

Al-Ghazali's Ihya' Ulum al-Din

REVITALISATION OF THE SCIENCES OF RELIGION

(Abridged by Abd el Salam Haroun)

Revised and Translated

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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

All Praise be to ALLAH, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers
and peace be upon Mohammad His servant and Messenger.

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

"Whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and whatever he
forbids you, desist from it." (Chapter 59 verse 7)

First, I praise Allah, continuously though the praise of the
fervent does not do justice to His Glory.

Second, I invoke the blessing of Allah upon His Messenger,
peace and prayers be upon him, the master of mankind, and upon

all the Messengers.

Third, I ask His help having resolved to write a book on the revival of the religious sciences.

Fourth, I proceed to enlighten you, who are the most self-righteous of those who reject belief, and you, who are the most immoderate of the thoughtless unbelievers.

I am no longer obliged to remain silent, because the responsibility to speak, as well as warn you, has been imposed upon me by your persistent straying from the clear truth, and by your insistence upon fostering evil, flattering ignorance, and stirring up opposition against him who, in order to conform to the dictates of knowledge, deviates from custom and the established practice of men. In doing this he fulfills Allah's prescriptions for purifying the self and reforming the heart, thus somewhat redeeming a life, which has already been dissipated in despair of prevention and remedy, and avoids by it the company of him whom the Lawgiver (Mohammad peace and prayers be upon him) described when he said: "The most severely punished of all men on the Day of Resurrection will be a learned man whom Allah has not blessed with His knowledge." For, by my life, there is no reason for your abiding arrogance except the malady which has become an epidemic among the multitudes. That malady consists in not discerning this matter's importance, the gravity of the problem, and the seriousness of the crisis; in not seeing that life is waning and that what is to come is close at hand, that death is imminent but that the journey is still long, that the provisions are scanty, the dangers great, and the road blocked. The perceptive know that only knowledge and works devoted to Allah avail.

To tread the crowded and dangerous path of the Hereafter with neither guide nor companion is difficult, tiring, and strenuous. The guides for the road are the learned men who are the heirs of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) but

the times are void of them now and only the superficial are left, most of whom have been lured by iniquity and overcome by Satan. Everyone of them was so wrapped up in his immediate fortune that he came to see good as evil and evil as good, so that the science of the religion disappeared and the torch of the true faith was extinguished all over the world. They duped the people into believing that there was no knowledge except such ordinances of government as the judges sue to settle disputes when the mob riots; or the type of argument which the proud display in order to confuse and refute; or the elaborate and flowery language with which the preacher seeks to lure the common people. They did this because, apart from these three, they could find no other ways to snare illegal profit and riches of the world. On the other hand the science of the path of the Hereafter, which our fore-fathers trod and which includes what Allah in His Book called law, wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment, light, guidance and righteousness, has vanished from among mankind and been completely forgotten. Since this is a calamity afflicting religion and a grave crisis overshadowing it, I have therefore deemed it important to engage in the writing of this book; to revive the science of religion, to bring to light the exemplary lives of the departed immans, and to show what branches of knowledge the prophets and the virtuous fathers regarded as useful. I have divided the work into four parts or quarters. These are: the Acts of Worship, the Customs of Life, the Destructive Matters in Life, and the Saving Matters in Life. I have begun the work with the Book of Knowledge because it is of the utmost importance to determine first of all the knowledge which Allah has, through His Messenger, ordered the elite to seek. This is shown by the words of the Messenger of Allah when he said: "Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory upon every Muslim." Furthermore, I have begun with Book of Knowledge in order to distinguish between useful and harmful

Al-Ghazali's Ihya' Ulum al-Din

knowledge, as the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said: "We seek refuge in Allah from useless knowledge." And also to show the deviation of the people of this age from right conduct, their delusion as by a glistening mirage, and their satisfaction with the husks of knowledge rather than the path.

The quarter on the Acts of Worship comprises ten books:

1. The Book of Knowledge
2. The Articles of Faith
3. The Mysteries of Purity
4. The Mysteries of Prayer
5. The Mysteries of Almsgiving
6. The Mysteries of Fasting
7. The Mysteries of Pilgrimage
8. The Rules of Reading the Koran
9. On Invocations and Supplications
10. On the Office of Potions

The quarter of Customs comprises ten books:

1. The Ethics of Eating
2. The Ethics of Marriage
3. The Ethics of Earning a Livelihood
4. On the Lawful and the Unlawful
5. The Ethics of Companionship and Fellowship with the Various Types of People
6. On Seclusion
7. The Ethics of Travel
8. On Audition and Emotion
9. On Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil
10. The Ethics of Living as Exemplified in the Virtues of the Prophet

The quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life comprises ten

Al-Ghazali's Ihya' Ulum al-Din

books:

1. On the Wonders of the Heart
2. On the Discipline of the Soul
3. The Breaking of the Two Desires
4. The Evil of the Tongue
5. The condemnation of Anger, Rancor and Envy
6. The Condemnation of Worldliness
7. The Condemnation of Miserliness and Love of Wealth
8. The Condemnation of Prestige and Hypocrisy
9. The Condemnation of Pride and Conceit
10. The Condemnation of Vanity

The quarter on the Saving Matters of Life comprises ten books:

1. On Repentance
2. On Patience and Gratitude
3. On Fear and Hope
4. On Poverty and Asceticism
5. On Divine Unity and Dependence
6. On Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment
7. On Intentions, Truthfulness and Sincerity
8. On Self-Examination and Self Accounting
9. On Meditation
10. On Death

In the quarter on the Acts of Worship I shall mention some of the hidden elements of its meanings. These, the active learned person badly needs, without their knowledge no one will be versed in the science of the Hereafter. Most of this information has been neglected in theological studies.

In the quarter on the Customs of Life I shall deal with the rules of the practical religion current among men, its deep mysteries, intricate technique, and the piety concealed in its rules of conduct, which no religious person can do without.

In the quarter on the Destructive Matter of Life I shall

enumerate every abhorred trait whose exposure the Koran has ordered, as well as dealing with the purifying of the soul and cleansing of the heart from them. Under every one of these straits I shall give its definition, the truth about it, its origin, its evil consequences, its symptoms, and finally its treatment. To all this will be added illustrations from the Koran, tradition, and antiquity.

In the quarter on the Saving Matters of Life, I shall enumerate every praiseworthy trait and every one of the desirable qualities of Allah's favorites (al-muqarrabun) and the saints, by means of which the slave seeks to draw near to the Lord of the Universe. Similarly, under every quality I shall give its definition, the truth about it, its origin, its fruit, the sign by which it is known, its excellence which renders it desirable, together with examples to illustrate it from the fields of law and reason. It is true that men have written several works on some of these aspects, but this one differs from them in five ways:

First, by clarifying what they have obscured and elucidating what they have treated casually.

Second, by arranging what they have disarranged, and organizing what they have scattered.

Third, by ensuring what they have elaborated, and correcting what they have approved.

Fourth, by deleting what they have repeated (and verifying what they have set down).

Fifth, by determining ambiguous matters which have hitherto been unintelligible and never dealt with in any work. For, although all have followed one course, there is no reason why one should not proceed independently and bring to light something unknown, paying special attention to what his colleagues have forgotten. It is possible that such obscure things are noticed, but mention of them in writing is overlooked. Or, again, it may not be a case of overlooking

them, but rather one of being prevented from exposing them. These, therefore, are the characteristics of this work which comprises the aggregate of the (previously enumerated) sciences. Two things have induced me to divide the work into four quarters. The first and original motive is that such an arrangement in research and exposition is imperative because the science by which we approach the Hereafter is divided into the science of revelation and the science practical religion. By the science of revelation I mean knowledge and only knowledge. By the science of practical religion I mean knowledge as well as action in accordance with that knowledge. This work will deal only with the science of practical religion, and not with revelation, which one is not permitted to record in writing, although it is the ultimate aim of saints and the desire of the eyes of the sincere. The science of practical religion is merely a path which leads to revelation and only through that path did the Prophets of Allah communicate with the people and lead them to Him. Concerning revelation itself, the Prophets spoke only figuratively and briefly through signs and symbols, because they realized the inability of man's mind to comprehend. Therefore since the learned men are heirs of the Prophets, they cannot but follow in their footsteps and emulate their way.

Furthermore, the science of practical religion is divided into outward science, by which is meant that of the functions of the senses, and inward science, by which meant that of the functions of the heart. The bodily organs perform either acts of worship or usages of life, while the heart, because it is removed from the senses and belongs to the world of dominion, is subject to either praiseworthy or blameworthy (influences). Inevitably, therefore, this science divides itself into two parts - outward and inward. The outward, which pertains to the senses, is subdivided into acts of worship and customs of

life; the inward, which relates to the conditions of the heart and the qualities of the soul, is subdivided into things which are praiseworthy and things which are objectionable. Together these constitute the four parts of the science of practical religion, a classification objected to by none.

My second motive for adopting this division is that I have noticed that the interests of students in jurisprudence (which has, for the sake of boasting and exploiting its influence and prestige in arguments, become popular among those who do not fear Allah) is genuine. It is also divided into quarters. And since he who dresses as the beloved will also be beloved, I am not far wrong in deeming that the modeling of this book after books of jurisprudence will prove to be a clever move in creating interest in it. For this same reason, one of those who wanted to attract the attention of the authorities to (the science of) medicine, modeled it after astronomical lists, arranging it in tables and numbers, and called (his book) Tables of Health. He did this in order that their interest in that (latter) type (of study) might help in drawing them to read it. Ingenuity in drawing hearts to the science which is good for spiritual life is, however, more important than that of interesting them in medicine which benefits nothing but physical health. The fruit of this science is the treatment of the hearts and souls through which is obtained a life that will persist of souls through which is obtained a life that will persist forever and ever.

How inferior, then is the medicine of the body, which is of necessity destined to decay before long. Therefore, we beg Allah for help to lead us to the right path and the way of truth, indeed He is the Generous, the all Bounteous.

The Quarter on the Acts of Worship

The First Book

The Book of Knowledge

Kitab al-Ilm

Comprising Seven Chapters

Chapter One

The Value of Knowledge, Instruction, and

Learning together with its evidence in

Tradition and from reason

The excellence of Knowledge

The evidence of the excellence of knowledge in the Koran is revealed to us by Allah Almighty:

Allah bears witness that there is no Allah but He, and so do the angels and those who possess knowledge, upholding justice...(Koran Chapter 3 Verse 18)

We see how Allah Almighty begins by bearing witness for Himself, secondly for the angels and thirdly for those who possess knowledge. In this it is clear that the knowledgeable people are emphasized as holding high rank in the sight of Allah. As Allah Almighty said:

Allah will raise up in rank those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge...(Chapter 58 Verse 11)

Allah (High Exalted) said:

Say: "Can those be equal, they who know and they who know not?" (Chapter 13 verse 9)

Allah (High Exalted) also said:

Surely those of His servants who have knowledge fear Allah alone. (Chapter 35 Verse 28)

And Allah (High Exalted) said:

Say: "Allah Suffices as a witness between me and you, and whoever possesses knowledge of the Book." (Chapter 13 Verse

43)

Allah (High Exalted) also said:

Said one who possessed knowledge of the Scripture "I will bring it to you in the wink of an eye"... (Chapter 27 verse 40). Indicating that he was enabled by the power of knowledge.

As to the evidence of the value of knowledge in tradition (al-akhbar) the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "If Allah wants to do good to a person He makes him comprehend the Religion and of course knowledge is attained by learning." He also said, "The learned persons are the heirs of the prophets." It is also well known that there is no rank higher than prophecy, nor is there any honor higher than its inheritance.

And The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) also said "Whatever is in the heavens and the earth intercedes for the learned person." Who could be in a more elevated position than the one for whom the angels of the heavens and earth seek forgiveness?

The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said: "The best of persons is the learned believer who, if he is needed, he will be useful; and if dispensed with, he will be self-sufficient." He also said: "People are like ores of gold and silver, the best of them in the times of (Jahiliyah) before Islam, are also the best in the times Islam, provided they see the light."

And he also said: "The superior rank the learned person holds over the worshiper is similar to the superiority of the moon when it is full over the other stars."

As the evidence of the value of knowledge in the saying of the Companions (al-athar), Ali Ibn Abi Talib, (may Allah be pleased with him) said to Kumail "O Kumail knowledge is better than wealth, you safeguard wealth but knowledge safeguards you. Knowledge is sovereign but wealth is servile, wealth is diminished by expending while knowledge is increased in its

expending."

About Al Aswad said: "Nothing is more precious than knowledge, while kings are sovereign over the people, they are ruled by the learned."

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) said: "Solomon the son of David, (peace be upon them) was offered to choose between knowledge, wealth or power, and he chose knowledge, then he was blessed with wealth and power as well."

Ibn Al Mubarak was asked: "Who constitutes humanity?" He answered: "The learned." It was then said to him: "And who are the kings?" He answered: "The ascetics." He was asked: "Who are the ignoble people then?" He answered: "Those who in the name of religion, grow fat in the world." Ibn Al Mubarak only regarded the learned as belonging to mankind, because it is knowledge which distinguishes man from the animals.

Furthermore, man is a human being, not because of his physical prowess, for physically the camel is his superior; not because of his size because the elephant is larger; nor for his courage because the lion is more courageous than him, not because of his appetite for the ox has the greater.

Al Hassan (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "The ink of the learned will be likened to the blood of the martyrs, and the former will prove superior."

Salem ibn Abi Al Ja'd said: "My master bought me for 300 Dirhams and later set me free. Then I said what shall I do to support myself? So finally I took up learning and no sooner than a year had passed the Emir of Madinah called upon me, but I would not receive him."

Al Zuhari (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "Knowledge is glorious and is not treasured except by the glorious."

The Excellence of Learning

The excellence of learning is attested to in the Koran by Allah Almighty:

Al-Ghazali's Ihya' Ulum al-Din

Allah (High Exalted) said:

...but a party of every section of them should march forth, to become learned in Religion...(Chapter 9 verse 122)

As to the evidence of the excellence of learning in tradition (al-akhbar) the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said: "Whoever follows a path in search of knowledge, Allah will guide him into a path leading into Paradise."

And the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) also said: "Truly the angels will bow low to the one who seeks knowledge in approval of what he does."

As to the evidence of the excellence of learning in the saying of the Companions (al-athar), Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) said: "I was humbled when I sought knowledge, then I was elevated when the people sought knowledge from me."

And he also said: "I would rather spend a part of the night in learned discussion than in continual prayer."

Abu El Darda'a said: "To learn something is more favourable to me than to stand all night in prayer." And he also said: "Be learned or a learner, or one who listens, and do not be the exception or you will be doomed." He said: "Whoever sees that striving for knowledge is not a Jihad, his mind and opinion are lacking."

The Excellence of Teaching

The excellence of teaching is supported in the Koran, Allah Almighty said: "...and to warn their people when they return back to them, that they should guard themselves against evil." (Chapter 9 verse 122)

The object is teaching and advice,

Allah Almighty said: And when Allah took Covenant with those who were given earlier Scripture, "You shall certainly make it known to all people, and you shall not conceal it..." (Chapter 3 Verse 187)

It is an obligation to teach.

Allah High Exalted said: "Call mankind to the Way of your Lord

with wisdom and sound advice, and reason with them in a well mannered way...(Chapter 16 verse 125)

As to the evidence of the excellence of teaching in tradition (al-akhbar) the Prophet said to Mo'az (may Allah be pleased with) when he sent him to Yemen: "That Allah guides one person through you, it is better for you than the world and all that is in it."

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:

"Allah does not take away knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the religious learned men till none of them (religious learned men) remain, then people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray."

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:

"The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it barren which could neither hold the water nor bring vegetation (then that land did not give any benefits). The first is an example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and gets benefit from the knowledge which Allah has revealed through me (the Prophet) and the second an example of a person who learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land).

As to the evidence of the excellence of teaching in the sayings of the Companions (al-athar),

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"Whoever relates to a Hadith (Tradition) and thus induces someone to act according to it, will be rewarded himself and rewarded the equivalent reward for those who acted according to that Hadith."

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) said: The one who teaches people good, all things seek forgiveness for him, even the whales in the sea.

Ata'a (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I came upon Saeed Ibn El-Musayyab and found him crying, I asked him why are you crying?" He answered: Because no one seeks from me any knowledge."

It has also been said: The learned are the shining Luminaries of all time, each one is the luminary of his time which illuminates his generation.

Chapter Two

On Praiseworthy and Blameworthy Branches of Knowledge, their classifications, and the rules which govern them

The explanation of those branches of knowledge whose acquisition is deemed Fard ayn (individual duty) as well as those whose acquisition is deemed Fard kifaya (collective duty); on determining the position of theology and fiqh (jurisprudence in Islam) in relation to the science of Religion; and, finally, on showing the superiority of the science of the Hereafter.

On knowledge whose acquisition is deemed Fard Ayn (Individual Duty)

The Messenger of Allah said: "Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory on every Muslim," and also, "Seek knowledge even if it is from China." People, however disagree

as to what branch of knowledge man is obliged to acquire, and as a result split up into about twenty groups. We shall not go into details but simply summarize the matter by saying that each group insisted on the necessity of acquiring that branch of knowledge which happened to be its specialty. The scholastic theologians insisted on scholastic theology because the unity of Allah, as well as His Essence and Attributes, is known through it. The Jurists held out for jurisprudence because the acts of worship, the lawful and the unlawful as well as the forbidden and the permissible in daily conduct are determined through it. Furthermore, the commentators and traditionalists, holding that through it all sciences are attained, stood for the science of the Koran and the Tradition. The Sufis pointed to Sufism as the branch of knowledge which was intended, some saying that it is the science whereby the creature, realizing his position in relation to the divine, has a mystical experience (in communion with Allah). Other Sufis said that it comprises knowing what sincerity is and what the afflictions of the soul are, as well as being able to distinguish between the followers of Allah and the followers of Satan. Others again said that it was the esoteric science whose acquisition was required only of the qualified, select few, and accordingly they dismissed the accepted meaning of the word in favor of its esoteric connotation.

According to Abu Talib al-Makki, what is meant (by the above mentioned tradition) is knowledge of the contents of Tradition which embodies the foundations of Islam, referred to in the following words of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him): "Islam is built upon five pillars." Since these five pillars are ordinances imposed by Allah, it is necessary to know how to fulfill them. The student therefore, should be absolutely certain that knowledge, as we have already shown in the introduction to this book, is divided into the science of

practical religion and the science of revelations. The scope of this discussion is confined to the science of practical religion.

The (tenets of) practical religion which an adult and sane creature is obliged to observe deals with three things: beliefs, works and prohibitions (tark, pl. turuk). For example, when a sane individual attains puberty and comes of age, his first obligations is learning the two words of the confession of faith (al shahadah) and understanding their meaning. These two words are: 'There is no Allah but Allah; Mohammad is the Prophet of Allah.' He is not required to fully penetrate their significance through scrutiny, investigation and research, but only to believe and confess them unequivocally without the least doubt or hesitation. The latter is obtained by merely accepting on authority without any investigation or proof, since the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) required only mere acceptance and confession from the ruffians among the Arabs without their learning any evidence. Thus in accepting and confessing the two words, the person fulfills an obligation which is binding at that time. Accordingly, at that time, the branch of knowledge, whose acquisition is divinely ordained and binding upon every Muslim, would consist in the learning and understanding of the two words of the confession of faith. Furthermore, at that stage it is sufficient for them. This is shown by considering that if a Muslim dies upon accepting and confessing the two words of the confession of faith, he would die obedient to Allah and be guilty of no rebellion. With the rise of new developments, however, there would be other obligations, but they would not necessarily be binding on every individual. On the contrary, it would be quite possible (for some) to be free of them. The new developments may affect obligations regarding works, prohibitions or beliefs.

Regarding works, for example, if a person's life were to extend from dawn until noon, he would be required to learn how to perform his ablutions and pray because of the approaching noon hour. In such a case it would be wrong to say that it is obvious that he should persist in his study; (and if he finds that his life will extend beyond noon) and thinks that he might not be able to finish in time, (he should still persist) and perform his ablutions and pray before evening, however long this may be after the appointed hour. In short he should give study primary consideration regardless of the time required. In addition it can be said that the obligation to acquire knowledge, which is the prerequisite for works, is derived from the obligation to perform works, in which case it might not even be obligatory before sunset. This is also true of the other prayers.

Further, should a person live until (the beginning of) Ramadan, he would be obliged to learn all about fasting, i.e., that it lasts from morning until sunset, that observing it requires resolve, abstinence from food, drink and sexual intercourse as well as seeing the new moon personally (or accepting the word of two eye witnesses instead). Similarly, should a person come into some wealth, or on coming of age, inherit some, he should learn all about zakah. For, although fulfilling the obligation is not immediately incumbent upon him, it would become so at the end of the first year after his acceptance of Islam. Should he possess nothing but camels, he would not need to learn the zakah of sheep, and the same is true of other varieties (of wealth).

When, however, the months of pilgrimage begin, it will not be necessary for the person to start at once, to learn how to make the Pilgrimage; and since it is performed at leisure, learning how to do it is not immediately obligatory. Rather the learned men of Islam should point out to him that the pilgrimage is a divine ordinance to be observed, at leisure

and convenience, by everyone who, as a man of means, has both the provisions and the means of transportation. This should be done in the hope of inducing the individual himself to resolve upon the pilgrimage. Should he so resolve, it would become necessary for him to learn how the pilgrimage is performed. He would not need, however, to learn anything except its essentials and duties and not the voluntary acts of supererogation connected with it; for, if performing the voluntary acts is supererogatory, so would its knowledge also be, and learning it, consequently, would not be a divine ordinance binding on all Muslims. (As to the unlawfulness of neglecting to point out that the pilgrimage is obligatory whenever the individual is able to perform it, there has been considerable speculation worthy of nothing but jurisprudence.) The same reasoning applies to the knowledge of the other works which are divinely ordained and binding on all Muslims. As to prohibitions, the acquisition of the knowledge of which is obligatory, the obligation is conditioned by the rise of new developments and changed circumstances relevant to it, and varies with the conditions of the individual. Thus the mute is obliged to know what is unlawful in speech nor the blind to know what things are unlawful to see. Similarly the Bedouin is not obliged to know the houses in which it is unlawful to sit. All these obligations only apply within the limits of circumstance, and need not be learned when it is certain that the question (of their applicability) will not arise. But whatever situations resemble these and may, therefore, be confused with them must be distinguished from them - as, for example, the case where an individual who, at the time of his embracing Islam, was in the habit of wearing silk garments, or possessed something illegally, or looked at a woman whom he could not legally marry. In such a case, he should be warned. On the other hand, whatever does not resemble these things and is, therefore, not confusing but to which one may be exposed

through contact - such as food and drink - instruction concerning it is obligatory. Hence if an individual happens to be in a town where it is customary to drink wine and eat pork, it is imperative that he be taught concerning their prohibition and warned against using them. Moreover, of all things in which instruction is obligatory, acquiring a knowledge of them is also obligatory.

As to beliefs and actions of the heart, knowledge of them is obligatory according to the state of the mind. Thus if one should feel any passing thought (khatir) as to what the two words of the confession of faith mean, it would be obligatory upon him to acquire the knowledge of whatever would remove that doubt. If, on the other hand, he felt no such passing thought but died before he believed that the world of Allah - the Koran - is eternal, visible and not a substratum for originated properties, as well as other often repeated articles of faith, he would have died a professing Muslim. These feelings of doubt which render the knowledge of the articles of faith obligatory arise in the mind either naturally or as a result of hearing things in one's own community. Thus in a town where rumors have spread and the people talk heresy, the individual should, in the early years of his maturity, be protected against such influence by being instructed in the elements of truth. If on the other hand, he were exposed to falsehood, it would become necessary to remove it from his heart, a task which might prove difficult. Again, if this particular Muslim were a merchant living in the midst of a town where the practice of usury was prevalent, it would be obligatory to warn him against usury.

This, then, is the truth concerning the knowledge whose acquisition is deemed an ordinance of Allah binding on everyone and no less binding on some because of its observance by others. The gist of it all is knowledge of how to perform works whose discharge is obligatory. Whoever, therefore, knows

what works are obligatory together with the time of their discharge, the same possesses the knowledge who acquisition if far ayn. Furthermore, what the Sufis hold relative to the understanding of the thoughts of the enemy and those of the company of heaven (lummat al-mulk) is also true, though only to those who apply themselves to it. If, however, man does not for the most part refrain from the impulses of evil, hypocrisy and envy, he should seek to acquire whatever knowledge he may feel he needs from the 'Quarter of the Destructive Matters of Life'. How can he neglect this obligation when the Messenger of Allah said: "Three things in life are destructive: sordid avarice, vehement passion and self conceit." And no man can refrain from these. The rest of what we shall mention of the reprehensible conditions of the heart such as pride, conceit, etc., all follow from these three aforementioned destructive matters of life. Their eradication is a fard ayn. It is, however, not possible except through a knowledge of the nature of these destructive matters of life, as well as their causes, symptoms and cure; as the one who does not know evil falls into it. A cure is, in reality, confronting a cause with its opposite. How could such a thing be possible without a knowledge of both cause and effect? Most of the things we have mentioned in the Quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life belong to the fard ayn class which have been totally neglected by the people in favor of pursuing things which do not matter. Among these things about which (we) should proceed to inform the individual, in case they have not yet been transmitted from one people to another, are belief in Paradise, Hell, the Day of Resurrection, and the Day of Judgment in order that he may believe and accept them, as they are the continuation of the words of the confession of faith. This is required because after the acceptance of Mohammad's Prophethood, the Message which he conveyed, namely, that whoever should obey Allah and His Messenger would enter Paradise, and whoever should disobey

them would enter Hell fire, should be understood. If, therefore, you would pay attention to this reasoning you would know that this is the true way of life. You would also find out that every servant suffers, in the course of his life, both during the day and the night, from enduring thoughts (waqai) of doubt which befall him in the performance of his acts of worship and daily transactions. These thoughts require new obligations and consequently it becomes necessary for him to inquire concerning every unusual occurrence which may happen to him as well as to proceed to learn what may be generally expected to occur in the near future.

Finally, if it should become clear that what the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) meant by his words: "Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory upon every Muslim", is knowledge with the definite article, namely, the knowledge of only those works which are well known to be obligatory on every Muslim, the line of this reasoning would become apparent as would also the time in which these obligations should be discharged. Allah, however, knows best.

On Knowledge whose acquisition is deemed Far kifayah
(Collective Duty)

It should be known that a necessary duty is not distinguished from other duties, except when the different sciences are enumerated. These are divided in relation to the kind of duties we are now considering, into shariyah and profane (ghayr shariyah) sciences. By Shariyah sciences I mean those which have been acquired from the prophets and are not arrived at either by reason, like arithmetic, or by experimentation, like medicine or by hearing, like language.

Profane sciences are divided into praiseworthy (mahmud), blameworthy (madhmum), and permissible (mubah). Praiseworthy sciences are those on whose knowledge the activities of this life depend such as medicine arithmetic. They are divided into sciences which are fard kifayah and into sciences which are

meritorious though not obligatory. Sciences whose knowledge is deemed fard kifayah comprise every science which is indispensable for the welfare of the world such as: medicine which is necessary for the life of the body, arithmetic for daily transactions and the division of legacies and in inheritances, as well as others besides. These are the sciences which, through of their absence, a community would be reduced to narrow straits. But should one who can practice them rise in that community, it would suffice, and the obligation to acquire their knowledge would cease to be binding upon the rest of the community.

No one should be astonished when we say that medicine as well as arithmetic are of the sciences which are fard kifaya, because the fundamental industries are also the same, such as agriculture, weaving, politics, even cupping and tailoring. For should such a town lack a cupper extinction would overtake its people and they would be driven to expose themselves to destruction. Has He Who sent down the malady not also sent down the remedy, given guidance for its use, and prepared the means for administering it? It is not, therefore, permissible to expose oneself to destruction by neglecting the remedy. To go deep into the details of arithmetic and the nature of medicine as well as such details which, while not indispensable, are helpful in reinforcing the efficacy of whatever is necessary, is however, considered meritorious, not obligatory.

The blameworthy (madhmum) sciences are magic, talismanic science, juggling, trickery and the like.

The Shariyah sciences which are intended in the study are all praiseworthy. Sometimes, however, they may be confused with what may be taken for praiseworthy but, in fact, are blameworthy. For this reason Shariyah sciences are divided into praiseworthy and blameworthy sciences.

The praiseworthy sciences comprise sources (usul), branches

(furu), auxiliary (muqaddimat), and supplementary (mutammimat). There are therefore, four kinds.

First come the sources (usul) which are four in number. The Book of Allah (The Koran), The Usage (sunnah) of His Prophet, The Agreement (ijma) of all Muslims, and The Traditions relating to the Companions (athar al sahabah). Agreement, in so far as it evinces usage, is a source. Like traditions relating to the Companions, however, which also evince usage, agreement is a secondary source. This is because the Companions have witnessed the Revelations and have, through their close association with the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him), comprehended what others have failed to see. Since, however, it is possible that words will not fully express what has been so comprehended, the learned men have deemed it fit to follow the example of the Companions and hold fast to their traditions though on certain condition and in a special manner as the one concerned may see. It is, however, not appropriate to discuss it in this chapter.

Second are the branches (furu). They are what has been drawn from the sources (usul), not according to the literal meaning but through meanings which are adduced by the mind thereby widening the understanding until a meaning differing from the literal is indicated, as is, for example, indicated by the words of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him): "The judge should not sit in judgment while angry," namely, that he should not sit in judgment while constipated or hungry or suffering from a painful disease. This last thing may be of two kinds: the first pertains to the activities of this world and is contained in the books of law and entrusted to the lawyers, the learned men of this world: the second pertains to the activities of the Hereafter. It is the science of the conditions of the heart, it's praiseworthy and blameworthy characteristics, what is acceptable before Allah and what is reprehensible to Him.

All these are treated in the last part of this book, i.e., the whole book of The Revival of the Sciences of Religion. It includes the knowledge of what issues from the heart and affects the senses in their acts of worship and usages of life, all of which are treated in the first part of this book. Third are the auxiliary (muqaddimat). These act as the instrument for the Shariyah sciences. Thus linguistic science and syntax are but instruments for the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the usage (sunnah) of His Prophet. In themselves linguistic science and syntax are not Shariyah sciences, but it has become necessary to engage in their study because of the law since this law has come in the language of Arabs. And whereas every law is revealed through the medium of a particular language, the learning of that language becomes an instrument wherewith to learn the law. Among these instruments, also, is the science of writing. It is however, not a necessary instrument because the Messenger of Allah was himself unlettered (ummi). And if it were conceivable that retention of everything that is heard was at all possible, mankind might have dispensed with writing. But, because of the impossibility of such a thing, it has become, on the whole, necessary.

Fourth are the supplementary (mutammimat) which, in relation to the science of the Koran, are divided into what pertains to pronunciation such as learning the different readings and the enunciation of the different letters, and into what pertains to exposition which also rests on authoritative transmission. This is because language alone cannot treat exposition or its technicalities such as the knowledge of the abrogating (nasikh) and the abrogated (mansukh), the general (amm) and the particular (khass), the express laws of the Koran as well as its manifest meaning, and finally the manner of their application, i.e. the science which is called the principles of jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh), which also includes the

sunnah.

In connection with tradition and history, the supplementary sciences are biography, dealing mainly with the lives of illustrious men and of the Companions, knowledge of the trustworthy transmitters of traditions and their peculiarities, in order to distinguish between weak (daif) and strong (qawi) traditions, and of their ages in order to differentiate between those traditions whose chain of authorities is incomplete or lacking (mursal) and those whose chain of authorities is incomplete goes back to the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) (musnad), as well as knowledge of whatever is connected with it.

These then are the Shariyah sciences. Not only are they all praiseworthy, but they also belong to the category of the fard kifayah. But should one inquire saying: "Why have you appended jurisprudence to secular sciences and grouped jurisprudents among secular scholars?" Let me tell you that Allah made Adam from earth and his offspring from clay and running water. He brought them out from loins to womb, then to life, and finally to the grave; from the grave He raised them to judgment and from there to Paradise or to Hell Fire. Such was, therefore, their beginning, such their end, and such their abodes.

Furthermore, Allah created this world in preparation for the Hereafter in order to gather suitable provisions therefrom. If these provisions were gathered justly, dissensions would have ceased and the jurisprudents would have become idle, but since men have with greed gathered their provisions, dissensions ensued and consequently the need for a magistrate to rule them arose. In turn the magistrate felt the need for a canon with which to govern the people. It is the jurisprudent, though, who has the knowledge of the rules of government and the methods of mediation between the people whenever, because of their greed, they contend. He thus becomes the teacher of the magistrates and their guide in government and control, that

through their righteousness the affairs of men in this world may be set in order.

Upon my life I declare that jurisprudence is also connected with religion, not directly but indirectly through the affairs of this world, because this world is the preparation for the Hereafter, and there is no religion without it. Furthermore, the state and religion are twins. Religion is the foundation while the state is the guard. That which has no foundation will certainly crumble and that which has no guard is lost. Without the magistrates there is neither government nor control, and the correct way to settle dissensions is through law. And as government by magistrates does not belong primarily to the science of religion but is an adjunct to that without which there is not religion, so is the knowledge of the manner of government. Thus it is well known that it is not possible to carry out the pilgrimage without the protection of an escort of Bedouins along the route. But the pilgrimage itself is one thing, setting out on the road to pilgrimage is another, policing the route without which it is not possible to perform the pilgrimage is still another, and knowledge of the manner of policing the route with all its rules and regulations is again another. The result of jurisprudence is knowledge of the methods of government and control. This is attested by a Tradition whose chain of authorities goes back to the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him), namely: "People will not be judged except by three: a governor, a deputy and an intruder." The governor is the Imam (the Imams have always been the judges); the deputy is his lieutenant, while anyone else is an intruder who undertakes that responsibility without there being any need for him to do so. As a matter of fact it was the custom of the Companions to avoid giving legal opinions to the extent that each was in the habit of referring (the question) to his colleague, although they did not avoid answering questions relative to the science

of the Koran and the Path to the Hereafter. In some recessions (the word) hypocrite (appears) instead of the word intruder, (and rightly so) because anyone who, without any special need, undertakes the responsibility of giving legal opinions does so for the sake of acquiring position and wealth.

If you agree to this, the same will hold true in connection with the rules of invalidating testimonies, restrictive ordinances, indemnities and settling feuds; but it will not hold true in respect to what falls under the Quarter of the Acts of Worship such as fasting and prayer, nor in respect to what the Customs of Life entail of civil and legal matters such as determining the lawful and the unlawful. You should, therefore, know that what the jurisprudent comes nearest discussing under works which pertain to the Hereafter are four: Islam, prayer, almsgiving, (doing) what is lawful and abstaining (from) what is unlawful. But when you examine how far the jurisprudent's speculation goes into these four you will find that it does not go beyond the limits of this world into the next. If then you realize this limitation in respect to these four it becomes to you more evident in others besides.

Concerning Islam the jurisprudent discourses on what renders it sound or unsound as well as on its conditions, but only pays attention to outward confession. The heart, however, is removed from his domain because the Messenger set apart from the jurisprudent those who wield the sword and those in whose hand the reins of temporal power lie. This the Messenger did when he said to the man who had killed another because the latter had recited the confession of faith giving for a reason his fear of the sword, "Have you examined his heart?" The jurisprudent also determines with the aid of the sword the soundness of (one's) Islam, although he knows that the sword can neither reveal to him the intentions (of the individual) nor remove from his heart the veil of ignorance and

bewilderment. He is, however, a counselor to him who wields the sword. Since the sword can reach the (individual's) neck, and the hand his possessions, repeating the confession of faith with the tongue protects his life and possessions as long as he has either in this world. For this reason the Prophet said; "I was ordered to fight people until they say, 'There is no Allah but Allah.' When they say this they render their lives and possessions immune against my hand." He thus confined the efficacy (of verbal confession) to life and possessions; but in the Hereafter mere words do not avail - only the illumination of the hearts (by the divine light), their secret thoughts, and their sincerity do avail. These, however, do not fall within the field of jurisprudence, although the jurisperit may delve into them as he might also delve into theology and medicine, both of which are outside his field.

Concerning prayer, the jurisperit is entitled to give his opinion as to whether or not it has been correctly performed in accordance with the prescribed regulations, regardless of the fact that (the worship), from the beginning to the end, might not have paid attention to any part of his prayer except the magnificent (takbir), but has instead busied himself in going over his market transactions. Such a prayer is of no use for the Hereafter just as verbal confession of Islam is also of no use. Nevertheless, the jurisperit does not pass judgment regarding its soundness, namely, whether or not the worshiper has, in what he has performed, fulfilled the requirements of the law and has thereby rendered himself immune to execution and punishment. To (the subject of) submitting and presenting the heart to Allah, however, both of which are works pertaining to the Hereafter and through which works are rendered efficacious, the jurisperit does not address himself; and in case he does, he oversteps his bounds. Concerning almsgiving, the jurisperit examines what

satisfies the demand of the magistrate so that, in the event that the payment of the alms is withheld and, consequently, the magistrate exacts it by force, the jurisperit then rules that the responsibility of the magistrate has been fulfilled. It is related that Abu Yusef, the judge, was in the habit of giving away all his income to his wife at the end of each year and in turn making her give away hers to him in order to avoid the payment of alms. On being informed of it, Abu Hanifah declared that this was the result of Abu Yusef's (versatility in) jurisprudence; and Abu Hanifah was right because such a thing is the result of worldly wisdom. Nevertheless, its harm in the Hereafter outweighs every benefit (it may yield in this world). Moreover, such knowledge is harmful.

Concerning the lawful and the unlawful, abstinence from the latter is a part of religion. Piety, moreover, has four grades.

The first is that piety which is required for just testimony and the relinquishing of that which disqualifies man to bear witness before a court, or to be a judge or to act as governor. It consists, in other words, in avoiding all that is clearly unlawful.

The second is the piety of honest men which guards against dubiousities which engender ambiguous and misleading interpretations. Thus the Prophet said: "Discard that which is dubious for that which is indubious." He also said: "Sin is heart alluring."

The third is the piety of the godly which entails desisting from perfectly lawful deeds for fear that may lead to deeds which are unlawful. In this connection the Prophet said: "No man will be numbered among the godly unless he is inclined to avoid what is harmless for fear of what is harmful." Of such is the reluctance to discuss the affairs of people lest one be drawn into backbiting, and the abstinence from eating and drinking of things which when the appetite lest that should

stimulate passion and lust which lead a man to commit that which is forbidden.

The fourth is the piety of the saints which shuns all things but Allah for fear of expending one single hour of life in things which, although it is clear and certain that they lead to nothing unlawful, do not help to bring the individual nearer to Allah.

All these grades (of piety), except the first, namely the piety of witnesses and judges as well as what militates against justice, are outside the domain of the jurisprudent. Furthermore, to comply with the requirements of this first grade of piety does not preclude sin being punished in the Hereafter. The Prophet said to Wabisah: "Consult your own heart although you have been given a dispensation once, twice or thrice." The jurisprudent does not, and should not, express an opinion regarding the things which allure and perplex the heart, or how to deal with them, but confines his opinion to those things which militate against justice. Hence the entire scope of the jurisprudent's domain is limited to the affairs of this world which pave the road to the Hereafter. Should he then touch upon the attributes of the heart and the rules of the Hereafter, he does so as an intruder just as he would be whenever anything relative to medicine, arithmetic, astronomy and theology confront him. The same is true of philosophy in relation to syntax or poetry. Sufyan al-Thawri, an authority in esoteric knowledge, used to say that the study of this (science) is not among the provisions for the Hereafter. How could it be when it is agreed that the value of knowledge is acting according to its precepts? Is it possible, therefore, to hold as provisions for the Hereafter the knowledge of the forms that divorce might take, either zihar or by li'an, of contracts involving immediate payment of the price and admitting delay in the delivery of the article purchased (salam) of hire, rental, and lease (ijarah), and of money

changing (sarf)? Anyone who acquires the knowledge of these things, hoping to draw nearer to Allah, would certainly be mad. Indeed, nothing but engaging body and soul in the service of Allah and His worship would draw people nearer to Allah; and nobility lies in knowing how to accomplish these deeds. If you should say; "Why have you regarded medicine and jurisprudence in the same way when medicine pertains to the affairs of this world, namely, the welfare of the body, while upon jurisprudence in the same way when medicine pertains to the affairs of this world, namely, the welfare of the body, while upon jurisprudence depends the welfare of religion; and furthermore does not this equal regard of the two violate the public consensus of opinion among all Muslims?" Then know that such a treatment is not necessary and in fact the two sciences differ. Jurisprudence is superior to medicine on three counts: first, because it is sacred knowledge, and, unlike medicine, which is not sacred knowledge, jurisprudence is derived from prophecy; second, it is superior to medicine because no one of those who are treading the road to the Hereafter can do without it, neither the healthy nor the sick; while on the other hand only the sick, who are a minority, need medicine; thirdly, because jurisprudence is akin to the science of the road of the Hereafter, being a study of the works or the senses. The origin of these works as well as their source lies in the attributes of the heart. Thus praiseworthy works are the result of praiseworthy characters (endowed with) saving (grace) in the Hereafter; similarly, the blameworthy works are the result of blameworthy characters. The connection between the senses and the heart is thus clear. Health and disease, however, result from certain qualities in the humors characteristic of the body, not of the heart. No matter how often jurisprudence is compared with medicine, the superiority of the former is evident. Similarly, whenever the science of the road to the Hereafter is compared with

jurisprudence, the superiority of the former is evident.

If you should say: "Explain to me the science of the road to the Hereafter in such a manner as will bring out its outline if the enquiry into its details is not possible", know, then, that it is divided into two parts: the science of revelation and the science of practical religion.

The first part, namely the science of revelation is the science of esoteric which is the goal of all sciences. One of the Gnostics said: "I fear that whoever should lack a portion of that science would come to an evil end." The least portion of the science of revelation is believing in it and placing it in the hands of those worthy of it. Another said: "Whoever has these two characteristics, heresy and pride, will never be blessed with any of this science." It was also said: "Whoever (loves Allah succeeds, but) whoever loves this world and persists in his desires will not attain the science of revelation, though he might attain the other sciences." The least punishment which the person who denies revelations will suffer is that he will not be blessed with any of its gifts. Furthermore, the science of revelation is the science concerned with the saints and the favorites of Allah. It stands for a light which shines in the heart when it is cleansed and purified of its blameworthy qualities. Through this light is revealed the truth of several things, whose names have hitherto often been heard, and to which ambiguous and obscure meanings have been attached. Through it, these truths are clarified until the true knowledge of the essence of Allah is attained together with that of His eternal and perfect attributes, His works and wisdom in the creation of this world and the Hereafter as well as the reason for His exalting the latter over the former. Through it also is obtained the knowledge of the meaning of prophecy and prophet and the import of revelation. Through it is obtained the knowledge of the meaning of prophecy and prophet and the

import of revelation. Through it is obtained the truth about Satan, the meaning of the words angels and devils, and the cause of the enmity between Satan and man. Through it is known how the Angel appeared to the prophets and how they received the divine revelation. Through it is achieved the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven and earth, as well as the knowledge of the heart and how the angelic hosts have confronted the devils. Through it is gained the knowledge of how to distinguish between the company of heaven and the company of the Devil, a knowledge of the Hereafter, Paradise, and Hell Fire, the punishment of the grave, the bridge (al sirat) across the infernal Fire, the Balance of the Judgment Day, and knowledge of the Day of Reckoning. Through it also is comprehended the meaning of the following words of Allah: "Read your book! Today your soul suffices you as a reckoner." (Chapter 17 verse 15) and: "...indeed the Hereafter is the life..." (Chapter 29 verse 64). Through this same light is revealed the meanings of meeting Allah and seeing His gracious face; the meaning of being close to Him and of occupying a place in His gracious face; the meaning of being close to Him and of occupying a place in His proximity; the meaning of attaining happiness through communion with the heavenly hosts and association with the angels and the prophets. Through it also the distinction between the ranks of the people in the different heavens is determined until they see one another in the same way as the Planet Venus is seen in the midst of the heavens. Many other things which would require a great deal of time to explain because people, once they accept they accept them in principle, take different stands with regard to their significations, are also determined through this light. Thus, some would regard all these as mere examples holding that the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man that which Allah has prepared for His righteous servants, and that man knows nothing of Paradise

except its attributes and names; others hold that some are mere patterns and some are identical with the realities which their names signify. Likewise others hold that the limit to which our knowledge of Allah can reach is to admit the inability to know Him. There are some also who claim great things on (the subject) of knowing Allah while others say that we cannot go beyond what all the common people have reached, namely, that Allah is, that He is omniscient and omnipotent, that He sees and hears, and that He speaks. We, therefore, mean by the science of revelation (that science whereby) the cover is removed so that the truth regarding these things becomes as clear as if it were seen by the eye, leaving thereby no room for any doubt. Man would, by himself, be capable of such a thing had not the rust and rot resulting from the filth of this world accumulated over the surface of the mirror of his heart. By the science of the road of the Hereafter we mean the knowledge of how to remove from the surface of this mirror that filth which bars the knowing of Allah, His attributes, and His works. The mirror is cleansed and purified by desisting from lust and emulating the prophets in all their states. Thus to whatever extent the heart is cleansed and made to face the truth, to that same extent will reflect His reality. But there is no way to this except through discipline (which will be discussed in its proper places), learning, and instruction.

These sciences are not recorded in books and are not discussed by him whom Allah has blessed with any of them except among his own circle of intimates who partake with him of them through discourses and secret communication. This last method is nothing but the occult science which the Prophet had in mind when he said: "Indeed of knowledge is a branch that resembles a hidden thing: no one grasps it except those who know Allah: whenever they declare it no one fails to recognize it except those who do not know Allah. Despise not, therefore,

a learned man whom Allah has blessed with this knowledge because Allah Himself does not despise that man once He has imparted to him that knowledge."

The second part, namely, the science of practical religion, is the science of the states of the heart, of which the praiseworthy are fortitude, gratitude, fear, hope, resignation, devotion, piety, contentment, generosity, recognition of one's obligation to Allah under all circumstances, charity, good faith, morality, fellowship, truthfulness and sincerity. To know the truth concerning these states as well as their definitions and the means whereby they are attained, together with their fruits and signs, and tending whatever state has been weakened until it becomes strong again and whatever has disappeared until it reappears, belongs to the science of the Hereafter. On the other hand, the blameworthy, such as the fear of poverty, discontent with one's lot, bitterness, such, rancor, envy, deceit, ambition, the desire to be praised, the passion to live long in this life for the sake of indulgence, pride, hypocrisy, anger, scorn, enmity, hatred, greed, niggardliness, lust, extravagance, frivolity, insolence, exalting the rich and despising the poor, haughtiness, vanity, vaunting, boasting, holding oneself above truth, meddling in things not of one's concern, loquacity, obstinacy, currying favor, adulation, conceit, being occupied with other people's shortcomings, the vanishing of grief from the heart and the departure of fear of Allah from it, extreme self pity whenever in affliction, lukewarm support for truth, outwardly professing friendship and secretly fostering enmity, taking advantage of Allah's patience and long suffering and persisting in taking away (from people) what Allah has given them, trusting only in obedience, trickery, dishonesty and fraud, (vain) optimism, cruelty, rudeness, satisfaction in worldly pleasures and dejection at their loss, delight in the company of people and

loneliness when they depart, harshness, levity, haste, lack of shame and lack of mercy - these and many similar qualities of the heart are the seed beds of immoralities and the nursery gardens of turpitudes. The opposite of these, namely the praiseworthy traits, are the fountainhead of all good works. To know the definitions of these traits, the truth concerning each, the means whereby they are attained as well as their fruits and cures comprises the sciences of the Hereafter whose acquisition, according to the legal opinion of the learned men of that science is fard ayn. Whoever should turn away from this knowledge, would, in the Hereafter, be destroyed by the wrath of the King of Kings, just as he who fail to perform the civil duties would, according to the legal opinion of the jurisprudents of this world, be cut down by the sword of the temporal rulers of this world. The judgment of the jurisprudents concerning obligatory ordinances (furud ayn) relates to the welfare of the life in this world, while the judgment of the learned men of the science of the Hereafter relates to the welfare of life in the Hereafter. Thus if a jurispudent were asked concerning the meaning of any of these terms, as for example: sincerity, or dependence, or precaution against hypocrisy, he would hesitate to express an opinion although every one of these is an obligatory ordinance in whose neglect lies his own destruction in the Hereafter. But should you inquire from him concerning the li'an form of divorce or the zihar form, or concerning wager (sabaq) and target shooting he would recite to you volumes of minute details which would never be used or needed; and in the event a need might arise for some of them the community would not lack for someone who could render this service and spare the jurispudent the trouble and labor of his studies. He thus persists laboring day and night on these details tying to memories and learn them, but the things which are of real importance in religion, he overlooks. Should he, then, be

questioned about it, he would say that he had pursued it because it was the science of religion and also a fard kifayah, confusing thereby, himself and others by these excuses. The intelligent person knows that if, in performing the fard kifayah, the aim of the jurisprudent has been to do the right thing, he should have given precedence to the fard ayn and to several others of the fard kifayah. How many a town has no physician except from among the followers of protected religions (dhimmah) whose testimony, according to the laws of jurisprudence, especially in controversy and polemics. Furthermore, the town is crowded with jurisprudents employed in giving legal opinions and defending cases. Would that I knew why the learned men of religion permit work in activities which are fard kifayah and which have been performed by quite a number of people to the neglect of other fard kifayah activities which have not yet been performed. Could there be any reason for this except that medicine does not lead to management of religious endowments (awqaf), (execution of) wills, possession of the money of orphans, and appointment to judicial and governmental positions through which one exalts himself above his fellow men and fastens his yoke upon his enemies? Indeed the science of religion has been destroyed because the learned men have espoused evil. Allah is, therefore, our help and refuge. May Allah protect us refuge. May Allah protect us from this delusion, displeasing to Him and pleasing to the Devil. The pious among the learned men in esoteric knowledge used to acknowledge the excellence of the learned men in esoteric knowledge (ilm al-batin) and the advocates of the inward knowledge of the heart. The Imam Al Shafi'I was in the habit of sitting before Shayban al Ra'I just as a boy would sit in the school, and would ask concerning one thing or another, to which Shayban would reply: "Would one like you ask the advice of this Bedouin?" Al Shafi'I would say; "This agrees with what we already know."

Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yahya ibn Ma'in used to call upon Ma'ruf al Kharkhi who, in esoteric knowledge (ilm al-zahir) was not their equal; nevertheless, they used to seek his advice. And why should they not have done so? Had not the Prophet, when he was asked: "What shall we do when we are confronted by something which we cannot find in either the Koran or in the Tradition?" said: "Ask the honest men among you and guide your affairs by consultation." For that reason it has been said that the learned men of esoteric knowledge are the ornament of the earth and the state, while the learned men of esoteric knowledge are the ornament of heaven and its kingdom. Al Judayd said: "Once upon a time my teacher al Sari asked me saying: 'When you leave my place whose company do you keep?' I said: 'Al muhasibi's.' To which he replied: 'Well have you chosen! Follow his learning and culture, but avoid his affectation in speech and his refutation of the theologians.' Upon leaving I overheard him say: 'May Allah make you first a traditionist and then a Sufi rather than a Sufi first and then a traditionist.'" This is a reference to the fact that he who first acquires versatility in tradition and learning and then turns to Sufism comes off well, he who takes to Sufism before learning exposes himself to danger.

Should you say: "Why did you in your classification of the sciences make no mention of theology and philosophy and not show whether they are blameworthy or praiseworthy?" The know all that theology offers in the way of useful evidence is contained in the Koran and Sunnah (traditions). Whatever evidence is not contained therein is either reprehensible argumentation (which, as will be seen, is an innovation), or mere wrangling by dwelling on distinctions or amplification through the array of different opinions, most of which are drivel and nonsense, despised by the mind and rejected by the ears, while others are rumbling into things unrelated to Religion and not customary during the first period of Islam.

To enter into such discussions at all was then regarded heresy, but things have now changed. Innovations which turn people from the dictates of the Koran and the tradition have arisen and a group has emerged who made imitations of the Book and the Hadith and based upon it false speculation, so that certain dangerous things have necessarily become permissible; they have even become as binding as the fard kifayah. To such an extent would an innovator go whenever he purposes to preach a heresy. We shall discuss this briefly in the following chapter.

As to philosophy, it is not in itself a single branch of science but comprises four:

The first: This includes geometry and arithmetic, both of which are, as has already been said, permissible and no one is barred from them except the person who might be old by their study to blameworthy sciences, for most of those who practice them have stepped over to innovations. Thus the weak are barred from the study of geometry and arithmetic just as the boy is barred from the bank of the river lest he should fall into the water, and as the newly converted Muslim is kept away from company of unbelievers for fear he might be influenced by them. In this last case not even the strong is called upon to mix with the unbelievers.

The second: This is logic, which is the study of the nature of evidence and its conditions as well as the nature of a definition and its conditions. Both of these are included under theology.

The third: This is divinity, which is the science of the begin and attributes of Allah. This is also included under theology. Furthermore, the philosophers have not, in their philosophy, developed another type of science, but have branched out into several schools, of which some are systems of unbelief and others of innovation. Thus just as the Mu'tazilite system does not in itself represent a branch of science, but its

protagonists, as a group of theologians and specialists in the art of philosophical disputation, have been distinguished by their erroneous views, so are the philosophers.

The fourth: This is physics of which some parts contradict the law and the true Religion, and are therefore folly. These are not science that they may be classified under sciences. Others are a study of the qualities of the different substances, their properties, transmutation and change. This part resembles the researches of physicians, except the physician studies the human body, particularly the cause of its diseases and cure, while the physicists study all substances from the standpoint of change and motion.

Medicine however, is superior to physics because the former is needed while the latter is no need.

The Virtues of the Scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence

The Jurisprudents who are the spokesmen of the science of jurisprudence and the leaders of men, namely, those whose school claims the greatest following, are five:

Al Shafi'I, Malik, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Hanifah and Sufyan Al Thawri, (may Allah have mercy upon them) each one of them was a worshiper of Allah, an ascetic, a learned man versed in the science of the Hereafter, a jurisprudent well informed in the affairs of men in this world, and a devotee to the knowledge of Allah's face.

That Al Imam Al Shafi'I (may Allah have mercy upon him) was a devout worshiper of Allah is shown by what has been related concerning him, namely that he divided the night into three parts: one part for study, one part for prayer and one part for sleeping. Al Rabi'a said: "Al Shafi'I used to complete reading the Koran in Ramadan 60 times while standing to pray." With regard to his asceticism, Al Shafi'I said, "Whoever should claim that he has in his heart the love of this world as well as the love of his Creator, the same has lied." Al-Humaydi related that one day Al Shafi'I set out for

al-Yaman in the company of some of the governors. With 10,000 Dirhams he made his way to Makkah where a tent was pitched for him just outside the city and the people came out to see him. He did not leave until he had distributed all among his visitors." Furthermore the strength of Al Shafi'i's ascetism, the intensity of his fear of Allah, and the concentration of his efforts on the Hereafter are manifest from a report that when Sufyan ibn Ouyena narrated a Hadith about mystical sciences (al-raqa'iq) in his presence he fell unconscious and those present thought that he had died. Sufyan thereupon said if he should die, the most excellent man of the age would have passed away.

That Al Shafi'I was familiar with the secrets of the hearts and learned in the sciences of the Hereafter would be made known to you through the wise sayings ascribed to him. It has been reported that once he was asked about hypocrisy, he responded intuitively: "Hypocrisy is a golden apple which passion has placed before the eyes of the learned who, through the poor judgment of their impulsive hearts, cast covetous eyes upon it, and thereby their works were frustrated." Al Shafi'I (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "If you fear the people praising your goods deeds, then seek the pleasure of Allah and the reward you desire, the punishment you fear and the strength you would be grateful for, and the trial you would remember, so when you think about any one of these you would see how small your deeds really are."

That through jurisprudence in particular, and debates centering around the same subject in general, Al Shafi'I had sought nothing but the face of Allah is revealed by the following, which it has been reported that he said: "I had hoped that men would benefit by this science and that none of the benefits would be attributed to me." It can be seen how he realized what a curse it was to seek knowledge in order to obtain prestige and how he had been completely above such

considerations.

As to Al Imam Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) he was too adorned with those five characteristics. It is reported that he was once asked, "O Malik, what do you say of seeking knowledge?" He replied: "It is fair and beautiful, but find what you need from the time you open your eyes in the morning to the time you close them in the evening and confine yourself to it." He was so emphatic in exalting the science of religion that whenever he sat down to discourse on tradition, he would first perform his ablutions, sit on his bed, comb his hair, perfume himself, settle down with stateliness and dignity, and then proceed with the discourse. When asked about it, he answered: "I like to exalt the traditions of the Messenger of Allah."

With regard to his asceticism, it is attested by the report that al Mahdi the prince of the believers, had once asked Malik saying: "Have you any home of your own?" Malik replied: "No! But listen and I shall relate to you. I heard Rabiah ibn abi Abd al Rahman say, 'Man's home is his ancestry'." At another time al Rashid asked him the same question and on his answering, "No." The Caliph gave him three thousand Dinars and said: "Go buy with this a home." Malik took the money but did not spend it. When later al Rashid was preparing to return to Baghdad he said to Malik: "You should come along with us because we have decided to make the people follow the Muwatta (Malik's tradition) as Uthman made the people follow the Koran." Malik replied: "There is no way to make the people follow the Muwatta because of the death of the Messenger of Allah, his Companions were dispersed around the different countries and in each place they related the traditions, (which they knew) and consequently among the people of each individual country different Hadiths prevail. Furthermore the Prophet said: "Non-conformity among my people is a gift of mercy." It is also not possible to go along with you because

the Messenger of Allah said: 'If they would only understand they would know that Al Madinah is best for them.' And again 'Al Madinah does away with its corruption just as the furnace does away with the dross of the iron.' Therefore here are your Dinars just as you have given them to me; you may take them and if you wish you may leave them. Does this mean that you require me to leave Al Madinah in return for what you have given me? Know that I prefer nothing to the City of the Messenger of Allah, not even the whole world."

That through his knowledge he sought the face of Allah and that he despised this world are attested by the following report. He said: "Once upon a time as I entered upon Harun al Rashid, the Caliph told me, 'O Abu Abd Allah! You should frequent our place so that our sons may learn from you the Muwatta.' To which I replied: "May Allah exalt my lord the prince! You my lord are the source of this knowledge. If you honor it, it will be exalted, and if you dishonor it, it will be despised. Furthermore, knowledge is something you achieve, not something you receive.' Thereupon Harun al Rashid said, 'You are right.' And turning to his son added, 'Go out to the mosque and join the audience with the people'."

As to About Hanifah, he too was a worshiper of Allah and an ascetic who knew Allah, had His fear in his heart and sought through his knowledge Allah's face. That he was a worshiper of Allah is evidenced by a report transmitted on the authority of Ibn al Mubarak who said that two things were characteristic of Abu Hanifah, manliness and much prayer. Hammad ibn abi Sulayman reported that he was in the habit of spending the whole night in prayer. According to another report it was his custom to spend half the night in prayer until one day, as he was walking through a street, a certain person pointed to him and said to a companion, 'This is he who spend the whole of the night in prayer.' From that day on, he spent the whole night in prayer and said: "I will be ashamed before Allah to

be described with something I do not possess in connection with my worship of Him."

As to his ascetism, it has been reported that al Rabi ibn Asim once said, "I was sent by Yazid ibn Umar ibn Hubayrah to summon Abu Hanifah before him. On his appearing, Yazid offered him the position of governor of the treasury, but Abu Hanifah declined the offer and consequently Yazid had him scourged with twenty lashes. It can be seen how he had run away from the office of governor of the treasury and bore the torture instead.

Al Hakam ibn Hisham al Thaqafi said that he had once, while in Damascus, related a tradition to the effect that Abu Hanifah was one of the most honest men and that the governor had wanted him to take charge of the keys of the treasury or be scourged if he refused, but Abu Hanifah would have nothing of that, preferring torture at the hands of the governor to torture at the hands of Allah.

It was also reported on the authority of Mohammad ibn Shuja, on the authority of one of his companions, that Abu Hanifah was once told: "The prince of the believers, Abu Jafar al Mansur, has ordered that the sum of ten thousand Dirhams be paid to you." Abu Hanifah, however, would not consent to it and on the day on which the sum was expected to be delivered, he performed the morning prayer, wrapped himself with his cloak and sat in silence. Presently the messenger of Al Hasan ibn Qahtabah arrived with the money and appeared before Abu Hanifah, but the latter would not speak to him. Then some of those present explained to Al Hasan that it was Abu Hanifah's custom to act like that. Thereupon Al Hasan ordered that the bag containing the money be placed in one of the corners of the house, and left. Abu Hanifah then willed the contents of his house and told his son that, upon his death, his son should take the bag which contained the money to Al Hasan ibn Qatabah and tell him to take back his money which he had

deposited with Abu Hanifah. When his son delivered the money to Al Hasan, the latter exclaimed: "May the mercy of Allah be upon your father, indeed he has been zealous over his religion."

It was also related that Abu Hanifah had also been invited to fill the position of chief judge but he declined saying: "I am not qualified for this post." Asked why he thought so, he replied, "If I were to be honest (about it I would know and say that) I am not qualified for the job; if on the other hand I were to lie, I might say I was qualified; but a liar is not fit for the judgeship."

Abu Hanifah's knowledge of the things of the Hereafter and his concern with the weighty matters of religion as well as knowing Allah are attested to by his deep fear of Allah and by his ascetism. In this connection Ibn Jurayj had said: "It was reported to me that this Kufian friend of yours, Al Numan ibn Thabit, fears Allah very much." Sharik al Nakhaj had said that Abu Hanifah spent long spells in silence and contemplation and conversed little with men. These are among the clearest signs of inward knowledge and the concern with the weighty matters of religion, because whoever has been blessed with silence and ascetism would receive all knowledge as well.

The virtues of Abu Hanifah are, however, too many to be numbered. Had he not been characterized by perseverance in self mortification, and had he not dipped into the sea of contemplation? Had he not throughout a period of forty years performed his morning prayer (having spent all night in continual prayer) on the basis of the evening ablutions? Had he not, also, performed the pilgrimage fifty five times?

This is but a small part of the lives of these three Imams. As to Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Sufyan al Thawri, their followers are not as many as those of the three other Imams, and of the two, the followers of Sufyan are the less numerous. Nevertheless, of the five, Ahmad and Sufyan were the best known for piety

and ascetism. Since this book is, however, full of the account of their work and words, there is no need to take up their lives in detail at this moment. For the present, examine the lives of these three Imams and ask yourself whether these states, words, and works, through which they forsook the world and devoted themselves to Allah, were merely the result of the knowledge of the several branches of jurisprudence, such as contracts of the type of salam, hire, rental and lease; and the different forms of divorce, namely, zihar, ila and li'an; or the result of a higher and nobler knowledge. Scrutinize, too, those who claim to be following the example of these Imams and find out for yourself whether their claim is true or false.

Chapter Three

On what is popularly considered to be a part of the science of religion, but is (really) not

Including a discussion of the circumstances under which some of the sciences would be blameworthy; and on the exposition of how the names of certain sciences, jurisprudence, the science of religion, theology, admonition, and philosophy, have been changed, as well as on showing how much of sacred knowledge is praiseworthy and how much is blameworthy.

Be advised then that knowledge is not held to be blameworthy in itself. It is only regarded as such in the eyes of men for one of three reasons.

First when it leads to any harm, whether the harm should befall its practicer or someone else besides, for which reason the science of magic and talismans is held blameworthy.

Second, a knowledge is blameworthy when it is mostly (fi ghalib al-amr) harmful as, for example, astronomy which is

not, in itself, blameworthy, because it is of two parts: The first is mathematical (in reference to which) the Koran has pronounced that (by it) the courses of the sun and the moon are reckoned. Thus Allah said: "And the sun and the moon (run their courses) according to a (certain) reckoning." (Chapter 55 verse 4) And again: "And as for the moon, We decreed stations for it, till it changes like an old and crooked palm branch." (Chapter 36 verse 39) The second is astrology (ahkam) the gist of which is that (future) events are indicated by present causes. This is similar to how a physician is guided by the patient's pulse to predict the future development of a disease. Astrology is therefore an attempt to know the course of the laws and ordinances of Allah relative to His creatures. But the law has declared it blameworthy. Thus the Prophet said: "Whenever the decrees of Allah are mentioned, withhold from discussing them; whenever the stars are mention, desist from talk; and when my Companions are mention, refrain from any gossip."

He warned against it for three reasons; first because it is harmful to most people, since if they were told that these results would ensure consequent upon the course of the stars, they might think that it is the stars which influence the course of events and are also the gods who direct the world. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the stars are glorious celestial bodies and awe inspiring to the hearts, the hearts of mankind would naturally become focused upon them and would see both good and evil required or forbidden by the stars with the result that the Name of Allah would be erased from the heart. The feeble minded one does not look beyond the means, and only the learned man who is well grounded in knowledge would understand that the sun, moon, and the stars are subject to the will of Allah.

A second reason is that astrology is purely guess work and in the opinion of the average man, (the influence of the stars)

is not determined either with certainty or even probability. Pronouncements in connection with it are the result of ignorance. Consequently, astrology has been pronounced blameworthy because of this ignorance, not because it is knowledge.

A third reason (for which a kind of knowledge may be pronounced blameworthy) is when the pursuit of that kind of knowledge does not give the practitioner any real scientific advantage. Consequently, such knowledge is intrinsically blameworthy, as, for example, the study of the trivial science before the important one, and the obscure before the significant, like delving into the divine mysteries which have been pursued by both the philosophers and the theologians; but neither they nor anyone else could (grasp) it in whole or in part except the prophets and the saints. For this reason people should be deterred from delving into these mysteries, and instead, be diverted to pursue those subjects which the law allows, wherein lies sufficiency for the guided.

Determining What Names of Sciences Have Been Changed

We should also be aware that the source of the confusion of the blameworthy sciences with the sacred is the tampering with, and the changes in, the names of the praiseworthy sciences and the alterations introduced therein, in bad faith, so as to connote other than those which the righteous fathers and the first century Muslims intended. Consequently, five terms, namely, jurisprudence (fiqh), the science of religion (al ilm), theology (tawhid), admonition (tadhkir), and philosophy (hikmah), all names of praiseworthy sciences, whose possessors have held the chief positions in the religious organization, but which now have been altered so that they connote something blameworthy; yet people have become reluctant to condemn those who possess them because of the widespread practice of applying these names to all of them (alike).

The first term to be affected was jurisprudence whose meanings has been tampered with not so much by alteration and change but by limitation. It has thus been limited to the knowledge of unusual legal cases, the mastery of the minute details of their origins, excessive disputation on them, and the retention of the different opinions which relate to them. The person who goes more deeply into these things than his colleagues and devotes more time to them than the rest is considered the most versatile in jurisprudence. But in the early period of Islam the term jurisprudence (fiqh) was applied to the science of the path of the Hereafter and the knowledge of the subtle defects of the soul, the influences which render works corrupt, the thorough realization of the inferiority of this life, the urgent expectation of bliss in the Hereafter, and the domination of fear over the heart. This is indicated by the words of Allah when He said:

"...to become learned in Religion, and to warn their people when they return back to them..." (Chapter 9 verse 122)

Jurisprudence is, therefore, that which brings about such a warning and such fear rather than details of ordinary divorce or divorcee through li'an, or manumission (ataq), salam contracts, and hire, rental, and lease (ijarah), which produce neither warning nor fear. On the contrary, to devote oneself exclusively to these things hardens the heart and removes from it all fear which is exactly what we see now in those who have so devoted themselves. Allah thus said:

"...they have hearts but they do not understand with them..." (Chapter 7 verse 179)

having had in mind the meaning of belief, not of legal opinions.

The Prophet said: "Shall I tell you who is the profoundly discerning man?" They answered: "Yes." Thereupon he said; "The profoundly discerning man is he who has not induced people to despair of the mercy of Allah; nor made them feel safe (rather

than urge them to repent) during the period of respite which Allah, out of patience, gives to mankind, nor made them lose hope in the spirit of Allah; nor discarded the Koran in favor of something else."

The second term to have been altered is the science of religion (al-ilm) which used to be applied to the knowledge of Allah, His miracles, and His works among His servants and creatures. When, therefore, the Caliph Umar died, Ibn Musud exclaimed: "Indeed nine tenths of the science of religion (al-ilm) has passed away." He thus designated this knowledge as the science, using the definite articles, and then explained it as the knowledge of Allah. Yet people used the term freely and altered its meaning by restriction until it became more commonly applied to those who debate cases of jurisprudence and the like with adversaries and are dubbed learned in the truth, versatile in knowledge.

The third term (to suffer alteration) was theology (tawhid) which has now become equivalent to scholastic theology (sina'at al-kalam), the knowledge of the methods of argumentation, the manner of confounding adversaries, and the ability to be diffuse in speech by means of asking too many questions, raising doubts, and formulating requisites, to an extent that some of those groups have gone so far as to call themselves 'The People of Equity and Unity' (ahl al-adl w-al-tawhid) while the scholastic theologians were called the learned men of religion although nothing of the tenets of men of religion although nothing of the tents of their profession was known during the early period of Islam. On the contrary (the learned men at the time) condemned very strongly anyone who would take to disputation and contention.

As to the evident proofs which the mind accepts immediately on hearing and which are contained in the Koran, they have been known to all. Knowledge of the Koran was all knowledge while theology (tawhid) signified something else which was beyond

the comprehension of most scholastic theologians, and which, when they comprehended it, they were not called after its name. Theology was then the belief that all things come from Allah, a belief which ruled out all intermediary causes (al-asbab w-al-wasa'it). Both good and evil would then be seen as coming from Allah.

Theology (tawhid) is, therefore, like a precious fruit which is encased in two successive husks. (Obviously) the outer husk is farther from the pith than the inner husk. People have thus applied the term (theology) exclusively to the husks which encase the pith, as well as the t heir protection, and have entirely ignored the pith itself. The out husk represents the verbal profession that there is no Allah but Allah, which profession is called monotheism in contradistinction to the Trinitarians the Christians profess. Such a profession, however, may come from the lips of ahypocrite whose secret thoughts contradict his open declaration. The inner husk represents the state wherein the heart neither opposes nor denies the express meaning of this statement, but rather the outward expression of the heart represents its belief and acceptance of that belief. This the monotheism which the common folk profess.

The third part is the pith itself. It represents the belief that all things come from Allah, a belief which rules out any consideration of instrumentalities and implies worshipping Him and no other thing besides Him.

The fourth term to be altered was the science of invocation (dihkr) and admonition (tadhkir). Allah said:

"And remind them, surely remembrance benefits the believers."
(Chapter 51 verse 55)

Several traditions commending the assemblies of invocation (dihkr) have been passed down to use, as, for instance, the words of the Prophet when he said; "When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, stop and enjoy yourselves." On being

asked what the gardens of Paradise were, he replied, "The assemblies of invocation." And again in the following tradition: 'indeed, other than the guardian angels, Allah has rover angels (sayyahan) who roam the earth looking for the assemblies of invocation (dihkr). On locating an assembly they beckon one another saying: 'Come to your goal.' Then the rover angels gather around these assemblies and hear the words: 'O you remember Allah and give warning to one another.' The practice has been altered in favour of story telling, recital of poems, ecstatic utterances (shath) and heresies (tammāt), the things which contemporary preachers persist in doing. As to story telling, it is an innovation; in fact our fathers have warned against attending the circles of story tellers saying that it was not the custom either at the time of the Messenger of Allah or the times of Abu Bakr and Umar. It was not until the appearance of heresy that they made their appearance.

Unfortunately, however, those who are in the habit of embellishing their speech with lies have taken these traditions as means of justification for themselves and have appropriated the name warning (tadhkir) for their fables thus forgetting the right path of praiseworthy invocation (dihkr) and spending their time in recounting tales which are subject to variations, accretions, and deletions, and which deviate from the stories which occur in the Koran and go beyond them. Some of the tales are good to hear while others are harmful in spite of the fact that they may be true. Whoever would go after this practice would no longer be able to distinguish truth from lies and what is good from that which is harmful. As to poetry, its generous use in sermons is blameworthy. Allah said: "And the poets, only the erring people follow them; Do you not see how they wander in every way?" (Chapter 27 verse 224 & 225).

And Allah High Exalted said:

"And We have not taught him poetry, it is not befitting for him." (Chapter 36 verse 69)

Furthermore, most of the poetry with which the preachers are familiar and which they are accustomed to repeat in their sermons pertain to claims of being in love, the beauty of the beloved, the joys of union with him, and pains of separation; while the assembly comprises no one but the crude among the common folk whose minds are saturated with lust and their eyes never cease from staring at fair faces. Their poetry inspires nothing in their hearts except that which their hearts already conceal, and enkindles therein the flames of lust.

Consequently they begin to shriek and make a show of their love. Most of this, if not all, is a result of a certain kind of corruption. Therefore no poetry should be used unless it contains a moral or a wise saying and should only be used as evidence or for example.

By ecstatic utterances we mean two types of speech evolved by some of the Sufis. The first comprises long pretentious claims of excessive love (ishq) of Allah and of union (wisal) which renders outward deeds superfluous until some have asserted oneness (ittihad) with Allah, the removal of the veil (hijab), seeing (mushahah) Him with the eye (ru'yah), and mouth to mouth conversation. They thus say that they were told such and such and that they have said such and such and imitate thereby al Husayn ibn Mansur al Hallaj who was crucified for letting slip from his lips certain words of this type, and cite as an example his saying: "I am the Truth." (Ana'l Haqq).

The second type of ecstatic utterances comprises unintelligible words with pleasing externals of which some, though awesome, are useless. They may be of two kinds: the first and more common comprises words unintelligible to the author who utters them because of the perplexity in his own mind and the confusion in his imagination resulting from his ignorance of the exact meaning of the words which he hears;

while the seconds represents words which may be intelligible to their author who, however, because of his insufficient practice in science and his lack of instruction in rhetoric, is unable to convey them to others through language which can express his thoughts.

As to heresies (tammāt), they comprise, besides what we have already mentioned under the ecstatic utterances (shath), another thing characteristic of them, namely, the dismissal of the obvious and literal meaning of words in favor of an esoteric interpretation of worthless value such as the Batinite method of interpretation which is unlawful and of great harm.

An example of the interpretations put forward by those heretics may be seen in the assertion of one of them that in the verse where Allah addresses Moses saying: "Go to Pharaoh, truly he is a tyrant" (Chapter 79 verse 17) the word Pharaoh stands for the heart of Moses, the heart being the trespasser against every man. Again when Allah said to Moses: "Cast down your staff." (Chapter 27 verse 10), the word staff is asserted to represent anything besides Allah on which man may depend (and in which he may place his trust), and should therefore be cast away.

The fifth term to have been altered is wisdom (hikmah), since we see that it has now become customary to apply the word wise (hakim) equally to the physician, the poet, the astrologer, and even to the one who reads fortunes for the peasants who squat on the street corners. Wisdom, however, is that which Allah commended when he said:

"He bestows wisdom upon whoever He pleases and whoever has wisdom bestowed upon him indeed has been endowed with a bounty overflowing..." (Chapter 2 verse 269)

The Prophet also said: "A word of wisdom which man learns is better to him than the world and all that is in it." We see, therefore, what wisdom stood for and to what it has been

altered, and examine, in the same way, the other terms. Beware, then, of being deceived by the ambiguities of the teachers of falsehood: their evil influence upon religion is greater than that of Satan.

Determining How Much is Praiseworthy (to acquire) of the Praiseworthy Sciences

One should know that, in this respect, science is divided into three parts. One part is that whose knowledge is blameworthy whether it be in part or as a whole. Another is that whose partial as well as total knowledge is praiseworthy; in fact the more one acquires of it, the better. Third is that whose knowledge is praiseworthy within a certain limit, that of sufficiency, but beyond that it ceases to be praiseworthy; to go into it deeply is not ???(word is illegible).

The part whose partial and total knowledge is blameworthy is that which has no use either in the realm of religion or in the domain of life because its harmfulness exceeds its utility, such as the science of magic, talismans and astrology.

The part whose knowledge, even to the limit of thoroughness, is praiseworthy is the science of knowing Allah, His attributes and works as well as His Law which governs His creatures and His Wisdom in ordaining the superiority of the Hereafter to this life. The knowledge of this is incumbent upon mankind both for itself and also for attaining thereby the bliss of the Hereafter.

The sciences whose knowledge is praiseworthy up to a certain limit are those which we have already mentioned under the sciences the acquisition of whose knowledge is a fard kifayah. Every one of these sciences has three stages; first limitation (iqtisar) which stage is the primary, second moderation (iqtisad) which is the intermediary, and third thoroughness (istiqsi) which is a sequel to moderation and which goes on and on during the life of the seeker. Be, therefore, on of

two, either one who educates himself, or one who concerns himself with the education of others after he has educated himself. Never, however, concern yourself with reforming others before you have first reformed yourself.

The one who would spend himself in pursuing what would reform others (while he himself remains unredeemed) is insolent, and how utterly foolish is the man who, when snakes and scorpions have crept beneath his clothes, is busy looking for a whisk with which to drive the flies off from other people, a task which will neither spare nor save him from the attacks of the snakes and scorpions lurking beneath his clothes.

Chapter Four

On the Reasons Which Induced Men to pursue the Science of Polemics and on Revealing the Evils of Debate and Disputation as well as Stating the Conditions Which Render Them Permissible.

After the death of the Messenger of Allah, the caliphate was occupied by the orthodox and guided caliphs who were Imams of righteousness, learned in the science of Allah, His essence and His attributes, versed in His statutes, and independent in handing down their legal opinions and decisions. In this they did not seek the aid of jurisprudents except in very rare cases in which consultation was indispensable. They devoted themselves to the science of the Hereafter and used to refer legal questions and all that pertains to human affairs in this world to one another and with their keenest effort, as the accounts of their lives reveal, they followed after Allah. When at their death, the caliphate passed to those who occupied it without either merit or independence in legal opinion and decisions, the caliphs were compelled to seek the

aid of jurisprudents and to attach them to themselves on all occasions in order to consult with them on the manner of their judicial decisions. A few learned followers (tabi'un), who continued to emulate the orthodox caliphs and persisted in conforming to the dictates of religion, and in following the way of righteous Fathers, were still living. Whenever they were sought (for appointment as judges), they would flee, disdaining (altogether such honour). Consequently the caliphs were compelled to be insistent in their desire to appoint them as judges and to delegate to them the power of government. Contemporaries were thus awakened to the glory of the learned men who, while they paid no attention to the caliphs and governors, were persistently sought by them. As a result these contemporaries turned with their efforts towards knowledge which they hoped to acquire in order to attain power and glory through the solicitation of governors. They bent themselves to the study of the science of legal opinions and offered their services to governors from whom they sought office and rewards. In this some failed while others met success, but those who were successful were not free from the obsequiousness of begging and the servility of indebtedness. Consequently the learned men, after having once been sought, have now become job seekers, and after having once been proud of their indifference to the sultans, have now become obsequious by waiting upon them. (This is true of all) except the few learned men of religion whom Allah has blessed in every age.

Subsequently, however, there appeared some distinguished men who deemed it improper to discourse on theology and start a series of debates therein because such a thing would lead to bloodshed and destruction. Instead they preferred to debate in jurisprudence and to point out the more important juridical points in the systems of Al Shafi'I and Abu Hanifah in particular.

Consequently, men discarded theology and other disciplines of knowledge and pursued especially problems of disagreement between Al Shafi'I and Abu Hanifah, while to those between Malik, Sufyan (al Thawri), Ahmad (ibn Hanbal), and others, they paid little attention. Their purpose, they claimed, was to elicit the abstruse points of law, determine the principles of the system, and prepare the bases of legal opinions and decisions. They composed many works on the subject and elicited many points, setting forth therein the different kinds of syllogisms of controversy and enumerating the various works that pertain thereto. Furthermore they still continue to compose at this present time; as to the future, however, we do not know what Allah ordained. This, then, is what induced men to take up nothing but controversies and debate. On the Evils of Debate and the Character Destroying Influences Resulting There from

We shall now allude to the major evils which are enkindled by debate. Of these we may enumerate the following.

One is envy. The Prophet said: "As fire consumes wood so does envy consume goods deeds." The debater persists in envy because at times he overcomes his adversary and at other times he himself is overcome; at times his words are praised and at other times those of his opponent are applauded; and as long as there remains in all the world one known among men for his versatile knowledge and regarded by them more learned than the debater and endowed with keener insight, the debater will inevitably envy him and wish that the favors and admiration which that man enjoys might accrue to him instead.

Envy is a consuming fire; its victim is subject to torment in this world while in the world to come his tortures will be more intense and painful. For this reason Ibn Abbas said: "Take knowledge wherever you may find it, but accept not the opinion of one jurisprudent concerning another because they are as jealous of one another as the bulls in the

cattle-yard."

Another is pride and haughtiness. The Prophet said: "He who exalts himself is humbled by Allah."

The debater persists in exalting himself above his equals and peers and in claiming for himself a station higher than his worth to the extent that he and his colleagues fight over their seats in assembly halls and boast about the degree of their elevation or lowliness as well as their proximity to, or remoteness from the central seats.

Another is rancor from which a debater is hardly ever free. The Prophet said: "The believer is free from rancor." Several more traditions have been related in condemnation of rancor and they are well known. Yet we do not know of a debater who is capable of entertaining no rancor against anyone who would nod his head in approval of the words of his adversary, or who, when the latter pauses in the midst of a sentence, would politely wait for him. On the contrary he would, whenever he is confronted with such a situation, entertain and foster rancor in his heart. He may attempt to restrain himself hoping thereby to disguise his feelings; but in most cases he fails as his feelings invariably reveal themselves. How can he refrain from rancor when it is inconceivable that all the audience should unite in favoring his argument and approve all his conclusions and deductions? Furthermore, should his opponent show the least sign of inconsideration about what he is saying, he would entertain for him in his heart a hatred that would last throughout his life.

Another is backbiting which was likened by Allah to the eating of carrion. "...nor backbite each other, would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?..." (Chapter 49 verse 12) The debater persists in "eating carrion" and is continually referring to the words of his opponent and traducing him. Because he endeavors to be right in what he says about his opponent, he inevitably cites only what shows the weaknesses

of his opponent's argument and the flaws in his excellence. Of such is traducing and backbiting, while lying is sheer calumny.

The debater, moreover, cannot keep his tongue from attacking the honor of anyone who turns away from him and listens to his opponent. He would even ascribe to him ignorance, foolishness, lack of understanding and stupidity.

Another is self-justification. Allah said:

"...therefore do not claim piety for yourselves, He knows best who is pious." (Chapter 53 verse 32)

A certain wise man once was asked: "What truth is reprehensible?" He replied: "A man's praising himself (even though it is justified)." A debater is never free from praising himself (and boasting) of his power, triumph, and excellence over his peers. In the course of a debate he would repeatedly say: "I am fully aware of all such things," and "I am versatile in sciences, of independent judgment in questions of law, and well versed in the knowledge of tradition," and many other assertions besides with which he would sing his own praise, sometimes out of sheer arrogance and at other times out of need to render his words convincing. It is well known that arrogance and self pride are by law and reason condemned. Another is spying and prying into a person's private affairs. Allah said: "...And do not spy..." (Chapter 49 verse 12).

The debater always seeks to uncover the errors of his peers and continually pries into the private affairs of his opponents. He would, when informed of the arrival in town of another debater, seek someone who could reveal the inside story of the man and would by means of a questionnaire attempt to bare his vices in order to expose and disgrace him whenever the need should arise. He even would inquire about the affairs of his early life and the blemishes of his body in the hope of discovering some defect or disfigurement such as scalp pustule and the like. Should he fear defeat at the hands of his

opponent, he would, in the course of the debate, allude to these blemishes, especially if his opponent should remain firm and stand his ground, and would not refrain from being outspoken if he were given to insolence and scorn.

Another is to rejoice at the injury of others and feel depressed when they are glad. Anyone who does not desire for his brother Muslim what he desires for himself is far removed from the way of the believers. Thus he who prides himself by parading his excellence is inevitably pleased at the injury of his peers and equals who vie with him for glory. The hatred which exists between them is like that which exists between fellow wives. Just as the one wife would tremble and turn pale at the sight of her fellow wife so would a debater at the sight of another; his color would change and his mind become perplexed as though he had seen a mighty devil or a hungry lion.

Another is deception, the evidence of whose blameworthiness (is well known) and need not be enumerated. Debaters are compelled to deception because when they meet their opponents, friends, or followers, they find it necessary to endear themselves to them by saying nice things which they do not mean, by feigning to have been anxious to meet them, and by pretending to be impressed by their station and position, while everyone present as well as the speakers and those to whom they have spoken know that the whole thing is untrue, false, fraudulent, and wicked. They profess their love with their tongues while their hearts seethe with hate. From it all we seek refuge in Allah.

The Prophet also said: "When people take to knowledge and ignore works, when they profess love to one another with their tongue and nurse hatred in their hearts, and when they sever the ties of relationship which bind them, Allah will visit His wrath upon them and curse them, He will render their tongues mute and their eyes blind." The truth of this tradition, which

was related by Al Hasan, has been verified as these conditions which it predicts have been witness and seen.

Another is to resist truth and detest it and to persist in disputing it so much so that the most hateful thing to a debater is to see the truth revealed by his opponent; no matter what it may be, he would do his best to refute and deny it and would exert his utmost in deception, trickery and fraud in order to disprove his adversary until contention becomes in him a second nature. He is unable to hear anything without immediately expressing his objection to it. This habit of this would even drive him to dispute the truths of the Koran and the words of tradition and would cause him to cite the one in contradiction of the other.

Another is hypocrisy and flattering people in an effort to win their favor and mislead. Hypocrisy is that virulent disease which leads to the gravest of the major sins. The debater wants nothing but to the gravest of the major sins. The debater wants nothing but to put himself forward before people, and to gain their approval and praise.

These ten traits are among the greatest secret sins. Others who lack restraint, may engage in controversies leading to the exchange of blows, kicking, boxing, tearing garments, plucking bears, cursing parents, denouncing teachers, and outright slander. Such people, however, are not considered respectable human beings. The prominent and sober among them do not go beyond the preceding ten traits. One may be free of this or that trait with regard to his inferiors or superiors whatever the case may be, or with regard to people outside his community or his sphere of work. Yet in his attitude towards his peers, who are equal to him in position, the debater is guilty of all these traits. Each of these ten traits may give rise to ten other vices which we shall neither discuss nor explain at the present time. They include snobbishness, anger, hatred, greed, the desire to seek money and power in order to

attain triumph, boasting, gaiety, arrogance, exalting the wealthy and those in authority as well as frequenting their places and partaking of their unlawful riches, parading with horses, state coaches, and outlawed garments, showing contempt to people by being vain and ostentatious, meddling in the affairs of others, talkativeness, the disappearance of awe, fear and mercy from the heart, absentmindedness to an extent that the worshiper would no longer be aware of what he prayed, or read, or who had communed with him during the prayer.