

IN SERVICE OF GOD and
HUMANITY • THE LEGACY OF
Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali

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Abridged by Wanda Krause

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In Service of God and Humanity – The Legacy of Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali is an inquiry into Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali's model of *da'wah*. The work examines Shaykh al-Ghazali's life, education, career, intellectual and professional contributions to *da'wah* and society, as well as personal character traits. It also illustrates how al-Ghazali, a traditional scholar with an in-depth understanding of the philosophy, dynamics and implications of Islam, also employed a modern approach with regards to analyzing religion, society, and contemporary *da'wah*.

Al-Ghazali considered *da'wah* to be an issue of immense importance, requiring a multifaceted and multi-skilled approach, primarily because he connected this to mankind's need for a belief in God in the first instance, and a barometer measuring the general degeneration of Muslim spiritual thinking in the second.

The study thus examines al-Ghazali's conceptual framework of *da'wah*, including its concepts and characteristics, as well as the Prophet's *da'wah* as described in the Qur'an, the question of innate human nature (*fitrah*), and the universality of *da'wah*. It also examines the effects of society and culture on *da'wah*, how al-Ghazali understood *da'wah* in light of the Revelation, and the implications and effects of socio-economic and political factors concerning its development.

Al-Ghazali's sharp critique of *du'āt* (those inviting to an understanding of Islam) and the practice of *da'wah* work itself are explored. In doing

so, the author examines al-Ghazali's methodology and various proposed solutions, the juristic responses to his perspective, *du'āt* approach to *da'wah*, and, most importantly, al-Ghazali's notion of *fiqh al-da'wah* (legal methodology related to *da'wah*) associated with the priorities of contemporary *da'wah* in light of al-Ghazali's understanding of the best interest of *da'wah* (*maṣlaḥah al-da'wah*).

Al-Ghazali's ideas continue to attract many researchers today and nourish modern *da'wah* thought.

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SHAYKH MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI*

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INTRODUCTION

The field of modern *da'wah* studies often highlights existing models of *da'wah*, with each reflecting respective historical backgrounds, philosophies and methodologies, such as those of the Sufis, the Tablighi Jamaat, the Jamaat-i Islami or the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*. Yet, notwithstanding shared fundamentals and despite the various contributions these *da'wah* models have made, debate continues over which one of these models most effectively advances the understanding of Islam and whether they could develop a synthesis between religious norms and the complex challenges of modernity. Hence, not only an in-depth understanding of the Islamic theory of *da'wah* is needed but also a critical analysis of contemporary *da'wah* practices in light of the socio-cultural contexts of Muslims and the ways for *da'wah* to best respond to the challenges of modernity whilst abiding by the fundamental tenets of Islam. In way of addressing this issue, the late scholar and preacher Muhammad al-Ghazali has led the development of a new perspective on the subject of *da'wah*. During his lifetime he authored close to sixty books, most of which approached modern *da'wah* critically and unconventionally.

Al-Ghazali's extensive discussion of *da'wah* reflects his thinking and experiences. These arise from, for example, his experience in rural Egypt, training in the Muslim Brotherhood (1937-1953), his Azharite academic education, government positions he held (1971-1981), as well as his active membership within many Islamic and charitable organizations, and even personal stories and travels.¹ He lived to see the aftermath of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, and witnessed the decline and fall of various Muslim countries. His thought therefore reflects a wide spectrum of socio-historical experiences belonging to different political eras and reflects regional and global developments of the time. His literary works provide an analysis of the broad range of modern Islamic thought, as well as Muslim society and culture, in an attempt to lay solid foundations for successful *da'wah* practice.

This work attempts to examine a series of interrelated questions. The major question I seek to answer is: What model of *daʿwah* did al-Ghazali develop for modern Islam? In tackling this question, I address a number of further significant issues: What was al-Ghazali's understanding of the position of human nature (*fiṭrah*) vis-à-vis *daʿwah*? What are the effects of socio-cultural developments on *daʿwah*? And, what is the role of freedom and religious pluralism in enhancing *daʿwah*? I also discuss the impact of role models in the process of advancing *daʿwah*, as well as other related questions, such as *daʿwah* and peace, and the universality of *daʿwah*. Finally, I also seek to understand the genesis of al-Ghazali's thought and the major factors contributing to his intellectual formation.

Chapter One

The Life, Educational Background and Contributions of Muhammad al-Ghazali: Islamic Reforms (1917–1996)

In seeking to understand his thought formation, al-Ghazali's childhood and educational background are examined, with further exploration of the intricacies of his personality. Also analyzed is how his relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood shaped his thought and how he sought to differ from the group. The chapter traces al-Ghazali's school of thought and contribution to Islamic knowledge concluding with an overall look at his professional and intellectual journey.

Al-Ghazali's Childhood and Educational Background

Muhammad al-Ghazali al-Saqqa was born on September 22, 1917 in the village of Niklā al-ʿInab located in the province of al-Buḥayrah (Northern Egypt).² His father, Ahmad al-Saqqa, was a religious man who had great hopes for al-Ghazali's future. Despite other assertions made by scholars, al-Ghazali was named after the great scholar Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī of Baghdad (450-505 AH/1058-1111 CE). Before marriage, his father claims to have had a vision in which Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī appears requesting him to name his future son by his own name.

While al-Ghazali's name may have not affected him as largely as some would have us believe, it is quite apparent that the site of his birth did

shape him. Al-Ghazali grew up in Niklā al-^ḥInab, a place where religious emotions pervaded everyday behavior, and echoed, to a large extent, the concerns of society at large.³ Al-Ghazali's narratives point towards the religious conservatism of his local community, its keen interest in the memorization of the Qur'an, its prowess in learning Islamic studies and ability to produce scholars. It can safely be said that al-Ghazali's memories of his hometown had a large impact on his upbringing and to an extent the development of his character. One of al-Ghazali's foremost memories of his village concerns an insurrection mounted against the occupiers (1919). He recalled villagers revolting by cutting telephone lines and also, more vividly, occupying soldiers surrounding a mosque and killing a peasant who refused to abide by martial law.⁴

The economic conditions surrounding al-Ghazali's birth can only be described as very difficult. Al-Ghazali grew up in an exploited and rural neighbourhood subjected to oppression and repression by Pashas and princes. Injustice and exploitation at the hands of landlords was rife as was the abuse of peasants, who received very little for their hard toil.⁵ Not surprisingly, these social injustices gave rise to privileged social classes and in Egyptian society a huge gap between rich and poor, with income inequality such that some people planted grain but ate hay, grew cotton but dressed poorly, and built tall buildings yet lived in poverty. These conditions caused al-Ghazali to empathize greatly with the suffering, exploitation, and maltreatment of the general populace.⁶

By 1914, small owners represented over 90 per cent of all landowners and yet possessed only a quarter of the land. The large landowners formed a group with common interests and landownership gave them a privileged position at the top of Egyptian society. By 1966 the population density rose to 845 for every square kilometer. This increase in the man-to-land ratio naturally had a depressing effect on the 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. Such socio-economic conditions had a profound impact on al-Ghazali's thinking, leading him to conclude that religion could not flourish in such wretched circumstances, of poverty, disease and ignorance.⁷ This harsh way of life also led him to become preoccupied with ideas concerning the relationship between religious progress and the environment, and also between economic improvement and *da'wah*.

Al-Ghazali's education took place in a variety of settings, from the *kuttāb*, to the Alexandria Religious Institute and the University of Al-Azhar. At the age of five, al-Ghazali was enrolled at the local *kuttāb* to memorize the Qur'an.⁸ Learning in the *kuttāb* resulted ideally in the students' literal incorporation of the Qur'anic text, and accordingly teaching 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.

In 1927, at the age of ten, al-Ghazali entered the Alexandria Religious Institute, where he studied for a period of nine consecutive years.⁹ Classes included both religious and 'secular' sciences. At the same time, al-Ghazali took advantage of his father's bookstore.¹⁰ His father often encouraged him to read, but discovered, to his regret, that al-Ghazali preferred foreign novels to religious books. One of the reasons al-Ghazali gives for this partiality is that these works were full of fabricated and unauthenticated hadith and absurd myths.¹¹

In 1937, al-Ghazali enrolled in the Faculty of Theology, Al-Azhar University. After four years of study, he obtained his Licentiate (*Ālamiyyah*) and pursued a two-year Masters Degree in *Da'wah* and Religious Guidance (*al-Da'wah wa al-Irshad*). During his tenure at the Faculty, al-Ghazali worked as an Imam (religious cleric) at the Masjid of al-Ātabah al-Khaḍrā'. Throughout this period of learning, al-Ghazali was greatly influenced by scholars such as Abd al-Azim al-Zarqani. Two other influential teachers were Ibrahim Gharbawi and Abd al-Aziz Bilal.

Al-Ghazali often draws on his early education and associated problems to make the point that improvement of the education system was absolutely vital and, in fact, an inescapable prerequisite, for modern Islamic reform. He also used his educational experience to assess and point to *du'āt's* education problems, that is, the integral relationship that exists between religious learning and *da'wah*, in addition to the link between effective education and religious progress. Al-Ghazali firmly believed that much of the religious literature used by the public, including that issued by Al-Azhar itself, was both poor in content and style, and had put Muslim culture at a great disadvantage.¹² For al-Ghazali, the *kuttāb* suppressed the activity of children and restrained their fun, leaving them with emotional problems.¹³ In addition, al-Ghazali considered the use of the 'stick' as damaging to the student,

because a child's education requires compassion, patience, tolerance, and strictness without cruelty. He believed that despite their good intentions, some *kuttāb* were producing little more than "recording tapes" instead of effective role models. Yet, despite his discomfort with the idea of rote learning alone (that is, producing 'recording tapes'), al-Ghazali remained an advocate of the traditional Qur'anic transmission method.

More broadly, however, religious learning had fallen to its lowest level during al-Ghazali's time, and he felt that it neither served Islam nor attracted competent students. Al-Ghazali drew attention to the following three problems in religious education: a) a lack of emotional and intellectual intelligence on the part of religious scholars,¹⁴ b) early academic specialization before acquisition of a requisite knowledge base in human and scientific subjects,¹⁵ and c) poor understanding of Islamic fundamentals, and excessive attention to trivial issues.¹⁶

Al-Ghazali's discussion of the pitiable state of religious education reflects a genuine interest in its modernization through the inculcation of contemporary disciplines. For him, graduates of Islamic studies should not only acquire traditional knowledge, but also understand modern science. This would aid them to utilise a modern perspective in introducing Islam whilst advancing the cause of *da'wah* working in parallel with scientific progress. Learning appears to be evaluated in terms of improvement of public life, assisting people to embody the values of Islam in their daily lives, or enhancing a smooth social change needed for reforms.

An Exploration of al-Ghazali's Personality

In investigating to what degree al-Ghazali's personality influenced such evaluation, I believe that the key personality traits that perhaps really define him involve confidence, a commitment to truth, advocacy of justice and equality, and struggle for freedom from exploitation and humility. Al-Ghazali considered a caring attitude to be particularly critical to human progress, and disliked rudeness, aggressiveness, or cold-heartedness. Although al-Ghazali loved forbearance and patience, he did on some occasions lose control, especially when seeing ignorant people addressing public matters, issuing damaging statements, or engaged in futile controversies.¹⁷

Al-Ghazali rejected as inhumane any act that ever denied even an atom of freedom to the intellect or consciousness. It was this belief in

freedom that led him to criticize religious formalities as well as many manifestations of religious and socio-cultural life. He also viewed the intellect as the structural foundation of religion because intellectual proofs according to him possess overwhelming weight, and it is only through the intellect that one may recognize God, identify the truths of revelation, and realize man's accountability in the Hereafter.¹⁸ It becomes apparent that his intellectual freedom led him to raise numerous critical questions concerning Muslim life and Islamic disciplines, such as belief, jurisprudence, and history.

It is also worthwhile examining al-Ghazali's problematic use of a negative and at times harsh style of language. His intellectual journey, whether in the *kuttāb* or at Al-Azhar, also provides no justification for his harsh or negative reactions towards traditional religious pedagogy. However, the occurrence of major events seemed to have affected him, such as the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, the foreign exploitation of the Muslim world, the occupation of Palestine, and the stagnant conditions affecting the Muslim world. He does apologize to his readers for the bitterness and anger found in the lessons he draws from history, and for the harshness detected throughout his discussion of Muslim failures.¹⁹ Furthermore, sometimes al-Ghazali's statements appear to be pessimistic, leaving no room for hope. His emotional cynicism resulted from a comparison of the Muslim world's prevailing conditions with those of other nations, and a discomfort with regards to conditions of sorrow and humiliation. What might have caused al-Ghazali's negative approach was an increased degree of anger at the deteriorating socio-cultural reality of Muslims.

Al-Ghazali and the Muslim Brotherhood

Al-Ghazali knew Hasan al-Banna, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, when he was a student at the Alexandria Religious Institute, and later, at the age of twenty, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood, being an active member for a period of seventeen years.²⁰ Al-Banna appointed him as under-secretary of the *Majallat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* (Journal of the Muslim Brotherhood). Al-Ghazali's writing talents in fact qualified him for the honorific title of *Adīb al-Da'wah* (the writer of *da'wah*) among the Muslim Brotherhood, and his literary skills and intellectual competence were manifest in their publications.²¹ Al-Ghazali became both an active member of the organization and also an official scholar in the Ministry of Endowments.

Often in his writings al-Ghazali refers to al-Banna as his first teacher and mentor.²² Soon after al-Banna's assassination in 1948, problems within the organization surfaced. Al-Ghazali's disagreement with the newly appointed leader, Husayn Hudaybi (1891-1973 CE), resulted in his dismissal and led to an exchange of accusations.²³ What led to al-Ghazali's dismissal was disagreement over the Brotherhood's decision to boycott the government of Jamal Abd al-Nasir.²⁴ In reality, however, al-Ghazali's conflict with the Muslim Brotherhood had started much earlier. Had al-Ghazali maintained a political affiliation with the Brotherhood, his contribution might have taken a different course. As it happened, 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.

Al-Ghazali's School of Thought and Contribution to Islamic Knowledge

Al-Ghazali's thinking changed and developed over the course of his career. Al-Ghazali's work, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyyah* (The Constitution of The Cultural Unity) provides further testimony as to his growing independence vis-à-vis major areas of concern for the Muslim Brotherhood as epitomized in al-Banna's Twenty Principles.²⁵ Al-Ghazali formulated ten new principles required for implementing modern reform: 1) That women and men are partners (*shaqā'iq*); 2) The family represents the moral and social foundation (support) of society, and the natural center for educating generations; 3) The moral and economic rights of people should be assured and safeguarded; 4) Rulers, whether kings or presidents, are simply agents acting on behalf of their respective nations; 5) Mutual consultation (*shūrā*) is the basis of government; every nation must choose the method that best realizes its interests; 6) Conditions and rights of private property should be protected. The nation is one single body which does not tolerate neglect or subjugation; 7) Muslim countries are responsible for *da'wah*; 8) Religious differences should not cause enmity or fighting; 9) The relationship of Muslims with the international community should be guided by agreements of human brotherhood; Muslims should carry out *da'wah* through debate/persuasion far from any harm; and 10) Muslims need to contribute to the moral and material well-being of humanity.²⁶ These principles were aimed at religious reform in Muslim societies.

Some of al-Ghazali's main concerns included interrelated problems such as the fragmentary presentation of Islam, the current state of

Muslim culture, a negative attitude towards life, fatalism in the Muslim world, misunderstanding the principle of causality, traditions of showing off in Muslim societies, status of women in periods of weakness and decline, poor level of Arabic literature, wealth mismanagement, and political corruption.²⁷ He did not fit into any Muslim movement, for his constant criticism could only be accommodated in an atmosphere of freedom and independence. His concern was to review and decontaminate understanding of the sources of Muslims' interpretation in order for Muslims to regain their position in humanity.

Al-Ghazali believed his works to reflect inspiring realities. They were meant to stimulate the consciousness residing in the hearts of believers, and to provide keys to various meanings invaluable to Muslims.²⁸ His writings concurrently respond to the intellectual and emotional needs of the individual and society.²⁹ His writings also provide both clear and ambiguous exposition of thoughts and emotions, affected mostly by passionate feelings and enthusiastic presentation.³⁰

Al-Ghazali's Professional and Intellectual Life

Al-Ghazali 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 Al-Azhar, as a Director of mosques and training, and finally a director of *al-Da'wah wa al-Irshād*. On July 18 1971, Abd al-Aziz Kamil, the then minister of endowments and affairs at Al-Azhar, appointed him as an undersecretary at the ministry. In March 1981, Anwar al-Sadat, the Egyptian President (1970-1981), appointed him as an undersecretary of *Da'wah* in the Ministry of Endowments. Through writing, speeches, sermons, lectures, radio and television broadcasts, al-Ghazali is said to have left a manifest influence upon the minds of Muslims in Egypt and elsewhere. Among many of the initiatives he supported, al-Ghazali assured women's attendance in many mosques.

Al-Ghazali's lectures and publications which contained sharp criticism of conditions in Egypt, and unveiled conspiracies against Islam and Muslim society, upset the Egyptian authorities. Al-Ghazali was warned but nevertheless chose to continue, and this led to a ban on his religious activities, and to his being blacklisted by the Egyptian Government in 1974.³¹ Following his suspension from delivering *khutbahs* in the ʿAmrū ibn al-ʿĀṣ Mosque, al-Ghazali obtained a position at King Abd al-Aziz University, Jeddah, and later in Umm al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. There, he continued his *da'wah* work through

broadcast programs and newspapers, whilst also teaching and supervising graduate students, serving on various academic councils in Muslim universities and participating in *da'wah* agencies. In Qatar, for example, al-Ghazali most notably contributed to the development of the University of Qatar's Shari'ah Faculty, and to the dissemination of Islamic awareness through media, mosques, and associations. In 1984, al-Ghazali was appointed as chairperson of the Academic Council of El-Emir AbdelKadir University in Constantine, Algeria. In 1989 and after five years in Algeria, al-Ghazali returned to Egypt.

During his final stay in Egypt, al-Ghazali undertook serious research work on the methodology of study of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, Muslim intellectual heritage, and contemporary Muslim problems. Throughout his academic career, however, al-Ghazali consistently maintained a keen interest in *da'wah*. Al-Ghazali's *da'wah* provides a religious perspective which addresses many aspects of Muslim intellectual, cultural, and socio-political life, and looks into the underlying causes of religious and social problems. Al-Ghazali's contribution, whether through the Muslim Brotherhood, 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.

His works depict the problems of society and culture, attempt to diagnose inherent weaknesses and failures, and highlight the responsibilities and challenges faced by *da'wah*. His extensive intellectual background and diverse experience also translated into the development of *da'wah* concepts, studying cultural impediments to *da'wah*, reviewing *da'wah* legal implications, and critiquing contemporary *da'wah* attempts by untrained, unprepared, mentally ill-equipped and narrow-minded *du'at*. His works also establish a logical relationship between the sacred and secular, religion and modernity, and religious and mundane life.

His thought translated key ideas of contemporary Islamic reform, including the views of his teacher, Hasan al-Banna, with regards to the comprehensive nature of Islam and the false dichotomy posited between the religious and mundane world. Yet, instead of speaking in broad religious terms, al-Ghazali chose to shift attention to a new fundamental relationship between *da'wah* and life, hence putting the challenges of modernity at the center of his thesis on *da'wah*.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Analysis of *Da'wah*

It is contended that the conceptual framework al-Ghazali put forward for *da'wah* highlights and underlines religious, cultural and socio-economic contexts. Al-Ghazali linked *da'wah* to two crucial concepts. The first, innate human nature and the attempt to explore and discover ways according to which *da'wah* practice conforms to human nature. The second, the socio-economic and cultural context of *da'wah*, which not only includes a discussion of social and economic problems impeding current *da'wah*, but also a synergy between the fundamental character of *da'wah* and the ever-changing nature and needs of societies. In this context, pressing questions are raised regarding the proportionate relationship between *da'wah* and freedom, and the extent to which al-Ghazali's development of *da'wah* universality allowed him to examine *da'wah* beyond the geographical boundaries of the Muslim world.

Al-Ghazali's Conceptual Framework

In tracing al-Ghazali's conceptual framework and the contribution of his approach to the study of *da'wah*, it is important to note that al-Ghazali viewed the Qur'an as an illustration of the essence of *da'wah*, a comprehensive account of its progress and a description of the difficulties endured in the transmission of the religious message. He further draws on the *da'wah* models set by earlier prophets. Qur'anic accounts concerning *da'wah* with regards to the prophets, illustrate that throughout transmission of the divine message, prophets continually emphasized one principle, namely that no material compensation or reward was expected in return. Prophets were neither sellers of talk nor claimants of fame. They gave but did not take back, and chose to sacrifice without seeking any advantage or credit.³² For al-Ghazali, these examples proved that the undertaking of *da'wah* should be free from worldly purposes.

Furthermore, prophetic *da'wah* was straightforward, simple, understandable, sincere, and compassionate.³³ The transparency inherent within *da'wah* is shown in their clear and unambiguous message.³⁴ Prophets met all people, friend or foe, irrespective of the individual, and did not withhold any piece of their religious message.³⁵ Thus *da'wah* is open and transparent, with its questions, fundamental or secondary, being known to all, the general public or masses, and elite alike. *Da'wah* should not cloak any secret question nor conceal certain

aspects and disclose others.³⁶ Furthermore, al-Ghazali believed that the greatness of the message is manifested in its appreciation of the intellect, total rejection of conjecture and suspicion, and adherence to certainty and truth. Religiosity, as such, does not saturate the intellect with the unbearable, nor does it submerge it in the world of imagination.³⁷ It is probably based on these theological persuasions that al-Ghazali continually sought to associate the spirit of *da'wah* with the logic of science, so as to further enhance religious understanding and interpretations while engaging *da'wah* within the fold of scientific research. In fact, for al-Ghazali, the bridge between religiosity and science is critical because religion would lose its *raison d'être* once it overlooks science, downplays reason, or resists the reconciliation of religion with the mundane world.³⁸

Al-Ghazali's approach to issues such as religion and religiosity, however, points to existing objectives and layers underlying his concept of the religious message, including the need to oversee revelation and keep it at the forefront by means of dissemination of goodness, advocacy of righteousness, protection of faith, and rendering revelation as a nourishing source for virtues,³⁹ in addition to the further conveying of great meanings to nations in need. The religious message seeks to sustain justice and freedom for those oppressed and deprived nations, imparts certainty and piety through motivation and guidance,⁴⁰ awakens the hearts that have forgotten God, and sets static ideas in motion.⁴¹

Based on this description of religion and religiosity, al-Ghazali further depicted *da'wah* as being born with the birth of faith; it is the twin of faith, rituals and morals.⁴² *Da'wah* for him is guidance to the most precious truth in the universe, an orientation to goodness, and a salvation from destruction.⁴³ Al-Ghazali argued that reducing the scope of *da'wah* to a singular activity is unjustifiable.⁴⁴ As a result, he criticized those who understand *da'wah* as fiery sermons, excited emotions,⁴⁵ casual speech, a ruse to fight, or even fail to understand that preaching is one single aspect in a much broader religious engagement.⁴⁶ With this view in mind, al-Ghazali disapproved granting the title of *dā'iyyah* exclusively to preachers or Imams.⁴⁷ *Du'āt* for him rather include the just ruler, the competent lawyer or legislator, the guided writer, the faithful preacher, and those challenging injustice and tyranny.⁴⁸ Each individual is able to contribute either individually or collectively to religious, social, cultural, or political life.⁴⁹ *Da'wah* is a strategic tool of reform that engages all types of workers and volunteers. Al-Ghazali's understanding of *da'wah* appears to be holistic, and

reflects his broad approach to Islamic reform. His broad view of *daʿwah* however, entails a close relationship between *daʿwah* and the notion of change whereby *daʿwah* involves not only the transmission of religious teachings or the interpretation of the scripture to the Muslim community, but also embraces the many contributions of those engaged in social reform. His extension of the notion of *daʿwah* and his expansion of its mandate and scope to embrace broader social change is based on his belief in the comprehensive nature of Islamic precepts, and is based on his conviction that the understanding of religion should not be fragmentary.⁵⁰

Fitrah

The concept of *fiṭrah* plays a central role in his thesis for the reason that al-Ghazali uses it to set *daʿwah* within a framework of original human dispositions and ascension towards the divine ideals. Al-Ghazali persistently sought to forge an intimate relationship between *daʿwah* and the characteristics of innate human nature on the one hand, and on the other hand to develop a genuine yet proportionate equation between religious development and sound *fiṭrah*. The basic assumption, however, is that *daʿwah* facilitates a supportive environment for human ascension towards spiritual, moral, and religious perfection in general, whilst providing a finishing touch to an already existing intuitive knowledge yet without necessarily contributing any new teaching to it.

At the most basic level, however, al-Ghazali viewed Islam as essentially a religion of *fiṭrah*.⁵¹ According to al-Ghazali, *fiṭrah* consists of a sound intellect and pure heart.⁵² He argued that when the term *fiṭrah* is used in the context of *daʿwah*, it designates the sound *fiṭrah* alone.⁵³ Al-Ghazali argued that humans are both born with sound reasoning that guides them to the Creator, and also with an understanding that corruption is evil and shameful and needs to be kept distant.⁵⁴ Al-Ghazali maintained that the determination of moral acts eventually implies a rejection of rational philosophy about human actions, which pays no heed to revelation and only causes arbitrary approvals or denials.⁵⁵ It is on this basis that al-Ghazali associated *daʿwah* with the criteria of distinguishing good from bad, so as to make the moral determination of acts as an inherent characteristic of *daʿwah* thought.⁵⁶

According to al-Ghazali, an unerring sense of self-direction to God and perfected morality is instilled at birth. For him, children are born ready to develop towards perfect morality, yet are like fruit, which only grows sweet when sufficient care is taken against disease.⁵⁷ This implies

that left to personal choice human beings would eventually be guided to their Creator, discover divinely inspired inner motivations, prefer marriage to fornication, remain alert rather than drunk, act generously rather than with selfishness, and sincerely rather than deceitfully.⁵⁸ It is by virtue of *fiṭrah* that humans realize that justice is good, evil is bad, knowledge is an honor, ignorance is a disgrace, chastity is an ascension to perfection, and immorality is a corruption.⁵⁹ Even with little divine knowledge, explained al-Ghazali, the purity of *fiṭrah* leads people to know God and acknowledge His rights.⁶⁰ Humans are born with a readiness, that is, with a preference and a motivation, to follow the course of *fiṭrah* and to accept and follow belief and virtue. God endows *fiṭrah* with characteristics to resist falsehood. The disregard of those qualities causes failure and justifies just examination on the Day of Reckoning. Those characteristics include the capability to resist, refuse and object to superstitious thinking, to uphold the truth, to reject immorality, and to act kindly and righteously.⁶¹

According to al-Ghazali, any civilization that is closer to *fiṭrah* gets nearer to the nature of Islam.⁶² Not only that, but modern Western civilization according to him, is closer to *fiṭrah* than those religious teachings that suppress or humiliate the human body.⁶³ Specifically, modern traditions of the West, especially in politics, are nearer to the religion of Islam.⁶⁴ Al-Ghazali's understanding of *fiṭrah* transcends conventional religious definitions to consider more universal values as valid indicators of a sound *fiṭrah*. The true religion is the humanity on the right track (*al-insāniyyah al-ṣaḥīḥah*), which includes the intellect's determination of the truth through science withstanding myth and superstition.⁶⁵ Al-Ghazali's discussion of *fiṭrah* shows that his contribution lies in the proportionate relationship between healthy religious growth and social prosperity, and his attempt to strongly incorporate the component of *fiṭrah* in a *da'wah* thought system.

The Universality of *Da'wah*

According to al-Ghazali, Prophet Muhammad's message develops the concept of universality based on the belief that across time religion has only been one, and that prophets are but brothers who introduced the Creator and guided people to Him.⁶⁶ Al-Ghazali approached the universality of *da'wah* not just in terms of the large geographical area within which it operates, but particularly in light of the guidance and the formulation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah which address all humanity everywhere, irrespective of time or space considerations.⁶⁷

Al-Ghazali also underscored the importance of widespread reform and humanitarian endeavor. Such a perspective seeks to break emotional and cultural barriers surrounding this universality, and to forge bridges connecting cultures, communities, and societies. For al-Ghazali, dissemination of goodness, protection of piety, and resistance against evil are universal obligations. This implies that the spread, as well as safeguarding, of goodness or struggle against evil are not so much local duties incumbent upon Muslims in their mother societies, but rather represent universal obligations.⁶⁸ Universality in relation to *daʿwah* requires exploration of the world around us, including diverse religious communities. *Duʿāt* preoccupied with intellectual and emotional reforms need to examine and acquaint themselves with universal human thinking and to understand people's conditions with a view to improving them. Thus, Muslim scholars should examine strategies of universal *daʿwah* whether in terms of the presentation of Islam to the external world or in their response to doubts.⁶⁹ Thus, Muslims need to relate positively with others. At the macro-level however, the universality of *daʿwah* relates to improved moral and economic conditions for Muslim society just as the followers of Prophet Muhammad relied on their noble character and persuasive language to communicate the religion with other nations.⁷⁰

The universality of Islam, for al-Ghazali, is regretfully an expression which Muslims reiterate excessively, yet are not considerate of when it comes to its implications. Contemporary Muslims are not qualified to implement this universal understanding because of their confusion, contaminated cultures, and tyrannical political systems. Current conditions of Muslim societies even raise doubts as to the value of Islam, and the extent to which people would benefit from it.⁷¹

Al-Ghazali's evaluation of Muslims' current state led him to ask why they had served *daʿwah* universality so poorly, introducing gentle understanding of Islam on local and international fronts. And he reasons, that this was due partially to the early Muslims' preoccupation with Greek philosophy when in fact they should have been emphasizing and demonstrating Islamic monotheism and Qur'anic philosophy in diverse academic disciplines, ethics and business.⁷² Political stagnancy also deprived official Islamic policy of any sense of widespread *daʿwah*, primarily due maintained al-Ghazali, to rulers who instead of adhering to programs of teaching and guidance, became overwhelmed by desire for control and power.

Da'wah, Society and Culture

Al-Ghazali viewed the impact of economic conditions together with societal reform as fundamental elements in the implementation of *da'wah*. For al-Ghazali the social and cultural environment's impact on religion as well as personal and moral conduct is undeniable.⁷³ Hence, substantial influence over the moral and social environment was for him a prerequisite for the successful delivery of the religious message. For him, moral crimes and vice are often born and flourish in societies affected by economic need.⁷⁴ This, he argues, is because corrupt environments distort the nature of *fiṭrah*, and infect it with disease.⁷⁵ People are originally born in a state of faith and are prepared to connect with religion and its teachings as soon as they have acquired understanding, and the effects of negative practices have been removed.⁷⁶

Al-Ghazali also sees a relationship between *da'wah* and poverty. Thus, he argued, basic human needs should be secured first, only then are people expected to hold onto faith.⁷⁷ Much of his critique of *du'āt* involves how *da'wah* is to be effective in conditions of poverty. Al-Ghazali described how, despite several attempts, *da'wah* had not yet found the proper environment in which to implant beliefs, morality, or good deeds in poor social classes.⁷⁸

This state of affairs according to al-Ghazali requires *du'āt* to provide solutions to moral and economic problems.⁷⁹ Prior to guiding people to the Creator, large-scale economic reforms are required, for these are unavoidable if crime and moral vice are to be fought in the name of Islam. Al-Ghazali considered improvement of economic conditions as crucial to *da'wah* and believed in a type of proportional relationship to exist between economic development of Muslim societies and *da'wah*.⁸⁰ Hence, al-Ghazali educated *du'āt* to integrate the socio-economic context into their *da'wah* understanding and practices, and simultaneously calls upon institutions to proceed with reform programs as a key means to religious education and a prerequisite to discharge *da'wah* and Islamic reform in general.

According to al-Ghazali, regrettably horrendous traditions continue to control Muslim life in the name of religion.⁸¹ Also, the teachings of Islam have withdrawn from political, economic, and social life, with religious worship left without spirit, and turned into meaningless rituals. Al-Ghazali argued that *da'wah* is jeopardizing its message and compounding problems by transmitting Islamic principles that have been erroneously jumbled with elements from medieval and modern

times.⁸² Al-Ghazali thus exhorts Muslims to discard customs rooted in the first period of ignorance (*al-jāhiliyyah al-'ulā*). These for example include the suppression of women, in the form of amongst other things, disregarding their education, barring their attendance at mosques, discouraging them from enjoining the good and forbidding evil, and increasing their punishment for any sin committed.⁸³ For him, lack of a proper understanding of Islam has led certain nomadic traditions to infiltrate Muslim jurisprudence.

Da'wah and Freedom

Al-Ghazali viewed freedom of the intellect and conscience as fundamental foundations of religiosity,⁸⁴ and a key environment enabling religion to emerge, grow, and prosper.⁸⁵ According to al-Ghazali, intellectual freedom forms the foundation of *da'wah*, and is a crucial criterion for divine reward and punishment. Freedom of expression involves constructive criticism, contesting intellectual positions through cogent debate not offense or threat. According to al-Ghazali, religious messages have accorded the intellect necessary freedom to engage in enhanced dialogue demonstrating no compulsion against people's faith.⁸⁶ Islam, for instance, seeks to establish an atmosphere of tolerance, free of any despotism and oppression,⁸⁷ aiming to gently persuade in an environment of peace. Faith is thus seen as something rooted in, as well as an outcome of, absolute intellectual freedom, without resort to the use of miracles (suppressing intellectual capacity), or any pressure exerted on the human intellect or will.

Al-Ghazali enumerates approximately one hundred verses from the Qur'an in order to prove that faith is the ultimate outcome of free thinking, will, and conscience, the end result of intellect and persuasion which requires removal of coercion from *da'wah*. Al-Ghazali further enumerates various types of freedom, such as freedom of speech, religious freedom, the freedom to satisfy basic needs, and freedom from persecution.⁸⁸

For al-Ghazali, persuasion and debate are powerful, whilst fear and force have no place.⁸⁹ Logic alone dictates that when it comes to religion, any form of compulsion will drive people away and instead of instilling faith will foster religious misconceptions. People forced to adhere to religion are not considered religious even when subjected to strict religious observances.⁹⁰ Compulsion in religion is viewed as an intellectual offense, finding no support in the life of Prophet Muhammad or the rightly guided caliphs. Hence, al-Ghazali exhorts *du'āt* to be

concerned with guiding people, and not make accumulation of profit the *raison d'être* of life, the latter making of them little more than robbers not *du'āt*.⁹¹

According to al-Ghazali, prophets are brothers whose spiritual intimacy unites people awakening within them feelings of cooperation and sympathy instead of leaving them fragmented and scattered. Out of the ten principles al-Ghazali enunciated, four are devoted entirely to *da'wah* and religious cooperation, while principle eight addresses religious differences and how they should prevent enmity or adversity.⁹² According to al-Ghazali, humanity is one single family originating from one common source, with no preference whatsoever of one over the other with regards to creation or life.⁹³

In sum, al-Ghazali's works distance *da'wah* from all forms of abuse, tyranny, and exploitation. Both the caller (*dā'iyah*) and the called upon (*mad'ū*) enjoy equal freedom. The perspective on freedom in al-Ghazali's works transcends his own socio-political experience, and largely depends on persuasion and choice. This perspective is shown to be original, humanistic, realistic, and of course religious. In al-Ghazali's works, *da'wah* is shown to be an open and tolerant process of change, paying considerable attention to human emotion and intellect. It rationally translates the values of what he terms the natural religion (*al-dīn al-ṭabī'ī*) without confronting the universal values.

Chapter Three

***Du'āt* (Callers to Islam)**

Al-Ghazali's perspective on *du'āt*'s responsibilities, their spiritual, moral, and educational qualifications, is examined, as well as the problems and challenges facing them in relation to *da'wah*. Also examined is al-Ghazali's critique of their views. This helps us to better understand the nature and implications of *da'wah* work, and the importance al-Ghazali's model of *da'wah* placed on spiritual and moral character. It also allows us to identify the reasons which led him to regard these qualifications as mandatory for *da'wah* practice and without which he was clear *du'āt* would not succeed. Discussion of these qualifications also highlights al-Ghazali's position with regard to current notions of *du'āt*'s educational standards, and other prerequisites required for *da'wah* practice.

Responsibilities of *Du'āt*

According to al-Ghazali, Islam is in essence quintessentially geared to *da'wah*. It exhorts Muslims to learn and teach, become persuaded and persuade others.⁹⁴ Islam imparts detailed knowledge of the Creator, provides certainty for those who doubt and prescribes piety for all people. It also seeks to change the human self and society, confronts corruption and injustice, disposes of negative customs and rules, and endorses virtuous traditions and practices instead. 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 of God and His Messenger, and excellence in worldly life.⁹⁵

According to the Qur'an, *du'āt* are to recite its verses, acquire spiritual purification, and educate people. These duties, as advocated by the prophets, represent essential components of *da'wah*. More immediately, however, *du'āt's* primary field of work is their own selves and groups. Through setting a good example, they instantly act as role models, inspiring others to faith in God, as well as educating both Muslims and non-Muslims with regards to religion and revelation, testing their connection with the Qur'an. *Du'āt* illustrate the truth and do not conceal it, conveying the faith's message intact, free of the effects of material life. At the social level, and following several Qur'anic reports, the *dā'iyah* frees *da'wah* of desire and greed, communicating the Islamic message without thought of material gain.

A *dā'iyah's* responsibilities also involve his/her personal and social development and ability to address the religious and mundane worlds together. These responsibilities do not simply reflect the traditional duties of religious teachers, preachers, or scholars but, rather, fit a new *da'wah* perspective, whereby *du'āt* contribute to Islamic reform and act as positive agents of change. This shows how al-Ghazali's broad understanding of *da'wah* affected his understanding of *du'āt's* responsibilities. Such a wide-ranging spectrum of responsibilities, nonetheless makes the *dā'iyah's* task multifaceted, complex, and challenging, and renders assessment of their progress and contribution a little difficult. These responsibilities also show a subtle shift to a versatile and dynamic style of *da'wah* responsibilities. This broadens *du'āt's* attention, makes *da'wah* a crucial tool in general Islamic reform, and also deemphasises the distinctions between Islamic reform and *da'wah*.

Al-Ghazali also laid out *daʿwah* responsibilities for individuals and groups participating in peaceful and positive Islamic reform and the improvement of local and global life. These involved preachers, theologians, and members of Islamic reform movements. Most of his critique, however, is directed at *duʿāt* considered to be religious preachers and scholars. Al-Ghazali keeps both categories in mind, yet does not separate the responsibilities of each.

Spiritual and Moral Qualifications of *Duʿāt*

Al-Ghazali believed that *duʿāt* were most in need of self-discipline⁹⁶ and needed to implement within themselves a greater level of religious and moral virtue than the general public. For example, *duʿāt* should attain a higher degree of faith and certainty, enthusiasm and virtue. This required *duʿāt* to be attentive to their own moral and spiritual state, self-diagnosing themselves to cure any shortcomings or spiritual disease. They were also not to assume their lectures applied to their audiences only and not to themselves.

For al-Ghazali, greed and materialism are inconsistent with *daʿwah*. *Duʿāt* do not and should not seek material reward in return for their work.⁹⁷ For al-Ghazali, this selfless sacrifice found in the work of *duʿāt* is not accidental because the central foundation of a *dāʿiyah*'s moral character lies in his/her spiritual association with God. In undertaking *daʿwah*, *duʿāt* should be seeking divine satisfaction, not their own self-satisfaction, and their intention should be constantly focused on the fact that what they are doing, they are doing for God, and this cannot be done without a sincere heart and a positive connection to the Divine.⁹⁸ Successful *duʿāt* are those who guide people through example, acting as role models, displaying prophetic character in their worship, conduct, and struggle. Overall, *duʿāt* are to adhere to the teachings of Islam in their approach to, and style of *daʿwah*, and to abstain from deception, while reaching out to human hearts.⁹⁹

In addition, *duʿāt* should improve themselves morally and academically, because advanced societies are not realistically going to pay attention to inferior *duʿāt* who fail in areas of intellectual, scientific, and moral leadership. *Duʿāt* should share the sadness of people in distress, wish them health and recovery, assist them during failure, care for their sorrow, defend them against injustice, and join the crowds of ill-treated and abused people. *Duʿāt* are to connect with people and not segregate themselves from them, and to share good tidings, instead of driving people away. In all of this, *duʿāt* are to rise above personal disputes and not condemn people.¹⁰⁰

In sum, the major concern of *du'āt* is to teach, remind and guide people, and provide opportunities of hope until they return to their Creator. *Du'āt* motivate others and hope for their good, are satisfied if the goals of *da'wah* are achieved, and avoid despair, particularly if the surrounding conditions do not support *da'wah*.¹⁰¹

Educational Qualifications of *Du'āt*

Al-Ghazali believed that, in light of the Qur'an, the divine selection of nations depended on their intellectual and moral merit beneficial to humanity, and not on any ethnic or geographic terms.¹⁰² For al-Ghazali, *du'āt*'s success depends on their commitment to wide and deep study. *Du'āt* are to read about all types of literature and trends in human thought to understand life and its surrounding influences; they are to read about faith, atheism, philosophy, and Sunnah,¹⁰³ and to avoid reading materials from periods of decline. According to al-Ghazali, *da'wah* also requires knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is equally important for *du'āt* to understand the history of Muslim caliphs and their extensive examination of contemporary conditions.¹⁰⁴

Al-Ghazali underscored the role of the Arabic language and literature as a pre-requisite for effective *da'wah*. Learning Arabic helps people learn about Muslims, motivates them to understand revelation, and supports the transmission of beliefs. The intellectual formation of *du'āt* is also to include the study of the human sciences, including ethics, and social and political philosophy. They are also to have a grasp of modern trends in thought.¹⁰⁵ Effective *da'wah* also demands knowledge of sociology, economics, education, and psychology. Accordingly, *du'āt* are to approach the human sciences from an Islamic perspective. Finally, the intellectual formation of *du'āt* is to include a study of the natural sciences. *Du'āt* are to understand physical sciences including chemistry, biology and astronomy, and are to be also acquainted with geography, botany, and animal sciences.¹⁰⁶ The sciences outlined are for al-Ghazali crucial to *da'wah* because they help *du'āt* to correct their concepts, coordinate their relationship with the physical world, and provide them with in-depth guidance.¹⁰⁷

In sum, al-Ghazali attempts to articulate an ambitious *da'wah* model in which *du'āt* are to be remarkably learned personalities mastering various areas of academic scholarship. His model, however, demands socially skilled *du'āt* with encyclopaedic minds, who are able to exercise a multidisciplinary approach to areas of research – rational or traditional, physical or moral.¹⁰⁸

Problems of *Du'āt*

Al-Ghazali pointed to the numerous problems and challenges affecting *da'wah*. These include questions of culture and customs, *du'āt* being poor role models with poor religious practice, women's low rank status, a weak education system, inadequate institutions of *da'wah*, *du'āt* performance, Muslim misconceptions about mundane life, legal differences, abrogation in the Qur'an (*al-naskh fī al-Qur'ān*), failure in worldly life, and influential foreign cultures. For al-Ghazali, all these form critical challenges, especially when *da'wah* requires an intelligent and broad treatment, and the state of affairs facing Muslims is one of terrible economic and scientific backwardness.¹⁰⁹

For al-Ghazali, intellectual and sectarian differences have caused deep fissures among Muslims, engendering a disregard for social responsibilities both locally and internationally. Such disregard is, in turn, caused by Muslims' preoccupation with outward religious forms rather than their innate being.¹¹⁰ There are the ensuing causes of decline, whether intellectual, social, or political, and the cultural influences exploiting Muslim personality. The long-lasting state of ignorance has also caused a lack of research and follow up on *da'wah*, and allowed corrupted cultures and confused political movements to develop putting into jeopardy *du'āt*. As a result, the universal message of Islam has gradually declined.¹¹¹

According to al-Ghazali, Muslims should set ideal examples reflecting Islam's message, and act as genuine recipients of the divine teachings and values revealed. Al-Ghazali argued that a nation with a message should establish its life system accordingly. In so doing, the goodness of Muslims will eventually become visible across their borders and reach out to the whole world.¹¹² A Muslim role model can also come in the shape of Muslim governments who through various institutions, should take care of their citizens, uphold justice, advocate peace, and stand against material desires. Al-Ghazali anticipated that if Islam is to work well as a role model, a high percentage of Muslims require education. For al-Ghazali, *da'wah* does not flourish if Muslims fail in key areas of economics and social development, or lack understanding of life and its sciences.¹¹³ Hence, faith will not prosper so long as the intellectual and economic situation of Muslims remains poor.

For al-Ghazali, the social condition of present day Muslims not only affects *da'wah*'s progress, but also raises doubts as to Islam's value and the extent to which humanity would benefit from it.¹¹⁴ For him,

Muslim attitudes and social disintegration can easily deter people from the faith. Presently, Muslims cannot guide others and neither can their religious leaders. According to al-Ghazali, Muslims have failed to embody the values and teachings of Islam, whether in formulating *daʿwah* strategies or developing methods of religious presentation.¹¹⁵ Rather than developing a base for religious knowledge and moral contribution, to thereby shape a people capable of carrying out the message, Muslim culture (*thaqāfah*), according to al-Ghazali, has led intellectuals to seclusion and isolation.¹¹⁶ For him, most customs are baseless and have their origins in periods of backwardness.

Al-Ghazali also discussed a number of problems that together amount to a substantial setback for *daʿwah*. First, he surveyed Muslim history and contended that poor religious practices have significantly impeded *daʿwah*'s progress. Second, the conflict between this worldly life and the hereafter has caused *daʿwah* fatal losses, and entailed two major injustices: failure to understand or support people's attachment to life and failure to understand divine guidance or observe religious commands. Third is *duʿāt* misunderstanding of abrogation (*al-naskh*). Al-Ghazali viewed abrogation negatively seeing it as undermining *daʿwah* and damaging the beauty of its nature. Fourth is *duʿāt*'s preoccupation, even obsession, with trivial conflicts. Last, there is the absence of institutions of *daʿwah* that should motivate goodness, explore new intellectual fields, and follow up on internal and external *daʿwah* progress, achievements, or defeats.¹¹⁷

As the stress on intellectual development suggests, al-Ghazali placed discussion on improving *daʿwah* within the framework of Islamic education. Al-Ghazali sought to remedy *daʿwah*'s deteriorated state, and to advance the dissemination of Islamic culture in such a way that it enhances *daʿwah* concepts, blending *daʿwah* with the time-space factor components of reality. Any solution to the problems of *duʿāt* would represent, in al-Ghazali's view, a contribution to improving the general conditions of society as a whole.

Critique of *Duʿāt*

Al-Ghazali's critique of *duʿāt* focuses on specific individuals or groups, and he was able to develop a critique of common problems. However, had his approach and tone been less provocative and more constructive, then his critiques could have been probably more helpful. Al-Ghazali's criticism was successful to a degree because it created or opened up the current discourse on *daʿwah*, the various legal problems attached to it,

and the principles of *daʿwah* and how they are understood or translated in society. However, Al-Ghazali's critique raises problems it does not solve, does not lead to any systematic methodology reflecting unity, objectivity, or consistency, and demonstrates the need for a systematic yet extensive remedying effort in modern *daʿwah*.

Al-Ghazali's ideal image of *duʿāt* raises a series of critical questions. First, those "*duʿāt*" appear to integrate tradition with modernity, and use their skills in light of their understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context of *daʿwah*. If that is the case then any further discussion should have focused on the process of integration of disciplines, and also what methodology to adopt in approaching both Islamic and modern knowledge from the perspective of *daʿwah*. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on *duʿāt*'s educational standards raises the question as to what type of Islamic education institutions could help *duʿāt* acquire the various skills stipulated. This again leads to the question of perspective, curriculum, and staff. Clearly, al-Ghazali's inattention to how to solve the problems he states reinforces the fact that he was simply concerned with raising the question of *daʿwah* and *duʿāt* at a general level without developing a detailed *daʿwah* program for implementation.

Chapter Four

Al-Ghazali's Perspective on the Methodology of *Daʿwah*

Al-Ghazali's *daʿwah* methodology is the central theme of this chapter. It first deals with his approach to *daʿwah* and his understanding of *daʿwah* priorities, and the relationship of *duʿāt* to the receptive intellect and religious preaching. The second addresses the relationship of *daʿwah* to Islamic law. The third concerns *daʿwah* and women. Al-Ghazali here re-interprets many legal questions with regards to women to develop a framework that legitimizes women's participation in social and political life and supports his position that women, not just men, can make a positive contribution to *daʿwah* and Islamic reform.

The Approach to *Daʿwah*

The approach to *daʿwah* is what translates *duʿāt*'s knowledge and experience into an undertaking of religious transmission. It also reflects the priorities of *daʿwah*, areas of *duʿāt*'s attention and the implications

of *daʿwah* for society. According to al-Ghazali, *duʿāt* should present their beliefs in conformity to the methodology of the Qurʾan,¹¹⁸ which adheres to a specific style in introducing the Creator and the divine attributes. For him, *daʿwah* is an honest translation of religious truths, and a genuine interpretation of Islamic beliefs and laws.¹¹⁹ According to al-Ghazali, *daʿwah* is fundamentally preoccupied with elucidation of the oneness of God, instead of secondary legal opinions, this leads to goodness, and unites people around obligatory religious acts.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, al-Ghazali seemed overly preoccupied with the impact of legal differences on the approach to *daʿwah*. To free *daʿwah* from the grip of legal differences, he suggested what he terms “an amnesty in Islamic law.” Such attention reinforces his concern about the proper understanding and application of the law in *daʿwah*. According to al-Ghazali, *duʿāt* weaken or mislead Muslim society when they present Islam as a review of secondary legal rulings or theological discussion.¹²¹

Alongside the traditional form of religious preaching, i.e. the Friday sermon, al-Ghazali alludes to what he termed *al-iʿlām al-daʿawī* (*daʿwah* information). This is an honest transmission of the message, committed to the spread of the truth and support for the welfare of humanity.¹²² Furthermore, Al-Ghazali seemed to be more concerned with the effect of modern preaching on the approach to *daʿwah*. In his writing, the differences between *daʿwah*, preaching, and professional careers has caused some Muslims to perceive *daʿwah* as limited to religious preaching, dressing in a particular way, or making day visits to a neighboring village. And this perception has led to a disassociation from society, schooling, and academic pursuit.

Whether giving attention to the Qurʾan as a framework for *daʿwah* or looking at the compliance of *daʿwah* with the requirements of the law, al-Ghazali demonstrated a genuine interest in understanding and applying an effective Islamic approach to *daʿwah*. His approach to *daʿwah* involves the requirements and implications of revelation, yet is not simply a set of theoretical assumptions; rather, it involves reinforcement of the moral characters of *duʿāt*. Lacking those moral competences simply defeats *daʿwah*, and causes suspicion among outreached communities. For al-Ghazali, the approach to *daʿwah* is interwoven with the personal make up of *duʿāt*, and is geared to producing proper and effective religious understanding.

***Da'wah* Legal Methodology (*Fiqh al-Da'wah*)**

Al-Ghazali exercised independent reasoning concerning both *da'wah* and law, first delving into the problem of *da'wah* and how it should be understood, approached and undertaken, and secondly, addressing the question of the law and how it should be interpreted and applied to serve the best interest of *da'wah*. Al-Ghazali underscored the need to comply with and sustain the goals of *da'wah*. For this he had to wear the twin hats of both jurist and theoretician in relation to *da'wah*.

In revisiting Islamic jurisprudence then al-Ghazali sought to solve pressing problems which, in his view, impeded *da'wah* and negatively affected his model of it. This demonstrates that his study of law in regards to *da'wah* was simply a practical strategy with little attention paid to the formulation of a systematic methodology of *da'wah* thought. This is apparent in many of his juristic preferences, which fail to supply a consistent application of the law or a systematic methodology on the question of its integration with *da'wah*.

Al-Ghazali'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. Al-Ghazali lays out a broad framework for the relationship between law and *da'wah*, yet always with serious attention given to *da'wah's* best interests. For example, he discussed the legal ruling on the prohibition of music, believing this should not impede faith. He felt this to be particularly true of western societies in relation to which questions of music/song, or the covering of women's faces should not be raised in the course of *da'wah*. Al-Ghazali's legal methodology for *da'wah*, nonetheless, shows a profound preoccupation with the reactions of western societies vis-à-vis Muslim practices, and his concern regarding the interest of *da'wah* and his dream for a positive reaction from outreached people caused him to adopt considerable numbers of weak reports (*ahādīth ḍa'īfah*).

Al-Ghazali's work nonetheless provides a courageous exploration of the contemporary problems afflicting *da'wah* both internally and externally. One can only surmise that al-Ghazali's efforts, although in a stage of infancy, nevertheless broke the tense silence which had hitherto surrounded the association of *da'wah* with the law, and initiated the foundations of modern discourse on *da'wah*, law, and Islamic progress.

He also charted a new way of analysis, which exhorted 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.

Women and *Da'wah*

Al-Ghazali re-examined some theoretical assumptions concerning women, because detrimental cultural perceptions and customs in relation to women have negatively affected women's position and contribution, all in the name of Islam. Al-Ghazali repeatedly discussed the issue of cultural infiltration creeping into religious interpretation, the failure of *du'at* in their approach to the question of women, and the need to re-visit legal perspectives concerning various questions involving women. For al-Ghazali, a genuine understanding of the issue of women assures a proper approach with regard to their contribution to modern societies.

Al-Ghazali argued that the Qur'an's teachings regarding women were being totally ignored. Women rarely received their shares of inheritance, were seldom consulted with regards to their marriage,¹²³ and were humiliated and left in ignorance by uneducated religious people. As a result, they had forgotten their religious duties and responsibilities in life.¹²⁴ According to al-Ghazali, social and cultural customs such as these have contributed significantly to women's lowered status, for instance denying women their economic rights.¹²⁵ Moreover, these man-made customs and perceptions have impeded the contribution of women to society, making them insignificant in both life and religion, and in doing so preserving the darkness of ignorance, violating the teachings of Islam, and leading to a decline in the education of women and thereby the whole nation. For al-Ghazali, these customs by weakening the position of women have raised the status of men, constraining women to the realm of physical pleasure. Women's moral position is viewed through the lens of honor, such that i.e. a son's wrongdoing is considered youthful fun, whereas a woman's erroneous action is considered an embarrassment whose implications are serious.

Al-Ghazali's strategy was to provide fresh legal interpretations surrounding the condition of women. He argued, for example, that there is no indisputably authoritative Islamic text requiring women to cover their faces. To re-establish the position of women, al-Ghazali considered various interpretations that he believed would produce a fresh understanding, and which would unleash women's potential and capabilities.

Conclusion

Al-Ghazali sought to develop a modern *daʿwah* model within a broad spectrum of Islamic change. In his model, *duʿāt* are not just conveyers of abstract religious teachings or morality but also agents of positive change. Furthermore, *daʿwah* is viewed as no longer the duty of a particular religious group of *duʿāt* but rather a social and collective responsibility that seeks not only to enhance religious life but also the economic standards of Muslim society. Furthermore, *daʿwah* is to enrol in its service not only preachers, muftis, and religious scholars, but additionally all those contributing to social and global change, transcending the traditional space of groups such as Tablighi Jamaat, the Sufis and Salafis.

For him, *daʿwah* does not simply connote the responsibility 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 points of contact between religion and society. Given this multifaceted nature of *daʿwah*, al-Ghazali looks for a new operating context, one which transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, adheres to a fresh and rational understanding of the religious traditions, and is dissociated from contemporary contributions of Muslim *daʿwah* movements and groups. Al-Ghazali's model of *daʿwah* constantly involves questions of Islamic change, to produce an atmosphere that is conducive for *daʿwah*. In view of the universal character of *daʿwah* requiring the introduction of Islam to different individuals and nations, al-Ghazali's model seeks to forge bridges of communication, understanding and interaction, particularly with the West, as well as enhancing universal channels of communication in Muslim societies themselves.

Al-Ghazali's model of *daʿwah* supports a middle position. Indeed, it is hard to conceive where the state of discourse on *daʿwah* and Islamic reform would be without al-Ghazali's outstanding, constructive, and comprehensive contributions. The powerful stand he took on the importance of education, the significant weight he gave to a free society, his promotion of a decent standard of living for the poor, the quality of personal excellence he appealed for, and his compassionate, impassioned role as an educator and public critical intellectual, all preserve al-Ghazali's reputation both in his own lifetime and for many generations to come as one of the century's most important intellectual Muslim thinkers and reformers.

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Notes

- ¹ Ishaq Farhan, “Kalimah Jam‘iyyat al-Dirāsāt wa al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyyah,” in *Al-‘Aṭa’ al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī*, p.20.
- ² Muhammad Imarah, *Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī wa al-Mawqī‘ al-Fikrī wa al-Ma‘ārik al-Fikriyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2009), p.29.
- ³ Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Jur‘āt Jadīdah min al-Ḥaqq al-Murr* (New Doses of the Bitter Truth) (Giza, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2004), vol.6, p.44.
- ⁴ Muhammad al-Ghazali, “Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt al-Shaykh,” (Excerpts from the Memories of al-Ghazali: A Life Story) *Islāmiyyat al-Ma‘rifah*, 7 (1997), p.155.
- ⁵ Muhammad al-Ghazali *Ta‘ammulāt fī al-Dīn wa al-Ḥayāt* (Reflections about Religion and Life) (Giza: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘), pp.44-46.
- ⁶ Ahmad Assal, “Al-Jawānib al-Nafsiyyah wa al-Khuluqiyyah,” in *Al-‘Aṭa’ al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī*, p.28.
- ⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa Awḍā‘unā al-Iqtisādiyyah* (Islam and our Economic Conditions)(Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), p.62.
- ⁸ Masud Fallussi, *Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī Ghuṣn Bāsiq fī Shajarat al-Khulūd* (Al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali, A Lofty Branch in a Tree of Eternity)(Cairo:Maktabat Wahbah, 2003), p.24.
- ⁹ Fallussi, *Ghuṣn Bāsiq*, p.28.
- ¹⁰ See al-Ghazali, “Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt,” p.158.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p.159.
- ¹² Ibid., pp.168-169.
- ¹³ Al-Ghazali, *Ta‘ammulāt*, p.113.
- ¹⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* (Understanding Islam) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), p.28.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p.30.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p.32.
- ¹⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī* (Essays by Shaykh al-Ghazali) (Giza: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2002), vol.2, p.110.
- ¹⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Ṣayḥat Tahdhīr min Du‘āt al-Tanṣīr*, 1st edn., (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), p.33.

- ¹⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa al-Istibdād al-Siyāsī* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), p.207.
- ²⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Qadhā'if al-Haqq* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2002), p.81; *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyyah*, p.9.
- ²¹ Muhammad Imarah, *Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, al-Mawqī' al-Fikrī wa al-Ma'ārik al-Fikriyyah* (The Intellectual Position of Muhammad al-Ghazali and the Intellectual Debates) (Egypt: Al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li al-Kitāb, 1992), p.31.
- ²² See al-Qaradawi, *Al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī kamā ʿAraftuh, Riḥlat Niṣf Qarn* (Al-Shaykh al-Ghazali 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), p.31.
- ²³ Al-Ghazali, "Qiṣṣat Ḥayāt," p.197.
- ²⁴ Al-Assal, "Al-Jawānib al-Fikriyyah," in *Al-ʿAṭā' al-Fikrī li al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī*, p.54.
- ²⁵ See Said Hawwa, *Fī Āfāq al-Taʿālīm* (Beirut, Lebanon: The Holy Qur'an Publishing House, 1980), pp.168-173.
- ²⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah*, pp.236-237.
- ²⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Daʿwah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil Qarnahā al-Khāmis ʿAshar* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2001), pp.68-92.
- ²⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Haqq al-Murr*, vol.3, p.3.
- ²⁹ Halim Uways, *Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Tārīkhuhu wa Juhuduhu wa Ārā'uhu*, pp.10-11.
- ³⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Ta'ammulāt*, p.209.
- ³¹ Al-Ghazali, *Min Ma'ālim al-Haqq fī Kifāḥinā al-Islāmī al-Ḥadīth* (Signposts from our Present Islamic Struggle) (Giza, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2003), pp.95-96.
- ³² Al-Ghazali, *Min Hunā Na'lam* (From Here we Know) (Giza, Egypt: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2005), p.95.
- ³³ Al-Ghazali, *Ma'a Allāh: Dirāsāt fī al-Daʿwah wa al-Du'āt* (In the Company of God: A Study of *Daʿwah* and *Du'āt*) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), p.92.
- ³⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.3, p.81.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Ma'a Allāh*, pp.18-19.
- ³⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Qadhā'if al-Haqq*, p.81.
- ³⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Rakā'iz al-ʿImān*, p.23.
- ³⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta'akhhur al-ʿArab wa al-Muslimīn* (The Causes of Backwardness of Arabs and Muslims) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), p.35.
- ⁴⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Haqīqat al-Qawmiyyah al-ʿArabiyyah* (The Reality of Arab Nationalism) (Giza: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2005), p.49.

- 41 Al-Ghazali, *Min Ma‘ālim al-Ḥaqq*, p.148.
- 42 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, p.7.
- 43 Al-Ghazali, *Ma‘a Allāh*, p.52.
- 44 Ibid., p.157.
- 45 Al-Ghazali, *‘Ilal wa Adwiyah* (Diseases and Cures) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), p.250.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Al-Ghazali, *Ma‘a Allāh*, p.171.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Al-Ghazali, *Ḥuqūq al-Insān bayna Ta‘ālim al-Islām wa I‘lān Hay’at al-Umam* (Human Rights between the Teachings of Islam and the Declaration of the United Nation) (Giza, Egypt: Nahḍat Miṣr li Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2004), p.218.
- 50 Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.3, p.90.
- 51 Ibid., vol.1, p.63.
- 52 Al-Ghazali, *Jaddid Ḥayātaka* (Damascus, Syria: Dār al-Qalam, 2004), p.59.
- 53 Al-Ghazali, *‘Ilal wa Adwiyah* (Damascus, Syria: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), p.121.
- 54 Al-Ghazali, *Jur‘āt Jadīdah*, vol.5, p.51.
- 55 Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.1, p.50.
- 56 Al-Ghazali, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?* p.142.
- 57 Al-Ghazali, *Jur‘āt Jadīdah*, vol.5, p.51.
- 58 Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.1, p.63.
- 59 Al-Ghazali, *‘Ilal wa Adwiyah*, p.59.
- 60 Al-Ghazali, *Jaddid Ḥayātaka*, p.8.
- 61 Al-Ghazali, *Mi‘at Sa‘āl* (One Hundred Questions) (Cairo: Dār al-Muqaṭṭam li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2004), p.139.
- 62 Al-Ghazali, *Zalām min al-Gharb* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1999), p.39.
- 63 Al-Ghazali, *Rakā‘iz al-‘Imān bayna al-‘Aql wa al-Qalb* (Foundations of Faith between the Intellect and Heart), p.82.
- 64 Al-Ghazali, *‘Ilal wa Adwiyah*, p.120.
- 65 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Ghazw al-Thaqāfi*, p.18.
- 66 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyyah*, p.168.
- 67 Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta‘akbkhur*, p.148.
- 68 Al-Ghazali, *‘Ilal wa Adwiyah*, p.237.
- 69 Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta‘akbkhur*, pp.94-95.
- 70 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyyah*, pp.145-174.
- 71 Al-Ghazali, *Humūm Dā‘iyah* (Concerns of a Dā‘iyah) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), p.3.
- 72 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mahāwir al-Khamsah li al-Qur‘ān al-Karīm* (The Five Themes of the Glorious Qur‘an) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), p.57.
- 73 Al-Ghazali, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?*, p.15.
- 74 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa Awdā‘unā al-Iqtisādiyyah* (Islam and our Economic Conditions) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), pp.91-92.

- ⁷⁵ Al-Ghazali, *‘Aqīdat al-Muslim* (The Muslim Creed) (Dār al-Qalam, 1999), p.13.
- ⁷⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.1, p.63.
- ⁷⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.2, p.147.
- ⁷⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa Awdā‘unā*, p.61.
- ⁷⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Humūm Dā‘iyah*, p.129.
- ⁸⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta‘akhhur*, p.89.
- ⁸¹ Al-Ghazali, *‘Ilal wa Adwiyah*, p.120.
- ⁸² Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta‘akhhur*, p.33.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.32.
- ⁸⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa al-Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p.92.
- ⁸⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Qadhā‘if al-Ḥaqq*, p.235.
- ⁸⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa al-Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p.87.
- ⁸⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Mustaqbal al-Da‘wah* (The Future of *Da‘wah*) (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1997), p.15.
- ⁸⁸ Al-Ghazali, *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), pp.74-75.
- ⁸⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Mi‘at Sū‘āl*, p.296.
- ⁹⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Zalām min al-Gharb*, p.89.
- ⁹¹ Al-Ghazali, *Mi‘at Sū‘āl*, p.296.
- ⁹² Al-Ghazali, *Hādihā Dīmunā* (This is our Religion) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1999), p.55.
- ⁹³ Al-Ghazali, *Ḥuqūq al-Insān*, p.14.
- ⁹⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, pp.129-130.
- ⁹⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr* (The Harvest of Pride) (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), p.107.
- ⁹⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Ma‘a Allāh*, p.186.
- ⁹⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Min Hunā Na‘lam*, p.95.
- ⁹⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyyah*, p.144.
- ⁹⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta‘akhhur*, p.40.
- ¹⁰⁰ Al-Ghazali, *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), p.64.
- ¹⁰¹ Al-Ghazali, *Mushkilāt fī Ṭarīq al-Ḥayāt al-Islāmiyyah* (Problems on the Way to the Islamic Life) (Cairo: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2003), p.137.
- ¹⁰² Al-Ghazali, *Ḥaṣād al-Ghurūr*, p.21.
- ¹⁰³ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.3, p.165.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ghazali, *Ma‘a Allāh*, p.193.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.216-217.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.215.

- ¹⁰⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Mushkilāt*, p.117.
- ¹⁰⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Sirr Ta'akhhur*, p.95.
- ¹⁰⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, vol.3, p.28.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.100.
- ¹¹¹ Al-Ghazali, *Mustaqbal al-Islām*, pp.163-164.
- ¹¹² Al-Ghazali, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?*, pp.79-80.
- ¹¹³ Al-Ghazali, *Rakā'iz al-Īmān*, p.159.
- ¹¹⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, p.3.
- ¹¹⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Kayfa Nafham al-Islām?*, p.25.
- ¹¹⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Min Maqālāt*, 2, p.1.
- ¹¹⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyyah*, p.90.
- ¹¹⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Humūm Dā'iyah*, p.129.
- ¹¹⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Qadhā'if al-Ḥaqq*, p.168.
- ¹²⁰ Al-Ghazali, *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), p.175.
- ¹²¹ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, p.147.
- ¹²² Al-Ghazali, *Al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyyah Tastaqbil*, p.179.
- ¹²³ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, p.54.
- ¹²⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Islām wa al-Ṭāqāt al-Mu'atallah*, p.96.
- ¹²⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Dustūr al-Wiḥdah al-Thaqāfiyyah*, p.169.

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In his passionate devotion to the task of inviting others to Islam, Muhammad al-Ghazali (1917-1996) presented Muslims with a powerful critique of themselves, not only in their endemic failure to project Islam in the best, most reasoned light, but also in their betrayal of the Qur'an's spiritual principles and the highest standards set by the Prophet Muhammad.

This work analyzes al-Ghazali's critique of *du'āt* (those inviting to Islam) and the practice of *da'wah* work itself (the call to Islam). It also examines his methodology, various proposed solutions, and the juristic responses to his perspective. The evolution of al-Ghazali's thought and the people and factors influencing him are key elements of the study. It is hard to conceive where the state of discourse on *da'wah* and Islamic reform would be without al-Ghazali's outstanding contributions. The powerful stand he took on the importance of education, the significant weight he gave to a free society, his promotion of a decent standard of living for the poor, the qualities of moral and personal excellence he appealed for, and his compassionate, impassioned role as an educator, all these preserve al-Ghazali's reputation, both in his own lifetime and for many generations to come, as one of the twentieth century's most important Muslim intellectual thinkers and reformers. His legacy is founded on a lifetime of service.

