

دليل المريدين

إلى كتاب منهاج العابدين للإمام حجة الإسلام الغزالي

للعبد الفقير إلى ربه الغني الحميد

رمزي بن محمود عجم

A Mureed's Guide

to Al-Ghazali's Minhaj Al-Abideen

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على الهادي المرسل رحمة للعالمين و على آله وصحبه أجمعين . أما بعد

WHAT ARE THE SEVEN HURDLES?

There are seven hurdles along the path of servitude and worship;
which are:

1. Sacred Knowledge عقبة العلم
2. Repentance عقبة التوبة
3. Impediments عقبة العوائق
4. Hindrances عقبة العوارض
5. Incentives عقبة البواعث
6. Impairments عقبة القوادح
7. Praise & Gratitude عقبة الحمد والشكر

The seven hurdles are in the chronological order of one's spiritual journey, each occurring with the gradual progression on the path of worship. Each challenge is either a hurdle that blocks you from reaching your destination or a rite of passage, which if dealt with properly, allows one to move onto the next stage in one's spiritual journey. Each hurdle has prescribed remedies that help one overcome it and continue the journey.

CHAPTER ONE

عقبة العلم

The First Hurdle:

Sacred Knowledge (‘ilm)

1. Knowledge of God and the Main Articles of Faith
2. Learning the outward obligatory directives
3. Learning the inward obligatory directives
4. Passing the hurdle

1. What is the relationship between sacred knowledge and worship?

Sacred knowledge is the axis around which the action of worship revolves. Without it, there can be no guided movement because worship is only valid when the servant's acts are in conformity with the Lord's command outwardly and inwardly. Worship also means that the servant is acting and abandoning in fear and in reverence of God. Such qualities are borne within the heart when one knows of God the Majestic. He says, "*Those that truly fear God are the knowers*" (Quran 35:28). Hence, sacred knowledge is like a tree that bears fruit and worship is its fruit.

2. What must I learn first and why?

`Ilm al-Tawhid

It is obligatory for the seeker to know of God's existence, attributes, and acts' and then to direct his or her worship to Him and for Him alone. This obligation requires learning what is rationally necessary, impossible, and possible in regards to the Divinity so as to protect oneself from erroneous beliefs and to ensure that one's worship is sound and valid. Additionally, one must learn all of the tenets of faith that are foundational, as the validity of one's worship is predicated on accepting certain tenets as unequivocally true.

`Ilm al-Sirr

One's worship is also not valid unless his or her action is intentional and sincere. Hence, one is religiously accountable for learning what sincerity (*ikhlas*) is, and how to nurture its presence within one's heart. One must also learn other inward aspects of the heart such as presence of mind (*hudur al-qalb*), veneration (*ta'dhim*), hope (*raja*), awe (*hayba*), and shame (*haya*) so as to improve one's worship. Our Lord has also commanded that we have reliance, gratitude, consignment, contentment, and patience, etc. Hence, these are also obligatory to learn and foster within oneself. Likewise, it is obligatory to learn the prohibitions of the heart so as to recognize and abandon them; such as pride, ostentation, dissatisfaction, and false hopes, etc.

`Ilm al-Shariah

It is also obligatory to learn the outward actions of which one is religiously accountable for performing and for abandoning. Ritual worship involves obeying God's commandments, which cannot be realized unless one learns how to fulfil them correctly, what invalidates them and what perfects them. Likewise, all other activities require one to learn their ruling in the Sacred Law before engaging in them.

3. To what extent do I learn the obligations?

In summary, the expanse of sacred knowledge that will secure one from ruin is the content that it is obligatory for one to learn.

4. How do I pass this hurdle?

Imam al-Ghazali says, “sacred knowledge is indispensable to the servant because worshipping God rests entirely on it, especially knowledge of God (*ilm al-Tawhid*) and the inward qualities of the heart (*ilm al-Sirr*).”

Imam Ali (may God be well pleased with him said, “*Those that know God best are those that fear Him the most, serve Him the most, and are most excellent in their sincerity to Him.*”

Passing this hurdle entails:

- a) Learning the obligatory aspects of the three categories of sacred knowledge;
- b) Protecting one’s learning from insincerity and blameworthy motives;
- c) Practising what one learns without delay;
- d) Strengthening one’s knowledge through careful study and review;
- e) Contemplating God’s signs in a way that nurtures veneration and awe;
- f) Protecting oneself from laziness, boredom and indifference.