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Towards a Model of *Da'wah* in Contemporary Societies:
The Case of Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ghazālī (1917-1996)

Benaouda Bensaid

The Institute of Islamic Studies, "McGill University, Montreal"
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"A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy"

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Abstract

Title: Towards a model of *da'wah* in contemporary societies: the case of Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ghazālī (1917-1996)

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Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

This thesis is an inquiry into Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's (1917-1996) model of *da'wah*. It uses Ghazālī works as well those of his critics to build up a coherent model of *da'wah* for contemporary societies. The research first delves into Ghazālī's life, learning, and career. It examines his association with the Muslim Brotherhood as well as his intellectual and professional contributions to *da'wah* and society. This examination provides us with a better understanding of the socio-cultural and intellectual background of Ghazālī. The research also explores Ghazālī's personality in order to find out the reasons underlying his harsh language or simply the stylistic problems that earned him much criticism. This examination shows that Ghazālī was a traditional scholar who profoundly understood the dynamics and implications and of the Islamic development, with a modern approach to the question of religion and society. More importantly, it demonstrates his critical sense, in light of his reviews of contemporary of *da'wah*.

This study also examines Ghazālī's conceptual framework of *da'wah*. This highlights his understanding of major concepts, definitions and characteristics including *da'wah* in the Quran and the models of *da'wah* as illustrated by prophets. It also addresses some essential

questions, such as innate human nature, People of the Interval (*'Ahl al-Fatrah*) and the universality of *da'wah*. It provides a closer look at the effects of society, culture and freedom on *da'wah*, and demonstrates Ghazālī's perspective on the requirements for undertaking modern *da'wah*. This section provides us with a clear understanding of how Ghazālī understood *da'wah* in light of revelation and with a serious consideration of the socio-cultural, economic and political context of Muslim societies.

The above framework led Ghazālī to the catalyst of *da'wah*, the *dā'ī*. In light of his conceptual framework of *da'wah*, Ghazālī addresses the various spiritual, moral and educational requirements of *dā'īs*. This is made in reference to his ambitious search to quickly and comprehensively fill the serious gap between Muslim life and Islamic ideals, which caused him to produce an ideal image of *da'wah*. This was not easily achievable, given the many problems and deficiencies affecting contemporary Islamic learning, society and culture, which Ghazālī repeatedly raised throughout his analysis. In his discussion of *da'wah* and *dā'īs*, Ghazālī used a highly vigorous and critical approach, one that unfortunately employed harsh tones and sometimes demeaning language in his extensive discussion of *dā'īs'* undertakings and contributions.

This research also considers Ghazālī's methodology, including the *dā'īs'* approach to *da'wah* and, most importantly, his *fiqh al-da'wah* (*legal methodology of da'wah*), where he attempt to rebuild the priorities of contemporary *da'wah* in light of his own understanding of the best interest of *da'wah* (*maṣlaḥat al-da'wah*). Often, Ghazālī justifies his criticism of legal interpretations about *da'wah* based on the *maṣlaḥa* or his re-interpretation of religious texts, yet does not provide or elaborate a systematic methodology or even clear criteria, which would assure consistency and uniformity in his approach towards the problems and

challenges of *da'wah*. At the core of his discussion of the legal methodology of *da'wah*, Ghazālī consistently showed a concern about the opinions of Westerners and the question of what could yield a positive impression of Islam.

The various studies of Salafi scholars and *dā'īs* have intensely criticized his works as too general, literary, speculative and even destructive for the healthy development of Muslims. In contrast, his contribution was and still is viewed as strongly positive and authoritative by a considerably large number of Muslim scholars, *dā'īs* and Muslim activists. His ideas are continually drawn upon whenever modern *da'wah* and the relationship between East and West in particular are discussed. It is very likely that his contributions will gain increasing intellectual and academic attention, most precisely when developing a new modern model for *da'wah* in Muslim societies, when trying to analyze and solve the problems and challenges of Muslim societies, or when striving to present Islam and Muslims to the Western world.

Résumé

Titre: Vers un modèle de la *da'wah* dans les sociétés contemporaines: le cas du Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ghazālī (1917-1996)

Auteur: Benaouda Bensaid

Departement: Institut des Etudes Islamiques, Université McGill.

Diplôme: Doctorat en Philosophie

Ce mémoire examine le modèle de *da'wah* de Muḥammad Ghazālī (1917-1996). L'étude se base sur les œuvres de Ghazālī, ainsi que celles de ses critiques afin de développer un modèle cohérent de *da'wah* pour les sociétés contemporaines. En premier lieu, la vie de Ghazālī, ses études et sa carrière sont interrogées. On examine ses liens avec les Frères Musulmans ainsi que son influence intellectuelle et professionnelle sur la *da'wah* et la société. Ainsi, nous tâchons de mieux comprendre le milieu socioculturel et intellectuel de Ghazālī. Il est aussi question d'étudier la personnalité de Ghazālī, afin de mieux comprendre la dureté avec laquelle il s'exprima et, tout simplement, les problèmes stylistiques pour lesquelles ses écrits furent critiqués. Nous proposons que Ghazālī fut un traditionaliste avec une bonne compréhension de la dynamique ainsi que les implications du développement Islamique, mais qui aborda la question de la religion et la société d'un point de vue modern. Avant tout, nous voulons démontrer qu'il critiqua la *da'wah* contemporaine avec habileté.

Ce mémoire tâche aussi d'examiner la conceptualisation de la *da'wah* de Ghazālī. Ceci nous permet de souligner sa conception d'idées importantes, de définitions et de caractéristiques—y compris la *da'wah*—dans le Koran, ainsi que les modèles de *da'wah* présentés par les prophètes. Nous voulons aussi réfléchir sur des questions essentielles,

notamment, la nature humaine innée, les Gens de l'Intervalle (*'Ahl al-Fatrah*) et l'universalité de la *da'wah*. Par conséquent, nous tâchons d'analyser comment la société, la culture et la liberté produisent un effet sur la *da'wah* et nous présentons les conditions imposées par Ghazālī pour entreprendre la *da'wah* contemporaine. Cette section porte sur la conception de la *da'wah* que Ghazālī élaborait avec l'aide de la révélation, mais sans oublier le contexte socioculturel, économique et politique des sociétés musulmanes.

La conceptualisation de la *da'wah* présentée ci-dessus mène Ghazālī au mécanisme ultime de la *da'wah*, c'est à dire, le *dā'ī*. S'inspirant de sa conceptualisation de la *da'wah*, Ghazālī aborda les multiples exigences spirituelles, morales et intellectuelles requises par les *dā'īs*. Ghazālī eut l'ambition de rapidement et complètement supprimer l'écart entre la vie musulmane et les valeurs de l'Islam. Cela lui amena à élaborer une image idéalisée de la *da'wah*. Cependant, cette image fut difficile à réaliser, étant données les divers problèmes et faiblesses au point de vue du savoir, de la société et la culture, auxquelles les Musulmans modernes furent face—circonstances abordées par Ghazālī à travers ses écrits. Ghazālī aborda le sujet de la *da'wah* et des *dā'īs* avec vigueur et d'un oeil critique, ce qui l'amena, malheureusement, à s'exprimer avec dureté et d'un ton avilissant dans ses longues discussions des *dā'īs* et leurs affaires et contributions.

Ce mémoire examine aussi la méthodologie de Ghazālī, sans oublier la conception de *da'wah* des *dā'īs*, et, avant tout, le *fiqh al-da'wah* (*méthodologie juridique de la da'wah*) de Ghazālī, selon laquelle il tâcha d'établir des nouvelles priorités pour la *da'wah* contemporaine, en vue de sa propre conception des bienfaits de la *da'wah* (*maṣlaḥat al-da'wah*). Il arrive souvent que Ghazālī justifie ses critiques des interprétations juridiques de la *da'wah* en se basant sur la *maṣlaḥa* ou sur une réinterprétation de textes religieux. Cependant, il n'élabore pas une

méthodologie systématique et ne fournit pas de critères spécifiques qui pourraient l'aider à établir une méthode consistante et uniforme avec laquelle négocier les problèmes et défis de la *da'wah*. Au sein de sa discussion de la méthodologie juridique de la *da'wah*, Ghazālī est très soucieux des opinions des Occidentaux et cherche un moyen pour représenter l'Islam d'un point de vue positif.

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Transliteration

This thesis makes use of the following table of the system of transliteration of Arabic words and names used by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	ḍ = ض	m = م
kh = خ	ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	ẓ = ظ	h = ه
dh = ذ	‘ = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

Short vowels: a = ا i = ي u = و

Long vowels: ā = آ ī = إ ū = و

Diphthong: ay = آي aw = واء

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Introduction

Modern Muslim writers concerned with the development of Islam are confronted with various models of *da'wah*,¹ each reflecting respective philosophies and methodologies, such as those of the Sufis, the Tablighī Jamā'at,² the Muslim Brotherhood,³ the Jama'at-i Islāmī,⁴ and the 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth.⁵ Yet, notwithstanding shared fundamentals and despite

¹The concept of *da'wah* appears in such passages of the Qur'ān: "Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! your Lord is Best Aware of him who strays from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright." *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān, Explanatory Translation*, Chapter 16:25, Ed. 'Arafāt K. El-'Ashī (Maryland, USA: Amana Publications, 2002), 249. *Dā'wah* means to exhort people to the internal and external adherence to the beliefs, statements, and actions of Islam. See 'Abd al-Rahmān Maydānī, *Fiqh al-Da'wah 'ilā Allah wa-Fiqh al-Nuṣṣ wa al-'Irshād wa al-'Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (The Understanding of *Da'wah*, Guidance, and Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil), 2nd edition (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2004), 1:16.

²The Tablighī Jamā'at of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent is one of the most important grassroots Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world. From a modest beginning in 1926 with *da'wah* work in Mewar near Delhi under the leadership of the ṣūfī scholar Mawlāna Muhammad 'Ilyās (1885-1944), the Jamā'at today has followers all over the Muslim world and the West. The emergence of the Tablighī Jamā'at as a movement for the reawakening of faith and reaffirmation of Muslim religio-cultural identity can be seen as a continuation of the broader trend of Islamic revival in North India in the wake of the collapse of Muslim political power and consolidation of the British rule in India in the mid-nineteenth century. The emergence of the Tablighī Jamā'at was also a direct response to the rise of such aggressive Hindu proselytizing movements as the Suddhi (Purification) and Sangathan (Consolidation), which launched massive efforts in the early twentieth century to "re-claim" those "fallen-away" Hindus who had converted to Islam in the past. See "Tablighī Jamā'at", in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of The Modern Islamic World*, Ed., John L. Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2:165-166.

³The Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamic social and political activism in Egypt, rooted in the founding in 1928 by Ḥasan Bannā of Jam'iyat al-'Ikhwān al-Muslimīn (Society of Muslim Brothers). From the beginning, the 'Ikhwān's goals were both social and political, promoting the causes of benevolence, charity, and development, on the one hand, and nationalism, independence, and Islamism, on the other. Throughout the 'Ikhwān's nearly seventy-year history, "Islamism" has consistently meant the reform of society. More recently, this goal has been expanded to include the full establishment of Sharī'a (Islamic law). See Dennis J. Sullivan, "Muslim Brotherhood," *Ibid.*, 3:187.

⁴An Islamic revivalist party in Pakistan and one of the oldest Islamic movements, which has been influential in the development of Islamic revivalism across the Muslim World. It was founded in Lahore on 26 August 1941, mainly through the efforts of Mawlānā Sayyid Abū al-'A'lā al-Mawdūdī (d. 1979), an Islamic thinker and activist. The teachings of Mawdūdī emphasize the exoteric dimensions of faith, disparage traditional Islam, rationalize faith, and predicate eschatology and salvation on social action. The Jamā'at promises a utopian order to be constructed in the temporal realm; and it encourages Muslims to embark upon an Islamic revolution, shaping society and politics according to the precepts of the faith as interpreted by Mawdūdī. See Seyyed Vali Reza Naṣr, "Jamā'at-i Islāmī," *Ibid.*, 2: 356.

⁵Ahl al-Ḥadīth, the partisans of traditions. In opposition to the ancient schools and their extensive use of human reasoning and personal opinion, the 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth, who appeared on the stage a little later, claimed that formal traditions from the Prophet, even though they were transmitted only by isolated individuals, superseded the "living tradition". The movement of the traditionists was the most

the various contributions these *da'wah* models have made, the debate continues over which one of these models most effectively advances the cause of the religion, complies with the religious norms, and meets the challenges of modernity. This question has preoccupied notable Muslim writers, such as Fathī Yakan,⁶ Muhammad H. Faḍlallah,⁷ Muṣṭafā Mashhūr,⁸ and Ḥabannakah al-Maydānī,⁹ who recognized the need to review

important event in the history of Islamic religious law in the second century of Islam. The ancient schools opposed it strongly at first. Once consciously formulated, however, the thesis of the traditionists, invoking as it did the highest possible authority under the Qur'ān, was assured of success, and the ancient schools had no real defence against the rising tide of traditions. Al-Shāfi'ī adopted the thesis of the traditionists and the other schools accepted it too, though they did not necessarily change their established doctrine accordingly. Only the doctrine of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal is purely traditionist. The final theory of religious law represents a compromise, insofar as the thesis of the traditionists, while accepted in principle, was made dependent in its application on the consensus of the scholars. The main material aim of the traditionists was the same as that of the ancient schools, that is, to subordinate the legal subject-matter to religious and ethical considerations. The majority of traditionists, however, attempted to discriminate between reliable and unreliable traditions by criticism of the *'isnād*; this criticism was directed against the ancient schools whose standards, by the nature of things, were less exacting in this respect. This traditional criticism of the *'isnād* has no direct bearing on determining the historical authenticity of a tradition. As early as the 2nd/8th century, the study of traditions from the Prophet became an end in itself, and the science of traditions, no longer opposed but complementary to the science of positive religious law (*fiqh*), became an important and assiduously cultivated branch of Islamic religious scholarship. See Schacht, J. "Ahl al- Ḥadīth," also Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 28 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_Sim-0379>

⁶Fathī Yakan criticizes Muslim movements for using the same old methods, and considers their attitudes in *da'wah* a kind of suicide. He exhorts Muslim workers to re-examine their *da'wah* experience of the past forty years, as well as the positive and negative aspects of their intellectual contributions. See Fathī Yakan, *Mushkilāt al-Da'wah wa al-Dā'iyyah* (Problems of Da'wah and Dā'īs) (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981), 7-11. Yakan also wrote *Kayfa Nad'ū al-Nāsa 'ilā 'Islām?* (How to invite People to Islam?) (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981).

⁷Muhammad H. Faḍlallah believes that the question of *da'wah* methodology is serious in the progress of Islamic work, both at the individual and collective levels. This is because of the political, intellectual, and social changes affecting Islamic work. These have led Muslim *dā'īs* to realize the need to exploit all of their intellectual and material resources, understand how to deal with current reality through new methods so as to meet the intellectual standards, and encounter the movement of change. See Muhammad H. Faḍlallah, *'Uṣlūb al-Da'wah fī al-Qur'ān* (The Approach of Da'wah in the Qur'ān) (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā' li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī'), 9.

⁸Muṣṭafā Mashhūr was born in September 1921 in the town of Sa'diyīn, Minā, in the Province of Sharqiyyah. He graduated from the Faculty of Sciences in 1942. He joined the Organization of Muslim Brotherhood in 1936. Because of his membership with the Muslim Brotherhood, Mashhūr was fired from work in 1954, and sentenced for ten years in Military Prison. In 1965, he was again imprisoned until the president Anwar Sādāt released him. In 1996, and after the death of the fourth guide of the Muslim Brethren Muhammad Ḥamid Abū al-Naṣr, he was appointed as a leader for the Muslim Brotherhood. Mashhūr wrote several works on *da'wah* and Islamic movements. He died in October 2002. See Special

current approaches in order to maintain an effective role for *da'wah* and have thus attempted to address the pitfalls inherent in contemporary *da'wah* thought. Such an endeavour, however, requires not only an in-depth understanding of Islamic *da'wah* theory but also a critical approach to *da'wah* practices in light of socio-cultural contexts and the ways in which it can best respond to the challenges of modernity by going to the fundamental tenets of Islam.

Contemporary studies on *da'wah* have also given rise to new perspectives on the subject, geared to systematically reviewing current *da'wah* practices, revisiting legal interpretations affecting *da'wah*, and drawing on religious tenets in order to build modern *da'wah* models. One of these models is found in the insightful contribution made by the late scholar and preacher Muhammad Ghazālī (محمد الغزالي) (1917-1996).

Ghazālī graduated from the University of Azhar in 1943, and gradually acquired a reputation of an independent thinker and a rigorous jurist. In spite of being a man of letters, a thinker, a researcher, and a scholar, Ghazālī was particularly drawn to the study and writing of *da'wah*.¹⁰ Known primarily as a writer of *da'wah*, Ghazālī wrote over fifty books in this field, most of which approach modern *da'wah* critically.

Dossiers 2002: Muslim Brothers...Where to?, "The Fifth Guide of the Muslim Brothers"; Available from <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/7A531648-5092-4EDE-9D28-C174298A0DFC.htm>; Internet; accessed 28th April 2008.

⁹*Fiqh al-Da'wah 'ilā Allah* by 'Abd al-Rahmān Maydānī is a comprehensive treatise on the foundations, methods, means, and manners of *da'wah* in light of the sources of the Shari'a. Maydānī's major interest, however, was to develop an understanding of *da'wah* through deduction (*istinbāt*) of the texts of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. See Maydānī, *Fiqh al-Da'wah*, 1:9.

¹⁰Faṭḥī Ḥ Malkāwī, "Kalimat al-Ma'had," in *al-'Aṭā' al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī, Ḥalqa Dirāsiyah* (A Seminar on the Intellectual Contribution of Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī) (Ammān, Jordan: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1996), 16. Qaraḍāwī describes Ghazālī as a person who unreservedly devoted his life to *da'wah*. See Yūsuf Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh, Riḥlat Niṣf Qarn* (Shaykh Ghazālī as I Knew Him, A Journey of Half of a Century) (Al-Manṣūrah, Egypt: Dār al-Wafā' li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1995), 55.

Ghazālī's intellectual contribution is regarded as authoritative by both the Muslim intelligentsia and the Muslim masses--a fact attested to by the wide circulation of his writings, the various translations of some of his works,¹¹ awards,¹² the conferences and research organized around his contributions to studies of Islam,¹³ and the reactions that his works have provoked in the field of ḥadīth studies and Islamic jurisprudence.¹⁴ Ghazālī's vision of modern Islamic reform has been adopted by some of the most educated, apolitical and moderate modern thinkers, many of whom advocate rational change.¹⁵

¹¹Ghazālī's translated works include, *Our Beginning in Wisdom*, a translation of *Min Hunā Na'lam* by 'Ismā'il R. El-Farūqī (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1953); *Remembrance and Prayer: The Way of Prophet Muhammad*, *Understanding the Life of the Prophet Muhammad* (International Islamic Publishing House); *A Thematic Commentary of the Qur'ān* (A. A. Shamis Paperback, International Institute of Islamic Thought); *Muslim Character* by Mufti A.H. Usmani Paperback, Kazi Pubns Inc, La Foi du Musulman ('Aqīdat al-Muslim) by Moussa Chāmī.

¹²In 1995, Ghazālī received The International Islamic University President's Conferment Award for Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī. See Ramaḍān Gharīb, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: Ḥayātuḥu, wa-'Aṣruḥu, wa-'Abraz man Ta'aththara bihim* (Ghazālī: Life, Age, and Influential People) (Cairo: Dār al-Haram li al-Turāth, 2003), 83-84. Ghazālī also received various Awards of appreciation from several governments, including Egypt, Mauritania, Qatar, Algeria, Sudan, and Pakistan. See 'Alā' M. Ghazālī, "Al-Sīra al-Shakhṣiyyah li al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī," in *Al-'Atā' al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī, Ḥalqa Dirāsiyah* (A Seminar on the Intellectual Contribution of Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī, ed., Faṭḥī Malkāwī, (Ammān, Jordan: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1996), 185.

¹³Gharīb's *Maḥāwir al-Mashrū' al-Fikrī ladā al-Shaykh* (Themes of Ghazālī's Intellectual Project) is a Master thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology in the University of Azhar, under the supervision of Dr. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Alī Qaṣṣās. It was published by Dār al-Haram li al-Turāth, Cairo, in 2003.

¹⁴Ghazālī's works entitled "*Al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*" and "*Turāthunā al-Fikrī*" caused many critical responses from some Muslim preachers and *dā'īs*. They include 'Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī: *Naqd Kitāb al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah* by Jamāl Sulṭān; *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī bayna al-Naqd al-'Ātib wa al-Madh' al-Shāmit* by Kishk Jalāl, *Fī-Ḥiwār Hādī' ma'a Muhammad Ghazālī* by Salmān al-'Awdah, *Jināyat al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ghazālī 'alā al-Ḥadīth wa 'Ahlīh* by 'Ashraf ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Samṭ al-La'ālī' fī al-Radd 'alā Shaykh Muḥammad Ghazālī* by 'Abū 'Ishāq al-Juwaynī, *Mi'yār al-'Ilm: Ghazālī fī Kitābih al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyya* by 'Abd al-'Azīz M. 'Āl al-Shaykh, *Ghazālī wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bayna 'Ahl al-Fiqh wa 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth Naẓarāt wa Mulāḥazāt* by Mundhir 'Abū Sha'r, *Kashf Mawqī' Ghazālī min al-Sunnah wa 'Ahlīh wa Naqd ba'd 'Arā'ihī* by Rabī' Madkhalī, and *Fī Ḥiwār Hādī' ma'a al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī* by Salman al-'Awadah.

¹⁵'Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Uways, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: Tārīkhuh, wa-Juhūdūhu, wa-'Ārā'uh* (Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: History, Contributions, and Opinions) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), 139. According to 'Uways, those thinkers advocate a comprehensive reform of Islam, characterized by positive presentation, role model, and cooperation. Ibid. For 'Abd al-Quddūs, Ghazālī is a leader of a school of *da'wah* following wisdom and kind speech. Muhammad 'Abd al-Quddūs, *Fī al-Da'wah wa al-Du'āt* (About *Da'wah* and *Dā'īs*) (al-Jīzah: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2000), 20. According to Qaradāwī, Ghazālī's lectures contributed to the development of an Islamic school characterized by originality, purity from

Ghazālī's *da'wah* reflects his social experience in the rural society of Egypt, his training in the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood (1937-1953), his Azharite education, his government career (1971-1981), and his active membership in the many Islamic and charitable organizations.¹⁶ According to Abū Rabī, Ghazālī's unwavering support for a critical interpretation of Islam in the modern age has also placed him at the forefront of the most advanced movement of modern Islamic criticism, which has been pioneered by the reformers of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ What is interesting about Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought, however, is that it developed over the course of his various positions, capacities, and political circumstances. Ghazālī served as a preacher in the Azhar, as an official in the Ministry of Endowment, as a writer of *da'wah*, as a provider of religious guidance in the mosques of Egypt, and as an activist with the Muslim Brethren. Besides, Ghazālī not only lived in the aftermath of the elimination of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, but also witnessed the European occupation of various Muslim countries. His thought therefore reflects historical experiences from both eras and the regional and global developments at that time.

Over the course of an active career, al-Ghazālī wrote approximately sixty books, including such important works as *Khuluq al-Muslim (Moral Character of the Muslim)*, *al-'Islām wa-'Awḍā'unā al-'Iqtisādiyyah (Islam and our Economic Affairs)*, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī (Islam and Political Despotism)*, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyyah (A*

additions, distortions, or alterations; and uncompromising about the truth. Ghazālī's sermons do not cite individuals by names nor ignite fires or raise sensitive issues. Ghazālī approaches issues with in-depth wisdom and kindness. See Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araḥūh*, 60.

¹⁶Ishāq Farḥān, "Kalimat Jam'iyyat al-Dirāsāt wa al-Buḥūth al-'Islāmiyyah," in *al-'Atā' al-Fikrī*, 20.

¹⁷Ibrahim M. Abū-Rabī, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post 1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto Press), 242.

Constitution for Cultural Unity), al-Ta'aṣṣub wa al-Tasāmuḥ bayna al-Naṣrāniyyah wa al-'Islām (*Prejudice and Tolerance between Christianity and Islam*), and Ta'ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt (*Reflections about Religion and Life*). His works reflect an attempt to integrate religious education with Islamic reform, and show interest in problems of modern development, and in the economic and moral improvement of Muslims' lives as a necessary step towards serious progress in *da'wah*. The bulk of his writings, however, reflects a genuine preoccupation with the progress of *da'wah*, and provides insights crucial to many questions of development of *da'wah*, its theoretical framework, methodology, problems, and the education of *dā'īs*.

Combining a "traditional" Azharite background with a grasp of modern thought and history, and an insight into Muslims' problems and challenges, Ghazālī broke new ground in the study of *da'wah*. This was undertaken through a review of *da'wah* concepts in light of the Qur'ān, and a serious attention to the innate human nature, the intellect, Muslim role model, in both the understanding and implementation of *da'wah*, as well as a critical approach to *da'wah* practices, challenges, and prospects. Ghazālī transcended the usual description of *da'wah* themes to include a broadly critical perspective taking into consideration several factors like the urgent need for *da'wah* review, revisit of legal interpretations of *da'wah*, the material progress of the West, and the necessary improvements of Muslims' economic and socio-cultural conditions.¹⁸

Ghazālī's contribution is, however, held within a framework of analysis embracing regional and global developments. His literary works provide an analysis of the broad range of modern Islamic thought, society, and culture, in an attempt to lay

out solid foundations for successful *da'wah*. Yet, Ghazālī supplied neither a systematic synthesis for *da'wah* nor a unified understanding of his perspective on the issue nor even does he satisfactorily answer the questions he himself raised. On the other hand, the study of Ghazālī is challenging due to the changing circumstances of the society, (economic and political) that provided the background to the evolution of his views. Some of these go back to 1950s Egypt and reflect the socio-political conditions of that time, whereas his later affiliations caused him to change or abandon some of his notions.

This inquiry relies primarily on Ghazālī's own writings, supplemented by secondary sources which favourably or unfavourably address his contribution to *da'wah*, including those critical studies which focused largely on his recent work *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (The Sunnah of the Prophet) (1989). Despite the various contributions these studies have made to the understanding of Ghazālī, his *da'wah* thought has not yet been adequately studied or examined. These studies have failed to address issues like his position on traditional learning and pedagogy, the role of the Muslim Brethren in his thought or the possible effects of his personality on his critical perspective on *da'wah*.

Some works have failed to provide an objective examination of Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought, and are often characterized by emotional attachment to Shaykh Ghazālī. Examples include Fathī Malkāwī who describes Ghazālī as the true master of *da'wah*, one who undertook *da'wah* on guidance (*baṣīrah*),¹⁹ or Qaraḍāwī, who expressed his great

¹⁹Malkāwī, "Kalimat al-Ma'had," 16. The emotional inclination is noticeable in works like *al-Shaykh Ghazālī, Ghuṣn Bāsiq fī Shajarat al-Khulūd* by Fallūssī Mas'ūd, *al-Da'wah wa al-Dā'ir* (*Da'wah and Dā'ir*) by 'Abd

admiration for Ghazālī this way: “If water is not contaminated when it becomes two jars, so what about when it is an ocean that can never become impure?”²⁰ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Adawī finds himself not only dealing with a great leader of thought and religious guidance in addition to a prominent master of *da’wah* and reform. He rather deals with a comprehensive school of unique *da’wah*, thought, and reform; a school that is distinct in character and method, in need of several studies to bring about its characteristics, impacts, and perspectives.²¹

Gharīb’s work *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: Ḥayātuh, ‘Aṣruḥ, wa-’Abraz man Ta’atharra bihim* (Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: His life, time, and most Influential People) provides us with a closer look at Ghazālī’s life, personality, writings and people who most influenced him. It, however, fails to address Ghazālī’s *da’wah*. Gharīb’s second work discusses the major themes in Ghazālī’s intellectual contribution including issues of women, political despotism, deceitful religiosity, colonialism, secularism, communism, cultural conquest, missionaries, and western civilization. Such a discussion is, however, useful to an understanding of Ghazālī’s suggested reforms, yet analysis of *da’wah* per se is absent.

al-Raḥmān al-‘Adawī, or The Conference of *al-‘Aṭā al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh Ghazālī. Baṣīra* (clear evidence) is made in reference to the Qur’ān: (Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge. I and whosoever follows me-Glory be to Allah!- and I am not of the idolaters.” Pickthall, (Chapter 12:108), 214.

²⁰Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā ‘Araftuh*, 7. This is made in reference to the tradition of the Prophet: “If water becomes two jars (*qullatayn*), it is not contaminated by filth.”

²¹‘Adawī, *Lamsat Wafā’ ilā al-‘Imām Muhammad Ghazālī (al-Da’wah wa al-Da’iyah)* (Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1997), 34-35. Qaraḍāwī argues that Ghazālī does not belong to any particular group, movement or country, and rather belongs to the entire Muslim nation. See Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā ‘Araftuh*, 281. Shalabī for example writes: “To the great Muslim thinker, the devoted Mujāhid, the exemplary *dā’ī*, the eloquent speaker for whom three public protests were held, to the student of the Martyr Ḥasan Bannā, to the Ghazālī of ‘Iḥyā’ (work by Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī) and ‘Aḥyā (living people), on the occasion of his seventieth anniversary.” Muhammad Shalabī, *Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma’rakat al-Muṣḥaf* (Shaykh Ghazālī and the Battles of the Qur’ān) (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwa li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1987), 13.

Fallūsī's work *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī, Ghuṣn Bāsiq fī Shajarat al-Khulūd* (Ghazālī: A Loftiest Branch in the Tree of Eternity), provides a synopsis of Ghazālī's life, personality, and contribution; yet it lacks any attention of Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought. Similarly, 'Uways' work *al-Shaykh Ghazālī, Tarīkhuh, wa-Juhūduh, wa-'Arā'uh* (Ghazālī: History, Efforts, and Opinions), is a survey of Ghazālī's life and history, and an examination of his standpoints on different issues including women, western civilization, politics, and revelation. Despite 'Uways' belief that Ghazālī is one of the greatest *dā'īs* in modern history, he only dedicates a brief overview of Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought and contribution to Islamic Studies.²² 'Imārah's work *Shaykh Ghazālī: al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī* (Shaykh Ghazālī: the Intellectual Position) discusses the intellectual position of Ghazālī vis-à-vis contemporary Islamic reform and the Muslim Brotherhood. 'Imārah gives no attention, however, to Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought despite his statement that he is writing about Ghazālī as a *dā'ī* and servant of Islam.²³

The conference of *Al-'Aṭā al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī* (The Intellectual Contribution of Muhammad Ghazālī), jointly organized by the International Institute of Islamic Thought and the Royal Assembly of Research in Islamic Civilization in Jordan, examines Ghazālī's life, thought and contribution. The sections most relevant to our inquiry are those about Ghazālī's personal and moral qualities, a biography of Ghazālī, and Qaraḍāwī's "Ghazālī Rajul Da'wah" (Ghazālī: a Person of *Da'wah*), which is similar to his book *Al-Shaykh Ghazālī Kamā 'Araftuh* (Shaykh Ghazālī as I Knew Him).

²² Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Uways, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 49.

²³ Muhammad 'Imārah, *Al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī, al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī wa al-Ma'ārik al-Fikriyyah* (The Intellectual Position of Muhammad Ghazālī and the Intellectual Debates) (Egypt: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1992), 5.

The journal of *'Islāmiyyat al-Ma'arifah* (Islamization of Knowledge) dedicated a full issue to Ghazālī including such topics as Ghazālī's life, political thought, and views on contemporary Islamic reform. It fails, however, to provide an analysis of his *da'wah* thought.

In his "*Al-Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh: Riḥlat Niṣf Qarn*" (*Shaykh Ghazālī as I Knew him, A Journey of Half a Century*), Qaraḍāwī studies Ghazālī's life, personal qualities, history, *da'wah* and reforms. He addresses Ghazālī's studies on *dā'īs*, his sermons and contributions to the media, as well as his intellectual struggles against colonialism, Zionism, communism, secularism, materialism, and non-Muslim proselytization. Qaraḍāwī briefly discusses the foundations of Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought, namely the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, global history, culture, and every-day reality, providing a better understanding of Ghazālī's personality and contribution to modern Islamic thought; he, nonetheless, does not address his *da'wah* in any comprehensive or systematic manner.

Tajdīd al-Fikr al-'Islāmī 'alā Mashārif Qarnin Jadīd (Revival of Islamic Thought at the Onset of a New Century) by Muhammad Yūnus is an examination of Ghazālī's thought versus modern Islamic reform. Chapter Five in particular discusses Ghazālī's *da'wah* experience through the perspective of modern mass communication. Here the author quotes Qaraḍāwī's discussion of Ghazālī's *da'wah* foundations, and looks at the Friday sermon (*khutba*) introduced by Ghazālī as a model of successful communication.²⁴

In his *Contemporary Arab Thought*, Abū-Rabī' considers Ghazālī to be a freelance

²⁴Muhammad Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr al-'Islāmī (Revival of Islamic Thought)* (Dār al-Qalam li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1999), 112-113.

Islamist critic,²⁵ and points to his critique of several issues including theology and cleric, Islam and politics, Arab liberals, the inner enemies of Islam, views of the West and nationalism. Abū-Rabīʿ also discusses in brief the mission of the *dāʿiyahs* (preachers) as presented by Ghazālī, who are required to discover the methods of analysis and criticism.²⁶

In order to avoid the shortcomings of many secondary studies on Ghazālī's *daʿwah*, we will therefore examine a series of interrelated questions. The major question in the current study is: What model of *daʿwah* did Ghazālī develop for modern Islam? In addressing this question, this study addresses a number of secondary significant issues: What was Ghazālī's understanding of the position of the innate human nature (*al-fiṭrah*), the People of the Intervals (*'Ahl al-fatrah*), the effects of society and culture on *daʿwah*, and the position of freedom and religious pluralism in *daʿwah*. This dissertation also discusses the impact of role models in advancing *daʿwah*, as well as other related questions such as *daʿwah* and peace, and the relationship between Arab nationalism and the universality of *daʿwah*.

In order to answer the above questions, the research will draw on Ghazālī's socio-economic and political background so as to provide an understanding of his intellectual history. Examination of his childhood, learning, personality, intellectual works, and professional career are critical to the understanding of his perspective on *daʿwah*. An interesting question must be raised: What was the genesis of Ghazālī's

²⁵Ibrāhīm M. 'Abū-Rabīʿ, "Muslim Self-Criticism in Contemporary Arab Thought: The Case of Muhammad Ghazālī," in *Contemporary Arab Thought, Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto, 2004.), 224.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 246.

thought? What were the major factors contributing to his intellectual formation? An examination of influential personalities, political developments in Egypt, and events or crises that have influenced Ghazālī's thought allow us to reconstruct the genealogy of his *da'wah* model.

In the context of the above questions, the current dissertation addresses aspects of Ghazālī's originality, and the degree of convergence or divergence with the Muslim Brotherhood and Azhar. The then existing conditions in Egypt and the Arab/Muslim world, including the abolishing of the Ottoman Empire, the domination of the colonial powers, the subjugation and exploitation of human and natural resources of the Arab and Muslim world, political despotism in the Arab world, the Zionist occupation of Palestine in 1948 and other issues are instrumental to the understanding of Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter deals with Ghazālī's childhood and learning, including his early days, social life, religious learning, and personal characteristics. It also examines Bannā's religious and spiritual impact on Ghazālī, the effects of Ghazālī's association with the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood (1937-1952),²⁷ and finally his line of thinking. Chapter Two provides a theoretical analysis of *da'wah* including some of the basic concepts in *da'wah*, the role of innate human nature (*fiṭrah*), and the universal nature of *da'wah*. It also examines the relationship of *da'wah* to freedom and the effects of society and culture. Chapter Three discusses the responsibilities of *dā'īs*, including *dā'īs'* acquisition of spiritual, moral, and educational qualifications, problems facing *da'wah*,

and a critical evaluation of *da'wah* practices. Chapter Four discusses Ghazālī's perspective on the methodology of *da'wah*, including the approach to *da'wah*, the legal methodology of *da'wah* known as *fiqh al-da'wah*, where the question of the interest of *da'wah* is discussed according to Ghazālī's perspective on religious progress and Islamic reform, and the question of women and *da'wah*.

Chapter One

The Life, Learning, and Contribution of Muhammad Ghazālī:

Islamic Reforms (1917-1996)

I. Introduction:

An examination of Ghazālī's early childhood and educational background, association with the Muslim Brethren, academic pursuits, and professional and intellectual contributions, can contribute to a better understanding of his *da'wah* model. This becomes clear when Ghazālī draws on a multitude of personal stories and current events, even when they appear sometimes irrelevant to the context of *da'wah*.²⁸ The vivid images that Ghazālī offers of his village Niklā al-'Inab,²⁹ the kuttāb (1927), Azhar, Ḥasan Bannā, the distressful days in the prison of Ṭūr (1951) or Ṭurrah (1965),³⁰ his discussions and debates, even the songs and the news reports he listened to on the BBC,³¹ all contribute to his broad examination of issues of *da'wah* and reform.

Ghazālī's careful selection of events or memories, however, intend to substantiate his critical examinations of Muslim conditions and *da'wah* in specific instances. Ghazālī favours certain interpretations and criticizes others, and draws on local and international events to substantiate his arguments. An overall review of his

²⁸Muhammad Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq* (Signposts to the Truth) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Naṣhr wa al-Tawzī', 2003), 203.

²⁹Niklā al-'Inab is located in the province of al-Buḥayrah, in the North-eastern part of Egypt.

³⁰Ghazālī spent one year in the prison of Ṭūr. In 1965, he only spent less than a year in the prison of Ṭurrah. See Naṣr al-Dīn La'rābah, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: Ḥayāt wa-'Āthār, Shahādāt wa-Mawāqif* (Shaykh Ghazālī: Life and Works, Testimonies and Contributions) (Algeria: Sharikat al-'Ummah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Naṣhr wa al-Tawzī', 1998), 180-181. Also see Muhammad Shalabī, *Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf* (Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī and the Battle of the Qur'ān) (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwa li al-Naṣhr wa al-Tawzī', 1987), 24-25.

³¹The British Broadcasting Corporation.

critiques, nonetheless, reveals his ability to select and categorize events according to a framework of analysis, one that is personal, complex, and profound. It is a Ghazālīan screen, through which incidents, stories, and memories are interpreted. Ghazālī's active observation provided him with a massive amount of information, though only particular problems and events were decisive. These include personal memories, socio-political problems, poverty, colonialism, western scientific progress, Zionism, religious deception, the Muslim Brotherhood, political despotism, women, religious learning, and problems of culture--all are continuously present in his analysis.

For Ghazālī, there are events that force themselves upon his memory and those that knock upon the door yet are denied entry.³² The following are three examples of those stories, each with a message, serving an implication to his framework of critique, and reflecting real concerns in his reform. The first is a critique of religious scholars who are not concerned to improve their religious presentation; instead they take their positions for granted. Ghazālī draws on the image of a grocer (fruit-seller) operating a small carriage before him:

On it--the carriage--sit orderly and well coordinated rows of fruits that could continue in hundreds or thousands. The look is truly attractive even if it might not invite for purchase. The grocer did his utmost to present his commodity well. I then felt a promptly passing thought, and heard a question whispering from the bottom of my soul asking: Did you, as a religious scholar, organize your commodity for the public? and whether did I in fact present it in a way attracting eyes and minds. My response was perplexed, and that means it was negative. It appears to me that we, Muslim scholars, are only satisfied with bright names and superior status, without making the least effort to present the commodity in a pleasant fashion.³³

³²Muhammad Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt al-Shaykh: Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt," (Excerpts from the Memories of Ghazālī: A Life Story) *ʿIslāmiyyat al-Maʿrifah* (Islamization of Knowledge) 7 (1997): 156.

³³Ghazālī, *Min Maʿālim al-Ḥaqq* (Signposts of the Truth), 203.

Ghazālī's second story entitled "Had the religion been free from those people," draws attention to the integral relationship between the inner and outer forms of religious worship, and the damage caused by religious formalities when stripped off their inner spirit. The story is a critical example of people who are very regular in worship, yet are keen to be known publicly for their devotion. Leaving aside the question of their inner intentions, Ghazālī argues that those people commit actions, both in public and private, which are contradictory to the teachings of Islam. Strangely, Ghazālī wishes those people would abandon worship, the reason being that they do not benefit from their worship, but, instead, cause a distorted impression of religious rituals. Ghazālī describes one of those people:

I noticed one of them praying. I sincerely wished he would quit prayer and leave the mosque without any prostration or attempt at connecting with God. I said: For this person, the verse is reversed. Worship is not purifying him; instead it is he who corrupts worship!³⁴

The third story, which caused Ghazālī great distress, is about a foreign resident inspecting his property. That is not the main concern, however. It is rather the servant (*khādim*) following the foreign master wherever he goes:

One of the scenes of a humiliating job was when the foreigner rode his donkey. Followed by his servant who run barefoot, dressed in dirty clothes, and was tired of catching up with the donkey. An enslaved Muslim running behind a foreign master!³⁵

This inspires Ghazālī to wish there were laws to prevent such humiliation of Egyptian

³⁴Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt* (Reflections about Religion and Life) (Al-Jīzah: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2005), 108-109. Ghazālī is referring to the following verse in the Qur'ān: "Recite that which has been inspired in you of the Scripture, and establish prayer. Lo! Prayer preserves from lewdness and iniquity, but surely remembrance of Allah is more important. And Allah knows what you do." Pickthall (29:45), 374.

³⁵Ghazālī, *Fī Mawḳib al-Da'wah* (*In the Crowd of Da'wah*), 3rd Ed. (Egypt: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1965), 267.

citizens. Ghazālī argues that what pains him the most is when an Egyptian polishes westerners' shoes, or chooses to carry out demeaning jobs. For him, such attitudes vis-à-vis foreigners can only be changed through education.³⁶ This story, however, reflects the privileges enjoyed by foreigners in Egypt. According to Hopwood, the British often had higher standards of living and higher positions in Egypt than could have been expected in England. Life was made easier by numerous servants, by polo, tennis and gossip at European clubs. Foreign residents were protected by the Capitulations – the legal agreements which gave them the right to be tried in their own Consular Courts.³⁷

The examples mentioned above revolve essentially around religious presentation, inner and outer religious observance, and the Egyptians' attitude towards European residents. The first example according to Ghazālī requires a review of religious methods of presentation and criticises the contemporary religious order. The second is a critique of contemporary forms of worship where significant attention is given to formalities. The last reflects Ghazālī's sense of nationality and a concern over the dignity and respect of Egyptians.

II. Childhood and Learning of Ghazālī:

a. Childhood of Ghazālī:

Muhammad Ghazālī Saqqā was born in September 22, 1917 in the village of Niklā al-'Inab located in the province of al-Buḥayrah (northern Egypt).³⁸ Ghazālī's father, Aḥmad al-Saqqā, was a religious man, who laid great hopes on Ghazālī's future, and

³⁶Ibid.,

³⁷Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981* (London: George Allen & Unwin), 19.

³⁸Imārah, *Al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī wa al-Ma'ārik al-Fikriyyah*, 11.

whenever he encountered a crisis or fell sick, he comforted his wife by saying: “I left you Muhammad Ghazālī, and you shall find in him all help.”³⁹ Before his marriage, however, al-Saqqā had a vision in which Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī⁴⁰ requested of him that he adopts his name for his future child. Ghazālī was thus named after Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī of Bagdad (450-505 AH/1058-1111 AD). ‘Alwānī argues that Saqqā highly esteemed and revered Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī and, hence named his son Muhammad Ghazālī.⁴¹ Neither the associations of the name nor his father’s ṣūfī inclinations seem to have affected Ghazālī’s intellectual formation:

The name -of Ghazālī - was attached to me, yet did not affect my thinking. I benefited from the legacy of Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, the author of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* (Incoherence of the Philosophers), and his opponent Ibn Rushd⁴² in his *Tahāfut*

³⁹Muhammad Shalabī, *Al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa Ma’rakat al-Muṣḥaf* (Ghazālī and the Battle of the Qur’ān) (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwa li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1987), 24.

⁴⁰Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ṭūsī (450A.H. /1058A.D.-505A.H. /1111A.D.), outstanding theologian, jurist, original thinker, mystic and religious reformer. He was born at Ṭūs in Khurāsān. In 484/1091, he was sent by Nizām al-Mulk to be professor at the *madrasa* he had founded in Baghdād, the Nizāmiyyā. Ghazālī was one of the most prominent men in Baghdād, and for four years lectured to an audience of over three-hundred students. At the same time, he vigorously pursued the study of philosophy by private reading, and wrote several books. During his period of retirement at Damascus and Ṭūs, Ghazālī lived as a poor ṣūfī, often in solitude, spending his time in meditation and other spiritual exercises. It was at this period that he composed his greatest work, *‘Ihyā’ ulūm al-dīn* “The Revival of the Religious Sciences”. By the end of the period, he had advanced far along the mystic path, and was convinced that it was the highest way of life for man. In 499AH/1106CE, he began to lecture at the Nizāmiyya in Naysābūr and not long afterwards wrote the autobiographical work *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* “Deliverance from Error”. Before his death, however, in 505AH/1111CE, he had once again abandoned teaching and retired to Ṭūs. Here he had established, probably before he went to Naysābūr, a *khānqāh* or hermitage, where he trained young disciples in the theory and practice of the ṣūfī life. See Watt, W. Montgomery. “al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 25 April 2008 http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0233

⁴¹Gharīb, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī: Ḥayātuh*, 13.

⁴²Ibn Rushd, Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rushd, al-Ḥafīd (the grandson), the “Commentator of Aristotle”, famous in the Mediaeval West under the name of Averroes, scholar of the Qur’ānic sciences and the natural sciences (physics, medicine, biology, astronomy), theologian and philosopher. He was born at Cordova in 520/1126 and died at Marrākush in 595A.H./1198A.D. The biographers stress the excellent juridical education of the future Commentator. The science of law and of the principles (*‘uṣūl*), *dirāya*, interested him more than the science of traditions, *riwāya*. He worked also on Ash’arī *kalām* which he was later to criticize. In medicine, he was the pupil of Abū Ja’far Hārūn al-Tadjālī (of Trujillo), who was in addition a teacher of *ḥadīth*. Ibn Abī ‘Uṣaybi’a limits himself to reporting, following al-Bājī, that Averroes studied “philosophical sciences” (*al-‘ulūm al-ḥikmiyya*) with the physician

al-Tahāfut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence). Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī was a philosopher whereas Ibn Taymiyah was a jurist, I consider myself therefore, a student in the school of philosophy and jurisprudence.⁴³

Ghazālī does not see himself as a ṣūfī and rejects affiliation with any other Muslim group.⁴⁴ He does, however, have a Sufi heart and spirit, enjoys seclusion, and adheres to the rituals of remembrance of God (*‘awrād al-dhikr*).⁴⁵ In his *al-Jānib al-‘Ātifī min al-Islām* (The Emotional Aspect of Islam), Ghazālī states that some will describe him as a ṣūfī, while the ṣūfis will say he is misguided.⁴⁶ Ghazālī, nonetheless, believes that Sufism is an important aspect of Muslim culture which did not draw adequate attention of jurists and theologians.⁴⁷

In his search for the historical conditions surrounding his birth, Ghazālī reflects on his early life in Niklā al-‘Inab. He believes that the century into which he was born is the most deplorable as far as the religion of Islam is concerned, and during a decline in the history of Islam, specifically during the sad days of the British occupation of Egypt

Abū Dja‘far. From 1174 to 1180 was the period in which his original works were produced: “Treatises on the intellect”, *De substantia orbis*, *Faṣl al-makāl*, *Kashf al-manāhij*, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. As a jurist, Ibn Rushd was interested in the *‘uṣūl*. Ibn al-‘Abbār mentions the important *Kitāb Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa-Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid fī al-Fiqh*. Ibn Rushd had few disciples in Islam. His great fame among the Western schoolmen is well known. If one considers the whole corpus of Ibn Rushd’s works and the unity of his wide thought, it becomes apparent that the “Commentator” was a true philosopher. See Arnaldez, R. “Ibn Rushd, Abu al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rushd, al-Ḥafīd.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0340>

⁴³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt al-Shaykh Ghazālī* (Essays by Shaykh Ghazālī), Ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥasanīn Ḥasan, (Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2002.), 3:164.

⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Rakā‘iz al-‘Imān bayna al-‘Aql wa al-Qalb*, 105.

⁴⁵Gharīb, *Maḥāwir al-Mashrū‘ al-Fikrī*, 67.

⁴⁶Ghazālī, *al-Jānib al-‘Ātifī min al-‘Islām* (The Emotional Aspect of Islam) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 17. In Qatar, a ṣūfī disciple once encouraged Ghazālī to give allegiance to a ṣūfī master. Ghazālī replied: “Is there any better allegiance after that we gave to Bannā? We have taken from Bannā the religion of Islam in its comprehensiveness, depth, and moderation. See Qaraḍāwī, “Ghazālī Rajul Da‘wah,” in *al-‘Aṭā al-Fikrī*, 216.

⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Rakā‘iz al-‘Imān*, 105. Ghazālī calls Taṣawwuf the Emotional aspect of Islam.

(1882-1952) and other Muslim territories.⁴⁸ Ghazālī even goes so far as to say that his days are no different than those during the fall of Baghdad (655 A.H./1258 C.E), or of Granada (897A.H./1492CE).⁴⁹ He does not even feel he is living in the present (writing in the 20th century). He rather feels like the Tatars have just conquered Baghdad or the crusaders have just invaded Jerusalem.⁵⁰ He describes his feeling towards the conditions surrounding his birth as follows:

Nobody is questioned about the fact why were they born at such a time or a place, for this is a predestined divine decree towards which we hold no choice. What draws my attention, however, is that I was born during a decline in the history of Islam, and during the miserable days of the British occupation of Egypt and of the many lands of the ill-treated religion of Islam.⁵¹

This sad comparison between the conditions surrounding his birth and the Muslim past probably aimed to draw similarities between modern colonial movements and the crusades, on the one hand, and the medieval and modern Middle Eastern tyrannies, on the other. It also seems to be an attempt to draw attention to similar patterns affecting the general decline of Muslims, to rather assure Muslims that their current unideal conditions are nothing new. The purpose of his comparison becomes even clearer when he indicates afterwards that he is no longer embarrassed over his situation having realized the similarities between his own day and that of Ibn Taymiyyah:⁵²

⁴⁸Ghazālī, “Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt Shaykh Ghazālī,” 155-156.

⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadidah min al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 6 (New Doses from the Bitter Truth) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2004), 144.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 181.

⁵¹Ghazālī, “Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt,” 155.

⁵²Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad (1263-1328) was a ḥanbalī in many, though not all, juridical and theological matters, and a Salafī on a wider plane. He has had a strong influence on conservative Sunnī circles and, in the modern period, on both liberals and conservatives. His life was a mix of intellectual activity, preaching, and periodic persecutions and imprisonments. He was persecuted and imprisoned in Syria and Egypt, for his tashbīh (anthropomorphism), his 'ijtihād (independent reason) and his

When I grew up and I read –about the conditions of Ibn Taymiyah– I did not, however, feel embarrassment over the conditions surrounding my birth! I have learned that Ibn Taymiyyah was born and grew up in similar conditions. He was born during the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the increasing fierce assaults of the Tatars, which forced him to flee from one city to another, and to take a road full of victims of aggression, loss, and defeat.⁵³

Qaraḍāwī suggests that the birth of Muhammad Ghazālī symbolizes the birth of a second proof of Islam (*Ḥujjat al-ʿIslām*) almost one thousand years after Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī. For him, the Ghazālī of the fourteenth century A.H. (20th century C.E.), Muhammad Ghazālī, carried with him the spirit of the Ghazālī of the fifth century A.H. (12th century C.E.) concerning religious reform, and bringing life back into the inert body of the Muslim nation. Each Ghazālī, however, is unique – for example, the earlier Ghazālī is profoundly concerned with philosophical, juridical, and mystical foundations of Islam; whereas, the later Ghazālī ranges over almost all issues of Islamic thought but not at the same depth, and is much more concerned with political and socio-economic reforms.⁵⁴ Gharīb believes that there exists a similitude between the two Ghazālīs in their discussions of reason versus doubt and certainty, seclusion, encyclopaedic reading and writing, and in their treatment of forged religiosity (*al-tadayyun al-maghlūṭ*) and deceitful Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf al-maghshūsh*).⁵⁵ Such a comparison, however, is hardly sustainable as far as the nature of their intellectual contributions is concerned. In spite of Ghazālī's desire to be associated with notable medieval scholars like Ibn

idiosyncratic legal judgments (e.g., on ṭalāq–divorce). Ibn Taymiyah was also active in anti-Mongol propaganda. See Ronald L. Nettler, "Ibn Taymiyah, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad," *Ibid.*, 2: 165.

⁵³Ghazālī, "Muqtatafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 156.

⁵⁴Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Arfatuh*, 186.

⁵⁵Gharīb, *Muhammad Ghazālī, Ḥayātuh*, 228.

Taymiyyah, Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah,⁵⁶ Ibn al-Jawzī,⁵⁷ or Ibn Rushd; he does not provide parallel scholarly works. These similitudes again do not provide a solid ground to confirm the notion of similarity as they are too broad to apply to many other scholars. The discussion of this question either demonstrates a biased attachment to later Ghazālī or an artificial making of similarities on the basis of their common names.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, a Ḥanbalī theologian and juriconsult, born at Damascus on 7 Ṣafar 691/29 January 1292 and died there in 751/1350. Ibn al-Qayyim's education was particularly wide and sound. He was, from 713/1313, the most famous pupil of Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah, all of whose ideas he can be said to have absorbed and whose work he helped to popularize, while retaining his own personality. Well-versed, like his master, in all the main disciplines of the time—Qur'ānic exegesis, *ḥadīth*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *furū'*. Ibn al-Qayyim was, unlike his master, much more strongly influenced by Sufism. He left behind him the justified reputation of a writer of great talent, whose eloquence contrasts with the incisive dryness of the succinct prose of his famous master. In 726/1326, Ibn al-Qayyim was imprisoned in the citadel at Damascus, at the same time as Ibn Taymiyyah, and was not released until 728/1328, after the latter's death. His works include the *Fawā'id*, the *Madārij al-sālikīn*, the *I'lām al-muwaqqi'īn*, the *Qaṣīda nūniyya*, and *al-Ṣawā'iq al-mursala*. Several Muslim scholars of the Mamlūk period were among Ibn Qayyim's pupils or were in varying degrees influenced by him: among them were the Shāfi'ī traditionist and historian Ibn Kathīr, Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Rajab, and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī. See Laoust, H. "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Zar'ī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-3242>

⁵⁷Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jawzī, juriconsult, traditionist, historian and preacher, was one of the most famous Ḥanbalīs of Baghdad, where he was born in 510/1126 and died in 597/1200 after a life of great intellectual, religious and political activity. Among his chief teachers were some of the most famous 'ulamā' of his time. It was during the reign of al-Muktafi, however, with the encouragement of Ibn Hubayra, whose policy for the restoration of the caliphate and for a Sunnī revival he supported, that Ibn al-Jawzī began his career as a preacher (*wā'iz*), holding each Friday a session of *wa'z* in Ibn Hubayra's own house. His zeal as a cataloguer of heresies and as a polemicist, which appears throughout his work and prompted him to write refutations of al-Ḥallāj and of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, appears with particular intensity in one of the major works of Ḥanbalī polemic, *Talbīs 'Iblīs*, in which he attacks not only the various sects more or less outside Sunnism (*khawārij*, *rawāfiḍ*, *mu'tazila*, *falāsifa*, *bāṭiniyya*, etc.), but also, within Sunnism, all those whom he considered responsible for having introduced into the dogma or the law of Islam innovations which were to be condemned (*bid'a*): *fuqahā'*, traditionists, statesmen and, above all, *ṣūfiyya*, are vigorously attacked. Ibn al-Jawzī left, together with an excellent manual of Ḥanbalī *fiqh*, several collections of sermons. Ibn al-Jawzī had very many disciples and his influence on the Ḥanbalism of the Ayyūbid period was considerable. See Laoust, H. "Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad Abū al-Farash b. al-Jawzī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-3139>

⁵⁸In writing *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf* (The Battle of the Qur'ān), Ghazālī describes his feelings then as being similar to 'Abduh during his work on "*al-'Urwā al-Wuthqā*" in Paris. The difference, however, was that 'Abduh was chased by the British who conquered Cairo and subjugated Egyptians. As for Ghazālī, Cairo was officially independent, yet still dealing with remaining intellectual residues of the colonials. Ghazālī,

Ghazālī grew up in Niklā al-‘Inab,⁵⁹ where religious emotions affected people’s behaviour, and echoed the concerns of the society at large.⁶⁰ Ghazālī’s narratives also point to a religiously conservative character of his local community that was keenly interested in the memorization of the Qur’ān and competition in learning Islamic studies.⁶¹ Some of Ghazālī’s memories about his village go back to the time of the revolution against the British army in Egypt (1919) and the villagers’ revolt in cutting telephone lines. Ghazālī vividly remembers British soldiers surrounding a mosque, and killing a peasant who refused to abide by the martial law.⁶²

Ghazālī was born into difficult economic conditions,⁶³ and grew up in an exploited rural neighbourhood subjugated by Bāshas and princes. Injustice and exploitation by the landlords,⁶⁴ and abuse of peasants who received very little for their hard work, were prevailing.⁶⁵ Social injustice gave rise to privileged social classes and

Ma’rakat al-Muṣḥaf, 10-11.

⁵⁹Shalabī, *Al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa Ma’rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 24.

⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Jur’āt Jadīdah* 5 (New Doses) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2004), 44.

⁶¹Muhammad Majdhūb, *Muḥāḍarāt Ghazālī fī-‘Islāh al-Fard wa al-Mujtama’* (Ghazālī’s Lectures on Reform of the Individual and Society), Ed., Quṭb ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Quṭb (Cairo: al-Bashīr li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’), 18.

⁶²Ghazālī, “Muqṭaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt al-Shaykh,” 155.

⁶³Fallūsī Mas’ūd, *Ghazālī Ghuṣn Bāsiq fī-Shajarat al-Khulūd* (A Lofty Branch in a Tree of Eternity) (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 2003), 17, 18, 21.

⁶⁴Ahmad ‘Assāl, “al-Jawānib al-Nafsiyyah wa al-Khuluqiyyah,” *al-‘Aṭā’ al-Fikrī li-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 28.

⁶⁵Ibid., 27. See Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī Kamā ‘Araftuh*, 12. In his *Ta’ammulāt*, Ghazālī shares some scenes of the conditions of the countryside in Egypt. While walking in the evening, he heard children singing. Their singing tone, however, was mixed with sadness, and invaded the listener’s emotions with a complex of regret and grief. Ghazālī, *Ta’ammulāt*, 44.

Oh night! Oh Night! Oh Night! I am a stranger! Where Shall I spend the night?

The singers were hundreds of poor children who migrate to the village. They eat poorly and drink from impure water. At night, they all sleep in animal habitats. Ghazālī then whispered: “My children, you are not strangers! This is the country of your fathers and your grandfathers! It is your right to sleep in comfort. While children of other nations live in peace, you continue to live in destitute in your young age and adulthood.” Ghazālī then asked his friend: “How do those children go back home -their original homes?” His friend responded: “Do you recall the diseases affecting animals? Poor nutrition, work from sunrise until after sunset, the strikes heating the backs of those who fail to do their works, and above all, petty salaries most of which go to their brokers. When they remember their past, they begin to sing as

created an economic chasm where some people planted grain but ate hay, grew cotton but dressed poorly, and built tall buildings but could only live in poverty!⁶⁶ These conditions caused Ghazālī to be highly sensitive to the suffering and maltreatment of people.⁶⁷

By 1914, small peasants represented over 90 per cent of all landowners and yet possessed only a quarter of the land. The large owners formed a group with common interests and landownership gave them a privileged position at the top of Egyptian society. During the 1920s and 1930s, there were three agricultural crises that culminated in the Great Depression of 1929-32. The position of the underprivileged did not improve during this period. The population increased from 10 million in 1897 to 19 million in 1947. Population density in 1927 was 420 to every square kilometre and this had risen to 845 by 1966. Annual per capita income has been estimated at £E12.4 in 1913 and £E8 in 1937. The increase in the man-to-land ratio naturally had a depressing effect on average income, and low incomes prevented Egyptian villagers from expanding. Agricultural land was too expensive to purchase. The peasants at the bottom of the scale continued to suffer debilitating diseases, poverty, and undernourishment.⁶⁸

These are the type of developments that affected Ghazālī's thinking profoundly, and led him to believe that religion does not prosper in suffocating conditions of

you have heard. Such is the case; those children can only complain their problems to the dark (night). Finally, they either make it to graves or their homes.

Oh night! Oh night! Oh night!
How cheap is human being!
Oh night! Oh night! Oh night!
My mother and father both

I am a stranger! Where shall I spend the night?
He is humiliated because of two piasters
I am a stranger! Where shall I spend the night?
Cry with tears of the eye.

⁶⁶Qaradāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh*. 12

⁶⁷Assāl, "al-Jawānib al-Nafsiyyah wa al-Khuluqiyyah," 28.

⁶⁸Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981* (London: George Allen&UnWin), 17-18.

poverty, diseases, and ignorance.⁶⁹ They also led him to give serious attention to the relationship of religious progress and the environment, (i.e.,) the reciprocal relationship between economic improvement and *da'wah*. Ghazālī's response to a peasant, who on his death bed, pleaded with him for verses from the Qur'ān that might cure him of his illness, is an example in case; Ghazālī wrote: "I shook my head while my heart was bleeding". Ghazālī goes on to say that wicked people had consumed the farmers' harvest and those of his grandparents, and caused him this acute sickness. For Ghazālī, religion cannot prevent such conditions with amulets (*tamā'im*)⁷⁰ and spiritual healing; this would be like prescribing medications for the peasant's empty stomachs.⁷¹

b. Religious Learning:

A review of Ghazālī's educational career will not only acquaint us with his academic development, but also shed light on his intellectual preferences, his perspective on learning, his view about the ideal religious learning, and more importantly, his understanding of the relationship of education to *da'wah*.

Ghazālī's education took him from the *kuttāb*, to the Alexandria Religious

⁶⁹Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa-'Awḍā'unā al-'Iqtisādiyyah (Islam and our Economic Conditions)* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), 62.

⁷⁰Muslims have used amulets (*ruqā*, sing. *ruqya*) most often to cure spiritual or psychological conditions, including madness, spirit possession and the evil eye. The Qur'ān may be recited in the form of a spell (*du'ā*) or worn in written form (*ṭilasm*) on the person or placed in the home. The essential Qur'ānic justification for the use of the Qur'ān in amulets to transmit the divine blessing (*baraka*) of the text is its God-given characterization as "a healing and a mercy". The words of the Prophet Muḥammad as recorded in the ḥadīth have also been used as support for the practice. Those who employed amulets could cite a range of positive juristic opinions which argue that amulet use cannot be an act of unbelief (*kufr*), if the process brings benefit and the contents of the amulet are from the Qur'ān. Nevertheless, the use of amulets was surrounded by continual legal debate. See O'Connor, Kathleen Malone. "Amulets." *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 21 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=q3_SIM-00018>

⁷¹Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 52.

Institute and the University of Azhar. At the age of five, he enrolled in the local *kuttāb* to memorize the Qur'ān.⁷² By the age of ten, he had memorized the entire Qur'ān,⁷³ and learned the basic principles of mathematics and dictation.⁷⁴ J. Landau describes attendance at the *kuttāb* as being voluntary, with no precise age-limit: pupils enrolled at age four and five or above and in general studied for between two and five years. All pupils studied in the same room-there was seldom, if ever, a division into groups by age, and each pupil progressed at his own rate. Instruction was usually carried out from sunrise to sunset (or earlier) daily.⁷⁵

Kuttāb learning resulted ideally in the students' literal incorporation of the text of the Qur'ān, and accordingly the practice of its inculcation was ordered around the meaning and power of the words. The skills of reading and writing were always secondary to the acquisition of the skills of exactly reproducing the recited words of God through daily exposure to and repetition of sacred verses. A young boy could within the space of a few years gain the ability to repeat the text by himself.⁷⁶

Instructors frequently adopted the carrot and stick approach: beating was administered to the lazy and unruly.⁷⁷ Parents fully supported the instructor's disciplinary measures; it was said that the teacher's stick came from paradise.⁷⁸ Ghazālī vividly remembers his days in the *kuttāb*, and the punishment he received when he

⁷²Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 16.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 24.

⁷⁴Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 157-158.

⁷⁵See J. M. Landau, "kuttāb", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition*, Ed., C.E. Bosworth. E. van Donzel, B. Lewis, and Ch. Pellar 5 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 568.

⁷⁶Gregorrry Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, California, 1998), 37.

⁷⁷J. M. Landau, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 568.

⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 266.

erred. Frustration sometimes led to uncertainty, but as soon as the stick rose, Ghazālī paid attention and continued reading in order to escape the strike.⁷⁹ Ghazālī even remembers the verses and chapters of the Qur’ān for which his teacher rewarded him, released him, or beat him.⁸⁰

In 1927, at the age of ten, Ghazālī began attending the Alexandria Religious Institute, where he studied for a period of nine consecutive years.⁸¹ At the Institute, students received a monthly stipend of thirty piastres (*qirsh*) for food expenses, which was very helpful, particularly when his father’s bankruptcy forced him to return to his home village.⁸² Study at the Institute was carried out on a full-day basis from morning until late afternoon, and involved both religious and “secular” sciences. At the Institute, students used to wake up at dawn, review their lessons right after Morning Prayer, and prepare and explore their lessons before class time.⁸³

The study program was good yet not purely religious since “secular” sciences were also taught at an academic standard not inferior to that of the public school system. The only difference, however, was lack of instruction of foreign languages.⁸⁴ Ghazālī favoured certain academic subjects and textbooks, and preferred linguistics

⁷⁹Ghazālī, “Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt,” 157.

⁸⁰Ghazālī, *Jur’āt Jadīdah min al-Ḥaqq al-Murr* 4 (New Doses of the Bitter Truth), 218. Ghazālī for example remembered how he understood the following verses to mean a pigeon or crow attached to one’s neck. The verse states: “And every man’s augury have We fastened to his own neck, and We shall bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open.” Pickthall (Chapter 17:13), 252.

⁸¹Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 18.

⁸²Ghazālī, “Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt,” 160. Ghazālī writes: “My father was a pious person who guided me to memorize the Qur’ān. When I was ten, he sold all of his business to help me relocate to Alexandria and to enrol me in Azhar.” See Ghazālī, “al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī,” in *Min Maqālāt*, 3:164.

⁸³Ghazālī, *Jur’āt Jadīdah*, 5: 44.

⁸⁴Ghazālī, “Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt,” 160. Interestingly, the curriculum was developed by Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, a follower of Muhammad ‘Abduh. See Ghazālī, “Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt,” 160.

and Arabic literature. He particularly disliked *Nūr al-'Idāh Matn al-Qaddūrī*,⁸⁵ *Majma' al-'Anhur 'alā Multaqā al-'Abhur*,⁸⁶ and was uncomfortable with Nasafī and Abū Sa'ūd.⁸⁷ In the meanwhile, Ghazālī benefited from his father's bookstore.⁸⁸ His father encouraged him to read but regretfully discovered that Ghazālī preferred foreign novels over religious books. He for example, favoured *'Alf layla wa-laylah* (A Thousand Nights and a Night)⁸⁹ and ignored the religious materials his father selected for him,⁹⁰ including *Daqā'iq al-'Akhbār fī Dhikr al-Jannah wa al-Nār*,⁹¹ *al-Rawḍ al-Fā'iq fī al-Wa'z wa al-Raqā'iq*,⁹² *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*,⁹³ *Qīṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'*, *al-Khamrah al-'Ilāhiyyah*, and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*.⁹⁴ One of his reasons, though he only mentions this in retrospect, was that these works were full of fabricated and weak ḥadīth, and myths.⁹⁵

In the field of spirituality and ethics, Ghazālī was influenced by Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, 'Aṭā'uAllāh al-'Iskandarī.⁹⁶ During

⁸⁵*Nūr al-'Idāh Matn al-Qaddūrī* is a ḥanafī legal manual written by Ḥasan Shurunbulālī (Delhi: Kutubkhānah'i Rashīdiyyah, 198?). *Majma' al-'Anhur 'alā Multaqā al-'Abhur* was written by Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Shaykhzādah, 2 vols (S.I: Maṭba'ah al-'Uthmāniyyah).

⁸⁶The *Majma' al-'Anhur* is an illustration of *Multaqā al-'Abhur* and a concise legal manual written by the ḥanafī scholar 'Abd Raḥmān Muhammad bin Sulaymān.

⁸⁷Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 19. *Madārik al-Tanzīl wa-Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl* or *Tafsīr al-Nasafī* by Nasafī 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad (701/d. 1301) (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1995). *'Irshād al-'Aql al-Salīm 'ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm* or as known *Tafsīr 'Abū Sa'ūd*.

⁸⁸Ghazālī's father purchased a bookstore on Karmūz Street in Alexandria. There, he was selling stationery, foreign novels, stories, and religious books. See Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 158.

⁸⁹Qalamāwī, *'Alf Laylah wa-Laylah* (The Book of the Thousand Night and One Night), 1969.

⁹⁰Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 159.

⁹¹*Daqā'iq al-'Akhbār fī Dhikr al-Jannah wa al-Nār* was written by 'Abd al-Raḥīm bin Aḥmad al-Qaḍī (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1984). This work contains spiritual preaching and guidance, discussion on paradise, hellfire, death, the questioning of the Angels in the grave.

⁹²This work, in fifty-six chapters (*majlīs*), is by the mystic Shu'ayb bin Sa'ad al-Ḥarīfīsh. It discusses spiritual sermons, 'Aḥādiths, poems, stories of ṣūfī masters ('awliyā'), and merits of pious people.

⁹³Nasr 'Ibrāhīm Samarqandī, *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn* (Egypt: 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥanafī, 1953-1954).

⁹⁴Muḥyī al-Dīn bin 'Arabī (1165-1240), *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, ed., 'Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Cairo: al-Ha'ya al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1072).

⁹⁵Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 159.

⁹⁶Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, Tāj al-Dīn b. 'Aṭā' Allāh al-'Iskandarī al-Shādhilī, Arab mystic, follower of the doctrines of the mystic al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258) and a disciple of the mystic Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-'Anṣārī al-

this period at least, Ghazālī was not attracted much to legal studies,⁹⁷ and his literary preferences became geared more to psychology, sociology, education, philosophy, literature,⁹⁸ beliefs, and religious sects, and it was in light of this inter-disciplinary inclination that he pursued the specialty of *da'wah*.⁹⁹

In 1937, Ghazālī enrolled in the Faculty of Theology of Azhar.¹⁰⁰ After four years of study, he obtained his Licentiate (*Ālamiyah*), and pursued a two-year Master's Degree in *Da'wah* and *Irshād* (*Da'wah* and Religious Guidance).¹⁰¹ During his time at the Faculty, Ghazālī also worked as an Imām (religious cleric).¹⁰² Throughout this period of learning, Ghazālī was influenced by 'Abd al-'Azīm Zarqānī, the author of *Manāhil al-'Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Other influential teachers in the field of education were Ibrāhīm Gharbāwī and 'Abd al-'Azīz Bilāl, both of whom impressed him with their spirituality.¹⁰³ Ghazālī also commends Dirāz who greatly influenced his thematic commentaries on the Qur'ān. Ghazālī had little or nothing to say about his other teachers.

Mursī (d. 686/1287). He wrote a biographical work on the life and teachings of both mystics, entitled *Laṭā'if al-minan fī manāqib al-Shaykh Abū al-'Abbās wa-Shaykhihi Abū al-Ḥasan*. Originally from Alexandria, Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh lived in Cairo and died there on 16 Jumādā II 709/21 November 1309 in the *madrasa* al-Manṣūriyya. Brockelmann lists twenty works by Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, principally on mysticism and asceticism, of which six are in print and the rest in manuscript. By far the most celebrated of his works is a collection of maxims of a distinct beauty of expression, *al-Hikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah*, with numerous commentaries down to modern times, among them *Ghayth al-mawāhib al-'aliyyah* by the Spanish mystic Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī (d. 796/1394). He is also said to have written in the fields of Qur'ānic exegesis, traditions, grammar and the methodology of law. Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh was one of the foremost adversaries of the renowned Ḥanbalī jurisconsult and theologian, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328). See Makdisi, G. "Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, Tādj al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl (and Abū al-'Abbās, see Ibn Farḥūn, Dībāj, Cairo 1351, 70) Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Aṭā' Allāh al-'Iskandarī al-Shādhilī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-3092>

⁹⁷Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:154.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 163.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁰⁰Shalabī, *Al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 24.

¹⁰¹Muhammad Majdhūb, "Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī al-Saqqā," 18. Also see 'Imāra, *al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī*, 13.

¹⁰²Shalabī, *Al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 24.

¹⁰³Alā' M. Ghazālī, "Al-Sīrah al-Shakhṣiyyah li al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī," 186-187.

Some of his other teachers included 'Amīn Khūlī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām, Muḥammad Bahī, Muhammad Musā, Muhammad 'Awdan,¹⁰⁴ Muḥammad Rayyān,¹⁰⁵ 'Abd Allah Dirāz, Muhammad 'Abū Zahra,¹⁰⁶ Muhammad Ghamrāwī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb Khallāf, Muḥammad Ḥussayn, Muhammad Madhī,¹⁰⁷ and Maḥmūd Shaltūt.¹⁰⁸ Not all of these names seem to have left a mark on Ghazālī's imagination. Ghazālī, in fact, yearned for caring teachers who understood the problems of their students. Students often disliked their teachers, and their relations with their teachers were formal.¹⁰⁹ This was in contrast to the experience of the students of Ṭaha Ḥusayn,¹¹⁰ who set the example of an ideal teacher. Ṭaha Ḥusayn used to invite his students in the Faculty of Literature (*Kulliyat al-Ādāb*) to tea parties, and was concerned about his students' welfare even after graduation.¹¹¹

Ghazālī draws on his education in the discussion of *da'wah*, especially when addressing the problem of religious learning of *dā'īs*. On the one hand, this shows his concern for the improvement of learning as a prerequisite in modern reform. On the

¹⁰⁴Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakirāt Ghazālī," 167-168.

¹⁰⁵Majdhūb, "Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī al-Saqqā," 19.

¹⁰⁶Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 37. Dirāz's book *al-Naba' al-'Aẓīm* (The Great Tidings) influenced Ghazālī's style of thematic commentary of the Qur'ān. See Ghazālī, "Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt," 228.

¹⁰⁷Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 41.

¹⁰⁸Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī Kamā 'Araftuh*, 29. Shaykh Shaltūt (1893-1963) was a scholar, and a reformist rector of Azhar under 'Abdel Naṣṣer. He wanted to combine the modern sciences with traditional Islamic studies and called for opening the gate of 'ijtihād. He served as a rector of Azhar from 1958 until his death. He authored twenty-six printed works. He spear-headed Azhar's modernization, but failed to ensure its independence from the Egyptian government. One of his innovations is *Majma' al-Buḥūth al-'Islāmiyyah* (The Islamic Research Center). See "Shaltūt, Shaykh Maḥmūd," *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, Ed., Arthur Goldschmidt Jr. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 188.

¹⁰⁹Ghazālī, "Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt," 168.

¹¹⁰Ṭaha Ḥusayn (1889-1973) was a writer, educational administrator, and minister, often called the Dean of Arabic Letters and Qāhir al-Ẓalām (Conqueror of Darkness). In Azhar, he came under the influence of Muhammad 'Abduh and his circle of modernists. He went to France in 1915 and earned a doctorat d'état at the Sorbonne in 1919. He published *fi al-'Adab al-Jāhilī* [On Pre-Islamic Literature], *Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfah fi Miṣr* [The future of Education in Egypt]. See "Ḥusayn Dr. Ṭaha," *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, 81.

¹¹¹Ghazālī, "Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt," 168.

other, it demonstrates the vital connection between religious learning and *da'wah*, or between effective education and religious progress in broad terms. Ghazālī provides examples from his own learning experience in the *kuttāb*, the University of Azhar, and the instructional practices prevailing in the Muslim world.

Ghazālī begins by evaluating reading classes during his schooling as insignificant.¹¹² In fact he says he needed to rid himself of the effects of this course of study. This, he says, is due to the fact that the Islamic traditional literature was mostly beneficial to the period in which it first emerged, and for spiritual and economic problems that have passed. For him, Muslims recognize the pressing need to understand Islam today in a way that meets their present emotional (*nafsi*) needs.¹¹³ Furthermore, unbalanced reading only yields distorted thought, whereas the extensive study of a discipline in isolation from related disciplines does not produce a healthy culture either.¹¹⁴ Religious commentaries and illustrations are abundant, yet religious scholarship is not made easy and digestible. The situation is such that contemporary Islamic literature embraces authentic knowledge, but poor delivery and style make the literature ambiguous. In fact, many of the religious writings used by the public, including those issued by Azhar, are poor both in content and style, and have caused Muslim culture great disadvantages.¹¹⁵

Ghazālī decries in particular the problem of Islamic learning, which has become

¹¹²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam?* (Understanding Islam) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), 214.

¹¹³Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā* (This is our Religion), (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1999), 6.

¹¹⁴Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur al-'Arab wa al-Muslimīn* (The Causes of Backwardness of Arabs and Muslims) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), 51.

¹¹⁵Ghazālī, "Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt," 168-169.

the preserve of mediocre students who fail in areas requiring excellence.¹¹⁶ The specialty of *da'wah*, for instance, only attracts the least qualified students.¹¹⁷ The conditions of students in the program of *Da'wah* was “stressful,” and made it impossible for them to develop a successful *da'wah*.¹¹⁸ In his work *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq* (Signposts of the Truth), Ghazālī draws on a real-life example he repeatedly encountered:

The son of a wealthy man suffers from an eye infection. Consequently the father decides to enrol him in Azhar soon after he memorizes the Qur'ān. The child starts reciting and memorizing the Qur'ān under the guidance of a skilful blind teacher. Later, and surprisingly, the child regains his sight and gets well. The father panics! Soon the blind teacher loses his job, and the father enrolls his child again in non-religious school.¹¹⁹

This is, however, understandable in view of the fact that from the late nineteenth century onward, privileged families deserted Azhar for state or private schools and better career opportunities. A survey of senior students at Azhar and Cairo universities in 1962 shows that Azharis were generally poorer, more provincial, more rural, and from less educated families than their Cairo University counterparts.¹²⁰ Unfortunately, Ghazālī did not elaborate on the conditions of those incompetent students, why they

¹¹⁶Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Ḥālī* (Islamic *Da'wah* in Modern Century), (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2000), 62.

¹¹⁷Ghazālī, *Kifāh Dīn* (A Struggle of a Religion), 193.

¹¹⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah: Dirāsah fī al-Da'wah wa al-Du'āt* (In the Company of God: A Study of *Da'wah* and *Dā'īs*) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 9.

¹¹⁹Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq fī Kifāhinā al-'Islāmī al-Ḥadīth* (Signposts in our Modern Islamic Struggle), 195-196. *Al-naṭīha wa al-mutaradiyyah* are made in reference to Chapter Five in the Quran. The Quran states: “Forbidden unto you (for food) are carrion and blood and swine flesh, and that which has been dedicated unto any other than Allah, and the strangled, and the dead through beating, and the dead through falling from a height, and that which has been killed by (the goring of) horns, and the devoured of wild beasts, saving that which ye make lawful (by the death-stroke), and that which has been immolated unto idols. And (forbidden is it) that you swear by the divining arrows. This is an abomination. This day are those who disbelieve in despair of (ever harming) your religion; so fear them not, fear Me! This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam. Whoso is forced by hunger, not by will, to sin: (for him) lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” Pickthall (Chapter 5:3), 94.

¹²⁰Donald Malcolm Reid, “Azhar,” *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, 1: 170.

were “impaired,” and what differences there were with students from state or private schools. Nor did he share his perspective on excellent students nor any of his experiences in non-religious schools. One can only suspect that his expectations from the contributions of religious students were higher, to say the least, in view of the broad and complex reform Ghazālī discussed extensively, along the personal, moral, and educational requirements.

Nevertheless, Ghazālī gives special attention to the position of the *kuttāb* in religious learning probably because of his growing interest in developing a methodology of understanding the Qur’ān as shown in his works *How to Approach the Qur’ān?* or *The Five Themes of the Glorious Qur’ān*, or his critique of religious literalism which preserves the letter at the cost of the spirit. In his discussion of the *kuttāb*’s contribution to the moral and intellectual development of Muslim children, Ghazālī questions the usefulness of its teaching methods, yet does not provide a clear explanation of its disadvantages. He considers the *kuttāb* a bright episode in Muslim history and civilization.¹²¹ Yet, on the other, he argues that the *kuttāb* is boring because of the large number of students, between the age of six and sixteen, all in one single hall, either reading or writing.¹²² For him, the *kuttāb* suppresses the actual activity of children, restrains their fun, and leaves them with emotional problems.¹²³ Besides, the use of the stick is damaging because children’s education requires compassion,

¹²¹Ghazālī, *‘Ilal wa-‘Adwiyah* (Diseases and Cures) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 196.

¹²²Ghazālī, “Muqtatafāt min Mudhakkirāt,” 157.

¹²³Ghazālī, *Ta’ammulāt fī-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt* (Thoughts about Religion and Life) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2005), 113.

patience, tolerance, and strictness without cruelty.¹²⁴

Ghazālī believes that even despite the good intention, some kuttāb have caused damages to the Qur’ān because they have produced “recording tapes” instead of role models.¹²⁵ Students grow with a perfect memory of the letters of the Qur’ān yet are ignorant of its spirit, meanings, and teachings.¹²⁶ To substantiate his view, Ghazālī draws on his personal experience where the method of memorizing the words of the Qur’ān caused him to overlook many meanings even up to an older age. Ghazālī rids himself later from this habit that he inherited through memorization.¹²⁷

According to Ghazālī, television programs for children exclude the use of the mind, and only seek to satisfy their imaginations. This causes Ghazālī to think that modern education excludes reason and just satisfies imagination, and as such why not then be simply satisfied with memorizing the words? Ghazālī is still not satisfied, he says: “what is the point of memorizing the words and producing parrots to the society.”¹²⁸ His major concern is that the Qur’ān be implemented in all spheres of life. Ghazālī points out that people in the Maghreb were perfect memorizers of the letters of the Qur’ān, Egyptians were superb reciters, and Turks were excellent writers, but the Qur’ān is not implemented at the personal, social, and state levels. So how is the Qur’ān employed in purifying and cultivating the souls, disseminating kindness and

¹²⁴Ghazālī, *Nazarāt fī al-Qur’ān* (Thoughts about the Quran) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2005), 5-6.

¹²⁵Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata’āmal Ma’a al-Qur’ān?* (How to Approach the Qur’ān?) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2005), 31.

¹²⁶Ghazālī, *Ta’ammulāt*, 113.

¹²⁷Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata’āmal ma’a al-Qur’ān?* 31.

¹²⁸Ibid.

cooperation, or establishing justice and truth in the affairs of the state?¹²⁹

Still, Ghazālī does not find a way where students memorize parts of the Qur’ān yet understand its meanings, and despite his discomfort with those “recording tapes,” he supports the tradition of Qur’ān transmission to continue. In fact, despite technological advance, the tradition of memorization is still needed because it teaches children the words and style of the Qur’ān, enhances their Arabic language, preserves the oral authenticity of the Qur’ān (*al-tawātur bi al-mushāfaha*), and helps recall verses in Muslim prayers. And with no immediate solution to the problem of learning in the *kuttāb*, Ghazālī only exhorts experts in education and child psychology to discuss and review this problem.¹³⁰

As a result, we are left with no solution that integrates the memorization with the understanding of the Qur’ān in the *kuttāb*. For the blending of memorization and understanding to have happened, the learning methodology in the *kuttāb*, primarily concerned with the oral tradition of learning, would have changed drastically. Having said that, Ghazālī apparently applies to the post-*kuttāb* stage where learners grew up as “recording tapes” of the letters and words with no attention to the understanding of the verses. That said, Ghazālī, like many others, learned in the *kuttāb*, yet appears to have escaped the criticism of being a mere “recording tape”.

At a broader scale, religious learning, however, had fallen to its lowest point by

¹²⁹Ghazālī, *Ḥuqūq al-’Insān bayna Ta’ālīm al-’Islam wa-’l’lān Hay’at al-’Umam* (Human Rights between the Teachings of Islam and the Declaration of the United Nation) (Al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2004), 5.

¹³⁰Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata’āmal ma ‘a al-Qur’ān?* 31, 34.

his own day.¹³¹ It neither served Islam nor did it attract competent students.¹³² Ghazālī raises the following problems in religious learning: a) lack of emotional and intellectual intelligence on the part of religious scholars,¹³³ b) early academic specialization before acquiring a necessary knowledge base in human and scientific subjects, c) poor understanding of Islamic fundamentals, and d) excessive attention to trivial information.¹³⁴ According to Ghazālī, for about thirty years, Azhar has been academically and pedagogically in decline. “Nomadic” jurisprudence and childish interpretations of beliefs and laws had become widespread.¹³⁵ Crecelius states that despite continuing reform, the influence of Azhar, its moral leadership, its scholarship, its position at the center of the nation’s life, were continuing to erode at a rapid pace.¹³⁶ When such is the case, reform is unavoidable; this should happen through the incorporation of subjects like creeds, ethics, morals, philosophy, religious sects, and human and social sciences.¹³⁷ Besides, for Azhar to resist atheism, its teaching methodology should embrace the study of divinely appointed universal laws (*sunan Allāh fī al-’āfāq*) as well, the critique of modern schools of thought, and should also include the study of psychology, philosophy, education, and classical and modern

¹³¹Ghazālī, *al-Da’wah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil Qarnahā al-Khāmis (Islamic Da’wah in the Fifteenth Century)*, (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1990), 139.

¹³²Ghazālī, *Kifāh Dīn (A Struggle of a Religion)*, 190. According to Ghazālī, some of the Azhar’s graduates teach Arabic language in public schools yet provide only a little teaching or contribution about the religion of Islam. Ibid.

¹³³Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam?* 28.

¹³⁴Ibid., 32.

¹³⁵Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bayna ’Ahl al-Fiqh wa-’Ahl al-Ḥadīth (The Sunnah of the Prophet between the Jurists and the Muhaddiths)* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2001), 15. Ghazālī draws on legal rulings concerning the use of water, which is taught to the public as if they were living in the desert. For Ghazālī, there are substantial changes which should be taken into account in teaching those legal rulings, not only about cleanliness, but also about various other transactions. See Ghazālī, “Qīṣṣat Hayāt,” 164.

¹³⁶See Daniel Neil Crecelius, “The ‘Ulama and the State in Modern Egypt” (Ph.D. diss., University of Princeton: Department of Politics and Oriental Studies, 1967), 2.

¹³⁷Ibid., 193.

history.¹³⁸

To substantiate his contention as to the ineffective teaching methods of Islamic studies, Ghazālī draws on the approach through which, over a very long period of time, he had learned the legal aspects of prayer, of which he memorized seventeen legal obligations, over fifty desirable acts, as well as some other requirements and conditions. Yet he was not capable to grasp the spirit of prayer or understand the glory to fill his heart with divine connection.¹³⁹ Similarly, after fifteen years of study at Azhar, he did not learn much about modern Islam in Southeast Asia nor about North or West Africa.¹⁴⁰ Both learning of Islamic legal theory and Sunnah studies were poorly taught, presumably at the Alexandria Institute or Azhar. The science of ḥadīth was taught as rules and maxims in a sterile and lifeless way, without any demonstration of their application.¹⁴¹

Again, Ghazālī is not clear as to whether the problem was related to curriculum, teachers, resources, or environment. On the one hand, the curriculum we are told was not poor. In fact the curriculum of the Faculty of Theology was great, yet only needed competent teachers to produce competent *dā'īs*. On the other hand, Ghazālī argues that introducing the religion of Islam through the teaching methods of the sixth or seventh century of the Hijra is not understandable, and only shows an acute crisis in talents and wills.¹⁴² Ghazālī for example states that Azhar was prosperous during his tenure,

¹³⁸Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-Manāhij al-'Ishtirākiyyah (Islam and the Socialist Systems)* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1960), 215.

¹³⁹Ghazālī, *al-Jānib al-'Āṭifi min al-'Islām*, 15.

¹⁴⁰Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 198.

¹⁴¹Ghazālī, "Qisṣat Ḥayāt," 175.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, 166-175.

particularly during the time of Muṣṭafā Marāghī¹⁴³ and Aḥmadī Zawāhirī (1878-1944).¹⁴⁴ This was probably because of the introduction of subjects like Nature, Chemistry, Biology, Algebra, Mathematics, and Geometry, along with a broad examination of Islamic, regional, and global history and geography.

Ghazālī's discussion of poor religious pedagogy, however, reflects genuine interest in modernization of religious education through inculcating contemporary disciplines. Graduates of Islamic studies should not only acquire traditional knowledge but also understand modern sciences around them, which will help them introduce Islam through a modern perspective, and advance the cause of *da'wah* in parallel with scientific advances. The modernization of learning, however, is geared to a broader spectrum of reform where traditional knowledge amends the existing dichotomies of religion and science, worldly life and the Hereafter, and body and soul.

Ghazālī's approach to learning, however, depends on a perspective of social functionality of *da'wah*, which requires effectiveness and excellence in a variety of disciplines and fields. Learning is assessed in terms of improving public life, assisting

¹⁴³Muṣṭafā Marāghī (1881-1945) was an Islamic scholar, reformer, and rector of Azhar. He was educated in Azhar and became a disciple of 'Abduh. He played a pivotal role in the 1926 Cairo Caliphate Congress, in which the delegates discuss restoring the caliphal office that has just been abolished by Atatürk. He was the rector of Azhar in 1928-1929 and from 1935 until his death. His reforms included the introduction of modern sciences and foreign languages into the curriculum of Azhar. An opponent of taqlīd ([blindly] following ancient Muslim customs), he called for the renewed exercise of 'ijtihād and for reconciliation among the various madhhabs and sects of Islam. Marāghī wrote several books about Qur'ānic interpretation. See "al-Marāghī, Shaykh [Muhammad] Muṣṭafā," *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, Ed. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 123.

¹⁴⁴Shaykh Muhammad al-'Aḥmadī al-Zawāhirī was the rector of Azhar. He studied with Muhammad 'Abduh and others. He took over from his father the leadership of the Aḥmadi Mosque in Tanta and then moved to Asyūt to be the Shaykh of its Institute for a while. As he strengthened his ties with King Fu'ād, he replaced Marāghī as rector of Azhar in 1929. He served until 1935, when he resigned due to ill health. While he was a rector, the magazine Nūr al-Islam was launched and Azhar adopted some of the organizations of a modern university. An orator, Zawāhirī had leanings toward the Shādhilī ṣūfī order. His books include one on how to organize instruction and a memoir. See "al-Zawāhirī, Shaykh Muhammad al-'Aḥmadī," *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, 237.

people to embody the Islamic values in their daily lives, and in enhancing smooth social change. For Ghazālī, ideal learning is that which enables the Muslim nation to proceed gradually according to a spiritual and practical scheme, and to spread harmony throughout cities and villages, and among the young and the elderly.¹⁴⁵

c. An Exploration into the Personality of Ghazālī:

Has Ghazālī's personality had any influence on his critical evaluation of *da'wah*? Was it responsible for his language, tone and style, his seeming inclination to "pessimistic" or negative views about the future of Islam, his approach to argumentation? Attention to his personal traits explores Ghazālī's genuine feelings towards issues that are crucial to *da'wah* including freedom, justice, openness and transparency, cooperation, compassion, and tolerance. Such an examination will help us understand some of the concepts underlying his perspective of *da'wah*, such as his personal preferences, motives of criticism, and even his juristic preferences or interest-based approach to *da'wah*. This can be accomplished by looking at Ghazālī's autobiographical notes and descriptions of his supporters and opponents.

At the 1996 conference on Ghazālī's intellectual contribution, he was described as a person of courage, pride, humbleness and devotion. The key to his personality involved confidence, commitment to the truth, advocacy of justice and equality, and struggle for freedom from exploitation and humility.¹⁴⁶ Throughout his discussion of the character of the ideal *dā'ī*, Ghazālī described his own personal characteristics as

¹⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥḥam al-Islam?* 40.

¹⁴⁶For example, See 'Assāl, "al-Khaṣā'ish al-Nafsiyyah wa al-Khuluqiyyah," 27.

follows:

I cannot stand rigidity. I would have ultimately failed had I tried to act rigid. I rather prefer to behave according to my personal dispositions in the course of either adopting things or leaving them. I care less about formal traditions -in this regard- where it is commonly known that silence is the outstanding character of a religious scholar. I am inclined to fun, and I search for fun in everything around. I like to live happily and be humorous, even if people expect me to show sorrow so that they remember the next life and see in my appearance a warning of hellfire. I am also inclined to be popular in my actions. Had I been a king, I would have certainly joined the ranks of free brotherhood with people around the world.¹⁴⁷

Ghazālī considers a caring attitude to be particularly critical to human progress, and dislikes rudeness and aggressiveness, and cold-hearted people. In his eyes, were he to encounter rude people in stores or public service, he would never have gone to them. The worst, however, is when those people act as religious leaders, preachers, or *dā'īs*; they then represent a serious concern.¹⁴⁸ Ghazālī loves forbearance and patience, yet on some occasions loses control especially when ignorant people address public matters, issue damaging statements, or engage in futile controversies.¹⁴⁹ Ghazālī is straightforward; an evident trait in his critical comments.¹⁵⁰

Ghazālī downplays customary and cultural conventions in his approach to various problems. He insists that he interacts positively with true emotions, yet ignores them as soon as they exceed the boundaries of the intellect.¹⁵¹ He for example remembers his early life, when in spite of financial constraints; he had strongly desired

¹⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 3.

¹⁴⁸Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr* (The Bitter Truth) (al-Jīzah: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2004), 19.

¹⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt al-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 2:111.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 2:163. Ghazālī for instance describes a high-ranking university officer in the Sharī'a Faculty as "a closed up mind", who warned Ghazālī against using the Old Testament as a teaching material, and who accordingly cancelled the course. Ibid, 163.

¹⁵¹Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah min al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 5:42. Also see 'Imāra, *al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī*, 17.

to perform pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). His actual motivation then was the hope that his supplications would be answered. Only later did he realize that He who listens to his prayers in Mecca also listens to them in Egypt.¹⁵²

Qaraḍāwī described Ghazālī as a lover of and advocate for freedom, a foe of tyranny of any kind, especially when dressed up in religious form.¹⁵³ Ghazālī rejected as inhumane any act that denies even one atom of freedom to the intellect or consciousness.¹⁵⁴ It was this freedom that led him to freely criticize religious formalities and various manifestations of religious and socio-cultural life. Ghazālī's feelings about the etiquette of a young Muslim scholar expected to observe the strictest code of religious authority addresses the point; Ghazālī writes,

My appearance, when I was young, must have been funny! That is why, and for a long time, I continued to dislike the traditional uniform. I became Shaykh Muhammad before the age of puberty! I loved playing but how could a Shaykh play? Besides, I was a laughing person, something that caused me great deal of trouble and blame.¹⁵⁵

This desire for fun, however, did not last. Ghazālī underwent changes caused by certain difficult living conditions. He admits that days might have changed him, and that the difficult times taught him lessons. They forced him, the laughing person, to dive into seas of stress, and to watch his step as though he were avoiding traps.¹⁵⁶

On another level, Ghazālī draws our attention to the crucial role of the innate human nature (*fiṭrah*) in the correctness of attitudes and actions. He is keen about it

¹⁵² Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt*, 3.

¹⁵³ Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh*, 202.

¹⁵⁴ Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣḥaf*, 4.

¹⁵⁵ Ghazālī, "Muqtatafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 159.

¹⁵⁶ Qaraḍāwī, "Ghazālī Rajul Da'wah," 204.

and prefers to act upon its judgment. He, nonetheless, dislikes artificiality and drama.¹⁵⁷ Ghazālī also views the intellect as the building foundation of religion. This is because intellectual proofs have overwhelming weight, and it is through the intellect that we recognize God, identify the verities of revelation, and realize the religious accountability in the Hereafter.¹⁵⁸

Ghazālī's intellectual freedom led him to raise numerous critical questions about Muslim life and Islamic disciplines including belief, jurisprudence, and history. Ghazālī shares with the reader his own religious search, including a period of religious doubt and confusion during which he questioned the very fundamentals of the Islamic beliefs and rituals.¹⁵⁹ Ghazālī describes his journey of faith-how he first inherited the religion of Islam, how he later reflected on that inheritance, and began searching for the secrets of higher and lower existence.¹⁶⁰ Having learned the fundamentals of the religion from his parents, the time came when he discharged himself of all beliefs to leave the final judgment to the authority of the intellect.¹⁶¹ This state of religious doubt led him to set every belief aside and left the choice up to the intellect to take them up again or abandon them.¹⁶² In the process, Ghazālī closely observed the effects of ideas and ideologies, compared and chose positions and arguments, welcomed doubts and discussed them calmly.¹⁶³ Ghazālī wrote:

“I inherited the religion from my parents in the same way I inherited language,

¹⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Jur'at Jadidah*, 5:130.

¹⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Ṣayḥat Tahdhīr min Du'āt al-Taṣṣīr* (A Warning Call against Christian Missionaries) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, Ed. 1, 2000), 33.

¹⁵⁹Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-Islām?* 213.

¹⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Ṣayḥat Tahdhīr*, 29.

¹⁶¹Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 14.

¹⁶²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-Islām?* 15.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, 29.

(i.e.,) through reception and teaching devoid of a profound contemplation. When I grew up, however, I experienced a state of doubts that wiped out all my knowledge, and led me to contest those inherited beliefs, virtues, and traditions. I do not remember, however, how long that lasted.”¹⁶⁴

As soon as Ghazālī moves from this state of doubt to rational affirmation, he came to realize that his recovery was made possible with the aid of his mastery of the Arabic language, the critical study of the Qur’ān, and other sources.¹⁶⁵ Following this journey, however, Ghazālī concluded that God is One, True, Merciful, not to let his servants go astray, and that He has sent Messengers as teachers and *dā’īs*. Throughout his struggle, however, Ghazālī relied upon the intellect, and examined various religions to choose that which glorifies God and illustrates His divine names and attributes most. This explains his statement that he was first a religious follower who, based on research, examination, and comparison, became a convinced Muslim.¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, Ghazālī’s account immediately raises the issue of similarity with the narrative of Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī as described in his *Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error).¹⁶⁷ This leads us to question the account of Muhammad Ghazālī, and whether was it an attempt of building up scholarly merit or establishing a spiritual bond with Abu Ḥāmid. We soon discover that Muhammad Ghazālī’s

¹⁶⁴Ghazālī, *Ṣayḥat Taḥdhīr*, 213. Ghazālī does not identify what sources he examined in his journey of faith.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶⁷The *Munqidh* is Ghazālī’s narrative of himself, a description of freeing himself from taqlīd, the domination of doubt, and his healing through Sufism. The *Munqidh* does not contain any of Ghazālī’s philosophy. His philosophical treatises are rather found in his *Tahāfut*, *Maqāṣid*, *’Ihyā*, and *Mizān al-’Amal*. Ghazālī wrote the *Munqidh* after seclusion (*’uzlah*) over a period of ten years in which he adopted the ways of the Ṣūfis. The starting point of his doubt was freeing himself from taqlīd in faith in search for certain knowledge (*’ilm yaqīnī*). The *Munqidh* raised the crucial role of intuitive knowledge (*ma’rifah ḥadsīyyah*) which is the key to knowledge, and without which, certainty (*yaqīn*) won’t be able to draw on the intellect. The process of inquiry according to Ghazālī must trust the intellectual necessity (*ḍarūrah ’aqliyyah*). See Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl wa al-Mūṣil ’ilā dhī al-’Izzah wa al-Jalāl*, Ed., Jamāl Ṣalība and Kāmil ’Ayyād, (Damascus: Maṭba’at Jāmi’at Dimashq, 1960). 20-24

examination of numerous religious issues, whether theological or juristic, follows the same patterns in his works, eventually causing great deal of trouble particularly with 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth.¹⁶⁸ Ghazālī's journey of faith, nonetheless, provides a strong testimony to his independent character and open mind in dealing with one of the most challenging yet sensitive theological questions; Ghazālī asks, "Why can't I be wrong while others are right?"¹⁶⁹ A question hardly ever asked by a "traditional" scholar as far as theological persuasions are concerned. Such questions only placed him at an independent position within Islamic orthodoxy and within the scholarly community.¹⁷⁰

In addition to the above qualities and characteristics, it is worthwhile examining Ghazālī's negative and often harsh language, and finding out any factor in his early life that might have led him to a problem of style, and therefore a problem of the reception of his works. We find that Ghazālī grew up in an ordinary rural community and retained wonderful memories about his family.¹⁷¹ Ghazālī states that his childhood was ordinary having nothing exceptionally unusual, and that he loved reading and in all conditions.¹⁷² The community, despite its difficult economic situation, does not seem to have caused him any major problem. His intellectual journey, whether in the kuttāb or Azhar, provides no justification for his harsh or negative reactions towards traditional religious pedagogy. What appears to have drastically affected him the most in the analysis of *da'wah* relates to other major events, including

¹⁶⁸Gharīb, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 222-226. Gharīb draws an analogy between the two Ghazālīs, the thinker and the philosopher, around issues of doubt and certainty, position of the intellect, and seclusion. Ibid., 222-226.

¹⁶⁹Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-'Islām?* 214.

¹⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥda al-Thaqāfiyya bayna al-Muslimīn* (The Constitution of Cultural Unity between Muslims) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1998), 235.

¹⁷¹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālat*, 3: 164; Also see *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: Ḥayātuh*, 17.

¹⁷²Ghazālī, "Al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī bi-Qalamih," *Min Maqālat al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī*, 3:164.

the elimination of the Ottoman Caliphate, the colonial exploitation of the Muslim world, the occupation of Palestine, and the stagnant conditions affecting the Muslim world.

Ghazālī, nonetheless, believes there is a difference between harshness and emotional reaction.¹⁷³ Toughness may be close to rudeness where he feels he is soft-hearted, or close to arrogance where he claims he would never persist on error. Ghazālī acknowledges he is emotional because he dislikes cold treatment of ideas and people, and because abstract belief will only be dynamic when steered with emotions.¹⁷⁴ Ghazālī apologizes to his readers; however, for the bitterness and anger found in the lessons he draws from history, and for the harshness detected in his discussion of failures of Muslims.¹⁷⁵ He explains that had his works been edited, his words would have been softer.¹⁷⁶ His apologies, however, fail to justify the generally harsh or demeaning language found in most of his works. Not only his writings, his lectures too share similar characteristics.

Sometime, Ghazālī's statements appear to be pessimistic, leaving no room for hope. His description of the century during which he was born of being the worst as far as the religion of Islam is concerned is an example.¹⁷⁷ For him, if events continue to

¹⁷³Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 124-125. The tendency to give attention to the dark sides of things more than their bright aspects is present in many of Ghazālī's statements. See Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt*, 132. Ghazālī for instance tells us how he completely leaves out a given matter when he is unable to address it as a whole, and how he largely focuses on deficiencies in any matter rather than its good side. See Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt*, 132.

¹⁷⁴Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, 124-125.

¹⁷⁵Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 207.

¹⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:110. Gharīb does not excuse Ghazālī for repetitions, lack of editing, or missing proper citations. See Gharīb, *Shaykh Muḥammad Ghazālī: Ḥayātuh*, 63-64.

¹⁷⁷Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 156.

develop at the same pace, darkness will encompass everything,¹⁷⁸ or that the conditions of Muslims will be even more distressful in the future, with new catastrophes that may befall upon Muslims. Ghazālī states: “I wonder if there is any need to prove the ominous future awaiting Islam, that every passing day hastens its decline and that there is no hope in any struggle versus this decreed destiny!”¹⁷⁹ Ghazālī personally felt he was experiencing the defeats surrounding the religion of Islam both in the past and present times,¹⁸⁰ and regretted that Islam is an orphaned religion with no spiritual or cultural guardianship.¹⁸¹

Ghazālī's stressful emotions resulted from a comparison of Muslims' current conditions with those of other nations,¹⁸² and a discomfort towards conditions of sorrow and humiliation.¹⁸³ He dreams of seeing Islamic ideals implemented. However, when he contrasts his dream to Muslims' currently poor conditions, he constantly experiences sadness, sorrow, and anger.¹⁸⁴ His angry speech is also the result of seeing ineffective *dā'īs* failing to properly present the religion of Islam, or incompetent individuals joining *da'wah* and religious learning;¹⁸⁵ craftspeople, who despite their professional incompetence, address religious and juristic problems.¹⁸⁶

What makes me speak with some anger is when unsuccessful *dā'īs* fail to properly introduce the religion of Islam. I acknowledge that I sometimes lose my temper especially when uneducated people address public matters or give

¹⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr* (The Harvest of Pride) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 202.

¹⁷⁹Ghazālī, *al-Ghazw al-Thaqāfi* (The Cultural Conquest) (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1998), 7.

¹⁸⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 6:181.

¹⁸¹Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 31. This is an exaggeration, but Ghazālī is concerned that contemporary institutions are insufficient to support the maintenance or progress of religion.

¹⁸²Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:209.

¹⁸³Ghazālī, *Ḍalām min al-Gharb* (Darkness from the West) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1999), 117.

¹⁸⁴Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 207.

¹⁸⁵Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 134.

¹⁸⁶Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3: 133.

ineffective instructions leading others to drag the religion into losing battles, or giving others the opportunity to attack the religion.¹⁸⁷

What might well have caused Ghazālī's negative reaction was an increased degree of anger at the deteriorating socio-cultural reality of Muslims. For example, Ghazālī was upset and even angry when the religion of Islam is interpreted as a vague belief in the unseen or an adherence to ambivalent emotions, or when belief is perceived as a stagnant submission to the unknown as opposed to depictions of atheism as dynamic and devoted to searching for the secrets of the universe.¹⁸⁸ What might have also caused his anger was the pretext of scholarship as a cover for imperfect work, which developed into a sophisticated tool of deception.¹⁸⁹ Another reason for his passionate emotion was his dislike of cold attitudes and his view that belief (even religious belief) is inert unless supported with emotion.¹⁹⁰ Ghazālī believed that when falsehood drowned out most voices, it was vital to defend issues of faith emotionally and angrily.¹⁹¹ This has made him wonder how a Muslim smiles when diverse threats targeted the heart of the Muslim nation.¹⁹² Ghazālī asserts: "Had the scale of power and resources been equal, we would have spoken with a smile. How our hearts long for fun and smiles! We should not be blamed for anger when the impostors' claims are many."¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 124.

¹⁸⁸Ghazālī, *ʿIlāl wa-ʿAdwiyah*, 48; *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyyah*, 14.

¹⁸⁹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3: 133.

¹⁹⁰Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 123-124.

¹⁹¹Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah al-ʿArabiyyah* (The Reality of Arab Nationalism) (Al-Jīzah: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2005), 237.

¹⁹²Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 5:144.

¹⁹³*Ibid.*, 200.

Ghazālī's supporters acknowledge that he easily loses his temper in his writing, and that his anger resembled the ocean or a volcano; a fact attested to by Ghazālī himself, and witnessed by those who lived with him. Qaraḍāwī justifies the problem of style in terms of Ghazālī's abhorrence of injustice and humiliation. For Qaraḍāwī, Ghazālī did not set out to offend others nor did he take offence, and would not humiliate others nor accept being humiliated. Ghazālī could not stand wrongdoing, especially in areas of piety or religion, yet he was not ill-mannered in his debate nor did he wish ill for others. He quickly acknowledged the truth and admitted his mistakes in public.¹⁹⁴

His opponents suggest that Ghazālī's tough personality and rude style led him into a critical minefield of his own making, and disqualified him from dealing with current issues in any constructive manner.¹⁹⁵ Even in the absence of external influences, conversations with Ghazālī were often hot and harsh, mostly due to his temper and anger.¹⁹⁶ Ghazālī was proud, and would cast off his opponents accusing them of legal incompetence (*quṣūr fiqhī*). Ghazālī describes some *dā'īs* as so incompetent that they should remain silent so as not to affect the religion with speech they themselves do not understand or that they have grasped in a fashion contradictory to the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān (*ẓāhir al-Qur'ān*).¹⁹⁷ Ghazālī in the following illustrates the problem of style:

¹⁹⁴Qaraḍāwī, "Ghazālī Rajul Da'wah," 199.

¹⁹⁵Jamal Sultān, *'Azmat al-Hiwār al-Dīnī: Naqd Kitāb al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah bayna 'Ahl al-Fiqh wa 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, (The Crisis of Religious Dialogue: A Critique of Sunnah of the Prophet between Jurists and Ḥadīth Experts) (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣafā, 1990), 23.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 28.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 65. *Ẓāhir* of the Qur'ān applies to those verses, the meaning of which is obvious or clear, without seeking any additional assistance from the context of the verse (*qarīnah*).

The men who now lead the defence of Islam are, without exception, bringing shame to themselves and their cause.... The service of God and Mammon cannot be combined; nor can the duty of Jihad be compatible with the pursuit of pleasure and comfort. It requires a really deranged mind to bring these opposites together in any system of human life. Such must be the minds of those Azharites who grow fat while Islam grows thin, and repose in comfort while (Muslim) suffer in anguish. These deceivers have devised devilish means for escaping the genuine duties of Islam. They are most crafty and sly than those *hashīsh* smugglers who escape justice and the police. On one hand, we have a group of men satisfied merely with the performance of personal worship. When they are asked to take care of the public, or observe the social duties of Islam, they answer despondently, 'politics is not our business.'...On the other hand, we have a group that fights sectarianism and worship of the dead, yet its members profess to belong to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb. They silently worship the living and sheepishly submit to the tyrant and despots of their "Wahhābi" (Saudi Arabia) land... We have seen many leaders of Azhar who did not leave their office chairs until their pockets bulged with riches, though they claimed to be the "spiritual continuation" of the legacy of Muhammad 'Abduh and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī.¹⁹⁸

The problem of Ghazālī's angry rhetoric reflects the de facto reality of Muslim culture and society. It demonstrates the high expectations he has of scholars and *dā'īs*, while calling upon Muslims to reflect and concentrate on the real and fundamental problems that lead to progress. It also endorses Ghazālī's independence from religious formalities, that is, the little attention he pays to the bitter reactions of the scholarly community and Muslim movements. Besides, Ghazālī was no exception to the trend of criticism that has grown in modern Muslim societies. For Abu-Rabī' for instance, this criticism very often flourishes in reaction to a severe status quo, and that there had been a sustained effort on the part of a small portion of the Muslim intelligentsia to glorify the Muslim critical spirit, including Sayyid Quṭb, 'Abd al-Qādir 'Awdah,

¹⁹⁸Muhammad Ghazālī, *Our Beginning in Wisdom*, trans. 'Ismā'īl R. al-Farūqī (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1953), 69-70.

II. Ghazālī and the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood:

a. Association and Conflict:

Ghazālī's association with the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood is important in our inquiry because it highlights Bannā's influence on Ghazālī, the concepts and methods of *da'wah* that Ghazālī learned with the Muslim Brethren and the possible intellectual transformations he underwent during and after his membership in the organization and their effects on his *da'wah*.

Ghazālī knew Ḥasan Bannā²⁰⁰ when he was a student at the Alexandria Religious Institute.²⁰¹ Later, at the age of twenty, Ghazālī joined the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. He was an active member for a period of seventeen years.²⁰² Three years after joining, Bannā appointed him as under-secretary of the *Majallat al-'Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* (Journal of the Muslim Brotherhood).²⁰³ In 1945, Bannā wrote him a note of appreciation:

Peace be upon you. I read your recent article "Muslim Brotherhood and Political Parties" in the Journal of the Muslim Brotherhood. I was attracted to its

¹⁹⁹Ibrahim M. Abū-Rabī', *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 231.

²⁰⁰Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949), founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and author of *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il* (Letters) and *Mudhakkirāt al-Da'wah wa al-Dā'iyyah* (Memories of the Message and the Messenger). In the *Ismā'īliyyah* in March 1928, Bannā and six friends founded a "religious association devoted to the promotion of goods and the rooting-out of evil," a branch of the ḥaṣafiyyah. By 1929, the Organization was already being referred to as the "Muslim Brotherhood." Four terms dominated Bannā's discourse: nation, state, social justice, and society. If we add the term "Islamic" to these four terms, we will have characterized Bannā's "idea," the key to which is the view of Islam as a comprehensive system of life. Bannā was assassinated by secret services of Egypt in February 1949. See "Ḥasan al-Bannā," *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Ed., John L. Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1:195-198.

²⁰¹Ghazālī, "Muqatafāt," 188.

²⁰²Ghazālī, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 8; *Dustūr al-Wiḥda*, 9.

²⁰³Ghazālī, "Qissat Ḥayāt," 183.

succinct expressions, well-defined meanings, and excellent literary style. This is how Muslim brothers should write. Continue to write, the Holy Spirit shall support you, and God be with you. Peace be upon you.²⁰⁴

Bannā was not alone in valuing Ghazālī's excellence as a writer. Ghazālī's writing talents in fact qualified him for the honorific title of *'Adīb al-da'wah* (the writer of *da'wah*) among the Muslim Brethren. His literary skills and intellectual competence were manifest in the printed media of the Muslim Brotherhood.²⁰⁵ Qaraḍāwī describes Ghazālī's contribution to the column of the "Free Ideas" as inspirational, eloquent, and ridiculing; these qualified him to be a Muslim *dā'ī* and an extraordinary man of letters.²⁰⁶ It was in the Maṣjid of al-'Atabah al-Khaḍrā', in 1941, however, that Ghazālī's contribution to the Muslim Brotherhood increased. During this period, Ghazālī was both an active member in the organization and an official scholar in the Ministry of Endowments.²⁰⁷

It was during his tenure as a student in Azhar that Ghazālī accompanied Bannā,²⁰⁸ collaborated with him,²⁰⁹ and learned and benefited from his guidance.²¹⁰ Often in his writings, Ghazālī refers to Bannā as his first teacher and mentor,²¹¹ acknowledges his finest qualities, and portrays him as an ideal model of *da'wah*.²¹² He regarded Bannā as an inspiring modern reformer, who laid out the course for future

²⁰⁴Imārah, *Shaykh Muhammad: Ghazālī wa al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī*, 14.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 13.

²⁰⁶Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araḥtuḥ*, 11.

²⁰⁷Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 24.

²⁰⁸Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:4.

²⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 9.

²¹⁰Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:4.

²¹¹Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araḥtuḥ*, 115.

²¹²Qaraḍāwī, "Muqtaṭafāt," 28.

dā'īs.²¹³ Throughout his academic career, Ghazālī believed that God granted Bannā the skills of 'Afhānī,²¹⁴ 'Abduh,²¹⁵ and Riḍā.²¹⁶ His memories of Bannā were always positive; probably the most wonderful he had of any other person. Ghazālī dearly loved Bannā, supported his *da'wah*, and acknowledged his debt to him for the lead he took in contemporary Islamic reforms.²¹⁷ Ghazālī praises Bannā in print and speaks of him with reverence, describing him as a scholar of high calibre and a speaker who addresses

²¹³Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh*, 28.

²¹⁴Jamāl al-Dīn al-'Afhānī (1838/39-1897) was a writer and Pan-Islamist activist. In 1869, he went briefly to Cairo, and then to the Ottoman capital Istanbul. From 1871 to 1879, al-Afhānī lived in Cairo. He spent most of his time teaching, introducing an interpretation of Islamic philosophy that included restricting rational inquiry to the elite while encouraging orthodoxy among the masses. He was then expelled from Egypt for his continued fiery anti-British speeches. Al-Afhānī returned to India, going to the Muslim state of Hyderabad, where he did much of his writing. At the time of the 'Urābī revolt in Egypt (1881-1882), al-Afhānī took steps to leave India. Muhammad 'Abduh joined him in Paris where they edited an Arab newspaper, Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqā. Its main themes were Pan-Islamist and anti-British and also included theoretical articles. His political thought was impelled to British rule in foreign, especially Muslim lands. He is strongly associated with two movements that he did not originate, but that he expressed lucidly and propagated widely. One is nationalism, supported in Egypt with references to the glories of ancient Egypt and in India with praise of the ancient Hindus. The other is Pan-Islamism, which started with the nineteenth-century Ottoman sultans and was then voiced in more progressive, anti-imperialist forms of the Young Ottomans. See Audrey L. Altstadt, "Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-'Afhānī," *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Ed., John L. Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2: 23-26.

²¹⁵Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) was an Egyptian scholar and reformer regarded as the architect of Islamic modernism. The initial factors in his career were his traditional studies at Azhar University and an early commitment to Sufism with the Shādhilī order of mystical discipline. The crucial influence in his development was the impact of al-Afhānī, a strenuous advocate of a unitary Islam who emphasized the concept of ummah [community] against the regionalism. Pan-Islam was al-Afhānī's response to the British rule in Egypt and to European domination in general. 'Abduh was drawn into the cause and became editor of the journal Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqā (Firm Handhold). 'Abduh was exiled from Egypt between 1882 and 1888, when he made wide contacts with kindred minds in Syria and North Africa, with a short sojourn also in France. After his return to Cairo, his thought and efforts were drawn increasingly towards education and a renewal of Islamic Theology. See Kenneth Cragg, "'Abduh Muḥammad," *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, 2:11.

²¹⁶Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:4. Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) was a writer, editor, and Muslim reformer. He was the chief disciple of Muhammad 'Abduh, continuing and developing his reformist teachings. They founded an influential Arabic monthly, al-Manār, which disseminated their ideas throughout the Muslim world. He also wrote a commentary of the Qur'ān and a three-column biography of 'Abduh. His ideas were influenced by Wahhābī puritanism, calling for a return to the pristine Islam of Muhammad and his associates, hence its name, Salafiyyah (way of the righteous ancestors). During World War I Riḍā aided the Arab nationalists in Cairo who worked for future independence. Hoping to revive the caliphate, he took part in Islamic congress in Mecca in 1926 and Jerusalem in 1931. After his death, his movement and magazine vanished. "Riḍā, Sayyid Muhammad Rashīd," *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, 166.

²¹⁷Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh*, 28.

fundamental and real issues, and one who influenced him the most.²¹⁸

Yet, in spite of his view of Bannā as an ideal *dā'ī*, and his profound attachment to his model, Ghazālī rejected the assumption that Bannā was the first to call for resistance in modern times. The reason being that many earlier reformers in the Middle East, the Maghreb, India, and Indonesia, had preceded him in the struggle in areas of politics and education, and have contributed much to the service of the religion and the Muslim nation.²¹⁹ According to Ghazālī, Bannā's Twenty Principles represented neither the first nor the final formulation in the service of the Muslim nation. They were not final in carrying out cultural reforms, and only represented proposals resulting from his experience in uniting Muslims and correcting their failures. Those who had better alternatives should bring them forward.²²⁰

Soon after Bannā's assassination in 1948, problems within the organization floated to the surface. Ghazālī's disagreement with Ḥusayn Ḥuḍaybī (1891-1973),²²¹ the newly appointed leader, resulted in Ghazālī's dismissal,²²² and led to an exchange of

²¹⁸Ibid., 30.

²¹⁹Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 6.

²²⁰Ibid., 10-11. According to Ghazālī, Bannā's set of principles intend to gather disunited groups, illustrate the objectives of Islam, draw Muslims nearer to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and address the root causes of decline and indolence Muslims have encountered in the past. Ibid., 5.

²²¹Successor to Ḥasan Bannā as a supreme guide of the Muslim Brothers. He attended the Khedivial Secondary School and graduated from the government Law School in 1915. He practiced law in Cairo and Sūhāj, became a judge in 1924, and joined the Brothers in 1943. Following the assassination of Bannā, Ḥuḍaybī was named his successor in 1951, partly because he was not associated with terrorism or the secret branch within the society, and he accordingly resigned from the bench. He was arrested in 1954 for two months, and from 1965 to 1971. His *Sab'at 'As'ila fī al-'Aqīda wa al-Radd 'Alayhā: Takhaṭṭī al-Ṣu'ūbāt wa al-'Uqūbāt* (Seven Questions and Answers about Doctrine: Surmounting Difficulties and Obstacles) was published five years after his death. Cautious and conservative, he could not moderate the society's emotionalism and violence. See "al-Ḥuḍaybī Ḥasan," *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, 78-79.

²²²Imāra, *al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī*, 14. Ghazālī's expulsion, however, exempted him from imprisonment in 1954 and in 1965, except for a ten day period in the prison of Ṭurrah. See Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araṭuh*, 42. The reason for his imprisonment in Ṭurrah was because he refused to carry out the directives of the Egyptian authorities concerning warning the public against the Organization of Muslim

accusations.²²³ Ghazālī's conflict with Huḍaybī was harsh.²²⁴ Ghazālī also described Huḍaybī as very soft in his dealing with the parties responsible for the assassination of Bannā. This softness, for Ghazālī, has turned to persecution and increasing propagandas and accusations against innocent people. He writes:

“Should we let obscure forces play with the future of the mother Islamic movement (i.e., the Muslim Brotherhood) and jeopardize its activities in the various spheres of life and struggle as it happened three years ago? Should the religion of Islam bear the burdens of weak and shaken leadership that disguise its weakness by way of dictatorship and ill-treatment? And who is benefiting from all of these?”²²⁵

The reasons for the dismissal were, in Ghazālī's view, motivated by personal conflict, yet were seen by others as ordinary.²²⁶ What led to his dismissal was Ghazālī's disagreement over the decision of the Muslim Brotherhood to boycott the government of Jamal Abdel Nāṣṣer.²²⁷ Ghazālī was dismissed from his position in the founding body (*al-ha'yah al-ta'sisiyyah*) of the Muslim Brotherhood in December 1953, reportedly after attempting, with two other prominent members, to unseat Huḍaybī as leader (with the approval, some Muslim Brothers suspected, of Jamāl 'Abdel Naṣṣer and the Free Officers).²²⁸

Brotherhood, or addressing their mistakes on a radio broadcasting program. See Ghazālī, “*Qiṣṣat Hayāt*,” 216. Ghazālī's career as a public servant and his cooperation with official scholars also helped him avoid placing his *da'wah* efforts into political jeopardy.

²²³Ghazālī, “*Qiṣṣat Hayāt*,” 197.

²²⁴Shalabī, *Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣhaf*, 62.

²²⁵See Midḥat Basyūnī, *al-Ḥaqīqah al-Ghā'ibah bayna Khālīd Muhammad Khālīd wa-Muhammad al-Ghazālī* (The Missing Truth between Khalid Muhammad Khalid and Muhammad Ghazālī) (Cairo: s.n., 1997), 76.

²²⁶Ghazālī, *Jaddid Hayātak* (Renew Your Life) (Damsacus: Dār al-Qalam, 2004), 124.

²²⁷Assāl, “*al-Jawānib al-Fikriyyah*,” 54. Ghazālī tried hard to push the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood to action against King Fārūq. Ghazālī criticises them for failing to take on the right opportunity, and for not letting members of the organization move either, because the duty of their followers was to listen and obey! See Ghazālī, *Fī Mawḳib al-Da'wah*, 17.

²²⁸Nazih N. 'Ayūbī, “Ghazālī Muhammad,” *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, 2:63-64.

The sequence of events, according to Qaraḍāwī, went as follow: Ghazālī was not alone in his support of the Revolution of July 23rd 1952; the Muslim Brotherhood as a whole was also a great supporter. However, the Muslim Brethren, and particularly Huḍaybī, soon discovered that Jamal ‘Abdel Naṣṣer had only planned the Revolution for his own personal gains, and was planning to strike the Muslim Brethren. Ghazālī never suspected the intentions of ‘Abdel Naṣṣer. Along with some elder Muslim Brethren, Ghazālī was against the Brotherhood’s opposition to the government, as this would only lead to bloodshed and instability. Ghazālī believed flexibility towards the Revolution would be wiser, given that ‘Abdel Naṣṣer until then had not shown any hostility towards the Brotherhood. During those confusing times, misunderstanding surfaced between members of the organization. This led to the dismissal of Ghazālī and other members. Ghazālī, nonetheless, only realized ‘Abdel Naṣṣer’s mischief later.²²⁹

Ghazālī’s conflict with the Muslim Brethren started in fact much earlier, precisely during his imprisonment in the Ṭūr (1951). His criticism then was not welcomed. What disturbed Ghazālī the most in prison was that the Muslim Brethren in general rejected any criticism of their strategies. Ghazālī pointed out to them how, soon after the defeat at the Battle of ‘Uḥud (3rd A.H./625 C.E.), even some of the companions of the prophet were blamed, and how the Brethren should have re-evaluated their personal and public conduct. A few years later, Ghazālī described those moments as follows:

I thought the Brethren, especially after the assassination of Bannā and the ban on the Organization under extremely dismal political conditions, would learn

²²⁹Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā ‘Araftuh*, 47-48. Ghazālī addresses these issues in *Kifāh Dīn*, *Qadhā’if al-Ḥaqq*, *Ma’rakat al-Muṣṣaf*, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, and *al-‘Islām wa al-Zahf al-‘Aḥmar*.

from their experience and focus instead on assuring human dignity and civil liberties. But, did that ever happen? Regrettably not. The course had taken different path instead.²³⁰

Despite these differences with the Muslim Brethren, however, Ghazālī forgave his adversaries and decided to start a new page and to ask God for forgiveness.²³¹ Huḍaybī's steadfastness and upholding of the faith, during the trial of 1954, raised him in the eyes of Ghazālī, for the catastrophes that befell Huḍaybī and his family neither affected his judgment nor diverted him from the methodology of the Muslim Brotherhood.²³² Ghazālī also commended the steadfastness of the Brethren and was sympathetic, helpful, and supportive.²³³

Following his dismissal, Ghazālī discovered his own talents and decided to commit himself for the rest of his life to *da'wah* and writing. His concern with *da'wah*, of course, predated his expulsion: after his release from prison in 1949, Ghazālī became the foremost spokesperson on *da'wah* and the principal defender of Islam.²³⁴ During this period, Ghazālī's writings contributed to awakening minds, stirring up emotions, and paving the way to a revolution against injustice. On this particular transition, Ghazālī states:

I decided to work in the field of *da'wah*, in the way I personally choose, and in the best possible approach. There are two broad areas before me: writing, where God grants me success, and mosques, where I could lecture, deliver sermons, and lead thousands of Imāms to the best methods and results.²³⁵

²³⁰Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt," 188.

²³¹Ibid., 125.

²³²Ibid., 61. For Ghazālī's critique of the Muslim Brotherhood during Bannā's post-assassination, see his *Mawḳib al-Da'wah*, 17, 96-104.

²³³Shalabī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 62. Ghazālī argues that allegations of anarchy of all Muslim Brethren are false, and the claim of their impeccability is mere pride. *Ghazālī, Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 81.

²³⁴Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī Kama 'Araṭuh*, 43.

²³⁵Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 29; See also Ghazālī, "Muqtaṭafāt min Mudhakkirāt," 196.

Had Ghazālī maintained political affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, or had he chosen to grow intellectually within the parameters of Bannā's thought, his contribution might have taken a different course, for his formal dissociation from a structured Islamic movement provided him with the freedom necessary to address the subject of *da'wah* independently, critically, and broadly. Ghazālī's *da'wah* career knew no boundaries, and was impartially communicated to all segments of society, including Islamic movements, governments and scholars, Sunnis and Shī'ites,²³⁶ elites and masses. Ghazālī benefited from the general ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and largely shared their historical and emotional background, yet learned from others and developed his own intellectual identity.

b. Ghazālī's School of Thought:

Was Ghazālī the Muhammad 'Abduh of the contemporary era,²³⁷ a genius who developed his own program of Islamic reform or a prolific writer who skilfully blended the contribution of the Muslim Brotherhood with the ideas of modern Muslim reformers? In order to situate Ghazālī's intellectual position, we should examine his notes about Bannā, the Muslim Brethren, modern Muslim reformists, and sum up the main themes that preoccupied him the most as well as the possible changes he advocated throughout.

In the context of Islamic scholarship, there may be a tendency to categorize

²³⁶Ghazālī views the differences between the Sunnites and Shī'ites as being more political than religious. See *Zālām min al-Gharb*, 278.

²³⁷Ibrahim M. Abū-Rabī', *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 223.

thinkers by static labels. In the case of Ghazālī, however, we should acknowledge that such attempts of definition are in no way final determinants of his intellectual position. For example, his thought changed and developed over his career; therefore, any attempt to put him within the framework of modern Islamic thought must consider these changes and developments. Arguably, developing convergences with or divergences from preceding Islamic reforms reflects the very nature of the Adamic creation which tends to diversify the search for knowledge - a process which transcends intellectual positions and involves tremendous efforts of assimilation, transformation, and creativity.

The quest for scholarly taxonomy sometimes appears to be an exciting intellectual game because it tends to provide us with an ultimate rational satisfaction and intellectual relaxation, when all doors of inquiry are supposedly closed. Yet, in the end, the problem still challenges our inner curiosity. Of course, because of our inadequate analyses, we only tend to trace intellectual responses that resonate with external processes of assimilation, assess their nature, and place the entire diversified contribution into a general class of thought. Beyond this, guessing the hidden internalized thoughts and emotions then becomes “subjective” as it only yields conjecture. Yet our “objective” classification of scholarly contributions is not objective either because it carries out a great deal of confusion, vagueness, and even guesswork. What makes a scholar puritanical, conservative, progressive, fundamentalist, liberal, traditionist or modernist? Are these categories sophisticated enough to perfectly match their recipients or are they approximate descriptions embracing their overall intellectual contributions and characteristics of their recipients? Whatever the answer

might be, this exercise requires a fresh taxonomy that is unbiased and flexible, and free from the political implications of those categories and labels.

The case of Ghazālī is an ideal example of the deficiency inherent in our taxonomy system. According to our general framework, Ghazālī easily fits the mold of a traditional Azharite scholar; rational, a modernist, an Ash‘arite yet Salafi, a ṣūfī, and an Ikhwānī! It is difficult to simply classify his total diversified contribution unless those labels are stripped of their negative or political connotations, and unless we continue to examine his thought within a broader perspective without necessarily making it a “final” definition of his contribution. Let us, nonetheless, look at some of the manifestations of his intellectual position.

Ghazālī’s positive attachment to Bannā did not result in any literal adherence or interpretation to his methodology.²³⁸ Ghazālī in fact disagreed with Bannā and criticized him,²³⁹ and despite his close relationship, there is no indication whatsoever of Ghazālī’s continuing loyalty to the Muslim Brotherhood. Ghazālī writes: “Let me off the Brethren. I have washed my hands off those titles. I only speak for the religion of Islam, its current status, and the broken Muslim nation.”²⁴⁰ Ghazālī’s *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyya* (The Constitution of Cultural Unity) provides further testimony to his growing independence vis-à-vis major areas of concern of the Muslim Brotherhood as epitomized in Bannā’s Twenty Principles.²⁴¹ In his *Dustūr*, Ghazālī not only elaborated

²³⁸Qaradāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī Kamā ‘Araftuh*, 28.

²³⁹Ghazālī, *Fī-Mawkiḃ al-Da‘wah*, 14. Ghazālī says: “I used to take things from him and leave others, followed him and argued with him. Bannā used to see from me satisfaction and criticism.” Ibid.

²⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Qadhā’if al-Ḥaqq*, 81-82.

²⁴¹The following are al-Bannā’s Twenty Principles: Islam is a comprehensive system which deals with all spheres of life. 2- The glorious Qur’ān and the purified tradition (Sunnah) of the Prophet are the reference points for every Muslim to acquaint himself with the rules of Islam. 3- True belief, proper

on Bannā's principles, but also substantiated them and developed new tenets required for modern Islamic change:

My work was to explain and substantiate Bannā's principles in light of the experience I gained during a period of forty years of *da'wah*. I spent some of those years with Bannā and his disciples, and some others with sincere believers concerned about the religion, and who struggled for its cause and resisted all sorts of aggressions.²⁴²

Ghazālī formulated the following ten new principles necessary to carry out modern

worship, and Jihad in the Way of Allah have light and warmth. 4- Talismans, incantations, placing of shells around the neck, fortune telling whether by drawing lines on sand or astrology, sorcery and claiming to have knowledge of the unseen and similar practices are all evils that must be fought, except what is mentioned in the Qur'an or transmitted to us as authentic narrations of the Prophet. 5- The opinion of an 'Imām or his deputy is acceptable in matters which are of proven benefit to the public, provided that his opinion does not conflict with any established principle of Islam. 6- Everyone's opinion except that of the unfailing Prophet is liable to changes and modifications. 7- Any Muslim who has not reached the level to understand the different branches of Islamic jurisprudence may follow one of the four great Imams of this religion. 8- Differences on the branch matters of Islamic Jurisprudence should not be allowed to cause division, contention, or hatred within the ranks of the Muslims. This category includes debating minute aspects of rulings in cases which have never occurred, investigating the meaning of the Qur'anic verses which are still beyond the scope of human knowledge (the *mutashābihāt* verses), and differentiating between the companions of the Prophet or investigating the instances of disagreement that took place among them. 9- Every companion of the Prophet Muhammad has the honour and distinction of being a companion of the Messenger of Allah, and to each is the recompense of his motives. 10- Recognising Allah's existence (may He be exalted), believing in His oneness, and glorifying Him are the most sublime beliefs of Islam. 11- Every innovation introduced by the people into the Religion of Allah on the grounds of their whims and without authentic foundation, whether by adding to the principles of Islam or taking away from them, is a serious deviation which must be fought and abolished by the best means as long as it does not lead to a greater evil. 12- There is a difference of opinion regarding innovations which do not contradict established Islamic principles. 13- Love of pious people, respecting them, and honouring their righteous achievements brings one closer to Allah. 14- Visiting grave sites and tombs is an authentic Sunnah if done in the manner prescribed by the Prophet, but seeking the help of the dead, whomever they may be, appealing to them, asking them to fulfil certain requests, vowing to them, and swearing with their names instead of the name of Allah, building high tombs, covering them with curtains, illuminating them, are evil innovations that are equally prohibited. We do not need to interpret such actions giving them excuses. 15- Supplication to Allah via an intermediary is a minor difference of opinion. 16- Just because incorrect practices are common amongst the people, it does not change the label it has been ascribed by Sharī'ah. 17- Belief is the basis of action. 18- Islam liberates the mind, urges contemplation of the universe, honours science and scientists, and welcomes all that is good and beneficial to mankind. 19- Islamic principles may be evident or uncertain, as are pure scientific principles. 20- Never label as an unbeliever (*kāfir*) any Muslim who has confessed the two declarations (*shahādah*) of faith, acts accordingly and performs the obligatory (*fard*) duties of Islam unless he clearly professes the word of unbelief, refuses to acknowledge a fundamental principle of Islam, denies the purity of the Qur'an, or commits an evident act of unbelief. See Sa'īd Hawwā, *Fī 'Āfāq al-Ta'ālīm* (In the Horizon of Teaching Bannā) (Beirut, Lebanon: The Holy Qur'an Publishing House, 1980), 168-173.

²⁴²Ghazālī, *Dustūr*, 5. It appears that Bannā profoundly inspired Ghazālī's book *Dustūr al-Wihdah al-Thaqāfiyyah*.

reform: 1) The Islamic principles that women and men are partners (*shaqā'iq*); 2) The family is the moral and social support of the nation, and the natural center for educating generations; 3) The moral and economic rights of people should be assured; 4) Rulers, whether kings or presidents, are only agents on behalf of their nations; 5) Mutual consultation (*shūrā*) is the basis of government, and every nation must choose the method that best realizes it; 6) Private property is protected with its conditions and rights. The nation is but one body that does not tolerate neglect or subjugation, with the law being their general brotherhood; 7) Muslim countries are responsible for *da'wah*;²⁴³ 8) Religious differences should not cause enmity or fights; 9) the relationship of Muslims with the international community is guided by agreements of human brotherhood. Muslims carry out *da'wah* through argumentation and persuasion far from causing any harm; and 10) Muslims contribute to the moral and material well-being of humanity.²⁴⁴

These principles, whether of Bannā or Ghazālī, aim at religious reform in Muslim societies. Bannā's principles are, however, geared to the purity of belief, religion, piety, and Muslims' etiquette regarding legal differences. They seek to purify Muslims' actions and minds from practises that are contradictory to the teachings of Islam. Ghazālī is rather preoccupied with different issues such as women, family, education, human rights, consultative political system, private property, law, *da'wah* as a collective duty and state responsibility, religious tolerance, Muslims' relationship with the international community, peaceful *da'wah*, and contribution of Muslims to the

²⁴³This collective responsibility implies support for *da'wah* and does not negate individual efforts of *dā'īs*.

²⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Dustūr*, 236-237.

well being of humanity. Ghazālī's ten principles show new areas of concern in modern Muslim reform, and deal mostly with issues considered major as compared to Bannā's. Taking Ghazālī's statements at face value, we venture to say that Ghazālī's new principles represent an "extension" of social and political change following the implementation of Bannā's reform in areas of belief, law, and piety.²⁴⁵

According to 'Alwānī, Ghazālī's lectures at Azhar, in the various mosques of Egypt, as well as those delivered at the University of Umm al-Qurā and Emīr 'Abd al-Qādir, represented a merger or a synopsis of Bannā's lectures and the lectures of modern Muslim reformers, all blended with Ghazālī's own thought and knowledge.²⁴⁶ Pioneering reformers like Jamāl Dīn 'Afghānī (1838-1897), Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) are all noticeably present in his intellectual work.²⁴⁷

'Imārah views Ghazālī's intellectual position differently. He argues that the school of Manār is the only cradle of modern Islamic awakening, and that 'Afghānī, 'Abduh, and Riḍā are pioneers in modern Islamic thought.²⁴⁸ 'Imārah, however, finds it difficult to define Ghazālī's relationship with the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. For him, Ghazālī's position is rather found in a third category that combines the characteristics of both the Muslim Brethren and Rashīd Riḍā.²⁴⁹ Based on Ghazālī's own account that he is a member of the school of Bannā,²⁵⁰ and with the

²⁴⁵Referring to his new principles, Ghazālī argues that Muslim societies need these additions. Ibid., 236.

²⁴⁶'Alwānī, "Shaykhunā Muhammad Ghazālī wa-Ṣafaḥāt min Hayātih," *'Islāmiyyat al-Ma'arifah*, 9-10.

²⁴⁷Ghazālī wished Muslim scholars would imitate 'Afghānī in his dignity and trust in God. Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 101.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 122-123.

²⁴⁹Ibid., 36.

²⁵⁰Ghazālī says: "I acknowledge that I was one of those students who listened to Ḥasan Bannā, benefited from his example, gained piety through his guidance, and learned from his comments." See Ghazālī, *Mawḥib al-Da'wah*, 14.

understanding that Bannā is a disciple of Ridā who learned under ‘Abduh, ‘Imārah concludes that Ghazālī is a leading figure in the school of al-Jāmi‘ah al-‘Islāmiyyah.²⁵¹ This school benefited from many intellectual movements and schools in Muslim history, and also from the findings of psychology, sociology, political sciences, economics, and history; Ghazālī combines all of the above yet with a deeper understanding of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.²⁵²

Ghazālī’s life is, however, viewed by Muhammad Yūnus as a real interface of two converging schools of Islamic reform. Ghazālī’s intellectual life began with the school of Afghānī, ‘Abduh, and Riḍā, and continued throughout Muṣṭafā Marāghī (1881-1945). It was the same idea that Bannā attempted to translate into a reality, and struggled to raise its profile, to achieve its mission, and to ensure its pre-eminence through the publication of *Manār* after Riḍā.²⁵³

Uways views Ghazālī’s school of thought differently. For him, it stands in the midst of all Islamic movements, abides by the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, rejects partisanship, advocates cooperation among Muslim workers, sets brotherhood above legal differences, looks for a comprehensive civilization, and encourages understanding amongst the elites and the public.²⁵⁴ Ghazālī was not affiliated with any group, nor was he resolute about any Muslim school of jurisprudence, but instead regarded Qur’ān exegetes, ḥadīth experts, legal theorists, philosophers, theologians,

²⁵¹‘Imārah, *al-Mawqī‘ al-Fikrī*, 40.

²⁵²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:165.

²⁵³Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr*, 21.

²⁵⁴Uways, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 140-141

and Sufis with respect.²⁵⁵ He appreciated the benefits of the *kalām*, mysticism, and ethics;²⁵⁶ adhered to scholarly consensus and to the larger Muslim community,²⁵⁷ and showed great respect for religious masters.²⁵⁸

Some of Ghazālī's main concerns include interrelated problems like the fragmentary presentation of Islam, the current state of Muslim culture, the negative attitude towards life, fatalism in the Muslim world, misunderstanding of the principle of causality, traditions of showing off in Muslim societies, status of women in periods of weakness, poor Arabic literature, wealth mis-management, and political corruption.²⁵⁹ Ghazālī's writings show that he drew his understanding from primary sources, and paid less or no attention when scholarly opinions conflicted with his understanding of Islam or when he sensed that they impeded the progress of *da'wah*. He was willing to sacrifice culture or customs which could hamper or distort the image of the religion. Ghazālī's concern was that the divine should stay above human concepts. Ghazālī did not fit into any Muslim movement for his constant criticism could only be accommodated in an atmosphere of freedom and independence.²⁶⁰

The effects of contemporary Muslim reformers are discernible throughout

²⁵⁵Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī fī-Mīzān al-Shar' wa al-'Aql* (Our Intellectual Heritage in the Perspective of Reason and Revelation) (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2003), 83.

²⁵⁶Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 50-51.

²⁵⁷Ibid., 235.

²⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqalāt*, 3:224.

²⁵⁹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 68-92.

²⁶⁰Ghazālī describes his position on leadership as follows: "I dislike leading anyone because I prefer the other party to be a colleague instead of a follower. But I would like to meet the person whose heart and mind are great in order for me to deal without artificiality. I dislike having a boss, not out of arrogance, but because most of those leaders, keen to lead, are slaves (*'abīd*) hiding their disgrace in artificial pride. You may however argue that life requires leaders who instruct and lead people to action. I would have not objected to that had life been similar to the order of the universe, where small planets rotate around bigger ones. In the natural order, great planets do not turn around pebbles. People are naturally attracted to great leaders. When the order is mixed up and small people are required to grow when the big should shrink, then you expect nothing but chaos and failure. See Ghazālī, *Fī Mawkeb al-Da'wah*, 15-16.

Ghazālī's writings; his distinct contribution to modern thought and *da'wah*, however, is manifest throughout a review of modern religious and socio-political problems, as are his critiques of 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth and the implications of their understanding on contemporary *da'wah*, and his discussion of *da'wah* through a broad perspective of modern Islamic reform. Ghazālī maintained a traditional viewpoint when examining problems of culture and society in the light of the original sources in the Sharī'ah, while remaining aware of major areas of reform. Ghazālī did not, however, duplicate the works of Afghānī, 'Abduh, or Riḍā, nor did he attempt to continue the work of the Muslim Brethren. His concern was to review the sources of Muslims' understanding in order for Muslims to re-gain their leadership position in humanity.

III. Ghazālī's Contribution to Islamic Knowledge:

a. Scholarly Works of Ghazālī:²⁶¹

Ghazālī's works generally revolve around personal and cultural purification, Islamic awakening, advocacy of freedom and social justice, Muslim unity, women's role in society, scientific progress, struggle against political despotism, fighting against backwardness and deceitful religiosity. They also seek to protect the religion of Islam against the forgery of religious extremists and the myths of Islam's foes, and to preserve the purity of the religion and refute the interpretations of religious extremists and doubts raised by adversaries. With the exception of *Ma'a Allah: Dirāsah fī al-Da'wah wa al-Du'āt* (In the Company of God: A Study of *Da'wah* and *Dā'īs*),²⁶² Ghazālī's

²⁶¹ *Al-'Aṭā' al-Fikrī*, 229-260; *Imāra, al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī*, 114-117.

²⁶² *Ma'a Allah* is addressed to *dā'īs* only. It represents a series of seminars on *da'wah* delivered in the

works do not supply a systematic analysis of *da'wah* in modern societies. In fact, Ghazālī clearly points out that his works are not historical or academic, they are only intended to rescue people and steer life; his endeavour was only to integrate religious and historical facts in a literary style geared to people's guidance.²⁶³ Ghazālī's works, however, draw attention to a wide-ranging number of problems, challenges, internal failures, misconceptions and practices impeding the progress of modern *da'wah*. Ghazālī's keen interest in a broad-based *da'wah* forced him to deal with diverse issues of belief, ethics, reform, politics, culture, history, and jurisprudence, and to approach various socio-cultural, religious, and political issues through the concerns of *da'wah*.²⁶⁴

Ghazālī also believed his works were the outcome of inspiring realities; they were meant to stimulate the consciousness lying in the hearts of believers, and to provide keys to various meanings invaluable to Muslims.²⁶⁵ His writings concurrently respond to the intellectual and emotional needs of the individual and society.²⁶⁶ His writing also contains both clear and ambiguous exposition of thoughts and emotions, affected mostly by passionate feelings and enthusiastic presentation.²⁶⁷ They reflect both calmness and aggressiveness, at the same time, tending to be vocative and hortatory, while avoiding technical academic terminology, uttering harsh words so injurious as to cause anger and upset. This probably fits with Ghazālī's writing strategy -sometimes he wrote about *da'wah* and Islamic culture and, at other times about the

Faculty of Theology in Azhar University. The Azhar administration requested Ghazālī to lecture about *da'wah* according to a methodology (*minhaj*). This book discusses definitions and methods of *da'wah*, and the general rules from the *da'wah* of the Prophets.

²⁶³Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 209.

²⁶⁴Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3: 3.

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶⁶Uways, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī: Tārikhuh*, 10-11.

²⁶⁷Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 209.

struggle of *da'wah* and strategies of social reform.²⁶⁸ This strategy is described by Ghazālī as follows: “In the process of writing, I split my thought and feelings into two; the first carefully detects Muslims’ conditions whether manifest or hidden, the second searches into the religious guidance to heal diseases and strengthen existence.”²⁶⁹

The following is a glance at Ghazālī’s works in their chronological order:²⁷⁰

1. *Al-Ḥayāt al-’Ūlā* (The First Life): This was written at the Alexandria Religious Institute when Ghazālī was eighteen years of age. It is a poetic prose work about wisdom, brotherhood, morals, Sufism, nature, and the nation.

2. *Al-Islām wa-’Awḍā’unā al-’Iqtisādiyyah* (Islam and our Economic Conditions): A book that discusses the position of Islam regarding economic conditions, wealth and poverty, ownership, conflict between good and evil, and the casual relationship between economic problems and moral vices. This book also shows how economically deteriorating societies fall short of providing any favourable conditions for religious growth. The issue most related to our study is whether economic problems, including poverty, ignorance, and disease, evolve to moral vices.

3. *Al-Islām wa al-Manāhij al-’Ishtirākiyyah* (Islam and the Socialist Systems): This book deals with issues of property and its distribution in Islam, usury, monopoly, social security, the responsibility of the individual, and the conflict of Islam with communism. It also discusses the perspective of Islam regarding science, politics,

²⁶⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:111-112.

²⁶⁹Ghazālī, *’Ilal wa-’Adwiyah*, 6.

²⁷⁰This order is ‘Imārah’s chronological preference. See ‘Imārah, *Shaykh Ghazālī, al-Mawqī’ al-Fikrī*, 114-117. With the exception of *al-Fasād al-Siyāsī fī al-Mujatama’āt al-’Arabiyya wa al-’Islāmiyyah* and *Naḥwa Tafsīr Mawḍū’ī li al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*.

economics, and social system, and addresses the agricultural properties in Egypt, the damages of monopoly, exploitation, and interest-based financial institutions.

4. *Al-Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī* (Islam and Political Despotism): This book compares *Shūrā* (mutual consultation) with political despotism, and explains religious struggle against despotism, and the serious damage despotism has afflicted on Muslims since their early history.

5. *Al-Islām al-Muftarā 'alayhi bayna al-Shuyū'īn wa al-Ra'smāliin* (Islam: The Accused Religion between the Communists and the Capitalists): This book addresses the economic injustices in both the socialist and capitalist system. On the one hand, it addresses the capitalists' claims that the teachings of Islam imply accumulation of wealth based on the principle of free ownership. On the other hand, it deals with the socialists' allegation that Islam promotes equal ownership and shared property. This book introduces the economic system of Islam as distinct from both the socialist and capitalist.

6. *Min Hunā Na'lam* (From Here We Should Know) (1965): This book is a response to Khalid M. Khalid's book "*Min Hunā Nabda*" (From Here we Start). It discusses the relationship between religion and state, and shows how every attempt of segregation is an assault against faith and law.

7. *Ta'ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt* (Reflections about Religion and Life): The *Ta'ammulāt* contains literary pieces, aspects of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, reflections about religion and life, Ghazālī's personal characteristics, and narrations about his village and childhood.

8. *Khuluq al-Muslim* (The Character of the Muslim): This work illustrates the Islamic

morals and their implications in life and society. Most quotations are based on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. What makes this book interesting is that it tackles the moral implications of new social phenomena. In mass media for example, dishonesty causes greater damage because a single lie is believed by thousands of readers. Similarly, in elections, the recommendation of an incompetent candidate can be an enormous falsehood.

9. *'Aqīdat al-Muslim* (Muslim Creed): This work is an inquiry into beliefs in a way that meets the needs of today's Muslims. It sets out to present beliefs in a new style, using a more approachable language than that found in classical manuals of creeds. It addresses questions of, "The First Truth, Allah", "Decree and Predestination", "Deeds are the Basis of Faith", "Sins and Repentance", "Prophecies", and "Eternity".

10. *Al-Ta'aṣṣub wa al-Tasāmuḥ bayna al-Naṣrāniyyah wa al-Islam* (Prejudice and Tolerance between Christianity and Islam): This book is a response to an Egyptian Christian writer whose name and work Ghazālī does not bother to mention. It discusses the position of Islam towards prejudice, the treatment of the Caliph Omar of the People of the Book, the relationship of Muslims with *dhimmi*s, the history of Islamic conquest of Egypt, free religious conversion, tolerance towards different religious faiths, and religious expansion in both Islam and Christianity.

11. *Fiqh al-Sīra* (The Understanding of the Biography of the Prophet): This book was written in the Mosque of Medina in Saudi Arabia. It provides a comprehensive overview of the life of the prophet Muhammad.

12. *Fī-Mawḳib al-Da'wah* (In the Crowd of *Da'wah*): *Fī-Mawḳib al-Da'wah* is a collection of a number of articles written towards the end of the forties and the beginning of the

fifties. It defends the religion of Islam and *da'wah* against damaging and humiliating forces. In the introduction, Ghazālī says: “I wrote these papers to inspire emotions, motivate spirits, and reform current conditions. I struggle against the weakness leading our adversaries to our humiliation.”

13. *Ḍalām min al-Gharb* (Darkness from the West): A response to the orientalisks of Egypt. Ghazālī discusses the foreign ideas that undermine Islamic morals, strengths and self, distort Muslim personalities, and have led to a state where Muslims are neither Western in economic terms, nor are they aware of the sources of their strength and progress contained in Islam.

14. *Jaddid Ḥayātak* (Renew your Life): A guide for those who would like to develop a new lifestyle. A comparative study of the teachings of Islam with the finest discoveries of western civilization in education and morality. This book shows that religion and human innate nature lead together to the same end. Ghazālī benefited from the work of Dale Carnegie entitled *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*.

15. *Laysa min al-'Islām* (Not from Islam): This book is a discussion of beliefs, jurisprudence, customs, and religious innovations. It addresses average Muslim readers, and avoids complex terminology affecting the proper understanding of Islam. The decision to write this book was made in view of the fact that the public is better educated about modern subjects than about Islamic knowledge.

16. *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq fī-Kifāhinā al-'Islāmī* (Features of Truth in our Islamic Struggle): The book criticizes Muslim activists, addresses their mistakes, and explains the victories and catastrophes that have befallen the religion and its followers. The main argument of this book is that all catastrophes are due to Muslims' own selves and

not to any external conspiracy.

17. *Kayfa Nafham al-'Islām* (Understanding the Religion of Islam): This book deals with major issues affecting the Muslim nation, and attempts to purify the religion from the distortions of extremists and the myths of its adversaries.

18. *Al-'Istī'mār: 'Aḥqāḍ wa-'Aṭmā'* (Colonialism: Interests and Greed): This book addresses the colonial crimes, discusses the question of Islam and peace, and shows the justice Muslims enjoyed in their early history and the enormous aggressions Muslims were subjected to in later times.

19. *Nazarāt fī al-Qur'ān* (Reflections about the Qur'ān): The *Nazarāt* deals with several themes of the Qur'ān, like human beings, public life, property, divinity, prophecies, rewards, and the corruption of nations. This book is meant to introduce a series of commentary on the Qur'ān, conforming to the modern methods of understanding and deduction, and reflecting the spirit of the Qur'ān, while avoiding problems of grammar, rhetoric, and the polemics of theologians and philosophers.²⁷¹

20. *Ma'a Allah: Dirāsāt fī al-Da'wah wa al-Du'āt* (In the Company of Allah: Studies in Da'wah and Dā'īs): This book is a study of the historical progress of *da'wah*, the qualities of *dā'īs*, the means of *da'wah*, and the areas of modern *da'wah* which need attention.

21. *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf fī al-'Ālam al-'Islāmī* (The Battle of the Qur'ān in the Muslim World): The work was written as a contribution to the struggle against colonialism, it stirs the feelings of national pride, arouses hope instead of despair, and seeks to strengthen links between Muslim nations in order that they may stand up to colonial dominations and establish Islamic political and social life.

²⁷¹Ghazālī, *Nazarāt fī al-Qur'ān*, 271.

22. *Kifāḥ Dīn* (A Struggle of a Religion): The *Kifāḥ Dīn* discusses the deteriorating conditions of Muslims, the damages caused to states established by colonial powers, and how colonialism is still present despite official independence.

23. *Al-'Islām wa al-Ṭaqāt al-Mu'aṭṭalah* (Islam and the Unexploited Potentials): This work is a comparison between the Islamic ideals and the sad conditions of Muslims today. It explains how Muslims are able to become economically self-sufficient if only they would learn how to exploit their own resources. In his introduction, Ghazālī says: “In this book, I contrasted the nature of a religion with the conditions of a nation. The reader will notice the gap between what ought to be and what has actually occurred, and will also discover the reasons that have caused this gap.”²⁷² The book answers questions like: How did the Muslim nation become stagnant? How can it be rejuvenated? What is the position of Muslims’ spiritual and intellectual values?

24. *Ḥuqūq al-'Insān bayna Ta'ālīm al-'Islām wa-'I'lān al-'Umam al-Muttaḥidah* (Human Rights between the Teachings of Islam and the Declaration of the United Nations): This work discusses the principles of human rights, freedom, equality, and economic welfare, and shows that Islam calls for a life of dignity free from ethnic or economic discrimination. It explains that modern notions of human rights or the declaration of the United Nations are nothing more than a reaffirmation of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

25. *Hādhā Dīnunā* (This is our Religion): This book is a general overview of the teachings of Islam. It provides basic knowledge about Islam, yet avoids difficult

²⁷²Ghazālī, *Al-'Islām wa al-Ṭaqāt al-Mu'aṭṭalah* (Islam and the Unexploited Potentials) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2001), 3.

terminology, and follows a modern style of presentation. It is divided into sections on beliefs, rituals, and Sharī'a, and addresses faith, life, religious practice and the social dimension of Islam.

26. *Al-Khadī'ah: Haqīqat al-Qawmiyyah al-'Arabiyyah wa-'Uṣṭūrat al-Ba'th al-'Arabī* (The Deceit: The Truth about Arab Nationalism and the Myth of Arab Revival). This book is a collection of lectures originally delivered in the Faculty of Sharī'a in Azhar, in which Ghazālī discusses the concept of Arab nation, the Arab state, and the theories of Arab nationalists like Michel 'Aflaq, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Bazzāz, and Luṭfī Khulī. Ghazālī argues that it is impossible for the Arab nation to be rejuvenated so long as it ignores its religion and traditions.

27. *Al-Jānib al-'Āṭif min al-'Islām* (The Emotional Aspect of Islam): This book illustrates the meanings of Islam, faith, and perfection of worship (*iḥsān*) in light of the Qur'ān, away from the polemics of theologians and ṣūfis. It intends to empower Sufism so as to become a dynamic social force. Ghazālī discusses some of the wise statements of Ibn 'Aṭā Allah al-'Iskandarī on issues of ethics, manners, and self-discipline.

28. *Difā' 'an al-'Aqīda wa al-Sharī'a ḍidda Maṭā'in al-Mustashriqīn* (Defence of the Islamic Faith and Law against the Allegations of the Orientalists): This book is a critique of Goldziher's work "Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law".²⁷³ It discusses the evolution of Islamic law and faith, piety and Sufism, sects, Islamic unity, and the position of Muslims between colonialism and Zionism.

29. *Rakā'iz al-'Imān bayna al-'Aql wa al-Qalb* (The Foundations of Faith between

²⁷³Goldziher, Ignaz (1850-1920), *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Trans. Andras & Ruth Hamori, with an intro and additional notes by Bernard Lewis (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1981).

Reason and Emotions): The *Rakā'iz* is similar to his *Al-Jānib al-Āṭif*, yet is extensive and profound. Ghazālī examines the spiritual dimension of Islam and criticises the Islamic culture, and discusses the partnership between science and faith, spirit and body, and life and hereafter. It also raises the need to review Muslim culture, while discussing the sources of religious monotheism (*tawḥīd*), the universal mercy of the Prophet Muhammad and women.

30. *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr* (The Harvest of Pride): This work is a survey of the conditions of Muslims prior to and following their defeat in the war of 1967. Ghazālī expresses the hope that the Arabs, prior to their fight, were guided in their mission and developed trust in God. Failure to do so only yielded a harvest of pride.

31. *Al-'Islām fī Wajh al-Zaḥf al-'Aḥmar* (The Religion of Islam Confronting the Red Invasion): This book unveils the flaws in communism, the perspective of communism with regards to freedom, family, and religion. It exposes the sufferings of Muslim minorities under Russian rule.

32. *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq* (Shots of Truth): This book addresses different topics like Islamic faith, proofs about the oneness of God, how religions and prophets complement each other, the position of Islam versus nationalism, and the horrible destructive methods used against *dā'īs*.

33. *Al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil al-Qarn al-Khāmis 'Ashar* (The Islamic Da'wah as it Approaches the Fifteenth Century): This book is a reflection on the progress of *da'wah* in Muslim history, and a discussion of the fortunes of *da'wah*, obstacles, the causes leading to the decline of Islamic civilization, the elimination of the Caliphate, the crusaders, the atheists, and other adverse forces.

34. *Al-Fasād al-Siyāsī fī al-Mujtama'āt al-'Arabiyya wa al-'Islāmiyyah* (Political Corruption in the Arab and Muslim World). This book was originally written in the Prison of Ṭūr in 1951. It addresses questions of civil liberties, dignity of nations, religious thought, political conditions, collective 'Ijtihād, criteria of justice under systems of despotism, and the implementation of the Sharī'a.

35. *Fann al-Dhikr wa al-Du'ā'* (Remembrance and Prayer): This book describes in vivid prose how the Prophet used to remember Allah and pray to Him. It is a compilation illustrated by prophetic prayers.

36. *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyya* (The Constitution of Cultural Unity): The *Dustūr* discusses the conditions of Muslims in the present and future. It elaborates Bannā's twenty principles based on Ghazālī's personal experience gained over a period of forty years. Ghazālī develops another ten principles concerning Muslims' life, society, and their relationship with other societies.

37. *Wāqi' al-'Ālam al-'Islāmī fī Maṭāli' al-Qarn Khāmis 'Ashar* (The Condition of the Muslim World at the Start of the Fifteenth Century): This book addresses the plots against the religion of Islam and its followers. It discusses current conditions of Muslims, including political tyranny, administrative corruption, deteriorating freedom of expression, negligence of human rights, and the terrible gap between the teachings of Islam and the present conditions.

38. *Mushkilāt fī Ṭarīq al-Ḥayāt al-'Islāmiyyah* (Problems on the Way of Islamic Life): The *Mushkilāt* discusses the various problems that jeopardize civil and military progress, examines Muslim culture, and criticizes the current condition of Muslim civilization.

39. *Humūm Dā'iyah* (Concerns of a Dā'ī): This book deals with problems of modern Islamic thought and culture, including modern challenges, traditional concepts, culture, the obstacles facing *da'wah*, and the decline of civilization.
40. *Mi'at Su'āl fī al-'Islām* (A One-Hundred Questions about Islam): This book is a two volume set. It offers answers to one-hundred questions about Islam, including consensus in Islam, Sharī'a laws, the nature of Angels, the Jinn, modern Islamic awakening, Islamic standpoint towards the West, etc...
41. *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah* (Ills and Cures): The *'Ilal* examines the various ills of Muslim societies, and suggest cures, while also attempting to correct misconceptions about Islamic history. In the process of writing, Ghazālī distinguishes between the divine sources and the political and cultural history of Muslims.
42. *Mustaqbal al-Islām Khārij 'Arḍih* (The Future of Islam Outside of its Land): The *Mustaqbal* addresses the duties of Muslims towards *da'wah*, with special reference to Muslim converts in France. It discusses the means of *da'wah*, and whether *da'wah* today stands on a proper strategy and organized effort. Finally, it raises the question whether Muslims today attract others to Islam, and whether their image causes any injustice to the message of Islam.
43. *Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt* (Life Story): *Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt* contains Ghazālī's early memories of Hasan Bannā, the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, his work in the Ministry of Endowments in Egypt, etc...
44. *Sirr Ta'akhhur al-'Arab wa al-Muslimīn* (The Cause of Backwardness of Arabs and Muslims): This book is a critical examination of various problems leading Muslims to backwardness. These include questions of political despotism, the influence of

ignorance on *da'wah*, incompetent *dā'īs*, Islamic unity, and foreign cultural conquest. The solution starts with a review of the Islamic heritage, examines what benefits come from Western civilization, and provides a comprehensive presentation of Islam. It recommends producing competent Muslim scholars, a revival of the jurisprudence concerning the rituals of worship through understanding the worship in the Qur'ān, and improved education for Muslims.

45. *Al-Ṭarīq min Hunā* (The Road from Here): This book is a critique of the backwardness of Muslims, *da'wah* methods, and a comparison between every day conditions of Muslims and their religion.

46. *Jihād al-Da'wah bayna 'Ajz al-Dākhil wa-Kayd al-Khārij* (The Struggle of *Da'wah* between Internal Incompetency and External Conspiracies): This work describes the various ills of Muslims, as well as different influential religious interpretations like *Jihād*—understood to be fighting without reference to struggling in other important fields like media, finance, science, and social services.

47. *Al-Ḥaqq al-Murr* (The Bitter Truth): This five volume set include six hundred and thirty two short articles published in *Al-Muslimūn* Magazine in London. It addresses a variety of subjects to educate Muslims about their religion, values, morals, history, and law. It also offers the perspective of Islam on contemporary issues.

48. *Al-Ghazw al-Thaqāfī Yamtaddu fī Farāghinā* (The Cultural Conquest Grows in our Absence): Ghazālī argues that Muslim personality suffers from a terrible vacuum due to superficial and childish perceptions of the religion spawned by periods of intellectual retreat. This book attempts to discover the reasons leading to the backwardness of Muslims, assuming that problems of *da'wah* are similar in the Muslim East and West.

49. *Al-Maḥāwir al-Khamṣa li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (The Five Themes of the Glorious Qur'ān): This book is an exposition of the verses of the Qur'ān around major themes including: God is One; the universe is a sign of the Creator, resurrection and judgment, education, and legislation.

50. *Al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bayna 'Ahl al-Fiḥ wa-'Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (The Sunnah of the Prophet between the Jurists and the Muḥaddiths): The book deals with those who approach ḥadīth literature as if they have covered all of the Islamic scholarship, and addresses those who know only superficial aspects of the religion. This book led to many critical reactions from the 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth.

51. *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'a bayna al-Taḳālīd al-Rākidah wa al-Wāfidah* (Women's Issues between Static and Foreign Traditions): The Qaḍāyā deals with Muslims' concepts about women. Women fall victim to static traditions preventing them from making any contribution to life, or foreign customs that take them out of their natural role to be a tool of pleasure. This book collects separate thoughts about scholarship, literature, history, and legal verdicts, all related, however, to issues of women, family, and society.

52. *Turāthunā al-Fikrī fi-Mizān al-Shar' wa al-'Aql* (Our Intellectual Legacy in the Scale of Sharī'a and the Intellect): This work is a critical review of the Islamic intellectual heritage from a Qur'ānic perspective. It discusses numerous issues including the traditional knowledge, teaching methods, and reforms, Islamization of knowledge, dimensions of revelation, education, re-writing history, Qur'ān commentary, Sunnah, and the future of Arabic language and its literature.

53. *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (How to Approach the Glorious Qur'ān): This book is a discussion based on an interview held by 'Umar 'Abīd Ḥasana. It

addresses the methods of understanding the Qur'ān, order and classification in the Qur'ān, the relationship between the Qur'ān and science and ways to make the Qur'ān the primary source in modern Muslim culture. This book also discusses the comprehensiveness of the Qur'ānic worldview, the need to understand the universal laws, the conditions of Tafsīr, and the translation of the meanings of the Qur'ān.

54. *Ṣayḥat Taḥdhīr min Du'āt al-Taṣṣīr* (A Warning against Missionaries): Ghazālī wrote this book after reading about a Christian missionaries' conference in the United States. In this book, Ghazālī exhorts Muslims to be careful of missionaries, and call upon missionaries to focus on secular Western civilization instead of Muslims who are the last to need their work because they believe in God and in Jesus.

55. *Naḥwa Tafsīr Mawḍū'ī li-Suwar al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Toward a Thematic Interpretation of Chapters from the Glorious Qur'ān): This book provides a thematic commentary on the chapters of the Qur'ān. In this work, Ghazālī addresses each chapter as a unit separately with its own theme, draws a picture of the chapter, connects its beginning with its end, and searches for the hidden connections binding the chapter together.

56. *Kunūz min al-Sunnah* (Treasures from the *Sunnah*): This book was published after the death of Ghazālī. It was prepared by his student Muhammad K. Qa'īd, and includes Ghazālī's reflections on the traditions of the prophet that have implications in various spheres of life. It also deals with common notions based on traditions like "I was commanded to fight people until they testify that there is no God but Allah", "Jihād is the spiritual life of my nation", or "The best deed is that which is regular."

b. Ghazālī's Professional and Intellectual Life:

Soon after his graduation from the University of Azhar in 1943, Ghazālī was appointed as a cleric (*'imām*), a teacher (*mudarris*), and a preacher (*khaṭīb*) at the 'Azabān Mosque located in al-'Atabah al-Khaḍrā', a relatively small but strategic area in the heart of Cairo.²⁷⁴ In his "Interesting Discovery," Ghazālī describes those moments,

It was just one month after my appointment as an *imām* that I realized I was ignorant. My knowledge was all used up in a period of just a few weeks. I realized that if I did not renew myself and draw on the sources of knowledge, I would ultimately face embarrassment. I was deceived by the number of talks I mastered and that I have delivered earlier during my travels across the country. Now I was responsible for one pulpit visited by people from all walks of life, and I had to deliver daily lectures and weekly sermons.²⁷⁵

Ghazālī gradually rose in the administrative hierarchy of the Department of Islamic Propagation within the Ministry of Endowment in Egypt. He was appointed as a supervisor of mosques, as a preacher in Azhar, as a director of mosques and training, and finally a director of *da'wah* and *'irshād*.²⁷⁶ In July 18th 1971, 'Abd al-'Azīz Kāmil, the then Minister of Endowments and Affairs of Azhar, appointed him as an undersecretary at the ministry. In March 8 1981, Anwar Sādāt, the Egyptian President (1970-1981) appointed him as an undersecretary of *da'wah* in the Ministry of Endowments.²⁷⁷ Through writings, speeches, sermons, lectures, radio and television broadcastings,

²⁷⁴Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 23; Shalabī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 24.

²⁷⁵Ghazālī, "Qisṣat Hayāt," 178.

²⁷⁶Shalabī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Ma'arkat al-Muṣṣhaf*, 24. Ghazālī was assigned to the administration of preaching in the Azhar, and was appointed later as the Director of mosques and religious training. In July 1971, he became the Director of *Da'wah* and Guidance, and was promoted to the position of the undersecretary in the Ministry of Endowment in charge of Islamic *da'wah* in March 1981. See 'Imāra, *al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī*, 13.

²⁷⁷*Ibid.* 25.

Ghazālī left a manifest influence upon Muslim mind in Egypt and elsewhere.²⁷⁸

During his tenure in the Ministry of Endowments, Ghazālī travelled extensively to various cities in Egypt to meet *da'wah* workers and to share with them the best ways to carry out their religious duties.²⁷⁹ He worked closely with Sayyid Sābiq to improve the teaching and guidance of Imams and improve public attendance in mosques. They established non-profit societies for mosques that help Imams improve their performance,²⁸⁰ supplied mosques with Islamic libraries, and recommended teaching literature for Imams' weekly programs.²⁸¹ Despite resistance, Ghazālī also assured women's attendance in many mosques in Egypt.²⁸²

Ghazālī's typical day was busy. On Thursday afternoon, he could leave his home to give a lecture in Munayyā in the evening. He would then deliver the Friday sermon in Manfalūṭ, and give a lecture in Asyūṭ and another one in Suhāj after 'Ishā' Prayer. The next day, Ghazālī would arrive to work in Cairo before his workmates. Each day was full of discussions with *dā'īs* and scholars from Azhar and the Ministry of Endowments. He was often visited by Tanṭāwī, teachers from the faculty of 'Uṣūl al-Dīn and Arabic Language, ministers of endowments from Islamic and Arab countries, and *da'wah* workers from all over the world.²⁸³

Ghazālī was assigned to lecture at the Mosque of 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās. There, his Friday's sermons (*khuṭbas*) represented a series of thematic sessions of the commentary

²⁷⁸Adawī, *al-'Imām Muhammad Ghazālī: al-Da'wah wa al-Dā'iyyah*, 27.

²⁷⁹Ghazālī, "Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt," 226. In Egypt, Ghazālī carried out his *da'wah* through the Ministry of Endowment, and worked in higher education for nearly twenty years. Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 140; See also *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:36.

²⁸⁰Ghazālī, "Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt," 196; Fallūsī, 56-57.

²⁸¹Ghazālī, "Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt," 225-226.

²⁸²Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 67.

²⁸³Alā' Ghazālī, "Al-Sīrah al-Shakhṣiyyah," 186.

on the Qur'ān, beginning from the first chapter of the Qur'ān. His commentary of Chapter Four (The Women), however, coincided with the discussion of Islamic family laws in the Egyptian parliament, giving an impression that he selected those particular verses on purpose, that is, to reveal how the proposed laws violated the Qur'ān. Ghazālī was consequently banned from giving Friday sermons.²⁸⁴ Qaradāwī's explanation suggests that Ghazālī's lectures evolved into a distinct trend of thought, one that was enlightened and moderate. Ghazālī's lectures and publications contained sharp criticism of conditions in Egypt, and unveiled conspiracies against the religion of Islam and the Muslim nation that did not please the Egyptian authorities. Ghazālī was warned but chose to continue, and this led to a ban on his religious activities, and to his being blacklisted by the Government of Egypt in 1974.²⁸⁵

Following his suspension from delivering khuṭbas in the Mosque of 'Amr bin al-ʿĀṣ, Ghazālī moved to the University of King 'Abd al-'Azīz, Jeddah,²⁸⁶ and later to 'Umm al-Qurā University in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.²⁸⁷ There, his *da'wah* was carried on broadcast programs and newspapers, while he became involved in teaching and supervising graduate students, serving on various academic councils in Muslim universities and participating in *da'wah* agencies.²⁸⁸ In Qatar, Ghazālī most notably contributed to the development of the Sharī'a Faculty of the University of Qatar, and to the dissemination of Islamic awareness through various media, mosques, and

²⁸⁴Alwanī, "Shaykhunā al-Ghazālī Raḥimah Allah," 13-14.

²⁸⁵Qaradāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 52.

²⁸⁶Ishāq Farḥān, "Kalimat Jam'iyat," 21.

²⁸⁷Qaradāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 52.

²⁸⁸Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 38; 'Uways, *Shaykh Ghazālī, Marāḥil 'Aẓīma*, 18.

associations.²⁸⁹

In 1984, Ghazālī was appointed as chairperson of the Academic Council of El-Emīr AbdelKadir University in Constantine, Algeria. His lectures largely focused on thematic commentary on the Qur'ān. Ghazālī acted both as a guide and a juristconsult, and continually received visitors both in his office and at home. He participated in a weekly state television program, and delivered dozens of religious lectures and Friday sermons all over the country.²⁹⁰ He regularly contributed to the conferences organized by the Council of Religious Affairs in Algeria.²⁹¹

In 1989 and after five years in Algeria, Ghazālī returned to Egypt. According to 'Alwānī, some of Ghazālī's supporters and students believed he should return to Egypt either as a Rector (Shaykh) of the Azhar or as a guide (*murshid*) of the Muslim Brotherhood. The proposal of the Azhar rectorship was declined on the pretext that Azhar needed a person strictly in academia, which was not the case with Ghazālī.²⁹² Egyptian authorities believed that Ghazālī incited a public protest in support of the Islamic Family Laws and opposed a demonstration led by secularists in Cairo.²⁹³ Besides, his rivals did not forget his criticism of the government's mishandling of the war in

²⁸⁹ Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 39.

²⁹⁰ Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:36; Ṭālbī 'Ammār, "Shaykh Ghazālī Kamā 'Araftuh fī al-Jazā'ir," *'Islāmiyyat al-Ma'rifah*, 50-51.

²⁹¹ Ṭālbī, "Shaykh Ghazālī," 50. It appears that Ghazālī's stay in Algeria provided him with examples on some poor religious understanding and *da'wah* practices, which were included in his *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*. Such examples include the interpretation of Moses poking the eye of the Angel of death, and human suffering of evil spirits, Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 92-93. These stories happened to him in Algeria. See Ṭālbī, "al-Shaykh Ghazālī," 52-53.

²⁹² 'Alwānī, "Shaykhunā Muhammad Ghazālī," 7.

²⁹³ According to 'Uways, Ghazālī might be the only person for whom two public protests were held. The first was during the rule of 'Abdel Nāṣṣer, during the preparation of the constitution, which led Ghazālī to object to the influence of secular and socialist groups. The second was during the era of Sādat, when an attempt was made to modify family laws. Shaykh Ghazālī urged the public to protest. See 'Uways 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, "Ḥayāt Mujāhid Aẓīm," *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī, Ḥayāt wa 'Āthār, Shahādāt wa-Mawāqif*, Ed., Naṣr al-Dīn La'rābah (Algeria: Sharikat al-'Ummah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', ed., 1, 1998), 23.

1967. These issues mitigated against the idea of appointing him to Azhar.²⁹⁴ The proposal that he should lead the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood was also declined on the pretext that Abū Ḥāmid Abū Naṣr was older, that Ghazālī has been imprisoned for a short period of time because of his attitude towards the opposition of Jamāl ‘Abdel Naṣṣer, and lastly that he had clashed with Huḍaybī, leading finally to his dismissal in 1953.²⁹⁵

With both these proposals declined, there was a third alternative; that of leading the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Cairo in the capacity of a consultant and as a chair of its academic council in Cairo.²⁹⁶ This Institute involved prominent thinkers like Ahmad Kamāl Abū al-Majd, Ṭāriq Bishrī, Muḥamad ‘Imārah, Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Najātī, Muḥammad Salīm ‘Awwā, Jamāl Dīn ‘Aṭṭiyya, Sayyid Dasūqī Ḥasan, ‘Ali Jumu’a, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Masīrī, and Zuhayra ‘Ābidīn.²⁹⁷ Ghazālī participated in many conferences and research projects of the Institute.²⁹⁸

During his final stay in Egypt, Ghazālī undertook serious research work on the methodology of study of the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, the Muslim intellectual heritage, and contemporary Muslim problems. His efforts resulted in the publication of *Kayfa Natā’āmalu ma’a al-Qur’ān?* (How to Approach the Qur’ān), *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bayna ‘Ahl al-Fiqh wa-‘Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (The Sunnah of the Prophet between Jurists and

²⁹⁴Ibid., 8. According to Ghazālī, the shame of the defeat in the War of 1973 was caused by an absent-minded leadership. The failure of the leadership to observe minimum degree of consultation and democracy was the primary reason leading to the defeat. See ‘Alwānī, “Shaykhunā Muḥammad al-Ghazālī,” 14.

²⁹⁵Ibid., 9. Although there were older inmates in the prison of Ṭūr, the Brethren unanimously agreed to appoint Ghazālī as a leader. See Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh al-Ghazālī kamā ‘Araftuh*, 16.

²⁹⁶Malkāwī, “Kalimat al-Ma’had,” 16.

²⁹⁷Fallūsī, *Ghuṣn*, 95.

²⁹⁸Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 6.

Muḥaddiths), *Turāthunā al-Fikrī fī-Mizān al-Shar‘ wa al-‘Aql* (Our Intellectual Legacy in the Perspective of Sharī‘a and Reason), and *Naḥwa Tafsīr Mawḍū‘ī li-Suwar al-Qur’ān* (Thematic Commentary of Chapters of the Qur’ān). What characterised this period of time is that, prior to publication; Ghazālī’s ideas were discussed in group session, seminars, and forums at the same Institute.²⁹⁹ They appear to have directly served the vision of Islamization set by the Institute regarding the need for a thorough examination of the methodology in approaching revelation as a source of knowledge, and for a review and analysis of Muslim traditions. Particularly in his *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (The Sunnah of the Prophet) Ghazālī was remarkably deliberate about issues of juristic preferences and interpretation of traditions.

Throughout his academic career, however, Ghazālī consistently maintained a keen interest in *da‘wah*. He participated in many international conferences and seminars, and supervised several graduate theses.³⁰⁰ Ghazālī’s *da‘wah* efforts were diverse. He wrote in the weekly journal of the Muslim Brotherhood, *Majallat al-Mabāḥith*, of the Muslim Brethren after their release from prison in 1949, and contributed to the *Da‘wah Journal* founded by Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ashmāwī, *Liwā’ al-‘Islām* in Egypt, and *Majallat al-‘Ummah* in Qatar. He was also a regular writer for the newspaper of Al-Sha‘b in Egypt, and for the magazine of al-Muslimūn in Saudi Arabia.³⁰¹

Ghazālī’s televised and public lectures around the world exposed him to a wide Muslim audience. His attachment to Muslim universities particularly affected the Muslim elites. Ghazālī mediated in international crises, including the release of

²⁹⁹ Alwānī, “Shaykhunā Muhammad al-Ghazālī,” in *‘Islāmiyyat al-Ma‘arifah* 7 (1997), 11.

³⁰⁰ Uways, Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī, 8.

³⁰¹ Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh Ghazālī kamā ‘Araḥtuh*, 61.

Egyptian soldiers from Iran, and also visited Muslims in Bosnia.³⁰² He also travelled to Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia; there, and elsewhere, he was regularly invited to conferences organized by Muslim youth.³⁰³

The understanding of Ghazālī's real contribution cannot, however, be made without understanding the history of traditional and modern reform movements since the mid-19th century. Ghazālī's intellectual life can be analyzed with reference to two great conflicts in modern Islamic thought; one against literalism, superficiality and intellectual decline, and the other against traditionalism in defence of religious principles and faith against attempts at the westernization or even destruction of belief.³⁰⁴ Within the context of these battles, Ghazālī's *da'wah* provides a religious perspective which addresses many aspects of Muslim intellectual, cultural, and socio-political life, and searches into the underlying causes of religious and social problems. For 'Abū-Rabī', Ghazālī's contribution lies in the fact that, throughout his intellectual career as a writer and a theorist, he used the tools of critical Islamic thinking to approach the issues of the time. Whether considering the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, discussing the economic and social conditions of modern Muslims, critiquing inner stagnation and the weakness enveloping modern Muslim societies, proposing a sophisticated philosophy of Muslim self-criticism, critiquing the West and imperialism, or presenting his views on matters ranging from Islamic knowledge to the responsibilities of Muslim intellectuals in the contemporary age, Ghazālī brought a

³⁰² Alā' M. Ghazālī, "al-Sīrah al-Shakhsiyyah," 195. Iran showed satisfaction towards Ghazālī's approach as unite opinions without criticizing Shi'ism. Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid., 39.

³⁰⁴ Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr*, 5.

rigorously intellectual style of analysis to the task. Ghazālī began his life as an ideologue of the Islamic movement in Egypt, and ended it a freelance Islamicist critic.³⁰⁵

Ghazālī's contribution, whether with the Muslim Brethren, in Muslim universities, or in the Ministry of Endowment, was made on behalf of traditional Islam. His traditional approach, however, advocated new perspectives, supported modern changes, de-emphasized religious formalities, and criticized modern religious order. Ghazālī critiqued Muslim life with all its ills and problems, and was attentive to the various proposals of how to develop a new perspective for change. What explains Ghazālī's popularity in *da'wah* was the fact that his contribution was not purely traditional. Besides, Ghazālī was never disconnected from the social and political events of the Muslim world, but rather was at the heart of the Islamic movement through continuous interaction with members and representatives from various religious societies in the field of *da'wah*.

Ghazālī's contributions did not go unnoticed. Many Muslim governments, including Egypt, Mauritania, Qatar, Algeria, Pakistan, and Malaysia, honoured him. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia awarded him the King Faisal International Award for Distinguished Service of Islam in 1989. Ghazālī died in 1996, and was buried in the Muslim holy city of Medina, Saudi Arabia.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵Ibrāhīm M. Abū-Rabī', *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 224.

³⁰⁶Gharīb, *Muhammad Ghazālī, Ḥayātuh*, 83-84.

V. Conclusion:

Ghazālī's life and works show him to have been a distinct scholar with an open yet critical mind, who integrated traditional knowledge with modernity, and who developed a keen interest in *da'wah*. His background and experience prepared him to address the problems of *da'wah* and *dā'īs* with reference to the revelatory sources of Islam, yet without losing sight of the socio-economic and political implications of *da'wah*. His extensive intellectual background and diverse experience also translated into the development of *da'wah* concepts, attention to cultural impediments to *da'wah*, a review of *da'wah* legal implications, and criticism of the contemporary undertaking of *da'wah* by unprepared or narrow-minded *dā'īs*. More importantly, however, was his serious attention to the question of *da'wah*-based interest (*maṣlahat al-da'wah*). He exercised a great deal of independent reasoning on this question, and received the most intense criticism from scholars and *dā'īs*.

Ghazālī translated his criticism of the *kuttāb* into a condemnation of memorization, and of religious formalities or acts devoid of rational content or positive impact on the lives of the individual or the society. Ghazālī's critique of religious literalism, and his serious attention to the essence of acts instead of their forms and letters, deeply informed his analysis of *da'wah*. His criticism largely shaped his approach to the goals, approach and methods of *da'wah*. It also appears that he extended his critique of scholars, religious institutions, society and culture into his analysis of *da'wah*.

Ghazālī's multifaceted learning, background, and experience produced a fresh perspective on *da'wah* for modern societies. His preoccupation with various aspects of

reform, and his busy attention to a multitude of issues both at the local and international levels, affected his discussion of *da'wah* in such a way that it appeared broad too, and in many ways came close to reform. We must acknowledge, however, that his critique of learning and various socio-economic and political problems all had an effect on his examination of *da'wah* and *dā'īs*. His discussion of *da'wah* throughout his many works, instead of being narrowly-focused, enriches our understanding of the many dimensions and perspectives of *da'wah*.

The importance of *da'wah* to his understanding of society and culture, as well as religion, cannot be understated. Ghazālī's works depicted the problems of society and culture to diagnose the weaknesses and failures, as well as the responsibilities and challenges of *da'wah*. His works establish a logical relationship between the sacred and secular, religion and modernity, and avoid the common distinction made between religious and mundane life. Ghazālī's thought translated the ideas in contemporary Islamic reforms, including the views of his teacher Ḥasan Bannā, regarding the comprehensive nature of the religion and the false dichotomy between religious and mundane worlds. Yet, instead of speaking in broad religious terms, Ghazālī chose to shift attention to a new fundamental relationship between *da'wah* and life; hence, putting the challenges of modernity at the centre of *da'wah*.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Analysis of *Da'wah*

Introduction:

The argument in this chapter is that the conceptual framework Ghazālī has put forward for *da'wah* highlights social, cultural and economic contexts. This framework allowed Ghazālī to link *da'wah* to two crucial concepts. One is the innate human nature, which also allows him to include the People of the Interval into his discussion of *da'wah*. Ghazālī's attention to the question of innate human nature in the discussion of *da'wah* also allows him to explore and discover new ways in which human nature conforms to *da'wah*. The second critical concept in this chapter is the socio-economic and cultural context of *da'wah*. This not only includes discussion of social and economic problems impeding *da'wah* but also the vital connection between the very character of *da'wah* and the real needs of society. In this regard, one key question is the reciprocal relationship between *da'wah* and freedom. Another important question is the extent to which Ghazālī's development of *da'wah* universality allowed him to examine *da'wah* beyond the geographic boundaries of the Muslim world.

Ghazālī's conceptual framework for *da'wah* requires an examination of major concepts and definitions, the interpretations of related Qur'ānic verses, including the objectives and scope of *da'wah*, and the relationship of *da'wah* to questions of universality, freedom, and society. This theoretical analysis contributes to the formulation of Ghazālī's *da'wah* and demonstrates how carefully he examined the physical, emotional, and moral aspects of human existence. At the same time, Ghazālī

did not develop a *da'wah* theory purely based on revelation or abstract thinking, or adopt a traditional style in the study of *da'wah*, but rather drew on the socio-cultural and economic living context which, unless improved, impacted negatively on *da'wah*. Even in his discussion of the theological questions of innate human nature (*fiṭrah*) or the People of the Interval (*'Ahl al-Fatrah*), Ghazālī was continually preoccupied with the de facto reality affecting the understanding and progress of *da'wah*.

This chapter traces Ghazālī's conceptual framework and the contribution of his approach to the study of *da'wah*. It also discusses his understanding of human nature, and how it affected his *da'wah* thought, particularly when Ghazālī is constantly preoccupied with introducing a positive cheering image of the religion of Islam to Western societies.³⁰⁷ It is also worthwhile exploring questions of society, freedom, universality and peace. These point to Ghazālī's major interest in paving the way for a modern and intelligent *da'wah*, and also in comprehensive reforms affecting the living conditions of not only the caller to Islam (*dā'ī*) and the called upon (*al-mad'ū*), but of humanity as a whole.

In this discussion, I will draw on Ghazālī's works and on some commentaries of the Quran like Qurṭubī's *Tafsīr* and Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. I will also draw on some classical works including Ibn Taymiyyah's *Jāmi' al-Rasā'il* and *Dar' al-Ta'arud*.

³⁰⁷The following example shows Ghazālī's concern over the intelligent representation of Islam to Western audiences: "What does Islam gain from Muslim youth who in their travel to Europe or America; wear white garments, sit on the floor to eat foods using their fingers under the assumption that they practiced or introduced the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. What do Westerners think when a standing person, holds a glass and sits down to drink in order to practice the Sunnah? Is that what will attract people to Islam? See Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Hāli* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2000), 59.

I. Conceptual Framework:

Ghazālī views the Qur’ān as an illustration of the essence of *da’wah*, a complete account of its progress and a description of the consequences that *dā’īs* face in the transmission of the religious message.³⁰⁸ Stories in the Qur’ān especially provide an account of *da’wah* since the beginning of creation, spell out the hindrances before *da’wah*, and illustrate its various methodologies.³⁰⁹ Ghazālī’s understanding of *da’wah* is drawn from Qur’ānic verses that illustrate the characteristics of *da’wah* and address its surrounding conditions.³¹⁰ These include verses fifteen in Chapter al-Shūrā (The Consultation), sixty-eight and one-hundred and eight in Yūsuf (Joseph), sixty-seven in al-Ḥajj (The Pilgrimage), one-hundred twenty five in al-Naḥl (The Bee), thirty-three in Fuṣṣilat (Explained in Detail), one-hundred and forty five in al-’A’rāf (The Heights),³¹¹ and twenty-five in Yūnus (Jonah).³¹²

Ghazālī’s examination led to the following broad guidelines concerning the

³⁰⁸Ghazālī, *al-’Islām wa al-’Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 77.

³⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Nazarāt fi al-Qur’ān*, 95.

³¹⁰Ghazālī, *Ma’a Allah*, 17.

³¹¹Ibid., 16. The Qur’ān says: “Unto this, then, summon (O Muhammad). And be you upright as you are commanded, and follow not their lusts, but say: I believe in whatever Scripture Allah has sent down, and I am commanded to be just among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. Unto us our works and unto you your works; no argument between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and unto Him is the journeying.” Pickthall (Chapter 42:15), 467; “And when they entered in the manner which their father had enjoined, it would have not availed them as against Allah; it was but a need of Jacob’s soul which he thus satisfied; and lo! he was a lord of knowledge because We had taught him; but most of mankind know not.” Pickthall (Chapter 12:68), 211; “Unto each nation have We given sacred rites which they are to perform; so let them not dispute with you of the matter, but summon thou unto your Lord. Lo! you indeed follow right guidance.” Pickthall (Chapter 22:67), 312-313; “Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! your Lord is Best Aware of him who strays from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.” Pickthall (Chapter 16:125), 249; “And who is better in speech than him who calls unto Allah and does right, and said: Lo! I am of the Muslims.” Pickthall (Chapter 41:33), 462; “And Allah summons to the abode of peace, and leads whom He will to a straight path.” Pickthall (Chapter 10:25), 183; “And We wrote for him, upon the tablets, the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things, then (bade him): Hold it fast; and command thy people (saying): Take the better (course made clear) therein. I shall show you the abode of evil-livers.” Pickthall (Chapter 7:145), 143.

³¹²Ghazālī, *Ma’a Allah*, 16-17.

legitimacy, nature, and approach of *da'wah*:

- a) *Da'wah* to God implies the truth.³¹³
- b) *Da'wah* is divinely ordained (*tawqīfiyya*), i.e., *da'wah* draws neither on the personal reasoning of prophets nor on any rational philosophy.³¹⁴
- c) Prophets were but *da'wah* partners and exercised *da'wah* prior to the advent of Muhammad.³¹⁵
- d) Prophets were sent with good tidings and warnings to introduce people to God and to His commands, and to guide them to piety.³¹⁶
- e) *Da'wah* reflects and serves the current needs of the public.³¹⁷
- f) *Da'wah* is straightforward.³¹⁸
- g) *Da'wah* is free from material incentives.³¹⁹
- h) *Da'wah* is all-encompassing and includes all the disciplines that people need to understand the objectives of life and discover the signposts of guidance.³²⁰
- i) *Da'wah* is an everlasting obligation.³²¹
- j) Undertaking *da'wah* is a fundamental human right in Islam.³²²
- k) God endows *da'wah* with ingredients from preceding religions.³²³

³¹³Ibid.

³¹⁴Ibid., 18. The Qur'ān refers to this aspect in the following verse: (Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge. I and whosoever follows me - Glory be to Allah! - and I am not of the idolaters.) Pickthall, (Chapter 12:108), 214.

³¹⁵Ibid.

³¹⁶Ibid., 16. This is made in reference to the following verse in the Quran: "Messengers of good cheer and of warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise." Pickthall (Chapter 4:165), 90.

³¹⁷Ibid., 17.

³¹⁸Ibid.

³¹⁹Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 164.

³²⁰Ibid., 17.

³²¹Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 197.

³²²Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 218.

To provide a better explanation of *da'wah*, Ghazālī draws on the *da'wah* models of the prophets, whom he views as *dā'īs* throughout time, and whose efforts are considered to be a foundation of faith and goodness.³²⁴ According to Ghazālī, prophets assisted people, guided them³²⁵ and removed the accretions of superstition and material desires.³²⁶ They watched over divine guidance, their sayings were wisdom, their lives were role models, and their inner and outer aspects were harmonious. Prophets had no hidden versus public image, and their lifestyles corresponded to their styles of *da'wah*.³²⁷ In light of the Qur'ānic accounts of Prophets Noah, Ṣālih, Lūṭ, and Shu'ayb, Ghazālī argues that *da'wah* opens up human insight to recognize the Creator, and fights superstition, including the worship of idols or creatures.³²⁸

Still, Ghazālī discusses the nature of *da'wah*, and how it should be a constructive and persisting endeavour. To substantiate this, Ghazālī draws on the response of prophets to obstacles throughout the course of *da'wah*; the ways in which their respective nations adopted or turned down the message, and the end result of the conflict between guidance and evil.³²⁹ Prophets persevered throughout, and despite being prevented from delivering the message, engaged in construction rather than destruction, did good instead of harm, and continued in their teaching and education.³³⁰

The Qur'ānic accounts about the prophets' *da'wah* show that, in their

³²³Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 76.

³²⁴Ghazālī, *Min Maqālat*, 2:55.

³²⁵Ghazālī, *'Aqīdat al-Muslim* (Muslim Creed) (Dār al-Qalam. 1999), 188.

³²⁶Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah* (Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 31.

³²⁷Ghazālī, *'Aqīdat al-Muslim*, 202.

³²⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 91.

³²⁹Ghazālī, *Naẓarāt*, 95.

³³⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 135.

transmission of the message, they underscored one critical fact, namely, that no material compensation or reward was expected in return.³³¹ The prophets were neither sellers of talk nor claimants of fame.³³² This gave but did not take back, and sacrificed without seeking any credit.³³³ These shows how the undertaking of *da'wah* should be conveyed free from worldly purposes.

Prophets' *da'wah* was straightforward, simple, understandable, sincere, and compassionate.³³⁴ The transparency of *da'wah* derives from the example of their message, which was clear and unambiguous.³³⁵ Prophets met all people, both friends and foes, yet did not withhold any part of the religious message.³³⁶ *Da'wah* is open and transparent, and all of its questions, fundamental or secondary, are known to the public (*al-'āmmah*) and the elites (*al-khāṣṣa*). Besides, *da'wah* does not enfold any secret question nor does it conceal certain aspects and disclose others.³³⁷ This open nature is partly based on the example of the *da'wah* of Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) as narrated in the

³³¹The Qur'ān illustrates this question in the following verses: "And I ask of you no wage therefore; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds." Pickthall (Chapter 26:109), 345. "Those are they whom Allah guides, so follow their guidance. Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee for it. Lo! it is naught but a Reminder to the worlds." Pickthall (Chapter 6:90), 119. "O my people! I ask of you no reward for it. Lo! my reward is the concern only of Him Who made me. Have ye then no sense?" Pickthall, (Chapter 11:51): 197; "Say: I ask of you no reward for this, save that whoso will may choose a way unto his Lord." Pickthall (Chapter 25:57): 337; "Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee therefore, but loving kindness among kinsfolk." Pickthall (Chapter 42:23): 468; "But if ye are averse I have asked of you no wage. My wage is the concern of Allah only, and I am commanded to be of those who surrender (unto Him)." Pickthall (Chapter 10:72): 187.

³³²Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 76. The Qur'ān says: "And We made them chiefs who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the right establishment of worship and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone)." Pickthall (Chapter 21:73), 300-301.

³³³Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam* (From Here we know) (Al-Jizah, Egypt: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2005), 95.

³³⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 92.

³³⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:81. The Qur'ān states: "And We gave them the clear Scripture, And showed them the right path." Pickthall (Chapter 37: 117-118), 429.

³³⁶*Ibid.*, 3:81.

³³⁷Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 18-19.

Qur'ān.³³⁸ Ghazālī's attention to the openness in *da'wah* may be a reaction to the confidential nature of *da'wah* training implemented earlier with the Muslim Brothers.

The above characteristics place *da'wah* in a revelatory framework and draw heavily on the examples of prophets as ideal models for modern *dā'īs*. The definition of *da'wah*, however, is drawn from the implications of the Islamic message itself, whereby belief in the unseen co-exists with the art of legislation, and where belief is integrated with worship, and finance with politics.³³⁹ Such integration entails defining religion, faith, and religious message. Religion, according to Ghazālī, implies a belief in God, an appreciation of human vicegerency, and a supremacy over the universe.³⁴⁰ It is a profound thought, a heart full of lively emotions, an intelligent mind, and emotions loaded with genuine feelings.³⁴¹

Faith is also the ultimate outcome of intellectual persuasion, emotional satisfaction, and discovery of the truth.³⁴² It does not remain, therefore, in a closed mind.³⁴³ For Ghazālī, the greatness of the message lies in the appreciation of the intellect, a rejection of conjecture or suspicion, and an adherence to certainty and truth. As a result, religiosity does not load the intellect with the unbearable nor does it

³³⁸The Quran says: "Save single-minded slaves of Allah," Pickthall (chapter 37:40), 426.

³³⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 171-172.

³⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Rak'iz al-'Imān*, 24. Ghazālī argues that religion embraces both the message (*al-risāla*) and the Muslim nation (*al-'ummah*). The former being the divine guidance leading to the straight path and calling upon others to follow; the latter is the group that translates the divine guidance from theory into practice, (i.e.) the nation's understanding and practice of revelation and invitation to it. See Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 236.

³⁴¹Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 3:181. According to Ghazālī, those who can conceive belief yet their hearts are emotionless with no feeling whatsoever except for their own selves, and with no care except for their personal needs; those people have deficient belief and cloudy direction. Ibid., 3:181.

³⁴²Ghazālī, *Huquq al-'Insān*, 72.

³⁴³Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 3:181.

submerge the intellect in the imaginative world.³⁴⁴ Ghazālī strongly associates *da'wah* with the logic of science, probably to enhance religious understanding and interpretations, and to place *da'wah* within the progress of scientific research. For him, the bridge between religiosity and science is extremely vital in that religion loses its *raison d'être* once it overlooks science, downplays reason, or resists the reconciliation of religion with the mundane world.³⁴⁵

Da'wah stands alongside the intellect in shunning material desires and absurdity.³⁴⁶ Seen from another angle, the primary foundation of true religiosity is a healthy moral system, safe from distortions and artificiality.³⁴⁷ Religiosity is not a process through which purifying spiritual elements are introduced; rather, it seeks to establish measures that preserve human nature. By contrast, religiosity that is associated with a corrupted human nature connotes lies and deception.³⁴⁸

Ghazālī also discusses the social dimension of religion. For him, Islam is neither a philosopher's dream nor a mystic's attitude. It is rather a religion through which lives change, and by means of which societies transform according to the divine.³⁴⁹ Had the Islamic religion started out as purely a moral philosophy, it could have been spread by preachers and educators alone; and had it been simply a political system, it could have been looked after by politicians. The difference is that Islam combines both

³⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 223.

³⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Rak'iz al-'Imān*, 23.

³⁴⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 17.

³⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 12. The Qur'ān says: "So set your purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright-the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most people know not-." Pickthall (Chapter 30:30), 382.

³⁴⁸Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 51.

³⁴⁹Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 31.

dimensions; this implies that religious adherence is only made by way of a comprehensive formulation.³⁵⁰ The religious message also addresses both divine and human rights, and preserves a harmony between mundane life and the hereafter.³⁵¹

Ghazālī's approach to the concept of religion and religiosity points to various objectives of the religious message, including overseeing revelation and keeping it at the forefront through the dissemination of goodness, the advocacy of righteousness, the protection of faith, the making of revelation into a nourishing source of virtues,³⁵² and the conveying of great meanings to nations in need. The religious message provides justice and freedom for oppressed and deprived people, imparts certainty and piety to the doubtful through motivation and guidance,³⁵³ awakens hearts that forgot God, and sets in motion static ideas.³⁵⁴ The religious message illustrates its principles, enables others to discover them, and sets people free to either embrace or reject them.³⁵⁵ It also abhors evil, condemns wrongdoers,³⁵⁶ understands the wisdom in the divine decree versus religious differences, and opens up a door of hope and repentance.³⁵⁷ These concepts are geared towards creating a positive change at the individual and social levels, and they lay out a functional perspective on *da'wah*. Through this perspective, the religion does not simply connote mere acts of worship devoid of social implications, rituals transmitted by way of inheritance, or prayers

³⁵⁰Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 75.

³⁵¹*Ibid.*, 171-172.

³⁵²*Ibid.*, 35.

³⁵³Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 49.

³⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq*, 148.

³⁵⁵Ghazālī, *Ḥuqūq al-'Insān*, 72.

³⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 35.

³⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl (One-Hundred Questions)* (Cairo: Dār al-Maqtam li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2004), 283.

shared through inspirations.³⁵⁸

Based on this understanding of religion and religiosity, Ghazālī describes *da'wah* as being born with the birth of faith and the twin of faith, rituals and morals.³⁵⁹ *Da'wah* is a guidance to the most precious truth in the universe, an orientation to goodness, and a salvation from destruction.³⁶⁰ *Da'wah* is a process of clarification, perseverance, exchange of opinions, and examination of doubts.³⁶¹ *Da'wah* reminds people and stimulates the lazy, watches over verities, sets itself against evils, and alienates myths and desires.³⁶² *Da'wah* is a set of emotional virtues and legal duties.³⁶³ It involves patience, endurance, intercession,³⁶⁴ and embraces assistance, salvation, and empowerment.³⁶⁵ *Da'wah* empowers nations to discover the path to divine guidance and guards them from devilish desires, and helps them discover a course of guidance and mercy deep-rooted in the heritage of Prophets and Messengers.³⁶⁶

Da'wah is a comprehensive exposition of Islam, and an illustration of the divine book which was made as a guide in all states of affairs.³⁶⁷ *Da'wah* extends beyond the act of preaching or calling people to virtue and worship, to involve teaching and religious dialogue.³⁶⁸ The duty of *da'wah* is associated with various social institutions; this implies that prayer, like charity, honesty, or chastity, contribute together to the

³⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Khuluq al-Muslim* (Muslim Character) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2004), 218.

³⁵⁹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 7.

³⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 52.

³⁶¹Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 40.

³⁶²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:55

³⁶³Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 172.

³⁶⁴Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 40.

³⁶⁵Ibid., 19.

³⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 52.

³⁶⁷Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 250.

³⁶⁸Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 10.

transmission of faith.³⁶⁹ It also requires that Muslims establish institutions and develop strategies to perform their duty of *da'wah*.³⁷⁰ This makes *da'wah* a large-scale program of prevention, which fosters strategies of reform and remedy and involves great efforts to eliminate evil.³⁷¹

Confining the scope of *da'wah* to a single activity is unjustifiable.³⁷² As a result, Ghazālī criticizes those who understand *da'wah* as fiery sermons, excited emotions,³⁷³ a casual speech, or a trick leading to fight,³⁷⁴ or those who fail to understand that preaching is just one single component of a much broader circle.³⁷⁵ With this view, Ghazālī disapproves of granting the title of *dā'ī* exclusively to preachers or Imams.³⁷⁶ *Dā'īs*, in fact, include the just ruler, the competent lawyer or legislator, the guided author, the sincere warrior, the faithful preacher, and even the rebel against injustice and tyranny.³⁷⁷ Each individual is able to contribute either individually or collectively to religious, social, cultural, or political life.³⁷⁸ Such an engagement, however, should not give the impression that Islam is limited to a particular area of reform;³⁷⁹ *da'wah* is not limited to some aspects of human condition and forgetful of others.³⁸⁰

This understanding broadens the basis of Islamic activism, and diversifies the

³⁶⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 172.

³⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 218.

³⁷¹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 92.

³⁷²*Ibid.*, 171.

³⁷³Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 250. According to Ghazālī, corruption often creeps into religious circles through emotional excessiveness or intellectual ambiguity. See Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 238.

³⁷⁴Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 40.

³⁷⁵Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 250.

³⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 171.

³⁷⁷*Ibid.*,

³⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 218.

³⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Mushaf*, 162.

³⁸⁰Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 215.

social contributions of individuals and groups. On the one hand, it develops a strong sense of obligation at the individual level, sharing the responsibility for *da'wah* between religious scholars and society's professionals. On the other hand, this approach to the definition of *da'wah* and *dā'īs* breaks with the notion that Muslim scholars and jurists alone speak or act on behalf of Islamic orthodoxy: in Ghazālī's view, *da'wah* is a strategic tool of reform which engages all types of workers. The end result is not so much an act of a pure religious or spiritual transmission; but rather a diversified reform carried out on the shoulders of those committed to the cause of the religion and progress of the nation.

Just as Islam transcends time and space, *da'wah* is also boundless in scope. This is based on the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the deeds of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad.³⁸¹ *Da'wah* places religion in the context of the whole creation and addresses the salvation of the individual and the nation. What makes Islam broader in scope is the fact that it involves various institutions of education, law, the military, the economy, and international diplomacy; along with the deployment of all social efforts to serve as a religious mobilizing force.³⁸² Muslims should, according to their competencies, serve this broad-based *da'wah* through diverse scientific, economic, and social contributions.³⁸³ Ghazālī approaches the scope of *da'wah* through the implications of the message of Islam, including the responsibilities of Muslims to support mercy both locally and internationally, including help for the oppressed and

³⁸¹Ghazālī, *Maqālāt Ghazālī*, 1:74.

³⁸²Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 10.

³⁸³*Ibid.*, 11. See also Ghazālī, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 165.

destitute.³⁸⁴ Ghazālī's earnest concern to undertake the Islamic change through legitimate means caused him to involve all social factors contributing to the advance of Islam as supportive of *da'wah*. By the same token, the decline in human development in Muslim societies necessitates broad-based reforms of morals, culture, economic, and politics; and requires *dā'īs*' due attention to those needs and the impediments to them.³⁸⁵

To better appreciate Ghazālī's approach to the definition of *da'wah*, it may be worth examining some current definitions. First, *da'wah* is a homonym (*mushtarak lafẓī*)³⁸⁶ that connotes both the religion of Islam and the process of its propagation. It means propagation: the discipline through which, are identified the many attempts to convey the religion of Islam, including belief, law and morals. *Da'wah* is a process of dissemination and propagation (*al-nashr wa al-tablīgh*), which requires religious explanation, understanding of its characteristics and of the means through which propagation is achieved. *Da'wah* also implies the religion which God has chosen for humankind, for which He sent down the revelation to Prophet Muhammad, and also implies a submission to God and implementation of the teachings of Islam.³⁸⁷ Yūnus argues that scholarly differences regarding *da'wah* are due to the fact that some use *da'wah* in reference to the religion of Islam, whereas others use it in reference to the

³⁸⁴Ibid., 76.

³⁸⁵Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 256.

³⁸⁶*Mushtarak* is the active or passive participles of the form VIII verb *'ishtaraka* "to be associated with, common to". Jurjānī defines the term as qualifying a noun "which has come into use for its multiple meanings, like the word *'ayn*, because of its association with several meanings". See Troupeau, G. "Mushtarik or Mushtarak." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 21 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-5594>

³⁸⁷Aḥmad Ghalwāsh, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah (The Islamic Da'wah)* (Lebanon: al-Sharikah al-'Ālamiyyah li al-Kitāb, 1987), 12.

process of propagation itself. Yūnus also argues that there exists a subtle difference between these interpretations because the first views *da'wah* as an academic discipline having an independent subject matter, characteristics, and goals, whereas the second views it as a set of precepts and laws.³⁸⁸

In light of the above, Ghazālī does not appear to have offered one single definition of *da'wah* but, rather, approaches the content of *da'wah* through the dimensions and implications of the religious message and with a concern about Islamic reform. His contribution lies in his attempt to draw the essential features of Islam in a *da'wah* pattern through the examples of prophets, likely to support his *da'wah* model with a historical religious base, that is common to all monotheistic religions.³⁸⁹ Ghazālī did not limit himself to a particular definition, but was rather flexible, independent, and creative. His approach merged the act of enjoining good and forbidding evil³⁹⁰ into *da'wah*, instead of keeping them separate, and hence made both *da'wah* and the act of enjoining good and forbidding evil key characteristics of the final message (*al-risāla al-khātima*).³⁹¹ Ghazālī's various interpretations appear to have involved perspectives and functions of *da'wah*, including the meanings and implications of the religion, the required spiritual and economic reforms, as well as the empowerment of the Muslim

³⁸⁸Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr*, 107.

³⁸⁹Ghazālī is not alone in this. In a chapter entitled "*faṣl fī 'Anna dīna al-'Anbiyā' wāḥid*" (The Religion of the Prophets is One), Ibn Taymiyyah argues that the religion of prophets is one, namely the religion of Islam. Law and rulings, however, change for a wisdom as was the case with changing the direction of prayer to Jerusalem, which was later changed to the Ka'aba. Laws changed but religion remains intact. Ibn Taymiyyah draws on the tradition of the prophet: "We, prophets, our religion is but one- (*'innā ma'āshira al-'anbiyā dīnunā wāḥid*). See Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymīyah, *Jāmi' al-Rasā'il al-Majmū'a al-'Ūlā*, Ed., Muhammad Rashād Sālim (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1969), 274.

³⁹¹Ibid., 237. Ghazālī draws on the following verse as a point of reference: "And it is said unto those who ward off (evil): What has your Lord revealed? They say: Good. For those who do good in this world there is a good (reward) and the home of the Hereafter will be better. Pleasant indeed will be the home of those who ward off (evil)-." Pickthall (Chapter 16:30), 240.

nation.

Ghazālī's understanding of *da'wah* is holistic, and reflects his actual understanding of the concept and scope of the religion of Islam.³⁹² This broad view of *da'wah*, however, entails a close relationship between *da'wah* and the notion of change whereby *da'wah* involves not only the transmission of religious teachings, but also the various contributions of individuals or groups engaged in the process of Islamic social reform. Ghazālī's extension of the scope of *da'wah* to cover broader social change is based upon his belief in the comprehensive nature of the Islamic precepts, and stems from the fact that religious interpretations should not be fragmentary.³⁹³ His broad-based approach to the definition of *da'wah* may be reminiscent of the notion of comprehensive Islamic change (*shumūliyat al-ḥall al-'islāmī*) advocated by the Muslim Brotherhood. This approach, however, reflects his personal appreciation of the need for major change affecting all facets of socio-political life, to counter a secularism that evolved to dichotomies in religious and mundane life, and which has profoundly affected the progress of *da'wah* and religion in general.

³⁹²Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 76. To support the wide scope of *da'wah*, Ghazālī argues that just like prayer or fast, technical and administrative expertise are considered righteous deeds. See Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3: 133.

³⁹³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:90.

II. The *fiṭrah* (Innate Human Nature):³⁹⁴

Ghazālī's works reflect serious preoccupation with the state of *fiṭrah*, a fundamental requirement in the success of *da'wah*. The concept of innate human nature is central to Ghazālī's thesis it sets *da'wah* within a framework of human dispositions and their ascension towards divine ideals. This concept also addresses theoretical criteria involving several factors, including the intellect, common sense, the effects of surrounding environment, religious interpretation, and the progress of civilization, so as to assure a positive and cheerful undertaking of *da'wah* that is harmonious with universal human development.

Ghazālī has confidence in innate human nature.³⁹⁵ His preoccupation with the course of human nature, however, has profound implications for *da'wah*. Ghazālī struggles throughout to develop an intimate relationship between *da'wah* and the characteristics of innate human nature, and also to formulate a genuine and reciprocal equation of religious development and soundness of that nature. This question, however, requires *da'wah* to supply a supportive atmosphere for human ascension to religious and moral perfection, and to give a finishing touch to an already existing intuitive knowledge without necessarily contributing new teaching. This issue, nonetheless, raises the question whether *da'wah* gains any advantage through its

³⁹⁴Mālik bin Ṣa'sa'a said that Allah's Messenger described his Night Journey as follow: "While I was lying in *al-Ḥatim* or *al-Ḥijr*, then a container full of wine and another full of milk and a third full of honey were brought to me. I took the milk. Jibrael (Gabriel) remarked: "This is the Islamic religion which you and your followers are following." When I left, I heard a voice saying: "I have passed My Order and have lessened the burden of My worshippers." See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, *The Book of Merits of the Companions of the Prophet*, Trans. Muhammad Muḥsin Khān (Riyādh: Saudi Arabia, Dārussalām, Publishers & Distributors, 1996), 740.

³⁹⁵Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:130; See also Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq*, 94.

intimate association with human nature, and if such an association is understandable and workable in practical terms. What criteria did Ghazālī employ to determine intuitive knowledge and outer manifestations, and why did he advocate for this relationship so passionately and tenaciously? Prior to examining these questions, however, it is important to understand the concept of *fiṭrah* first.

Fiṭrah is one of the original concepts in the Islamic tradition. It is attributed to God (*fiṭrat Allah*), and is thus praiseworthy (*maḥmūda*).³⁹⁶ The Qur’ān and the ḥadīth use the word *fiṭrah* on numerous occasions. The Qur’ān says: “So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah’s creation. That is the right religion, but most men know not -.”³⁹⁷ Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: “Every child is born into *al-fiṭrah* but his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity or Magianism, as an animal gives birth to a perfect baby animal. Do you find it mutilated?”

Ibn Taymiyyah views *fiṭrah* as both the divine order of every created being and God’s creation of the body and the intellect. He argues that walking using one’s feet is a *fiṭrah*; picking up objects with them, however, is against the *fiṭrah* of the body. Likewise, drawing conclusions from their premises is a rational *fiṭrah*. Ibn Taymiyyah views *fiṭrah* as a set of qualities, characteristics, attributes, in which God created humans.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymīyah, *Dar’ Ta’arūḍ al-‘Aql wa-al-Naql (Repulsion of Conflict between Reason and Transmitted Texts (of Shari’ah))*, Ed., Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, Jāmi‘at al-‘Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa‘ūd al-‘Islāmīyah, 1979-1981). 4:284.

³⁹⁷The Quran states: “So set your purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright-the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah’s creation. That is the right religion, but most people know not.” Pickthall (Chapter 30:30), 382.

³⁹⁸Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ Ta’arūḍ*, 4:284.

Commentators on the Qur'ān, however, likewise reached different conclusions on the meaning of *fiṭrah*. Ṭabarī³⁹⁹ for instance argues that the Quranic verse (Chapter 30:30) exhorts Prophet Muhammad to turn his face to where God has directed, that is, to the worship of God and to the Islamic religion. The pattern, in which God has made mankind, is the *fiṭrah* of God out of which He has created humans.⁴⁰⁰ Ṭabarī cites the following related tradition: “The *fiṭrah* of God is the religion of Islam, in which, there is no change.”⁴⁰¹

Qurtubī argued that the term *dīn* (religion) mentioned in the verse (So you set your face steadily and truly to the faith) means Islam. The standard religion (*al-dīn al-qayyim*) for him, is the religion of Islam. Both terms, “religion” and “Islam”, are used interchangeably in view of the belief that Islam is the final religion. Qurtubī⁴⁰² mentions

³⁹⁹Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Dja'far Muḥammad b. Djarīr b. Yazīd, is a polymath, whose expertise included tradition and law but who is most famous as the supreme universal historian and Qur'ān commentator of the first three or four centuries of Islam. He was born in the winter of 224-5/839 at Āmul, died at Baghdād in 310/923. Al-Ṭabarī stemmed from Āmul in Ṭabaristān. Ṭabarī's modest degree of financial family support enabled him to travel extensively as a student and then, when he was an established scholar, gave him some independence from outside pressures and influences and from the necessity which poorer scholars experienced of seeking patronage. He was able to follow a career in a multiplicity of branches of knowledge. This was to embrace not only history, Qur'ān exegesis, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, but he also possibly wrote in the field of ethics and had interest in Arabic poetry. All his surviving works indicate that he had a reverence for scholarship and wished to present what must have already become, over the course of some two-and-a-half centuries, a formidable body of knowledge in such fields as *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and *'akhbār* in as concise and accurate a manner as possible. His works include *Mukhtaṣar ta'rīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk wa al-khulafā'*, *Djāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, *'Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*, *Tahdhīb al-'Āthār [wa-tafṣīl ma'ānī thābit 'an Rasūl Allāh min al-'akhbār]*, *Ṣarīḥ al-Sunnah*, *Faṣl bayn Qirā'a*. See Bosworth, C.E. “al-Ṭabarī, Abū Dja'far Muḥammad b. Djarīr b. Yazīd.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 21 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-1133>

⁴⁰⁰Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rīfah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1987), 21: 26.

⁴⁰¹Ibid., 27.

⁴⁰²Al-Qurtubī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr was a Muslim scholar of the Māliki law school, an expert on *ḥadīth* and well-known for his commentary on the Qur'ān. Born in Spain, he was one of those who travelled outside this country. He made his way to the Orient and settled at Munyat 'Abī al-Khuṣayb in Upper Egypt; he died and was buried there in 671/1272. Al-Dhahabī says of him, in his *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, that he was an 'imām versed in

that scholars disagreed about the meaning of *fiṭrah*. Some said it implies the state of beginning or inception (*ḥālat al-badā'a*) according to which humans were created - that is, God created humans to live and die, to be happy or miserable, and to be what they will be at the age of majority (*sin al-bulūgh*).⁴⁰³ Some others have argued that *fiṭrah* only concerns believing people. Had the case been otherwise, it is argued, all people would have believed, and nobody would fall into disbelief.⁴⁰⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah, in contrast, maintains that *fiṭrah* applies to all people, believers or not.⁴⁰⁵ The verse mentioned above also means that God does not change His will. Hence, those who were created to be happy shall never be miserable, and those created to be miserable shall never taste happiness.⁴⁰⁶

numerous branches of scholarship. Among his works, his biographers first mention his commentary on the Qur'ān entitled *al-Jāmi' li 'Aḥkām al-Qur'ān wa al-mubayyin li-mātaḍammana min al-Sunnah wa-'āyāt al-furqān*. Then they refer to the following titles: *al-'Asnā*, on the interpretation of the most beautiful names of God; *al-Tadhkār fi 'afḍal al-'adhkār*, where "he followed the pattern of the *Tibyān* of al-Nawawī, while producing a more complete work and making use of greater learning"; *Kitāb al-Tadhkirah bi-'umūr al-'āakhirah*; *Sharḥ al-Taqaṣṣī*; *Kitāb qam' al-ḥirṣ bi al-zuhd wa al-qanā'a wa-radd dhill al-su'āl bi al-kutub wa al-shafā'a*, which Ibn Farḥūn considers the best example of writing in this genre; and an *'Urdjūza*, where the names of the Prophet were brought together. All these titles testify eloquently to the religious pre-occupations of al-Qurṭubī. See Arnaldez, R. "al-Qurṭubī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Faraj al-'Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Andalusī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heirichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 21 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-4553>

⁴⁰³Majority (*bulūgh*) in Islamic law is generally determined by physical maturity in either sex (the Shāfi'īs explicitly lay down a minimum limit of nine years); should physical maturity not manifest itself, majority is presumed at a certain age: fifteen years according to the Ḥanafīs, Shāfi'īs and Ḥanbalīs, eighteen years according to the Mālikīs. Within these limits, the declaration of the person concerned that he or she has reached puberty is accepted. Majority is one of the conditions of full legal capacity; the minor is subject to a legal disability (*ḥajr*) and to the guardianship of his father or other legal guardian. See Ed(s). "Bāligh." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 21 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-1143>

⁴⁰⁴Abū 'Abd Allāh 'Anṣārī Qurṭubī, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, Ed. Shaykh Muḥammad Karīm Rājīḥ (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987), 4:88.

⁴⁰⁵Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' al-Ta'āruḍ*, 279.

⁴⁰⁶Qurṭubī, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, 4: 88.

Fiṭrah also implies the knowledge God inculcates in new born children. This results in every child being born in a state that qualifies him/her to know God at the age of understanding. This, Ibn Taymiyyah calls sound *fiṭrah* (*fiṭrah salīma*).⁴⁰⁷ It does not, however, mean that children are born conscious of the religion or that they want it at the time of their birth.⁴⁰⁸ It simply means that *fiṭrah* necessitates the religion of Islam. This very *fiṭrah* leads to acknowledgement of and devotion for the Creator. Despite the perfection of *fiṭrah* and its immunity from negative effects, its requirements are, nonetheless, met slowly.⁴⁰⁹ Parents simply invite, encourage, educate their children, and do what any educator or teacher does with his/her students.⁴¹⁰ Their influence on *fiṭrah*, however, is only rendered possible by the will and decree of God.⁴¹¹

Fiṭrah also denotes the primordial covenant of God in the pre-existent world of the atom (*‘ālam al-dharr*) God made with the children of Adam. This is understood from the following verse: “And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, verily. We testify. (That was) lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection: Lo! of this we were unaware; Or lest ye should say: (It is) only (that) our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were (their) seed after them. Wilt Thou destroy us on account of that which those who follow falsehood did?”⁴¹² The

⁴⁰⁷Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ al-Ta’arūf*, 279.

⁴⁰⁸This contradicts the Qur’ānic description: “And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing, and gave you hearing and sight and hearts that haply ye might give thanks.” Pickthall (Chapter 16:78), 244.

⁴⁰⁹Ibid., 289,

⁴¹⁰Ibid., 287.

⁴¹¹Ibid., 279.

⁴¹²Pickthall (Chapter 7: 172-173), 147.

covenant mentioned above means the *fiṭrah* God implanted in human souls,⁴¹³ or in those souls that acknowledged faith and knowledge prior to the creation of physical bodies.⁴¹⁴ The notion of primordial covenant is also supported by a tradition of the Prophet which states: “Allah said, I created My servants ḥunafā’ (monotheists), but the devils came to them and deviated them from their religion.”⁴¹⁵ This implies that humans were created equipped with divine knowledge and a belief in God, and were also born in a state of religion.⁴¹⁶

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr⁴¹⁷ argues that some scholars have explained the *fiṭrah* cited in the tradition as meaning “every baby child is born in *fiṭrah*”, i.e., as being on faith or

⁴¹³*Ma’a Allah*, 56.

⁴¹⁴Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ al-Ta’arud*, 4: 302.

⁴¹⁵Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr (Abridged), v. 4, Ed., Ṣafiur-Raḥmān Al-Mubārakpūrī (Saudi Arabia: Maktabat Dār-us-Salām, 2003), 47.

⁴¹⁶Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ al-Ta’arud*, 4: 280. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, *ḥanīf* in the language of the Arabs connotes purity and righteousness. There is no better righteousness than the religion of Islam. Ibid., 283. *Ḥanīf*, (pl. *ḥunafā’*), *Ḥunafā’* plural of *ḥanīf*, a believer who is neither a polytheist (*mushrik*) nor a Jew or a Christian. The Arabic root ḥ-n-f initially means “to incline,” so that *ḥanīf* (pl. *ḥunafā’*) is most probably understood in the Qur’ān as one who has abandoned the prevailing religions and has inclined to a religion of his own. It occurs once as a synonym of Muslim and also in juxtaposition with the verb *’aslama*. The Qur’ānic prototype of the ideal *ḥanīf* is Abraham, and being a *ḥanīf* signifies belonging to the “religion” (*millā*) of Abraham. In Qur’ānic terminology, his *ḥanīfī* monotheism consists of inclining his face towards God. A *ḥanīfī* monotheism is therefore part of the natural constitution (*fiṭrah*) with which one has been created. The Qur’ānic Prophet, too, is requested to become a *ḥanīf* by setting his face upright towards the true religion, and the same demand is also imposed on the rest of the people. See Rubin, Uri. “Ḥanīf.” *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=q3_COM-00080>

⁴¹⁷Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr al-Namarī was born in 368/978. He studied in his native city under masters of repute, engaged in correspondence with scholars of the East and traveled all over Spain “in search of knowledge”, but never went to the East. Considered the best traditionist of his time, he was equally distinguished in *fiqh* and in the science of genealogy. After displaying *Zāhirī* tendencies at first, in which he resembled his friend Ibn Ḥazm, he later followed the *Mālikī* doctrine, not without some inclination towards *Shāfi’ī* teaching. He held the position of *Qāḍī* at Lisbon and Santarem under Muẓaffar b. al-Aftas, and died at Játiva in 463/1070. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr is the author of a considerable number of works of all kinds, of which there have been preserved especially: *al-’Istī’āb fī ma’rifat al-’Aṣḥāb*, biographies of the Companions of the Prophet, then on the margin of the *’Iṣāba* of al-’Askalānī, *Jāmi’ bayān al-’ilm wa-fadlih wā mā yanbaghī fī riwāyatih wa-ḥamlih*, *al-Kāfi fī al-fiqh*, a manual of *Mālikī* law, *al-Tamhīd li-mā fī al-Muwatta’ min ma’ānī al-ray’ wa al-’asānīd*, *Kitāb al-’istidhkār fī sharḥ madhāhib ‘ulamā’ al-’amṣār*, *al-’Istidrāk li-madhāhib al-’aṣār fī-mā taḍammāna-hu al-Muwatta’ min ma’ānī al-ray’ wa al-’āthār*, commentary on the *Muwatta’*, *Kitāb al-’Intiqā’ fī faḍā’il al-thalāthat al-’a’imma al-fukahā’*, *al-’Inṣāf fī-mā bayna al-’ulamā’ min al-’ikhtilāf*, *al-Ḳaṣd wa*

disbelief, as tending to acknowledgment or denial. For him, it rather meant that every child is born in a perfect shape, form, and character, without necessarily embracing any faith or disbelief, knowledge or denial. Humans, according to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, only adopt faith or disbelief when they reach the age of distinguishing (*sinn al-tamyīz*).⁴¹⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr states: "*Fiṭrah* means soundness (*salāma*) and righteousness (*'istiḳāmah*); both meanings are supported in the following tradition: "I have created my servants ḥunafā', that is, on *'istiqāma* and *salāma*."⁴¹⁹

The Mu'tazilites, however, argue that humans are not born as Muslims, and that God did not create humans equipped with belief or disbelief. Rather, some people cause disbelief, and others belief, in Islam, without God affecting any of them. God invites them to the religion of Islam, removes their ineptness, and provides them with similar opportunities to qualify for faith or disbelief. God does not privilege believers with any favourable condition leading to faith, for that would be an injustice were it to happen. Some of the later Mu'tazilites, however, argue that God provides believers with the call of faith (*dā'ī al-'imān*) and the faculty for faith, which in turn lead faith.⁴²⁰

At a very fundamental level, however, Ghazālī views Islam as essentially a religion of *fiṭrah*.⁴²¹ This implies that being a Muslim, stands for adherence to the

al-'umam fī al-ta'rīf bi-'uṣūl al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam wa man 'awwal man takallama bi al-'arabiyyah min al-'umam, al-'Inbāh 'alā qabā'il al-ruwāh. See Pellat, Ch. "Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Namarī (al-Numayrī)." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 05 April 2008, http://http.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-3027

⁴¹⁸This age is reached when the child can take care of himself or herself and no longer needs an adult to help him eat, get dressed, or clean himself or herself.

⁴¹⁹Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' al-Ta'āruḍ*, 4: 318.

⁴²⁰Ibid., 286-287.

⁴²¹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:63.

natural religion (*al-dīn al-ṭabīʿī*), which cherishes human nature, esteems its virtuous predispositions, appreciates the intellect, and is tolerant of human error.⁴²² Religion is also the sound *fiṭrah* before it is affected by defective customs or thoughts.⁴²³ This also leads to the rejection of any religious understanding at odds with human nature or intellect.⁴²⁴ Given the present connection between *fiṭrah* and religion, Ghazālī criticizes *dāʿīs* who portray the religion of Islam as a strange or at odds with *fiṭrah* and human yearnings.⁴²⁵ The perspective of *fiṭrah* equally implies that people with sound *fiṭrah* alone hold on properly to the religion;⁴²⁶ whereas, those lacking sound intellect and pure consciousness can hardly be associated with faith.⁴²⁷ In other words, religion wanes as soon as *fiṭrah* is corrupted (*fasād al-fiṭrah*), and revelation is misunderstood when the intellect is poor or defective.⁴²⁸ Not only that, any religious life associated to a corrupt *fiṭrah* is absurd because it obscures human reality⁴²⁹ and makes revelation less effective.⁴³⁰

According to Ghazālī, the term *fiṭrah*, when used in the context of *daʿwah*, only designates sound *fiṭrah*.⁴³¹ *Fiṭrah* consists of a sound intellect and a pure heart.⁴³² To substantiate his notion on *fiṭrah*, Ghazālī draws on the primordial covenant of *fiṭrah* (*mithāq al-fiṭrah*), to which humans are bound since the inception of life, and which

⁴²²Ghazālī, *Mīʾat Suʾāl*, 283.

⁴²³Ghazālī, “*Qīṣṣat Ḥayāt*,” 200.

⁴²⁴Ghazālī, *Ḥuqūq al-ʾInsān*, 53.

⁴²⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:122.

⁴²⁶Ghazālī, *Jaddid Ḥayātak*, 9.

⁴²⁷Ghazālī, *ʾIlal wa-ʾAdwiyah*, 61.

⁴²⁸*Ibid.*, 6.

⁴²⁹*Ibid.*, 53.

⁴³⁰*Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³¹Ghazālī, *Jaddid Ḥayātak*, 9.

⁴³²*Ibid.*, 59.

establishes monotheism (*tawḥīd*) as a genuine belief, defies the temptations of polytheism, and connects human beings to their Creator.⁴³³ On this occasion, Ghazālī sees the Qur’ān as a reminder of that which should not be neglected; of the consciousness and what should it judge; and of the genesis of humanity and its strong bond with the Creator.⁴³⁴ The Qur’ān is called remembrance (*dhikr*)⁴³⁵ because it complements *fiṭrah* in such a way that the knowledge of the latter occurs after a stage of a complete ignorance.⁴³⁶

To provide a better understanding of the nature of *fiṭrah*, Ghazālī enumerates some of its physical expressions. These reflect its ultimate role in revitalizing the primordial covenant taken in the world of pre-existence. Seeking refuge in God during affliction, being conscious of the eventual return to Him, cherishing virtues and virtuous people, opposing crimes and criminals, and admiring the truth and justice – are all deeply rooted in sound *fiṭrah*.⁴³⁷ Given *fiṭrah* and the natural human yearnings for religion, there is no need to resort to violence.⁴³⁸

To substantiate the notion of human capability to determine moral acts, Ghazālī argues that humans are born both with certain sound reasoning that guides them to

⁴³³Ghazālī, *Jur’āt Jadīdah min al-Ḥaqq*, 5:51. The Qur’ān states: “And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, surely. We testify. (That was) lest you should say at the Day of Resurrection: Lo! of this we were unaware; Or lest you should say: (It is) only (that) our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were (their) seed after them. Will You destroy us on account of that which those who follow falsehood did?” Pickthall (Chapter 7:172-173), 147.

⁴³⁴Ibid., 148.

⁴³⁵The Quran states: “Lo! We even We, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian.” Pickthall (Chapter 15:9), 231.

⁴³⁶Ghazālī, *Min Ma’ālim*, 148.

⁴³⁷Ibid.

⁴³⁸Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-Da’wah (The Future of Islam)* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1997), 15.

the Creator, and also with an understanding that corruption is evil and embarrassing.⁴³⁹ This goes along with Ṣan'ānī's view that, despite differences in religions and traditions, different nations agree to praise truthfulness and truthful people, and to condemn lies and liars - a condition still applies. The literature of these nations, according to Ṣan'ānī, demonstrates an appreciation of kindness and a condemnation of mischief, using however, different terms like *ḥikmah* (wisdom), *safah* (foolishness), *maṣlahah* (interest), or *mafsada* (harm).⁴⁴⁰ To substantiate his argument concerning the human capability to distinguish goodness from evil, Ṣan'ānī shares the following example,

If you see a person approaching a miserable, weak, sick, thirsty and poorly dressed man with food, drink, and clothes; then afterwards you see another person stealing that food, drink and clothes, and insulting and beating up the poor man. Which mind then praises the actions of the second person, refuses to blame him, argues about the indifference of both actions, or describes praise and blame as akin? He who says so is simply foolish.⁴⁴¹

The theological question regarding human ability to distinguish goodness from evil, leads however, to issues of determining actions as good (*taḥsīn*) or vile (*taqbiḥ*) and the position of reason versus revelation. For Ghazālī, divine commands are the highest authoritative source as far as legal rulings are concerned.⁴⁴² Neither reason nor revelation disagree in their definition of good or bad, and both stand on equal footing as far as a moral determination is concerned.⁴⁴³ Lying like truthfulness, and justice like aggression, were all equivalent values prior to the advent of revelation.⁴⁴⁴ Along with

⁴³⁹Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:51.

⁴⁴⁰Al-Ṣan'ānī, *Kitāb 'Iqāz al-Fikrah li Murāja'āt al-Fiṭrah*, 204.

⁴⁴¹Ibid., 203-204.

⁴⁴²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:50.

⁴⁴³Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 204.

⁴⁴⁴Ghazālī suggested integrating the criteria of determining the actions as good or vile in the process of public education. See Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-'Islām?* 142. For Ghazālī the insight through which good or evil are distinguished is among God's greatest gifts upon people. See Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-'Islām?* 142.

the majority of Muslim scholars, however, Ghazālī maintains that the determination of moral acts implies a rejection of rational philosophy on human actions, which pays no heed to revelation and only causes arbitrary approvals or censures.⁴⁴⁵ Ghazālī, however, associates *da'wah* with the criteria of distinguishing good from evil, so as to make moral determination inherent component of *da'wah* thought.⁴⁴⁶

According to Ghazālī, the unerring sense of self-direction to God and to perfect morality is instilled at birth. For him, children are born ready to grow towards perfect morality, yet like fruits, only grow tasty when sufficient care is taken against diseases and insects.⁴⁴⁷ This implies that if humans were left to their personal choice, they would have eventually be guided to their Creator, have discovered divinely inspired inner motivations,⁴⁴⁸ preferred marriage to fornication, remained alert rather than drunk, and generously rather selfish, and sincerely rather than deceitfully.⁴⁴⁹ It is by virtue of *fiṭrah* that humans realize that justice is good, evil is bad, knowledge is an honour, ignorance is a disgrace, chastity is an ascension to perfection, and immorality is a corruption.⁴⁵⁰ Even with little divine knowledge, Ghazālī explains, the purity of *fiṭrah* leads people to know God and acknowledge His rights.⁴⁵¹

According to Ghazālī, humans are born with certain readiness, (i.e.) with a choice and a motivation to follow the course of *fiṭrah* and also to accept and adopt beliefs and virtues. *Fiṭrah* does not imply birth into a conscious state of beliefs or

⁴⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:50.

⁴⁴⁶Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-Islām?* 142.

⁴⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah min al-Ḥaqq*, 5:51. This is the example of the religion of Islam which introduces teachings that preserve *fiṭrah* from anomalistic and adverse germs. See Ghazālī, *Hādā Dīnūnā*, 12.

⁴⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:63.

⁴⁵⁰Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 59.

⁴⁵¹Ghazālī, *Jaddid Ḥayātak*, 8.

virtues; otherwise religious responsibility becomes pointless. It rather means humans are born with certain preparation and preference for the course of *fiṭrah*.⁴⁵² This natural predisposition occurs, nonetheless, with no prior learning since humans are steered to many verities without prior knowledge, and were at certain points in time predisposed to acknowledge and identify other verities. Under certain circumstances, however, humans lose track of those verities. Once these are brought back, however, the intellect immediately remembers them.⁴⁵³

In the beginning, however, *fiṭrah* is fragile and requires constant infusion of warmth until it acquires strength and overcomes material inclinations. In other words, the environment of *fiṭrah* requires delicate care until such a time as *fiṭrah* becomes independent and self-sufficient – that is, *fiṭrah* requires safeguards until it acquires perfection.⁴⁵⁴ On this particular issue, Ibn Taymiyyah argues that *fiṭrah* enfolds a power leading to faith in the same way the power of a healthy body searches for healthy food. On this note, Ibn Taymiyyah asks whether the power of readiness and capability are by themselves sufficient to lead to knowledge or should rather require additional learning from the external world?⁴⁵⁵ He further explains that necessary knowledge (*‘ilm ḍarūrī*) is acquired through internal evidence, like that reflected in the soul, yet is acquired without assistance of external evidences. Human Souls with *fiṭrah* cause their own reflections (*naẓar*) and reasoning (*‘istidlāl*) without the interference of external

⁴⁵²Ibid., 62.

⁴⁵³*Min Ma‘ālim al-Ḥaqq*, 148. According to Ghazālī, the example of the unity of human nature in its search for goodness and the implications of revelation is similar to the unity of two different individuals offering similar responses to the very same question. See Ghazālī, *Jaddid Ḥayātak*, 5.

⁴⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnūnā*, 260.

⁴⁵⁵Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ al-Ta‘ārūḍ*, 4:319.

evidences. As a conclusion, the *fiṭrah* of children implies their possession of learning.⁴⁵⁶

Ghazālī argue that in spite of the fact that humans are born with a sound intellect directed to one God, negative traditions affect the growth of *fiṭrah* and may lead it different ways.⁴⁵⁷ Humans are guided to the Creator only when surrounding conditions are favourable,⁴⁵⁸ because obstacles divert humans from their ultimate destiny.⁴⁵⁹ God endows *fiṭrah* with characteristics to resist falsehood. The disregard of those qualities causes failure and justifies a ground for a just examination on the Day of Reckoning.⁴⁶⁰ Those characteristics include the capability to resist and refuse and object to superstitious thinking, to uphold the truth, to reject immorality, and to act kindly and righteously.⁴⁶¹ Given the above, religiosity is not a process through which new purifying elements are introduced but, rather, an introduction of measures that safeguard the pure nature of *fiṭrah*.⁴⁶² In other words, religion does not establish new teaching components - rather consolidates *fiṭrah* through supportive measures.⁴⁶³

Ghazālī discusses some implications of sound *fiṭrah*, yet provides no evidence to support them. They generally appear to reflect his personal view about good human life and positive social interaction. For him, sound *fiṭrah* requires people to avoid transgression and not to adore themselves or advance their personal egos. It also implies that life is a right shared by all which, requires abstaining from hatred, lie,

⁴⁵⁶Ibid., 320.

⁴⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:51.

⁴⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 94.

⁴⁵⁹Ibid., 62.

⁴⁶⁰Ghazālī substantiates his view through verse Chapter 7:172-174. See Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:64; *Mi'at Su'āl*, 139.

⁴⁶¹Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 139.

⁴⁶²Ghazālī, *Naẓarāt*, 51.

⁴⁶³Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 12.

deception, and false accusation. Sound intellects also require abiding by the truth, appreciating proofs and rejecting superstitions and myths.⁴⁶⁴ Arguably, Ghazālī's open boundary of *fiṭrah* is problematic because it does not clearly set the terms of *fiṭrah* content and is rather open for thoughts and impressions that may be inconsistent with *fiṭrah*. Under the effects of various intellectual, cultural, and social changes people often undergo in their lives, what might be defined as *fiṭrī* at an early stage of life may later appear totally detrimental to *fiṭrah*. Ghazālī describes how he monitors the statements and actions of people through the criteria of *fiṭrah*, in order to accept that which is good and reject that which is evil.⁴⁶⁵ He does not, however, clearly reveal what makes an action or a behaviour a *fiṭrah*-oriented, which has caused critical problems in his discussion of *da'wah*. Does this lack of a definition, for example, mean that he is unable to distinguish between *fiṭrah*- from non-*fiṭrah*-oriented behaviour or that he cannot rule out acts contrary to *fiṭrah*?

Ghazālī's understanding of *fiṭrah* becomes a little clearer when he argues that *fiṭrah* proportionately reflects its purity with emotional health, security, and economic stability, and shows its expression in many great works and achievements - even when partially mixed with material desires, injustice, or confusion.⁴⁶⁶ For him, *fiṭrah* is favourably manifested in nations less indulged less in artificiality and showing off⁴⁶⁷ and is notoriously celebrated in modern societies than in corrupted religious circles.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁴Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 59-60.

⁴⁶⁵Ghazālī, "Qisṣat Ḥayāt," 200.

⁴⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥḥam al-Islam?* 68-69.

⁴⁶⁷Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 74.

⁴⁶⁸Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 59.

Any civilization that is nearer to *fiṭrah* becomes closer to the nature of Islam.⁴⁶⁹ Besides, modern Western civilization is even closer to *fiṭrah* than are religious teachings that suppress or humiliate the human body.⁴⁷⁰ Specifically, modern traditions of the West, especially in politics, are nearer to the religion of Islam.⁴⁷¹ In contrast, any civilization that inclines to artificiality eventually deviates from the religion of Islam even when it appears close.⁴⁷² This explains why Muslims' negligence to act according to *fiṭrah* caused their backwardness⁴⁷³ because the religion of *fiṭrah* has been substituted by restrictions, superstitions, and worldly desires; these have negatively affected *da'wah*.⁴⁷⁴

Ghazālī's understanding of *fiṭrah* transcends conventional religious definitions to consider more universal values as valid indicators of a sound *fiṭrah*. His objective was to lay out a *fiṭrah* basis for *da'wah* and to establish a common background with humanity. This is held with the view that appreciation of human nature yields agreement on common terms.⁴⁷⁵ Ghazālī's perspective however, requires understanding of his position towards humanity and humanism. For Ghazālī, sound hearts and minds are both familiar with humanism (*al-'insāniyah*). Ghazālī for example, shares the struggle of humanity against political despotism, religion fanaticism, racial

⁴⁶⁹Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 39.

⁴⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 82.

⁴⁷¹Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 120. For Ghazālī, appreciation of democracy and human rights is consistent with *fiṭrah*. The religion of Islam is the highest expression of *fiṭrah*. Hence, western politics and human rights are often closer to the values of Islam than are some Arab governments. Ibid.

⁴⁷²Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 39.

⁴⁷³Ghazālī, *Jaddid Ḥayātak*, 12.

⁴⁷⁴Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 74.

⁴⁷⁵Ghazālī, *al-Ghazw al-Thaqāfi*, 18. The common terms are referred to in the Qur'ān: "Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)." Pickthall (Chapter 3: 64), 52.

discrimination, and social stratification, and its quest for justice, tolerance, brotherhood, and compassion. He further states that he endorses humanism as a title and subject matter and that he believes that the call of humanism signifies the return of humanity to its origin or search for its missing innate nature (*fiṭrah*). Besides, religions conveyed by prophets, are nothing save the guided humanism which values reason, conscience, and pure heart (*qalb ṭahūr*) as moral determinants of good and evil. The true religion, according to Ghazālī, is the humanity on its right track (*al-ʿinsāniyah al-ṣahīhah*), which involves the intellect's determination of the truth through science and its withstanding of myths and superstitions.⁴⁷⁶

Connecting *fiṭrah* to humanism places *daʿwah* in a position where *dāʿīs* are not so much concerned with educating others about the religion as with identifying the natural echoes of *fiṭrah* in modern societies. Such a perspective broadens the base of *daʿwah* to integrate all human endeavours that are “sound”. It also leads to a critique of current *daʿwah* approaches in view of a progressing humanism. In more concrete terms however, we are left with no specific details as how to reform *daʿwah* or integrate these concepts into *daʿwah* thought. Ghazālī raised problems along with serious implications, yet is not committed to developing a working model of *daʿwah*, that translates these perspectives and concepts.

Given the many supportive traditions, Ghazālī is theoretically justified in his struggle to re-build *daʿwah* on the basis of *fiṭrah*; his task, however, remains incomplete. Ghazālī is concerned with *fiṭrah*-based *daʿwah*, one which is inter-connected with peace, security, and emotional stability, and is seriously affected by distortions or

⁴⁷⁶Ibid., 17.

superstitions. It is one that is harmonious with the intellect and science, and appreciates human discoveries. His definition, however, is not clear enough about what constitutes the contents of *fiṭrah*, and what are the boundaries of *fiṭrah* thought. His understanding of *fiṭrah* is identified, not only through revelation, but also by means of experience, philosophy, and science; which fall short of providing a mature criterion in the application of *fiṭrah*.⁴⁷⁷

Having said that, Ghazālī's discussion of *fiṭrah* shows that his contribution lies in the proportionate relationship between healthy growth and social prosperity, and also his attempt to integrate the component of *fiṭrah* in *da'wah* thought. On the one hand, the development of *fiṭrah*-based *da'wah* expands the philosophical grounds of thought on *da'wah*, and has the potential to extend beyond religious circles to embrace various human achievements in the fields of philosophy, morality, and science. Besides, his perspective on *fiṭrah* is an attempt at "humanizing" *da'wah*, as it constantly solicits harmony with human contributions that are still "undistorted." On the other hand, this relationship prepares a fertile ground for *da'wah* progress, opens up new boundaries before "genuine" human endeavours, and develop logical concordances between the realism of *dā'īs* and their respective audiences. On the side of *dā'ī*, it critically raises the challenges of harmonizing *da'wah* with human reality that carries further theological and legal implications. On the side of the audience, it "naturalizes" the task of *da'wah* since it draws on human logic, common sense, and experience.

⁴⁷⁷Ghazālī, "Qisṣat Ḥayāt," 201.

III. People of the Interval ('Ahl al-Fatrah):⁴⁷⁸

The issue of the People of the Interval ('Ahl al-Fatrah) is a theological question concerning people who were not exposed to *da'wah*: what will their status be on the Day of Judgment? The term also designates those who were not exposed to religious propaganda that effectively motivates for further religious exploration, or who, while acknowledging some prophets, were not well educated about their teachings. That is, the People of the Interval are like the *ḥunafā'* of the early Arabs: they had a general belief in the prophecy of Abraham and Ishmael, yet lacked proper understanding of their religious message.⁴⁷⁹ The Qur'ānic points of reference on the question of the People of the Interval are the following: "I will not punish people until I send a messenger to them."⁴⁸⁰ and "Lo! those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans, whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and does right, surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve."⁴⁸¹

The question is interesting, especially that it involves the sub-question of whether humans are capable of discovering and believing in God through the intellect. Ghazālī asked: "what is the ruling about those who lost the right path or missed the path of religion? And what is the ruling regarding those who were not exposed to the teaching of Prophet Muhammad, or have received instead a deplorable image unable to

⁴⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Dustūr*, 25-26, 57; *Ma'a Allah*, 45, 51; *al-'Istī'mar 'Aṭmā' wa-'Aḥqād* (Colonialism: Hatred and Greed), 141.

⁴⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 63.

⁴⁸⁰The Quran says: "Whosoever goes right, it is only for (the good of) his own soul that he goes right, and whosoever errs, errs only to its hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load, We never punish until we have sent a messenger." Pickthall (Chapter 17:15), 252.

⁴⁸¹Pickthall (Chapter 2:62), 12.

motivate them or open up their hearts for faith.⁴⁸²

Ghazālī is very concerned with the relationship of *da'wah* to the People of the Interval. He is preoccupied with the notion that contemporary *da'wah* would not benefit the People of Interval. He examines *da'wah* in the context of their needs - such as the changes required to deliver religious responsibility effectively, what constitutes satisfactory delivery of *da'wah*? And how to keep *da'wah* practical and free from hindering theological assumptions? Interestingly, Ghazālī introduces the question of 'Ahl al-Fatrah through a description of the stagnant state of *da'wah*, including Muslims' negligence of their religious duties, and failure to adhere to the example of Prophet Muhammad in *da'wah*.⁴⁸³

In his discussion of the question of the People of Interval, Ghazālī quotes 'Abduh and Riḍā in their commentary on the following verse: "Lo! Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans - whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right - surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve."⁴⁸⁴ According to 'Abduh, there is the view of 'Ahl al-Sunnah that the People of the Interval ('Ahl al-Fatrah) include all those who were not exposed to any *da'wah*; they will be saved since there is no legal responsibility or accountability without revelation.⁴⁸⁵ Ghazālī includes amongst the People of Interval those who were not

⁴⁸²Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 53-54.

⁴⁸³Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴Pickthall (Chapter 2: 62), 12.

⁴⁸⁵Muhammad 'Abduh, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm al-Musammā Tafsīr al-Manār* (*The Interpretation of the Glorious Qur'ān, called Tafsīr of al-Manār*), Ed. Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, (Al-Ha'ya al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1972), 1: 279.

exposed to a *da'wah* that stimulated their thought, or who, having learned that some prophets were sent out, have acquired a general belief, yet were not exposed to any prophets' specific teachings.⁴⁸⁶

Ghazālī also draws on Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī's sub-division of the saved group into three categories, depending on their positions vis-à-vis the Messengers: the first saved group (*najūn*) includes those who never heard about the message of any prophet. The second group is accountable (*mu'ākhadhūn*), and includes those who were exposed to the message yet did not examine its proof because of negligence, pride, or arrogance. The third group is also considered to be saved and includes those who received erroneous or flawed messages. Ghazālī quotes Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī in his *Fayṣal al-Tafriqah*, in which he mentioned a saved group (*najūn*), which heard about Prophet Muhammad, yet did not know about his qualities or characteristics, and only knew that a liar and a deceiver named Muhammad claimed to be a prophet.⁴⁸⁷

In his discussion of the Muslims' responsibility towards the People of the Interval, Shaykh Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Ḥalīm believes that Muslims' failure to convey the message causes the whole Muslim nation to be accountable, and blames Muslims for their negligence in *da'wah*.⁴⁸⁸ Maḥmūd divides 'Ahl al-Fatrah into two categories: the first includes those who knew that a prophet named Muhammad was sent with the

⁴⁸⁶Ibid., 1: 580. Ṭabarī argues that commentators of the Qur'ān disagree over the religious group from the Sabians. Some argue that the Sabians include all those who leave their religion for another. Some others believe that they are those who had no religion. Ṭabarī quote Mujāhid's statement: "The Sabians have no religion. They are neither Christians nor Jews," and Ibn Zayd's statement: "The Sabians believed in a religion that existed in the Arabian Peninsula. They believed in the oneness of God, but did not believe in any prophet. They had no rituals (*amal*), book, or a messenger. See Abū Ja'far bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1987), 21:253.

⁴⁸⁷Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 64-65.

⁴⁸⁸'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *Ālamiyyat al-Risālah al-'Islāmiyah (The Universality of the Islamic Message)* (Manṣurah: Dār al-Wafā' li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1992), 571-572.

religion of Islam, yet understood nothing about the teachings of Islam. They should seek the teachings of Islam because failure in this area causes accountability. However, if they are unable to learn about Islam, they then will be exempted from accountability. In contrast, Muslims who fail to carry out *da'wah* will instead be accountable.⁴⁸⁹ The second group includes those who knew nothing about Islam or Prophet Muhammad. They shall not be accountable, and their destiny is to God, whether He forgives or punishes them.⁴⁹⁰ In his discussion of the responsibility of people who received a distorted image of *da'wah*, Mahmūd blames the distortion on external factors.⁴⁹¹

Ghazālī makes a division. For him, the category of ignorant (*jāhil*) includes those who were not exposed to a genuine religious message, those who have lived according to ideas readily available to them, and those who inherited traditions (*mā 'irtabaṭa min al-wirātha*). Upon examination, however, the category of ignorant sub-divides into many groups, including the People of the Book, the polytheists, and intelligent people and ordinary people. The category of ignorant also includes people who look to understand the revelation. Upon understanding revelation, they should not be immediately requested to believe; for their safety and security should first be assured. Only then, they can commit themselves to belief in freedom and peace.⁴⁹²

Based on verse fifteen in Chapter al-'Isrā' (The Night of Journey), Ghazālī draws on the arguments of the 'Ash'arites concerning the exemption of the People of the

⁴⁸⁹Ibid., 576-577.

⁴⁹⁰Ibid., 575.

⁴⁹¹Ibid., 577-585.

⁴⁹²Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 69.

Intervals.⁴⁹³ Prophets supported the understanding of the intellect and elaborated issues beyond its realm, including questions of the Day of Judgment and methods of worship. For Ghazālī, the majority of scholars are of the opinion that prophets' transmission of faith is sufficient and provides a pretext for accountability for those exposed to faith, even when prophets were not sent to them specifically.⁴⁹⁴ By comparison, the Mu'tazilites argue that God endows humans with the intellect, with which, in the absence of a prophet, should avoid atheism or polytheism, aggression and corruption, even if they are not requested to implement religious rituals. They are, however, required to believe in the foundations of truth, that is, certainty about one God, and acting well and to the best of their abilities.⁴⁹⁵

Unlike Muslim theologians who address this question with a major preoccupation regarding the salvation (*najāt*) or accountability (*mu'ākhadha*), Ghazālī instead reverses the problem and shifts our attention to the ruling about those who fail

⁴⁹³The Qur'ān states: "Whosoever goes right, it is only for the good of his own soul that he goes right, and whosoever errs, errs only to his hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load, We never punish until we have sent a messenger." Pickthall (Chapter 17:15), 252. The Ash'ariyyah is a theological school, the followers of Abū al-Ḥasan Ash'arī. During the last two decades of his life, 'Ash'arī attracted a number of disciples, and thus a school was founded. Despite opposition the Ash'ariyyah apparently became the dominant school in the Arabic-speaking parts of the 'Abbāsid caliphate (and perhaps also in Khurāsān). In general, they were in alliance with the legal school of al-Shāfi'ī, while their rivals, the Māturīdiyyah, were almost invariably Ḥanafīs. Towards the middle of the 5th/11th century, the Ash'ariyyah were persecuted by the Buwayhīd sultans, who favoured a combination of the views of the Mu'tazilah and Shī'ah. But with the coming of the Saldjūks the tables were turned, and the Ash'ariyyah received official support, especially from the great wazīr Nizām al-Mulk. In return, they gave intellectual support to the caliphate against the Fātimids of Cairo. From this time on, until perhaps the beginning of the 8th/14th century, the teaching of the Ash'ariyyah was almost identical with orthodoxy, and in a sense it has remained so until the present time. Watt, W. Montgomery. "Ash'ariyyah." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 05 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0067>

⁴⁹⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 64.

⁴⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 54.

to deliver *da'wah*.⁴⁹⁶ Through focusing on the caller (*al-dā'i*) rather than the called upon (*al-mad'ū*), Ghazālī underscores a number of reasons leading to a state of dysfunctional *da'wah* among Muslims, rather than being preoccupied with theological questions beyond the realm of human imagination. Ghazālī appears to be more concerned with people who were exposed to a distorted message and, accordingly, were unable to turn their hearts to the religion of Islam. Ghazālī states,

We should ask ourselves about the ruling of Islam concerning people who were misguided or misled from the true religion, those who did not receive the message of Prophet Muhammad, or those who instead received a distorted message unable to attract them to faith or to open up their hearts for adherence to Islam.⁴⁹⁷

In attempting to resolve the controversy of *'Ahl al-Fatrah*, Ghazālī argues that a large number of people should be viewed beyond the reach of *da'wah* either because of their complete ignorance of the Qur'ān, the Prophet, and the teachings of Islam, or because of their misconceptions about the religion of Islam.⁴⁹⁸ Disbelief, according to Ghazālī, only applies when a person is exposed to the truth, understands it and is able to adhere to it, yet for certain purposes, chooses to reject it.⁴⁹⁹ Hence, people who were not exposed to the teachings of Islam from its original holders should likewise be exempted from any divine accountability.⁵⁰⁰ Still, Ghazālī finds it difficult to issue a general

⁴⁹⁶Ibid., 52.

⁴⁹⁷Ibid., 54.

⁴⁹⁸Ibid. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd doubts these groups still exist today given the advance in modern communication. See 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *Ālamiyyat al-Risālah al-Islāmiyah*, 575. In his discussion of the position of those who were not exposed to *da'wah* or have instead received a distorted image of *da'wah*, Shaykh Maḥmūd argues that if *'Ahl al-fatrah*, do still exist, then like the primitive tribes living in jungles, should be very few in number. Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 56.

⁵⁰⁰Ibid., 55. This group, according to Ghazālī resembles *'Ahl al-fatrah* among the Arabs preceding the advent of Islam, whom the Qur'ān states about them: "Whosoever goes right, it is only for (the good of)

judgment including all of the People of the Interval together around one common destiny. Some sincerely acted upon the little divine knowledge to which they were exposed. As well, there were those of sound character, who respected and preserved the rights of other people and abstained from moral vices. In contrast, there are those who mock the religion and disbelieves the unseen, and still others who, despite their ability to explore the truth, choose otherwise.⁵⁰¹ Ghazālī writes,

What can those little children do when they have been taught since their childhood that there is no God, that existence is simply physical, or that gods live as partners in the Mount Olympus, in an Island, or on the top of a cloud? Those children simply grow in misguidance.⁵⁰²

Ghazālī's discussion of communities beyond religious outreach displays his accommodating approach. His main concern was not to discuss their status with God, whether they will be accountable or saved, or whether they are able to discover God on their own. His interest rather, was the examination of factors that have possibly handicapped *da'wah*, and what has generated distorted and distorting ways of religious transmission.

In this regard, Ghazālī discusses certain issues concerning the interaction of Muslims with people from other faith groups. Muslims should view other faith groups who choose to reject the prophecy of Mohammad with justice and objectivity⁵⁰³ and should excuse them for their disbelief.⁵⁰⁴ Those who do not properly embrace the

his own soul that he goes right, and whosoever errs, errs only to its hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load, We never punish until we have sent a messenger." Pickthall, (Chapter 17:15), 252. Ibid.

⁵⁰¹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 56.

⁵⁰²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:64.

⁵⁰³Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 56.

⁵⁰⁴Qur'ān says: "And now verily We have caused the Word to reach them, that they may give heed."

religion of Islam because of repulsive religious practices should also be excused.⁵⁰⁵ People who were not emotionally or intellectually awakened by the Islamic message are not considered disbelievers because they were not properly exposed to the speech (*al-qawl*) described in the Qur'ān.⁵⁰⁶

Ghazālī argues that the outreach of monotheism (*tawḥīd*) is currently not satisfactory because inviting factors for a proper religious understanding are still lacking. The poor implementation of the Qur'ān along with both Muslims' poor internal conditions and external policies drove people away from the path of the divine.⁵⁰⁷ Only Muslims, however, are accountable for their disregard of the message and for holding back the light of guidance.⁵⁰⁸ To reach a more objective answer to the many questions surrounding the issue of religious outreach and human accountability, Ghazālī hypothetically asks whether would he have embraced Islam, known God, or believed in the Qur'ān, had he been born and raised in the West. The answer is affirmatively negative. This is due, according to him, to the distorted and negative images of Islam reaching modern societies of the West.⁵⁰⁹ Ghazālī writes,

I suppose when God, on the Day of Judgment, asks Westerners about the reasons causing neglect of His worship, their failure to do good or prepare for His meeting; their answer would probably be the Arabs who inherited the religion yet constrain its light.⁵¹⁰

Pickthall (Chapter 28: 51), 365.

⁵⁰⁵Ghazālī, *Jaddid Hayātak*, 8.

⁵⁰⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 70.

⁵⁰⁷Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm (The Five Themes of the Glorious Qur'ān)* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), 24.

⁵⁰⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 70.

⁵⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-Islam?* 14.

⁵¹⁰Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 32.

Ghazālī's discussion of the People of the Interval is clearly influenced by Muslims' current conditions, and demonstrates how deeply contemporary conditions affected his thinking, even around issues that are supposedly purely theological. It also proves that Ghazālī choose not to focus on metaphysical questions having no practical implications for *da'wah* but, rather, was concerned with useful and practical questions affecting Muslims. His approach to the People of the Interval, however, is no exception to his general critical stance vis-à-vis the affairs of Muslims and shows serious preoccupation with effective *da'wah* outreach. This implies that, instead of being satisfied with their current *da'wah* contributions, *dā'īs* are required to reflect on *da'wah* approaches and conditions, to constantly engage in self-criticism, and to meet their *da'wah* responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

Ghazālī's approach is not judgmental, and displays the spirit of a *dā'ī* and not of a theologian or a jurist. While there is criticism, nevertheless, Ghazālī's contribution to the relationship of *da'wah* and the People of the Interval is characterized by tolerance and understanding, by their excuse for not being rightly educated or properly exposed to teaching of Islam, and also by an assumption that role modeling is as influential as religious transmission in *da'wah*. In fact, role modeling is even more influential than the delivery of theoretical teaching; this is considered to be an original contribution to the theological discussion of People of the Interval.

IV. The Universality of *Da'wah*

The universality of the message of Islam (*'ālamīyyat al-risāla*) is another distinctive yet fundamental component in Ghazālī's model of *da'wah*. This universality runs throughout the ages, and unites prophets around one common theme, that is, showing the path to God. The message of Prophet Muhammad builds this universality on the belief that, throughout time, religion is only one, and that prophets are but brothers in introducing the Creator and guiding people to Him.⁵¹¹ The seal of prophecy (*khatm al-nubuwwah*) is, however, an affirmation of the Islamic universality since no further divine message will proceed after the Quran.⁵¹²

Ghazālī supports this universality with Quranic verses,⁵¹³ that are mostly Makkite;⁵¹⁴ this implies that this universality was determined during a very early stage

⁵¹¹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 168.

⁵¹²*Ibid.*, 166.

⁵¹³Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 31. "And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind; but most of mankind know not." Pickthall (Chapter 34:28), 409; "Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah to you all - (the messenger of) Him unto Whom belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no God save Him. He quickens and He gives death. So believe in Allah and His messenger, the unlettered, Prophet, who believes in Allah and Words, and follow him that you may be led aright." Pickthall (Chapter 7:158), 145; "And who seeks as religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him, and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter." Pickthall (Chapter 3:85), 55; "Lo! it is nothing else than a reminder for all mankind. And you will come in time to know the truth thereof." Pickthall (Chapter 38:87-88), 439; "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that you may be a witnesses over mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness over you. And We appointed the *qiblah* which you formerly observed only that We might know him who follows the messenger, from him who turns on his heels. In truth it was a hard (test) save for those whom Allah guided. But it was not Allah's purpose that your faith should be in vain, for Allah is full of pity, Merciful toward mankind." Pickthall (Chapter 2:143), 22; and "Blessed is He Who has revealed unto His slave the Criterion (of right and wrong), that he may be a warner to mankind." Pickthall (Chapter 25:1), 333.

⁵¹⁴"This is nothing else than a reminder unto the worlds," Pickthall (Chapter 81:27), 627; "And We sent not (as Our messengers) before you other than men, whom We inspired. Ask the owners of the Reminder if ye know not?" Pickthall (Chapter 21:7), 296; "And though you try much, most men will not believe. You ask them no fee for it. It is nothing else than a reminder unto the worlds." Pickthall (Chapter 12:103-104), 214; "Say (O Muhammad): What thing is of most weight in testimony? Say: Allah is Witness between me and you. And this Qur'an has been inspired in me, that I may warn there-with you and whomsoever it may reach. Do you possibly bear witness that there are gods beside Allah? Say: I bear no such witness.

of revelation - even during times when *da'wah* was suffering the most.⁵¹⁵ In considering the single Medinese verse that addresses this universality, Ghazālī argues that the Quran declared itself a message for humanity when the Makkans did not even accept Muhammad as a prophet for the tribe of Quraysh.⁵¹⁶

Ghazālī approaches the universality of *da'wah*, not just in terms of the large geographic area within which it operates, but rather in light of its guidance and the formulation of its verses. That is, both the Quran and the Sunnah address humans wherever they are, and irrespective of time or space.⁵¹⁷ This should not jeopardise human thought or downplay their changing conditions or circumstances.⁵¹⁸ The universality does not cause any homogenization nor any negligence of current characteristics of religious and national sovereignty.

Ghazālī exhorts Muslims to be clear about the relationship of universality to nationalism, and to avoid inviting Africans or Indians to Arabism because nobody is supposed to leave aside their origin and ethnic origin.⁵¹⁹ This led Ghazālī to discuss the position of language in formation and progress of Islamic universality. For him, the universality of the message is a combination of a mastery of language, exploration of

Say: He is only One Allah. Lo! I am innocent of that which you associate (with Him).” Pickthall (Chapter 6:19), 112; “Those are they whom Allah guides, so follow their guidance. Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee for it. Lo! it is nothing but a Reminder to (His) worlds.” Pickthall (Chapter 6:90), 119. See Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 165-166.

⁵¹⁵Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 166; Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt al-Ghazālī*, 2:175.

⁵¹⁶Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 166; Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:175. Ghazālī enumerated twelve verses in the Quran concerning the universality of *Da'wah*, and concluded they were all revealed in Makkah, which means they were revealed during days where -the religion of- Islam was trying to free itself from idolatry. The Quran states: “Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allah is Aware of all things.” Pickthall (Chapter 33:40), 402.

⁵¹⁷Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 148

⁵¹⁸Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 73.

⁵¹⁹Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 234.

other nations, and strengthening of relationships among nations, and thus requires Muslims to master foreign languages.⁵²⁰

For Ghazālī, Arabs should master foreign languages and develop a synopsis guide of the Islamic teachings in areas of beliefs, morals, worship, and other various transactions.⁵²¹ They should also transmit revelation to humanity in any possible medium of communication.⁵²² Ghazālī gives Arabic language a special attention in the context of Islamic universality.⁵²³ The primacy of Arabic language, however, does not imply leaving one's ethnic origin aside. Arabic language serves the universality of Islam yet does not censure racial or ethnic association. It would be absurd therefore to arabize humanity in order to reach a complete Islamization.⁵²⁴

Beside the crucial role of the language in the process of universality, Ghazālī underscored global reform and humanitarian endeavour. This perspective breaks the emotional and cultural barriers surrounding the universality, and develops vital bridges connecting cultures, communities, and societies. According to Ghazālī, dissemination of goodness, protection of righteousness, and resistance against evil are all considered key universal requirements. The spread and safeguard of goodness and the struggle against evil are not so much local duties incumbent upon Muslims in their

⁵²⁰Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 172.

⁵²¹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:179.

⁵²²Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 145-147.

⁵²³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:179.

⁵²⁴Ghazālī, *Ẓālām min al-Gharb*, 43. On this occasion, Ghazālī disapprovingly quotes a *muftī* to the effect that learning different languages is permissible under extreme necessity only. The *muftī* uses Ibn Taymiyyah as an authority in his case; Ghazālī writes: "Ibn Taymiyyah was not an ignorant person to say such a thing, and how could that have had happened when the prophet Muhammad is sent to people speaking different languages." See Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wihda al-Thaqāfiyyah*, 16.

mother societies; they rather represent Muslim universal obligations.⁵²⁵ This universality represents a connection to the *fiṭrah* and a continuous dialogue with the intellect; this also implies that the Muslim nation is made for the entire humanity,⁵²⁶ and that the message addresses people in all of their conditions irrespective of time or space.⁵²⁷

The universality of *da'wah* leads to the exploration of the world including the examination of diverse religious groups.⁵²⁸ *Dā'īs* preoccupied with intellectual and emotional reforms should examine and acquaint themselves with universal human thought, and understand people's conditions with the hope of improving them. Muslim scholars in particular, should examine universal *da'wah* strategies whether in the presentation of Islam to the external world or in their responses to doubts.⁵²⁹ Muslim administrations and ministries should equally understand foreign languages, conditions of close and remote nations, explore farthest lands, and strengthen mutual relationships.⁵³⁰

For the Islamic universality to be effective, Muslims should relate positively with others; this requires them to provide extraordinary moral examples in personal and public conduct, which motivate people to learn about Islam.⁵³¹ Muslims should also intermingle and frequent public and official gatherings.⁵³² In the process, Muslims should call upon humanity to embrace the religion of Islam, a call that assimilates all

⁵²⁵ Ghazālī, *ʿIlal wa-ʿAdwiyah*, 237.

⁵²⁶ Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:164.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁵²⁸ Ghazālī, *Humūm Dāʿiyah*, 53.

⁵²⁹ Ghazālī, *Sirr Taʾakhhur*, 94-95.

⁵³⁰ Ghazālī, *Maʾrakat al-Mushaf*, 62.

⁵³¹ Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:181.

⁵³² Ghazālī, *ʿIlal wa-ʿAdwiyah*, 121.

racess and colors, and strengthen the fellowship of humanity in the knowledge of God and spiritual purification.⁵³³ At the macro-level, this universality relates to the moral and economic conditions of the Muslim nation⁵³⁴ just as the followers of Prophet Muhammad relied on their character and persuasive language to communicate with other nations.⁵³⁵

Ghazālī examines the current state of the universality through current understanding of the universality, degrees of bridging up with the external world, and also the contributions Muslims have made so far to humanity. For him, the universality of Islam is unfortunately an expression Muslims excessively reiterate yet are not considerate of its implications. Contemporary Muslims are not qualified to carry out this universality because of their state of confusion, contaminated cultures, and the tyrannical political systems.⁵³⁶ Current conditions of Muslims even raise doubts about the value of Islam, and the extent to which people could benefit from.⁵³⁷ Ghazālī asks: “Do the Arabs realize that Muhammad is a messenger to humanity, and that this universality requires them to know him, and introduce and illustrate his message instead of accentuating his physical traits?”⁵³⁸

For Ghazālī, in spite of the fact that the message of the Prophet Muhammad is for all continents, Muslims still ignore much about other nations, modern thought or philosophies, yet only claim that the message is universal without the least effort to

⁵³³Ghazālī, *Ḥaḳīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 234.

⁵³⁴Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 145-147.

⁵³⁵*Ibid.*, 174.

⁵³⁶Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 94.

⁵³⁷Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 3.

⁵³⁸Ghazālī, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 238.

reach out to the wider world.⁵³⁹ Ghazālī continues to question whether Arab-speaking Muslims grasp the essence of this universality or even realize that Muhammad is a universal messenger sent to humanity.⁵⁴⁰ Ghazālī writes:

Unfortunately, the Arabs today neither appreciate Muhammad greatly nor adhere to his teaching. On the contrary, they provide a defamatory source to the religion of Islam and to the Prophet, and have further provided examples causing detrimental judgment.⁵⁴¹

Along similar lines of discussion, Ghazālī wonders what *da'wah* contributions Muslims have so far made, despite the fact they are supposed to carry out a universal *da'wah*, both at the local and international fronts, and whether the universal mercy (*raḥma li al-‘ālamīn*) of Prophet Muhammad has had any impact on contemporary thought, philosophies, or ideologies.⁵⁴² Ghazālī's evaluation of current conditions of Muslims also led him to question why these have badly affected the universality of *da'wah*.

According to Ghazālī, this universality has terribly suffered throughout the history because of the preoccupation of early Muslims with Greek philosophy instead of illustrating the Islamic monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and Quranic philosophy in the various academic disciplines, ethics, and business.⁵⁴³ The political stagnancy has also deprived the official Islamic policy of any sense of universality of *da'wah*. This, according to Ghazālī, is primarily due to rulers who, instead of adhering to a strategy of teaching and guidance, were instead overwhelmed by the desire of control and power.

⁵³⁹Ghazālī, *‘Ilal wa-‘Adwiyah*, 199.

⁵⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:184.

⁵⁴¹Ibid., 184. Ghazālī describes contemporary Muslims as being ignorant of their universal mission. Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:178.

⁵⁴²Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā‘iyah*, 3.

⁵⁴³Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 57.

Previously, Muslim caliphs understood that conveying the message lies at the core of their duties; whereas following rulers failed to establish a clear and realistic strategy to spread the religion of Islam, and were not concerned to educate *dā'īs* to convey the teaching of Islam to uneducated nations about Islam.⁵⁴⁴

IV. *Da'wah*, Society and Culture:

Ghazālī's discussion of *da'wah* and *dā'īs* clearly reveals an attention to the effects of society and culture on moral and human development. Such a perspective integrated social reality into his formulation of *da'wah* strategies, enhanced his understanding and evaluation of *da'wah*, and showed how the reality proportionately affects *dā'īs'* idealism with inputs from the daily life. This section of the thesis highlights the reasons leading Ghazālī to consider both the effects of economic conditions on *da'wah* and the reform of society as a fundamental pre-requisite in *da'wah*.

According to Ghazālī, the impact of social and cultural environment on religion, personal and moral conducts is undeniable.⁵⁴⁵ Hence, substantial influence over moral and social environment is a prerequisite for a successful religious message.⁵⁴⁶ Both

⁵⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 62.

⁵⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-Islām?* 15. Abū Hurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: "No child is born but upon *Fiṭrah*. He then said. Recite: "The nature made by Allah in which He created man, there is no altering of Allah's nature; that is the right religion." See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 4:2047. The following tradition is also similar. "Every child is born upon the *Fiṭrah*, it is only his parents who turn him into a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian." See Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, (Abridged), v. 4, Ed., Ṣafiur-Raḥmān al-Mubarkfūrī (Saudi Arabia: Maktabat Dārussalām), 46. Ghazālī, however, disagrees that attention to economic factors vis-à-vis morals and virtues is an inclination to communism or materialism, or a neglect of the effects of spiritual potentials which protect humans from sin or disobedience. Ghazālī, *Ibid.*, 91-92. For Ghazālī, every economic progress irrespective of its origin enhances the Islamic message. See *Sirr Ta'akhkhur*, 5.

⁵⁴⁶Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 54. Ghazālī argues that the Qur'ān contains teachings about personal and public

religious and moral education requires complete control over the society.⁵⁴⁷ Similarly religious worship requires safeguard of *fiṭrah* and a constant struggle against distorting conditions.⁵⁴⁸ To substantiate this notion, Ghazālī draws on a real-life story of a twenty-six year-old youth offender who was sentenced to death. This offender, we are told, began stealing at the age of five, became a street robber when he was eleven, and turned to a killer at the age of twenty-six. This offender's memoirs go as follow,

I hereby introduce the story of my life. Had I been properly educated or rightly brought up, I would have had chosen the right course good people normally choose. I was, nonetheless, unfortunate more than being of a wicked nature. I only encountered those who misunderstood and misguided me, and led me gradually from theft to murder to execution.⁵⁴⁹

Before considering the effects of society on human development, it is worthwhile defining "society" first. Society or the socio-cultural environment, according to Ghazālī, is all that surrounds people from birth to death, including the house in which they live, the city that connects to their homes, the schools where they learn, the friends they choose, and the books they read. It also includes the radio channels people listen to, the natural scenes they watch, the political system under which they live, their public emotions, the geographical and economic conditions, and the local and international circumstances; all of those affect people's thoughts and feelings, and model their work and their state of affairs.⁵⁵⁰ This implies that modeling human character involves several factors, including the inherited characteristics of human

relationships, and provides an illustration of all that affect or get affected by people. See Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 56; Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 261.

⁵⁴⁸Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr* (The Bitter Truth) (al-Jīzah, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr, 2005), 1:111.

⁵⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālīm*, 95-96.

⁵⁵⁰Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 54.

emotions, plus, home conditions, school, friends, conditions of health and sickness, wealth and poverty, peace and anxiety, weather, even the news and information one reads or hears about.⁵⁵¹

Yet, this environment is deeply affected by economic needs. For Ghazālī, moral crimes and vices are often born, and grow in societies affected by economic needs.⁵⁵² Corrupted environments, however, distort the nature of *fiṭrah*, and affect it with diseases.⁵⁵³ People are born in a state of religion ready to interact with its teaching as soon as they acquire understanding, and once the effects of negative practices are removed.⁵⁵⁴ In other words, in natural conditions, people are inclined to piety instead of immorality, and to righteousness instead of corruption.⁵⁵⁵ This also implies that due attention be given to surrounding influences instead of human character or belief per se,⁵⁵⁶ and that prior to any *da'wah* activity, *dā'īs* must first improve those surrounding conditions.⁵⁵⁷ Interestingly, the divine commands and prohibitions address human beings and their living societies together;⁵⁵⁸ the Islamic rulings are geared to support healthy environments.⁵⁵⁹ This explains why Islam strictly forbids a life of seclusion even

⁵⁵¹Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 211.

⁵⁵²Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa-'Awdā'unā*, 91-92.

⁵⁵³Ghazālī, *'Aqīdat al-Muslim*, 13.

⁵⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:63.

⁵⁵⁵Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Ḥālī*, 5.

⁵⁵⁶True worship according to Ghazālī, not only safeguards human thought, but constantly struggles against environments that are distorting or affecting. Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:111. Religious teachings consider the living reality through examination, contemplation, and comprehension (*tafahhum, tadabbur, and 'istī'āb*). The deviated living reality should be dismissed altogether and replaced with forms of truth. It should be subjected to examination and analysis to understand its nature, reason, and causes. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Najjār, "al-Fikr al-Wāqī'ī fī al-Nahḍah al-'Islāmiyyah" in *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah, al-Wasā'il wa al-Khuṭaṭ, wa al-Madākhil* (Riyadh: WAMY, 1982), 210.

⁵⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1: 63.

⁵⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 14.

⁵⁵⁹Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 55.

when the person's faith is at the peak,⁵⁶⁰ and only requires an atmosphere free from injustice and tyranny.⁵⁶¹

In good living conditions and in societies providing adequate supportive physical and emotional health, however, atheism prevails over a corrupted religiosity which ignores or undermines the mundane life.⁵⁶² In environments of scepticism, belief is susceptible to distortion: worshippers and worship in atheist societies slowly fade; atheism eventually becomes triumphant,⁵⁶³ and people are inclined to polytheism instead of monotheism.⁵⁶⁴ In addition, the spread of atheism or immorality is not due to their own advantages, but rather, to the failure of religious people to solve people's problems and, in the process, have made this proportionate relationship between people and their socio-cultural environments difficult and problematic.⁵⁶⁵

In his discussion of the relationship of poverty to *da'wah*, Ghazālī explains that Islam seeks to purify human talents and coordinate their endeavours, yet hardly achieves any of these in conditions of poverty.⁵⁶⁶ Basic human needs should first be secured; only then, are people expected to hold on to faith.⁵⁶⁷ To substantiate his

⁵⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 177. Ghazālī wrote about "Fann al-'Ikhtilāf wa al-'Uzlah," *Min Ma'ālim*, 72.

⁵⁶¹*Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 69.

⁵⁶³Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 177.

⁵⁶⁴Ghazālī, *'Aqīdat al-Muslim*, 13.

⁵⁶⁵Ghazālī, *Ḥasād al-Ghurūr*, 202.

⁵⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 68.

⁵⁶⁷Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:147. Abū Hāmid Ghazālī argues that the religious order cannot be fulfilled without the order of the mundane life. Religious order accomplished through knowledge and worship can only be achieved with a healthy body, living, and minimum requirement of clothing, shelter, food, and security. He who wakes up safe in his household, with a healthy body and sufficient sustenance for his day, is just like he owns the whole world. Religion shall not be in order unless basic necessities are secured. He who constantly struggles for safety against the swords of the aggressors or seeks his livelihood from the unjust will not be free to work or seek knowledge. The order of life, including the

argument, Ghazālī explains how suffering social classes provide no ideal soil for planting good beliefs, righteous deeds, or morals.⁵⁶⁸ The context of *da'wah* for Ghazālī largely involves poverty and, as is seen below, much of his critique of *dā'īs* involves how *da'wah* is to be effective in conditions of poverty. Ghazālī describes how, despite several attempts, *da'wah* did not find yet the proper environment in which to implant beliefs, morality, or good deeds in poor social classes.⁵⁶⁹

Ghazālī shares his experience of *da'wah* to show the serious effects of economic conditions. Ghazālī was perplexed about preaching to people in conditions of poverty, diseases, and ignorance. He was puzzled and did not know what to tell his audiences. Should he discourage worldly life as is expected from a religious scholar? Life is no worse than it is in the experience of those miserable people, and their need to learn about life is more crucial than their need to learn about Islam. Ghazālī writes,

“Most of them –poor people- ignore proper skills of agriculture, manufacturing, or business. I am supposed to teach them about God! Yet their knowledge about God is not possible without knowing oneself. He who knows himself knows His Lord. Those people are lost and are unconscious about their own selves. Feelings of need (deprivation) and humiliation affected their thinking. How would they then know their Lord or feel devoted to Him.”⁵⁷⁰

This state of affairs requires *dā'īs* to provide effective solutions to moral and economic problems.⁵⁷¹ Prior to guiding people to the Creator, large-scale economic reforms are required, for these are unavoidable if crimes and moral vices are to be fought in the

basic human necessities represent a requirement for religious order. Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *'Itiqād fī al-'Iqtisād* (Median in Belief), 567.

⁵⁶⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:147.

⁵⁶⁹Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa-'Awḍā'unā*, 61.

⁵⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 62.

⁵⁷¹Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah* (Concerns of a *Dā'ī*) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), 129.

name of the religion.⁵⁷² Ghazālī calls for improving economic conditions as crucial to *da'wah*, and enhancing the proportionate relationship between economic development of Muslim societies and *da'wah*.⁵⁷³ As a result, it would be absurd to let conditions for crime grow and be simply satisfied with religious admonitions and emotions.⁵⁷⁴ Preaching of faith alone is not successful,⁵⁷⁵ because it is extremely difficult to inspire guidance into the hearts of people when their stomachs are empty, or dress them in the garment of piety (*libās al-taqwā*) when they are naked.⁵⁷⁶

Ghazālī's attention to economic and social conditions provides *da'wah* thought with objectivity and realism, and points to the notion that the ideals of *da'wah* are impaired when surrounding conditions are poor. On the one hand, such a consideration likely draws the attention of *dā'īs* to the context of *da'wah* much more than to the values they intend to convey. On the other hand, the need of economic reforms prior to *da'wah* appear to surpass the efforts of individual *dā'īs*, and involves states and institutions. In this way, Ghazālī educates *dā'īs* to integrate context into their *da'wah* undertaking, and calls upon institutions to proceed with reform programs as a key means to religious education.

The impact of society on the progress of *da'wah* also includes attention to the effects of culture and customs. According to Ghazālī, horrendous traditions marginal

⁵⁷²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:147.

⁵⁷³Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 89.

⁵⁷⁴Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:147.

⁵⁷⁵Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa-'Awḍā'unā*, 69.

⁵⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:147. The Qur'ān states: "O Children of Adam! We have revealed unto you raiment to conceal your shame, and splendid vesture, but the raiment of restraint from evil, that is best. This is of the revelations of Allah that they may remember." Pickthall (Chapter 7:26), 132.

to Islam still control Muslim life - regrettably in the name of the religion.⁵⁷⁷ Ghazālī's many travels led him to conclude that customs have become more authoritative than Sharī'a, that people have an amazing power to dress up their personal and material inclinations in religious make up, and that they know well how to advance their personal agendas in the name of God.⁵⁷⁸ The teachings of Islam have withdrawn from political, economic, and social life, and religious worship, without their spirit, have turned into meaningless rituals. Morals are degraded, people interact according to their personal material desires, and the international conflict is not between the religion of Islam and the lower material desires but, rather, between the poor practices of Muslims and the awakened human nature.⁵⁷⁹

For Ghazālī, *da'wah* is currently jeopardized because it has transmitted Islamic principles erratically compounded with elements from medieval and modern times.⁵⁸⁰ Ghazālī asks: "Has the call for *tawḥīd* turned to an invitation for the attitudes of early Arab during their era of ignorance (*al-jāhiliyyah*). These primitive attitudes drive people away from the path of God."⁵⁸¹ In his review of *da'wah*, Ghazālī exhorts his reader not to confuse religious teachings with current customary practices.⁵⁸² Such a confusion results from adhering to customs under the pretext they are originally Islamic.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁷Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 120.

⁵⁷⁸Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq Min Hunā*, 44.

⁵⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Sir Ta'akkhur*, 5.

⁵⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁸¹Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 105.

⁵⁸²*Ibid.*, 129.

⁵⁸³Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-'Islam (Not from Islam)* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Shāmiyyah, 1999), 231. Ghazālī for instance draws on the autobiography of Najīb Maḥfūz in which he addresses the danger of confusing religion with customs. Maḥfūz relates how he first learned the religion from the society, which was then a mixture of superstitions and negativity. As soon as he grew up and contrasted his knowledge with the intellect, he endured a state of denial, and felt into a major intellectual fallacy when he considered those

Ghazālī rejects imposing the customs of the desert in the name of Islam,⁵⁸⁴ or inviting people to adopt those traditions on the account of their Islamic nature. For him, some people have dressed up traditions in an Islamic form, acting thus from their own selves and not from God.⁵⁸⁵ Ghazālī also exhorts Muslims to discard customs that have emerged out of the first period of the ignorance (*al-jāhiliyyah al-ʿulā*); these include suppression and accusation of women, disregard of women’s education and credentials, disallowing them from attending mosques, discouraging them from enjoining good and forbidding evil, or increasing their punishment when they sin.⁵⁸⁶ Many customs, which disgrace women and deny their moral status and economic rights, have evolved under the requirements of Islamic dress code.⁵⁸⁷ Ghazālī contends that lacking proper understanding led some nomadic traditions to infiltrate Muslim jurisprudence. For instance, Ghazālī describes how deeply he was embarrassed when a Muslim scholar issued a verdict that forbade women from driving cars! Ghazālī responded,

“An intelligent journalist told me then how modern civilization enabled women to conquer space; whereas, the religion of Islam still forbids women from driving cars. Are not the people right to think wrong about Islam and to discard religion from their life? I replied: “The religion of Islam neither forbids women from riding donkeys nor driving cars, but unfortunately some local customs have paved the way to this verdict.”⁵⁸⁸

The various ills prevailing in Muslim societies makes Ghazālī feel Muslims breathe in an atmosphere of intellectual stagnancy, and that their psychological, social, intellectual,

superstitions parts of the religion whose rejection shall release him free from religion. Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 3:17.

⁵⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 169.

⁵⁸⁵Ghazālī, *Humūm Dāʿiyah*, 129.

⁵⁸⁶Ghazālī, *Sirr Taʾakhhur*, 32.

⁵⁸⁷Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 169.

⁵⁸⁸Ghazālī, *Sirr Taʾakhhur*, 31.

and emotional nourishment is extremely poor.⁵⁸⁹ Ghazālī considers many prevailing customs to be un-Islamic, and wonders why *dā'īs* do not straightforwardly confront the sources of those problems affecting the future of the religion.⁵⁹⁰ Nothing justifies the neglect of reforming current negative customs and attitudes, and the enthusiasm of Muslims towards *da'wah* is questionable so long those negative qualities persist. Those customs burden Muslim societies with hardships and difficulties and developed showing off and insincerity.⁵⁹¹

Some of those customs for Ghazālī relate to marriage and divorce, social gatherings and dispersal, occasions of joy and sadness, and treatment of friends and neighbours. The spread of those customs, according to Ghazālī, engendered chaos all throughout Muslim societies.⁵⁹² Attitudes of boredom, laziness, apathy, and impassivity vis-à-vis creativity and exploration of the universe just pull Muslims backward.⁵⁹³ Customs related to marriage, dowry, or gifts, neither relate to religious piety nor support chastity. They provide no confirmation of spiritual or social purity either, and only develop showing off, arrogance, and pride.⁵⁹⁴ With this state of affairs, Ghazālī criticizes *dā'īs* who understand the religious message as having its own customs and protocols-its own isolated streets- and as disapproving of any connection with the external world; because what mostly matters in their view, is that those streets remain

⁵⁸⁹ Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam?* 6.

⁵⁹⁰ Ghazālī, *al-Tarīq min Hunā*, 13.

⁵⁹¹ Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 5:12-13.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 5:13.

⁵⁹⁴ Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 155.

isolated and filled with indigenous people only.⁵⁹⁵

To purify customs of doubts and suspicions, and draw them closer to revelation, requires enormous intellectual effort.⁵⁹⁶ Muslim culture should be thoroughly reviewed,⁵⁹⁷ and periodic reviews of customs be made mandatory, in order to assess their proximity to belief and virtues,⁵⁹⁸ until such time as only those related to the Sharī'a survive.⁵⁹⁹ This review is, nonetheless, wide-ranging, that is, Muslims should undertake a comprehensive review of culture, and subject prevailing customs and traditions, including Islamic legal judgments, to the certainty (*al-yaqīn*) contained in the divine book and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad.⁶⁰⁰

Ghazālī's *da'wah* is highly anchored into the current conditions of present day Muslims-which involve scientifically advanced western societies, "backward" Muslim societies, and the many problems of culture and customs. The incorporation of the reality into *da'wah* thought is not simply a consideration or an understanding of the social context known as "*murā'āt al-wāqī*". Ghazālī also advances towards the reform of socio-cultural environment, in his treatment of the relationship of mundane life and the Hereafter, body and spirit; in his appreciation of the capability of some factors not only to jeopardize *da'wah* but also to "negatively" re-model human behaviours.

Ghazālī points to the dire need to undertake economic and cultural reforms prior to undertaking *da'wah* because his main preoccupation was to see a positive social

⁵⁹⁵Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:39.

⁵⁹⁶Ghazālī, *al-Jānib al-'Āṭifi*, 10.

⁵⁹⁷Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 183.

⁵⁹⁸Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 204.

⁵⁹⁹Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 32.

⁶⁰⁰Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-Taqāt*, 60.

environment that smoothly facilitates the interaction of *fiṭrah* with the values of Islam. For him, such an environment is quite crucial for the success of *da'wah*, and is all that *dā'īs* are required to look for and find. Taking Ghazālī's notion into practice, one easily acknowledges, hypothetically at least, that modern prosperous and civilized societies have gone way through the preparation of fertile ground for a proper interaction of *fiṭrah* with religious ideals, that is, they have already proceeded with *da'wah*, and have provided an ideal ground for *da'wah* movements.

Yet the notion of socio-cultural reform raises more challenges for *da'wah*, particularly the problem of inner capability of the religious ideals versus the potential of prosperous environment - which is more influential? (i.e.,) are revelatory values eclipsed by the negative material productions of human beings? And is the influence of those values over material productions handicapped, unless human support those values? The Qur'ān generally does not appear to support Ghazālī's position, and this is probably why he did not draw on the Qur'ān in the discussion of this particular question. The tradition alludes to a close relationship between poverty and disbelief like in the following tradition: "Poverty is next to disbelief." The effects of socio-cultural environment appear to be of different kind, like those of parental influential education over children's upbringing on Judaism, Christianity, or Magianism. It is understandable that Ghazālī's loyalty to his theoretical premises forced him to proceed towards these assumptions. In practical terms, however, Ghazālī only draws attention to the requirement of socio-economic reform as a fundamental pre-requisite in the undertaking of a successful *da'wah*, yet did not fully develop clear guidelines to help *dā'īs* better understand the relationship of *da'wah* to society and culture.

V. *Da'wah* and Freedom:

In his analysis of the relationship between religion and freedom, or the impact of freedom on religious practice, Ghazālī's major interest was to establish a solid and intimate connection between freedom and religious prosperity.⁶⁰¹ Ghazālī's *da'wah* thought is strongly entrenched in freedom, and sometimes shows that *da'wah* and freedom are synonymous. This section examines this relationship and explains the crucial role of *da'wah* in support of freedom, and also address religious freedom in light of Muslims' belief in the everlasting obligation of *da'wah*. But first, let us introduce Ghazālī's defining perspectives of freedom.

According to Ghazālī, freedom of the intellect and conscience constitute the fundamental foundation of religiosity,⁶⁰² as well as the key environment where religion gives birth, grows, and prospers.⁶⁰³ Free persuasion is the only means leading to faith,⁶⁰⁴ and freedom is considered to be the most conducive atmosphere for growing beliefs and religious adherence.⁶⁰⁵ Since the beginning of religious monotheism, *da'wah* has closely been associated with the freedom of worship.⁶⁰⁶ Freedom is also the echo of the innate human nature, the secret of life,⁶⁰⁷ and the other face to the worship of God.⁶⁰⁸ It is an atmosphere which stands on finding out and determining the truth, and a

⁶⁰¹Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnūnā*, 67.

⁶⁰²Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 92.

⁶⁰³Ghazālī, *Qaḍā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 235.

⁶⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁰⁵Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 219-220; Ghazālī, *Kifāh Dīn (Struggle of a Religion)* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 108.

⁶⁰⁶Ghazālī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, 194.

⁶⁰⁷Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣḥaf*, 239.

⁶⁰⁸Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 205.

guidance of people away from compulsion.⁶⁰⁹ Humans are created to be dignified not humiliated, honoured not debased, and are to exercise their freedom through intellect, love with their hearts, walking with their feet, and work with their hands.⁶¹⁰

In contrast, tyranny is an enemy to God, His messengers, and humanity; no right shall be established on earth until all forms of tyranny are fully flattened.⁶¹¹ Since the genesis of human creation, tyrannical rules caused most catastrophes affecting religions. Prophets suffered most in societies lacking freedom.⁶¹² These led Ghazālī to raise a reciprocal relationship between disbelief and abusive environments, that is, disbelief only grows and develops in conditions lacking freedom of expression, and atheism settles in societies, which turn into large prisons with rulers acting as guards.⁶¹³

The religion of Islam, in contrast, establishes social relationships on personal and intellectual freedom, and rejects compulsion of intellect or conscience.⁶¹⁴ The Qur'ān shows that the only way leading to faith consists of acquiring knowledge through freedom and persuasion.⁶¹⁵ Ghazālī enumerates about one-hundred verses from the Qur'ān to prove that faith is the ultimate outcome of free thinking, will,⁶¹⁶ and conscience,⁶¹⁷ and is built on persuasion.⁶¹⁸ He also enumerates various types of

⁶⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 37.

⁶¹⁰Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 73.

⁶¹¹*Ibid.*, 77.

⁶¹²Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 239.

⁶¹³Ghazālī, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 235.

⁶¹⁴Ghazālī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Ghazālī*, 194.

⁶¹⁵Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 55.

⁶¹⁶Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islamiyyah*, 13.

⁶¹⁷Ghazālī, *Ḍalām min al-Gharb*, 89.

⁶¹⁸Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 128.

freedom, including a) freedom of speech, b) religious freedom, c) freedom to satisfy basic needs, and d) freedom from persecution.⁶¹⁹ The freedom Muslims long for relates to the building of a peaceful, honourable, and just life, where rights are protected and where people are treated equally.⁶²⁰

According Ghazālī, the intellectual freedom is the foundation of *da'wah*, and a crucial criterion in the divine reward or punishment.⁶²¹ It represents the only way leading to God, discovery of His glory, affirmation of His rights, and acquiring of His guidance.⁶²² Religious freedom is a paramount characteristic of Islam,⁶²³ and freedom from fear of persecution is a foundation of Islam.⁶²⁴ Freedom of expression involves constructive criticism, and contesting intellectual positions through arguments instead of the stick or sword.⁶²⁵ Ghazālī writes: "I greatly esteem freedom of expression. I, nonetheless, dislike idiocy, falsehood, or support of opinions through forceful suppression of intellect in order to block all avenues leading to the truth."⁶²⁶

For Ghazālī, religious messages granted the intellect freedom to enrich dialogue and to demonstrate that religion carries no compulsion against people's faith.⁶²⁷ Islam

⁶¹⁹Ibid., 74-75.

⁶²⁰Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 2:173.

⁶²¹Ibid., 90.

⁶²²Ibid., 205.

⁶²³Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah bayna 'Ajz al-Dākhil wa-Kayd al-Khārij* (*The Struggle of Da'wah between Internal Deficiencies and External Adversity*) (Beirut: al-Dār al-Shāmiyyah, 1999), 73. Muslims' appreciation of the intellectual persuasion in religious matters led them to discuss the question of whether the belief of the imitator (*muqallid*) is of any worth, and whether will it be of any value in the Hereafter. See Ghazālī, *Hādha Dīnuna*, 67.

⁶²⁴Ibid., 66-67.

⁶²⁵Ibid., 52.

⁶²⁶Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:104.

⁶²⁷Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 88.

looks for an atmosphere of tolerance, free from despotism or oppression,⁶²⁸ with the goal of persuasion in environment of peace. Faith is built on absolute intellectual freedom without resorting to miracles suppressing the intellectual capacities, and with no pressure against human intellect or will.⁶²⁹

The basic foundation of *da'wah*, according to the Qur'ān, is God's saying: "Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! Your Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright."⁶³⁰ Hence, *da'wah* is free from compulsion, assures freedom of human conscience, and provides opportunities of freedom.⁶³¹ *Da'wah* also implies that beliefs develop in total intellectual freedom.⁶³² This involves illustration not the sword, guidance not coercion,⁶³³ and helps people identify Muslims' interest to convey the religion through legitimate means, including role modeling and courtesy.⁶³⁴

Ghazālī argues that persuasion is more important than fear, and argumentation is far more powerful than the sword.⁶³⁵ Compulsion should not occur in areas of faith because when it does, it only drives people away from religion and causes religious misconceptions.⁶³⁶ People who are forced to adhere to religion are not considered

⁶²⁸Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-Da'wah*, 15.

⁶²⁹Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnūnā*, 67.

⁶³⁰Pickthall (Chapter 16:125), 249.

⁶³¹Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 34.

⁶³²Ibid., 91.

⁶³³Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 107. The Quran states: "Say: Obey Allah and obey the messenger. But if ye turn away, then (it is) for him (to do) only that wherewith he has been charged, and for you (to do) only that wherewith you have been charged. If you obey him, ye will go aright. But the messenger has no other charge than to convey (the message) plainly." Pickthall (Chapter 24:54), 329.

⁶³⁴Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 165.

⁶³⁵Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 296.

⁶³⁶Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 91.

religious even when subjected to strict religious observances.⁶³⁷ Compulsion in religious domains is an intellectual offence, having no support in the biography of the prophet or history of the guided caliphs.⁶³⁸

Islam seeks to remind people to uphold to the truth, reject material desires, and to approach life on the basis that religions cannot be disregarded.⁶³⁹ For freedom to flourish, Muslims are required to free the way before the innate human nature, and to eliminate the artificial obstacles before humans in their struggle for safety, justice, and dignity.⁶⁴⁰ In light of the congruent relationship between *da'wah* and freedom, Ghazālī exhorts *dā'īs* to be preoccupied with the guidance of people, not their capture, because those who view life as an area of profit are simply highway robbers but not *dā'īs*.⁶⁴¹ Muslims simply introduce the religion of Islam;⁶⁴² what mostly matters is to communicate goodness through decent means and persuasive argumentation.⁶⁴³ Muslims should not coerce people against their personal beliefs nor compel others to abandon their religions,⁶⁴⁴ and should also avoid hatred vis-à-vis intellectual and religious differences.⁶⁴⁵

⁶³⁷Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 89.

⁶³⁸The Qur'ān states: "There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejects false deities and believes in Allah hath grasped a firm handhold-which will never break. Allah is Hearer, Knower." Pickthall (Chapter 2:256), 38.

⁶³⁹Ghazālī, *Mī'at Su'āl*, 89.

⁶⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:173.

⁶⁴¹Ghazālī, *Mī'at Su'āl*, 296. Ghazālī states: "Life is not created for us nor does it function through us only." See Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 37.

⁶⁴²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:121.

⁶⁴³*Ibid.*, 1:4.

⁶⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣaf*, 35.

⁶⁴⁵Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:65. Based on verse seventy five and seventy six of chapter *Āl-'Imrān* of the Qur'ān, Ghazālī concludes that religious differences should not cause aggression or distress, or lead to hostility among each other. See Ghazālī, *Ḥuqūq al-'Insān*, 30. Using aggression against others exposes Muslims to the wrath of God. See Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:98. Ghazālī says; "I believe it is horrible to kill somebody to acquire paradise on the account of his bloodshed. It is horrible to request others to believe

For Ghazālī, Muslims are to illustrate the beauty of Islam, so that hearts and intellects are attracted to it with persuasion,⁶⁴⁶ and are to recite and illustrate the book, invite others to it; yet assure the freedom of people, irrespective of their acceptance or refusal.⁶⁴⁷ In their undertaking of *da'wah*, Muslims should provide opportunities for peace and reconciliation, appreciate human mistakes, and act nobly even when forced to fight.⁶⁴⁸ Muslims, still, should rely on wisdom, calm debate, and persuasion, and continually act so, even when armoured from head to toe.⁶⁴⁹ Ghazālī supports peace and condemns bloodshed, permits engagement in war only to defend the religion or safeguard *da'wah*,⁶⁵⁰ and advocates the strategy of peaceful transmission, while rejecting all other forms of transmission.⁶⁵¹ Fighting is justified only to establish intellectual freedom which involves removal of corrupted authorities.⁶⁵²

Muslims encourage legitimate competition, allow diverse religious groups to draw their life and sacredness from their own principles, and recruit religious followers without any pressure or force.⁶⁵³ In his discussion of the role of religious freedom in *da'wah* and his critique of *dā'īs*' inclination to compulsion, Ghazālī encourages *dā'īs* to emulate Prophet Muhammad, who was commanded to act strictly

in my statements otherwise they will perish." See Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 2:44. Ghazālī dislikes those who hold on to their inherited ideas, reject dialogue, or refuse to look at different opinions. Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:103.

⁶⁴⁶Ibid., 163.

⁶⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 55. Ghazālī even suggests to discipline those people who back up their opinions through terror, or force others to embrace their ways. See Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:10.

⁶⁴⁸Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah*, 133-134.

⁶⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim al-Ḥaqq*, 164.

⁶⁵⁰Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 53.

⁶⁵¹Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣaf*, 66.

⁶⁵²Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-'Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, 104. For Ghazālī, *Jihād* stands for a struggle against aggression and elimination of the evil of aggressors. Ibid., 98.

⁶⁵³Ghazālī, *Kifāh Dīn*, 20.

within the circle of religious transmission.⁶⁵⁴ Hence, Ghazālī criticizes those who perceive the Muslim relationship with non-Muslims as a means of conversion, payment of jizya tax, or instigation of war.⁶⁵⁵ Using Qur’ānic evidences,⁶⁵⁶ Ghazālī also criticizes *dā’īs* who neglect the role of intellectual and political freedom, overlook the need to nourish a prosperous freedom, or fail to understand that lack of freedom only leads to a decline in religious verities until they vanish or evolve to disbelief or atheism.⁶⁵⁷

The question of freedom led Ghazālī to discuss the position of *da’wah* versus religious differences, and whether *da’wah* compromises its universal ambitions with its intrinsic character of freedom. This, again, is a theoretical discussion, conducted in light of Islam’s basic concepts, and also in view of the nature of *da’wah*. According to Ghazālī, prophets are brothers, whose spiritual intimacy (*qarābah rūḥiyah*) unites people instead of dispersing them, and awakes feelings of cooperation and sympathy. God sent many prophets with one common religious theme, and the verities God teaches people in areas of emotional education and social interaction are close if not identical across faith groups.⁶⁵⁸ Interestingly, out of Ghazālī’s ten principles in, four are entirely devoted to *da’wah* and religious cooperation, while Principle Eight addresses religious differences and how they should not cause enmity or adversity.⁶⁵⁹

According to Ghazālī, humanity is one single family originating from one

⁶⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Ma’rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 141.

⁶⁵⁵Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 78-79.

⁶⁵⁶Ibid., 157. The Qur’ān states: “Allah loves not the utterance of harsh speech save by one who has been wronged. Allah is ever Hearer, Knower.” Pickthall (Chapter 4:148), 88.

⁶⁵⁷Ghazālī, *al-Jur’āt al-’Akhīrah* (*The Last Doses from the Bitter Truth*), 6:7.

⁶⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 204.

⁶⁵⁹Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 237.

common origin, with no preference whatsoever over creation or life.⁶⁶⁰ God created people to know not to deny each other. Such knowledge, however, requires Muslims to share good tidings and follow ease instead of hardship.⁶⁶¹ Differences in language or color are irrelevant,⁶⁶² and have no effect on human equality versus their original human existence.⁶⁶³

Religions share common background because of their common beliefs and also for their appreciation of the prophecy of Moses and Jesus; they honour his birth and exalt his lineage, and agree that any defamation of his status leads disbelief.⁶⁶⁴ Other religious commonalities include belief in the unity of God, affirmation of His divine Glory, knowledge, and might; belief in the Day of Reckoning where the righteous shall be rewarded and the sinners shall be disgraced; belief in emotional and social virtues, the need for cooperation and abstaining from moral vices; adherence to human rights; and the establishment of universal brotherhood.⁶⁶⁵ Jesus was one of God's resolute prophets (*'ulū al-'azm*), who guided people to the worship of God Almighty. Ghazālī respects life, peace, and security of people believing in Jesus, who believe Jesus died for their forgiveness.⁶⁶⁶

According to the Qur'ān, Islam is the synopsis of preceding religious teachings,

⁶⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Ḥuqūq al-'Insān*, 14.

⁶⁶¹Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 30.

⁶⁶²Ghazālī makes no reference to class or gender in this context. His line of thinking, however, remains general and can easily be extended to cover class and gender.

⁶⁶³Ghazālī, *Ḥuqūq al-'Insān*, 14.

⁶⁶⁴Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 72.

⁶⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 286.

⁶⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣhaf*, 141. The Qur'ān says: "And when We exacted a covenant from the prophets, and from you (O Muhammad) and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant." Pickthall (Chapter 33:7), 399. Ghazālī writes; "I believe I am correct and that others have been misled, and I sincerely hope for their guidance. Yet I do not cross the boundaries of this emotional desire nor do I convert it to any compulsion or coercion." Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣhaf*, 141.

conveyed through subsequent messages, and endorsed in the finality of the Qur'ān.⁶⁶⁷ In other words, Islam is a new title for an older truth, which Prophet Muhammad built on but did not abolish, affirmed and confirmed previous messages instead of waging combat or igniting conflict.⁶⁶⁸ This establishes the relationship of Islam with other faith groups on preserving truth and justice.⁶⁶⁹ Irrespective of religious or ideological differences, Muslims along other nations, should work together towards the betterment of global economic and moral conditions.⁶⁷⁰

According to Ghazālī, Muslims welcome any call for unity, which directs religious followers to building instead of deconstruction. Muslims should not, however, allege monopoly of religions, and should only adhere to the Qur'ān which says: “(Say: (It is) the truth from the Lord of you (all). Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve.”⁶⁷¹ Islam rejects any compulsion or hatred towards non-Muslims caused by intellectual or religious differences.⁶⁷² Muslims also appreciate the heavenly bonds they share with the People of the Holy Book,⁶⁷³ and view the Jews

⁶⁶⁷Ghazālī, *al-'Islam wa-'Awḍā'una*, 20.

⁶⁶⁸Ghazālī, *Hādā Dīnunā*, 13.

⁶⁶⁹Ghazālī, *Ḥalām min al-Gharb*, 54.

⁶⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 237. Ghazālī criticizes those who assume that the foundations of divine religions are detached or conflicting, for there are many areas of cooperation between religious groups which help address issues endangering humanity. Ghazālī is not only concerned with the preservation of the Islamic teachings but with those of other religions. He underscores the need to develop a defence line in order that the followers of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad protect their places of worship. See Ghazālī, *al-'Islam wa al-'Istibḍā al-Siyāsī*, 96. The Qur'ān says: “Those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said: Our Lord is Allah - For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. Verily Allah helps one who helps Him. Lo! Allah is Strong, Almighty.” Pickthall (Chapter 22:40), 310.

⁶⁷¹Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr*, 140. See Pickthall, Chapter 18:29.

⁶⁷²Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 1:65.

⁶⁷³Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 120. The Qur'ān says: “Nothing is said unto you (Muhammad) save what was said unto the messengers before you. Lo! thy Lord is owner of forgiveness, and owner (also) of dire punishment.” Pickthall (Chapter 41: 43), 462.

and Christians as brothers, and other faith groups with justice, kindness, and loyalty.⁶⁷⁴

Muslims and non-Muslims alike apply their energies collectively in face of atheism and corruption⁶⁷⁵ in a manner that is kind, just, and cooperative.⁶⁷⁶ Muslims build up positive international policy,⁶⁷⁷ and accept all invitations for religious brotherhood⁶⁷⁸ and any call that unites religions and removes conflicts.⁶⁷⁹ Religious unity, however, should not eliminate the religious characteristics of each individual religion.⁶⁸⁰ Religious groups should cooperate around common issues that bring them closer.⁶⁸¹

Ghazālī regrets the conflict between Christians and Muslims, and hopes the atrocious conflict between Christianity and Islam end, and the fuel igniting that fight be extinguished.⁶⁸² Although current level of coexistence is insignificant, it is, however, hoped that a sincere friendship develops between believers in the oneness or trinity of God. Religious peace, nonetheless, requires several supporting factors including the mutual recognition for an honourable life, and the need to express oneself, and defend and safeguard human right, honour, and life of religious followers.⁶⁸³ According to Ghazālī, a better future between the religion of Islam and Christianity is feasible, yet requires mutual forbearance, understanding of differences, and cooperation on issues

⁶⁷⁴Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 1:129.

⁶⁷⁵Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadidah*, 2:122.

⁶⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 95.

⁶⁷⁷Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 163.

⁶⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadidah*, 2:122.

⁶⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 122.

⁶⁸⁰Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadidah*, 2:122.

⁶⁸¹Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 210.

⁶⁸²Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadidah*, 2:124.

⁶⁸³Ghazālī, *Kifāh Dīn*, 18-19.

of agreement.⁶⁸⁴ Ghazālī writes; “we like to see a unity between the crescent and the cross, and cooperation among the believers in Jesus and Mohammad.”⁶⁸⁵

The above discussion shows how Ghazālī’s works separate *da’wah* from all forms of abuse, tyranny, and exploitation. Both the caller (*dā’ī*) and the called upon (*mad’ū*) equally enjoy freedom. This does not only relate to the interpretation of the religion, but also invokes complex social and cultural ramifications of the religious understanding. This also makes *da’wah* an intelligible presentation of Islam, a courteous argumentation of doubts, and an opportunity for reflection.⁶⁸⁶ In religious fields, *da’wah* does not race to win supporters or gain new territories, but rather develops positive religious models in atmosphere of intellectual and political freedom, while maintaining independence from material and emotional incentives.

The above discussion, however, represents a logical sequence of Ghazālī’s own assumptions. In practical terms, however, this freedom raises more challenges. First, the challenging task of keeping *dā’īs* passive in face of abusive and oppressive forces; second, the need for cultural and economic reforms resulting in freedom in the same way economic reforms are required prior to undertaking *da’wah*. Reinforcing freedom leads to religious tolerance and is acquired through education and criticism of *dā’īs’* practices. To develop new environments of freedom, major political reforms are inevitably required. This shows that *da’wah* and reform rotate in the same cycle and cannot be separated.

Ghazālī’s discussion of freedom and religious pluralism is positive especially

⁶⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 213.

⁶⁸⁵Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na’lam*, 124.

⁶⁸⁶Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da’wah*, 34.

given his own history of imprisonment and being persecuted. The perspective on freedom in Ghazālī's works transcends his own socio-political experience, and depends largely on persuasion and choice. This perspective is also shown to be original, humanist, and realistic, as well as religious. It integrates religion and reality, *da'wah* and human emotions and existence, makes *da'wah* transparent and accommodating, causes no jeopardy to the religious and mundane life, without twisting the basic notions of *da'wah*.

In Ghazālī's works, *da'wah* is an open and tolerant process of change, owing considerable attention to human emotions and intellect. It rationally translates the values of what he called the natural religion (*al-dīn al-ṭabīʿī*) without confronting the universal values. The harmonious interaction between religion, intellect, and human nature, was at the core of his *da'wah* thought, and helped him appreciate or criticize *dā'īs*' contributions accordingly. In view of the fact that favourable human conditions enhance and sustain *da'wah*, Ghazālī's goals were clear; simply pave the way before *da'wah* as shown in much of his critique of *dā'īs*' attitudes and approaches.

Evaluating the feasibility of Ghazālī's *da'wah* framework, however, involves complex factors. First, there is the attitude of Muslims to their socio-cultural problems, western lifestyles, religious interpretation, traditional learning, and, above all, the very definition and objectives of *da'wah*. Second, *da'wah* requires political stability, economic prosperity, and cultural health. And third, it differentiates between the sacred and the secular, and subjects the works of *dā'īs* to rational and objective measures of progress assessment.

Chapter Three

Dā'īs (Callers to Islam)

Introduction:

In his discussion of the current and future status of *da'wah*, Ghazālī was preoccupied with the duties and responsibilities of *dā'īs*, their religious understandings and approaches, their strategies for facilitating religious progress and, more importantly, with their failure to meet his expectations and ambitions for *da'wah*. This chapter will examine Ghazālī's perspective on *dā'īs*' responsibilities, their spiritual, moral and educational qualifications, problems and challenges around *da'wah*, as well as Ghazālī's critique of their views. This will help us to understand the nature and implications of *da'wah*, demonstrate the spiritual and moral character of *dā'īs* in Ghazālī's model, and show reasons leading Ghazālī to regard certain qualifications as mandatory, without which *dā'īs* harvest far-reaching failures. The discussion of these qualifications will also highlight Ghazālī's position in regards to current notions on *dā'īs*' education and prerequisites for *da'wah*.

The discussion of the failures and shortcomings of *dā'īs* was the perfect way for Ghazālī to address various current spiritual, intellectual and socio-cultural problems and challenges in contemporary *da'wah*. His harsh tone and his negative approach to contemporary *da'wah*, however, obscured his real arguments. Ghazālī's discussion of requirements and obligations clearly translated into an ambitious search for ideal *dā'īs* who, in the words of Malek Abisaab, resemble "mini-Messengers" reflecting ideal moral and spiritual personalities.

I. Responsibilities of *Dā'īs*:

Ghazālī's view on *dā'īs*' responsibilities primarily reflect an understanding of the fundamental objectives of the Islamic message (*al-risālah al-'islāmiyyah*) vis-à-vis personal and human development. This is understandable in view of the fact that *dā'īs*' efforts should lead to the actualization of those objectives, which affect both the sacred and secular dimensions of the society. Such a multitude of objectives, however, requires a wide array of responsibilities, in need of multitalented individuals with diverse academic, religious and intellectual credentials.

According to Ghazālī, the religion of Islam, in essence, is geared to *da'wah*, and exhorts Muslims to learn and teach, become persuaded and persuade others.⁶⁸⁷ The message of Islam imparts education about the Creator and provides certainty for the doubtful and piety for the deviant.⁶⁸⁸ It basically seeks to change human self and society, confronts corruption and injustice, disposes of negative customs and rules, and endorses good ones instead.⁶⁸⁹ Such is the religious message; the goal of *da'wah* then is effective human development and the mobilization of Muslims through enthusiastic faith, devout prayers, sincerity and love towards God and His messenger, and excellence in worldly life.⁶⁹⁰

The above general requirements demand that Muslims uphold the message, convey it to other nations,⁶⁹¹ and share its guidance with people in perplexity.⁶⁹² The

⁶⁸⁷Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 129-130.

⁶⁸⁸Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 49.

⁶⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 200.

⁶⁹⁰Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 107.

⁶⁹¹Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 49.

religious responsibility to reach out to non-Muslim communities made Ghazālī concerned that God shall hold Muslims accountable for the many nations which were unaware of Him, were not introduced to His books, and did not understand the path to Him or follow His prophets. According to the Qur’ān, *dā’īs* recite verses, acquire spiritual purification, and educate people.⁶⁹³ These duties advocated by prophets represent essential components in *da’wah*. The recitation of revelation implies several key elements; the illustration of Islamic doctrine, Islamic education through development of good potential, and the control of lower physical desires, and the establishment of a legal system for the individual, society, and state.⁶⁹⁴

More immediately, however, *dā’īs*’ primary field of work is their own selves and groups.⁶⁹⁵ That is, *dā’īs* should acquire a proper understanding of fundamental questions of Islam,⁶⁹⁶ and practice the religion decently.⁶⁹⁷ Through their own role modeling, they educate Muslims and non-Muslims about their religion,⁶⁹⁸ introduce people to revelation, and test their connection with and benefit from the Qur’ān.⁶⁹⁹ *Dā’īs* illustrate and do not conceal the truth,⁷⁰⁰ and convey the message of Islam intact

⁶⁹²Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta’akhhur*, 39.

⁶⁹³Ghazālī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, 113-114. The Qur’ān states: “It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest error.” Pickthall (Chapter 7:158), 145.

⁶⁹⁴Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 129-130.

⁶⁹⁵Ghazālī, *al-Da’wah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 228.

⁶⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 146.

⁶⁹⁷Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 72.

⁶⁹⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:121.

⁶⁹⁹Ghazālī, *al-Da’wah al-Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Ḥālī*, 41.

⁷⁰⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:81.

and free from the effects of material life.⁷⁰¹ At the social level, and following several Qur'ānic reports, *dā'īs* free *da'wah* from desires and greed, convey the Islamic message free from the effects of materialism, secure the safety of the public, and prove that *da'wah* is not a means to access or control public wealth and property.⁷⁰² Ghazālī writes,

The state of the religion improves when its followers commit themselves to social and political integrity, and preserve life, honour, and public property. Acting differently causes people to adopt materialistic philosophies which reject divine revelation and believe solely in the matter.⁷⁰³

Given that Islam calls for dialogue and persuasion and unequivocally rejects all means of damage and destruction, *dā'īs* forge bridges of trust with the larger society to be able to present *da'wah* and overcome its challenges.⁷⁰⁴ *Dā'īs* also appreciate the impact of the environment on the development of beliefs, emotions, and judgments; and acknowledge that they themselves could have rejected the Islamic beliefs had they been surrounded by similar conditions.⁷⁰⁵ Such an understanding requires *dā'īs* to improve their environment emotionally and intellectually; this improvement serves as a ground for subsequent reforms.⁷⁰⁶

Internally, *dā'īs* also cure the nation from within and end detrimental foreign intellectual influences. Ideally, for Ghazālī, *dā'īs* rescue the nation by closing the intellectual and spiritual gaps among Muslims, reviving religious brotherhood and

⁷⁰¹ Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah*, 72.

⁷⁰² Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'alam*, 95.

⁷⁰³ Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 3:105.

⁷⁰⁴ Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:113.

⁷⁰⁵ Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 15.

⁷⁰⁶ Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt fī-Tarīq al-Hayāt al-'Islāmiyyah* (Problems on the Way of Islamic Life) (Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2003), 137.

inspiring love.⁷⁰⁷ Externally, *dā'īs* explore communities living outside of Muslim societies, and become familiar with their socio-cultural conditions.⁷⁰⁸ *Dā'īs* need to understand their thought and other's thought,⁷⁰⁹ and be aware of allegations made by atheists or adversaries.⁷¹⁰

The responsibilities of *dā'īs* involve personal and social development and address the religious and mundane worlds together. Those responsibilities do not simply reflect the traditional duties of religious teachers, preachers, or scholars but, rather fit a new *da'wah* perspective, whereby *dā'īs* contribute to the Islamic reform and act as agents of change.⁷¹¹ This shows how Ghazālī's broad understanding of *da'wah* affected his understanding of *dā'īs*' responsibilities. Such a wide-ranging spectrum of responsibilities, nonetheless, makes *dā'īs*' tasks multifaceted, complex, and challenging and makes the assessment of their progress and their contributions a little difficult. These responsibilities also show a subtle shift to a versatile and dynamic style of *da'wah* responsibilities; this broadens *dā'īs*' attention, makes *da'wah* a crucial tool in general Islamic reform, and de-emphasizes the distinctions between Islamic reform and *da'wah*.

Ghazālī laid out *da'wah* responsibilities for individuals and groups who participate in Islamic reform and the improvement of local and global life. These involve both preachers and religious scholars, and members in movements of Islamic

⁷⁰⁷Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 16.

⁷⁰⁸Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, 131.

⁷⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:157. Ghazālī made an exception when he closely examined the conditions of Western societies, intellectual, moral, and religious schools affecting their lives, standards of their civilization and economic export percentages; such an examination greatly supported the undertaking of *da'wah*. See Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 135.

⁷¹⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 148.

reform. Most of his critique, however, is directed at *dā'īs* in the sense of religious preachers and scholars. Ghazālī keeps both categories in mind, yet does not separate the responsibilities of each. This makes the attempt to develop a clear understanding of *da'wah* responsibility for each category challenging. Ghazālī's discussion of *da'wah* responsibilities in several contexts also shows how each time they carry the implications of the topic under discussion. As a result, they do not provide any sequence of order or priority in his analysis of *da'wah*.

II. Spiritual and Moral Qualifications of *Dā'īs*:

Ghazālī's discussion of the need for spiritual and moral qualifications for *dā'īs* reflects the nature of *da'wah* and draws a moral pattern for the lives of *dā'īs*. Such a discussion also brings to light Ghazālī's perspective on spiritual and moral education in modern times. What is crucial, however, is Ghazālī's definition of spirituality and morality in the undertaking of *da'wah*, whether these concepts are static or dynamic, reflecting the changing needs of society, and what framework Ghazālī employed in assessing progress and failure.

According to Ghazālī, *dā'īs* are the most in need of self-discipline⁷¹² and should implement in themselves a greater share of religious virtue than the general public. For example, *dā'īs* should attain a higher degree of faith, certainty, enthusiasm and virtue.⁷¹³ This requires them to diagnose themselves and cure their own diseases, and

⁷¹²Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 186. Ghazālī argues that guidance which is not translated from the realm of self-discipline into social reform is like a baby being born aborted before acquiring complete growth. See Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 200.

⁷¹³Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 181.

to not assume their lectures apply only to their audiences and not to themselves.⁷¹⁴ In discussing the critical role of self-discipline in the development of effective *da'wah*, Ghazālī suggests that those who fail to explore their own selves or discover their weaknesses cannot be *dā'īs*, and that those who are keen to accuse people of disbelief or downplay their good deeds are only sick-hearted.⁷¹⁵ Such people should even be dismissed from the field of *da'wah* because of their inability to appreciate the spirit of goodness in the religious message, and because they exploit religious knowledge to mislead people or to reduce to them the benefits of religion.⁷¹⁶

For Ghazālī, greed and materialism are inconsistent with *da'wah*. *Dā'īs* do not seek material rewards in return for their deeds.⁷¹⁷ They give but do not take back, sacrifice themselves without the least personal advantage,⁷¹⁸ and are independent from material ends and temptations.⁷¹⁹ *Dā'īs* adopt an honourable path to God,⁷²⁰ are free from falsehood,⁷²¹ and distance themselves from people who indulge heavily in material life or have corrupt intentions.⁷²² To support this point, Ghazālī draws on numerous Qur'ānic narratives about prophet Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shu'ayb, and Mūsā, including

⁷¹⁴Ibid., 187-188. According to Ghazālī, the living conditions of many *dā'īs* are at odds with their statements, and people who listen to their lectures about righteousness and piety find their actions and their teachings at odds. Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam*? 35.

⁷¹⁵Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 229.

⁷¹⁶Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam*? 34.

⁷¹⁷Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'alam*, 95. The Qur'ān states: "Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you, So keep your duty to Allah, and obey me. And I ask of you no wage therefore; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds." Pickthall (Chapter 26:107-109), 345.

⁷¹⁸Ibid., 95.

⁷¹⁹Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 161; *Ma'a Allah*, 212.

⁷²⁰Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 200.

⁷²¹Ibid., 285.

⁷²²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām*? 29.

the reactions of their respective communities to them.⁷²³ For Ghazālī, this selfless sacrifice found in the work of *dā'īs* is not accidental, because the central foundation in *dā'īs'* moral character is their spiritual association with God: this association is free from material expectations, boosts life and provides light and warmth.⁷²⁴ In contrast, spiritual disassociation from God or lack of sincerity only leads to ineffective *da'wah*, for pretence in *da'wah* makes it worthless.⁷²⁵ Ghazālī writes: “What is a famous scholar worth who memorizes chapters of the Qur’ān, ḥadīth, and literature, or even grasps the profound meanings of all of these, when, inward, he is corrupt?”⁷²⁶

Crucially, at the core of *dā'īs'* spiritual development, lies the purity of intention. That is, *da'wah* should relentlessly be undertaken for God only and be approached with pure intention.⁷²⁷ In undertaking *da'wah*, *dā'īs* should only seek divine satisfaction, as distinct from their own self-satisfaction.⁷²⁸ Their intention should constantly be for God; *dā'īs* cannot serve without a sincere heart and a positive connection to the divine.⁷²⁹ This requires *dā'īs* not to give up *da'wah*, so long their ultimate goal is divine pleasure, and to care less about people’s criticism.⁷³⁰

Such spiritual aptitude, however, can only be attained through understanding

⁷²³Ibid., 95.

⁷²⁴Ibid., 182.

⁷²⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:169.

⁷²⁶Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 205.

⁷²⁷Ghazālī, *Ma’a Allah*, 129.

⁷²⁹Ghazālī, *al-Da’wah al-Islāmiyyah*, 144.

⁷³⁰Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 163. Ghazālī argues that protecting *da'wah* from a “business-like” attitude reflects the true meaning of asceticism (*zuhd*) practiced by earlier religious masters. See Ghazālī, *Min Ma’ālim al-Ḥaqq*, 161.

the meanings of the Qur'ān,⁷³¹ and requires *dā'īs* to exalt the Qur'ān through recitation and reflection upon its meanings and to contrast Qur'ānic ideals with the deteriorating human condition.⁷³² This spiritual exercise equally requires *dā'īs* to avoid hunting for mistakes⁷³³ and being overly preoccupied with criticizing others and rather, to engage in rebuilding the nation.⁷³⁴ Ghazālī is dissatisfied with *dā'īs* who instead of offering guidance on the way of salvation and obedience, divulge peoples' faults, or develop them into hurdles. He even questions the sincerity of some *dā'īs'* approach to human failures. He asks, "Are those *dā'īs* more concerned about the religion than the Lord of the religion, and are they more compassionate towards people than their Creator?"⁷³⁵

Ghazālī cautions against so-called "*dā'īs*" who know nothing but shouting or howling, and who show anger in their support of truth yet their inner being is corrupt.⁷³⁶ Ghazālī writes: "Some people claim to be religious yet their inside is corrupted. Stay assured that those people are as far as their corrupted hearts and minds are from the religion."⁷³⁷ Some others pretend to be *dā'īs* yet their approach to *da'wah* associates them with al-Ḥuṭay'a.⁷³⁸ There are those who enjoy divulging people's

⁷³¹Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 30.

⁷³²Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 185.

⁷³⁴Ghazālī, *al-Tarīq min Hunā*, 135; See also Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 3:19. For Ghazālī, such spiritual and emotional aptitudes are also accessible within the Muslim cultural heritage, and are illustrated by early scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim. See 'Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Uways, *al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ghazālī, Tārīkhuh wa-Juhūduh wa-'Arā'uh*, 58. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' fatāwā Ibn Taymiyyah*, 'Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm, *Raf' al-Malām 'an al-'A'immah al-'A'lām*, *al-Tuhfah al-'Irāqīyyah fī al-'A'māl al-Qalbiyyah*, *al-'Aqida al-Tadmuriyyah and al-'Ubūdiyyah*. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: *Madārij al-Sālikin bayna Manāzil 'Iyyāka Na'bud wa-'Iyyāka Nasta'in*, *Tarīq al-Hijratayn wa-Bāb al-Sa'adatayn*, and *T'lām al-Muwaqī'in 'an Rabb al-'Ālāmīn*.

⁷³⁵Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:16-17.

⁷³⁶Ibid., 3:19.

⁷³⁷Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 12.

⁷³⁸Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 152. Under the title "*When al-Ḥuṭay'a is Engaged in Da'wah*," Ghazālī wrote: "Al-Ḥuṭay'a was an Arab poet who criticized people. Al-Ḥuṭay'a's passion for insult constantly caused him to

mistakes just to satisfy their personal egos. That censoriousness, in Ghazālī's view, is worse than the ills they blame people for, and even makes a sinner with a broken heart more honourable than an arrogant preacher. To illustrate his point, Ghazālī refers to a young Muslim fellow who blamed Ghazālī for sitting with clean-shaven students and immodestly dressed girls, and for smiling instead of commanding good or prohibiting evil. Ghazālī's response was that showing anger is not the etiquette of a *dā'ī*, who should only explain the Islamic principles with regards to belief and morals.⁷³⁹

For Ghazālī, pretence and anger in a *dā'ī* do not point towards the Islamic message. By itself, however, the calm and unpretentious verbal illustration of the message is not sufficient to establish or reinforce the message's religious foundation. It is, rather, the practical example that translates morals, commands, and prohibitions from the world of the imaginary to the reality.⁷⁴⁰ The rights of God and people, for example, should not just be abstract ideas instilled into the intellect but should, rather, be familiar examples and growing traditions.⁷⁴¹ Values like belief, excellence and equality remain lost in the imagination until translated through proper and motivating practices.⁷⁴² This is substantiated by the examples of prophets who acted as role models

criticize others. When there was nobody to insult, Ḥuṭay'a would turn to his wife and tell her: "I walked for long then I returned to a house whose lady is dull." But when his wife ran away from him, and he cannot find anybody to insult, he turns against his reflected image in the mirror and says: "I see my face that God made ugly. What an ugly face and what an ugly person!" See Ghazālī, *Ta'ammulāt*, 152. Al-Ḥuṭay'a's name is Jarwal bin 'Aws bin Makhzūm bin Mālīk, known as 'Abū Mulaykah. He was imprisoned during the time of the Caliph Omar for his negative criticism of the Muslim public. Later, Omar released him but warned him not to do that again. Al-Ḥuṭay'a replied: "Then my children would die. That is my livelihood." It is, however, narrated that Omar paid him three thousand dirhams provided he stopped criticizing the Muslim public. Al-Ḥuṭay'a fulfilled the promise. But once Omar died, he returned to his former ways. See *Dīwān al-Ḥuṭay'a*, Ed., Nu'mān Muhammad 'Amīn Ṭaha (Cairo: al-Ḥalabī, 1958), 41, 47.

⁷³⁹Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 3:240.

⁷⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-Islam?* 23.

⁷⁴¹Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 134.

⁷⁴²Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 134.

and ideal examples in speaking on behalf of God.⁷⁴³

Ghazālī argues that the Qur’ānic description of Muslims as the best nation is not based on any ethnic or geographic considerations but, rather, on the moral and intellectual qualities that they have and that are beneficial to humanity.⁷⁴⁴ Successful *dā’īs* are those who guide people through role modelling,⁷⁴⁵ displaying prophetic character in their worship, conduct, and struggle.⁷⁴⁶ Overall, *dā’īs* are to adhere to the teachings of Islam in their approach and style of *da’wah*, and abstain from deceptions, while reaching out to the human heart.⁷⁴⁷ This is because twisted approaches violate the nobility of *da’wah*.⁷⁴⁸

On the other hand, *dā’īs* should improve themselves morally and academically,⁷⁴⁹ because advanced nations do not give due attention to inferior *dā’īs* who fail in areas of intellectual, scientific, and moral leadership.⁷⁵⁰ Ghazālī suggests, “I only recommend to *da’wah* those who integrate intelligence with sincerity. Idiots are adverse to their own selves; and the speech of hypocrites ends up being rejected.”⁷⁵¹ To develop a moral archetype for modern *dā’īs*, Ghazālī draws on the quality of mercy of

⁷⁴³Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 76.

⁷⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Jur’āt Jadīdah*, 2: 57. The Qur’ān states: “You are the best community that has been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and you believe in Allah. And if the People of the Scripture had believed it had been better for them. Some of them are believers; but most of them are evil-livers.” Pickthall, (Chapter 3: 110), 57.

⁷⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Ma’a Allah*, 285.

⁷⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 212.

⁷⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta’akhhur*, 40.

⁷⁴⁸Ghazālī, *Ta’ammulat*, 76. Ghazālī writes: “The Prophet Muhammad abstained from twisted propaganda, and did not seduce supporters or release adversaries.” *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, 256-257.

⁷⁵⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:165.

⁷⁵¹Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr*, 128.

the Prophet Muhammad, which connected him with the world in a spirit of kindness, hope, and peace.⁷⁵² The centrality of mercy implies for Ghazālī that its opposites - harshness, cold-heartedness, and emotional indifference towards human sufferings - are the root cause of religious defeat in contemporary societies.⁷⁵³ Those who leave behind social enmities destroy themselves and their mission together.⁷⁵⁴ The religion of Islam sympathizes with human weakness and helps wrongdoers⁷⁵⁵ repent and acquire guidance. *Dā'īs*, for Ghazālī, share the sadness of people in distress, wish them health and recovery, assist them during failures, care about their sorrow, defend them against injustices, and join the crowds of ill-treated and abused people.⁷⁵⁶

This sympathy is an active and not a reflective practice. This concern with active sympathy can be understood in terms of returning people to their Creator which is crucial. *Dā'īs* are to help and facilitate people's return to their Creator,⁷⁵⁷ and gradually guide wrongdoers through righteousness.⁷⁵⁸ Gradual guidance is only possible through constant interaction with people. *Dā'īs* connect with people, and share good tidings, instead of driving people away.⁷⁵⁹ In all of these, *dā'īs* rise above personal disputes and do not condemn people.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵²Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 2:245.

⁷⁵³*Ibid.*, 4:77.

⁷⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 163. Ghazālī states: "Those who do not show mercy or are unmindful of others should quit *da'wah*." See Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 20.

⁷⁵⁵"Wrongdoer" best translates the Arabic word *mufsid*.

⁷⁵⁶Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:16-17.

⁷⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 62.

⁷⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 61. Ghazālī distinguishes between identifying legal judgments and implementing them. Alcoholic consumption is unlawful, yet in their approach to alcoholics, *dā'īs* should act kindly and gently. See Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al-Qur'ān*, 101.

⁷⁵⁹Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:24.

⁷⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 64.

Da'wah is an expression of active sympathy for people, within the work of returning people to their Creator. As such, *da'wah* requires patience.⁷⁶¹ Rather than being driven to rudeness or suspicion by zealous emotions, *dā'īs* are to examine issues profoundly and with patience.⁷⁶² In so doing, *dā'īs* emulate the example of the Prophet Muhammad,⁷⁶³ who planted seeds and provided ample time for growth, during which the sleepy woke up, the wrongdoers repented, and complex problems inherited from the past were resolved.⁷⁶⁴ Ghazālī draws on many Qur'ānic verses regarding having patience and forbearance with ignorant and misguided people, until such time obstacles hindering their intellectual freedom are removed.⁷⁶⁵

In sum, the major concern of *dā'īs* are to teach, remind and guide people,⁷⁶⁶ and to provide opportunities of hope until they return to their Creator.⁷⁶⁷ *Dā'īs* motivate others and hope for their good, are satisfied if the goals of *da'wah* are achieved,⁷⁶⁸ and avoid despair, particularly when the surrounding conditions do not support *da'wah*.⁷⁶⁹ These major concerns are not advanced, however, if *dā'īs* are examples of ignorance, cruelty, or rudeness, or do not advocate the truth with tranquility and decency.⁷⁷⁰ In

⁷⁶¹Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:19.

⁷⁶²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:28.

⁷⁶³Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:19.

⁷⁶⁴Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 16. Ghazālī states: "Dā'īs should not be bored and should exercise patience towards people who act blindly." See Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 20.

⁷⁶⁵Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 17.

⁷⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 66.

⁷⁶⁷Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:16.

⁷⁶⁸Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 61.

⁷⁶⁹Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt*, 137.

⁷⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 219. The Qur'ān states: "So have patience (O Muhammad)! Allah's promise is the very truth, and let not those who have no certainty make thee impatient." Pickthall (Chapter 30:60), 385; "We created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them save with truth, and lo! the Hour is surely coming. So forgive, (O Muhammad), with a gracious forgiveness." Pickthall (Chapter 15:85), 235; "Remind them, for thou are but an admonisher, You are not at all a warden over them." Pickthall,

this regard, Ghazālī argues that telling the truth does not require abusive language since it is possible to reach out to others positively, politely, and kindly.⁷⁷¹

The ideal qualities of *dā'īs* represent essential spiritual and moral components engrained in Ghazālī's *da'wah* model. These qualities reflect his multifaceted and all-inclusive nature of *da'wah* and require a religious, decent, and caring approach. Ghazālī does not deny that *dā'īs*' endeavours always have a large degree of spirituality. What his model does is balance religious spirituality with the needs of the mundane life and distance *da'wah* from purely spiritual reflections or philosophical meditations. In his model, the spiritual and moral aptitudes of *dā'īs* have an instrumental role in the process of *da'wah* and Islamic change, and assure that *dā'īs*' endeavours remain religious in nature. Such an assurance is important since, in Ghazālī's model, *da'wah* involves a variety of objectives, requires contributions from diverse disciplines, and necessitates ongoing interpretations.

These spiritual and moral requirements, nonetheless, reflect Ghazālī's ideal position, which informs his view on the actual education of *dā'īs*. They either struggle and acquire those religious qualities, or are dismissed from the field of *da'wah* altogether. In other words, Ghazālī leaves the impression that *da'wah* activities are difficult and challenging by nature. It is arguable, however, that Ghazālī's model only draws a general pattern for the life of *dā'īs*, and makes their success vary reciprocally

(Chapter 88:21-22), 643. Ghazālī writes: "They should not act like businesspeople who offer a commodity, and take no interest in the customer once the sale is over—rather, they present the religion in such a way that unites people in brotherhood." See Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Hālī*, 41.

⁷⁷¹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:176. According to Ghazālī, belief does not develop during a debate where arguments are recalled to defeat one's opponent, or where parties manipulate Aristotle logic to trick their opponents in public. See Ghazālī, *Aqīdat al-Muslim*, 6.

with the degree of spirituality they acquire. The long set of spiritual qualities also raises a two-part question: whether all *dā'īs* involved in the process of change or preaching require similar levels of spiritual and moral education, and whether religious preachers and scholars require a much higher level than ordinary Muslim activists. This question is legitimate, given the demanding job of Muslim educators who are directly connected with the moral developments of the Muslim public, in contrast to *dā'īs* required to excel in their respective areas of expertise. Again, Ghazālī is constantly aware of those differences, yet falls into generalizing those requirements among *da'wah* workers when he extends the scope of *da'wah* beyond the traditional perspective.

III. Educational Qualifications of *Dā'īs*:

In his preoccupation with *da'wah*, Ghazālī constantly critiqued the religious education that *dā'īs* received. As noted below, for him the failure of preachers and religious scholars at *da'wah* reflects their educational background. His approach to the educational requirements of *dā'īs* appears, however, to be drawn from a context other than Islamic studies, a context that urges Muslim to excel in all branches of modern academic scholarship to carry out Islamic reform with success. Ghazālī directly applies this view of excellence to the field of Islamic preaching and religious learning, yet without discussing the feasibility of integrating religious with modern education, and without providing any specific guidance in the process of implementation. We, nonetheless, can examine his perspective towards education and *da'wah*.

Ghazālī believes that, in light of the Qur'ān, the divine selection of nations

depends on the intellectual and moral merits beneficial to humanity and not on ethnic or geographic terms.⁷⁷² This implies that religious representation is not granted to any group other than those with educational, intellectual, and spiritual aptitudes.⁷⁷³ For Ghazālī, God selects His messengers from among the best of His creation, and grants them high intellectual and spiritual qualities; this disqualifies narrow-minded *dā'īs* with poor skills from succeeding the prophets.⁷⁷⁴

For Ghazālī, *Dā'īs'* success depend on their commitment to a broad and deep learning;⁷⁷⁵ that is, *da'wah* requires the mind of a philosopher, the emotion of a man of letters, the precision of a lawmaker, the courage of a knight, and the kindness of a parent.⁷⁷⁶ Without all of the above, *dā'īs* would not understand the true meaning of the religion they are responsible to convey,⁷⁷⁷ and would not convey the message of Islam in an all-encompassing manner.⁷⁷⁸

The discussion of education in *da'wah* also brings to attention the role of reading; for Ghazālī, it is the backbone of *dā'īs'* thinking.⁷⁷⁹ *Dā'īs* are to be obsessed by reading - book-lovers, constantly looking for new books.⁷⁸⁰ They read all types of literature and about trends in human thought to understand life and its surrounding

⁷⁷²Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 21; See also *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 2:57.

⁷⁷³Ghazālī, *Jaddid Ḥayātak*, 9.

⁷⁷⁴Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:165. Ghazālī states: "Training of *dā'īs* implies the training of the Muslim nation. This is because great nations are nothing save the good education of talented people." Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 9.

⁷⁷⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:21.

⁷⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 119.

⁷⁷⁷Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:165.

⁷⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 175. Ghazālī exhorts *dā'īs* not versed in *da'wah* to quit the field. Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:56.

⁷⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:164.

⁷⁸⁰Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 212.

influences; they read about faith, atheism, philosophy, and Sunnah,⁷⁸¹ and avoid reading materials from periods of decline.⁷⁸²

Da'wah requires knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.⁷⁸³ This is because *dā'īs*' intellectual and emotional connection with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah provide them with a proper understanding.⁷⁸⁴ Equally important is *dā'īs*' understanding of the history of the Muslim caliphs, and their extensive examination of contemporary conditions.⁷⁸⁵ As well, *dā'īs* should be familiar with the occasions and history of revelation (*'asbāb al-nuzūl*), and the conditions in which the ḥadīth traditions were stated (*munāsabat al-ḥadīth*).⁷⁸⁶

Dā'īs also learn about life and universal history. They critically explore Islamic history; examine jurisprudential, literary, educational and intellectual movements;⁷⁸⁷ and are familiar with Islamic law and civilization.⁷⁸⁸ To make the above demands possible, Ghazālī argues that *dā'īs* should not necessarily be well versed in the studies of the Sunnah nor must they acquire a level of Islamic knowledge similar to scholars like Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik or Ibn Ḥanbal. What is crucial is that they acquire a minimum degree of intellectual health, and a basic knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, with an understanding of the priorities of Islamic law (*'awlawiyāt al-fiqh al-'islāmī*). Specific

⁷⁸¹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:165.

⁷⁸²Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 245. Ghazālī argues that disturbed reading becomes a burden unless it revolves around religious fundamentals. Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 212.

⁷⁸³Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 193.

⁷⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:42-43.

⁷⁸⁵Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 193.

⁷⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 190.

⁷⁸⁷Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 143. According to Ghazālī, *dā'īs* should stay away from the study of historical archaic. See Ghazālī, *Humūm*, 129.

⁷⁸⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:166-167.

questions are referred to the experts in their respective fields.⁷⁸⁹

In connection with the understanding of Islam, Ghazālī underscores the role of Arabic language and literature as a pre-requisite for effective *da'wah*.⁷⁹⁰ Learning Arabic helps people learn about Muslims,⁷⁹¹ motivates them to understand revelation, and supports the transmission of beliefs.⁷⁹² Ghazālī proposes setting up schools for Arabic language and sending delegations overseas to disseminate Arabic language dissociated from the religion; this supports the cultural foundations of the Qur'ānic language and provides a way to Islam.⁷⁹³ Ghazālī's attention to Arabic language is a distinct characteristic in his *da'wah* model and shows his eagerness to preserve the traditional character of *da'wah*. This, nonetheless, poses a challenge to Islamic universality which demands that all linguistic and cultural differences fade away in favour of higher religious objectives.

It is not just cultural traits that seem contrary to Islamic universality. There is also Ghazālī's strict requirement of Arabic in the education of *dā'īs*. Proficiency in Arabic, however, becomes a challenge for non-Arabic speaking *dā'īs* who may effectively contribute to the broad *da'wah* through excellence in their respective areas of specializations but are unable to understand religious texts in the mother language of Arabic. In other words, the strict observance of Arabic in *da'wah* could place its universal character in jeopardy. One only presumes that Ghazālī gives Arabic language

⁷⁸⁹Ibid., 159.

⁷⁹⁰Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 218; *al-Da'wah al-'Islamiyyah Tastaqbil*, 88.

⁷⁹¹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islamiyyah Tastaqbil*, 157.

⁷⁹²Ibid., 47.

⁷⁹³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:181. Ghazālī also exhorts *dā'īs* ignorant of Arabic literature to quit *da'wah*. See Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 218.

a crucial role in *da'wah* to preserve some of its basic characteristics, and also to encourage *dā'īs* in all areas of life to acquire educational qualifications to the best of their abilities.

For Ghazālī, the above are only part of *dā'īs'* intellectual formation. Muslims currently face a universal thought as a result of interactions amongst diverse civilizations, each reflecting various movements and philosophies.⁷⁹⁴ These modern developments require *dā'īs* to acquire a solid knowledge base in both Islamic and non-Islamic cultures and to study human history, including intellectual history and the history of modern philosophies.⁷⁹⁵ *Dā'īs'* intellectual formation also includes the study of the human sciences,⁷⁹⁶ including ethics, social, and political philosophy; and a grasp of modern trends of thought.⁷⁹⁷ Furthermore, effective *da'wah* demands a knowledge of sociology, economics, education, and psychology.⁷⁹⁸

This wide-ranging intellectual foundation is part of *dā'īs'* relationship with those to whom they bring *da'wah*. *Dā'īs*, for Ghazālī, give due attention to the exploration of human beings and, how, through revelation, to correct their confusions.⁷⁹⁹ Accordingly, *dā'īs* approach the human sciences from an Islamic perspective.⁸⁰⁰ *Dā'īs* also examine

⁷⁹⁴Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 273.

⁷⁹⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:166-167.

⁷⁹⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 171. Ghazālī disqualifies *dā'īs* who poorly understand the political and legal history of Islam, Islamic thought, contemporary world, or modern philosophies. See Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt*, 59.

⁷⁹⁷Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 216-217. Ghazālī believes that poor understanding of human sciences causes confusion of students of religious studies in view of the fact that the foundations of Islam only prosper in flourishing intellectual flourishing atmosphere. See Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 202.

⁷⁹⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 214. According to Ghazālī, psychology is closer in the description and analysis of human emotions and intellectual activity than ancient philosophies. *Ibid.*, 215.

⁷⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁰⁰Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 203.

religious sects⁸⁰¹ and attain a fair understanding of world religions and religious disciplines. With the understanding of comparative religion, *dā'īs* are aware of the shortcomings and prospects of *da'wah* for their own and other societies.⁸⁰² This understanding is very important for Ghazālī: *dā'īs* succeed only when they acquire an understanding of history, and develop an insight into contemporary schools of thought.⁸⁰³ As well, *dā'īs'* intellectual formation depends in part on their relationship with those to whom they bring *da'wah*. That relationship benefits from communication, and goes beyond preaching. Furthermore, *dā'īs* are to study the arts and identify artists who can communicate better on issues of *da'wah*.⁸⁰⁴

Finally, the intellectual foundation of *dā'īs* includes the natural sciences. *Dā'īs* understand physical sciences including chemistry, biology, astronomy, and are acquainted with geography, botany, and animal sciences.⁸⁰⁵ Ghazālī underscores the position of universal laws in both the human and physical worlds, and the need to understand and apply those laws to maintain a social equilibrium crucial to *da'wah*. For Ghazālī, many *dā'īs* fail to build their approach towards morally troubled societies on either proper understanding of universal laws or studies of *da'wah*.⁸⁰⁶ These sciences are crucial to *da'wah* because they help *dā'īs* correct their concepts, coordinate their relationship with the physical world, and give in-depth guidance.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰¹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:44.

⁸⁰²Ibid., 3:269-270.

⁸⁰³Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Uways, *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 52.

⁸⁰⁴Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata'amal Ma'a al-Qur'ān?* 222.

⁸⁰⁵Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 215.

⁸⁰⁶Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt*, 117.

⁸⁰⁷Ibid., 215. Ghazālī writes: "Those who do not learn about the universe fail to appreciate the greatness

The examination of various academic disciplines, however, is not so much about the level of education rather than using them in the comprehensive scrutiny of social ills, learning about politics and economics, and the views of educationists and psychologists.⁸⁰⁸ In Ghazālī's view, because of their need to understand the traditional and modern aspects of Islamic culture,⁸⁰⁹ *dā'īs* acquire broad education and understanding.⁸¹⁰ Both a selective approach towards the various areas of scholarship and a broad culture assure sound logic and effective *da'wah*.⁸¹¹ These also imply that *dā'īs* are not confined to a particular legal or theological school; they are independent from these constraints, and are equipped with an objective understanding of their living conditions.⁸¹² In fact, *dā'īs* understand the social conditions, the nature of the intellect they deal with, and the types of ills and goodness of innate human nature.⁸¹³ They understand the nature of the time during which they live, and understand the dominating universal movements.⁸¹⁴ They also understand the characteristics of the human race and nations, and learn about their respective leaders, beliefs, and movements.⁸¹⁵

In sum, Ghazālī attempts to articulate an ambitious *da'wah* model where *dā'īs*

of the Qur'ān." Ghazālī, *ʿIlal wa-ʿAdwiyah*, 202-203. For Ghazālī, ignorance of the universe and human creation devastates *da'wah*. Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-ʿIslām?* 32.

⁸⁰⁸Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-ʿIslām*, 226.

⁸⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:42-43.

⁸¹⁰*Ibid.*, 169.

⁸¹¹*Ibid.*, 159.

⁸¹²Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 273.

⁸¹³Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nataʿāmal Maʿa al-Qurʿān*, 222.

⁸¹⁴Ghazālī, *Maʿa Allah*, 217.

⁸¹⁵*Ibid.*, 218. For Ghazālī, some *dā'īs* are well versed in religious sciences, yet are ignorant of the living conditions, mundane life, and the universe around them; such ignorance only leads them to issue damaging legal verdicts. See Ghazālī, *Sirr Taʾakhhur*, 50.

are remarkably learned personalities who master various areas of academic scholarship. His model, however, demands socially skilled and encyclopaedic *dā'īs* who are multidisciplinary in areas of research, rational and traditional, physical and moral.⁸¹⁶ Experts in their respective fields either fail to meet those requirements or fail in their own area of expertise; and this defeats the purpose of broadening the scope of *da'wah* or religious responsibility. Ghazālī's model of *da'wah* also involves a set of ideal requirements, probably beyond the reach of *dā'īs* which aim at enhancing *dā'īs'* intellectual level to the best possible standard. Those requirements, however, reflect a need to enrich *da'wah* with diverse modern academic disciplines and professional expertise, and more importantly to develop an intimate relationship between *da'wah*, science, and modernity. They also reflect Ghazālī's belief in the inability of traditional learning to develop an effective *da'wah* methodology, which requires a different educational background.

Overall, however, Ghazālī's work on the intellectual formation of *dā'īs'* for effective *da'wah* is hopeful. That is, their intellectual formation has potential for Islamic reform and the modern representation of Islam. On the one hand, Ghazālī's discussion reveals his interest to forge a solid association of *da'wah* with research and exploration, an approach applicable not only to *da'wah* but to Islamic reform in general. On the other hand, his model seeks to overcome the dichotomies existing between religion and modern learning, or religion and science. The implementation of his views not only yields a positive relationship between *da'wah*, science and modernity but

⁸¹⁶Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 95.

eventually equips preachers and religious scholars with the tools necessary to digest modern changes and developments, and the ability to present Islam through a modern perspective transcending the traditional style of presentation.

IV. Problems of *Dā'īs*:

Without a better intellectual formation, however, the prospects are not so positive. Ghazālī's critical review of *da'wah* as practiced continually reveals a negative view about the overall progress of the religion of Islam.⁸¹⁷ These problems and shortcomings relate to Islamic reform, and turn both *da'wah* and reform into sides of the same coin. Not all of the problems, however, relate to *dā'īs*' intellectual formation. That is, some problems relate to *dā'īs*' incompetence and failures, while others go beyond their reach and deal with questions of Islamic reform in general. Any improvement of *da'wah* entails, according to Ghazālī, an analysis of the conditions of Muslims influencing *da'wah*. Thus, an examination of Ghazālī's analysis of Muslims' current conditions is needed to understand the problems around *dā'īs* and *da'wah* as he presents them.

The discussion of *da'wah* problems and challenges is, however, entrenched in the analysis of Muslims' conditions, and is no different than the state of affairs of Muslims per se. Hence, the same problems affecting Muslims are also detriments to *da'wah*, which is geared to alleviate those hurdles. Ghazālī raises numerous problems and challenges. These include questions of culture and customs, *dā'īs*' poor role modeling and religious practice, women's degraded status, education, institutions of

⁸¹⁷Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 3. For Ghazālī, all that has affected the religion of Islam both in the past and present times has been caused by Muslims themselves. Ibid.

da'wah, *dā'īs'* performance, Muslim's misconceptions about mundane life, legal differences, abrogation in the Qur'ān (*al-naskh fī al-Qur'ān*), failure in worldly life, and influential foreign cultures. For Ghazālī, all these are critical challenges, especially when *da'wah* requires an intelligent and broad treatment. Today's Muslim state of affairs results in terrible economic and scientific backwardness.⁸¹⁸

In his "*Sirr Ta'akhhur al-'Arab wa al-Muslimīn*" (The Causes of Backwardness of Arabs and Muslims), Ghazālī enumerates the following as major problems: a) religious misunderstanding, b) flaws in Muslim culture, c) ignorance about common life, d) the doctrine of fatalism (*al-Jabriyyah*),⁸¹⁹ e) ostentation, f) women's degraded status, g) the poor standard of Arabic literature, h) financial mismanagement, and i) political despotism.⁸²⁰ Four other reasons are, however, highly detrimental; first, the spoiled religious passion enhanced through the teaching of the Sūfis and their negative view of life; second, the deteriorated value of human beings as a result of long periods of tyrannical political rule; third, the loss of intellectual potential and the influence of fictions and myths over Muslim public life; and, last, deviance from the texts and rulings of Islam.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:28. Ghazālī writes: "When other nations travel to the space and explore the universe, Muslims are still dependent on foreign products such as bread." Ibid.

⁸¹⁹Jabriyyah, or Mujbirah, the name given by opponents to those whom they allege to hold the doctrine of *Jabr*, "compulsion", namely that man does not really act but only God. It was also used by later heresiographers to describe a group of sects. The Mu'tazilah applied it, usually in the form Mujbirah, to Traditionists, Ash'arite theologians and others who denied their doctrine of *Qadar* or "free will". See Watt, W. Montgomery. "Jabriyya, or Mudjbira." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 28 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-1905>

⁸²⁰Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 65-92.

⁸²¹Ghazālī, *al-'Islām wa al-Ṭaqāt*, 23.

For Ghazālī, intellectual and sectarian differences have caused deep chasms among Muslims, and engendered a disregard of social responsibilities both locally and internationally.⁸²² Such a disregard is, in turn, caused by the preoccupation of Muslims with outward religious forms rather than their innate being.⁸²³ Then there are the ensuing causes of decline, whether intellectual, social, or political, and the cultural influences exploiting Muslim personality.⁸²⁴ The long-lasting state of ignorance has also caused a lack of research and follow up on *da'wah*, and led to corrupted cultures, confused political movements, and jeopardy of *dā'īs*.⁸²⁵ As a result, the universal message of Islam has gradually declined.⁸²⁶

According to Ghazālī, *dā'īs* encounter a legacy of centuries of defeat,⁸²⁷ and are lost between the weaknesses of the public and government.⁸²⁸ Not only that, efforts are made to drive *dā'īs* away so that they quit their positions, which are then open for ignorant and uneducated people.⁸²⁹ *Da'wah* in fact encounters far more intelligent and powerful forces,⁸³⁰ yet depends on pathetic and disintegrated enthusiasm, or on the spare time of volunteers and the dead spirit of negligent professionals.⁸³¹ Ghazālī

⁸²²Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 39-40.

⁸²³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:100. Ghazālī writes: "Islam implies nothing save a lively heart, awakened consciousness, a pure inner being, and loses its worth once it turns to rituals and ceremonial services." Ibid.

⁸²⁴Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 252.

⁸²⁵Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 75.

⁸²⁶Ibid., 163-164.

⁸²⁷Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 122.

⁸²⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:172.

⁸²⁹Ghazālī, *al-Fasād al-Siyāsī*, 23.

⁸³⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:10.

⁸³¹Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-Islam*, 228.

doubted *da'wah* will prosper, given current problems like general educational failures, moral incompetence, unsubstantiated claims, self-satisfaction, and accusations of others.⁸³²

Ghazālī's critical approach to Muslims' conditions, nonetheless, appears to have dismissed the contributions of individual or collective *da'wah* efforts in Muslim history. Ghazālī was undoubtedly aware of Muslims' contributions to *da'wah*, locally and internationally, whether by individuals, organizations, or states. One only suspects that those efforts do not meet his broad expectations. His negative approach also shows his ideal position vis-à-vis *da'wah* contributions, and his less than appreciative and acknowledging attitude. Ghazālī probably maintains a general negative approach throughout to create a distress signal in circles of *da'wah*, rather than causing a positive impression that might lead to self-satisfaction.⁸³³

In his *da'wah* example, Ghazālī's devotes serious attention to the question of Muslim role modeling (*al-quḍwa al-'islāmiyyah*). Without a role model, any talk of *da'wah* progress becomes idle. Muslim role models are the key to the success of *da'wah*.⁸³⁴ Ghazālī goes on to say that the future of the Muslim nation depends entirely on their religious, economic, and social conditions, whether at the individual or social level.⁸³⁵ People hardly distinguish between written words of truth from myths. They are, however, attached to the truth when exemplified in role models, growing hopes, and

⁸³²Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 77.

⁸³³Given Ghazālī's critical approach to the modern nation of Islam, it is likely he wanted to keep his readers from self-congratulation.

⁸³⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 289.

⁸³⁵Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:105.

embodiments of an entire nation.⁸³⁶ Morals in fact represent a universal language through which nations, despite differences of laws and customs, communicate and adhere to.⁸³⁷ This notion implies that the theoretical illustration of the truth alone is insufficient to assure implementation of its principles, and that implementation requires real life examples which translate morals and religious values from abstract to reality.⁸³⁸ For Ghazālī, in order to gain admiration in the West, Muslims there should be inspiring role models in education and culture.⁸³⁹

Da'wah sets certain requirements for role models. Muslims should set ideal examples reflecting the religious message, and act as genuine recipients of the divine teachings and values. This means that their healthy internal conditions constitute a pre-requisite for positive *da'wah* to the external world and that,⁸⁴⁰ prior to understanding or advancing the cause of Islam, Muslims are first required to improve their economic and moral standards. Without that step, all preceding efforts are in vain, with no real impact.⁸⁴¹ Those improvements are geared to producing positive role models and not eloquent speeches,⁸⁴² and are affected by the broad and all-inclusive nature of *da'wah*, which includes farmers, craftspeople, and businesspeople.⁸⁴³ They, as well as religious scholars, can be role models suitable for *da'wah*. The mastery and the beneficial use of life skills in support of the truth are all facets of religious endeavour,

⁸³⁶Ghazālī, *Ẓalām min al-Gharb*, 266.

⁸³⁷Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 50.

⁸³⁸Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 23

⁸³⁹Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 1:17.

⁸⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 237.

⁸⁴¹Ghazālī, *al-Islam wa-'Awḍā'unā*, 191.

⁸⁴²Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 216.

⁸⁴³Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 115.

and yield enormous progress towards the truth.⁸⁴⁴ In fact, any scientific progress, irrespective of its origin,⁸⁴⁵ supports the religious message and the mastery of life, while acquiring of expertise supports the Islamic principles.⁸⁴⁶

Before continuing, it is worthwhile highlighting aspects of good Muslim role model. The role model implies that goodness integrates both an inward and outward character through which the Muslim nation progresses and attracts others.⁸⁴⁷ Such an integration of the internal and external confirms the true nature of the Islamic message and motivates religious adherence.⁸⁴⁸ The Muslim role model also includes safeguarding the honour of the abused and maltreated nations, providing local and international support for the ill-treated, acting with compassion, showing generosity, and rising above petty trivial issues.⁸⁴⁹ That is, Muslims maintain social and political integrity, safeguard people's lives, wealth, property and honour.⁸⁵⁰ Only then, for Ghazālī, are they able to head civilization.⁸⁵¹

Muslim society, described by Ghazālī as being balanced and wise, has sufficient institutions to facilitate marriage, collect charity in face of poverty, establish prayers,

⁸⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Hādihā Dīnunā*, 87-88. According to Ghazālī, just like prayer or fast, technical and administrative expertises are considered righteous deeds without which, a nation or a religious mission cannot rise or prosper. See Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Mur*, 3:133. Ghazālī also draws on the example of Dhul-Qarnayn who bridged between two steep mountain-sides, and who melted iron and copper into a series of castles to protect the weak against tyrants. This was made to show how *Dhul-Qarnayn*, instead of relying on rethoric, carried out his responsibility and refuted falsehood through the use of natural resources. See Ghazālī, *ʾIlāl wa-ʾAdwiyah*, 26.

⁸⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-ʾIslām*, 34.

⁸⁴⁶Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 137.

⁸⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-ʾIslām?* 79.

⁸⁴⁸Ghazālī, *al-Yahūd al-Muʾtadūn*, 29.

⁸⁴⁹Ghazālī, *al-Ṭariq min Hunā*, 76.

⁸⁵⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Mur*, 3:105.

⁸⁵¹Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nataʾamal Maʾa al-Qurʾān?* 222.

and transmit knowledge through setting up schools and printing houses.⁸⁵² Given his strong emphasis on role modeling for and by nations, Ghazālī argues that a nation with a message should establish its life system accordingly. In so doing, the goodness of Muslims will eventually become visible across the borders and reach out to the whole world.⁸⁵³ Muslims should meet and maintain the expectations of the religion, and communicate effectively with other nations. They should be well established in leading positions of all areas of life,⁸⁵⁴ reflect their Islamic mandate, and introduce it to close and far nations.⁸⁵⁵

Muslim role modeling also includes the contribution of Muslim governments which, through various institutions stand for justice, comfort its citizens,⁸⁵⁶ advocate peace, and stand against material desires. They impart and invite goodness, teach the truth and disseminate its proof, enjoin good, and forbid evil, both locally and internationally.⁸⁵⁷ Confusion about verse related to state and *da'wah* can raise questions as to what *da'wah* is. Ghazālī tries to avoid confusion about *da'wah*; he views it as excellence in governmental affairs and much more. For example, he argues that guidance from God through communication with the intellect is a fundamental component in *da'wah*. Verse related to *da'wah* and state should not, however, be confused. *Da'wah* related verses address the intellect through discovery of God, leading

⁸⁵²Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 86.

⁸⁵³Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam?* 79-80.

⁸⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 89.

⁸⁵⁵Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:24.

⁸⁵⁶Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 287.

⁸⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 39.

to adherence of a certain lifestyle.⁸⁵⁸ States track down criminals,⁸⁵⁹ fight crimes, and safeguard life, property, and honour.⁸⁶⁰ Ghazālī writes,

Neglecting *da'wah* implies that Muslim governments neglect the act of goodness, teaching the truth, enjoining the good and forbidding evil, advocating peace against aggression, justice against violence, or supporting of humanity in face of material desires and temptations.⁸⁶¹

Excellence in role modeling includes more than excellence in governmental affairs. In view of Ghazālī's attention to the need for excellence in worldly life, Ghazālī argues that excellence does not evolve by itself, for it requires several factors, including interest in learning, the longing to discover the unknown, and the determination to overcome difficulties. These, in his view, depend on having the strength of faith capable to develop these emotions.⁸⁶² The question of education is also crucial to the improvement process. Ghazālī anticipates that if the religion of Islam is to work well as a role model, a high percentage of Muslims require education.⁸⁶³

Ghazālī's attention to the need for internal improvements reflects the crucial role they and their effects have in the advancement of *da'wah*.⁸⁶⁴ For Ghazālī, *da'wah* does not prosper so long Muslims fail in the areas of economics and social development, or lack the understanding of life and its sciences.⁸⁶⁵ An implication is that the living conditions of Muslims are, by and large, the most fundamental factors

⁸⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:38.

⁸⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 4:215.

⁸⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 36.

⁸⁶¹Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 38.

⁸⁶²Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 107.

⁸⁶³Ghazālī, *Khuluq al-Muslim*, 218.

⁸⁶⁴Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 23.

⁸⁶⁵Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 159.

leading to the success of *dā'īs* and the prosperity of the values and teachings of Islam.⁸⁶⁶

Another implication is that Muslims are incapable of effectively advancing the religion of Islam so long their general conditions do not rise up to a universally acceptable or better standard.⁸⁶⁷ That is to say that the message of Islam spreads out with success only when the Muslim nation changes fundamentally, such that its moral and economic characteristics become effective and persuasive to the outside world.⁸⁶⁸ In other words, faith will not prosper so long as the intellectual and economic situations of Muslims are poor.⁸⁶⁹

Ghazālī's notion of the Muslim role model did not, however, draw as much on revelation as was the case with *dā'īs'* spiritual and moral etiquette. In fact, *da'wah* related verses in the Qur'ān do not explicitly allude to this component, and in many instances show followers of *da'wah* to have made their way to salvation and prosperity after states of subjugation. The process of *da'wah* development, as given in the Qur'ān, appears to present belief, patience, and trust in God as the means for success in *da'wah*. Ghazālī supports the notion of role model in *da'wah* through general verses calling for change, such as the following: "Allah changes not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts."⁸⁷⁰

Ghazālī does not contradict the importance of belief, patience and trust for *da'wah*. Rather, a key point of his is that Muslims' internal conditions have jeopardized

⁸⁶⁶Ghazālī, *ʿIlal wa-ʿAdwiyah*, 237.

⁸⁶⁷Ghazālī, *Maʿrakat al-Muṣṣaf*, 131.

⁸⁶⁸Ghazālī, *ʿIlal wa-ʿAdwiyah*, 40.

⁸⁶⁹Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 64.

⁸⁷⁰Pickthall, (Chapter 13:11), 225.

da'wah. In his reading of Muslim history, it is the poor conditions or state of civilization that have affected *da'wah*.⁸⁷¹ Specifically, in a world that struggles for freedom, science, and experimentation, Ghazālī is concerned that Islam is being portrayed as a tyrannical, mythical, and fictional religion or as a series of meaningless rituals irrelevant to the everyday world.⁸⁷² For Ghazālī, statements and actions by Muslims regrettably raised a terrible confusion about and within *da'wah*. Their acute scientific backwardness and moral decline stalled people's progress to God.⁸⁷³

For Ghazālī, the social conditions of present day Muslims not only affect the progress of *da'wah*,⁸⁷⁴ but also raise doubts about the value of Islam and the extent to which humanity would benefit from it.⁸⁷⁵ For him, the attitudes of Muslims and their social disintegration cause people to turn their backs on the religion.⁸⁷⁶ Presently, Muslims cannot guide others, and their religious leaders are incapable of carrying out this responsibility.⁸⁷⁷ They are pre-occupied with their internal affairs and have failed to introduce the religion of Islam to other nations or to serve as role models leading to attraction and adherence to Islam.⁸⁷⁸

Ghazālī criticizes Muslims for injustices they have done to Islam with their malpractice, since these have caused the impression that Islam is in conflict with

⁸⁷¹Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 79.

⁸⁷²Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 4.

⁸⁷³Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 37-38.

⁸⁷⁴Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 79.

⁸⁷⁵Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 3.

⁸⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 36-37; See Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 89.

⁸⁷⁷Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 80-81.

⁸⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 134.

human nature, freedom, and reason.⁸⁷⁹ For Ghazālī, Muslims' failure to properly implement religious teachings leads to the notion that they are highway robbers, seekers of worldly pleasures, or that they use their power simply to advance ethnic or regional agendas.⁸⁸⁰ *Dā'īs* should not overburden the religious message or cause it distraction. Harming *dhimmis*, for instance, is oppression, and causes an impression that it is religiously motivated.⁸⁸¹ Generally, according to Ghazālī, Muslims do not provide positive examples of religious monotheism or moral values, and cannot offer role models of peace, rise above materialistic ends, safeguard the lives, property and honour of others, or enjoin good and forbid wrongdoing.⁸⁸² Ghazālī writes,

What make residents of Damascus, Baghdad, or Istanbul spend the night insecure and fearful while they would sleep safely and comfortably in London, Paris, or Washington? To whom, then, shall God grant leadership of humanity?⁸⁸³

Muslims failed to embody the values and teachings of Islam, whether in formulating *da'wah* strategies or methods of religious presentation.⁸⁸⁴ The Muslim nation continues to burden the religion so long it fails to invite others to Islam through a persuasive and attractive example.⁸⁸⁵ Ghazālī asserts: "The shadows of religious failure affected the economic and administrative life. Work that is perfectly done by others emerges from

⁸⁷⁹Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 63. The Prophet Mohammad is reported to have said, "He who unfairly treats a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims, or undermines his rights, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent; then I am his opponent on the Day of Judgment." Reported in Abū Dāwūd and al-Bayhaqī. The Prophet is also reported to have said, "He who harms a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims has harmed me, and he who harms me has harmed Allah."

⁸⁸⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 77.

⁸⁸¹Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 36-37.

⁸⁸²Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 34.

⁸⁸³Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, 14.

⁸⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-'Islām?* 25.

⁸⁸⁵Ghazālī, *Min Ma'ālim*, 167.

Muslims hands as an aborted baby with no features and no hope for survival.”⁸⁸⁶ The incapability of Muslims to produce effective role models is caused either by misunderstanding of the implications of the message,⁸⁸⁷ or by cultural and political corruption.⁸⁸⁸

Ghazālī argues that nations concerned with scientific excellence, political dignity, and social and economic prosperity, have no hope that Muslims could lead in any of these areas.⁸⁸⁹ Even if they had such hope, however, other nations would lose it, given the backwardness of Muslim nation.⁸⁹⁰ These deficiencies caused other nations to pay little attention to Muslims, so long they are economically backwards, ignorant of their heritage, or solicit aid from abroad.⁸⁹¹ Economic shortcomings of Muslims and their need for humanitarian relief do not impress or attract others to Islam.⁸⁹² For instance, poor nations looking for humanitarian relief from developed nations become impeded and in a state of inferiority.⁸⁹³

Ghazālī also argues that developed nations interpret the wide-spread illiteracy among Muslims in religious terms.⁸⁹⁴ Had the teachings of Islam been good, then the

⁸⁸⁶Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhkhur*, 44. Ghazālī writes: “I am worried if every object returns to its place of origin, Muslims would then be left without food, electricity, clothing, transportation, and might even walk barefooted.” See Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt fī-Ṭarīq*, 12.

⁸⁸⁷Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 119.

⁸⁸⁸Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 16.

⁸⁸⁹Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 37-38.

⁸⁹⁰Ghazālī, *al-Yahūd al-Mu'tadūn*, 30

⁸⁹¹Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 141.

⁸⁹²Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 77.

⁸⁹³*Ibid.*, 115. Ghazālī calls on Muslims not to be inferior to other nations, or depend upon working and intelligent nations. See *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 133. He also argues that poverty of Muslims lies essentially in the severe impairment of human talents and skills. See Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 104.

⁸⁹⁴*Ibid.*, Ghazālī excuses nations that turned down the call of Islam, particularly when they are introduced to the religion of Islam through corrupted political and economic systems. See Ghazālī, *al-*

conditions of Muslims would be good; yet, they are bad. The contradiction then constantly causes doubts and impedes adherence to Islam.⁸⁹⁵ This resembles a state of impaired religious life and infancy in need of guardianship, which makes the success of *da'wah* implausible.⁸⁹⁶

As seen above, Ghazālī sees a reciprocal relationship between the Muslim role model and *da'wah*. His discussion of the relationship demonstrates his concern about Muslims' current conditions, and his belief in improvement as a basic requirement for effective *da'wah*. Ghazālī's hopes relate mostly to the objectives and scope of Islamic reform, which echo his hopes for *da'wah* and the reactions of outreached communities. Ghazālī's attention to the question of leading by example also reflects a deep understanding of the diverse implications involved in the process of *da'wah*, which requires correspondence between propagated ideals and the context of *da'wah*, and a match between the development of Islamic theory and practice. Ghazālī is not impressed with verbal manifestations when the causes of decline are present, because unless those problems are remedied, verbal *da'wah* remains useless.

Muslim role model for Ghazālī is not simply a set of personal, behavioural and moral credentials attached to *dā'īs*. The model represents, rather, the collective movement and the growing examples of an entire nation in most or all spheres of life. The movement and the examples are geared to prove that the religion leads to prosperity and human welfare and, hence, worth thought and adherence. The Muslim

Da'wah al-Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Hāli, 124.

⁸⁹⁵Ghazālī, *al-Yahūd al-Mu'tadūn*, 30.

⁸⁹⁶Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt*, 12.

role model, however, transcends regional, religious, and cultural boundaries, to contribute to global improvement, and earns global credibility leading to trust of Islamic religious ideals.

At the core of *da'wah* improvement lies the issue of culture. Rather than developing a base of religious knowledge and moral contribution which sculpts a nation capable of carrying out the message,⁸⁹⁷ Muslim culture (*thaqāfā*), according to Ghazālī, led intellects to seclusion and isolation.⁸⁹⁸ For him, Muslim culture today does not facilitate the truth about Islam⁸⁹⁹ and presents Muslim societies as flawed, suffering from intellectual and emotional problems.⁹⁰⁰ The culture Ghazālī dreams about sympathizes with people without impeaching them, and is preoccupied with fundamental issues and not with interpreting failures according to conspiracy theory.⁹⁰¹ Ghazālī's criticism looks for a positive image of Muslims and calls for purifying culture from elements that are not consistent with Islamic revelation, as a necessary step to building a positive model affecting the progress of *da'wah*.

Of importance, and along similar lines of cultural reform, Ghazālī discusses the effects of customs on *da'wah*. For him, most customs are baseless and have only developed during periods of backwardness. What is worse is that Muslims have impeded Islam by presenting adherence to their customs in areas of politics, economics, social and family life as a requirement for adherence to Islam by interested

⁸⁹⁷Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:90.

⁸⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 2:1.

⁸⁹⁹Ghazālī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 183.

⁹⁰⁰Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 5.

⁹⁰¹Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 15.

parties.⁹⁰² To support his view on the damaging effects of customs, especially for adherence in Western societies, Ghazālī draws on stories of a few Muslim converts. The first is Leonard, a European convert, renamed Shaykh Ali, who dressed oddly. Shaykh Ali, according to Ghazālī, should have dressed up normally, and showed a distinct moral character and physical purity. Another convert, Rosy, later named Taqiyyah, whom Ghazālī wishes had continued to be known among her colleagues and students as an experienced and competent playschool teacher, while maintaining her beauty and modest appearance.⁹⁰³ Last is a British Muslim convert who joined the Naqshabandi Sūfi order, and whom Ghazālī did not expect to benefit much from the religion of Islam, despite his good religious character.⁹⁰⁴ These examples illustrate Ghazālī's approach to the problem of culture and *da'wah*. They, on the one hand, show Ghazālī's attention to the essence and not the forms of deeds or actions. On the other hand, they demonstrate his attempt to create an atmosphere of Islamization where less or insignificant consideration is given to external appearances, especially when they affect *da'wah*. Arguably, his approach is geared to creating a neutral environment whereby secondary religious or cultural changes or adoptions including dress codes or minor acts of piety do not affect fundamental transformations in the process of Islamic progress. To a certain degree, Ghazālī's critique provides a contrary position to religio-cultural manifestations where outer forms often legitimize inner beings, and where external manifestations carry out a profound authority over substantial issues. His message seeks to re-establish the position of cultural accommodations within a broader yet

⁹⁰²Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 75-76.

⁹⁰³Ibid, 27-28.

⁹⁰⁴Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 112.

essential perspective of change and *da'wah*. It does not, however, provide us with a clear understanding of the priorities involved in the process of distinguishing fundamentals from secondary issues, religious from cultural, nor about the *da'wah* implementation process, particularly in the communities of Muslim converts and the West in general.

Ghazālī also discusses a number of problems that, together, amount to a substantial setback to *da'wah*. First, he surveys Muslim history and contends that poor religious practices have significantly impeded the progress of *da'wah*.⁹⁰⁵ Arabs, for example, have not only abandoned their leadership position in a universal *da'wah*, but have also detached themselves from the virtues and commands of Islam.⁹⁰⁶ Ghazālī's attention to religious practice is geared to a coordinated *da'wah*, whereby the introduction of Islamic values, beliefs, and actions is harmonious. To develop a harmonious correspondence of *da'wah* with Muslims' practice, Ghazālī re-interprets religious manifestations inflicting damages and affecting the presentation of Islam, or damaging the reciprocal connection between positive religious practice and the effectiveness of *da'wah*. For Ghazālī, *da'wah* is either dormant or obsolete when religious practices are negligent or artificial. His works, nonetheless, fall short of a structure and methodology that deal with prevailing practices with uniformity and consistency. In most parts, Ghazālī's interpretations project his personal views about what he believed to be proper and healthy culture or customs supporting *da'wah*. All

⁹⁰⁵ Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 44.

⁹⁰⁶ Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 57. Ghazālī argues that the West received a distorted image of Islam, both of its theoretical and practical aspects, and that Westerners know more about the petroleum of the Arab world than the Qur'ān. See Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥam al-'Islām?* 14.

that Ghazālī cares about is a genuine manifestation of *da'wah*, yielding satisfactory results, at least positive interest.

Second, conflict between worldly life and the hereafter caused *da'wah* fatal losses,⁹⁰⁷ and entailed two major deficiencies: failure to understand or support people's attachment to life, and failure to understand divine guidance or observe religious commands.⁹⁰⁸ *Dā'īs'* confusion vis-à-vis the worldly life and the hereafter led to the impression that religious and mundane worlds are in opposition, and that people shall not truly acquire piety unless they indulge in poverty or totally discard the reality of life and the divine laws of the universe.⁹⁰⁹

Third, is *dā'īs'* misunderstanding of abrogation (*al-naskh*). For Ghazālī, abrogation is a negative approach affecting some Qur'ān exegesists, damaging the beauty of *da'wah*, and undermining *da'wah*.⁹¹⁰ Proper interpretation of the verse of the sword (*'āyat al-sayf*) and the traditions of the prophet for example preserve the methodology of *da'wah*.⁹¹¹ Another related example is the claim that *da'wah* was legislated in early Islam but was later abrogated following the conquest of the tribe of Banū al-Muṣṭalaq.⁹¹²

Fourth, is *dā'īs'* preoccupation, even obsession, with trivial conflicts. That is, such extreme focus on legal differences has led to neglect both the political and

⁹⁰⁷ Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 150.

⁹⁰⁸ Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 86.

⁹⁰⁹ Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 267.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁹¹¹ Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 22.

⁹¹² Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 28.

economic systems and of the development of relationships with other nations.⁹¹³

Ghazālī does not name specific nations or time periods but makes this a general observation. The excessive stress on legal differences, according to Ghazālī, has even revived the old conflict between early and later Muslim generations (salaf and khalaf),⁹¹⁴ and drove them to a course other than *da'wah* and caused Muslims to be preoccupied with different problems.⁹¹⁵

Last, there is the absence of institutions of *da'wah* that motivate goodness,⁹¹⁶ explore new intellectual fields,⁹¹⁷ and follow up on internal and external *da'wah* progress, achievements, or defeats.⁹¹⁸ For Ghazālī, negligence by Muslims caused weaknesses and deficiencies in *da'wah* institutions.⁹¹⁹ For example, institutions of Islamic learning failed to cultivate a discipline of *da'wah* or foster positive *da'wah* institutions.⁹²⁰ This failure has harmed existing official and public *da'wah* institutions,⁹²¹

⁹¹³Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadidah*, 4:8-9.

⁹¹⁴*Salaf and Khalaf* (a.), lit. "the predecessors and the successors," names given to the first three generations and to the following generations of the Muslim community respectively. It was the *Sunnah* rather than the Qur'ān which instituted one of the most characteristic traits of the Islamic vision of history by imposing the idea a priori that this history was said to have begun with a golden age, which was said to have been inevitably followed by a period of relaxation of standards, deviation and finally of division. See Chaumont, E. "al-Salaf wa al- Khalaf." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-6515>

⁹¹⁵Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 8. For Ghazālī, "true" *Salafis* do not overlook or neglect the fundamentals of moral, social, and political reform. See his *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 11. The claim of *Salafiyyah* inflames disagreements about past religious issues, and is only an adversary to modern Islamic awakening. See Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 61. Ghazālī describes how young Muslims are encouraged not to look into the legal opinions of scholars or *Madhāhib* (Muslim schools of law), and to directly deal with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. See *al-Aṭā' al-Fikrī*, 77; and *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*, 10.

⁹¹⁶Ghazālī, *al-Haqq al-Murr*, 1:34.

⁹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 3:165.

⁹¹⁸Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islamiyyah*, 90.

⁹¹⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 39-40.

⁹²⁰Ghazālī, *al-Fasād al-Siyāsī fī al-Mujtama'āt al-'Arabiyyah wa al-'Islamiyyah* (*Political Corruption in Arab and Muslim Societies*) (*Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Tibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī'*, 2003), 21.

⁹²¹Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām Khārij 'Arḍih*, 31.

and they remain ignorant, incompetent, or corrupt.⁹²² The issue of absent or defective *da'wah* establishments brings attention to the role and responsibilities of Muslim governments towards *da'wah*. Ideally, for Ghazālī, those governments should support the undertaking and safeguarding of *da'wah*.⁹²³ Towards the end of the era of the guided Muslim caliphs (10 A.H./632CE-40 A.H./661CE), however, Muslim rulers generally abandoned their *da'wah* responsibilities, and failed to develop or support *da'wah* institutions with adequate resources.⁹²⁴ Ghazālī does not refer specifically to Islamic establishments such as Dār al-'Iftā' or 'Awqāf - rather, he makes the point that governments in general have left *da'wah* responsibilities to the public. As a result, *da'wah* did not receive adequate attention or care from Muslim rulers.⁹²⁵ Such was the state in which *dā'īs* contributed to the transmission of Islam, with minimal effect.⁹²⁶ Ghazālī questions the contribution of Muslim governments, past and present, towards the transmission of Islam, and argues that *da'wah* has been dissociated from the state since an early time.⁹²⁷

For Ghazālī, however, the poor progress of *da'wah*, in part, reflects the poor standard of *dā'īs*. As noted previously, Ghazālī was concerned with *dā'īs'* intellectual formation. Current ways of selecting *dā'īs* were also a problem and the poor qualities of those selected were detrimental to the purity of the religion and to its present and future status.⁹²⁸ Ghazālī believed that most people aspiring to become *dā'īs* are

⁹²²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al-Qur'ān*, 223.

⁹²³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:187.

⁹²⁴Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 39.

⁹²⁵Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 170.

⁹²⁶Ghazālī, *al-Fasād al-Siyāsī*, 21.

⁹²⁷Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 190.

⁹²⁸Ghazālī, *al-Fasād al-Siyāsī*, 23. Ghazālī criticizes the orientation of intelligent students to the study of

incompetent.⁹²⁹ For him, incompetence caused *dā'īs* to lack influence and to fail to support the faith or gain any appreciation for their efforts.⁹³⁰ *Da'wah* is also affected by extremists or naïve individuals. Thus, the current state of *da'wah* involves ignorant *dā'īs* threatening scholars; emotionally troubled *dā'īs* posing a menace to those with sound *fiṭrah*; *dā'īs* wielding wooden swords to frighten atomic experts; and illiterate *dā'īs* intimidating highly educated women.⁹³¹ Such a state of affairs, for Ghazālī, explains the need for intelligence, or as has been alluded to by early scholars, the requirement for a broad understanding and pure intention.⁹³² *Da'wah* needs thinkers, researchers, and speakers of a higher calibre,⁹³³ and motivated *dā'īs* who convey the religion of Islam and follow up on the current progress of religion.⁹³⁴ Those *dā'īs* are both residents and travelers, and are fluent in foreign languages.⁹³⁵

As the above stress on intellectual formation may suggest, Ghazālī frames the discussion of improving *da'wah* within the issue of Islamic learning. For him, Islamic education is primarily responsible for the quality of *dā'īs* and *da'wah*. Current Islamic learning, however, is not able to integrate reason with emotion and has either produced naïve *dervishes* or rude jurists.⁹³⁶ More specifically, the decline in religious

arts, and the rest to religious studies and *da'wah*. He draws on the example of Azhar which enrolls successful students in business administration and others into Sharī'a or *da'wah*, and only recruits students who fail in other universities. These attitudes, for Ghazālī, do not support the education of leaders in areas of Islamic disciplines including *da'wah*. See Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣḥaf*, 119.

⁹²⁹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Ḥālī*, 124.

⁹³⁰Ghazālī, *al-Maḥāwir al-Khamsah*, 124.

⁹³¹Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 64.

⁹³²Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Taṣṭaqabil*, 163.

⁹³³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:10.

⁹³⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 176.

⁹³⁵Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:10.

⁹³⁶Ghazālī, *al-Jur'āt al-'Akhīrah*, 6:97.

learning produced a narrowed-minded generation of *dā'īs*, unable to advance the cause of the religion.⁹³⁷ In addition, because Muslim jurists have overburdened Islamic disciplines with trivial issues, the disciplines require a thorough screening to draw them nearer to their original conditions in order to serve people better.⁹³⁸ Their poor understanding of sciences also caused confusion in students of religious studies.⁹³⁹

Ghazālī connects *dā'īs'* educational incompetence, already noted above, with contemporary limitations in Islamic learning. Graduates of major Islamic institutions represent a disturbed tradition and intellectual decay, and have emotional problems; all those hold back rather than advance *da'wah*.⁹⁴⁰ *Dā'īs* are selected according to a criteria that contaminates the purity of the present and future state of the religion.⁹⁴¹ Some *dā'īs* fail to balance between the various aspects of religious learning either because of personal defects causing disequilibrium and misunderstanding, or because of a lack of guidance and a poor educational background.⁹⁴²

Ghazālī seeks to remedy the deteriorated state of *da'wah*, and to advance the

⁹³⁷Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 153. Ghazālī writes: "In the same way old telescopes cannot shoot images of distant planets, narrow-minded *dā'īs* are also unable to understand major issues." Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 146-147.

⁹³⁸Ghazālī, *Haqīqat al-Qawmiyyah*, 182. Ghazālī says: "I sadly observe religious guidance delivered to Muslim public. Both the content of traditional literature and the cultural conquest require revision and new approaches." Ghazālī, *al-Jur'āt al-'Akhīrah*, 6:145.

⁹³⁹Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 202-203. To substantiate his view concerning the poor status of education, Ghazālī argues that many notions have infiltrated Islamic education. Ignorance is called knowledge, innovation has become *Sunnah*, misguidance is viewed as righteousness, and lower desires have turned to religion. Wrong titles and distorted concepts have turned evil into good deeds and goodness into wrongdoings. On the other hand, many wrong ideas infiltrated Muslim nation through western influences. Chaos has become a freedom, illegitimate sexual relationships represent love, the return to religion is viewed as fundamentalism, and imprisoning of women is considered a religion while their presence alongside men is viewed as a civilization. See Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* 143.

⁹⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Rakā'iz al-'Imān*, 10. For Ghazālī, disturbed or "unbalanced" studies also lead to a disturbed reasoning, just as the in-depth study of a discipline without an interdisciplinary perspective does not produce a proper education. Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 51.

⁹⁴¹Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 149.

⁹⁴²Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 193.

dissemination of Islamic culture in a way that enhances *da'wah* concepts and integrates them with the environment. In seeking those goals, he examines diverse related problems and options for improvement.⁹⁴³ For Ghazālī, one positive step towards improvement would be to include more *dā'īs* who are intelligent, able to understand the implications of religious progress and the needs of the people.⁹⁴⁴ Another step would be to understand other nations to enable *dā'īs* to know whom they communicate with and what material should be communicated. This requires an understanding of contemporary achievements of civilization, and an examination of political trends and overall achievements and potentials of other nations. Making these goals possible requires a better selection of *dā'īs* and the reform of institutions of *da'wah*. Ghazālī also calls for struggle against culturally-based illusions or deceptions and against intellectual delinquencies; this would, in his view, rebuild the Muslim nation on the basis of revelation, and lead it to the exploration of the universe and to the effective exploitation of resources.⁹⁴⁵

To this point, most of the problems of *dā'īs*, as discussed above, can be seen as problems of the Muslim society as a whole, and any solution to the problems of *dā'īs* represents, in Ghazālī's view, a contribution to improving the general conditions of Muslim society. In other words, the solution of many *dā'īs* and *da'wah* problems falls within the realm of broader social reform.

Nevertheless, for Ghazālī, there are problems that are more specific and appear

⁹⁴³Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 46.

⁹⁴⁴Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 129.

⁹⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 37.

to fall within the reach of religious preachers and scholars. Examples include poor *da'wah* performance, negative views on women, and legal differences. Therefore, we turn below to Ghazālī's specific critique of *dā'īs*. Ghazālī was constantly critical in his approach, because of the importance of *da'wah* to the Islamic enterprise, and because he uses the critique of *dā'īs* to reveal the real problems in contemporary *da'wah*. Ghazālī did not rank list of the problems, but presented them embedded in his critique. Accordingly, it is important to examine his critique to determine what the problems are and to discern his criteria for an improved *da'wah*.

V. Critique of *Dā'īs*:

Ghazālī criticizes preachers, muftis, scholars, and sometimes even students of religious learning, more often than he criticizes *dā'īs*. Nonetheless, he extensively criticizes the understanding and performance of *dā'īs*. His style is ridiculing and provocative and often causes confusion, misunderstanding, and negative reaction. Ghazālī's criticism is a reaction to the current state of *da'wah*, and shows how the contributions of *dā'īs* do not meet his expectations nor translate his understanding of *da'wah* for contemporary societies. In fact, he persists in his critique of the current state of *dā'īs* and *da'wah* because the requirements he sees for *da'wah*, as discussed above, are not met.

Ghazālī's harsh or demeaning remarks about existing *dā'īs*' contributions reflect a generally negative evaluation of their diverse undertakings in *da'wah*. Given the discussion of *dā'īs*' learning above, it is no surprise that Ghazālī develops an intensely critical attitude to *dā'īs*' intellectual or educational failures. For him, the weakness of

dā'īs results primarily from their taking their own poor knowledge as authoritative.⁹⁴⁶

Based on his experience in diverse religious settings, Ghazālī learned that poor intellects should be dismissed from *da'wah*,⁹⁴⁷ in the same way that the religious message does not prosper when human characteristics and emotions are defective.⁹⁴⁸

Ghazālī criticises *dā'īs* who speak for a religion they misunderstand or fail to rise to its standards, and whose example reflects poorly on the religion.⁹⁴⁹ The religion of Islam, according to Ghazālī, should not be learned from Nomadic jurists or dervish Sufis,⁹⁵⁰ or from emotionally troubled people who should rather find a field other than *da'wah*.⁹⁵¹ Some *dā'īs* educate people about God yet are themselves unaware of Him, are ignorant of the universe and human history, are null in religious matters or lack knowledge of the material world.⁹⁵²

For Ghazālī, God's religion is too honourable to be taken from the mouths of idiots,⁹⁵³ embracing Islam is easier without the hurdles of ineffective *dā'īs*.⁹⁵⁴ Some *dā'īs*

⁹⁴⁶Ibid., 157.

⁹⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam?* 34.

⁹⁴⁸Ibid., 68.

⁹⁴⁹Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 2:114; *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 47.

⁹⁵⁰Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 112. Ghazālī believes that "Nomadic-jurisprudence" (*al-fiqh al-badawī*) has limited prospect, and only drives people away especially when associated with religion. See Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 91. Ghazālī does not, however, clearly define the concept of Nomadic-jurisprudence nor sets its terms and position with relation to classical Islamic jurisprudence. He only illustrates its manifestations and "negative" impacts on modern *da'wah*. Nomadic-jurisprudence as understood from Ghazālī, reflects many meanings. On the one hand, it involves strict traditional jurists who give no attention to the various ramifications of modern developments in Muslim societies. It also connotes jurists who advocate their cultural and traditional lifestyles as genuine Islamic practices to be reinforced in *da'wah* and adopted by the general Muslim public. On the other hand, it designates religious and cultural practices, which causes detriments to *da'wah* particularly in Western societies, and even goes against the very practical objectives of *da'wah*.

⁹⁵¹Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 61.

⁹⁵²Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 92.

⁹⁵³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:24.

⁹⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 20.

do better to sell sheep, and when butchers act as jurists consults they only search for a sacrifice.⁹⁵⁵ The stress on effective levels of education carries over into his discussion of Islamic culture, including the economy. Ghazālī regretted that *dā'īs*' educational levels did not qualify them to even set up a small store, yet they were adamant to compete with large petroleum companies and giant financial institutions.⁹⁵⁶ Ghazālī writes,

While walking in Cairo, I noticed a building for an Italian delegation which trained Egyptians how to manufacture shoes. At that time, I asked myself whether we need training in this particular field, and also remembered *dā'īs* who wish to spread Islam with swords. I responded: Go and fight your bare footedness first, and be humble before God.⁹⁵⁷

Ghazālī criticizes *dā'īs* who fail to reflect upon their mistakes, correct their assumptions, or realize that social and political lapses caused global decline.⁹⁵⁸ For him, many *dā'īs* lost sense of the value of political and intellectual freedom, and of the need for freedom to sustain and nourish *da'wah*. They also forgot that faith only fades away in the absence of freedom and even shrinks until it disappears or changes to disbelief.⁹⁵⁹ On this occasion, Ghazālī criticizes some ḥadīth experts who argue that slavery is a genuine Islamic practice, not to be abolished, or jurists who argue that a Qurayshite man may marry an Arab or a non-Arab women; whereas, a non-Qurayshite is required to fulfill the requirement in marriage compatibility as far as their genealogy

⁹⁵⁵Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 13.

⁹⁵⁶Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 148.

⁹⁵⁷Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:212.

⁹⁵⁸Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, 13.

⁹⁵⁹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 148.

⁹⁶⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 15.

⁹⁶¹Ghazālī, *al-Jur'āt al-'Akhīrah*, 6:7.

(*nasab*) is concerned.⁹⁶⁰

For Ghazālī, some *dā'īs* are less connected with Islamic principles than with current practices, whether right or wrong, and approach *da'wah* in terms of their current traditions and customs, rather than in light of the divine revelation.⁹⁶¹ Some even perceive Islam as a message for a small neighbourhood, inaccessible to the external world, with its own traditions and protocols. Those *dā'īs*, according to Ghazālī, may well serve as doorkeepers in a deserted area but cannot be callers for a universal religion.⁹⁶²

Some *dā'īs* introduce Islam through customs or historical weaknesses as if these were the norms of divine guidance.⁹⁶³ On this occasion, Ghazālī draws on the example of a Muslim who persuaded an American Muslim convert to dress up in a traditional white garment. Ghazālī wonders why this convert was not taught to dress up ordinarily and be identified as a Muslim through his conduct and manners, rather than his way of dress.⁹⁶⁴ Ghazālī dismisses *dā'īs* of Bedouin understanding, as well as those who, in capital cities, dress up the religion of Islam in Bedouin turbans.⁹⁶⁵ Some look forward to reviving the tradition of eating with one's hands while sitting on the floor, and refuse to use utensils or tables; Ghazālī questions,

Who ruled out that eating on tables or using spoons is against the Sunnah? The religious understanding of those people is strange, and the discussion of these

⁹⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:124.

⁹⁶¹Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 133.

⁹⁶²Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:39.

⁹⁶³Ghazālī, *al-Ghazw al-Thaqāfi*, 28.

⁹⁶⁴Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 112.

⁹⁶⁵Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 243.

questions is an intellectual disease or insanity. Why are some people preoccupied with these traditions and neglectful of their obligations and major problems?⁹⁶⁶

Ghazālī is surprised at *dā'īs* who, despite lacking educational qualifications, enjoy talking about God and the religion.⁹⁶⁷ In his *Talkative about Islam without fruitful actions*, Ghazālī is disappointed with those who, despite their inability to perform good work, continue to raise religious and legal problems. Their alleged scholarship is only a deceptive veil put over their failures, and the pretext of scholarship is a cover up of their imperfect work.⁹⁶⁸ The problem, according to Ghazālī, arises when *dā'īs* love to talk about Islam, yet ignore its reality and history, are unaware of contemporary issues, and are inattentive to the difficult conditions surrounding the present and future of Islam.⁹⁶⁹ Ghazālī criticizes *dā'īs* who increasingly argue over legal questions rather than developing insights into current problems.⁹⁷⁰ Ghazālī illustrates,

My dear friend, Western democracy only grew in the vacuum you have yourself made, and only found lovers because of your extremely distorted presentation of the religious and worldly reality, and your insignificant attention to the human characters and history of nations looking for mercy and justice. You know well how to bring about death yet are unaware how to boost life. You prohibit in the name of God yet fail to provide lawful alternatives to satisfy people's needs or obstruct the course of disobedience.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 152. Ghazālī mentions a Muslim preacher who advocates that Zakāt should be given as dates, barley, or other food items, and who rejects the option of currency. Ghazālī said: "This person thinks as a bedouin who demands London and Paris, if they are Islamic, to import tons of barley and dates for charities. What is wrong in giving Zakāt in cash? Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wihdah*, 169.

⁹⁶⁷Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 92.

⁹⁶⁸Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:133.

⁹⁶⁹Ghazālī, *al-Jur'āt al-'Akhīrah*, 6:25.

⁹⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:43. Ghazālī blames *dā'īs* for raising the issue of permissibility of photography not knowing the satellites' ability to locate and attack their sites. See Ghazālī, *al-Jur'āt al-'Akhīrah*, 6:21.

⁹⁷¹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 110.

Ghazālī wishes those *dā'īs* would keep silence, given their horrible weaknesses in the field of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, their poor understanding of the little they memorized, their insignificant appreciation of the traditions of Muslim scholars, and their poor comprehension of humanity.⁹⁷² Those *dā'īs* are unable to help the Muslim nation, let alone third parties interested in the religion of Islam.

Dā'īs' inability to rescue their nations from poor conditions is due to their attention to the outward instead of the inward.⁹⁷³ According to Ghazālī, it is not only impoverished environments that affect the progress of *da'wah*, but also moody and pessimistic *dā'īs* keen to issue verdicts of prohibitions causing people distress,⁹⁷⁴ or talkative *dā'īs* who preoccupy people with useless knowledge.⁹⁷⁵ Some *dā'īs* lack the essential characteristics which qualify them to transmit the message, or attract people to the religion. For Ghazālī, had *da'wah* had to depend on present-day *dā'īs*, and had the religion of Islam not been easy and in harmony with innate human nature, the religion would have stopped where it first started, shrunk, or even vanished. The methods of religious presentation require effective skills, wisdom, sincerity, and dedication; these, however, are scarce amongst *dā'īs* in the present time.⁹⁷⁶

Ghazālī criticizes *dā'īs* who present Islam as being in conflict with human nature, who constantly look for restraints, hardship and complexity when people long

⁹⁷²Ghazālī, *Ṣalām min al-Gharb*, 151.

⁹⁷³Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:61.

⁹⁷⁴Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islam?* 41.

⁹⁷⁵Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:170.

⁹⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islam?* 21.

for freedom and ease,⁹⁷⁷ or who introduce defective and unattractive outputs, despite their citation of legal rulings.⁹⁷⁸ Despite being supposed to call for ease instead of hardship, and to share good tidings instead of driving people away,⁹⁷⁹ some *dā'īs* are keen to issue verdicts that forbid almost everything around.⁹⁸⁰ Those *dā'īs* terribly affect the progress of *da'wah*.⁹⁸¹ Had those people been able, they would have prohibited breathing air even if that cause their own suffocation.⁹⁸²

Some *dā'īs* avoid addressing political or economic problems, underestimate the effects of customs on divine guidance.⁹⁸³ Some others concentrate on the supererogatory, rather than the obligatory acts of worship, on secondary rather than fundamental legal rulings, and on areas of disagreement rather than of consensus.⁹⁸⁴ Some *dā'īs* live in the past, and introduce Islam as a historical phenomenon neither suitable for the present or the future. They preoccupy themselves with battles with the Mu'tazilites or the Jahmites,⁹⁸⁵ losing sight of contemporary problems.⁹⁸⁶ They fight

⁹⁷⁷Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:124.

⁹⁷⁸Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:133.

⁹⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 41.

⁹⁸⁰Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:39.

⁹⁸¹Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 41.

⁹⁸²Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 5:39.

⁹⁸³Ghazālī, *Sir Ta'akhhur*, 51.

⁹⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Jihād al-Da'wah*, 17.

⁹⁸⁵In general terms, the Jahmites or those qualified as such denied a distinct existence of any of God's attributes. According to Ibn Ḥanbal, Jahm gave the following answer to a question concerning verse eleven of chapter 42, which states "Nothing is like Him": "He cannot be qualified (*lā yūṣaf*), neither is He known by any attribute or act; He has no limit or end; mind cannot apprehend Him; He is all face, all knowledge, all hearing, all sight, all light, all power, without being two separate thing. Whenever you think that He is something you know, He is other than that." See Gilliot, C. "Attributes of God." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, III. Edited by: Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=ei3_COM-0163>

with theological sects in Muslim history, not knowing they only fight ghosts, and may win in areas having no real opponents.⁹⁸⁷ Some others summon features of decayed societies and culture,⁹⁸⁸ and take their knowledge from the period of the Abbasids (750C.E.-1517C.E.), Mamelukes (1250 C.E.-1517 C.E.), or Petty Kings in Muslim Spain (*Mulūk al- Ṭawā'if*) (1031-1086 CE).⁹⁸⁹ Ghazālī's following comment on a Friday sermon illustrates the point: "Had this sermon been delivered as of the fifth or the sixth century of the *hijra* (12th/13th CE), nobody would have then objected. The sermon exhibits weakness and fear of rulers, causing *dā'īs* to escape real problems."⁹⁹⁰

Ghazālī has additional criticisms for *dā'īs* working in the West. In discussing the presentation of Islam to Western societies, Ghazālī mocks vulgar *dā'īs*, who advocate authoritative political systems, and associate public consultation (*shūrā*) with the personal opinion of the ruler.⁹⁹¹ In addition, Ghazālī regrets that some *dā'īs* in the West still address westerners through literature and cultural traditions developed specifically for the problems of Muslim societies, instead of a discourse that meets the challenges and concerns of the West.⁹⁹² There is also the problem of local customs. *Dā'īs* who transmit Islam to Western societies should respect established customs in those societies, so long as these do not conflict with Islamic principles,⁹⁹³ and should not

⁹⁸⁶Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:167.

⁹⁸⁷Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 129.

⁹⁸⁸Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 51.

⁹⁸⁹Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4.

⁹⁹⁰Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 147.

⁹⁹¹Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa-'Adwiyah*, 241.

⁹⁹²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al-Qur'ān?* 222.

⁹⁹³Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 89.

presume to enforce the customs of Arab tribes.⁹⁹⁴

Such problems, inside the Muslim nation and in the West, led Ghazālī to conclude that the dilemma of *dā'īs* is their neglect or overlooking of current issues of the public welfare and their trust in notions like these: reason is presumed guilty until proven innocent; analogy (*qiyās*)⁹⁹⁵ is inferior to weak report; the sword, not persuasion, is the way to *da'wah*; and Nomadic dress is the symbol of piety.⁹⁹⁶ The problem, according to Ghazālī, lies with halfway learners who fail to master the art of *fatwā*, are not objective and have not acquired the picture in full. Those *dā'īs* are unaware of the precise doses required in the Islamic treatment and are also unable to detect the ills of Muslim or non-Muslim societies.⁹⁹⁷ Their ignorance causes more harm than benefit.⁹⁹⁸

Ghazālī's criticism informed his own model for *da'wah*. Overall, that model is ambitious. It involves ramifications of responsibilities, requirements, problems, and concerns. It projects both the concerns and the dreams of a typical Muslim thinker in

⁹⁹⁴Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 59.

⁹⁹⁵*Qiyās*, reasoning by analogy, is the fourth source of Muslim law. In a broad sense, *Qiyās* can indicate inductive reasoning (*'istinbāl*), and even deduction (*'istinbāt, istikhrāj al-ḥaqq*). It is thus that in *kalām*, *Qiyās al-Ghā'yb 'ala al-shāhid* indicates the syllogistic procedure which consists in induction from the known to the unknown. In the terminology of *fiqh*, *qiyās* is "judicial reasoning by analogy." It is the method adopted by the Muslim jurisconsults to define a rule which has not been the object of an explicit formulation: a verse of the Qur'ān, a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet or '*ijmā'*. This specific structure results from the particular nature of the mode of reasoning by analogy; the absence of a middle term in the primitive form of *qiyās*, then definition of an explanatory principle (*'illah*) which is not a logical norm, but the prescription of a rule (*ḥukm*) established by God or His Prophet, this is the judicio-religious norm. See Bernand, M.; Troupeau, G. "Qiyās." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 27 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0527>

⁹⁹⁶Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 1:125.

⁹⁹⁷Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 130-131.

⁹⁹⁸Ghazālī, *al-Ḥaqq al-Murr*, 3:26-27. According to Ghazālī, some *dā'īs* regard the pulpit, niche, or clock as purely religious innovations; yet when they speak, they do not awaken the sleepy nor educate people. Ibid.

modern times. Furthermore, the problems and challenges identified by Ghazālī are real, understandable, and still present. Ghazālī's model, however, ignored the religious monopoly in *da'wah*, and succeeded to scrutinize the ailments accompanying modern *da'wah* and *dā'īs* with the tools used by jurists and 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth. Predictably, the immediate reaction by scholars and *dā'īs* was to discredit Ghazālī by denying he had any legal or ḥadīth credentials.

The question now addressed is the value of Ghazālī's method, including his tone, intellectual legacy, and critique. Ghazālī counters his opponents' opinions or accuses them of extremism which, in his view, hinders the progress of *da'wah* or damages the image of Islam in the West.⁹⁹⁹ In sum, Ghazālī's critique of *dā'īs* focused on specific individuals or groups, yet was able to develop a critique of common problems. Had his approach and tone been more constructive, then his critiques could have been more helpful, for his provocative style only led to angry reactions and destructive responses at the time, a point that will be discussed in the following chapters.

Ghazālī's open criticism, however, shows his independence, and strong belief in his model of *da'wah* for modern times and particularly in the West. In short, his legacy includes an example of independent and open critique of *da'wah*, and includes not only his open criticism of religious undertakings, but also his undermining of what is usually perceived as the distinction between the sacred and the secular. In the end, however, his criticism was successful to a degree because it created or opened up the current discourse on *da'wah*, on various legal problems attached to *da'wah*, and on the

⁹⁹⁹Sulṭān, 'Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī, 56.

principles of *da'wah* and how they are understood or translated in society. Neither his model nor the criticism informing it is the end of that discourse. Ghazālī's critique raises problems it does not solve, does not lead to any systematic methodology reflecting unity, objectivity, and consistency, and demonstrates the need for systematic yet extensive remedying efforts in modern *da'wah*.

As shown above, Ghazālī's works present an ideal portrayal of *dā'īs*' qualifications and achievements and provide one of the most rigorous treatments of modern *da'wah* and *dā'īs*. One can only presume that Ghazālī's quest for a comprehensive Islamic society in contrast to the poor state of Muslims underlies his whole discussion, and ignited most of his criticisms of *dā'īs*. This conclusion, however, is not completely satisfactory. A careful examination of *dā'īs* portrayed by Ghazālī reveals the need to create a large class of charismatic religious intellectuals, who are well versed in most academic disciplines. This, on the one hand, is a problem in view of Ghazālī's own assumptions that both society and government share the responsibilities of *da'wah*. On the other hand, the boundaries of *dā'īs* from either the fields of religion or mundane life are not clear enough and continue to raise confusion as to what the requirements of each category are.

At the practical level, we are faced with the problem of feasibility. Ghazālī's ideal image of *dā'īs* raises a series of critical questions. First, those "*dā'īs*" appear to integrate tradition with modernity, and use their skills in light of their understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context of *da'wah*. If that is the case, then any further discussion should have focused on the process of integration of disciplines, and what methodology should be adopted in approaching both Islamic and modern

knowledge from the perspective of *da'wah*. Probably, Ghazālī should not be blamed because he only raised concerns and problems of *da'wah* with the hope that other may continue this work. On another level, *dā'īs*' education as discussed by Ghazālī raises the question of what type of Islamic learning institution could help *dā'īs* acquire various skills. This again leads to the question of perspective, curriculum, and staff. With his criticism of Islamic tradition and secular education, and with his keen interest to see all-rounded education, Ghazālī does not advocate a new Islamic institution but, rather, seeks to modernize contemporary Islamic institutions including the Azhar. We should, however, not lose sight of the fact that his discussion of *dā'īs*' multifaceted education is nothing but a reflection of the implications of modern Islamic reform, which should respond to the various problems of Muslim individuals and society.

Ghazālī discusses the need to involve all society and government in *da'wah* so as to avoid the dichotomy between religion and mundane life, and also to escape the gap between religious elites as opposed to the professional classes. He urged *dā'īs* in their respective professions to acquire a minimum degree of Islamic education yet, does not specify how that was to happen, given his many criticisms of traditional Islamic learning. Ghazālī proposed Islamic education should not happen in a vacuum and not before remedying the problems associated with contemporary religious institutions. Clearly, Ghazālī's inattention to this problem reinforces the fact that he was simply concerned to raise the question of *da'wah* and *dā'īs* at a general level without developing a detailed *da'wah* program for implementation.

Chapter Four

Ghazālī's Perspective on the Methodology of *Da'wah*

Introduction:

The argument of this chapter concerns Ghazālī's methodology of *da'wah*. The research for this chapter involved the examination of the sources, both Ghazālī's works and the works of his critics, and began with the expectation that it would reveal his methodology. This is particularly important, in part because Ghazālī's works do not provide a complete and elaborate explanation of *da'wah* methodology. The research did reveal much about his *da'wah* methodology. The prime significance of this chapter is that it reveals the methodological criteria that Ghazālī identifies for successful *da'wah*. One important finding that is discussed below is just how consistently Ghazālī used *da'wah* as a lens for viewing law. In this regard, the research reveals how he used *da'wah* lenses to re-interpret traditions, relations between Islam and the West, and the socio-political and religious roles of women.

This chapter has three major sub-sections. The first is on the approach to *da'wah* and deals with Ghazālī's understanding of *da'wah* priorities, the relationship of *dā'īs* to the receptive intellect, and religious preaching. The second sub-section is concerned with the relationship of *da'wah* and Islamic law. This has caused intense criticism of Ghazālī by scholars and *dā'īs* and the accusation that he passed over religious authorities to accommodate western ways of life. The third and last sub-section is about *da'wah* and women. Ghazālī re-interprets many legal questions of women to develop a framework that legitimatizes women's participation in social and

political life and to support his position that women, not just men, can make positive contributions to *da'wah* and Islamic reform.

I. The Approach to *Da'wah*:

The approach to *da'wah* is what translates *dā'īs*' knowledge and experience into an undertaking of religious transmission. It also reflects the priorities of *da'wah*, areas of *dā'īs*' attention and the implications of *da'wah* for society. These involve the educational, spiritual, and moral qualities but, more importantly, the skills necessary to integrate the goals of *da'wah* with the needs and challenges of society. For Ghazālī, the difficult work of *da'wah* must be done well, since *dā'īs*' failure to properly present Islam entails negative consequences like the assumption that adhering to Islam connotes a return to tribal life, a denial of science, or a neglect of women's right to education.¹⁰⁰⁰

According to Ghazālī, *dā'īs* should present their beliefs through adherence to the methodology of the Qur'ān,¹⁰⁰¹ which adheres to a specific style in introducing the Creator and the divine attributes.¹⁰⁰² The Qur'ān for instance draws human intellect and emotions to the signs of creation spread out in the universe, and illustrates the evidences¹⁰⁰³ and solid proofs for the Creator.¹⁰⁰⁴ Also, the teachings of the Qur'ān are

¹⁰⁰⁰Ghazālī, *al-Jur'āt al-Jadīdah*, 6:26.

¹⁰⁰¹Ghazālī, *Humūm*, 129; *Min Maqālāt*, 1:123.

¹⁰⁰²Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nafham al-'Islām?* 109.

¹⁰⁰³*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁴Ghazālī, *Ḥalām min al-Gharb*, 87. The Qur'ān states: "Those are they, the secrets of whose hearts Allah knows. So oppose them, admonish them, and address them in plain terms about their souls." Pickthall (Chapter 4:63), 78; "Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! your Lord is Best Aware of him who strays from His way, and He is Best

open and protect the freedom of the public in either accepting or rejecting them.¹⁰⁰⁵

For Ghazālī, *da'wah* is an honest translation of religious truths and a genuine interpretation of Islamic beliefs and laws.¹⁰⁰⁶ *Dā'īs* avoid twisted approaches leading to compromises or consenting to falsehood.¹⁰⁰⁷ *Da'wah* also requires *dā'īs* to adopt the use of Islamic approaches and means in the transmission of religion.¹⁰⁰⁸ Ghazālī's emphasis on Islamic means in *da'wah* builds it on proper and undistorted understanding of revelation; this repeats an established notion in Islamic law and also shows the traditional character of his *da'wah* model.¹⁰⁰⁹ The implementation of this requirement in *da'wah*, nonetheless, requires the skills of distinguishing Islamic from un-Islamic means, an area in need of advanced training in Islamic law and jurisprudence.

According to Ghazālī, *da'wah* is fundamentally preoccupied with the elucidation of the oneness of God, instead of secondary legal opinions; this leads to goodness, and unites people around the obligatory religious acts.¹⁰¹⁰ Away from legal debates, *da'wah* is a guide to the fundamental tenets of Islam, and a focus on issues that are certain, rather than doubtful, drawing upon the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and not upon opinions

Aware of those who go aright." Pickthall (Chapter 16:125), 249.

¹⁰⁰⁵Ghazālī, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, 161.

¹⁰⁰⁶Ibid., 168. For example, the tolerance of the Qur'ān vis-à-vis ignorant people is about removing all obstacles before the intellectual freedom and healthy perception of the truth. Ghazālī, *Kayfa Naḥḥam al-Islām?* 16.

¹⁰⁰⁷Ibid., 82. The Qur'ān states: "Therefore obey not you the rejecters, Who would have had you compromise, that they may compromise." Pickthall (Chapter, 68: 8-9), 584.

¹⁰⁰⁸Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣaf*, 168.

¹⁰⁰⁹That commitment reflects the legal maxim stating "The best means to the best ends" (*'afḍal al-wasā'il 'ilā 'afḍal al-maqāsid*). This implies a conjunction between goals and the ways to achieve them. The legal maxim on the Islamic nature of both the means and ends requires *dā'īs* to abstain from ways deemed contradictory to the teaching of Islam.

¹⁰¹⁰Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 175.

or strange legal views.¹⁰¹¹ *Da'wah* is made for established and certain Islamic principles instead of differences or doubtful opinions, and adheres to the famous ḥadīths (*sunan mashhūra*) rather than strange opinions (*'ārā' gharībah*).¹⁰¹² With this understanding, *dā'īs* call for fundamental and decisive religious texts,¹⁰¹³ discard questions of disputes,¹⁰¹⁴ and appropriately select legal rulings especially in non-Muslim societies.¹⁰¹⁵ *Da'wah* defends the principles of Islam in education, ethics, constitutional and international law.¹⁰¹⁶

Nevertheless, Ghazālī seems overly pre-occupied with the impact of legal differences on the approach to *da'wah*. To free *da'wah* from emphasis on legal differences, Ghazālī suggests what he calls “an amnesty in Islamic law.” Such an attention reinforces his concern about the proper understanding and application of the law in *da'wah*. According to Ghazālī, *dā'īs* weaken or mislead the nation of Islam¹⁰¹⁷ when they present the religion of Islam as a review of secondary legal rulings or theological discussion.¹⁰¹⁸

According to Ghazālī, the approach to *da'wah* accommodates differences. *Dā'īs* consider the differences among people, whether in education or learning, both for the public and elites. *Dā'īs* anticipate each individual, and allow them to understand the

¹⁰¹¹Ghazālī, *al-Ṭarīq min Hunā*, 68.

¹⁰¹²*Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁰¹³Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islam*, 75.

¹⁰¹⁴Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 70.

¹⁰¹⁵Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al-Qur'ān?* 98.

¹⁰¹⁶Ghazālī, *Jur'āt Jadīdah*, 4:9.

¹⁰¹⁷Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 44.

¹⁰¹⁸Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 147.

message, regardless of their varying intellectual capabilities and needs.¹⁰¹⁹ The approach to *da'wah* also requires *dā'īs* to share their perspectives on various issues including Muslims' viewpoints, identity, and goals; and to leave the final judgment to the intellect.¹⁰²⁰ The transformation of belief into mere arguing or debating, however, weakens its emotional and moral credibility.¹⁰²¹

Ghazālī examines the relationship between the caller (*al-dā'ī*) and the called upon (*al-mad'ū*), giving more attention to the outreached party, or what he calls “the receptive intellect.” For Ghazālī, *da'wah* is undertaken with success when the intellect is sound,¹⁰²² for poor intellects only provide unfavourable conditions for *da'wah*.¹⁰²³ The receptive intellect, however, implies that *dā'īs* assist people understand and respond to the Islamic message.¹⁰²⁴ The overall clarity in *dā'īs*' transmission should be consistent until the *dā'īs* transfer the message to the recipient, making both the transmitter and the recipient equal in the appreciation of the religion.¹⁰²⁵ Such is the case; two interactive parties then share the process of religious education. Such an

¹⁰¹⁹Ghazālī, *Nazarāt*, 128.

¹⁰²⁰*Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁰²¹Ghazālī, *al-Islam wa al-Ṭaqāt al-Mu'aṭṭallah*, 83. Undoubtedly, argumentation in ordinary conditions enhances understanding and cooperation. Ghazālī is rather concerned with the damaging effects of negative debate and argumentation, when arguing parties are predominantly preoccupied with winning the game. For him, *dā'īs* should abstain from these sorts of arguments and adopt rather a straightforward style of presenting the religion of Islam.

¹⁰²²*Ibid.*, 20. The Qur'ān states: “Thus do We display Our revelations that they may say (unto you, Muhammad): “Thou has studied,” and that We may make (it) clear for people who have knowledge.” Pickthall (Chapter 6:105), 121.

¹⁰²³*Ibid.* For Ghazālī, the work of *da'wah* can be difficult. *Dā'īs*, however, are supported with two essential factors in their representation of Islam: first, the covenant of sound and healthy *fiṭrah*, and second, the appreciation of the intellect and absolute adherence to its judgment. Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 32.

¹⁰²⁴Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 20.

¹⁰²⁵Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 195; *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, 39. The Qur'ān says: “But if they are averse, then say: I have warned you all alike, although I know not whether near or far is that which you are promised.” Pickthall, (Chapter 21:109), 303.

understanding, however, places *da'wah* at an objective level where neither the callers to Islam nor the called upon are impervious to scrutiny and criticism. Ghazālī's concern was to have people acquire proper understanding, avoid ignorance, and overcome doubts, which all necessitate time.¹⁰²⁶ Hence, the approach of *da'wah* also requires patience and persuasion,¹⁰²⁷ and requires *dā'īs* to acquire wisdom, devotion and sacrifice,¹⁰²⁸ to preach faith with wisdom and kind admonition,¹⁰²⁹ show forbearance and gentleness, and confirm the established religious truths, regardless of public vilification.¹⁰³⁰

As seen above, there are several means to *da'wah*, besides preaching (*al-wa'z wa al-'irshād*). Religious preaching, however, caught Ghazālī's attention despite his belief that it is the duty least required in modern times.¹⁰³¹ For Ghazālī, religious lectures are easy to implement so long they are simple and straight-forward. For him, the more accommodating religious preaching is, the more conducive it is to God's creation and the easier it is to follow God's path.¹⁰³² To review the Islamic preaching in modern times, Ghazālī argues that the Prophet Muhammad rarely spoke at length, and that his sermons were short, concise, and wise. Contrary to the teachings of Islam, however, Muslim preachers today prolong their speeches, and some of their speeches are hollow,

¹⁰²⁶Ghazālī, *Min Maqālat*, 29.

¹⁰²⁷*Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰²⁸*Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰²⁹Ghazālī, *Mi'at Su'āl*, 283.

¹⁰³⁰Ghazālī, *al-Jānib al-'Āṭifi*, 103.

¹⁰³¹Ghazālī, *Humūm Dā'iyyah*, 17.

¹⁰³²Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 169.

repetitive, extremist, unfocused, and unrealistic.¹⁰³³

Even worse is the Muslim public's addiction to lengthy, repetitive, and ineffective preaching. This addiction, however, reflects chaotic religious preaching and teaching.¹⁰³⁴ Worse, speakers' incompetence makes it less likely that *dā'īs* will lift up their audiences.¹⁰³⁵ Specifically, religious speeches known in *ṣūfī* circles as sermons of the divine drunkenness (*khutab al-sukr al-'ilāhī*) or sermons of the divine wine (*khutab al-khamr al-'ilāhiyah*) only prompt ambiguous religious feelings, and have no connection whatsoever with the reality of Islam nor with the currently distressful conditions of Muslims.¹⁰³⁶ The overall situation is worsened by storytelling, undertaken at the expense of the religion. According to Ghazālī, throughout the Muslim history, storytellers have gratified the public and satiated their wishes; currently and for the worse, preachers have revived this type of religious storytelling (*al-qāṣaṣ al-dīnī*), and have applied it to their lectures and seminars.¹⁰³⁷ Ghazālī suggests that even if the public is satisfied with obsolete stories and dislikes investigation and precision, *dā'īs* are still responsible to raise the level of understanding of the public, instead of joining in their decline.¹⁰³⁸

At the core of religious preaching, however, lies the question of the state of Friday sermons (*khutab al-jumu'a*).¹⁰³⁹ Friday sermons, in Ghazālī's view, should address

¹⁰³³Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-'Islām*, 227-228.

¹⁰³⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁵Ghazālī, *Fī-Mawḳib al-Da'wah*, 247.

¹⁰³⁶*Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁰³⁷Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 320.

¹⁰³⁸*Ibid.*, 324.

¹⁰³⁹*Khutba* (sermon) is addressed by the *khaṭīb*. The *khutba* has a fixed place in Islamic ritual, viz. in the Friday service, in the celebration of the two festivals, in services held on particular occasions such as an

both mundane and eternal life, peace and conflict, wealth and poverty, the individual and the group, and body and spirit. As well, Friday sermons should tackle aspects of the human condition, including loneliness, work, family, and law.¹⁰⁴⁰ More specifically, Friday sermons should include the following elements: brevity and cohesiveness, logical sequence, attention to current events, contemporary conditions, and respective audience. Friday sermons should dispose of weak and fabricated reports, avoid controversial questions or traditions that give immense rewards for minor deeds, and illustrate the moral and social aspects of Islam, as well as the cultural and political contributions made by early Muslims. Friday sermons should also explore and illustrate the meanings attached to goodness and evil, examine the diverse trends associated with atheism, deal with the psychological effects of foreign philosophies, and ensure they have safe emotional and social effects upon the listeners.¹⁰⁴¹

In contrast to such excellence, however, are preachers who deliver memorized sermons without paying attention to the conditions of their respective audiences, and who mix up several topics without any thematic unity.¹⁰⁴² For Ghazālī, most religious speakers, particularly in mosques, fail to convey the truth of Islam or properly address

eclipse or excessive drought. On the Friday it precedes the *ṣalāt*, in all the other services the *ṣalāt* comes first. It is customary to pronounce the *Khuṭba* in Arabic; nevertheless, this rule is not infrequently broken in non-Arabic speaking lands. The history of the *khuṭba* in Islam remains to be written, and the study of oratory from the *minbar* or pulpit likewise remains to be undertaken. On the latter point, the enquirer might utilise with profit the texts (of varying degrees of authenticity) of those sermons of the Prophet given in the *Sīra*, in the *ḥadīth* collections and in historical texts, as well as in those *'adab* works which have preserved specimens of famous *khuṭbas*. See Wensinck, A.J. "Khuṭba." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library, 08 April 2008 <http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_Sim-4352>

¹⁰⁴⁰Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allāh*, 297.

¹⁰⁴¹*Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁰⁴²*Ibid.*, 190.

their audiences.¹⁰⁴³ This happens when religious speakers are preoccupied with the delivery of memorized sermons.¹⁰⁴⁴ Dead statements devoid of any spirit are not Islamic sermons; in effect, people listen to these non-sermons, then leave the mosque not knowing the subject of the speakers' lecture.¹⁰⁴⁵

Friday sermons play a vital role within the broad spectrum of *da'wah*. Ghazālī's discussion raises the need for effective styles of religious communication, and reflects an ambition to improve the delivery of *da'wah* through competent *dā'īs*. His theoretical model, however, is probably difficult to achieve, given the many problems of society, culture and learning surrounding *da'wah*. According to Ghazālī, the problems affecting preaching mean that traditional methods employed in religious transmission are inadequate in modern times, and that the intelligent dialogue and the demonstration of life in the form of stories, jokes, or cartoons have become effective tools in religious transmission.¹⁰⁴⁶ For example, a broadcast about the oneness of God could be aided by a magnificent image of the universe and a brief demonstration of how science leads to faith.¹⁰⁴⁷ Along the traditional form of religious preaching, Ghazālī alludes to what he called *al-ī'lām al-da'awī* (*da'wah* information). This is an honest transmission of the message, committed to spread the truth and support the welfare of humanity.¹⁰⁴⁸ For him, media that advocates the truth and peace inadvertently conveys the teachings of

¹⁰⁴³Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-Islām*, 228.

¹⁰⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁰⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 296.

¹⁰⁴⁶Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 178.

¹⁰⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁰⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 179.

Islam in many ways.¹⁰⁴⁹

This discussion brings Ghazālī back to the question of *dā'īs*' competency. A few of them are proficient at *da'wah*.¹⁰⁵⁰ Good preachers are good *dā'īs*, that is, well versed in divine revelation and the problems of life and its tribulations,¹⁰⁵¹ and do not simply act as transmittal instruments-their duty is not fulfilled once they convey religious texts to their audience.¹⁰⁵² A competent preacher for Ghazālī epitomizes a successful *dā'ī*. Had Ghazālī provided us with a modern example of successful religious preachers, we would probably have acquired a better idea of preaching in modern times. Ghazālī admires Bannā's preaching style and describes it as unique and influential yet without providing more details other than emotional attachment.

Ghazālī is more concerned with the effect of modern preaching on the approach to *da'wah*. In his writing, the differences between *da'wah*, preaching, and professional careers cause some Muslims to perceive *da'wah* as being limited to religious preaching, dressing in a particular way, or making a day visit to a neighbouring village. This perception, however, led to a disassociation of *da'wah* from society, schooling, and academic pursuit. According to Ghazālī, some Muslims quit their academic careers under the pretext that *da'wah* is more important, and under the impression that their specialties and *da'wah* are completely different. On the contrary, for Ghazālī, *da'wah* is

¹⁰⁴⁹Ibid., 178. According to Muhammad Yūnus, comparing Ghazālī's *da'wah* experience to modern mass communication shows how Ghazālī employs the most recent scientific theories discovered by modern scholars. See Yūnus, *Tajdīd al-Fikr*, 106. Ghazālī argues that the current condition of Muslim media is poor. See Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt al-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 3:83. For him, modern Muslim media is also defeated and unable to lead to *da'wah* reforms. See Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 157.

¹⁰⁵⁰Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 228.

¹⁰⁵¹Ghazālī, *Ma'a Allah*, 297.

¹⁰⁵²Ibid., 247.

present in all careers and specialties, or as he said: “Just like *da’wah* opposes their current situations, these Muslims could not translate *da’wah* through their academic specialties and expertise, or set up effective social pulpits.”¹⁰⁵³ Ghazālī believes that a Friday sermon implies the establishment of a hospital for a physician, the building of a road or a bridge for the engineer, and excellence in governmental affairs for a minister.¹⁰⁵⁴

Ghazālī’s understanding of the relationship between work and *da’wah* including the Friday sermon is based on the all inclusive nature of *da’wah*. *Da’wah* involves all the disciplines people require to discover their *raison d’être* and the sign-posts of guidance.¹⁰⁵⁵ Hence, *dā’īs* should undertake a comprehensive movement of reform, one that connects Muslims’ past to their present, and helps them understand their position, mission, and their surrounding.¹⁰⁵⁶ This he supports through divine ordinances that commanded Prophet Muhammad to undertake *da’wah* comprehensively and in an all-encompassing way.¹⁰⁵⁷

Whether giving attention to the Qur’ān as a framework for *da’wah* or the compliance of *da’wah* with the requirements of the law, Ghazālī demonstrates a genuine interest to understand and apply an effective Islamic approach to *da’wah*. His approach to *da’wah* involves the requirements and implications of revelation, yet is not

¹⁰⁵³Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt*, 138-139.

¹⁰⁵⁴Ghazālī, *Fī-Mawkib al-Da’wah*, 233.

¹⁰⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁵⁶Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 30-31.

¹⁰⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 82. The Qur’ān states: “A likely thing, that you would forsake anything of that which has been revealed unto you, and that your breast should be straitened for it, because they say: Why has not a treasure been sent down for him, or an angel come with him? You are but a warner, and Allah is in charge of all things.” Pickthall (Chapter 11:12), 193.

simply a set of theoretical assumptions; rather, it involves the reinforcement of the moral characters of *dā'īs*. Lacking those moral components defeats the approach to *da'wah*, and causes suspicion among outreached communities. For Ghazālī, the approach to *da'wah* is interwoven with the personal make-up of *dā'īs*, and is geared to produce proper and effective religious understanding. It is attentive to the fundamentals of Islam, not to trivial questions, is realistic because it deals with social problems, and is open to improvement.¹⁰⁵⁸ Ghazālī's discussion also shows his preoccupation with the delivery of *da'wah* through genuine and effective approaches, his attention to the context of *da'wah* and the position of the receptive intellect, and the need for an intelligent honing of *dā'īs'* skills as a necessary step in religious transmission.

II. *Da'wah* Legal Methodology (*fiqh al-da'wah*):

Whether understood as a broad based reform, individual or collective transmission of Islam, a positive role model, or a religious preaching, the development of *da'wah* constantly searches for Islamic legitimacy. This search solicits supportive legal rulings or constant re-interpretations of religious texts to support and enrich the progress of *da'wah* or remove the obstacles from the path of *dā'īs*. For Ghazālī, such a soliciting begins as a proactive approach, forcing the law to serve the needs and challenges of *da'wah*. Such an approach, however, is both challenging and complex, given the diverse interpretations of the law, the various Muslim schools and philosophies underlying the

¹⁰⁵⁸Ghazālī says: “*Da'wah* techniques do not represent the core of the Islamic message.” Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:155.

strategies of Islamic change, but more importantly the constantly changing conditions of society and culture.

In his case, Ghazālī exercised independent reasoning about both *da'wah* and law. He first delved into the problem of how *da'wah* should be understood, approached and undertaken and, second, how the law should be interpreted and applied to serve the interests of *da'wah*.¹⁰⁵⁹ Ghazālī underscores the need to comply with and sustain the goals of *da'wah*. This interest caused him to wear the hat of a jurist and a *da'wah* theoretician—a position that is challenging, unsafe, and vulnerable to misinterpretation and manipulation. Before considering that position below, we should first address the question of Ghazālī's scholarly position, and whether he was a jurist-consult, a thinker, or a *dā'ī*. This helps us to understand his competence to engage in the task of integrating *da'wah* and law, and to discover the nature of the *da'wah* lenses used in the discussion of legal problems. In other words, how did Ghazālī approach Islamic jurisprudence through the problems and challenges of *da'wah*?¹⁰⁶⁰ This examination also sheds light on the scholarly credentials required in the integration of law and *da'wah*, and whether Ghazālī's discussions of the legal implications of *da'wah* reflect an original understanding of the law, or were simply arbitrary and speculative statements about modern *da'wah* and Islamic reform.

During his life, Ghazālī's contribution to the field of Islamic reform and scholarship has been viewed differently by Muslim scholars and thinkers. Uways, for

¹⁰⁵⁹“Literalists” were provoked with regards to questions of women, music, beards, dress codes, and international relations. See Ali Sawwā, “Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Minhajuh fī al-Fiqh,” in *al-‘Aṭā’ al-Fikrī li-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 151.

¹⁰⁶⁰Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī kamā ‘Araftuh*, 151. For Qaraḍāwī, the various problems and challenges of *da'wah* led him to underscore the glory and justice of law and legislation. Ibid.

example, regards Ghazālī as a leading modern *dā'ī*, rather than a jurist or a ḥadīth expert. He mentions that some hoped Ghazālī would have devoted his intellectual and literary talents more to *da'wah* without delving into the questions of jurisprudence or ḥadīth; this resulted from the belief that Ghazālī's strengths were more in the field of Islamic reform and *da'wah*.¹⁰⁶¹ The focus on Islamic reform and *da'wah* is, however, manifest in Ghazālī's works. They address overall contemporary issues in Islamic thought, culture, and society, as well as *da'wah* and reform. His work "*al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bayna 'Ahl al-Fiqh wa-'Ahl al-Ḥadīth*," however, was his most extensive thesis on legal questions.¹⁰⁶²

Malkāwī views Ghazālī as a man of *da'wah* per se,¹⁰⁶³ who in spite of his fine qualities in writing, rhetoric, research and independent thought, adopted *da'wah* as his favourite topic.¹⁰⁶⁴ For Ḥuwaynī, Ghazālī is a distinguished *dā'ī* in modern times, and probably the best at presenting Islamic issues with enthusiasm,¹⁰⁶⁵ but his discussion of questions of law is extremely poor.¹⁰⁶⁶ Sulṭān appreciates Ghazālī's contribution to *da'wah* and thought, yet based on the fact that Islamic jurisprudence and ḥadīth involve academic disciplines and not a broad type of thought, he disqualifies Ghazālī as a jurist or a ḥadīth expert.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶¹Uways, *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 49.

¹⁰⁶²'Abd al-Maqṣūd believes that *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* contains false allegations and many accusations of the Sunnah and its followers. See 'Abd al-Maqṣūd 'Ashraf, *Jināyat al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī 'alā al-Ḥadīth wa-'Ahlīh* (Al-'Ismā'īliyah, Egypt: Maktabat al-'Imām al-Bukhārī, 1989), 12.

¹⁰⁶³Qaradāwī, "*al-Ghazālī Rajul Da'wah*," in *al-'Aṭā' al-Fikrī*, 210.

¹⁰⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁶⁵Ḥuwaynī 'Abū 'Ishāq, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī fī al-Radd 'ala al-Saykh Muhammad Ghazālī* (Jīzah, Egypt: Maktabat al-Taw'iyah al-'Islāmiyyah, 1989), 3.

¹⁰⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁶⁷Jamāl Sulṭān, *'Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī*, 23.

Looking back at Ghazālī's personal account, however, one easily notices that the study of Islamic jurisprudence was neither his subject of interest nor area of specialization. Ghazālī was mostly inclined to interdisciplinary studies and a broader perspective to learning. He felt forced to revisit the study of Islamic law due to legal problems with *da'wah*, and the potential destruction of *da'wah*. Ghazālī writes: "I do not enjoy Islamic jurisprudence much and am uncomfortable with it. I had to revisit its study because of the many problems I encountered on the way of *da'wah*, and the legal opinions which were about to destroy *da'wah*."¹⁰⁶⁸ In revisiting Islamic jurisprudence, Ghazālī sought to solve pressing problems which, in his view, impeded *da'wah* and negatively affected his model of *da'wah*. This demonstrates his practical approach to the relationship of law and *da'wah*, yet with little attention to the formulation of a systematic methodology of *da'wah* thought. This is evident in many of Ghazālī's juristic preferences, which fail to supply a consistent application of the law nor have they elaborated a methodology pertinent to the question of integrating *da'wah* with law.

Ghazālī's legal qualifications should not, however, be underestimated. His broad perspective of Islamic jurisprudence gave him a better insight into the many inter-related problems of law in modern societies. For Qaraḍāwī, Ghazālī understood well the objectives of Sharī'a, was capable of connecting secondary legal rulings to their principles, and could deduce essential questions through evidence from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.¹⁰⁶⁹ Even if Ghazālī were not a jurist or a muḥaddith (transmitter of traditions), *per se*, his discussion of legal questions showed a good understanding of the

¹⁰⁶⁸Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:202.

¹⁰⁶⁹Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuh*, 151.

development of Islamic law, and how the Islamic disciplines should be approached and applied.

Ghazālī clearly determined his position towards the Muslim schools of law. On the one hand, he only advocates the Qur’ān and the Sunnah,¹⁰⁷⁰ and gives no preference whatsoever for a particular juristic opinion over another. This implies that *da’wah* is to be undertaken for Islam and not for the schools of law.¹⁰⁷¹ On the other hand, he condemns blind following (*taqlīd*) of schools by Muslim scholars.¹⁰⁷² In particular, scholars should meet certain educational requirements, attain the stage of inquiry and weighing evidences (*al-nazar wa al-tarjīh*), exert independent reasoning, and select legal opinions appropriate for their time and conditions.¹⁰⁷³

Ghazālī also discusses the effects of legal differences on *da’wah*. Legal disagreements should not hinder *da’wah*.¹⁰⁷⁴ Ghazālī’s concern was that Islamic jurisprudence should serve *da’wah* and that legal verdicts should not drive non-Muslims away from Islam nor repel wrongdoers from guidance.¹⁰⁷⁵ By contrast, Ghazālī rejects any independent reasoning that jeopardizes *da’wah*.¹⁰⁷⁶ According to Ghazālī,

¹⁰⁷⁰Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:211.

¹⁰⁷¹Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-’Islām*, 75-76.

¹⁰⁷²*Ma’a Allah*, 177. *Taqlīd* from the verb *qallada* “to imitate, follow, obey s.o.,” meaning acceptance of or submission to authority. The word, with this semantic range, is not found in the Qur’ān nor in *ḥadīth* literature. It has an important role throughout the Muslim religious sciences where it has a predominantly negative meaning, implying unreasonable and thoughtless acceptance of authority. The term has been widely adopted into Orientalist discourse where it is almost invariably translated as “blind submission”. The same is broadly true of modernist Islamic discourse. See Calder, N. “*Taqlīd*,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. BrillOnline. McGill University Library, 05 April 2008, www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?Entry=islam_SIM-7343>

¹⁰⁷³*Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁰⁷⁴Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 134.

¹⁰⁷⁵Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh Ghazālī kamā ‘Araftuh*, 177.

¹⁰⁷⁶Ghazālī, *Kayfa Nata’āmal Ma’a al-Qur’ān?* 98.

instead of adhering to the Islamic fundamental tenets, Muslims have adopted legal opinions that cause people to turn their backs to the religion.¹⁰⁷⁷ Part of the problem lies with the fact that contemporary statements that are issued in the Arabian Peninsula (*jazīrat al-'arab*) are instantly transmitted worldwide, and legal verdicts issued for certain regions are transmitted externally even when they cause detriment to *da'wah*.¹⁰⁷⁸ To solve this chaos, *dā'īs* should adopt the legal opinions of the majority.¹⁰⁷⁹ This requires *dā'īs* to understand law and the strategies supporting proper legal preferences, which correspond to the particular questions under discussion.¹⁰⁸⁰ Ghazālī for example, questions the reasons leading Muslims to stress trivialities, thereby driving people away from the path of God or portraying the religion of Islam as hideous.¹⁰⁸¹ As a result, he had to re-examine some legal questions with regards to their support or damage to *da'wah*, and he sought a practical selection of juristic preferences to maintain a rational and intelligible presentation of the law in the *da'wah* process.

Ghazālī lays out a broad framework on the relationship between law and *da'wah*, yet always with serious attention given to the best interests of *da'wah*. He, for example, discussed the legal ruling about the prohibition of music which, he believes, should not impede faith. For Ghazālī, this is particularly true in Western societies where questions of music or songs,¹⁰⁸² or covering women's faces, should not be raised in the course of

¹⁰⁷⁷Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 134.

¹⁰⁷⁸Ghazālī, *Mushkilāt*, 137.

¹⁰⁷⁹Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 156-157.

¹⁰⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁰⁸¹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 70.

¹⁰⁸²Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 92-93.

religious presentation.¹⁰⁸³ Ghazālī even doubts the progress of Islam will ever prosper given the legal verdicts that prohibit western uniforms, uncovered female faces, music, and women’s attendance at mosques.¹⁰⁸⁴ His juristic preferences in the propagation of Islam were those held hitherto within the territories of Sunni Schools of Law, including the legal opinions of Ibn Ḥazm.¹⁰⁸⁵ Ghazālī did not give attention to Shi’ite legal rulings, probably because of his Azharite background. Other reasons may be the fact that any preference of Shi’ite opinions would imperil his attempt of integration of law and *da’wah*, and his belief that problems affecting the Muslim nation generally transcend the boundaries of theological or law schools including Shi’ism.

For Ghazālī, in Western societies, *da’wah* should take into consideration the context and not be simply a naïve speech.¹⁰⁸⁶ Only legal rulings closer to the cultural context of people should be selected.¹⁰⁸⁷ Ghazālī more often than not cared about the image of Islam and was concerned when rigid Muslims travelled to the West to raise legal issues such as women’s invalidation of Muslim prayer.¹⁰⁸⁸ In Western societies,

¹⁰⁸³Ghazālī, *al-Da’wah al-’Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 70.

¹⁰⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 2:15.

¹⁰⁸⁵Ibn Ḥazm, Aḥmad b. Sa’īd, born at Cordova in 384/994, died at Manta Lisham in 456/1064, Andalusian poet, historian, jurist, philosopher and theologian, one of the greatest thinkers of Arabo-Muslim civilization, who codified the *Zāhirī* doctrine and applied its method to all the Qur’ānic sciences. He is the most representative of the *Zāhirī* school. On the theoretical level, he was a fierce opponent of Ḥanafism and to a lesser degree of Shāfi’ism. But on the theoretical and the practical levels, his great enemy was the Mālikism, which was strong in Spain in his time. Insensible to the demands brought about by historical changes, Ibn Ḥazm applied himself to reconstructing a legal system stripped of all that he considered to be additions made by the jurists who came after the Prophet and the Companions. See Arnaldez, R. “Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Sa’īd.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 28 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0325>

¹⁰⁸⁶Ghazālī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, 225.

¹⁰⁸⁷Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 61.

¹⁰⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 156-157. This is made in reference to the following tradition of the Prophet Muhammad in which

women enjoy personal freedom and carry out their marriage contracts on their own. This, for Ghazālī, requires *dā'īs* not to force the legal opinion of Mālik or Ibn Ḥanbal when Abū Ḥanīfa's opinion accommodates their culture.¹⁰⁸⁹ Muslims should not for example, exhort European women to have a guardian when their social customs related to marriage do not require the presence of a guardian. In societies where the guardian is required, Muslims should, nonetheless, abide by that. The Islamic law is in favour of each preference.¹⁰⁹⁰ This inconsistent application of the law does not appear to be any of Ghazālī's concern, and was not at all addressed in his discussion. His major concern was simply to select juristic preferences harmonious with socio-cultural practices of the west so as to assure a positive and joyful perception of Islam.

Ghazālī's preoccupation with the question of *da'wah* and law did not preclude his critical review of Muslim attitudes that cause doubt. This state of affairs does not draw nor motivate people to the religion of Islam.¹⁰⁹¹ Such examples include some *dā'īs* in the United Kingdom who raise the question of appointing women to public office instead of being preoccupied with questions of beliefs, the emotional and social

he says: "When one of you stands in prayer, what definitely constitutes a barrier for him is an object placed in front of him of the same height as the back of a camel-saddle. If it is not in front of him and of the same height as the back of a camel-saddle, then some [stray] donkey, or some woman passing, or some black dog will cut off his prayer." Abū Dharr was asked: "O Abū Dharr! What is it that makes a black dog different from a red or yellow dog?" He replied: "O dear cousin! I asked Allah's Messenger--Allah bless and salute him!--the exact same question. He said that the black dog is a devil." See Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 9. Ḥuwaynī comments that 'Abū Dharr did not understand the reason why only black dogs invalidate Muslims' prayer, and asked the prophet about the difference in dogs. The prophet Muhammad answered: Black dog is a devil". Ghazālī goes: "Dogs are all same, whether white or black! Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 10. Black dogs cannot be a devil because he sees them as dogs, knowing that the internal anatomy of white or black dog is the same. See Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 11.

¹⁰⁸⁹Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 61. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "A woman may not be married without the presence of her guardian. If she is, then her marriage is invalid, invalid, invalid." Another ḥadīth states: "No marriage may be made without the presence of a guardian."

¹⁰⁹⁰Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 17. Ḥuwaynī mentions that marriage cannot be held without a guardian. The ḥanafī argument is weak. Ibid.

¹⁰⁹¹Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 70.

implications of religious monotheism, the divine perfection, human weakness, or the hereafter.¹⁰⁹² Some other *dā'īs* traveled to troubled regions to raise issues such as immodest clothing, Islamic law versus divine reality (*al-sharī'ah wa al-ḥaqīqah*), the weaknesses of Muslim schools of law, unlawful external appearances,¹⁰⁹³ or people's attachment to graves.¹⁰⁹⁴ In Korea for example, *dā'īs* should not jeopardize the progress of Islam through prohibiting the consumption of dogs, to which Koreans are accustomed.¹⁰⁹⁵

Other similar examples include adherence to the Sunnah by way of sitting down while drinking, dressing in traditional uniforms, or eating with ones' hands instead of using utensils.¹⁰⁹⁶ According to Ghazālī, the practice of *dā'īs* from the *Tablīghī Jamā'at* (eating together in a single pot) may cause Westerners to think those acts are Islamic, or lead them to lose interest in the religion of Islam.¹⁰⁹⁷ Ghazālī does not explain why such practices cause negative perceptions in Westerners, and what grounds support his similar frustrations. Ghazālī's pattern of frustration towards Muslim acts in Western societies simply reveals a personal dislike of acts he believed lead to a disrespect of Westerners. Still, we are short of any criteria that determine the objective approach towards those manifestations and their effect on the progress of *da'wah*, particularly in Western societies.

¹⁰⁹²Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 175.

¹⁰⁹³Ghazālī, *Ṣayḥat Taḥdhīr*, 136.

¹⁰⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁰⁹⁵Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 41. Koreans used dogs to cook bosintang (dog-meat soup). See Martin Robinson and others, *Korea Travel Guide* (Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 71.

¹⁰⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁰⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 41.

To support his selective approach, Ghazālī hypothetically contends that if Westerners were to embrace the religion of Islam provided that women were allowed to testify regarding cases of human life and honour (*al-shahāda fī al-dimā' wa al-'a'rād*), and be permitted to occupy public offices, then based on the principle of legal flexibility and the broad scope of *'ijtihād*, and in view of the public need for security,¹⁰⁹⁸ they should adopt the opinion of Ibn Ḥazm.¹⁰⁹⁹ Ghazālī also describes his approach to religious juristic differences, how he explores legal evidences with “objectivity”, and selects only those which reflect in his soul the strongest evidence (*yaqa'u fī nafsih 'anna dalīlahu 'aqwā*). His selection, however, revolves around two essential questions: what is easy for people, and what serves the best interest of *da'wah* in various societies and times.¹¹⁰⁰ When legal evidences are conflicting, and the opinions of legal experts are many, Ghazālī gives himself the right to choose a fatwā, select evidence over another, and choose what is more convenient for people and solves their problems more easily.¹¹⁰¹ Ghazālī asks,

Why should we jeopardize the religion of Islam through strict adherence to Muslim schools of law? We should rather expand the scope of Islamic jurisprudence without necessarily abandoning the texts of the religion. In their approach to controversial questions, *dā'īs* should select legal rulings that best suit the needs of *da'wah*.¹¹⁰²

Ghazālī adopts a selective approach to Islamic jurisprudence,¹¹⁰³ and selects legal

¹⁰⁹⁸Ibid., 69.

¹⁰⁹⁹Ghazālī, *Mī'at Su'āl*, 89.

¹¹⁰⁰Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 134.

¹¹⁰¹Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'a bayna al-Taḳālīd al-Rākida wa al-Wāfida* (*Women's Issues between Static and Foreign Traditions*) (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1994), 23.

¹¹⁰²Ghazālī, *Min Maqālāt*, 3:210-211; See also 'Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Uways, *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī*, 52.

¹¹⁰³Ibid., 3:160.

rulings that sustain the infusion of Islam into the hearts of people. He exhorts *dā'īs* to apply legal ease (*al-tawsi'a al-fiqhiyyah*) in the selection of legal opinions to support *da'wah* instead of jeopardizing the progress of Islam through rigid juristic preferences.¹¹⁰⁴ Muslim converts in particular, should not be invited to adopt a particular Muslim school of law; rather, they should be free to choose legal rulings.

¹¹⁰⁵The problem, however, is not so much about the principle of legal selection than the understanding of the best interests of *da'wah* and the process of selection. Without knowing first what those interests are, and what criteria should we adopt to infer those interests, any process of legal selection becomes hopeless. More important, what are the academic requirements involved in determining those interests and the process of juristic selections.

Ghazālī's approach to Islamic law did not escape scholars' criticism. Sulṭān, for example, questions Ghazālī's application of subjective deduction and argues that when revelation is taken as the ultimate source of law, the traditions of the prophets are not strange, and cause no bypassing of religious precepts.¹¹⁰⁶ For Sulṭān, adopting legal opinions for their correspondence with western customs, and disregarding their authentic application is to the detriment of the legal rulings of Islam. Westerners, according to him, should rather be invited to learn Islamic rulings which reflect the guidance of the prophet.¹¹⁰⁷

One way to understand Ghazālī's legal selections, according to Ṣawwā, is to

¹¹⁰⁴Ibid., 3:210-211.

¹¹⁰⁵Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-'Islām*, 75-76.

¹¹⁰⁶Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁰⁷Abd al-Maqṣūd, *Jināyat al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī*, 83.

understand his various legal preferences in light of his legal methodology. Ghazālī's preferences include an alignment with the public interest (*al-maṣlaḥa al-mursala*),¹¹⁰⁸ the defensive nature of Jihād, the advocacy of democracy when tyranny is the norm, and his consent to aspects of socialism when economic exploitation is prevailing.¹¹⁰⁹ Sultān describes Ghazālī's methodology as rational, one which discounts the methodology of 'Ahl al-Sunnah, and as a misinterpretation of religious and legal rulings pertaining to the relationship of Muslims with non-Muslims.¹¹¹⁰

Ghazālī's legal methodology for *da'wah*, nonetheless, demonstrates a profound preoccupation with the reactions of Western societies vis-à-vis Muslim practices, as shown in his worry about the impression of Westerners regarding political refugees escaping the Muslim world.¹¹¹¹ Ghazālī's concern about the interest of *da'wah* and his dream for the positive reaction of outreach people caused him to adopt considerable numbers of weak and irregular reports (*'Aḥādīth ḍa'īfah wa shādhidha*).¹¹¹² Ghazālī preferred weaker legal opinions over unprecedented opinions on issues of Muslim

¹¹⁰⁸Maṣlaḥa (pl. maṣāliḥ) is the abstract noun of the verb ṣalaḥa (or ṣaluḥa), "to repair or improve". Strictly speaking, maṣlaḥa means "utility". Generally speaking, maṣlaḥa denotes "welfare" and is used by jurists to mean "general good" or "public interest". Anything which helps to avert *mafsada* or *ḍarar* and furthers human welfare is equated with maṣlaḥa. As a legal concept, maṣlaḥa must be distinguished from 'istiṣlāḥ, a method of legal reasoning through which maṣlaḥa is considered a basis for legal decisions. In the modern age, however, under the impact of Western legal thought, the concept of maṣlaḥa has become the subject of an increasing interest among jurists who have sought legal reforms in order to meet the needs of the modern conditions of Islamic society. See Khaddūrī, M. "Maṣlaḥa," Encyclopaedia of Islam. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. McGill University Library. 06 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-5019>

¹¹⁰⁹Ali al-Ṣawwā, "Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Minhajuh fī al-Fiqh," 164.

¹¹¹⁰Sultān, 'Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī, 29.

¹¹¹¹Ghazālī, *Ḥasād al-Ghurūr (Harvest of Pride)* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 39-40.

¹¹¹²Ḍa'īf (weak) is a ḥadīth which falls short of Ḥasan (good) due to defects in its chain of transmission (sanad) or, integrity of reporter or text. The greater the number of defects, the more the severity, the lower the rank of ḍa'īf ḥadīth i.e. closer to being mawḍū' (fabricated). Shādh (irregular) is a ḥadīth which is reported by a trustworthy person but goes against a narration by an even more reliable authority.

female dress code, the testimony of women, and their appointment to public offices.¹¹¹³

For Kashk, Ghazālī's approach to *ḥadīth* is arbitrary, and is primarily concerned with the presentation of Islam to the West in a way that yields a positive reaction there. These concerns, according to Kashk, caused Ghazālī to give little attention to authentic reports, to rely on personal judgments and preferences, to reject solitary reports (*'aḥād*), and to subject the traditions (*ḥadīth*) to the satisfaction of Westerners.¹¹¹⁴ Kashk's criticism, however, is hardly sustainable, especially when Ghazālī appeals for faith in God and for the preservation of Muslim values, and is critical of western lifestyle and its cultural invasion (*al-ghazw al-thaqāfī*).¹¹¹⁵

For Ḥuwaynī, when Ghazālī encounters two legal opinions, he chooses that which is closer to the desires of people. This is based on the notion that every Mujtahid is correct, and that it is permissible to search for dispensations (*rukḥṣa*)¹¹¹⁶ in Muslim schools of law.¹¹¹⁷ Ghazālī for instance, argues that the tradition of 'Aisha is weak from the point of view of the chain of the *ḥadīth* (*sanad*), and does not stand as strong

¹¹¹³Ṣawwā, "Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Minhajuhu fī al-Fiqh," 160.

¹¹¹⁴Mohammad Kashk, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī bayna al-Naqd al-'Ātib wa al-Madh al-Shāmit* (Shaykh Ghazālī between the Caring Praise and the Negative Blame) (Maktabat al-Turāth al-'Islāmī, 1990), 28. Kashk argues that after more than half a century, Ghazālī's colleagues ended up in defeat, given the poor progress of *da'wah*. Ibid., 29.

¹¹¹⁵Ali Ṣawwā, "Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Minhajuh fī al-Fiqh," 161.

¹¹¹⁶*Rukḥṣa*, literally "permission", "dispensation" is a legal ruling relaxing or suspending by way of exception under certain circumstances an injunction of a primary and general nature (*'azīma*). The general obligation to fast during Ramaḍān is, by way of *rukḥṣa*, suspended during the days of an illness or a journey, under condition that these days are made up after Ramaḍān. Similarly, the general prohibition to eat meat that has not been ritually slaughtered is suspended if a Muslim could only survive by violating it. As a rule, one has the choice whether or not to make use of the *rukḥṣa*. The circumstances permitting a dispensation of the strict rule are either the necessity to preserve one's life or the removal of hardship. See Peters, R.; Haar, J.G.J. "Rukḥṣa." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 06 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0937>

¹¹¹⁷Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 16. Ḥuwaynī reports that scholars discourage a person looking for dispensations across Muslim schools of law. He quotes Ibn Ḥanbal saying: "Following the dispensation - *rukḥṣah* - of every scholar make the person become a recipient of all evil." Ibid., 17.

evidence for women covering their faces.¹¹¹⁸ Ḥuwaynī said: “Ghazālī should have shown the weakness in the ḥadīth, and whether it is subject to acquire strength.”¹¹¹⁹ For Ghazālī, the narration of ‘Aisha is also irregular (*shādh*) from the point of view of the text (*matn*). Ḥuwaynī responded: “This is a false allegation. Based on Ghazālī’s definition of irregularity (*shudhūdh*) as the disagreement of a credible with a more credible narrator, I then request Ghazālī to substantiate the irregularity in the ḥadīth. He will eventually find no way to it except through usual allegations.”¹¹²⁰

For Ḥuwaynī, Ghazālī argues that when the meaning of a ḥadīth is found to be in a total concordance with the Qur’ān or a tradition, he then narrates and writes it down.¹¹²¹ Following this understanding, Ghazālī views many ḥadīths as defective, including those which were not determined to be defective by ḥadīth experts or jurists. Ḥuwaynī argues that Ghazālī uses the term *muḥaqqiqīn* (established scholars) to persuade his readers. His understanding of defectiveness (*‘illah*) is poor. For Ḥuwaynī, Ghazālī should, however, be excused because he is not an expert in the field of ḥadīth.¹¹²² According to ‘Abd al-Maḥṣūd, what led Ghazālī to reject authentic ḥadīth or allege their weakness is the pretext that those ḥadīths do not fit with the general context (*al-siyāq al-‘āmm*), or his understanding of the religion and *da‘wah* strategies.¹¹²³ For ‘Abd al-Maḥṣūd, Ghazālī’s rejection of ḥadīth is based on the following notions: a) jurists and not ‘Ahl Ḥadīth are able to discover the defects in ḥadīth, b) defects in

¹¹¹⁸Ibid., 43.

¹¹¹⁹Ibid. The tradition of ‘Aisha quotes as follow: “Men on camels used to pass by us while we were with the Prophet and we were in a state of ihram. We would cover our faces with our gowns when they passed by us, and then uncover them again.”

¹¹²⁰Ibid., 45-46.

¹¹²¹Ibid., 43-44.

¹¹²²Ibid., 107. Ḥuwaynī describes Ghazālī as a nightly wood collector (*ḥāṭib layl*). Ibid., 45.

¹¹²³‘Abd al-Ḥalīm ‘Abd al-Maḥṣūd, *Jināyat al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī*, 34.

ḥadīth occur when the ḥadīth goes against the obvious meaning of the Qur'ān (*ẓāhir*), and c) Muslim belief cannot be sustained through a single tradition (*khabar al-wāḥid*).¹¹²⁴ 'Abd al-Maqṣūd also believes that the following factors affected Ghazālī's method of ḥadīth scrutiny: a) Ghazālī's state of religious doubt in his early life, which caused him to lose trust in the Muslim traditions and heritage, b) the influence of modern rational schools on his thought, c) the influence of orientalist, and d) the Western influences, which led him to search for dispensations (*rukhaṣ*) in order to endorse their customs even when they are opposite to Islam.¹¹²⁵

As noted above, Ghazālī was concerned with how interpretations of the law should not jeopardize the progress of *da'wah*. For example, with reference to Maryam Jamīlah who described how Europeans greatly esteemed musicians and dramatists, Ghazālī discussed that in terms of the progress of Islam; he said: "What alternative should I provide to those societies? Should I, based on weak or fabricated ḥadīth, request westerners to ignore the arts altogether? And should I request them to leave out their beliefs, and raises hurdles [to the religion of Islam] like music and songs."¹¹²⁶ This, however, is a *da'wah*-oriented argument, but not a systematic approach to Islamic law or to the adoption of a particular legal opinion. Sultān criticizes Ghazālī's view

¹¹²⁴Ibid., 46. Khabar al-Wāḥid is a tradition or a report going back to one single authority. According to the generally-accepted definition, a *khabar al-wāḥid* is a report which falls short of the predicate *mutawātir* (or, as certain scholars assert, *mashhūr*) in that it has only one or a few (from two to five) transmitters in every *ṭabaqa* of its *'isnād*. The *khabar al-wāḥid* can only be invalidated by one or more other reports which present an opposing view and which, at the same time, meet the requirements of reliability more adequately. See Juynboll, G. H. A. "Khabar al- Wāḥid." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 28 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-4112>

¹¹²⁵Ibid., 53.

¹¹²⁶Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 92-93.

regarding Western arts:

This is a strange discussion of *da'wah* methods. It is beyond doubt that the values and laws of Islam not only conflict with the arts, but with most values, ethics and laws of the West. The worldviews, principles, message, and values of Islam and the West are different. Islam transfers new Muslims and re-models their ways of learning, guidance, and laws.¹¹²⁷ In modern times, western stars who convert to Islam leave behind their Western view of arts as was the case with Yūsuf Islam.¹¹²⁸

In his book, *Calm Discussion with al-Shaykh Ghazālī*, 'Awdah argues that the problem with Ghazālī is whether Ghazālī's preferences for specific legal opinions over others result from compromise with Western conventions or ways of life. According to 'Awdah, Ghazālī let the influences of law affect his legal selections.¹¹²⁹ Ghazālī's juristic preferences are not supported by evidences from the Qur'ān or ḥadīth, nor are his legal inferences supported by established principles.¹¹³⁰ Ghazālī's preoccupation with presenting a bright image of Islam to the East and the West affected all of his later works. Such a preoccupation, however, may be a slippery slope and leads to disregard for established legal and religious questions.¹¹³¹ It rather represents the outcome of a preoccupation not to weaken the religion in the face of conventional laws or social customs.¹¹³²

¹¹²⁷Sultān, 'Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī, 56-57.

¹¹²⁸Ibid., 57. Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens. He was a British musician and a singer-songwriter. He is also well known as a convert to Islam.

¹¹²⁹Ibid., 160.

¹¹³⁰Şawwā, "Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Manhajuh fī al-Fiqh," 161.

¹¹³¹Sultān, 'Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī, 51. Ghazālī rejects many traditions, like the ḥadīth of the sword, the black magic, the flies, the battle of Muṣṭalaq, and the black dog. See 'Abd al-Maqṣūd, Jināyat al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī, 35-36. Ghazālī for example claims that the story about Moses and the Angel of death as narrated in Bukhārī and Muslim claim is defective (*ma'lulah*). Ghazālī could not imagine pious people, especially prophets, disliking death. See Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 8.

¹¹³²Şawwā, "Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Manhajuh fī al-Fiqh," 161.

For some, Ghazālī's compromises to the intellectual and social aspects of the West almost afflicted harm to the authority of the Sharī'a.¹¹³³ His approach to the law was even viewed by some as detrimental to the education of Muslim youth, and his works were regarded as not less harmful than Abū Rayyāh's.¹¹³⁴ Ghazālī was also blamed for not clearly and straightforwardly addressing social problems, or giving insightful attention to the emotional and religious formation of Muslim youth, for he was rather interested to satisfy deviant concessions.¹¹³⁵

In spite of these criticisms, we must, however, acknowledge Ghazālī's full and complete abiding by the authority of the religious text, without bypassing the fundamentals of the religion. Most of Ghazālī's legal interpretations revolved around issues of Sunnah practices, legal permissibility (*al-'ibāḥa*) or desirability (*al-nadb*), which in the usual exercise of 'Ijtihād should not have caused such an intense and over-reacting criticism. This bitter disparagement by scholars and *dā'īs*, however, demonstrates an increasing degree of irritation on the parts of some Muslim scholars, particularly 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth, mostly concerned with the potential harm of Ghazālī's perspective of *da'wah*. Their concern is the damage these interpretations may bring to the religion. The best way to undermine Ghazālī's popularity was to raise doubts around their scholarly credibility. This happened in the case of Ghazālī, especially when his opponents describe him as a "*dā'ī*" or a thinker and disqualified him from any juristic proficiency.

¹¹³³Ibid., 29.

¹¹³⁴Abd al-Maqṣūd, *Jināyat al-Shaykh*, 20. Abū Rayyāh's work is entitled '*Aḍawā' 'alā Sunnah* (Highlights on the Sunnah.)

¹¹³⁵Sulṭān, '*Azmat al-Ḥiwār al-Dīnī*, 74.

The criticism of Ghazālī's methodology, however, is not so much about his application of the principle of interest in *da'wah*, as about his speculations of what might be detrimental or supportive. The act of enjoining good and forbidding evil,¹¹³⁶ for example, involves the principle of considering public interest (*maṣḥala*), and requires due consideration of surrounding factors. Such consideration, however, varies according to one's personality and the social and cultural upbringing. Ghazālī's principle of best-interest-of-*da'wah* (*maṣḥaḥat al-da'wah*) aims at an effective religious progress; this required him to re-interpret related religious texts in a way that served the purpose of *da'wah*.

Notwithstanding, Ghazālī's approach to the interest of *da'wah* raises many crucial problems since it does not reflect a coherent or uniform methodology. Ghazālī's juristic preferences do not follow a systematic legal methodology. They rather, show the influence of certain opinions, such as the need to comply with international laws or avoid conflict with people's lifestyles. Those juristic preferences reflect certain pressures. They appear to be affected by personal feelings, and influenced by an anticipation of the reactions to Muslim religious or customary practices. What appears to have deeply affected Ghazālī's approach is an engrained sense of pleasing, and the hope to provide a "bright" presentation of the religion leading eventually to religious acceptance. In the process, Ghazālī only speculates as to what the Western taste is like,

¹¹³⁶Al-'Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar, "commanding right and forbidding wrong" refers to the exercise of legitimate authority, either by holders of public office or by individual Muslims who are legally competent (*mukallaḥ*), with the purpose of encouraging or enforcing adherence to the requirements of the *Shari'a*. This article deals mainly with the duty of individual Muslims in this regard; technically, this is usually considered to be a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāya*). See Cook, M. "al- Nahy 'an al- Munkar (a.)." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 28 April 2008 http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-1437.

and what reactions of the West might be as a result of interaction with Muslim practices and attitudes.

Ghazālī's work, nonetheless, provides a serious examination of current problems surrounding *da'wah* both internally and externally. One can assume that Ghazālī's efforts, despite being in a stage of infancy, broke the silent tension around the association of *da'wah* with the law, and built up a foundation for modern discourse around *da'wah*, law, and the progress of Islam. His efforts led to an opening of a new way of analysis, which exhorts Muslims to give due attention to the cultural and religious manifestations associated with the phenomena of *da'wah*, especially in Western societies, and to the reality of the relationship of Muslim societies with humanity in general.

III. Women and *Da'wah*:

The question of women often floats to the surface in the discussion of Islamic reform. Ghazālī's examination of the role of women in *da'wah* cannot be separated from the general question of their contribution to the social and political life of Muslim societies. Ghazālī re-examines conceptual and theoretical assumptions regarding women, because detrimental cultural perceptions and customs surrounding women have negatively affected their position and contribution in the name of the religion of Islam. Instead, Ghazālī repeatedly discussed cultural infiltrations creeping into religious interpretations, the failures of *dā'īs*' approach to the question of women, and the need to re-visit the legal perspectives on various questions involving women. For Ghazālī, a genuine understanding on the issue of women assures a proper approach to

their contribution to modern societies.

Ghazālī defended the position of women as early as the 1950s in his book *Min hunā Na'lam* (From here We Know), and continued his defence through writing and lectures.¹¹³⁷ He, however, shifted his attention to the religious context around women and advocated a change and a return to the fundamental tenets of Islam. In his book *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah* (The Sunnah of the Prophet), Ghazālī discusses several legal problems, including Muslim women's dress (*ḥijāb*), the covering of women's faces (*niqāb*), family, responsibilities, spirituality, and social roles. This section on women and *da'wah* examines Ghazālī's perspectives on women's contribution to the social and political roles, and the impediments to their participation there, as well as Ghazālī's contribution to the question of women and *da'wah*.

We should, however, bear in mind that Ghazālī echoed the prevailing debate around the issue of "*Tahrīr al-Mar'ah*" (The Emancipation of Woman) in the Arab and Muslim world at the time. As noted above, Ghazālī was born to a conservative family in the rural society of Egypt. He, for example, remembered women frequenting markets, helping with planting, irrigation, and harvest, yet not attending prayers in local mosques. For him, some traditions forbade their attendance. Women and girls were not allowed to attend schools because a false tradition (*riwāya maghlūṭah*) required them to stay illiterate.¹¹³⁸ They were locked in their homes,¹¹³⁹ and the four walls of their homes

¹¹³⁷Suhayla al-Ḥusaynī, *al-Mar'a fī Manhaj al-'Imām al-Ghazālī* (Women in the Methodology of Ghazālī) (Cairo: Dār al-Rashād, 1998), 15.

¹¹³⁸Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 162.

¹¹³⁹Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt al-Mu'tṭalah*, 103; Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 99.

became the limit of their thought and activity.¹¹⁴⁰

In addition, women did not exercise any cultural or political role, had no position in the development of educational curriculum or social systems, and no place in Mosques nor in any other field of struggle. Mentioning a woman's name was a disgrace, seeing her face was prohibited, her voice was taboo, and her only jobs were in the kitchen and the bedroom.¹¹⁴¹ Ghazālī argues that the teachings of the Qur'ān regarding women were totally ignored. Women rarely received their shares in inheritance and were seldom consulted about their marriage,¹¹⁴² and were humiliated and left to ignorance by uneducated religious people.¹¹⁴³ As a result, women forgot both their religious duties and responsibilities in life¹¹⁴⁴ and ignored special or public affairs - even the effective education of children.¹¹⁴⁵ Rather, they imitated Western dress and appearance and were not preoccupied with questions of science or exploration.¹¹⁴⁶

According to Ghazālī, these social and cultural customs contributed significantly to women's deterioration. Certain customs denied women economic rights¹¹⁴⁷ because of Muslims' obsession to associate cultural customs and opinions with the body of Islamic beliefs and laws.¹¹⁴⁸ Those man-made customs and perceptions impeded women's contributions to society, and made them insignificant in both life

¹¹⁴⁰Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 103.

¹¹⁴¹Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 33.

¹¹⁴²Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 54.

¹¹⁴³*Ibid.*, 169.

¹¹⁴⁴Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 96.

¹¹⁴⁵Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 166. The same applies to men. *Ibid.*,

¹¹⁴⁶Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 99.

¹¹⁴⁷Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyyah*, 169.

¹¹⁴⁸Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 67.

and religion.¹¹⁴⁹ They preserved the darkness of ignorance, violated the teachings of Islam, and led to a decline in the education of women and of the whole nation.¹¹⁵⁰

For Ghazālī, those customs also weakened the position of women and raised the status of men, constrained women to physical pleasure, and approached women's moral position through the question of honour, such that a son's wrongdoing is viewed as fun; whereas, women's errors are an embarrassment with serious implications. Ghazālī was clear throughout his work on the question of women: those unjust customs caused women physical and educational poverty and incompetence in worldly and religious life, and generated further customs which subjugated women.¹¹⁵¹ For Ghazālī, those customs are also the by-products of regions highly attached to their local traditions, and only familiar with abandoned or rejected narrations (*riwāyāt matrūka 'aw munkara*).¹¹⁵² For example, a fabricated report prohibits women from learning to write, and another disallows women from seeing men, and vice versa. Those narrations, according to Ghazālī, deprive women from education.¹¹⁵³

Specifically, it was men who caused women's decline. Such a conclusion is part of Ghazālī's criticism of Muslim jurists and preachers who, through their religious interpretations endorsed women's subjugation. Not only that, it was men's misunderstanding and misapplication of Islam that caused the backwardness of the entire Muslim community including women.¹¹⁵⁴ Some men disguised their personal

¹¹⁴⁹Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṣhaf*, 245.

¹¹⁵⁰Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 16.

¹¹⁵¹Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 142.

¹¹⁵²Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 64.

¹¹⁵³Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islamiyyah Tastaqbil*, 83.

¹¹⁵⁴Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt al-Mu'ttalah*, 96.

desires in the name of the religion, and alleged false traditions prohibiting women from seeing men and men from seeing women.¹¹⁵⁵ Some religious people drove women from worldly and religious life; for Ghazālī, these attitudes survived due to fabricated or weakly-supported traditions, odd interpretations (*ta'wīlāt shādhah*) of the Qur'ān, and due to a state of ignorance, worse, in Ghazālī's view, than the first pre-Islamic era of ignorance (*al-jāhiliyyah al-'ulā*).¹¹⁵⁶

To show these manifestations in modern times, including the far-reaching consequences caused by Islamic elites, Ghazālī draws on the example of *dā'īs* in Algeria, who caused the protests of feminists against Muslim family laws in 1984. Those *dā'īs* depicted women as primarily responsible for giving birth to men, as illiterate, or at most needing to learn basic mathematic notions, and that elementary education far exceeds their educational needs.¹¹⁵⁷ Some *dā'īs* elsewhere encouraged women to stay indoors and not to leave their homes, save on occasions of their marriage or death. On this occasion, Ghazālī refers to the position of a well-known but unnamed *dā'ī*, namely, that women are only allowed to leave their homes for their husbands or their graves. His point of reference was a report stating that a woman during the time of the prophet sought her husbands' permission to visit her father on his death-bed, but her husband refused. Soon after her father's death, she again asked her husband's permission to attend the funeral procession and be with her family. Her husband again

¹¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 103.

¹¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 258-259. The tradition of preventing women from learning to write, which states: "Do not teach women writing - *Lā tu'alimmū al-nisā al-kitāba*." led school girls to be closed." See Shalabī, 144. According to Ghazālī, women of the first era of ignorance (*al-jāhiliyyah*) did not face the same obstacles placed before Muslim women in periods of decline. Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 99.

¹¹⁵⁷Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 48.

refused. Upon hearing her story, Prophet Muhammad says: “God forgave your father because of your obedience of your husband.”¹¹⁵⁸ Ghazālī argues that this report is not included in the authentic sources of ḥadīth. He also argues that it is contrary to Islam because it undermines God’s commands to maintain the bonds of family and the rights of parents. In contrast, the authentic tradition of the prophet Muhammad reads: “God permits you to leave for your own affairs.”¹¹⁵⁹

Similar examples caused an image of Islam as a centre for women’s detention and ignorance, or a set of laws viewing women as demons to be humiliated, whose contribution to learning, worship, and social life is approached with mystery.¹¹⁶⁰ They violated women’s right of worship,¹¹⁶¹ denied their right to education, and rejected their contribution and support of goodness, or their struggle against falsehood and evil.¹¹⁶² Ghazālī questioned the increasingly artificial impediments facing women, which placed believing women in discomfort, and resulted in jeopardy of *da’wah*.¹¹⁶³ This, for him, had happened despite the universal teachings of the Prophet, which encourage woman to acquire education,¹¹⁶⁴ secure positions in mosques to uplift their

¹¹⁵⁸Ibid., 51. Kashk wonders how Ghazālī discovered that woman never left home. For Kashk, this very ḥadīth proves that this woman, without any trouble, left home at least twice to complain to the prophet. For some unknown reasons, however, her husband objected to her visit, particularly to see her father. See Kashk, *Shaykh Muhammad Ghazālī bayna Naqd al-‘Ātib wa al-Madh Shāmit*, 82. The question, for Kashk, should rather be whether Muslim woman should obey her husband in what goes against her emotions, especially when the husband’s decision goes against the most honourable emotions. These questions are open for discussion. Ibid., 82-83.

¹¹⁵⁹Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 51. Ghazālī draws on the statement: “Men teach women and train them to pray at home. There is no need to leave out or cause immorality.” Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁰Ghazālī, *Mi’at Su’āl*. 20.

¹¹⁶¹Ghazālī, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, 257-258.

¹¹⁶²Ibid., 258.

¹¹⁶³Ghazālī, *Jur’āt Jadīdah*, 5:40.

¹¹⁶⁴Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 63. The tradition goes as follows: “A woman requested her husband’s permission to visit her father during his deathly illness, yet he refused. When her father died, she again

spirituality, and develop an understanding of society to enjoin good and forbid evil.¹¹⁶⁵

The spread of these customs also caused an impression that Islam humiliates and oppresses women. Ghazālī asks: “Does the Qur’ān and the Sunnah support this allegation?”¹¹⁶⁶ To answer this question, Ghazālī argues that Islam views both men and women as equal with regards to their rights, responsibilities,¹¹⁶⁷ and freedoms.¹¹⁶⁸ This is drawn from the following two Qur’ānic verses “And their Lord hath accepted of them, and answered them: Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: Ye are members, one of another,”¹¹⁶⁹ and “They are your garments and ye are their garments.” For Ghazālī, the blending of two beings’ existences makes men and women one single being.¹¹⁷⁰

Ghazālī confirms that humanity flies with two wings; the disruption of a wing causes global interruption and decline. The solution in his view lies in discarding weak and fabricated reports.¹¹⁷¹ Women represent half of the nation, so when they are physically and intellectually handicapped, the second half becomes dysfunctional. This means, for Ghazālī, that religious and worldly well-being of women strengthens their positive status and contribution.¹¹⁷² Women are partners of men. Seeking knowledge is

requested her husband to let her join the family and attend the funeral procession, and her husband refused for a second time. Al-Khaṭīb says: When this lady told her story to the Messenger of Allah, he told her: God had forgiven your father because of your obedience to your husband”. Ghazālī commented: “Is this how the religion of Islam should be presented?”

¹¹⁶⁵Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 63.

¹¹⁶⁶Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar’ah*, 6.

¹¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 15-16. The Quran states: “And their Lord has heard them (and He said): Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost. You proceed one from another.” Pickthall (3:195), 67.

¹¹⁶⁸Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-’Insān*, 103.

¹¹⁶⁹Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar’ah*, 15-16.

¹¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 154. The Quran says: “It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and ye are raiment for them.” Pickthall (2:187), 27.

¹¹⁷¹Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar’ah*, 6.

¹¹⁷²Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na’lam*, 144.

an obligation on both, and so is their contribution to enjoining good or forbidding evil.¹¹⁷³ Neither does toughness endow men with piety nor does softness reduce women's opportunities for goodness.¹¹⁷⁴ Depriving women from learning, education, and worship, or blocking their contribution to society and politics is not a religious act.¹¹⁷⁵ In many areas, the teachings of Islam shrunk, and so did the relationship between men and women.¹¹⁷⁶

Such being the case, Ghazālī draws on early Muslim history to establish a legitimate gender relationship, and to show the negative practices contradictory to Islam. For him, the examination of gender relations in early Islam shows Muslim men and women meeting together in the Mosque courtyard, day and night, and fighting together to raise the word of Allah.¹¹⁷⁷ According to Ghazālī, those traditions confirm that rows of men and women gathered in the mosque to perform obligatory prayers and could see each other. Women struggled and fought, and provided men with help and support.¹¹⁷⁸ To criticize current and social cultural practices, Ghazālī selected the story of Moses in the Qur'ān as his counter-example. The Qur'ān informs us that a pious man sent his daughter after Moses as soon as she described his character. He asked Moses to marry one of his daughters. Ghazālī's comment was that, had the father been from the countryside of today's Egypt, he would not have proposed the marriage but might instead have killed the girl for having described a strange man to him.

¹¹⁷³Ghazālī, *Dustūr al-Wiḥda*, 236.

¹¹⁷⁴Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 99.

¹¹⁷⁵Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 245.

¹¹⁷⁶Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt al-Mu'aṭṭalah*, 103.

¹¹⁷⁷Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-Islām*, 232. It is reported that the mother of Sharīk used to receive guests in her home. Some women attended the allegiance of the 'Aqaba before the migration of Muslims, and many other women pledged the allegiance of Prophet Muhammad after that. See Ghazālī, *Ṣayḥat Taḥdhīr*, 156.

¹¹⁷⁸Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 103.

Ghazālī said: “Had her father been of today’s Muslims, he would have not have sent his daughter to invite a strange man.”¹¹⁷⁹

Ghazālī is clear about what he believed to be the Islamic perspective on women’s contribution to religion and society. Women are allowed to acquire public responsibilities (e.g., in government or the judiciary), benefit Islam and the nation, and carry out their duties, together with men. Together, both sexes should serve the broad area of education and learning, families, and social relationships.¹¹⁸⁰ Competent female preachers should teach in mosques because there is a dire need for their instruction.¹¹⁸¹ Muslim women are also entitled to carry out *da’wah*, enjoin good and forbid evil, and share the guidance of Islam with others.¹¹⁸² They should participate in public life.¹¹⁸³ *Da’wah*, for Ghazālī, needs doctors, engineers, chemists. Both men and women stand equal before that.¹¹⁸⁴

¹¹⁷⁹Ghazālī, *Laysa min al-Islam*, 250. The Qur’ān states: “And when he turned his face toward Median, he said: Peradventure my Lord will guide me in the right road. And when he came unto the water of Median he found there a whole tribe of men, watering. And he found apart from them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What ails you? The two said: We cannot give (our flocks) to drink till the shepherds return from the water; and our father is a very old man. So he watered (their flock) for them. Then he turned aside into the shade, and said: My Lord! I am needy of whatever good you would send down for me. Then there came unto him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said: Lo! my father bids you, that he may reward thee with a payment for that thou did water (the flock) for us. Then, when he came unto him and told him the (whole) story, he said: Fear not! You are safe from the wrongdoing folk. One of the two women said: O my father! Hire him! For the best (man) that thou can hire in the strong, the trustworthy. He said: Lo! I fain would marry you to one of these two daughters of mine on condition that thou hire thyself to me for (the term of) eight pilgrimages. Then if you complete ten it will be of your own accord, for I would not make it hard for you. Allah willing, you will find me of the righteous. He said: That (is settled) between you and me. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there will be no injustice to me, and Allah is Surety over what we say.” Pickthall (Chapter 28:22-28), 363.

¹¹⁸⁰Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na’lam*, 167.

¹¹⁸¹Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 160. Ghazālī urged representatives in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Algeria to organize women’s religious lectures led by female graduates of Muslim Universities. See Ghazālī, *Qadāyā al-Mar’ah*, 20. Even if Ghazālī does not explicitly indicate that women can teach men, this is implied, given his reference to historic instances where women did teach men.

¹¹⁸²Ghazālī, *Qadāyā al-Mar’ah*, 17.

¹¹⁸³Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 109.

¹¹⁸⁴Ghazālī, *Mustaqbal al-Islam*, 177-178.

Ghazālī said that women are allowed to attend mosques and schools, and go to other places so long they are properly dressed.¹¹⁸⁵ At one point, however, Ghazālī considered unemployed mothers and wives in the home to be better and more devout women, and more honourable spouses than women employed outside the home.¹¹⁸⁶ Ghazālī's consistent defence of women's domestic role was because mothers inspire tranquility and love, and help develop decent and good people.¹¹⁸⁷ Women's domestic role should not, however, be underestimated or considered embarrassing.¹¹⁸⁸ Later, Ghazālī realized the need to place issues in a broader context, and to develop relevant ideas in this regard. This led him to better understand the status and role of women vis-à-vis the nation. In so doing, he realized the need for a criterion instead of a focus on occupations, and an attention to the fundamentals to which secondary goals are associated.¹¹⁸⁹

Ghazālī's strategy was to provide fresh legal interpretations surrounding the conditions of women. He, for example, argues that there is no indisputably authoritative Islamic text requiring women to cover up their faces. By contrast, the tradition implies the opposite. The problem is that some jurists issued this fatwā to obstruct immorality.¹¹⁹⁰ Throughout Muslim history, Muslim women contributed their time and wealth and made significant contributions to religion and society. Ghazālī gave the example of the Khaznādār, an Egyptian woman who established the Faculty of

¹¹⁸⁵Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 159.

¹¹⁸⁶Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 97.

¹¹⁸⁷Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 52.

¹¹⁸⁸Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt al-Mu'ttalah*, 100.

¹¹⁸⁹Hibat R. 'Izzat, "al-Ḥaqq al-Murr: al-Shaykh Ghazālī wa-Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah," *'Islāmiyyat al-Ma'arifah*, 91.

¹¹⁹⁰Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 159.

Theology in the University of Azhar, a mosque, an orphanage, and a hospital. She advanced the cause of knowledge, protected worship and orphans, and cared for ill people.¹¹⁹¹ Ghazālī also saw many Muslim women in modern times as successful school principals, and talented physicians who honoured their families and their occupations.¹¹⁹² The condition of women, according to Ghazālī, will even be better and higher, especially when intelligent minds and pure hearts draw their understanding from Islam and apply that understanding in both social and governmental affairs.¹¹⁹³ Ghazālī proposed to deal with issues of women with knowledge and not through emotional problems, negative moods, or weaknesses under the excuse of jealousy and ignorance of the truths.¹¹⁹⁴

To re-establish the position of women, Ghazālī considered various interpretations that he believed produced a new understanding, which in turn released women's capabilities. There is first the issue of men's guardianship (*al-qiwāma*) mentioned in the Qur'ān. "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women."¹¹⁹⁵ For Ghazālī, men's guardianship is a responsibility, not an honour, and a sacrifice, not a dignity for men. Moreover, the problem of ignorance, however, engulfed both men and women, and made the relationship of male and female simply physical.¹¹⁹⁶ Gender does not make men superior,¹¹⁹⁷ and is irrelevant to questions of advancing or retarding,

¹¹⁹¹Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 87.

¹¹⁹²Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 53.

¹¹⁹³Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 250.

¹¹⁹⁴Ghazālī, *al-Da'wah al-'Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, 86.

¹¹⁹⁵Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 98.

¹¹⁹⁶Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 37. Ghazālī argues the majority of jurists are of the opinion that women are not required to serve men. The question is more of a partnership between man and woman, which is guided through emotions of sacrifice, not selfishness. Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁷Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 121. Ghazālī writes: "I had a conversation with a Canadian citizen who was

rewarding or punishing.¹¹⁹⁸ Despite the principal duty of women being to learn better home management and care about her family,¹¹⁹⁹ guardianship does not allow men to be arrogant. A woman might be better than her husband in areas of scholarship, morality, and piety.¹²⁰⁰ Guardianship (*al-qiwāma*) should not undermine women's freedom either, nor lead to men's interference in women's business or property management.¹²⁰¹

The tradition of Prophet Muhammad states that women are deficient in both intellect and faith [*nāqīṣāt 'aql wa dīn*]. This, according to Ghazālī, implies the exemption of women from prayers, and from fasting during the month of Ramaḍān during menstruation. Also, Ghazālī considers the tradition that testimony of two women equals that of one man. For Ghazālī, this is a tradition about forgetfulness and emotions. Specifically, anger causes women to easily forget the good deeds of their husbands; this is the deficiency of mind.¹²⁰² In contrast to Ghazālī, however, some preachers interpreted *nāqīṣāt 'aql* as stupid, sinful, and as connoting humiliation for their gender. For Ghazālī, both styles of interpreting *nāqīṣāt 'aql* are a continuation

bothered about the stand of Islam regarding women. I said to him: "Women are free to choose their spouse. They are not forced into marriage, and could carry their marriage contract on their own or appoint their representative." Not far from us, was an angry listener who luckily kept silence. Soon after our discussion, that person spoke: "It is not allowed for women to carry out their marriage contract on their own because it goes against the religion." My response was: "You choose to follow an opinion in some schools of law, and I choose the opinion I believe is closer to the mentalities of Europeans and Americans." See Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 29.

¹¹⁹⁸Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 103.

¹¹⁹⁹Ghazālī, *al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 99.

¹²⁰⁰Ghazālī, *Huqūq al-'Insān*, 121.

¹²⁰¹*Ibid.* The Qur'ān states: "Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded. As for those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High, Exalted, Great." Pickthall (Chapter 4:34), 75.

¹²⁰²Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 146.

from the first period of ignorance¹²⁰³ and unjustifiable in terms of both reason and tradition. For Ghazālī, women were perfect, in both old and present times, and have greatly contributed to the service of religion and society. For Ghazālī, such misunderstanding of *nāqīṣāt* 'aql contradicts the Qur'ān, which affirms that men and women are for each other, and contradicts the tradition of Prophet Muhammad about the partnership of men and women.

Ghazālī discusses a number of secondary issues, which reflect his attention to what he views as abusive interpretations of the religious text in relation to men and women. He argues that *ḥadīth* commentators interpreted the tradition of greeting between men and women, and tried their best to ban this form. Over time, their commentaries become authoritative to a point undermining the very principle of greeting, replacing it with distorted interpretations. Such commentaries, for Ghazālī, hold that men can greet women away from immorality only when a *maḥram* is present or if the women are old.¹²⁰⁴ According to a tradition in Bukhārī,¹²⁰⁵ however, Prophet Muhammad allowed men to greet women, and it is reported that he conveyed the greeting of the Angel Gabriel to 'Ā'isha, saying: "Gabriel greets you with peace."¹²⁰⁶

¹²⁰³Ghazālī, *Ṣayḥat Taḥdhīr*, 143.

¹²⁰⁴Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 6-7. A *maḥram* is a kin with whom marriage is not allowed.

¹²⁰⁵al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, a famous traditionist, b. 194/810, d. 256/870. Bukhārī began to learn traditions by heart at the age of ten. He had a remarkable memory. He travelled widely in search of traditions, visiting the main centres from Khurāsān to Egypt, and claimed to have heard traditions from over 1000 *shaykhs*. His most famous work is the *Ṣaḥīḥ* which took him sixteen years to compile. It is said that he selected his traditions from a mass of 600,000. This famous collection of traditions is arranged in 97 books with 3450 *bābs* (chapters). There are 7397 traditions with full *'isnāds*, but if repetitions are omitted the total is 2762. See Robson, J. "al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mughīra b. Bardizbah Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ju'fī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. 25 April 2008 <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-1510>

¹²⁰⁶Ghazālī writes: "A responsible scholar blamed me for greeting my female students with peace which was for him religiously unlawful. My answer was that Bukhārī narrated the permissibility and

Ghazālī dealt with a few specific legal issues pertaining to the perception of women’s status and role in society. In this area, his re-interpretations seek to free women and to break down cultural and social barriers affecting their position, movement and role in society. The first of those issues is travel. Ghazālī advocates the permission so long their safety is present. He asks: “does the ruling about women’s travel change when safety prevails? Some jurists advocate permissibility with the presence of safe companionship (*rufqa ma’mūna*) which eliminates worries and suspicions.¹²⁰⁷ Second is the voice of women. Ghazālī held that the notion of women’s voices being taboo (*‘awrah*) led to a false legal verdict against their voices. For him, there is no solid legal ground to this verdict, yet it has acquired great authority.¹²⁰⁸ During the period of Prophet Muhammad, women narrated ḥadīth, enjoined good and forbade evil, yet nobody claimed their voices to be a taboo. The real taboo, in Ghazālī’s view, is in the voices of both men and women when they speak ill, evil, or in vain.¹²⁰⁹ The third legal issue is hiding women’s names. Men were not allowed to mention women’s names, mothers or wives. For Ghazālī, the religion of Islam should not be held responsible for men’s feelings towards women. The Prophet Muhammad publicly called

occurrence. His counter-argument was the fact that scholars did not follow Bukhārī’s narration. I said: Those scholars are ignorant people who speak without knowledge, and choose the customs of their ancestors over the teachings of Islam.” See Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar’ah*, 67.

¹²⁰⁷Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 160. Earlier on, Ghazālī strongly advocated the prohibition of women travelling on their own without any company. Ghazālī’s criticism of Khalid’s fatwā illustrates the point: “The ruling regarding women travelling abroad on their own is well-known to Muslim scholars. The Prophet Muhammad said: It is not permitted for a Muslim woman to make a journey of a night unless accompanied by a *maḥram*. This ruling should be observed to the end of the hour. How did Khalid M. Khalid then, a scholar of Azhar, oversight this ruling and encouraged women to travel to Europe and the United States alone.” See Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na’lam*, 142.

¹²⁰⁸Ghazālī, *Sirr Ta’akhhur*, 22.

¹²⁰⁹Ghazālī, *Qaḍāyā al-Mar’ah*, 166.

upon Ṣafiyyah and his daughter Fatima to believe in God alone.¹²¹⁰

In contrast to the illegitimate practices around those three legal issues, the Muslim dress code is central to the discussion of women and their position in society. The Qur'ān ordains women to cover up and not to show their beauty in public. Ghazālī, however, alluded to a new aspect of the dress code, namely the dress of virtue, which confirms the innate human nature. For him, the dress code of Christian nuns is closer to the teachings of Islam, and so is the dress code of women farmers in the Manūfiya or Sharqiyya in Egypt.¹²¹¹ As a result, Ghazālī calls for adherence to modest forms of dress (*malābis al-faḍila*), that are also familiar to Westerners because they bring justice to Islam and attract lovers of virtue to embrace Islam.¹²¹²

Ghazālī does not advocate a particular style of dress, as much as he advocates for modesty and virtue. Modesty and virtue should not isolate women socially, or present them as strange creatures, particularly in Western societies. Such an understanding carries an interest in Western satisfaction and bridging of the cultural, but more importantly, the emotional gap. Ghazālī's ultimate goal, however, is to support modesty and virtue, while freeing women from excessive juristic probabilities of immorality, separating cultural influences from genuine Islamic practices, and avoiding any drawback or negative impression (especially in Western societies) that can impede *da'wah*.

On the one hand, Ghazālī exhorts Muslims in the West not to require school

¹²¹⁰Ibid., 85-86.

¹²¹¹Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 158. It is unclear why Ghazālī specified Manūfiyah and Sharqiyyah, instead of Cairo for example or his own city al-Buḥayrah.

¹²¹²Ibid., 7. According to Ghazālī, hiding Muslim women or showing them as ghosts is not considered a religious goal.

girls to cover up their faces because this requirement would destroy *da'wah*, and drive people away from the religion of Islam.¹²¹³ On the other hand, despite the advanced arguments, the ruling of covering women's face is not a means to obstruct immorality, and was only adopted in periods of weakness. To deal with this problem, Ghazālī proposes a complete and all-encompassing education about virtues for both men and women. This should be based on traditions originating from obvious instead of ambiguous or controversial texts (*nuṣūs mutashābiḥa 'aw mukhtalaf fī hā*).¹²¹⁴ Besides, some Muslim scholars regard the ruling of women's covering faces as a weak or alternative opinion (*ḍa'īf 'aw marjūh*).¹²¹⁵

The contribution of women also includes their testimonies. Although the tradition considers the testimony of a woman as half of a man,¹²¹⁶ Ghazālī argues that the safety of the public requires consideration of their testimonies.¹²¹⁷ The appointment of women to public office is also relevant. Ghazālī draws on the example of the United Kingdom, which under the leadership of women achieved economic prosperity and political stability. Ghazālī wonders: "Where then is the loss in appointing a woman as a governor?"¹²¹⁸ And what does gender has to do with these?" For Ghazālī, Western societies are free to elect or appoint women as governors, judges, ministers, or ambassadors, and should not be told that such elections or appointments are prohibited, especially when juristic opinions allow for the election and appointment of

¹²¹³Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 7. According to Ghazālī, hiding Muslim women, or showing them as ghosts is not considered a religious goal.

¹²¹⁴*Ibid.*, 159-160.

¹²¹⁵Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 49.

¹²¹⁶Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 161.

¹²¹⁷Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 69.

¹²¹⁸*Ibid.*, 58.

women.¹²¹⁹ In sum, for Ghazālī, religion will not progress in the West or elsewhere if *dā'īs* depict Islam as requiring that women's testimony be dismissed or neglected, even in cases of public safety, that women cannot contribute to public office, or that their election or appointment is prohibited.

The issue of women's education and learning, worship, and social and political role are crucial to *da'wah*.¹²²⁰ Ghazālī discussed women's religious discourse in a much broader context where he examined generally-relevant traditions and addressed the religious foundations (*al-'uṣūl*) required to separate them from personal opinions, or opinions resulting from foreign influences, as well as from local or regional customs (*'a'rāf*). In his essay "The Battle of the Hījāb," Ghazālī exhorts contemporary Muslim movements to avoid mistakes that led the Muslim nation to deviance and insignificant world-wide influence, and to rather produce a positive image for Islam that eliminates doubts, brings justice to revelation, and attracts the beholders.¹²²¹

In his extensive discussion of women's position and role, Ghazālī recognized the problem of finding a conceptual framework. Ghazālī argues that it is an open question because implementing parts of the religion when the whole is absent does not lead to the building of an Islamic society. Issuing legal verdicts (*fatwās*) for instant pressing cases, yet ignoring their surrounding circumstances, affects both the religion and the nation – but not always positively.¹²²² Accordingly, for Ghazālī, rulings about the social

¹²¹⁹Ibid., 60.

¹²²⁰Ghazālī, *al-Islam wa al-Ṭāqāt*, 113-122.

¹²²¹Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 44.

¹²²²Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 245.

role of women are only a part of a contemporary inoperative Islamic whole.¹²²³ Hence, obstructing immoralities should be carried out through a positive approach without necessarily causing hardship or constraints. Education in its broadest sense remedies such a backwardness and decline.¹²²⁴

Several factors appear to have underscored Ghazālī's discussion of women's contribution to the intellectual-educational and socio-political arenas. First is the character of modern civilization which adopts humanism as a motto and human rights as the basis in international relations, and supports social justice. This requires Muslims not to introduce the religion of Islam as a rival of human nature and human longings or as a discussion of secondary issues, while ignoring major issues.¹²²⁵ The achievements of Western women in scientific fields caused him to carefully review the social movement of Muslim women. Ghazālī, for example, asserts that while modern Western women conquered space, we still keep Muslim women at home and away from attention.¹²²⁶

As noted Chapter Two, Ghazālī considers the effects of economic conditions on the way people understand their cultural needs. With this understanding, Ghazālī was careful about spreading minor fatwas in the absence of broader Islamic context. For him, what is required is not only adherence to the decisive religious texts, but also an Islamic socio-economic and cultural environment supporting the application of

¹²²³Ghazālī, *Min Hunā Na'lam*, 160.

¹²²⁴Ibid., 167. Ghazālī views some "covered" communities as being more corrupt than some villages of uncovered women farmers. Ibid., 157.

¹²²⁵Ibid., *Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah*, 28-29.

¹²²⁶Ghazālī, *Turāthunā al-Fikrī*, 67.

religious texts.¹²²⁷

Ghazālī also believes that contemporary Muslim women do the work of *da'wah*. He, however, compares the conditions of Christian women missionaries with their Muslim counterparts. In North Africa for example, nuns served their religion with enthusiasm and devotion.¹²²⁸ Mother Teresa supervised hundreds of women and ran many charitable projects in India and elsewhere.¹²²⁹ According to Ghazālī, the spiritual energy of Muslim women is no less than that of Mother Teresa. Ignorant *dā'īs*, however, denied women's social contribution.¹²³⁰ In his work, Ghazālī brought the contribution of Mother Teresa to the attention of Muslim preachers. They, however, continue to be embarrassed about women's education and their attendance at mosques. As a result, preachers have looked into themselves, not religion, to develop or maintain obstacles that exclude women from enjoining good, forbidding evil, or guiding the public.¹²³¹ Some Muslim *dā'īs* and jurists are eager to lock up women at home, and to keep them away from worship, learning, or intellectual contribution. Those *dā'īs* and jurists,

¹²²⁷Ghazālī, *Ma'rakat al-Muṣḥaf*, 245.

¹²²⁸Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 53.

¹²²⁹Ghazālī, *Ḍaw' 'alā Tafkīrīna al-Dīnī fī Maṭālī' al-Qarn al-Khāmis 'Ashar al-Hijrī* (Review Spotlight On our Religious Thought at the Beginning of the Fifteen Century) (Cairo: Dar al-'Itṣām, 1981), 27-28. Mother Teresa (1910-97) a founder of the Missionaries of Charity, winner of the Templeton Prize and of the Nobel Peace Prize (1979). Born Agnes Gonxha Boyaxhiu, she joined the Sisters of Loreto to work in India, where she went after a brief period in Ireland. Upon completing her noviceship in Darjeeling, she was sent to teach in Calcutta. In her spare time, she worked among the very poor and the sick, and in 1948 she left the Sisters of Loreto, gained some medical knowledge, and returned to Calcutta to found her order. Her nuns are now to be found all over the world, working with the poorest in society. Mother Teresa also became a constant campaigner against both artificial birth control and abortion. See "Teresa, Mother" The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions. Ed. John Bowker. Oxford University Press, 2000. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. McGill University. 6. April 2008 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t101.e7318>

¹²³⁰Ghazālī, *al-Ghazw al-Thaqāfi*, 80.

¹²³¹Ghazālī, *Ḍaw' 'alā Tafkīrīna al-Dīnī*, 27-28.

according to Ghazālī, should not be allowed to speak in the name of God.¹²³²

As a reaction to the failure of religious elites to properly address the question of women, and to their traditional approach, Ghazālī calls for the formation of a guided women movement (*nahḍa nisā'iya rashīda*). Rational and pious women should support this movement, defend the precepts of Islam, and enjoin good and forbid evil.¹²³³ Just how and by whom this women's movement is to be guided is not discussed.

The discussion of the position of women in *da'wah* shows Ghazālī's keen interest in issues of Islamic reform in general. Because *da'wah* and reform are parallel, the issue of women immediately floats to the surface. Ghazālī seeks to ameliorate *da'wah* discourse on women, improve their position in the socio-political arena, and secure their role in *da'wah*. He believed that these objectives are achievable through purifying Muslim culture from practices detrimental to women's progress, and re-valuing *dā'īs'* treatment of women's issues. Ghazālī's endeavour was to develop an approach to replace the stagnant status of women in religion and in society with a new understanding that allows them to contribute to and share in *da'wah* and Islamic reform. Despite his broad perspective, Ghazālī invested much of his attention, however, to the review of specific interpretations of Islamic rulings which impede the progress of Muslim women, and even pull them backward.

As shown above, Ghazālī was very careful that *da'wah* results in positive impression of Islam among Westerners. In fact, his critique of the actions of some Muslims is highly affected by an accommodating approach to Westerners' probable

¹²³²Ghazālī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, 159-160.

¹²³³*Ibid.*

reactions. In addition, Ghazālī did search for juristic bases to support his views and critiques. One can presume that in writing for a Muslim audience, Ghazālī recognized the importance of establishing credible views, which required him to search for support from Islamic law. Choosing from various legal opinions does not by itself challenge Ghazālī's approach to a number of questions in *da'wah*. What remains problematic, however, is why Ghazālī firmly believed in accommodating Westerners as a pre-condition in *da'wah* progress, and why he employed the pretext of the best-interest for *da'wah* to discredit or disqualify *dā'īs* and various approaches to *da'wah*.

As to his constant preoccupation with Westerners' positive impression, Ghazālī firmly believed in the beautiful image of Islam. For him, that image had been apparent during the period of the early Muslim generations but had become poor by his own period and was still deteriorating. In his works, a positive contemporary presentation of Islam involves not only the positive role model of Muslims, but also the rational understanding of Islamic traditions and, thus, necessitates a constant reinterpretation of the Islamic traditions in light of modern science. In fact, Ghazālī's works addressed not only issues pertaining to religion and science or to reason and revelation, but also issues of cultural lifestyles, for example, eating without using utensils, or drinking while sitting. Even here, religious traditions are re-interpreted. At the root of his frustrations with contemporary *dā'īs* and *da'wah*, however, lies his determination to avoid any religious or cultural practices that Westerners may find odd or strange. Accordingly, in matters of religious practice, Ghazālī explored different interpretations that Westerners could accept. But in matters of culture or customs, Ghazālī only used his broad criteria of the interest of *da'wah* to criticize or unveil the damaging effects of

those cultural or customary manifestations on the progress of *da'wah*.

In his works, his reliance on the criterion of best interests of *da'wah* is nothing more than a personal assessment of what might enhance or impede *da'wah* in the West. This reliance usually involves reference to religious principles but also reflects his own worries about the future of Islam in general. Given his negative evaluation of the current and future progress of Islam, Ghazālī was not ready to accept any more damage to *da'wah* and the progress of Islam. Through his writings, however, he worked to alleviate such damage and to help people become aware of the obstacles they themselves put in the way of *da'wah*. In the attempt to create that awareness, Ghazālī's works do not focus on developing a methodology that assures success and prosperity for *da'wah*. Despite the ambiguity around his criteria, the principle of *da'wah* interest does not appear to be abused in his work. In his works, Ghazālī constantly endeavoured to show that his conclusions were based on genuine interest in *da'wah* and the proper understanding of the fundamentals of Islam (*al-'uṣūl al-kulliyah li al-Islam*). In general terms, the best interest of *da'wah* more or less subsumes the issues and concerns of each school of Islamic reform. Hence, the best interest of *da'wah* may allow the concerns of Ghazālī's school of reform to be translated to the West in a manner that is sensitive to Westerners' reactions to the representation of Islam. Therefore, in this instance at least, the best interest of *da'wah* is committed to the rational and positive introduction of Islam to the Western world.

Conclusion

Ghazālī attempted to develop a modern *da'wah* within a broad spectrum of Islamic change. In his model, *dā'īs* are not just conveyers of abstract religious teachings but, rather, are agents of change. *Da'wah* is no longer the responsibility of a peculiar religious group of *dā'īs* but is a social and collective responsibility that enhances the religious life and economic standards of Muslim societies. *Da'wah* enrolls not only preachers, muftis, and religious scholars, but all those who contribute to social and global change. *Da'wah* not only designates an all-inclusive reform but also transcends the traditional practices of groups like the *Tablīgh Jamā'a*, the *Ṣūfis*, or the *Salafis*.

In working out his model, Ghazālī did not reproduce Bannā's *da'wah* or present a new model of the experience of Azhar. He criticizes their approaches, and those of many *dā'īs*, to establish a new vision for *da'wah* in modern societies. Despite his sharp critique of contemporary *da'wah* practices, and his vision of re-establishing the understanding of *da'wah* on religious fundamentals, Ghazālī did not escape the effects of contemporary notions of *da'wah* or Islamic reform. Such being the case, Ghazālī did not destruct existing frameworks but, rather, assessed both their proximity to what he perceived to be the original understanding of the religion and, more importantly, their potential to transform Muslim societies and have them take leading and influential positions in the modern world.

Ghazālī's model of *da'wah* exhibits an originality and independence as far as religious interpretations are concerned, yet shifts the focus of *da'wah* literature onto a broader arena. *Da'wah* does not simply connote the contributions of religious preaching but also reflects a process of intellectual change and moral transformation. Such a

process is open and holistic, embraces diversity, and involves the points of contact between religion and society. Ghazālī's *da'wah* is peaceful and accommodating, transparent and open, caring and supportive, human and rational, all-inclusive and educative, not only for the Muslim community, but for the entire humanity. *Da'wah* connects the concerns of *dā'īs* to global problems facing humanity, requiring local and international attention. It equally necessitates an extensive and profound review of cultures and customary practices, yet blends improving *dā'īs'* contributions with a universality leading to advocacy of international justice and peace.

Given this multifaceted nature of *da'wah*, Ghazālī looks for a new operating context, one which transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, adheres to a fresh and rational understanding of religious traditions, and is dissociated from contemporary contributions of Muslim *da'wah* movements and groups. His model of *da'wah*, however, applies well to a context of civilization characterized by economic prosperity, assured political freedom and civil liberties, effective dialogue among nations, sincere religious interaction, advocacy of human rights, and international law.

Ghazālī's *da'wah* model is far from being a purely religious or spiritual exercise. It constantly involves questions of Islamic change, to produce an atmosphere conducive for *da'wah*, and takes the implications of life, of both Muslim and non-Muslims, to the level of religious interpretation in order to preserve the rationality and humanity of *da'wah*. Hence, in his model, *da'wah* is ineffective unless the conditions of Muslims significantly improve, and until such time as Muslim models of excellence in all areas of life are developed. In fact, Ghazālī's *da'wah* requires Muslims to lead the world in morality and justice, in worldly life, and in the support of needy nations. This

priority of leadership in Ghazālī's model neither evolves in a vacuum nor is built in confusion or negativity. This reinforces the fact that this vision rather requires a new vision of reform, and involves extensive intellectual exercise not only to properly position the sacred vis-à-vis the secular, but also to bring Ghazālī's own questions to a level of understanding, clarity, and feasibility, to say the least.

In view of the universal character of *da'wah*, requiring introduction of Islam to different individual and nations, Ghazālī's model seeks to build bridges of understanding and positive interaction, particularly with the West, as well as enhancing universal channels of communications in Muslim societies. Those connections, nonetheless, do not impede *da'wah* but, rather, enrich *dā'īs* with positive insights leading to better prospects of *da'wah*. This requires open and sincere interactive dialogues and freedom, not only to support *da'wah* but to match all improvements in Muslim societies with the local needs of *da'wah*. Integrating and enhancing communication for *da'wah* entrenches peace and tolerance, and rejects all types of violence or conflict because these simply defeat the purpose of *da'wah*. *Da'wah*, in Ghazālī's model, has no notion of clash of civilizations and is predicated on the possibility or, rather, the need for a serious interaction among nations, which is made possible through freedom, religious pluralism, dialogue, and an advocacy of human rights - all of which Ghazālī addressed in his works.

As shown above, given that model of *da'wah*, the efforts of *dā'īs* can be characterized as being focused, clear, and straightforward. *Dā'īs* adhere to peaceful means to convey their teaching with effectiveness. They exercise freedom because loosing freedom entails loosing their *raison d'être*.

A question worth reflection is the degree to which Ghazālī's model of *da'wah*, in the years after his death, can meet the current needs of *da'wah* movements and institutions. First, his *da'wah* model not only applies well to the agenda of modern Muslim reform, but also strengthens *da'wah* institutions and *dā'īs*' contributions. This is possible in part because Ghazālī raised critical questions concerning the progress of Islam and attempted to develop an objective and rigorous approach to *da'wah* and *dā'īs*. Let us recall that both his conceptual analysis of *da'wah* and his extensive discussions of the many problems hindering current progress are worth examining. They help *dā'īs* re-shape their understanding, re-position their movements in a broader context of debate, and clarify their views on religion and modernity. What might limit interest in Ghazālī's ideas on *da'wah*, however, relates mainly to his legal interpretations, which have caused debate and much criticism of his scholarly credibility, particularly in the camp of 'Ahl al-Ḥadīth and Salafiyah.

Ghazālī's independence from the "politics" of contemporary Muslim movements, especially given his early association with Muslim Brotherhood, seem to work in the favour of his ideas on *da'wah*. His style of critique does not, however, work in his favour. A statement that a pious woman is better than an arrogant bearded man causes bad feelings and negative reactions among religious scholars, bearded people, or in societies where having a beard is simply a cultural norm, rather than a religious practice. Ghazālī's negative style caused some Muslim youth to lose respect for him and even accuse him of being hostile to the Sunnah, especially when he undermines scholarly interpretations of sound ḥadīth. For Ḥuwaynī, Ghazālī should have avoided

making adversaries and let them, instead, benefit from his knowledge.¹²³⁴

Ghazālī's model of *da'wah* stands in a middle position. It calls for global reforms, and addresses traditional questions of *da'wah*, including Friday sermons and religious preaching. It not only addresses conventional *da'wah* but also looks forward to improving Muslim life and preparing the ground for a lasting *da'wah* that has far-reaching results. The actualization of this model would have many ramifications and implications, such as the improvement of religious learning, social culture, and political and economic life. It may be that, as was the case with the Algerian thinker Malik Bennabi, more time is needed before Muslim movements and groups fully realize the instrumental contribution of Ghazālī's *da'wah* in modern times, and the need to transform his theoretical model into action.

Far from dismissing Ghazālī for not being able to develop *da'wah* methodologies or elaborate on perspectives and strategies for a proper undertaking of *da'wah*, one can easily state that the amount of issues or questions about *da'wah* he raised in his works are as a success in the field of *da'wah* and Islamic studies in general. Ghazālī's commitment to issues of *da'wah* produced a wealth of writings and ideas that could be well exploited in the development of any further *da'wah* program. In other words, Ghazālī succeeded in creating an awareness within contemporary Muslim and Western developments, while raising appropriate questions and criticizing attitudes and undertakings that defeat the purpose of *da'wah*. Again Ghazālī did his best to deal with the problem of *da'wah* from many angles, probably hoping some of his sincere readers or students would continue the task. Indeed, Ghazālīan *da'wah* model still requires

¹²³⁴Ḥuwaynī, *Ṭalī'at Samṭ al-La'ālī*, 66.

further analysis and development – for example, around issues of accommodating Westerners and sound legal authority. Nevertheless, it is hard to conceive of what the discourse around *da'wah* and Islamic reform would be without Ghazālī's contributions – his critics amongst scholars and *dā'īs* would not have added to the discourse if he had not set out issues first.

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