

**A  
LETTER  
TO  
GHAZZALI MUHAMMAD**



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My Dear Son, Ghazzali,

A goodly recognized name I have given you, after MUHAMMAD HAMEED ALGHAZZALI, the Scholar, the Imam, the Sufi.

You had the opportunity to be taught the first letters of literacy by myself and your good mother though less than your brother, named after Imam Imran, head of one of the families chosen by Allah above all people.

I have been able to send you to modest schools and you have met a good number of commendable teachers. All of these have exposed you to what is consistent with our beliefs and our world outlook that influences our orientation.

You will recall that in the case of Imran, he had indicated non-objection to several and consistent encouragement to read medicine, by his teacher, his friends and your goodly mother. And he was elected for commonwealth scholarship from a state-wide competition. Then he consulted with me. I confirmed to him that the special knowledge and practice of medicine is *Ilmul kafaya*. Like attendance of burial prayer that is *farlil kafaya*, they are compulsory for the benefit of the community BUT not by EVERY MEMBER. Thus some can be saved if some have it or attend. And I added that four great messengers IBRAHIM (A.S.), MUSA (A.S.), ISA (A.S.) and MUHAMAD (S.A.W.) all had exposure in farming. These are the models, the messengers we have for reference. And the best is MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.).

Then he chose to read Agricultural Economics. And when we checked the Federal Ministry of Education for the commonwealth scholarship documentation, his records had disappeared.

All praise be to Allah for his graduation in his course of choice in Nigeria.

In your case you had consistently indicated interest to read political science as I did. I had never understood how you linked my personality to what I read at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. All the same you are now opportune to read political science and conflict resolution at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin.

I congratulate you.

I had actually been afraid of your innocent exposure to the popular Marxist paradigm that I experienced in my days. But in my case, my goodly late father, SA'IDU, was the mechanic, the civil servant, the scholar and my teacher, who introduced me to Alghazzali, Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, Muhydeen Ibn Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, Mansur Alhallaj, Abu Yazid, Attar Alhujwiri, Rabiyyatu Adawiyya, Ibn Fodio, etc. I must confess that these introductions are principally responsible for my present understanding and orientation.

I therefore feel compelled to write you this letter.

Dear Ghazzali,

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

In the Name, is a swearing. An Oath.

In this case, by Allah Himself as it comes as the first in the opening of the book.

Allah by Himself certifies that He is the One that Benefits and the very one that is Merciful.

For those of us who believe in Allah, ALL BENEFITS in themselves and those that will benefit us if we strive for them are rooted or originate from Him. Fresh air, rain water, oxygen in the hospital or tap water are the benefits of Allah. Spring water or bottled water are His benefits. Alcohol, wine and drug that have partial benefit or temporary benefit or immediate benefit are His provision and allowance. Taking of food and drink and the passing of these that are wasted are His benefits. The discovery of mineral resources are His benefits. The processing and processed mineral resources are His benefits. Whatever will fall into our thinking and understanding as beneficial, profitable, advancement, progress, movement and achievement are all His benefits by provision and allowance. For every and all benefits, we understand that a part of it is given. Another part of it is by our effort and this effort(s) is always defined by methods or processes. We emphasize our role in the realization of the benefit or what will be beneficial as our innovation, our creation, our make, our model, our discovery, our finding etc. But when we look into ourselves, our efforts and our abilities we inevitably find that the claim is self flattery and really untrue. The truth is, a combination of OTHERS that melt into us by admission, the THINGS that have not melted and we necessarily accept as 'neither' of OTHERS nor of ourselves and what we

appear to be responsible for as intuition, imagination, experiment, vision, inspiration etc. Thus for those of us who believe in Allah, He is really the One who benefits. And for all benefits, we must secure from Him, by simple submission to Him. And this is one of the foremost attributes of Allah that is basic in the knowledge of Allah for every average person.

On this course, every believer will precede every action with this declaration: In the Name of ALLAH. With a conscious intention backing this knowledge that is expressed, what is acted upon or acted as a process (i.e. all relations) become, in submission to Allah and for purity should be in truth. This is because what has followed this example of Allah is the TRUTH, the REVELATION, the GUIDE, the QUR'AN. Allah is the TRUTH. The Qur'an is TRUE. A believer will be TRUTHFUL IF he constantly submits. Regularity or constancy in his TRUTHFULNESS or SUBMISSION is the rating of his GODLINESS or PURITY.

Thus the guidance of Allah in truth as prescribed in the Qur'an and exemplified by the certified model, MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.) is not separable from BELIEF. The principles that are defined take their forms in standard practice(s). The ignorance of these and the abuse of these in knowledge or the deliberate denial of these or the separation between these are not the PATH of BELIEVERS.

Allah swears and counsels whoever chooses that He is the ONE who BENEFITS. And whoever chooses may disregard or disbelieve, for there is no compulsion in Islam. For those of us who believe, we accordingly submit, for, we accept that truly, HE is the MERCIFUL.

This is the promise of Allah, that being responsible for the provisional basis of EVERY and ALL BENEFITS we find, discover, or seek and GET, ACHIEVE or attain, be it personal, interpersonal, collective, in the social, economic, political, technological, intellectual, spiritual realm(s), HIS GUIDANCE or BELIEVE and SUBMISSION based on knowledge, WILL BE THE MEANS TO GETTING HIS MERCY. And this is defined by benefits in special forms especially FORGIVENESS for inabilities or failures or lapses while COMMITTED to HIM, to HIS GUIDANCE. And in the hereafter, granting of bliss in eternal life. This is because, those who know and are given of understanding fear Allah, who is FREE to do whatsoever He pleases.

Praise be to Allah. Allah (S.W.T.) praises Himself. He is truly praise worthy and thus teaches us to praise or glorify Him. No amount or form of glorification of Allah will be out of place. The intention defined by the conscious recognition of Allah is the best suitable basis for doing so, either by what He has taught us – the

recitation of the Qur'an which transforms into the affirmation of the truth and truity of Allah, the example of MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.) or in our own words. The worthiness even to the ordinary mind, the simple mind, is captured in the three-fold worlds of, our material reality, the reality of the spiritual world that angels enjoy and reality of the world of eternity. For us in this world and history, the appreciation and experience of His benefits is a field of wondering for the ordinary and special minds that care, understand and believe. Thus, praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Those who believe appreciate and understand and submit to the truth of Allah as Sustainer and Cherisher of the worlds.

For emphasis. To be sure. In other words. That Allah is the Beneficent, the Merciful the Sustainer, the Cherisher of ALL the worlds including the material world that we cannot deny sensing and living in. Beyond their totality, their finality, their SPECIFICITIES and especially their eternality, they originate and end with Him. Allah is the only one who PROVIDES and PERMITS all conclusions, all ends, all decisions, all judgments – their IMMEDIACY, in their PROCESSES and in their ULTIMATE END. That is, of NOW and FUTURE, of history and ETERNITY, in MATERIALITY and SPIRITUALITY.

Then IF we truly believe, shall we not hang and look up to Allah alone without association, without competition? Shall we have any justification for dividing or sharing His authority, His responsibility, His benefits, His mercies with ourselves or any other self or thing or the admixture or collection of these? It is both logical and sensible and safe for Allah to guide and advice us towards BELIEVING and SUBMITTING. SURRENDER is the colour, the attribute, attitude of a believer in Allah. Intending and commencing and committing ourselves and everything to Allah is the only ORIENTATION that rhymes with the teaching and declaration to symbolize the truity of: Thee (Allah) alone do we worship and thine (His) help alone do we seek. Thus, it is an encapsulation of: Allah is One, He is the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Sustainer and Cherisher of the worlds who Masters them.

After these then comes the honourable recognition and admission of the identity of whoever and those who believe in Allah, the truth FOR TRUITY, to sail and live in accordance with the guidance of the TRUTH, having believed and surrendered. It is the voluntary joining in servitude to the beneficial and merciful Allah, because of the TRUE need, want and fancy of Allah's benefits and mercies in the course of living. And the prayer is GUIDE US UNTO THE STRAIGHT PATH that is true and leads to the Truth. This is not the crooked path that cannot neatly fit into the guidance that Allah has defined in the Qur'an and

MUHAMMAD (SAW) is the outstanding model. Those who believe know and understand that it is a MIDDLE course of no extremities.

Like there is no ambiguity in the Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah in relation to all the worlds, their sustenance, cherishment, the beneficial and merciful needs of these worlds and their contents, the believer is guided to pray and focus in clarity for identity and commitment. The believers are like parts of a single person. One therefore flows with others as one. There is no isolation but socialism. The individual pursues and prays for the whole BECAUSE the objective of believing, glorifying and obeying Allah in all aspects of one's life truly and better applies to all the other members. Thus the clarification of the prayer, the plea, the direction, the belongingness along with THOSE UPON WHOSE PATH (WHOM) YOU HAVE BESTOWED YOUR GRACE because they are also believing and of striving identity on HIS PATH – in the past, the present or in the future. This is clearly against the opposite, who are the class, the group, the club that do not believe and are not on His course, thus justified for the wrath of Allah.

This opening is therefore the only key or opener that is freely available to the believers for commencing or opening their affairs. It is equally enough for closing. It is the summation of the Qur'an and Islam. It is the first and compulsory bearing of a believer. Its recitation, its knowledge and compliance to it voluntarily is the sign, the orientation and symbolism of a Muslim. Thus in our individuality and collectivity this is our TABLET for sustenance, for resolution of ANYTHING. It is this that is the ONE platform for the community of believers to be the best and the model. Of all things, Allah revealed that this is the gift bestowed on MUHAMMAD (SAW) and it is of the other distinction to be often repeated and compulsorily too, by every and all Muslims in the day, in the afternoon, in the evening, in the night and in every raka'at of farlil salat and nafilil salat. And IF we only sincerely do so, what is it that will overcome us? The words, the verses, the chapter, in rote recitation are of sacred status, of spiritual value; the meanings, of rational and sensible compliance; and the essence most inviting. THEN WHICH OF THE FAVOURS OF ALLAH SHALL WE DENY?

Dear Ghazzali. As a believer, as a Muslim and as a student who seeks to study and understand political science and conflict resolution, what do I have to remind you? What guidance do I have that you may consider?

It is inevitable, to appreciate that conflict simply defines differences in active relationship. The essence of the activity is to maintain a particular identity or to achieve a varying identity. In history, it will be of significance because the activity is

directed towards achieving the set objective FOR the agent and not just IN ITSELF.

In relation to Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, it is our believe that the ordinary differences have a purpose that is of benefit and compassion to the whole of mankind. Allah has allowed our differing in nations, in tongues, in colours in order that we may recognize one another. And He has made the variation in gender to be a source of garmenthood. These differences are a favour and not godly basis for conflict. There is however no denying that each or a combination or a facet of one of these can be transformed into a vehicle for conflict and a resolution formula compelled or generated. You can therefore accordingly see nationalism, tribalism, racism and racialism. Within and between these you can have group or political parties differences, you can have economic or wealth differences, you can even have family or clan differences.

You must know that the members of these differences are in relation to Allah, each and all required to believe. Thus we believe, like Abraham, like Musa, like Isa and as finished by Muhammad (SAW). From our standpoint some disbelieve, some misbelieve, some do not believe – thus, shades of hypocrites. All these are truths in spite of the truth. This truth that is finally Allah, is reflected in the truth that each and all willingly and unwillingly submit to the provisions and permissions of Allah. Not one or more, alone or in company resists Allah so much, so simply as not to breathe or eat food and drink or waste, or sleep, or live on the surface of a planet etc. NONE.

Dear Ghazzali, Allah has not compelled Islam on any one, which is the source of these possibilities. The angels do not have this provision and permission. They do not choicefully disbelieve or rebel against the straight guidance of Allah. In the school, you may be exposed to differences in facets. They may delineate it as political, social, economic, technological or whatever. A fairly developed one is by Karl Marx. He suggested that workers who create wealth are different from the bourgeoisie and that the resolution is in the determined dialectical struggle aimed at recovering the creations or surpluses that actually belong to the workers, from the thieves who pay them less on the flimsy basis of ownership of land and capital.

Thus, the roots of differing are many. The primary source of all these is defined by the Qur'an as what men covet. Examples summarily given include “women, sons, heaped-up hoards of gold and silver, horses branded (for blood and excellence); (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land”. And Allah connects the relationship with men as Trial of believers with what they love most. Differences or conflicts are therefore of various forms, types and levels and in different circumstances and are

historical. Ghazzali. For us the differences that we may see or find ourselves in are absolutely provided and permitted or allowed by Allah. The role(s) we need to play in the dynamism of these differences must be referred to Allah and the example of Muhammad (SAW). Ours is informed by faith in Allah and the Rasul; and compliance with what is prescribed. This is reasonably and sensibly different from philosophy. And this is because our religion is perfected.

Ghazzali. For us, ALL men are VICEGERENTS of Allah. This covers women. The superiority of one over the other is to be measured by compliance, by submission, by worship. And there is NO COMPULSION in the acceptance of the guidance of Allah. In the Islamic samples of the resolution of conflicts in the history of Muslims, the ummah and therefore Islam there are four to draw from. The first is in respect of the family. Where there is a difference between members, Allah is to be the reference. This is because His guidance is all encompassing. Between husband and wife, the witness and supporter or sponsor of the marriage that can be from the side of the husband or the wife or none, is to be consulted. The objective is to reaffirm compliance to Allah. In the extreme example of adultery an oath with Allah will determine what decision is to be taken.

The second is defined by Rasul as Islam being an advice. Primarily of Allah, secondarily of Rasul, followed by that of the Leader (a parent, teacher, senior etc.), the Imam and the Friend. We cannot therefore fail to be able to resolve any form or type of conflict in the ummah. The emphatical distinction is found in the advice of the wise Luqman to his son. And in Allah's strong instructions of a child's obedience to his parents, it is limited to ultimate submission to Allah.

The third example and method is in the prohibition of alcoholism. Allah revealed the greater evil over the good that is in alcoholism. He then prescribed godliness by not going near to salat when in a state of intoxication. And this is followed by outright prohibition.

The fourth is the in the practice of religion. For those who believe, where one of two parties stray, the OTHERS are to intervene by COMPELLING the erring party to comply if he insists on wrong doing. And in relation to those who do not believe, they are not to be compelled. They are only to be resisted if they attempt to stop the believers' freedom to practice. For the earth belongs to Allah and all are equally entitled to it.

Dear Ghazzali. You must therefore appreciate that the nature of conflict is not to be understood, as pure as in a facet of analytical convenience. This is why for

instance, the perspective and even philosophical solutions of political economy status are more realistic and superior to purely political or purely economic solutions. It explains why the assumptions for making fiscal policies effective are often foolish in especially developing economies.

You will therefore find that for meaningful living, it is NOT ENOUGH to simply explain problems. In other words, the explanation or understanding of a problem that is half way the solution applies ONLY if the solution is feasible, can impact on the lives of men and without discriminating against the basics.

As believers, the guiding posts are that we must retain our BASIC/FUNDAMENTAL IDENTITY which are freely given by Allah and can fight justifiably to death, to keep and maintain it. BUT, BUT, BUT, without compelling ANY men on the same course, as we are all basically vicegerents of Allah.

Dear Ghazzali, in a society like Nigeria, where it is the will of Allah to keep Muslims, people of the book, occultists/idol worshippers, unbeliever's etc. together our approach and method need be characterized with only the following – whether we are in leadership, in advisory capacity or in fellowship:

- i) KEEPING THOSE THINGS THAT ARE OBLIGATORY by ALLAH.
- ii) MAINTAINING THOSE COMMENDABLE as approved by Rasul.
- iii) GUARDING THOSE CONVENTIONS that are consistent with the above as satisfactorily lived by admitted schools.
- iv) OUR CHOICES or COMPROMISES that do not contradict the above foundations.

Thus Ghazzali, in the resolution of any shade of conflict the PROHIBITIONS of Allah MUST NOT BE ADMITTED for self benefit freely. The commendations of Rasul will always make life brighter, for whoever, if goodly understood, but must not be imposed. And as for our choices, the resolution of such conflicts are usually universally smoothed out. For example, the mosque cannot be used as a legislature in any tier of government in Nigeria. Except where there is an interpreter no language should be used to the disadvantage of any member. And in the event of a debate, a resolution can be made by casting of votes.

Dear Ghazzali, it is therefore not possible to UNDERSTAND and less, to CONTRIBUTE in the study of political science and conflict resolution except and until you have sufficient knowledge of the relevant LIMITATIONS, JURISDICTIONS, BOUNDARIES or RESTRICTIONS that islamically apply as against those that do not. That is why in Islam, KNOWLEDGE OF THE RELIGION AND ITS PRACTICE IS COMPULSORY. EVERY ADULT – for

himself. Knowledge other than this that is/are compulsory will be for the community but not for each and every member. For example the knowledge of Health and Medicine is necessary for some members of the society to have but not everyone. This is where the knowledge of political science and conflict resolution falls. This is my caution. This is my guidance. I wish you the best understanding of the expositions you will experience to be placed in the perspective of Islam and a realization of the modest resolution options that will not deny the benefits and mercies of Allah to humanity because there is no compulsion in our religion.

Your goodly father,

M.S. Jimada