

The Complete Summons and General Reminder



by Imām al-Ḥaddād
translated by Moṣṭafā al-Badawī

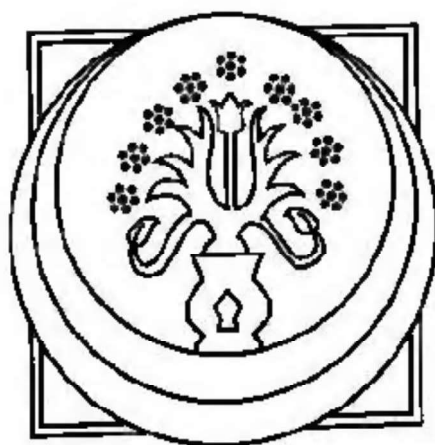
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By
Imām ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād

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By Imām 'Abdallāh al-Ḥaddād:

The Book of Assistance
The Lives of Man
Gifts for the Seeker
Knowledge and Wisdom
Mutual Reminding and Good Manners of the Disciple
The Sublime Treasures
Counsels of Religion

By Ḥabīb Aḥmad Mashhūr al-Ḥaddād: Key to the Garden

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Translator's Introduction

The Muslim community has long been suffering from a deep seated, chronic malaise; partly because it is going through what seems to be a collective identity crisis. The current malfunction of the community as a whole is undoubtedly due to their abandonment of the Book of God and *Sunna* of His Prophet—prayers and peace be upon him—with consequent loss of the normal hierarchy of values, neglect of religious duties, ignorance of the basics of the Muslim's correct behavior toward his family and surrounding community, and of the Prophetic model of virtue. The present state of chaos has been reached only after centuries of insidious decline. Three hundred years ago, when Imām al-Haddād authored this treatise, things were still very far from what they have come to today, yet the trend was clear and what the Imām wrote in those days applies even more tellingly to our time. The plan of the book is unique in that the author is the first scholar to have divided mankind into eight main categories according to the kind of *da'wa* they needed, and then detailed the rights and duties of each category and what it should or should not do to obtain salvation and the good pleasure of its Lord. Being addressed primarily, not to the pious and learned, but to those who are recalcitrant to follow the straight path, who commit forbidden things, or are ignorant of their rights and duties, the instructions seem at times strict and harsh. Understandably, the author concentrates more on duties than on rights.

Calling the non-Muslims to Islam is also a duty upon every Muslim, each according to his circumstances and abilities. Non-Muslims in general today have a low opinion of Islam. Some equate it with this or that terrorist person or group, but most have heard only the perfidious calumnies circulated during the middle ages when the Christian world felt so threatened by Islam that they fought it not only with their swords but with a widespread campaign of vilification, the repercussions of which are still felt to this day. Therefore, Muslims living among non-Muslims are under obligation to convey

to them the message of Islam, not necessarily by words but more importantly by deeds, by being, as instructed by their Prophet—prayers and peace be upon him—the kindest, most compassionate, and most helpful of all persons, by having a positive and benevolent impact on the community, and by bringing a high standard of excellence and integrity both to their work and their interactions with others, whether these be in the social or commercial spheres. Non-Muslims are not considered to have received the message of Islam until they fully receive it in its true form, a form not only unadulterated by lies and slander, but more damagingly by the anti-Islamic behavior of so many Muslims. The first step for every Muslim will necessarily be to reform himself by striving to acquire the necessary knowledge, then to implement it. Only utter sincerity in this will make of a Muslim an honorable example, both for other Muslims to follow and for non-Muslims.

Islam aims at preserving order in society, regulating human interactions, and preventing chaos, to provide the best possible environment for people to travel through this world in a manner conducive to eternal happiness in the Hereafter. This regulation takes the form of instructions as to what kind of behavior is declared by God to be obligatory, recommended, merely permissible, discouraged, or frankly forbidden.¹ Now regulation is by definition restrictive and the choices of this world are not only between good and evil, but more often between a greater and a lesser good, a greater and a lesser evil, or an immediate small and a delayed greater gratification. It is in the nature of this world that everything in it has a price, one sacrifices an immediate pleasure for the sake of obtaining a greater and longer lasting one later on. Students, for instance, abandon their outings and sporting activities to study, hoping that this sacrifice will bring them in the future better and more pleasurable and durable pleasures. Muslims refrain from drinking wine in the hope that in the Garden they will be recompensed with greater and more durable pleasures. To every regulation that brings about a positive result in this world there must be a negative aspect, usually because many people, being imperfect by nature and not interested in reforming themselves, abuse the law and exploit it in their favor without regard to the intention behind it or the spirit of it.

The best ordered society can never be perfect, so that order is always an approximate goal, and every reasonable person will recog-

1. These are the five categories into which any act is be legally classified.

nize that perfection is unattainable in this world. However, ordered societies will place the elders in a privileged situation, for they are the people who have acquired the experience necessary to bring about wisdom and give the best chance of making sound decisions. Thus elders are consulted about every important matter, whether in the family, clan, tribe, or nation. They are accorded respect and are treated with extreme courtesy. There is a hierarchy among elders based on who is seen as more knowledgeable, wiser, and possessed of a decisive personality. The value system of the community is agreed upon and taken for granted, so that he who flouts it attracts upon himself criticism, rebuke, pressures to conform, then punishment for the rebellious. He who still refuses to conform will eventually be rejected by the community and will become an outcast. In normal societies parents will also command veneration and obedience from their children. This makes for a stable society where roles are clearly defined and everyone's duties and expectations are common knowledge. However, as the times deteriorate the younger generations lose their respect for their elders and their parents and the normal social structure begins to fall apart. Then voices begin to be heard calling for all kinds of freedoms, gradually society loses its characteristics and becomes a group of individuals who happen to live in the same space but each of whom acts as he pleases. Elderly people are sent to nursing homes, half the female teenage population becomes pregnant; it is a free-for-all that reduces human beings to the level of their crudest instincts. Then, as they recognize what they have done to themselves, they call for more of the same, more freedom, which is really more chaos, to remedy what has happened. Societies who believe in a Hereafter and a final judgment cannot allow themselves to be carried along in such a rush toward disintegration; they must understand what is happening. Merely to understand constitutes the beginning of an effective riposte, for it is only their refusal to use their intellects and their heritage of wisdom that may cause Muslims to be sucked down by the eddies of the times.

Many *ḥadīths* are quoted only in part, the author quoting only that part of the *ḥadīth* that is relevant to the context.

Much of the poetry in the conclusion was left out in the translation.

Author's Prologue

In the Name of God, Most Merciful and Compassionate,

Remind, for reminding does profit believers.

There is neither power nor ability save by God, the High, the Formidable.

Transcendent are You ! We have no knowledge save that which You taught us, You are the Knowing, the Wise.

All praise belongs to God, Lord of Majesty and Generosity, the King, the Holy, the Peace, the Guarantor, the Supreme, the Omniscient, who has bestowed upon us of His favor by guiding us to faith and Islam, making us members of the best community ever to have been brought out for mankind, and clarifying for us, through the words of His truthful and trustworthy Messenger, the laws concerning statutory limits and regulations, the pattern of the licit and the forbidden, the true and the false, guidance and error, and obedience and transgression. Thus was the path made clear for the rightly guided travelers and the case made against iniquitous rebels. His is grace most abundant, Transcendent and Exalted be He, and His the final argument against all beings, both the generality and the elect.

He creates each creature for a purpose in His knowledge, that they may live according to His will. This He does out of mercy, favor, wisdom, and justice. He causes them to differ in this as in other things such as their states, acts, and behavior. He molds their forms to shape them into species, then divides species into kinds, to demonstrate the magnitude of His astounding ability, infinite knowledge, and irresistible will, and to make of them signs to both His visible and invisible realms. In this He is never unjust to His servants. *He is not to be questioned as to what He does, whereas*

they are.¹ He created the Garden and created its people for it, in such a manner that they will behave as the people of the Garden should; and He created the Fire and created people for it, so that they will behave as the people of the Fire should. In all this they create nothing, rather they are created. They possess no power to attract benefit to themselves, protect themselves from harm, bring to life, end it, or bring about resurrection. Neither will they be excused when they neglect to fulfill His rights upon them and fail to obey Him and to fulfill His pledge, nor when they act in defiance of His orders and in His disobedience, so long as they do so willfully, being neither coerced nor compelled. Those will perish who are extreme, presumptuous, complacent, or who dispute with their Lord; they are those of whom He said, August be He, *They follow but their guesses, merely conjecturing.*² For His is ability and generosity, Transcendent be He, favor and graciousness, and kindness and benefaction.

May God's blessings be upon our Lord and Master Muḥammad, His Servant and Messenger, whom He sent as a mercy to all beings, made him the Seal of the Prophets and the Master of the Messengers, the most noble of all people, those who have gone by and those yet to come, and the first Accepted Intercessor; and upon the members of his pure and noble household, his Companions, the illustrious leaders, and upon those who follow them truly till the Day of Resurrection and Gathering before God for the weighing of deeds, judgment, and crossing of the Bridge, where some feet will remain firm, while others will slip. *God confirms those who believe with the Firm Word, in this life and the life to come, and God leads astray the unjust, and God does what He will. Have you not seen those who changed the favor of God into ingratitude and led their people to the abode of ruin?*³ The abode of ruin is the abode of wrath and revenge. *As for those who believe and do good works, they shall be admitted to gardens underneath which rivers flow, therein to dwell perpetually by leave of their Lord; their greeting therein will be peace.*⁴

O God, only with You does protection and refuge lie and only to You do we turn for help and preservation. We seek Your protection against the evil in ourselves and in our works, the evil of every

1. Qur'ān, 21:23.

2. Qur'ān, 6:116.

3. Qur'ān, 14:27, 28.

4. Qur'ān, 14:23.

rebellious demon and obstinate tyrant, against injustice and jealousy, and the evil of everything that goes into the earth and everything that comes out of it, or that comes down from the sky or ascends in it, You are the Compassionate, the Forgiving. You accord protection and none can accord protection against You, there is no escape from You save to You. O God, guide us with Your guidance, make us of those who hasten to Your good pleasure, do not commit us to the protection of any other, and do not make us of those who disobey You.

God is our sufficiency and He is the best Guardian. There is neither power nor ability, save by God, the Exalted, the Formidable.

My success is but from God, upon him do I rely and to him do I humbly turn.⁵ God is sufficient as a protector and an ally.⁶ He is the best of protectors and the best of allies.⁷ There is no god other than Him, the Living, the Sustainer.⁸ He alone is Pre-existent and Eternal.

To proceed: This is, God willing, a blessed book, a compilation that was completed with God's assistance, wherein we mention certain counsels and exhortations, as well as theoretical and practical good manners, that need to be assimilated and applied, and their meanings and realities acquired. Our goal is to counsel, advise, and discipline ourselves and our brothers in religion, may God grant us and them success in attaining to His good pleasure, and make us and them of those who fear Him as He should be feared, thank and remember Him abundantly, and extol His praises mornings and evenings. Works are valued according to intentions and each person is rewarded according to what he intended. A person is where his intention is, not his body. *Each works according to his nature and God knows best who is better guided in his ways.⁹ And your Lord knows what their breasts hide and what they reveal.¹⁰ He is God, there is no other god but He, His is the praise in this world and the next, His is the judgment, and to Him you shall be returned.¹¹*

The Prophet—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—has said, *God looks not at your bodies or your wealth, but rather at*

5. Qur'ān, 11:88.

6. Qur'ān, 4:45.

7. Qur'ān, 8:40.

8. Qur'ān, 2:255.

9. Qur'ān, 17:84.

10. Qur'ān, 28:69.

11. Qur'ān, 28:70.

*your hearts and your works.*¹² And, *He who goes to war desiring only a hobble, his shall be only what he intended. And, Most of the martyrs in my community will be those who die in their beds; a man may be killed between the two ranks whose intention God knows best. And, God sometimes supports this religion with a corrupt man; or, with people in whom there is no good.*¹³

O God, make what You have taught us an argument in our favor and a path to Your good pleasure and Your Garden; do not make it an argument against us, nor a path to Your wrath and Your Fire, the abode of Your punishment. O God, make us benefit from what You have taught us and teach us what will be of benefit to us. May God be thanked at all times; We seek His protection from the states of the people of the Fire.

We have entitled this work: *The Complete Summons and General Reminder*, and have divided it into an introduction, eight sections, and a conclusion. As for the introduction, we have explained in it the summons to God, His religion, and His path. As for the eight sections, each concerns a certain category of people, the first category being the scholars; the second the ascetics and devotees; the third the kings, the rulers, and other people in authority; the fourth the merchants, the craftsmen, and other such people; the fifth the poor, the weak, and the destitute; the sixth the dependents such as the women, children, and slaves; the seventh the generality of believers, both the obedient among them and the transgressors; the eighth those who have not responded to the summons of God and His Messenger and do not believe in God and the Last Day. Finally,

12. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, (4650, 4651); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, (4233).

13. All these *ḥadīths* are concerned with intention. The "hobble" is the piece of rope (*'Iqāl*) that Bedouin use to tie the legs of their camels when at rest so as to prevent them from straying far. Thus, a Bedouin who goes to war ostensibly for the sake of God, but in reality in the desire to obtain booty worth a camel-rope, his intention makes his action worth no more than that. As for the martyrs who die in their beds, the reference is not only to those who die from a fulminating illness, but also of a sudden or violent death such as an accident, drowning, or in a fire. Such people cross to the next life as martyrs, although by no means equal to the battlefield martyrs. The next two *ḥadīths* refer to people who actually fight, "between the two ranks," either dying or showing great prowess, but whose intentions, which only God is aware of, are corrupt. Neither those who die are martyrs in the sight of God, nor will those who survive be rewarded save as their intentions deserve.

First *ḥadīth*: Aḥmad, *Musnad*, (22692, 22788). Second *ḥadīth*: Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, (3087, 3088); Aḥmad, *Musnad*, (21634, 21669). Third *ḥadīth*: Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3062. Fourth *ḥadīth*: Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, (8834); Aḥmad, *Musnad*, (20454).

in conclusion, we give brief counsels of advice to all eight categories, in addition to general counsels and exhortations that soften the heart, the completion of which closes the book. God it is who guides to the truth and to what is correct. He it is that we ask for help and support, from Him does assistance and rectification come, He is my Lord, there is no god other than He, upon Him do I rely and to Him do I repent.

The time has come to turn intention into action and it is to God that we turn for help; only through Him can the end be reached. There is no god and no lord other than He, no other can be the object of worship or yearning. His is all favor, benefaction, grace, and generosity, from beginning to end, inwardly and outwardly. *He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has knowledge of all things.*¹⁴

14. Qur'ân, 57:3.

Introduction

God, Most High and Immense, Mighty and Invincible, says in His August Book to His truthful and trustworthy Messenger, *Call to the path of your Lord with wisdom and gracious exhortation, and debate with them in the best manner, your Lord knows best those who have erred from His path and He knows best those who are rightly guided.*¹ And He says Exalted be He, *Say: This is my way; I call to God in full awareness, I and those who follow me, and Transcendent is God and I am not one of those who associate with Him.*² And He says, Exalted be He, *And whose speech is more excellent than he who calls to God, does good works, and says: I am one of the Muslims.*³ And He says, Exalted be He, *Let there be a community among you who invite to goodness, enjoin good, forbid evil; those are they who will succeed.*⁴

To call the people to God, to His path, His religion, and His obedience, is the wont of the Prophets and Messengers; this is what God commanded them to do and the reason He sent them. This is what He enjoined upon them and exhorted them to do, and it is in this that their heirs, the practicing scholars and virtuous saints among the believing servants of God, follow and emulate them. At all times and under all circumstances they persisted in calling the people to the path of God and to His obedience, with both their words and deeds, with full ardor and zeal, seeking the good pleasure of God, in compassion for His servants, desiring His recompense, and in emulation of the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him. He said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*He who invites to guidance receives a reward equal to that of those who follow him, without this diminishing their rewards in any way; and he who invites to error, his burden of sin is equal to that of those*

1. Qur'ān, 16:125.

2. Qur'ān, 12:108.

3. Qur'ān, 41:33.

4. Qur'ān, 3:104.

*who follow him, without this diminishing their burden in any way.*⁵ And he said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*He who guides to an act of goodness is just like he who performs it.*⁶

There are numerous well known verses of the Qur'ān and traditions of the Prophet and the Companions detailing the merits of calling the people to God and His Way. Furthermore, all verses and traditions concerned with acquiring and disseminating knowledge, the merits of counseling and reminding, and even the merits of fighting in the way of God, as well as enjoining good and forbidding evil, are included in the merits of calling to God, Exalted be He, and His way, for these are all various kinds and subdivisions of it.

He who neglects to call to God and His religion, while qualified and able to do so unopposed, is included in the threats proffered against those who withhold the guidance and clear signs that God has sent down, and these are indeed severe threats, catastrophic punishments, and utter disparagement from God, who says, Exalted be He, *Those who withhold the clear proofs and guidance which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they will be cursed by God and by those who curse.*⁷ And He says, Exalted be He, *Those who withhold that which God has sent down of the Book and sell it for a cheap price, those shall eat Fire in their bellies, up to, so how patiently will they endure the Fire!*⁸

God has taken oaths and pledges from those to whom He gave His book, His knowledge, and His wisdom, that they shall call His servants to these and make them clear to them. As He says, Exalted be He, *When God took the pledge of those who had been given the Book: That you shall make it clear to the people and not conceal it. But they threw it behind their backs and sold it for a cheap price. Evil is that which they sell!*⁹ And the Messenger of God—may God's blessing and peace be upon him—said, *He, who when asked about knowledge withholds it, will be bridled with a bridle of fire by God on Judgment Day.*¹⁰ Now if the question is asked with the tongue that speaks, the situation is obvious, yet a question asked with the

5. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4831; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3993; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2598; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 202.

6. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2594.

7. Qur'ān, 2:159.

8. Qur'ān, 2:174, 175.

9. Qur'ān, 3:187.

10. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3173; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 261.

tongue of one's condition is not that far from being equally obvious. Is it not being said that, "The tongue of one's condition is even more eloquent than the tongue that speaks." Therefore, when he who has knowledge of the religion of God and is engaged in reminding others of His Days and calling them to His Path, looks at those who are ignorant of this knowledge, forgetful of the Hereafter, and in earnest pursuit of this world, he has no option but to explain to them what rights God has upon them, and what they need to do to align themselves into His obedience, conform with His injunctions, and avoid sinning against Him and committing what He has forbidden.

As for the neglectful scholars, overcome by their negligence and muddled states, they care little for this, so much so that it seldom crosses their minds, for they share with the ignorant their wastefulness and neglect, as well as their evil words and deeds. The only difference between them is the outward form of knowledge and its formalities which show in their speech and external appearances. Those are neither leaders of guidance, nor summoners to goodness, nor are they guides on the path to God, the Formidable King. It may even happen that some of them will cause the common people to wade even more deeply into their audacities and impertinence, and persist in words and deeds that attract the wrath of God and His Messenger. For when the common people observe those who are said to be people of knowledge and religion, being neglectful and careless in upholding the commands of God and fulfilling His obligations, and being slow to obey him, it may encourage them to neglect and flout matters of religion, perhaps even fall into major sins and crimes. Thus will such scholars have become summoners to evil and leaders into error, whether in full awareness or not. We ask God's protection against reversion and inversion, and we ask him for safety from every fearful thing and every calamity, for us, our loved ones, and all Muslims. The end belongs to those who are God-fearing, and hostility is directed solely against the wrongdoers.

People of truth and religion from among the firmly steeped scholars who are sincere with God and His Messenger and of good counsel to the Muslims, once they observe and take note of the common people's disinterest in knowledge and guidance, disinclination to uphold Divine injunctions and obligatory devotions, inclination to embark on forbidden activities, satisfaction with ignorance instead of knowledge, error instead of guidance, and falsehood instead of truth, together with being intent on indulg-

ing their appetites, pursuing ephemeral desires, giving precedence to this world over the next, and being content with the changeful and ephemeral rather than the subsistent and eternal, cannot decline to counsel and enjoin good upon them, uphold the commands of God among them, invite them to guidance and goodness, and repel them from evil and reprehensible things. They must exert themselves to the utmost in doing this and expend of their energy and effort to their very limits, for this is incumbent upon them, either in an individually or collectively binding (*kifāya*) manner. In this they can never be excused, nor do they have the slightest permission to abandon it, since God taught them of His knowledge, made them the custodians of His religion, and bequeathed to them his Book and the *Sunna* of His Messenger. He said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets, for the Prophets bequeath neither dīnār nor dirham, but they bequeath knowledge.*¹¹ Another tradition states that, *The scholars of my community are like the Prophets of the Children of Israel.*¹² There used to be raised one Prophet after another among the Israelites to renew the Sacred Law of Moses—may the best of blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and him—to exhort them to uphold it, encourage them to implement it, and put fear into them of neglecting the commands of God and falling into His disobedience. This was through revelation from God, as will be immediately recognized by he who reflects on their stories and what has been said about them. This continued until Jesus, the son of Mary, may the best of blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and him, was sent by God with a Sacred Law superseding that of Moses, upon whom be peace. But the Israelites denied and gave him the lie, also slandering his mother, may peace be upon her. Then there was a period without Prophets, until God sent His slave and Messenger Muḥammad—may blessings and peace be upon him—the Master of the Children of Adam, with the Qur'ān and the comprehensive Sacred Law, to supersede all that had come before it. But both the Jews and the Christians disbelieved and denied

11. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3157; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2606; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 219.

12. This tradition was said by leading traditionists to have no reliable chain of transmission, despite its meaning being accepted as correct. However, it is quoted explicitly as a *ḥadīth* by Ibn Qudāma and many major Qur'ān exegetes, such as for instance Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: *Tafsīr Maḥāṭib al-Ghayb*, commentary on *Sūrat Yūnus*, verses 57, 58; *Sūrat Ibrāhīm*, verse 11; *Sūrat Fuṣṣilat*, verse 79.

him, save those whom God willed.

God made Muḥammad—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—the Seal of the Prophets and the Messengers, and He said, August be He, *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of God and Seal of the Prophets, and God has full knowledge of all things.*¹³ Thus did God seal with him both the functions of Prophet and Messenger, making him the completion and perfection of all Envoys. Then, just as He had made him their beginning and origin, then their end and seal, so that there shall be neither Prophet nor Messenger after him, He made, by His grace, generosity, and favor, the scholars of his community, who are his heirs and successors and the carriers of his Sacred Law and everything of importance in his religion, to resemble the Israelite Prophets, from many or most aspects, but evidently not all, since there is no way to attain to the rank of Prophecy and none can hope for it after the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him. The path to such a rank is closed, for it can never be attained by effort and striving, but only at the time and place where it is possible for it to occur, and these were before Muḥammad was raised—blessings and peace be upon him—and before the functions of Prophet and Messenger were sealed with him. Since the matter is as you have heard and come to know, God raises in this Muḥammadan Community callers to guidance, renewers to invigorate that which has become threatened with extinction of religion, that which has been effaced of the landmarks of certitude, and those divine injunctions and prohibitions that have become neglected and forgotten. To this refers the following saying of the Prophet—may God's blessings and peace be upon him: *God raises for this community, at the head of every hundred years, those who will renew its religion for it.*¹⁴ Scholars, may God have mercy on them, have designated as the renewer at the head of the first century the pious caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdal-'Azīz, the Umayyad, the Qurashī, may God have mercy on him. At the head of the second century Imām Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī al-Muṭṭalibī, may God have mercy on him. At the head of the third, either Ibn Surayj al-Shāfi'ī or Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī. At the head of the fourth, either Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillanī al-Mālikī, or Shaykh Abū Hāmid al-Isfarāyīnī al-Shāfi'ī. At the head of the fifth, the Imām, the Proof of Islam, Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī. Fol-

13. Qur'ān, 33:40.

14. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3740.

lowing these there is disagreement as to the renewer of the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, which complete the thousand years since his emigration—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—with which the Muslim calendar was begun during the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, following the suggestion of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, may God be pleased with them. Also, as we have seen, there was some disagreement as to the renewer of the third and fourth centuries.

Al-Hāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī, may God have mercy on him, in commenting on the meaning of the *ḥadīth* stating that a renewer will be raised every hundred years, said that it was possible that renewal would be done by a number of leading scholars, who accomplish the renewal between them. Both the wording and meaning of the *ḥadīth* make this possible. However, since our virtuous ancestors designated only one person as renewer of the first centuries, even though they differed at times, we cannot take al-Hāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī's opinion for granted. It is now a long time since I have read his opinion, but this is what I remember of it, and God is the Knowing, the Aware.

The aforementioned renewal is one of the attributes specific to this Muḥammadan Community, for there shall be no other Prophet or Messenger after its Prophet—may God's blessings and peace be upon him. It has been transmitted to us that after his passing away the earth complained to its Lord that no Prophet is ever to walk on it again, so He gave this community the *Awtād* and the *Abdāl*¹⁵, and other saints of God and those given gnosis of Him, who are the heirs of the Prophets and their successors. It has even been transmitted that some of them are according to the heart of Abraham, the Friend, may peace be upon him,¹⁶ others according to the hearts of other Prophets and angels of God, may peace be upon them. A *ḥadīth* says, *There shall always be a group in my community to uphold the truth, unaffected by those who let them down, and they shall remain so until the command of God comes.*¹⁷ And, *The son of Mary will find in my community people similar to his disciples.*

The Commander of the Faithful 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, may God be pleased with him, said, "O God, allow not the earth ever to be without those who uphold your argument, whether they be manifest

15. The *Awtād* and the *Abdāl* are categories of saints.

16. Ṭabarānī, *kaḥīr*, 10237.

17. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3544.

and well known, or hidden and overwhelmed, etc...”

Thus does follow what we have quoted and other similar textual evidence to indicate that there shall always be in this community, at all times and places, those who call to God and His path, to upholding His commands and preserving His religion, even though the times may be corrupt and falsehood dominant, and even though transgressors and aggressors strengthen one another, for religion is supported by God until the time God grants it victory; as He says, August be He, *He it is who sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion to make it supreme over all other religion, despite the idolaters' repugnance.*¹⁸ There is no excuse for the ignorant to refrain from seeking that which God has made obligatory upon him to know. As the Prophet said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.*¹⁹ There is no excuse for a scholar not to teach what he knows of the knowledge of God that is obligatory to learn, either by way of being an individual or a collective (*kifaya*) obligation. The knowledge, the dissemination of which is profitable for all Muslims, is that which induces one to prefer the next world to this one, to shift from disobedience to obedience, and from distraction to vigilance. Such reminding must be accompanied by counsels and exhortations, warnings, explanations of the promises and threats, and what God has prepared in the way of recompense for the obedient and of punishment for the wrongdoers and disobedient, in the manner that He explains it in the verses of the Qur'ān and through the words of His Messenger whom He sent with guidance and clear exposition. In this way will hearts soften and become humble, and souls become submissive and easily led. God, Exalted be He, says, *There should come out of each of their groups a party that study religion and become warners to their kin when they return to them, that they might beware.*²⁰

There are similar indications in the *ḥadīth* of Ḥanzala, when he said to the Prophet—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—that when they sit with him and he reminds them of the Garden and the Fire, they feel they can almost see them with their eyes.²¹

18. Qur'ān, 9:33.

19. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 220.

20. Qur'ān, 9:122.

21. When Ḥanzala al-Usaydī once met Abū Bakr in the streets of Madina he exclaimed, “Ḥanzala has become a hypocrite!” Abū Bakr asked, “Why is that?” He

The Book of God and *Sunna* of His Messenger are brimming with those things that make rectitude and the Garden attractive, and repel from disobedience and Hell. They are full of good news and warnings, which occur even in the course of verses and *ḥadīths* stating rules of law and explaining them. The gatherings of the practicing scholars and rightly guided leaders have always been filled with such things. Some of them sat on chairs surrounded by a vast crowd of Muslims whom they counseled and reminded of the Days of God and of His blessings, and exhorted them to uphold His orders and to avoid His prohibitions, and the people used to benefit from their words, show signs of that in their fear and their tears, and in hastening to repent and return to God. This is well known about both the early generations and their successors. Such were, among the early ones, al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad, the Master of the Faction in his days, Abū Ḥamza al-Baghḍādī, and Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘āz al-Rāzī. Among the latecomers were Imām al-Ghazālī, Shaykh Muḥiyuddīn ‘Abdal-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and Shaykh al-Suhrawardī, the author of *‘Awārif*. There were many others like them, leaders of religion, summoners to goodness, and guides on the path. Then weakness set in, calling to God diminished, distraction overcame the common people, as did turning away from the Hereafter and concentration on this world and its ornaments. Those who remind and those who call to God with insight and certitude grew scarce. Eventually the gatherings of those connected with knowledge and religion became similar to those of the distracted, the heedless that are preoccupied with conversing about worldly affairs and the conditions affecting its people. This is why the affliction has become ubiquitous, the ailment virulent, the tongues of the Reminders have been silenced, ignorance and heedlessness have become so pervasive among the generality of people that those who know nothing of what the people of truth and guidance did in the past now imagine that it has always been so. How very wrong they are! But there is no bringing back

replied, “When we sit with the Messenger of God—may God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and he reminds us of the Garden and the Fire, and it is as if we could actually see them with our eyes. Then we leave his presence, laugh with the women and the children and attend to the plantations, and we become heedless.” Abū Bakr took him to the Prophet, remarking that it was something that happened to him too. Ḥanzala repeated what he had said in the presence of the Prophet, who answered him saying, “By He in whose hand is my soul, were you to maintain the state you are in with me and the remembrance at all times the angels would shake hands with your on your beds and in your streets; but Ḥanzala, sometimes this, sometimes that.” He repeated the last words three times. [Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4937, 4938.]

what has gone. Knowledge has gone when the learned, the learners, and the true seekers have vanished. A *ḥadīth* says, *God does not seize knowledge from among the people forcefully, but He seizes knowledge by seizing its people, until when no scholar is left, the people will accept ignorant leaders who when asked will answer without knowledge, thus going astray and leading others astray.*²² Consider how, for those ignorant pretenders, speaking is of worse effect on the people than keeping silent, and you will understand the difference between the religious scholars who are heirs of the Prophets and leaders of guidance, and the ignorant who attempt to resemble them outwardly. The first group benefits the people with their knowledge, guides them with their wisdom, and explains to them the path of their Lord and that which leads to success in this and the next worlds, while the other group leads people astray with their legal opinions, confounding their affairs for them. We shall return to this later and explain more elaborately the attributes of the ignorant who pass themselves off as scholars, try to resemble them in their outward appearance, but are entirely lacking in the realities of their knowledge and piety, and possess very little in the way of religion and guidance. These are of several kinds, all self deceivers, deluded by this world, and having succumbed to their passions, as God says, August be He, *Say: Shall we inform you of whose works have failed most? Those whose endeavors have gone astray in this world, yet who think they are doing well.*²³

Evil innovations and alterations have appeared, reprehensible things have become rampant, distraction and disinterest in God and the Hereafter have overcome everyone. There can be no excuse for the people of truth and religion among the people of knowledge and certitude, to fail to make the truth and guidance clear and call to God and His Path, with words and deeds, and strive to the utmost to stamp out innovations and alterations, and remove reprehensible things. He said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*When innovations (or he might have said seditions) appear, and my Companions are insulted, let every scholar reveal his knowledge, and for he who does not, let the curse of God, the angels, and all people be upon him; God will accept from them neither repentance nor requital.*²⁴

22. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 98; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4828.

23. Qur'ān, 18:103, 104.

24. Abū Bakr ibn al-Khallāl, *Al-Sunna*, 797; Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Jāmi' li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Ādāb al-Sāmi'*, 1366; Al-Ājirī, *Al-Sharī'a*, 2003.

Certain doubts may beset scholars, thereby preventing them from calling to the truth and disseminating knowledge. One of them is to think, "I do not implement what I know, so how can I teach and invite others to it, when those who would do so are under severe threats, as is well known?" To such a person it should be said, "To teach knowledge is part of practicing it, and he who teaches without himself practicing is much better than he who neither teaches nor practices. If you cannot do good in its entirety, then at least do some of it. You must teach and you must strive to practice what you know. Without doubt, threats against he who teaches without practicing what he teaches, are even more worthy of applying to him who neither practices nor teaches, for God has imposed two obligations upon those who have knowledge, the first fulfilled one and failed to fulfill the other, while the second failed to fulfill both, thereby becoming more worthy of these threats and more deserving of punishment."

Such a person may also say to himself, "Calling to God, Exalted be He, and guiding His servants is a lofty degree and a noble rank that belongs to the leaders of guidance and religion and to their function. Neither am I one of those, nor am I qualified ever to be." His feelings of insignificance and inadequacy, his disdain of himself and his humility then lead him to refrain from calling to God, or assuming the function of guidance. He imagines this to be praiseworthy modesty and that he thus knows his limits and humbly stops at them. Such thoughts are erroneous illusions, for the truth is never an obstacle to the truth, and good is never an obstacle to good. He should strive and do his utmost to call to guidance, show the way to goodness, together with maintaining humility and modesty, experiencing fear and awe, confessing to his shortcomings, and disdaining himself. This is what perfection is, and how to acquire the attributes of those men who are not repulsed by the devil's insinuations, nor diverted by his illusions and deceptions, or his passing off evil as good.

Another such illusion is for the scholar to spend all his time in his invocations and continuous acts of worship and recitations, feeling that that is better for him and takes priority over calling to God and His path and disseminating profitable religious knowledge. The truth is that calling to God and disseminating profitable knowledge, when accompanied by sincerity, are better than supererogatory prayers and other devotions, for the benefits of knowledge are

widespread, and it is needed by both the common people and the elect, the young and the old. The *ḥadīth* says, *The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is as my superiority over the least among you.*²⁵ Another *ḥadīth* says, *The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is as the superiority of the moon on the night when it is full over the rest of the planets.*²⁶ Nevertheless, the scholar who calls to God should never abandon his *awrād* and neglect acts of devotion, but he should designate times that are set aside for them when he can devote himself completely to worship, especially at night and those times of the day when he is not actively teaching or when no seekers of knowledge are usually present. Imām Mālik, may God have mercy on him, said, "Seek this knowledge in a manner that does not affect your acts of worship, and pursue this worship in manner that does not affect the quest for knowledge." Imām Shāfe'ī, may God the Exalted have mercy on him, used to divide the night into three parts, one to pray, a second to study, and a third to sleep. The Proof of Islam, may God the Exalted have mercy on him, in the section of the *Iḥyā'* where he discourses on how to arrange one's *awrād*, explains in detail how a scholar should schedule his time. So let every scholar hold on fast to that and implement it, and may God guide him.

These illusions that we have mentioned and others like them may occur to some practicing scholars who are God-fearing and humble. As for those that occur to the pretenders who have realized neither fear of God nor humility, and are not keen to practice what they know, they are numerous, but they all originate in distraction and confusion, and prevent them from calling to the path of God and disseminating knowledge for God's sake. They are prevented from doing so by being too preoccupied with their worldly affairs, seeking the good graces of the evil eminent people of this world and refraining from criticizing them, by procrastination and delaying functions from their specific times so that they impinge on other things, or by the desire to keep their behavior and their negligence hidden, imagining that were they to call to God and the Hereafter while their behavior is different from their words, the people will notice and they will be despised and lose their influence. This they dread, being most anxious to preserve their influence and rank in people's hearts, since they assiduously pursue eminence, for it is

25. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2609.

26. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3157.

one of the most powerful worldly passions and the one whose grip is most powerful over those egos that are prisoners of their passions.

There are also among those who pretend to be scholars those who are engaged in acquiring knowledge that is unrelated to the calling to God and His path, and reminding of Him, His Days, His blessings, and His promises and threats. Yet they consider themselves scholars and consider those that differ from them ignorant. Examples of those are those whose knowledge consists of the subtleties of *kalām*, the rarely applicable branches of jurisprudence, and legal rulings thereof. Another kind are those whose knowledge consists in grammar, linguistics, and literature. These and similar sciences are not sciences of calling to God and His path, neither do they instill the fear of meeting Him, nor are concerned with His threats and His promises, nor do they warn against neglecting His injunctions and committing what He has forbidden, although they are considered sciences among the sciences, but they are beneficial neither to the common nor the elect, neither are they what the people need for the good of their religion and Hereafter. It has been said, "Sciences are numerous and not all of them are beneficial. Sciences are like foods and medicines, some are important and beneficial to everyone, some are for certain people but not others, and some are harmful to certain people but not to others."

He whose knowledge belongs to those sciences that are neither religiously important nor beneficial, to call him a scholar is an appellation empty of content. His knowledge may even cause him to incur his Lord's wrath, to perish by losing his life to come. Thus all scholars should add to these the religious sciences of the Hereafter that are accompanied by fear and awe, abundant knowledge of the promises and threats, and exhortations to detach oneself from the love of this world and desire the Hereafter. For these are the sciences about which Sufyān al-Thawrī, may God have mercy on him, said, "We sought knowledge for other than God's sake, but knowledge refused to be but for God's sake." The Proof of Islam, may God have mercy on him, made similar statements.

Just as the pious, no less than the confused scholar, may be subject to doubts and illusions that hinder and obstruct him from calling to God, guiding to good, and disseminating knowledge, so can the ignorant be subject to illusions that prevent him from seeking knowledge and acquiring insight into his religion. For instance he may imagine that should he seek knowledge and acquire it, he will

acquire with it obligations toward God and people which he will be forced to discharge, and he will then have been forced to conform to God's orders and prohibitions. In his ignorance he thinks that to have no knowledge is to be relieved from discharging these obligations. That thinking is erroneous and the excuse unacceptable. It may even happen that you observe one of those ignoramuses refraining from attending the sessions of the people of truth for fear of hearing something of the promises of reward and threats of punishment, or something that may oblige him to conform to the obedience of God, avoid sins, or detach himself from the world and the pleasures that have taken him over and grasped him by the throat,. He thinks that in this manner he will evade responsibility and will not be required to conform to something he does not know. How wrong he is! God will never excuse him and such behavior will only serve to increase him in remoteness, pain, abasement, and torment.

The ignorant person may be prevented from seeking the truth and learning about religion by his relentless pursuit of this world, by being infatuated with its beauties and preoccupied with gathering its debris, to the extent that no time is left for the truth and religion. His share will be this world. It will consist in remaining constantly engaged in gathering and withholding it, and enjoying its pleasures and appetites. Of religion and the Hereafter he will thus have no share at all. Yet he is so thoroughly ignorant and so utterly distracted that he imagines that working for this world is more important and more pressing, and takes precedence over seeking to learn his religion and God's commands and prohibitions. About such people God, Exalted be He, says, *They know some appearances of the life of this world, but of the Hereafter they are heedless.*²⁷ And He says, Exalted be He, *They are content with the life of this world and are reassured by it. Those who are heedless of Our signs, their abode will be the Fire for that they have earned.*²⁸

In reality, engaging in learning religion, becoming familiar with knowledge, and fulfilling God's rights as far as both knowledge and works are concerned, is the basis and foundation upon which all else rests. As for worldly matters, they are all secondary compared with this, and by this I mean essential worldly matters, as for inessential ones, Muslims are discouraged from attending to them and encouraged to abandon them. See how the ignorant and heedless turn

27. Qur'ân, 30:7.

28. Qur'ân, 10:7, 8.

things upside down because of their ignorance, making the head tail and the tail head, the essential secondary and the secondary essential, and showing interest in that which should be renounced and disinterest in that which should be sought, and you will see how the ignorant are harmful and evil news, and affliction and humiliation for their families in this world and the next. This is why it was said,

His enemies never injure the ignorant more than the ignorant injures himself.

And,

Ignorance for the ignorant is a death before death
his body is a tomb long before he is laid in his tomb

Ignorance nowadays prevails, has taken control of the people of these evil times, and is leading them into strange places, to the extent that the majority of them know nothing of what the truth of religion is, neither of the Hereafter, nor of returning to God. This has become a major catastrophe the harm of which affects both the ignorant and the learned, the common people and the elect. As for the harm that affects the ignorant, it is obvious, for he has lost that which God has made incumbent upon him in the way of learning about his religion and His injunctions. As for the harm that befalls the scholar it is because of his failing to call to the path of God and to teach the people what they need to know of their religion, while able to. Thus when the ignorant no longer know that they are obliged to seek that which God has made obligatory upon them of religious knowledge, it becomes incumbent upon the scholars to bring this to their attention. Their keeping silent at such times is forbidden and God will accept no excuse from them for not taking the initiative with the ignorant. Scholars should pay much more attention to this than to much else they are responsible for.

Know that Islam is subject to periods of slackening and that the people today are in the throes of one of these, for we have reached a state where so many people within the circle of Islam know nothing of what God has made obligatory for them to do or refrain from doing. Furthermore, they do not know that it is obligatory to seek that knowledge and then implement it. What then will move them ever to do that? Why would they ever start learning when they have no idea that it is obligatory? It is therefore incumbent upon the learned who call to God to take the initiative in conveying this obligation to them and exhorting them to fulfill it, for he who knows not will

never start learning until informed he must do so.

These periods of slackening that beset Islam and occur between one caller to God and another are similar in some ways to those that occur between one Divine Envoy and another. This has been alluded to by the Gnostic Shaykh 'Abdal-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad al-Sha'rānī, may God have mercy on him, near the end of the 10th century A.H., at the beginning of his book entitled "Warning the Deceived."²⁹ This is different from the estrangement that is to befall religion near the end of time, at the approaches of the Hour, about which the Prophet said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*Religion began as a stranger and will revert to being a stranger. Therefore, happy are the strangers who preserve of my Sunna that which the people have corrupted.*³⁰ He also said—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*People have entered this religion of God in large groups and they shall exit in large groups.*³¹

Some of the people of this time know nothing about truth and religion; neither do they know that it is obligatory to learn about them. Others know that it is obligatory, yet fail to seek that knowledge because of their negligence and complacency, or because they are too engrossed in working for this world, too preoccupied with amassing and enjoying it. Others know of the obligation and do seek the knowledge, but never implement what they learn. Others yet learn and practice, but without sincerity, for worldly purposes and ephemeral gains, rather than for the sake of God. These are all astray and subject to deception. Some, however, are more astray than others, and some more deceived than others. Excellent is what one of the leaders among the Virtuous Ancestors, may God have mercy on them, said, "The people are all dead save the learned; and the learned are all dead save those among them who practice what they know; and those are all dead save those among them who are sincere; and those are all dead save those among them who are fearful; and even those are in grave danger."

You are now aware, from what has been said, that because of the common people's disinterest in learning about religion and seeking the truth, and their being contented to remain ignorant and blind instead of learned and rightly guided, the responsibility that falls upon those who call to God and teach His religion is multiplied

29. *Tanbīh al-Mughtarrīn*.

30. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2554.

31. Aḥmad, *Musnad*, 14169.

manifold, for it is obligatory upon them to rise to the situation, strive to guide everyone, take the initiative, disseminate knowledge and spread it everywhere, so that everyone would learn. Then the path of God will become clear for those who would travel it, and the Argument of God will have become established against those who would perish.

Callers to God and scholars must be extremely compassionate and gentle with all Muslims, intent on guiding, teaching, and calling them to that in which lies their salvation and their happiness in this world and the next. They must be patient to the extreme, tolerant, forbearing, comforting, affectionate, and unassuming. God, Exalted be He, said to His Messenger—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*Lower your wing to the believers.*³² And, *Had you been harsh and coarse of heart they would have dispersed from around you.*³³ Should the need arise for a certain harshness because no response is forthcoming otherwise, then let it be purely in appearance, not involving the heart, and always stopping short at causing ill feeling and dissension.

If ever they are injured in any way by the ignorant because of their calling them to God, they must be forbearing, ignore the injury, and utter only words of goodness. God, Exalted be He, said to His Prophet—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—*Accept what they do, enjoin praiseworthy things, and turn away from the ignorant.*³⁴ And, *And the servants of the All-Merciful who walk gently upon the earth and when addressed by the ignorant say: Peace!*³⁵

Prophets, Messengers, and those leaders of truth and guidance who follow them have all been made to suffer greatly by various kinds of ignorant and heedless people, but they were ever patient and preferred God's reward. It only increased them in their wish to guide them to the Path of God, Exalted be He, counsel them religiously, and exhort and encourage them to conform to God's orders and prohibitions. This was the pattern of God's Prophets and Messengers with their communities, those who called to God among previous communities, and those who call to God among this Muḥammadan community.

The caller to God and His religion may sometimes not be met

32. Qur'ān, 15:88.

33. Qur'ān, 3:159.

34. Qur'ān, 7:199.

35. Qur'ān, 25:63.

with outright rejection and harm, but rather with disinterest and heedlessness, or he may be listened to and accepted, with no sign of this appearing on the behavior of the people in the way of upholding the truth and implementing it, nevertheless, he has no excuse in leaving the calling to God and His path, even if over an extended period of time those who respond are very few. Such a situation will be that of the callers to God in most Islamic areas in these days, they are not harmed, neither are they openly rejected, but the truth is sometimes accepted from him and sometimes not, and what he calls to may be implemented or may not. There may come a time in the future when such callers will be disparaged and harmed. So let the callers make the best of this time, so long as the situation is as we have stated, before there comes another time and other people when the truth will be rejected openly and they may suffer grievous harm, perhaps even before they begin to speak. This will happen when the Hour is near and when its general signs will have appeared. He who studies the relevant *ḥadīths* and other traditions will understand this.

It is among the blessings of God upon the callers to God and His religion in these times that as long as they address the people in general, so they are neither reprimanded nor harmed, sometimes also if they are somewhat more specific, unless it be from certain arrogant tyrants, iniquitous heads of state, or evil rulers. So let the callers refrain from designating specific persons to steer safe from their rebukes, injuries, and seditions, which they may be too weak to endure, so that they become troubled, aggrieved, and distressed, and make this an excuse for withholding counsel and a permission to stop calling to truth and religion. Let them emulate the Master of all Prophets and leader of all counselors, Muḥammad—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—for when he was informed of something distasteful he never explicitly designated the culprit, rather he said, "Why do certain people do such and such a thing?" This was out of tact and gentleness, and the desire to preserve people's loyalty and conceal their blemishes. His Lord, August be He, described him thus, *Yours is indeed a tremendous character.*³⁶ And, *We have not sent you but as a mercy to all beings.*³⁷ And, *There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves, grievous to him are you sufferings, solicitous for you, to the believers gentle and*

36. Qur'ān, 68:4.

37. Qur'ān, 21:107.

compassionate.³⁸ May God's blessings and peace be upon him, may He increase him in honor and elevation to His nearness, and may He grant us to follow his example thoroughly and emulate him to perfection. As He said, Exalted be He, *You have in the Messenger of God an excellent example, for those who hope in God and the Last Day and remember God in abundance.*³⁹

It is clear from the above that there can be no excuse and no permission for religious scholars to abandon calling to God, counseling the Muslims, teaching them what they are obliged to know as it concerns obedience to God's orders and refraining from what He has forbidden, and that there is no excuse and no argument for ignorant people not to accept this from them, and respond and assimilate what is given. On the contrary, they should take the initiative in seeking knowledge and seriously pursuing it, and should make it a priority over matters of earning a living. Should they fall short of this, the scholars may not remain silent or leave them to their neglect, for they would thus become their equal in negligence, inadequacy, and indifference toward the rights of God, the Vast, the Supreme.

The Proof of Islam, may God's mercy be upon him, says near the end of the third chapter of the Book of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil of his *Ihyā'*:

Know that everyone sitting in his house in these times is not free from some degree of blame for failing to guide the people, teach them, and lead them to good. For most townspeople are ignorant of the *Shari'a* as concerns the conditions of validity of the ritual prayer, so how is it likely to be in the villages and deserts, among the Bedouin, the Kurds, the Turkomen, and other such people? There must be in every mosque and every quarter of the town a jurisprudent (*faqih*) to teach the people their religion, and so in every village. Every jurisprudent to complete his obligations must devote himself to the *kifāya* obligations by travelling to the neighboring areas where people like Bedouin and Kurds live, to teach them their religion and the obligations of their Sacred Law. He should take with him sufficient provision so as to not eat of their food, for much of that may be suspicious because of the possibility of it being stolen. When one juris-

38. Qur'ān, 9:128.

39. Qur'ān, 33:21.

prudent goes out, he relieves the others of their responsibility; otherwise everyone will be in the wrong, the scholars for failing to go out, and the ignorant for failing to seek knowledge. Every common person who learns the conditions of the ritual prayers becomes responsible for teaching them to others or else share in their guilt.

It is obvious that no man is born with religious knowledge; the onus falls upon the learned to teach the others. He who knows one legal ruling is considered learned as far as that ruling is concerned.⁴⁰ But the guilt of the scholars is much worse, for they are more capable in that respect, and more qualified. Were every craftsman to abandon his craft, life would become disrupted, for they assume responsibility for something that is necessary for the functioning of society. The role of the jurist-prudent, his craft so to speak, is to convey what has reached him from the Messenger of God—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—for scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. Now a man is not allowed to sit in his house and not go to the mosque simply because he sees that the people there are not praying correctly, on the contrary, once he recognizes this it becomes incumbent upon him to go out and teach them. Similarly, if a person is convinced that in the marketplace a certain kind of reprehensible thing occurs, either constantly or at specific times, and he is capable of changing it, it is not permissible for him to shrug this off by staying at home. On the contrary, he must go out and attempt to change it. If he can change it only partly, but wishes not to go out so as not to be forced to see it, he must try to change that part he is able to. Under such circumstances witnessing the rest that he cannot change will do him no harm. It is forbidden to go out lest one should witness forbidden things only when there is no acceptable justification.

It behooves every Muslim to begin with his own self, reform it by the regular performance of obligatory acts of worship and the abandonment of all forbidden things, followed by teaching this to the members of his household, then once this is done to his neighbors, then his neighborhood, then all his townsmen,

40. This statement refers to basic legal rulings—not subtle controversial issues that require much background knowledge to discuss and may thus induce narrow minded people to insist on imposing their convictions upon everyone else because they are incapable of realizing how complex the subject is.

then the surrounding areas, then the desert Bedouin, Kurds, and other such like people, and so on to the farthest reaches of the world. When the person that is near assumes this function, he who is far is relieved of the responsibility, otherwise anyone capable of it, whether near or far, would be accountable, and this responsibility remains incumbent upon everyone capable of assuming it until there does not remain on the face of the earth a single person who is ignorant of a single obligation of his religion. This is sufficient to occupy to the full he who is anxious for his religion and prevent him from wasting his time in rare details and delving in depth in subtle sciences which are collective or *kifāya* obligations and over which individual or more important *kifāya* obligations take priority. (End of quotation from Ghazālī, may God have mercy on him.)

Let this conclude this blessed introduction and let us now begin to discourse on the eight categories, asking God for His help and relying entirely on Him.