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In the Qur'an, God admonishes, "Be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth" (30:60, Sahih International). In previous times, God revealed His word to Moses and Jesus, and adherents to these faiths are named the People of the Book (2:146). However, God's original word was corrupted by these followers. The Qur'an, and by extension the religion of Islam, is said to have been sent by God to restore the true religion of Abraham and correct falsehood both to the People of the Book and the polytheists of Arabia. Similarly, Mormonism asserts its place as "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (Doctrine and Covenants 1:30), claiming that the church established by Jesus had been corrupted over years of apostasy. Despite God's voice in both of these faith traditions that truth has been restored via new prophets and scripture, each founder emphasizes the importance of discovering truth for yourself, rather than living blindly by teachings that have become standard. In the hadith, Muhammad stated, "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim" (Hadith, 224). Joseph Smith stated that "[God's] Spirit will bear testimony to all who seek diligently after knowledge from Him" (Teachings of the Presidents of the church: Joseph Smith). In Al-Ghazali's *Deliverance from Error*, he gives his account for how he was able to find truth through Sufism. He argues that truth cannot be found solely on the basis of scripture, prophets, or logic alone, but must come as revelation from God. His experiences act as a type and shadow of how Muslims and Latter-days Saints alike can discover truth.

A renowned lecturer on Islamic law, Al-Ghazali left his career in favor of finding a better path to God. At the onset of his journey, he appears to have had an established definition of truth, “every knowledge unaccompanied by safety from error is not sure and certain knowledge” (20). He quickly finds though that even the surest aspects of human life can be scrutinized and critiqued until even they cannot be found reliable. He compares perceived reality to that of a dream, where reality makes a sudden and dramatic shift upon awakening. Before he begins to explore different aspects of finding truth, he concludes that “unveiling the truth . . . on precisely formulated proofs . . . indeed straighten[s] the broad mercy of God” (23). Al-Ghazali argues *against* a standard formula by which to find truth, already suggesting that something systematic or methodical cannot draw truths out of divinity.

This pitfall is commonplace among Latter-day Saints, who often read what is known as Moroni’s promise (see Moroni 10:3-4) and create an equation in their minds that reading the Book of Mormon and asking God sincerely of its truth will automatically yield in a dramatic manifestation of the Spirit. While the processes of many may have parallels between them, this process hinges on the faith associated with the seeker of truth; and since faith is entirely unquantifiable and extremely personal, it follows that each Latter-day Saint must have a unique experience in the acquisition of truth. This process therefore cannot be described as a formulaic equation but rather a distinct personal expedition to seek after God.

Al-Ghazali explores four different ways of seeking after truth, the first of which being the *Mutakallimun*. The main premise of the *Mutakallimun*, or theologians, is that all truth can be derived from the Qur’an and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. If the Qur’an stated something was true, then that was all the authority that statement needed. Al-Ghazali found

this way insufficient, even as a devout Muslim, because this method required the acceptance of scripture as truth without the process of discovering if truth was manifested as scripture. In other words, Al-Ghazali found the argument “because the Qur’an said so” as unconvincing. He further complains that “most of their polemic was devoted to bringing out the inconsistencies of their adversaries and criticizing them for the logically absurd consequences of what they conceded” (26). These divisions among people and the lack of spiritual process caused Al-Ghazali to conclude that this was not his way to find truth.

In Latter-day Saint thought today, there is the true idea that all aspects of our religion stand or fall on the truthfulness and authenticity of the Book of Mormon. However, sometimes this idea bleeds into the incorrect notion of the infallibility of scripture. Moroni himself asks us not to “condemn [the Book of Mormon] because of the imperfections which are in it” (Mormon 8:12). Accepting all scripture as infallible removes the wrestle from the process of complicated or controversial passages and can lead to extremism and stunting discovery. Also similar to Al-Ghazali’s theologians is the prominent thought that Mormons are right because everyone else is clearly wrong. It is easy to poke holes in changes made to early Christian doctrine and claim that therefore Mormons have it right, but far more uncomfortable to face changes made in our own practices and even doctrine and still feel that Mormons are without fault in the process of truth. Truth cannot be found through comparative means and looking at the faults in others.

In another phase of his journey, Al-Ghazali finds himself not surrounded by the fallibility of others but one person’s infallibility, the Ismaili Shi’ite’s infallible Imam. These followers present a similar idea to the theologians, but their truth is found in an imam who is their authority on truth. Al-Ghazali described “their assertion of the need for authoritative teaching

and an infallible teacher” led them to “not understand, to say nothing of attempting to solve [any problems]” (50). Their teacher not only became the source of truth, but their reliance on him depleted their ability to reason and find truth themselves. Al-Ghazali further noted that “they waste their life in seeking the authoritative teacher and in boasting of having found him, yet they have learned nothing at all from him!” (50). The danger then is not in having a teacher, for Al-Ghazali himself regarded Muhammad as having attained the highest level of prophecy (63), but in letting this teacher act in place of faith in God and personal discovery of truth.

The cult following of prophets or teachers may not seem commonplace in Latter-day Saint tradition, however perhaps its adherents put too much stock in their leaders both past and present as “infallible imams” or, in other words, perfect men. Ironically, it is often the critics of the Church that seem to be guilty of this improper relationship. They will often cite statements or practices of church leaders that seem incongruent with the status of prophet or religious teacher. However, to put a teacher or prophet above the status of a normal man and question his position when he makes normal mistakes is to make him an idol, albeit one not worth worshipping. Joseph Smith himself said, “I don’t want you to think I am very righteous, for I am not very righteous” (*Crucible of Doubt*, 64). Terry and Fiona Givens argue in their book, *The Crucible of Doubt*, “The prophetic mantle represents priesthood keys, not a level of holiness or infallibility” (*Crucible of Doubt*, 70). The path to truth can be pointed out by a prophet, and one can be guided along the path by a teacher, but when those things become substitutes for faith is the process of discovery dammed.

The group encountered by Al-Ghazali known as the philosophers find a different substitute for faith and truth than scripture or prophets. They believe that truth can be discerned only by reason and logic and that any other modes or practices do not suffice nor can be trusted. They claim that “knowledge is either a concept, and the way to know it is the definition, or it is an assent, and the way to know it is the apodeictic demonstration” (34). The flaw in reasoning this way is that God is taken out of the picture of developing a sense of godly truth since it is based solely on human thinking. Therefore, the philosophers “know the truth by men, and not men by the truth” (38). In this way, they are making themselves idols by trusting too far in what their own minds can surmise.

Both within and without the Latter-day Saint community, there are many creative and logical explanations for divine phenomena, ranging from archeological findings to linguistic evidence. However, there are many skeptics who find equally creative and logical explanations for why such divine phenomena is absurd and impractical. There is evidence that cannot be dismissed as to why the Book of Mormon must be true, and there is equally credible evidence as to why the Book of Mormon cannot be true. The process of discerning through human reasoning is good and instructive but ultimately insufficient and lacking in discovering truth. The Givens’ elsewhere explained “the call to faith is a summons to [attune] the heart . . . to resonate in sympathy with principles and values and ideals that we devoutly hope are true *and which we have reasonable but not certain grounds for believing to be true*” (The God Who Weeps, 4, italics in original). In some way, doubt needs to be associated with belief to make the process of discovering truth truly unique and personal.

Lastly, Al-Ghazali discovers the his journey the path of Sufism, or the discovery of truth “by knowledge and by activity” (51). In Sufism, truth is uncovered by the exercise of faith and the acquisition of knowledge, both of which are an integral part of the process. He says that “ascertainment by apodeictic proof leads to *knowledge*. Intimate experience of that very state is *fruitional experience*. Favorable acceptance of it based on hearsay and experience of others is *faith*” (58, italics in original). He further asserts that “the world of knowledge . . . could not conceivably be obtained by the intellect alone” (61). Sufism requires spiritual experiences from within to ascertain truth.

In Latter-day Saint theology, the process of discovering truth is often called revelation. God says that he reveals “in [the] mind and in [the] heart” (D&C 8:2). Al-Ghazali’s personal journey to discovering all the truth available to him was exceptional but in many ways, that’s the essence of what can be learned from his journey. The path to truth is unique and personal and cannot be replicated or duplicated by following a recipe or adhering to a script. And though Latter-day Saints have the use of scripture, prophets, and reason, these are in danger of becoming the subject of worship and not the means with which to find God and truth. Al-Ghazali explained the process of gaining what Latter-day Saints called a testimony as such: “These three fundamentals of our Faith had become deeply rooted in my soul, not because of any specific, precisely formulated proofs, but because of reasons and circumstances and experiences too many to list in detail” (53). Latter-day Saints, who have so much to claim as truth, need to make that progression personal and genuine, coupled with reason, faith, and guidance from others, to find the truth that God has promised them.