

of gathering, and the resurrection; [he should be instructed] until he reaches faith and can affirm the truth thereof, for this is how one completes the two statements of faith. For after affirming the truth of his [Muḥammad, ﷺ] being a messenger [sent by God], it is obligatory to comprehend the message that he brought; which is, whoever obeys God and His messenger will be in paradise and whoever disobeys Him will abide in the fire.

When you have become aware of this step by step [process], you will know that this is the path of certainty in this matter and realize that each servant in the course of his states—day and night—will always be subject to the varying circumstances that affect his acts of worship and mutual conduct, each [of which] brings with it renewed obligations. It is thus necessary to ask about each singular incident as it befalls him, just as it is necessary to immediately learn and comprehend those events that he expects to occur in the near future.

Therefore it is clear that when he [Muḥammad, ﷺ], used the term the knowledge (*al-ilm*), with the definite article (*al-*), in his statement “Seeking *the* knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim,”¹⁶ he meant the knowledge that must be applied practically and which is recognized as obligatory on every Muslim. The nature of the gradual process [of acquiring knowledge] at the time it becomes obligatory has been made clear. And God knows best.

An Elucidation of the Knowledge that is a Communal Obligation

Know th at the obliga tory nature of an action is only distinguished from another action through the varying classifications of the disciplines. The disciplines that are associated with obligation that we are concerned with here are divided into those that are derived from the law and those that are not.

I intend by [those disciplines] “derived from the law” to be those communicated by the prophets ﷺ, not those derived from

¹⁶ Reported by Ibn Māja, 224.

the intellect, such as mathematics, nor from experiment, such as medicine, nor from hearing, such as language.

The disciplines that are not derived from the law can be separated into [those that are] praiseworthy, [those that are] blameworthy, and those that are neutral.

As for the praiseworthy, such as [the disciplines of] medicine and mathematics, they are associated with worldly benefit, and that category is divided into those that become a communal obligation and those that are of great merit [to practice or learn] but are not an obligation.

Communal obligations include every form of knowledge that is indispensable to the establishment of the affairs of this world, [and include disciplines] such as medicine, which is necessary for the preservation of healthy bodies; and mathematics, which is necessary for [financial] transactions and the division of wealth in which wills and inheritance and other needs are involved. Should a region be without someone who practices these disciplines, the people of that region will fall into straightened circumstances; but should there be [at least] one individual established [in that discipline], it would suffice and the obligatory nature of [having someone knowledgeable in that discipline] would be lifted from the remainder of the community.

One should not be astonished by our saying, “Medicine and mathematics are among the obligations of the community.” For the foundational crafts are also communal obligations, such as agriculture, the manufacture of cloth [and tailoring], and governance, even cupping. For were a region to be void of one who practices cupping, devastation would overtake its residents, and they would become anxious at being exposed to this devastation. For He who sent down the affliction sent down the remedy, provided instructions for its application, and provided the means to practice it. It is therefore forbidden to expose oneself to devastation by neglecting it.

With regard to what is considered virtuous though not obligatory, there is the meticulous study of the intricacies of mathematics, the niceties¹⁷ of medicine, and other fields that can be dispensed with,

¹⁷ The word al-Ghazālī uses here is *ḥaqāʾiq*, usually translated as “realities.” In this case, it means details beyond the essentials.

however, any [fi ld] can become benefic al with [one's] increased expertise in accordance with the need for it.

Concerning blameworthy [disciplines], there is the practice of magic and the making of talismans,¹⁸ as well as legerdemain and deception.

Neutral practices include the knowledge of poetry that is free of caprice and the narration of oral histories of people and similar occupations.

With regard to the disciplines derived from the law, which is the aim of this explanation, they are all laudable pursuits, though at times confusion arises regarding what is thought to be the law but is actually reproachable. Therefore they [the disciplines] are also divided into praiseworthy and blameworthy.

As for those [disciplines] that are praiseworthy, they are the fundamentals, the branches (*furūʿ*), the preliminary [aspects] and the supplemental [branches of knowledge]. These are the four categories.

The fi st category is the fundamentals (*uṣūl*), which are four in number: The Book of God ﷻ, the *sunna* of His Messenger ﷺ, the general consensus of the community (*umma*), and the traditions of the Companions.

The consensus [of the community] is among the fundamental sources in that it indicates the *sunna*; it is thus a fundamental [aspect of] a secondary level. Likewise are the traditions of the Companions, for they also indicate the *sunna* because the Companions ﷺ observed the inspiration and revelation [of the Qurʾān] and grasped through direct association the states which those who were not present could not perceive. Perhaps expression cannot encompass that which can be comprehended through direct association. From this aspect then, the scholars chose to follow their example and hold steadfast to their traditions, but that occurs under specific conditions and circumstances according to the followers [of these traditions]. The clarifi ation of this is not, however, suitable for the topic under discussion.

18 Talisman (*ṭilasm*, or *ṭillasm*, pl. *ṭilasmāt*) refers to what is secret and hidden, or knowledge of the formation of celestial forces and their manipulation through earthly objects.

AL-GHAz ā Lī
Kit ā b al - ʿ i l m
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with an Intr oductio n *and* Notes
by Kenneth H oner kamp
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بيان علم الذي هو فرض كفاية

اعلم : أن الفرض لا يتميز عن غيره إلا بذكر أقسام العلوم ، والعلوم بالإضافة إلى الفرض الذي نحن بصدده تنقسم إلى شرعية وغير شرعية .
وأعني بالشرعية : ما يستفاد من الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين ، ولا يرشد العقل إليه مثل الحساب ، ولا التجربة مثل الطب ، ولا السماع مثل اللغة .

فالعلوم التي ليست شرعية : تنقسم إلى ما هو محمود ، وإلى ما هو مذموم ، وإلى ما هو مباح .
فالمحمود : ما ترتب به مصالح الدنيا ؛ كالطب والحساب ، وذلك ينقسم إلى ما هو فرض كفاية ، وإلى ما هو فضيلة وليس بفريضة .

أمّا فرض الكفاية : فهو كل علم لا يستغنى عنه في قوام أمور الدنيا ؛ كالطب ، إذ هو ضروري في حاجة بقاء الأبدان ، والحساب ؛ فإنه ضروري في المعاملات وقسمة الوصايا والموارث وغيرها ، وهذه هي العلوم التي لو خلا البلد عمّن يقوم بها . . . خرج أهل البلد ، وإذا قام بها واحد . . . كفى وسقط الفرض عن الآخرين .

فلا يتعجب من قولنا : إن الطب والحساب من فروض الكفايات ؛ فإن أصول الصناعات أيضاً من فروض الكفايات ؛ كالفلاحة والحياكة والسياسة

بل الحجامه ؛ فإنه لو خلا البلد عن الحجاج . . تسارع الهلاك إليهم ،
وخرجوا بتعريضهم أنفسهم للهلاك ؛ فإن الذي أنزل الداء أنزل الدواء وأرشد
إلى استعماله ، وأعد الأسباب لتعاطيه ، فلا يجوز التعرض للهلاك
بإهماله .

وأما ما يعد فضيلة لا فريضة : فالتعمق في دقائق الحساب وحقائق
الطب ، وغير ذلك مما يستغنى عنه ، ولكنه يفيد زيادة قوة في القدر المحتاج
إليه .

وأما المذموم منه : فعلم السحر والطلسمات^(١) ، وعلم الشعبة
والتليسات .

وأما المباح منه : فالعلم بالأشعار التي لا سخر فيها ، وتواريخ الأخبار
وما يجري مجراه .

وأما العلوم الشرعية - وهي المقصودة بالبيان - فهي محمودة كلها ،
ولكن قد يلتبس بها ما يظن أنها شرعية وتكون مذمومة ؛ فلتقسم إلى
المحمودة والمذمومة :

أما المحمودة : فلها أصول ، وفروع ، ومقدمات ، وامتتات ، فهي
أربعة أضرب :

(١) الطلسمات : مفردا الطلسم بتخفيف اللام وتشديدها ، وهو اسم للسحر المكتوم ، وعلم
تأليف القوى السماوية بقوى بعض الأجرام الأرضية ليتألف من ذلك قوة ، ومنه ما يوافق
الشرع ومنه ما يخالفه ، ويطلب ذلك في موطنه .

إحياء علوم الدين

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الطوسي الطبراني الشافعي
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reason, like arithmetic, or by experimentation, like medicine or by hearing, like language.

Profane sciences are divided into praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*), blameworthy (*madhmūm*), and permissible (*mubāḥ*). Praiseworthy sciences are those on whose knowledge the activities of this life depend such as medicine and arithmetic. They are divided into sciences the acquisition of the knowledge of which is *farḍ kifāyah* and into sciences the acquisition of the knowledge of which is meritorious though not obligatory. Sciences whose knowledge is deemed *farḍ kifāyah* comprise every science which is indispensable for the welfare of this world such as : medicine which is necessary for the life of the body, arithmetic for daily transactions and the division of legacies and inheritances, as well as others besides. These are the sciences which, because of their absence, a community would be reduced to narrow straits. But should one who can practise 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 *farḍ kifāyah*, because the fundamental industries are also the same, such as, agriculture, weaving, politics, even cupping and tailoring. For should a town lack a cupper extinction would overtake its people and they would be driven to expose themselves to destruction. Has not He Who has sent down the malady 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 (*madhmūm*) sciences are magic, talismanic science, juggling, trickery and the like.

The sacred sciences which are intended in this study are all praiseworthy. Sometimes, however, they may be confused with

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