

بداية الهداية

The Beginning of Guidance

Complete Arabic Text with Facing English Translation

The Imām and Proof of Islam

ABŪ ḤĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ

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White Thread

P R E S S

Publisher's Note



ALL PRAISE IS TO ALLĀH, the Loving Lord of the worlds, and may His blessings and peace be upon His beloved Messenger Muḥammad, Mercy to the Worlds ﷺ, his family and Companions.

For centuries, *Bidāyat al-Hidāya* (Beginning of Guidance) has inspired Islamic scholarship. It has been published in its original Arabic as well as other languages around the world. Dr. Mashhad Al-Allaf's English translation was first published in 2004 and was received with much excitement. We are extremely grateful to Allāh for the opportunity and to Dr. Al-Allaf for granting us permission to publish a revised edition of this translation through White Thread Press.

This edition has gone through several improvements. The work has been entirely revised and updated according to the recent Dār al-Minhāj Arabic edition although a number of additions found in the earlier editions have been retained. The language has been thoroughly edited for flow and lucidity. We would like to thank Faraz A. Khan, Hamdi Benaissa, Shehnaz Azmina Karim, Aziza Spiker, and Amir Toft for their assistance in this regard. The Arabic text has now been set out with the corresponding translation on facing pages for ease of comparison rather than at the end of the book. References for the Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic narrations have been provided, with much of the ḥadīth references taken from 'Irāqī's referencing of Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* and referencing notes of the first edition. An appendix comprising the English transliteration of the supplications has been included for the benefit of those who have difficulty reading the Arabic text. Changes and additions have also been made to the English

section headings to better facilitate navigation through the book. A brief biography of the author has been added at the end of the book.

This work was never intended to be a *fiqh* manual. Imām Ghazālī, when expounding the etiquette of purification and ritual prayer, includes the juridical rulings primarily according to the Shāfi‘ī school. However, some divergences with the Shāfi‘ī school are to be observed herein. Therefore, readers should consult the manuals of their respective schools for the official positions related to purification and prayer. We have provided the positions of the Ḥanafī school on the divergent matters wherever possible in this edition. These are set as endnotes along with other useful notes taken from the Arabic editions of the work and introduced by a [H].

Finally, we pray that Allāh accept this translated edition from us and allow it to inspire as many as the author’s original did. *Āmīn*.

ABDUR-RAHMAN IBN YUSUF MANGERA
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INTRODUCTION



IN THE NAME of Allāh, Most Gracious Most Merciful. All praise be to Allāh, as much as is His right to be praised. And peace and blessings be upon Muḥammad, His Messenger and slave, and upon his Family and his Companions after him.

To proceed: You who are desirous of acquiring sacred knowledge, expressing in yourself a sincere longing and a passionate thirst for it, know that if your aim in seeking knowledge is to compete, show off, outdo your peers, garner attention, and amass the debris of this world, then you are on your way to rendering your religion null and void, destroying yourself, and selling your eternal life for this present one.

Your transaction is empty, your business profitless. And the person who teaches you in this case is nothing less than an accomplice in your transgression, a partner in your loss. He can be compared to one who sells a sword to a highway robber, for as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Indeed, whoever helps with a sin by even half a word is a partner in it” (‘Irāqī from *Musnad al-Daylamī*).

But if, in seeking knowledge, your intention and aim, between Allāh Most High and yourself, is to gain guidance, and not simply the transmission of information, then glad tidings be to you. The angels will spread their wings for you as you walk and the fish in the sea will ask forgiveness for you as you strive.

You should know before all else that guidance, which is the fruit of knowledge, has a beginning and an end, an outward aspect and an inward essence.

خُطْبَةُ الْكِتَابِ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَقَّ حَمْدِهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِهِ
وَعَبْدِهِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَاعْلَمِ أَيُّهَا الْحَرِيصُ عَلَى اقْتِبَاسِ الْعِلْمِ، الْمُظْهِرُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ صِدْقَ الرَّغْبَةِ فِيهِ،
وَفَرَطَ التَّعَطُّشِ إِلَيْهِ: أَنَّكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقْصِدُ بِطَلْبِ الْعِلْمِ الْمُتَنَفِّسَةَ، وَالْمُبَاهَاةَ، وَالتَّقَدُّمَ عَلَى
الْأَقْرَانِ، وَاسْتِمَالَةَ وُجُوهِ النَّاسِ إِلَيْكَ، وَجَمَعَ حُطَامِ الدُّنْيَا .. فَانْتَ سَاعٍ فِي هَدْمِ دِينِكَ،
وَإِهْلَاكِ نَفْسِكَ، وَبَيْعِ آخِرَتِكَ بِدُنْيَاكَ.

فَصَفَّقْتُكَ خَاسِرَةً، وَتَجَارَتُكَ بَائِرَةً، وَمُعَلِّمُكَ مُعِينٌ لَكَ عَلَى عِصْيَانِكَ، وَشَرِيكَ لَكَ
فِي خُسْرَانِكَ، وَهُوَ كَبَائِعِ سَيْفٍ مِنْ قَاطِعِ طَرِيقِكَ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: وَمَنْ أَعَانَ
عَلَى مَعْصِيَةٍ وَلَوْ بِشَطْرِ كَلِمَةٍ .. كَانَ شَرِيكًا فِيهَا.

وَإِنْ كَانَتْ نِيَّتُكَ وَقْصُدُكَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ تَعَلُّمِ الْعِلْمِ: الْهِدَايَةَ دُونَ
مُجَرَّدِ الرَّوَايَةِ .. فَأَبَشِرْ؛ فَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَبْسُطُ لَكَ أَجْنِحَتَهَا إِذَا مَشَيْتَ، وَحِيَتَانِ الْبَحْرِ
تَسْتَعْفِرُ لَكَ إِذَا سَعَيْتَ.

وَلَكِنْ يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ قَبْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَنَّ الْهِدَايَةَ - الَّتِي هِيَ ثَمَرَةُ الْعِلْمِ -: لَهَا بَدَايَةٌ
وَنَهَايَةٌ، وَظَاهِرٌ وَبَاطِنٌ.

There is no way to reach the end without mastering the beginning, just as there is no way to discover the inner essence of it until you have arrived at an understanding of its outward.

Here I am going to point you to the “beginning of guidance,” for you to see where you stand and determine what your heart intends.

If you find your heart inclining toward it, and you find your self compliant and receptive, then look to the ends of it, and immerse yourself in the oceans of this knowledge.

If, on the other hand, you find that in taking stock of it, your heart puts off starting it, or asks for more time in responding to its demands, then know that the part of your lower self wanting knowledge is the self that commands to evil, which has risen up out of obedience to the accursed Satan. Satan’s strategy is to throw to you the rope of deceit, then pull you in by it to the abyss of destruction; his intention is to present evil in the form of good until he succeeds in making you of “those who lose the most in respect of their deeds, whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they reckon that they do good work” (Qur’ān 18:103–4).

At this point, Satan will recite to you the excellence of knowledge and the high rank of the scholars, and all that has been related about it in ḥadīths and other narrations. And he so will divert you from the warning of the Prophet ﷺ: “He who increases in knowledge, but not in guidance, increases only in distance from Allāh Most High” (‘Irāqī from *Musnad al-Daylamī*); and this one: “Of those most severely punished on the Day of Judgment is the knowledgeable person whom Allāh did not benefit through his knowledge” (*Shu‘ab al-Īmān*) (he ﷺ would supplicate [for protection] thus: “I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit, a heart that does not fear, a deed that does not ascend, and an invocation that is not heard” (*Hākīm*)); and from this one: “On the night of my ascension to the heavens, I passed by people whose lips were being cut by pincers from the Hellfire. So I asked, ‘Who are you?’ They replied, ‘We used to order people to do good and not do it ourselves, and advise people against evil, even as we were doing it ourselves’” (‘Irāqī from Ibn Ḥibbān; similar in *Aḥmad*).

Then beware, O destitute one, of following Satan’s disingenuous advice and being roped in by his deceit.

وَلَا وُصُولَ إِلَى نَهَائِهَا إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِحْكَامِ بَدَائِئِهَا، وَلَا عُثُورَ عَلَى بَاطِنِهَا إِلَّا بَعْدَ الْوُقُوفِ عَلَى ظَاهِرِهَا.

وَهَا أَنَا مُشِيرٌ عَلَيْكَ بِبِدَايَةِ الْهَدَايَةِ؛ لِتَجَرَّبَ فِيهَا نَفْسَكَ، وَتَمْتَحِنُ بِهَا قَلْبَكَ. فَإِنْ صَادَفَتْ قَلْبَكَ إِلَيْهَا مَائِلًا، وَنَفْسَكَ بِهَا مُطَاوِعَةً، وَلَهَا قَابِلَةً .. فَدُونَكَ وَالتَّطَلُّعَ إِلَى النَّهَائِيَّاتِ، وَالتَّغَلُّغَ إِلَى بِحَارِ الْعُلُومِ.

وَإِنْ صَادَفَتْ قَلْبَكَ عِنْدَ مُوَاحَدَتِكَ إِيَّاهُ بِهَا مُسَوِّفًا وَبِالْعَمَلِ بِمُقْتَضَاهَا مُمَاطِلًا .. فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ نَفْسَكَ الْمَائِلَةَ إِلَى طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ هِيَ النَّفْسُ الْأَمَّارَةُ بِالسُّوءِ، وَقَدْ انْتَهَصَتْ مُطِيعَةً لِلشَّيْطَانِ اللَّعِينِ، لِيُدَلِّيكَ بِحَبْلِ عُرُورِهِ، فَيَسْتَدِرَّ جَنَكَ بِمَكِيدَتِهِ إِلَى غَمْرَةِ الْهَلَاكِ، وَقَصْدُهُ أَنْ يَرُوجَّ عَلَيْكَ الشَّرَّ فِي مَعْرِضِ الْخَيْرِ حَتَّى يُلْحِقَكَ بِالْأَخْسَرِ بَيْنَ أَعْمَالِ الَّذِينَ صَلَّى سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يَحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا.

وَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ يَتَلَوُّ عَلَيْكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَضْلَ الْعِلْمِ وَدَرَجَةَ الْعُلَمَاءِ، وَمَا وَرَدَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْأَخْبَارِ وَالْأَنْبَارِ، وَيُلْهِيكَ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مَنْ أزدَادَ عِلْمًا وَلَمْ يزدَدْ هُدًى .. لَمْ يزدَدْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بُعْدًا».

وَعَنْ قَوْلِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «إِنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَالِمٌ لَمْ يَنْفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِعِلْمِهِ»، وَكَانَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَقَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَعَمَلٍ لَا يُرْفَعُ وَدُعَاءٍ لَا يُسْمَعُ»،

وَعَنْ قَوْلِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مَرَرْتُ لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِي بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ بِأَفْوَامٍ تَقْرُضُ شِفَاهُهُمْ بِمَقَارِ بَيْضٍ مِنْ نَارٍ، فَقُلْتُ: مَنْ أَنْتُمْ؟ فَقَالُوا: كُنَّا نَأْمُرُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَلَا نَأْتِيهِ وَنَنْهَى عَنِ الشَّرِّ وَنَأْتِيهِ».

فِيَاكَ يَا مُسْكِينُ أَنْ تُدْعِنَ لِتَزْوِيرِهِ، وَتَتَدَلَّى بِحَبْلِ عُرُورِهِ.