

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

SOFTENING THE HEART

Kitāb az-Zuhd wa'r-Raqā'iq

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ABDULLĀH IBN AL-MUBĀRAK

Translated by
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*May the Ummah never be bereft
of the likes of
ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak*



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INTRODUCTION

MUSLIMS TODAY ARE suffering from an illness, unaware and oblivious to its harmful consequences. The illness in question? We have become attached to this worldly life and its adornments, and are ignoring the realities of the afterlife. The result is that our communities are weak, disrespected and even oppressed.

The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ were not affected by these ailments, and therefore, their progress was not stifled. These men and women were mentored by the Prophet ﷺ, and through their unwavering belief, became towering examples of what a Muslim should aspire to be. They honoured Islam, so Allah ﷻ honoured them.

Allah ﷻ says,

﴿زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

To those who disbelieve, the life of this world is painted in glowing colours and they laugh at those who believe. But on the Day of Rising, those who fear Allah will be over them. Allah provides for whomever He wills without any reckoning. (2:212)

Muslims must strive not to be distracted by the temporary nature of this worldly life, and we should not view the troubles and calamities that occur in this life negatively, because the Next World is the ultimate goal.

To help revive these Islamic values, we present to you one of the most reputable books on the topic of rejection of worldly life: *Zuhd of Abdullah Ibn al-Mubarak*. This edition is unique for several reasons: the inclusion of detailed introductions to the topic, the book, and its author; removal of

the chains of narration; removal of many additions added by the narrators of the *Zuhd*; removal of repetitions of narrations; and the addition of brief commentary where it is needed.

We ask Allah ﷻ to reward us abundantly for what is accurate in this book, and to pardon us and forgive us for any mistakes we have made.

THE MEANING OF ZUHD

As is mentioned in *Mukhtār aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ*: *Zuhd* is the opposite of desire. Ibn al-Manẓūr said in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, ‘*Zuhd* is the opposite of desire and covetousness of the world.’ To do *zuhd* in a matter is to not have any interest in it, as the words of Allah ﷻ show:

﴿وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ﴾

They considered him to be of little worth. (12:20)

Aḥmad ibn Qudāmah said,

Know that *zuhd* with regards to this life is one of the noble attributes of the seekers. *Zuhd* is to turn your attention from one thing to something better than it. A person will only be called a *zāhid* (an ascetic) when the object of his self-discipline is something that is usually sought after. He will not be referred to as a *zāhid* if he forsakes something worthless like soil.

Common usage has now specified a *zāhid* as one who has forsaken this world; the one who forsakes everything besides Allah Almighty is known as the perfect *zāhid*. Be aware that it is not considered *zuhd* to spend wealth comfortably and generously while attracting people’s admiration in the process. *Zuhd* is, however, forsaking wealth based on the understanding that it is insignificant in relation to the value of the Next World.

Zuhd is, therefore, emptying the heart of its worldly contents and diverting it from love of this world to love of the next. This life is not a primary concern nor the limit of one’s knowledge, but rather the heart should instead be focussed on the journey from this world to the next. The foundation of happiness or grief should not lie in this life, and there should be no desire for worldly honours. The Next World must be the main aim and primary focus, and knowledge that leads to this aim is known as *yaqīn*. As Allah ﷻ says,

﴿بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾

Yet still you prefer the life of this world when the Next World is better and longer lasting. (87:16–17)

The world is like a block of ice—inexpensive and quick to melt—while the Next World is like a valuable diamond that does not dissolve. A person's *zuhd* in this world and desire for the Next World is relative to his knowledge of the disparity between the two. The Prophet ﷺ had the most *zuhd* from the whole of the Muslim community, because having absolute certainty in and desire for the Next World will most definitely lead to *zuhd* in this. There are numerous verses of the Qur'an that establish and emphasise this basic concept:

﴿وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِىَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

The life of this world is nothing but a game and a diversion. The abode of the Next World—that is truly Life, if they only knew. (29:64)

﴿وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ﴾

They rejoice in the life of this world yet the life of this world, compared to the Next World, is only a fleeting enjoyment. (13:26)

﴿كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ۖ وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ﴾

No indeed! But you love this fleeting world and you disregard the Next World. (75:20–21)

﴿تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ﴾

You desire the goods of this world, whereas Allah desires the Next World. (8:67)

﴿رُئِيَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ ۖ قُلْ أَوْفَيْتُكُمْ بِحَيْثُ مِنْ ذَلِكَُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾

To humans, the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colours: women

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and children, and heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, and horses with fine markings, and livestock and fertile farmland. All that is merely the enjoyment of the life of this world. The best homecoming is in the presence of Allah. Say, 'Shall I tell you of something better than that?' The god-fearing will have Gardens with their Lord, with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever, and purified wives, and the Pleasure of Allah. Allah sees His slaves. (3:14-15)

﴿قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَى﴾

Say, 'The enjoyment of this world is very brief. The Next World is better for those who are god-fearing.' (4:77)

Allah ﷻ relates the words of the believer from Pharaoh's people:

﴿يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ﴾

My people! The life of this world is only fleeting enjoyment. It is the Next World which is the abode of permanence. (40:39)

Allah ﷻ also says,

﴿وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ﴾

The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (57:20)

And He ﷻ says,

﴿بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾

Yet still you prefer the life of this world when the Next World is better and longer lasting. (87:16-17)

The noble hadiths also convey the same message of *zuhd* in this world and desire for the next as these verse:

Mustawrid ibn Shaddād ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مِثْلُ مَا يَجْعَلُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعَهُ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيَنْظُرْ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ.

'The world, in comparison to the Next World, is like one of you dipping a finger in the ocean and then seeing what it draws out' (Muslim 2858 and Tirmidhi 2323).

Sahl ibn Sa'd ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

لَوْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا تَعْدِلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ مَا سَقَى كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةَ مَاءٍ.

‘If the world were equal, in the sight of Allah, to the amount of a gnat’s wing of good, He would not even give the unbeliever a sip of water from it’ (Tirmidhī 2320).

Jābir رضي الله عنه narrated:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ بِالسُّوقِ، وَالنَّاسُ كَنَفَتِيهِ، فَمَرَّ بِجَدْيٍ أَسَكَ مَيِّتٍ، فَتَنَاوَلَهُ فَأَخَذَ بِأُذُنِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَيُّكُمْ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ هَذَا لَهُ بِدِرْهَمٍ؟ فَقَالُوا: مَا نُحِبُّ أَنَّهُ لَنَا بِشَيْءٍ، وَمَا نَصْنَعُ بِهِ؟ ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَتُحِبُّونَ أَنَّهُ لَكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: وَاللَّهِ لَوْ كَانَ حَيًّا، كَانَ عَيْبًا فِيهِ، لِأَنَّهُ أَسَكَ، فَكَيْفَ وَهُوَ مَيِّتٌ؟ فَقَالَ: وَاللَّهِ لَلدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، مِنْ هَذَا عَلَيْكُمْ.

‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ walked by the market while the people were standing on the side. He ﷺ passed by a dead lamb with very short ears, and he took hold of its ear and said, “Which one of you would like to have this for a dirham?” They answered, “We would not take it for any price. What would we do with it?” He ﷺ then said, “Would you like to have it (for free)?” They replied, “By Allah, even if it was alive, it would still be defective because of its short ears, but this is dead!” He ﷺ then said, “By Allah, the world is more insignificant, in the sight of Allah, than this is to you.” (Muslim 2957).

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say,

الدُّنْيَا مَلْعُونَةٌ، مَلْعُونٌ مَا فِيهَا، إِلَّا ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا وَالَاهُ، وَعَالِمًا، وَمُتَعَلِّمًا.

‘The world is cursed, and what it contains is cursed, except for the remembrance of Allah and what leads to it, a scholar, and a student.’ (Ibn Mājah 4112).

There is also a more authentic narration where the Prophet ﷺ explicitly directed us to practice *zuhd*:

ارْزُهِدْ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُحِبَّكَ اللَّهُ، وَارْزُهِدْ فِيمَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ يُحِبُّكَ النَّاسُ.

‘Forsake the world, and Allah will love you. Forsake what is in people’s hands, and they will love you.’ (Ibn Mājah 4102).

He ﷺ also said,

إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا، فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ،
فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا وَاتَّقُوا النَّسَاءَ.

‘The world is sumptuous and lush, and Allah is going to place you there as a deputy to see how you act. So avoid the world and avoid the temptation of women.’ (Muslim 2742).

HOW THE RIGHTEOUS EARLY MUSLIMS DESCRIBED
ZUHD AND THOSE WHO PRACTICE IT

Sufyān ath-Thawrī said, ‘*Zuhd* towards this world means limiting one’s hopes. It is not eating coarse food and wearing a woollen cloak.’

Sarī said, ‘Allah ﷻ has snatched the world from His friends, protected His close-ones from it, and removed it from the hearts of those He loves, because He does not want that for them.’ He also said, ‘*Zuhd* is found in the Words of the Almighty:

﴿لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ
فَخُورٍ﴾

That is so that you will not be grieved about the things that pass you by or exult about the things that come to you. Allah does not love any vain or boastful man.
(57:23)

The *zāhid* is, therefore, one who is not overjoyed with worldly things when he has them, and is not grieved when he loses them.’ Sarī also said, ‘*Zuhd* is ridding the heart of what the hand does not possess.’

Aḥmad said, ‘*Zuhd* means limiting one’s hopes.’ In another report, he said, ‘It means not being overjoyed when it comes, and not being sad when it goes.’ He was once asked if a man who has 1,000 dirhams can be a *zāhid* and he responded, ‘Yes, provided he is not pleased if it increases nor despondent if it decreases.’

A man asked Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘ādh, ‘When can I enter the store of reliance and wear the uniform of the *zāhids* and sit among them?’ He answered, ‘When your training of your self reaches such a point, that if Allah ﷻ was to suspend all sustenance from you for three days, it would not weaken your spirit. If you have not yet reached this stage, then for you, sitting on the mat of the *zāhids* is mere ignorance and I cannot protect you from being exposed.’

Ḥasan said, 'The *zāhid* is the one who, when he sees anyone, says, 'He is more of a *zāhid* than I am.'

Yūnus ibn Maysarah said, '*Zuhd* towards this worldly life does not entail making what is lawful unlawful, nor is it wasting wealth. Rather, it means having more certainty in what Allah possesses than in what you possess. It is to have the same temperament in calamitous times and blessed times, and it is for your attitude to be the same towards one who praises you and one who criticises you for speaking the truth.'

Fuḍayl said, 'The absolute essence of *zuhd* is to be content with Allah ﷻ.' He also said, 'The one who is content is the *zāhid*. He is truly need-free.'

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, '*Zuhd* is to abandon all those things which will be of no benefit in the Next World and *wara'* is to leave the things whose repercussions you fear in the Next World.'

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said,

The Gnostics agree that *zuhd* is the journey of the heart from the abode of this world through the stages of the next. The earliest scholars authored books of *zuhd* based on this concept. Some of them are: 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak's *Zuhd*, Imām Aḥmad's *Zuhd*, Wakī's *Zuhd*, Hannād ibn as-Sarī's *Zuhd*, and others. *Zuhd* is to abandon six things, and only a person who foregoes them all deserves the title of *zāhid*: they are wealth, appearance, leadership, people, life, and everything besides Allah ﷻ.

This does not, however, mean that one must abandon all responsibilities. In their time, no one was considered more *zāhid* than the Prophets Sulaymān and Dāwūd عليه السلام, yet they still possessed wealth and dominion, and they married. Our Prophet ﷺ was considered the most *zāhid* from all humans, and he had nine wives. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, Zubayr, and 'Uthmān رحمه الله were all *zāhids*, despite their great wealth. 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak, who is one of the leading *zāhids*, owned a great deal of wealth. Layth ibn Sa'd, another one of the leading *zāhids*, said of his riches, 'Had it not been for this, these people would snatch us away.' (Ibn al-Qayyim in *Madārij* 2:15–16).

ZĀHIDS AND WHAT DROVE THEM TO ZUHD

Ibn Rajab رحمه الله said,

Those who are true *zāhids* have varying observations of the world and incidents which they experience:

Softening the Heart

Some experience fatigue when they try to acquire worldly goods, so they leave them in order to rest. Ḥasan said, ‘*Zuhd* of the world rests the heart and the body.’

Some of them fear that their share of the Next World will decrease by engaging in futile worldly activities.

Others fear the lengthy accounting required for worldly matters. One of them said, ‘Asking Allah ﷻ for the world is merely asking to be held to account (on the Day of Judgement) for a lengthy time.’

Some have seen the many faults of this life, such as its inconsistency, its exhaustion and large numbers of wicked people who crowd the path to it. Someone was once asked, ‘What has made you denounce the world?’ He replied, ‘Its dishonesty, its extreme aversion and its contemptible advocates.’

Some *zāhids* notice the inferiority of the world in the sight of Allah and so they too despise it. Fuḍayl said regarding this, ‘If the world and all it contains was presented to me without needing to give an account for it in the Next World, I would still despise it just as a person hates for a corpse to touch his clothes.’

Still others fear it will distract them from preparing for the afterlife. Ḥasan said, ‘Some of them spend their whole lives striving as much as they can for the next life. They have wealth and they are asked, ‘Will you not take some of it and use it?’ But they reply, ‘By Allah, I will not. I fear that if I do, it will corrupt my heart and my deeds.’ On one occasion, ‘Umar ibn al-Munkadir was sent some money, which made him weep profusely. He said, ‘I weep because I fear that this world will overcome my heart and there will be no space left for the next.’ He then ordered that it be given in charity to the poor of Madinah.

The highest level of this kind of awareness is the fear that the world will preoccupy one from Allah ﷻ. Abū Sulaymān said, ‘*Zuhd* is to abandon everything that distracts you from Allah.’ He also said, ‘Family, wealth, and children that distract you from Allah are all calamities.’

Zuhd is, in fact, freeing the heart from the distractions of the world, so that it is free to seek Allah ﷻ, His knowledge, His proximity, His benevolence, and His presence. These matters are not of a worldly nature. (Ibn Rajab in *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm wa’l-ḥikam* 2:198).

We must be mindful that the finest example of a *zāhid* is the Prophet ﷺ. The Companions رضي الله عنهم were unsettled when the Prophet ﷺ told them that a person’s deeds cannot save him, that even the Prophet’s ﷺ deeds could not save him! But then he reassured them of Allah’s ﷻ mercy, and said,

سَدُّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا، وَاعْدُوا وَرُوحُوا، وَشَيْءٌ مِنَ الدُّجَى، وَالْقَصْدَ الْقَصْدَ تَبْلُغُوا.

‘Seek what is balanced and correct! Worship Allah in the morning and the evening and in a portion of the night. Be moderate! Be moderate and you will reach your destination.’ (Bukhārī 6463 and Muslim 2818).

SANCTIONED ZUHD AND INNOVATIVE ZUHD

A clear disparity emerges when we compare the Prophet’s ﷺ guidance in *zuhd* with the *zuhd* of certain Sufis, who claim that the highest levels of *zuhd* involve reclusion, monasticism and celibacy, and as a result, the disciple is not permitted to marry or even be friendly with anyone other than Allah ﷻ. They say, ‘Whoever marries has embarked upon the sea. Then if he has a child, he has been shipwrecked.’ Such people have opposed the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ in matters of *zuhd* because he forbade celibacy. Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ narrated,

رَدَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ التَّبَتُّلَ، وَلَوْ أَذِنَ لَهُ
لَاخْتَصَيْنَا.

‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade ‘Uthmān ibn Maz‘ūn from being celibate. Had he ﷺ permitted it, we would have had ourselves castrated.’ (Bukhārī 5073 and Muslim 1402).

Ibn Hajar said,

Here, *tabattul* here means to forgo marriage and the enjoyment of it in favour of worship. As for the *tabattul* which is commissioned in Allah Almighty’s words:

﴿وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا﴾

Devote yourself to Him completely (73:8), Mujāhid explained it as, ‘Being completely sincere to Him,’ which is a metaphorical meaning. Even literally, the meaning of *tabattul* is cessation and so it means, ‘To cease something for Him.’ However, since ceasing something for Allah is not possible without sincerity, Mujāhid explained it as such. (Ibn Hajar in *Fath* 9:118).

Instead, the Prophet ﷺ forbade being excessive in worship, so that a person does not eventually abandon it or tire of it, and he ﷺ demanded that a person be gentle when dealing with his ego. Bukhārī, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, has named

a chapter: It is disliked to be excessive in worship. Under that heading, he relates from Anas رضي الله عنه:

دَخَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَإِذَا حَبْلٌ مَمْدُودٌ بَيْنَ السَّارِيَتَيْنِ، فَقَالَ: مَا هَذَا الْحَبْلُ؟ قَالُوا: هَذَا حَبْلٌ لِرَيْنَبَ فَإِذَا فَتَرَتْ تَعَلَّقَتْ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا، حُلُّوهُ! لِيَصِلَ أَحَدُكُمْ نَشَاطَهُ، فَإِذَا فَتَرَ فَلْيَقْعُدْ.

The Prophet ﷺ entered the masjid and there was a rope hanging between two pillars. He asked, 'What is this rope?' They said, 'The rope belongs to Zaynab. When [she is praying and] she gets tired, she hangs on to it.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'No—remove it. You should [stand and] pray as long as you have the energy for it. When you are tired, you should sit down.' (Bukhārī 1150).

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr رضي الله عنه narrated,

قَالَ لِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَلَمْ أَخْبَرَ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ اللَّيْلَ وَتَصُومُ النَّهَارَ؟ قُلْتُ: إِنِّي أَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ. قَالَ: فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ هَجَمْتَ عَيْنُكَ، وَنَفِهْتَ نَفْسَكَ، وَإِنَّ لِنَفْسِكَ حَقًّا، وَلِأَهْلِكَ حَقًّا، فَصُمْ وَأَفْطِرْ، وَقُمْ وَنَمْ.

The Prophet ﷺ said to me, 'I have been told that you spend the night in prayer and fast in the day?' I said, 'Yes, I do that.' He ﷺ said, 'If you do that, your eyes will become weak and you will become exhausted. Your body has a right on you and your family has a right on you. So fast sometimes and do not fast at other times, and pray, but also sleep.' (Bukhārī 1153).

The Prophet ﷺ forbade ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr رضي الله عنه from fasting consecutive days and spending the whole night in prayer because a person will eventually be too tired to carry out his other responsibilities towards himself and his family. The Prophet ﷺ advised ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr رضي الله عنه:

صُمْ صَوْمَ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، وَكَانَ يَصُومُ يَوْمًا وَيُفْطِرُ يَوْمًا، وَلَا يَفِرُّ إِذَا لَاقَى.

'Fast the fast of Dāwūd عليه السلام. He would fast a day and not fast the next, and he never fled from the enemy.' (Bukhārī 3419).

In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ explained that if Dāwūd عليه السلام fasted every day, he might not have sufficient strength to fight the enemy, and so fasting one day and not fasting the next preserved his strength. Aside from this, the Prophet ﷺ explicitly forbade perpetual fasting.

The Prophet ﷺ opposed the trend of celibacy and monasticism, stating that it has no place in Islam. The monasticism of this community is struggling in the Path of Allah and moderation in all matters—which is what Muḥammad ﷺ taught. Consequently, a person will not fall short in worship, nor will he exert strain on himself—which will lead to abandoning worship altogether.

The surest example of the Prophet's ﷺ method in worship can be found in the hadith of the group of three. Anas ؓ narrated:

جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَهْطٍ إِلَى بُيُوتِ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوبُهَا، فَقَالُوا: وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ، قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أَصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَعْتَزِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ أَبَدًا، فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْهِمْ، فَقَالَ: أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا؟ أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتْقَاكُمْ لَهُ، لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

Three people came to the houses of the Prophet's ﷺ wives to ask about how the Prophet ﷺ worshipped. When they were told, it was as if they thought it little and said, 'We are nowhere near the status of the Prophet ﷺ! He has been forgiven his past and future wrong actions.' Consequently, one of them said, 'I will pray all night every night.' Another said, 'I will fast all the time and not break the fast.' The other said, 'I will withdraw from women and never marry.' Later, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to them and said, 'Are you the ones who said such-and-such?' By Allah, from all of you, I am the one with the most fear and awareness of Allah, but I fast and break the fast, I pray and I sleep and I marry women. Whoever disdains my method is not with me.¹

There is no doubt that what the three honourable companions of the Prophet ﷺ decided on is what some Sufis promote, but it is also what the Messenger

¹ Bukhārī (5063). The warning: 'is not with me' means 'is not upon my way.' It does not result in exclusion from the Religion. If, however, obstinate aversion leads him to believe his own actions are superior, then 'is not with me' means 'is not part of my Religion,' since such beliefs constitute disbelief. Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath* (9:105–106).

of Allah ﷺ specifically forbade. He elucidated in his guidance that he fasts and does not fast, he stands in prayer and also rests and he marries women.

Ibn Hajar said, 'The Prophet ﷺ, in his moderate upright way, did not fast at times in order to strengthen himself for more fasts, he slept in order to regain energy to stand in prayer and he married to curb his desires, remain chaste and increase offspring.' (Ibn Hajar, abridged from *Fath* 9:105–106).

Zuhd is not perfected through declaring unlawful those things which Allah ﷻ has deemed lawful and renouncing marriage. The perfection of worship is to show gratitude to Allah ﷻ for His blessings. How excellent is the narration of Hasan al-Baṣrī, when he served a guest a sweet dish! The guest refused to take it, offering the excuse that he will not be able to show the gratitude it demands. So Ḥasan said to him, 'Eat, you fool! You are not able to show the gratitude required even for a sip of cold water.'

The Prophet ﷺ is the leader of the *zāhids* and the worshippers, yet he married thirteen women and left behind nine. He ﷺ used to say,

حُبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ دُنْيَاكُمْ النِّسَاءُ وَالطِّيبُ، وَجُعِلَتْ قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ.

'In this world of yours, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and I find pleasure in prayer.' (Nasā'ī 3939).

Yet, he ﷺ would pray until his feet became swollen. He was asked, 'Why do you do that, when your past and future wrong actions have been forgiven?' and he ﷺ said,

أَفَلَا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا؟

'Should I not then be a grateful slave?' (Bukhārī 1130).

He ﷺ would fast days continuously, but he forbade others from doing so. When the Companions ﷺ wanted to increase their level of worship and obedience to Allah, they began fasting continuously and they pleaded with the Prophet ﷺ, 'But you fast continuously.' He answered,

إِنِّي لَسْتُ كَهَيْئَتِكُمْ، إِنِّي يُطْعِمُنِي رَبِّي وَيَسْقِينِي.

'I am not like you. My Lord feeds me and gives me water to drink.' (Bukhārī 1964).

ZUHD OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

When explaining the *zuhd* of the Prophet ﷺ, his own description about his relation to the world suffices. He ﷺ said,

مَا لِي وَلِلدُّنْيَا، إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا كَرَائِبٍ قَالَ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ ثُمَّ رَاحَ وَتَرَكَهَا.

‘What do I have to do with the world? My example with the world is only like a rider who seeks shade under a tree where he rests and then leaves it.’ (Aḥmad 4208 and Tirmidhī 2377).

He ﷺ also advised ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ؓ, saying,

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ.

‘Be in the world as if you were a stranger or someone passing through.’ (Bukhārī 6416).

The stranger does not strive for honour in the world and he is not concerned with its [apparent] humiliation. He has his own concerns and the people have their concerns. The books of hadith are filled with authentic narrations describing the Prophet’s ﷺ interactions with the world. Hereunder are some examples:

FOOD OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

One day, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ spoke about all the goods of the world the people had gained, and then he said,

لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ نَبِيَّكُمْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَا يَجِدُ مِنَ الدَّقَلِ، مَا يَمْلَأُ بِهِ بَطْنَهُ.

‘Sometimes I would see that your Prophet ﷺ could not find even a date to satiate his hunger.’ (Muslim 2977).

‘Ā’ishah ؓ said,

مَا شَبَعَ آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ خُبْزِ شَعِيرٍ يَوْمَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ حَتَّى قُبِضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

‘The family of Muḥammad did not eat bread made of wheat for two consecutive days until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away.’ (Muslim 2970).

Anas ؓ said,

لَمْ يَأْكُلِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى خِوَانٍ حَتَّى مَاتَ، وَمَا أَكَلَ خُبْزًا مُرَقَّقًا حَتَّى مَاتَ.

‘The Prophet ﷺ did not eat at a table until he died, and he did not eat fine bread until he died.’ (Bukhārī 6450).

Ibn Baṭṭāl commented on this, saying, ‘He ﷺ only did this to sacrifice the luxuries of the world in favour of the pleasures of eternal life. He was only ever concerned with wealth if it aided him for the Next World and so, generally, he did not require wealth. In essence, this narration does not say that poverty is better than affluence, but it does indicate the excellence of contentment, abstinence and avoiding indulgence in the world.’

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said,

وَاللَّهِ يَا ابْنَ أُخْتِي، إِنْ كُنَّا لَنَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْهِلَالِ، ثُمَّ الْهِلَالِ، ثُمَّ الْهِلَالِ، ثَلَاثَةَ أَهْلَةٍ فِي شَهْرَيْنِ، وَمَا أُوقِدَ فِي أَنْبِيَاتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَارٌ. قُلْتُ: يَا خَالَهَ فَمَا كَانَ يُعَيِّشُكُمْ؟ قَالَتْ: الْأَسْوَدَانِ التَّمْرُ وَالْمَاءُ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ كَانَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جِيرَانٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ، وَكَانَتْ لَهُمْ مَنَائِحُ، فَكَانُوا يُرْسِلُونَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْبَانِيهَا، فَيَسْقِينَاهُ.

‘By Allah, nephew! We used to see the crescent moon, and another crescent, and then another crescent; three crescents in two months without a fire being lit in the houses of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.’ ‘Urwah asked, ‘O aunt, what did you survive on?’ She answered, ‘*Aswadān*—dates and water. However, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had some Anṣārī neighbours who had sheep which were lent to them for milking, and they used to give the Messenger of Allah ﷺ some of their milk and he would let us drink.’ (Bukhārī 2567 and Muslim 2972).

CLOTHES OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

Abū Burdah ibn Abī Mūsā رضي الله عنه said,

أَخْرَجَتْ إِلَيْنَا عَائِشَةُ كِسَاءً مُلَبَّدًا، وَإِزَارًا غَلِيظًا، فَقَالَتْ: قُبِضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي هَذَيْنِ.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ took out a woollen garment and a thick lower garment, and she said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was wearing these when his soul departed.”¹

BED OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

‘Ā’ishah ؓ said,

إِنَّمَا كَانَ فِرَاشُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الَّذِي يَنَامُ عَلَيْهِ أَدَمًا حَشُوهُ
لَيْفٌ.

‘The bed where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ slept was merely leather stuffed with palm fibre.’ (Muslim 2082).

ZUHD OF THE COMPANIONS ؓ

The honourable Companions followed the example of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in *zuhd* as they followed him in all affairs, and they became living role-models for all Muslims. ‘Umar ؓ is an example of that, as is clear from Anas’ ؓ narration: ‘I saw him—and he was the Leader of the Believers at that time—with three patches between his shoulder blades, stitched one on top of the other.’ (Mu’atta’ 3400).

Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn related, ‘We were with Abū Hurayrah ؓ and he was wearing two linen garments dyed with red clay. He blew his nose and said, “How excellent! Abū Hurayrah is blowing his nose with linen. I can recall falling down unconscious between the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and ‘Ā’ishah’s room. Someone would put his foot on my neck, thinking that I was mad, but I was not mad. It was only hunger.”’ (Bukhārī 7324).

Faḍālah ibn ‘Ubayd ؓ narrated, ‘When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lead the people in prayer, some of the men would collapse out of hunger. These were the *Aṣḥāb aṣ-Ṣuffah*, whom the Bedouins would call mad. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ finished praying, he turned to them and said, “If you knew what Allah has in store for you, you would want to be increased in poverty and need.”’ (Tirmidhī 2368).

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ said, ‘Had I not feared that my good deeds would decrease, I would join you in your comfortable lives, but I have heard Allah rebuke people, saying,

¹ Bukhārī (3108) and Tirmidhī (1733). The wording is of Tirmidhī.

﴿أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا﴾

You dissipated the good things you had in your worldly life and enjoyed yourself in it (46:20). (Ibn Shabbah in *Tārīkh al-Madīnah* 2:695)

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Samurah ؓ related an example of ‘Uthmān’s ؓ *zuhd*, saying, ‘While the Prophet ﷺ was preparing the army for the *‘Ushrah* expedition, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ؓ came to him with a thousand dinars in his garment and he poured it into the Prophet’s ﷺ lap. He ﷺ began touching it and repeating, “Whatever Ibn ‘Affān does from today onwards will not harm him.”’ (Aḥmad 20630).

Dirār ibn Ḥamzah said about ‘Alī ؓ,

By Allah, he shed many a tear, and he spent long hours grieving in contemplation and conversing with his soul. He loved to wear coarse clothes and eat simple food. By Allah, he was just like one of us; he would answer us when we asked him something, he greeted us first when we went to him and he came to us when we called him. By Allah, despite being so close to us and dear to us, we would not speak to him out of awe of him, and we never initiated conversation with him, out of reverence for him. When he smiled, his teeth were like well-arranged pearls. He honoured representatives of the Religion and he loved the poor. The mighty had no hope of his favour in their falsities and the weak never lost hope of his justice. I swear by Allah, on one occasion, when night had fallen and the stars had faded away, I saw him in his place of prayer, holding his beard and weeping like he was mourning in pain. I could hear him saying, ‘O world, are you offering yourself to me? Are you beautifying yourself for me? Never! Deceive someone else! I have divorced you thrice irrevocably. Your life is short, your sustenance is vulgar and your dangers are grave. Oh how few the provisions, how far the journey and how lonely the path!’

Along with the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions ؓ, the author of this book is another prime example of a *zāhid* from the early Muslim community. Ibn al-Mubārak did not refuse to earn a livelihood, he did not confine himself to a *zāwiyah* and only wear woollen clothes and he did not abandon marriage. On the contrary, he was a businessman who earned lawful wealth and spent it on pilgrimage, military service, to promote unity among people and in fulfilling other needs. In addition to this, he strove tirelessly in worship, obedience and the fear of Allah ﷻ. When the book, *Zuhd* was being read to

him, he seemed like an animal that had just been butchered. This is the kind of *zuhd* we should strive to attain and promote. The one who removes the world from his hands is not a *zāhid*, if he still holds it dear to his heart. The true *zāhid*, however, is the one who has removed the world from his heart, despite still holding it in his hands.

TYPES OF ZUHD

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته الله said that *zuhd* is of four types:

1. The *zuhd* which is obligatory upon every Muslim: avoiding prohibitions.
2. The *zuhd* which is recommended. There are levels of recommendation which vary according to the object of one's rejection. They are: rejection of disliked matters, rejection of lawful superfluous matters and rejecting fascination with lawful desires.
3. The *zuhd* of those who have committed themselves to this endeavour. They are those who are actively journeying to Allah ﷻ. This type is of two kinds:
 - a. Rejection of the world in general. This does not imply discarding all wealth and living empty-handed. It merely refers to ridding the heart of it completely, so that it is not a distraction in the heart, despite being in one's possession. This was the state of the rightly guided Khalīfs and ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who presided over the treasuries, but they were exemplars in *zuhd*. In fact, Allah ﷻ granted complete sovereignty in the world to the Prophet ﷺ, yet it only increased his rejection of it.
 - b. Rejection of the ego which is the most difficult kind. Majority of *zāhids* merely arrive at this stage and do not commit to it. Rejection of prohibitions becomes easy when you consider some of its motives, such as the evil consequence of the unlawful act and the safety of one's belief in renouncing them. Rejection of disliked and lawful superfluous matters also becomes easy when you consider the ever-lasting bliss you stand to lose by indulging in them. And rejection of the world is easy when you know what comes after it. The difficulty of rejecting the ego, on the other hand, is akin to trying to slaughter something with a blunt object. It is carried out in two ways:
 - As a means to an end; which is to destroy the ego until it is worth nothing in your eyes. Eventually, you will not get angry on its behalf, you will not be pleased for it, you will not aid for its benefit, nor will you avenge

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it. This may be harsh, but it does not deserve to be afforded any kind of comfort in matters pertaining to your everlasting welfare.

- As the main objective; which is to fully employ the ego specifically for the Beloved. It is rejection of the ego from the perspective of a lover, who has escaped its grasp and surrendered it to his Lord. All of the aforementioned types of *zuhd* are, in fact, steps and means to arrive at this stage, and one cannot achieve this station without going through those steps.

LEVELS OF ZUHD

Ibn Qudāmah رحمہ اللہ said,

There are people who renounce the world while desiring it, but they put strain on their ego. These are known as *Mutazahhids*, and it is the first level of *zuhd*.

The second level is when one willingly renounces the world and it does not bother his ego. Instead, he observes this *zuhd* and is inclined to it and he seems to be delighted with his ego. He feels that he has abandoned something valuable for something more precious, like one who leaves a dirham in exchange for two dirhams. This level of *zuhd* is deficient.

The third, which is the highest level, is to willingly reject the world and to reject one's rejection, thereby giving no worth to the object of his rejection. This is because he knows the world is worthless in the sight of Allah ﷻ, and, therefore, he is like one who leaves porcelain for a jewel. He does not see it as a commutative contract since the world, in relation to the pleasures of the Next World, has far less worth than porcelain has in comparison to a jewel. This is the perfection of *zuhd*. The similitude of the third level is like the one who is barred by a dog from entering the king's door. He throws it a morsel of bread to distract it, and he enters and gains closeness to the king. Should he feel as though he has helped the king by discarding a morsel for something far greater? Shayṭān is the dog standing at the open, unveiled door of Allah ﷻ, barring people from entering, and the world is the morsel which is cast away in order to attain the King's honour. He would never give the discarded morsel a second thought.

HARMS OF LOVING THE WORLD

The Fire thrives through the people's love of the world and the Garden thrives through people's rejection of the world. One of the harms of loving the world

is that it has an intoxicating effect which is far more potent than wine, since the effects of the latter will eventually wear off most of the time. As for the intoxication of the love of the world, a person will not come to his senses until he is in a dark grave.

Yahyā ibn Mu‘ādh said,

The world is Shayṭān’s wine. Whoever is intoxicated by it will not recover from it until he is dead, filled with regret among the losers. The least harm it can do is to distract one from Allah’s ﷻ love and His remembrance. When the heart is distracted from Allah’s remembrance, Shayṭān settles there and directs it wherever he wishes. One of his evil schemes is that he keeps a person content with few good actions, just to appease him and show him that he is doing good deeds.

It is related that the Messiah ﷺ said,

حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَةٍ.

‘Love of the world is the cause of every sin.’ (Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 6:388).

There are many reasons why love of the world is considered to be the root of every sin:

1. Loving the world demands that you laud it, but it is despised in the sight of Allah ﷻ, and one of the gravest sins is to laud what Allah ﷻ has despised.
2. Allah ﷻ curses, detests and loathes everything in the world that is not for Him, and the one who loves what Allah ﷻ detests will face trials, scorn and anger from Him.
3. When one loves the world, he makes it his goal. He tries to attain it using actions which are supposed to be used as a means to get to Allah ﷻ and the Next World. He is, therefore, doing the opposite of what he is required to do and he has changed the rationale of his worship. There are two concerns here: firstly, he has turned a means into a goal, and second, he is seeking to gain access to the world through actions of the Next World. This is an evil inversion and a gross reversal from all angles. Allah ﷻ says about this very deed:

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

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As for those who desire the life of this world and its finery, we will give them full payment in it for their actions. They will not be deprived here of their due. But such people will have nothing in the Next World but the Fire. What they achieved here will come to nothing, and what they did will prove to be null and void. (11:15–16)

Along with the above verse, there are many narrations that discuss this reprehensible sin, an example of which is Abū Hurayrah's رضي الله عنه hadith about the three who will be the first to burn in the Fire; the fighter, the charitable one and the reciter, all of whom sought the world through their deeds. (Muslim 1905). Love of the world has deprived these people of reward, spoiled their actions for them and made them the first to enter the Fire.

4. Love of the World intervenes between a person and those actions which will benefit him in the Next World, by distracting him with things he is infatuated with. People are at varying levels in this respect. Some are distracted by their desires from investing in their belief, while others are distracted from obligations and praiseworthy deeds.

5. The world becomes the primary concern for the one who loves it. Regarding this, the Prophet ﷺ said,

مَنْ كَانَتْ الْآخِرَةُ هَمَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ غِنَاهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ وَجَمَعَ لَهُ شَمْلَهُ، وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا هَمَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ فَقْرَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ، وَفَرَّقَ عَلَيْهِ شَمْلَهُ، وَلَمْ يَأْتِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا قُدِّرَ لَهُ.

Allah will satisfy the heart of the one who makes the Next World his main concern, He will consolidate all of his problems and the world will come to him grudgingly. Alternatively, Allah will put poverty right before the eyes of the one who makes the world his primary concern, He will make his problems many and only that portion of the world which is destined for him will come to him. (Tirmidhī 2465).

6. The one who loves the world will suffer the most because of it. He will suffer through his effort in trying to attain it and in vying with competitors. He will then suffer in the grave and on the Day of Rising through the pain of being separated from the world. The worms and insects crawling through his body will not affect him as much as being separated from what he loves. Allah ﷻ says,

﴿فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ﴾

Do not let their wealth and children impress you. Allah merely wants to punish them by them during their life in this world and for them to die while they are unbelievers. (9:55)

7. Those who love it and prefer it over the Next World will be filled with the most regret. They will regret their foolishness which made them favour a dream over reality and something temporary over the everlasting abode.

We ask Allah ﷻ to save us from falling into the temptations of the world and to unite us with the Prophets, the truly sincere and the righteous in the Next World. What excellent company they are!

BOOKS WRITTEN ON ZUHD

The scholars have given special consideration to authoring books on *zuhd* and *raqā'iq* (heart-softening anecdotes). Most of the authors of the six primary books have included a chapter on *zuhd* or a chapter on heart-softening narrations, or both of them together, in their respective books. Some scholars have written books specific to the topic of *zuhd* and others have listed the books in compendiums—such as *Kashf az-Zunūn*, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī* and *Fihrist of Ibn an-Nadīm* etc. Firyawāʿī, an editor of Wakī's *Kitāb az-Zuhd*, has mentioned 62 books authored on the topic of *zuhd* and heart-softening anecdotes. Then, in the introduction of Hannād's *Kitāb az-Zuhd*, he supplemented that with fourteen more books, bringing the total to 76 books. Further details of all the books can be found in these references, but we will suffice on mentioning a few examples, listed in chronological order:

1. *Zuhd* of Imam Shaykh al-Islām ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak al-Marwazī (118/797). It is the oldest extant book on the theme of *zuhd*. There are two transmissions of this book: one of Marwazī and the other of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād. Shaykh Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān al-Aʿzamī edited and verified the Marwazī text which also included some additions from Yaḥyā ibn Ṣāʿid and Marwazī, but not through Ibn al-Mubārak. The total number of narrations in this copy amount to 1,627. Thereafter, he added the *Zuhd* of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād to it, and this is the copy which is widely-used and accepted. The edition of the *Zuhd* currently in your hands has removed the extra narrations

added by the narrators of Ibn al-Mubārak's *Zuhd* and it does not contain Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād's *Zuhd*. This has been done in an effort to make the *Zuhd* purely Ibn al-Mubārak's.

2. *Kitāb az-Zuhd* of Imam Wakī^c ibn al-Jarrāḥ (197/813). It is published with Dr 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Firyawā'ī's verification.

3. *Kitāb az-Zuhd* of Imam Ḥāfiẓ Asad ibn Mūsā, also known as Asad as-Sunnah (212/827). It is published with Abū Ishāq al-Ḥuwaynī's verification, and it contains 104 narrations.

4. *Kitāb az-Zuhd* of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ash-Shaybānī (241/855). It is a collection of 2,345 narrations, some of which are not related from Aḥmad but have been added by his son, 'Abdullāh. Earlier scholars' comments on the book indicate that the current published edition seems to only be a portion of Aḥmad's actual *Kitāb az-Zuhd*.

5. *Zuhd* of Imam Hannād ibn as-Sarī al-Kūfī (243/857). It is published in two volumes with Dr 'Abd a-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Firyawā'ī's verification. There is also another edition of the book which is verified by Muḥammad Abū 'l-Layth al-Khayrābādī. It contains 1,467 narrations.

6. *Kitāb az-Zuhd* of Imam Ḥāfiẓ Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath as-Sijistānī (275/888). It is from the transmission of Ibn al-A'rābī from Abū Dāwūd. The narrations, which amount to 521, are arranged according to the Companions and *Ṭābi'īn* who relate them.

7. *Kitāb az-Zuhd* of Imam Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn 'Amr ibn Abī 'Āṣim (282/895). It is published with Dr 'Abd al-'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥāmid's verification, and it contains 288 narrations.

8. *Kitāb az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* of Imam al-Muḥaddith Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (458/1066). Dr Taqiyy ad-Dīn Nadwī verified it and added notes to it. It consists of five parts and it is published in one volume. The book is arranged in six chapters. Each chapter begins with Prophetic hadiths, followed by narrations from Companions and then statements of *Ṭābi'īn* and scholars.



BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

NAME, BACKGROUND AND BIRTH

HIS NAME IS ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Ḥanẓalī at-Tamīmī, the clients of Abū ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Marwazī. He is Shaykh al-Islām, the great scholar and leader of the righteous in his time. His mother was a Khawā-rizmī and his father, a Turk, was the slave of a trader from Hamdhān from the Ḥanẓalah tribe. Ḥasan said, ‘Ibn al-Mubārak’s mother was Turkish, and he clearly looked like one of them.’

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said he was born in 118/797. He was from Merv, which is a city in Khorasan (now located in southern Turkmenistan).

‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Abī Razmah said that Shu‘bah once asked him, ‘Where are you from? He answered, ‘From Merv.’ He then asked, ‘Do you know ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak?’ and he replied, ‘Yes’. So he said, ‘We have never seen anyone like him.’

Ibn al-Mubārak once visited Ḥammād ibn Zayd and the latter asked, ‘Where are you from?’ He answered, ‘From Khorasan.’ He asked, ‘Which part of Khorasan?’ He answered, ‘From Merv.’ He then asked, ‘Do you know of a man called ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak?’ He responded in the affirmative. ‘What happened to him?’ he asked. Ibn al-Mubārak answered, ‘He is the one speaking to you.’ He then greeted him and welcomed him and they got along very well.

ALL GOOD QUALITIES COMBINED

Ḥasan in ‘Īsā said,

Ibn al-Mubārak’s companions, Faḍl ibn Mūsā, Makhlad ibn Ḥusayn and Muḥammad ibn an-Naḍr, gathered and said, ‘Let us count Ibn al-Mubārak’s good qualities.’ They counted: seeking knowledge, understanding of

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jurisprudence, having knowledge of literature, grammar, language, poetry, eloquence, *zuhd*, piety, justice and fairness, worship and standing to pray at night, Hajj, military service, bravery, equestrian skills, physical strength, only speaking about matters that concerned him and few disagreements with his companions.

Ismā'īl ibn 'Ayyāsh said, 'There is no one on the face of the earth like 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak. I do not know of any good quality which Allah ﷻ has created and not put in 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak. My companions told me that they accompanied him from Egypt to Makkah and he would feed them delicacies while he always fasted.'

'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī said, 'I have not seen anyone like Ibn al-Mubārak.' Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān asked, 'Not even Sufyān or Shu'bah?' He answered, 'Not even Sufyān or Shu'bah. Ibn al-Mubārak was a jurists, a hadith master, an ascetic, a worshipper, a wealthy man, a pilgrim, a warrior, a grammarian and a poet. I have not seen anyone like him.'

'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Abī Rizmāh said, 'Every praiseworthy trait was found in 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak; modesty, generosity, noble manners, friendliness, cordiality, *zuhd*, piety and everything else.'

Nasā'ī said, 'During the time of Ibn al-Mubārak, we knew of no one greater or nobler than him and no one possessed more good qualities than him.'

Ibn Ḥajar said, 'He is reliable, trustworthy, generous, a jurist, a scholar and a warrior. Every good quality was found in him.'

PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND KEEN INTELLIGENCE

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said,

In the time of Ibn al-Mubārak, there was no one who travelled more to seek knowledge than him. He travelled to Yemen, Egypt, the Levant, Basra and Kufa. He was one of the transmitters of knowledge and he deserved that title. He took knowledge from the young and the old. He took from 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī and from Fazārī, and he amassed a great deal of reports. No one made fewer mistakes than Ibn al-Mubārak. He narrated from a book, and whoever narrates from a book will hardly make mistakes. Waki' would narrate from his memory without referring to a book; consequently, he made some mistakes. After all, how much can a person memorise?


Abū Khirāsh asked 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak at Mopsuestia, 'Abā 'Abd ar-


Raḥmān, how much longer are you going to pursue knowledge?' He said, 'Perhaps I have not yet heard the word which will lead me to my salvation.'

Muḥammad ibn an-Naḍr ibn Musāwir said, 'My father told me he said to 'Abdullāh (ibn al-Mubārak), "Abā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, do you try to memorise hadiths?" His face changed and he said, "I have never tried to memorise a hadith. I merely read a book and whatever I like from it clings to my heart.'"

Ṣakhr (Ibn al-Mubārak's friend) said, 'In our younger days whilst in elementary school, we passed by a man giving a lengthy speech and when he finished, Ibn al-Mubārak told me he had memorised it. A man overheard him and challenged him to repeat it, so he did. He had actually memorised it!'

Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād heard 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak say, 'My father told me, "If I find your books, I am going to burn them." So I said to him, "What harm will that do me if it is already in my heart?"'

Shaqīq ibn Ibrāhīm narrated that Ibn al-Mubārak was once asked, 'You pray with us but why do you not sit with us?' He replied, 'I sit with the Companions  and their followers.' The people said, 'There are no Companions or followers here!' He explained, 'I look back at my knowledge and I retrieve their traditions and their deeds. What would I do sitting with you? All you do is backbite others.'

Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād said, 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak would often sit alone in his home and people would ask, "Do you not feel lonely?" He answered, "How can I feel lonely when I am with the Prophet ?"'

WORSHIP AND FEAR OF ALLAH

Muḥammad ibn al-Wazīr (Ibn al-Mubārak's trustee) said,

I was with 'Abdullāh in the howdah when we passed by a dangerous place at night. Ibn al-Mubārak got down and mounted his steed until we passed that place, and then we arrived at a river. He got down from his steed and I took the reins and I laid down. He began performing *wuḍū'* (ablution) and he prayed until dawn while I was watching him. Before the sun had risen, he called out to me, 'Get up and perform *wuḍū'*!' and when I answered, 'I have *wuḍū'* already,' he was filled with remorse because I knew he spent the night standing in prayer. He did not speak to me thereafter until noon when we arrived at our destination.

Qāsim ibn Muḥammad said,

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We used to travel with Ibn al-Mubārak and I would always wonder to myself, ‘What has made this man better than all of us and propelled him to fame? He prays, fasts, fights and performs Hajj, but so do we.’ Once, when we were on one of our journeys to the Levant, we stopped to rest for the night in a house and the candle went out, so one of us got up to relight the candle. He went out and it was a while before he returned with the candle. When he brought the candle back, I looked at Ibn al-Mubārak and his face and beard were drenched in tears. I told myself, ‘It is this fear of Allah that has made this man better than all of us.’ Perhaps he was reminded of the Day of Rising when the light was snuffed out and darkness fell.

Abū ‘Abdillāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, ‘Allah ﷻ raised the status of Ibn al-Mubārak because of a secret which he possessed.’

Khalīl Abū Muḥammad said, ‘When Ibn al-Mubārak left for Makkah, he would say:

بغض الحياة وخوف الله أخرجني وبيع نفسي بما ليست له ثمننا
إني وزنت الذي يبقى ليعده ما ليس يبقى فلا والله ما اتزنا

Hate of the world, fear of Allah and selling my soul for something invaluable
have forced me to travel.

I have weighed the permanent against the temporary

but, by Allah, they are incomparable. (Khaṭīb in *Tārīkh* 11:400).

Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād said, ‘When ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak read *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*, he would weep like a butchered animal. None of us had the audacity to approach him or ask him something because he would push us away.’

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ash‘ath said, ‘Once, when Ibn al-Mubārak was sick, he became extremely concerned, and the people could see he was anxious. They told him, “Your situation is not very serious, so you need not be so worried.” He said in response, “I have fallen sick while in a spiritual state I am not pleased with.”’

Fuḍayl once said, when he was talking about ‘Abdullāh, ‘I love him because he fears Allah.’

Abū Ishāq also said that Ibn al-Mubārak was asked, ‘Which of two men do you prefer; one who fears Allah the most, or one who is killed in the Path of Allah?’ He replied, ‘I prefer the one who fears Allah the most.’

Abū Khuzaymah, the worshipper said, ‘I visited ‘Abdullāh while he was

sick, and he was tossing and turning in his bed out of grief. I said to him, “Abā ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, what is this?! Be patient!” He retorted, “Who can be patient against Allah’s grip? *His grip is painful, violent.* (11:102)”

Abū Rawḥ related that Ibn al-Mubārak said,

Those with insight never feel truly safe from four: a past sin and what the Lord ﷻ will do with it; remaining life and the destruction that lies in it; a blessing bestowed—which one sees as a good thing but could easily be a ploy to deceive and misguide; and the gradual, but swift, deviation of the heart—his religion is being snatched away while he is none the wiser.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āṣim al-Harawī narrated:

An old man visited ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak and he saw him leaning on a coarse elevated pillow. He said, ‘I wanted to say something to him but I saw the fear in his eyes and I felt sympathy for him. He was saying, “Allah ﷻ says: *Say to the believers that they should lower their gaze* (24:30). Allah does not approve of looking at a woman’s beauty, let alone fornicating with her. Allah ﷻ says: *Woe to the Stinters* (83:1)—those who fall short when measuring and weighing, so what will happen to those who unjustly take the whole amount? Allah ﷻ says: *Do not backbite one another* (49:12) and other similar verses, so what will happen to the one who kills another?’ I pitied him after I saw his state, so I did not say anything.’

ZUHD AND PIETY

The essence of *zuhd* is to remove the world from the heart while still holding it in your hand. Like Ibn al-Mubārak; he was a trader, but he intended to use his wealth for Hajj, for military use, in assisting people and other noble endeavours.

‘Alī ibn al-Fuḍayl said,

I heard my father say to Ibn al-Mubārak, ‘You encourage us to make do with less and what is sufficient and to renounce the world but we see you bringing goods from Khorasan to the Sacred Land. Why is that?’ Ibn al-Mubārak answered, ‘Abā ‘Alī, I only do that to save face, to protect my honour and to help me to obey my Lord. Whenever I see a right of Allah, I rush to carry it out.’ Then Fuḍayl said to him, ‘Ibn al-Mubārak, if that is the case, then how admirable!’

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Regarding his piety, Ḥasan said, ‘I once saw a pigeon in Ibn al-Mubārak’s house and he said, “We used to make use of this pigeon’s hatchlings but we are not going to do so anymore.” I asked, “Why is that?” and he replied, “Other pigeons [that do not belong to us] mated with it, so because of that we do not want to take benefit from its hatchlings.

Ḥasan ibn ‘Arafah said, ‘Ibn al-Mubārak told me, “I borrowed a pen when I was in the Levant and I forgot to return it. Then, when I got to Merv, I saw that I still had it in my possession, so I went again to the Levant to return it to him!”’

‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Shaqīq narrated that he heard Ibn al-Mubārak say, ‘I would much rather return a doubtful dirham than give 100,000, followed by another 100,000, even up to 700,000 in charity.’

‘Ayyāsh ibn ‘Abdillāh narrated that ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak said, ‘If a person stays away from 100 things but indulges in one thing, he is not considered God-fearing. Similarly, if a person abstains from 100 things but indulges in one thing, he is not considered to be pious. And whoever possesses a single characteristic of ignorance is considered ignorant. Have you not heard what Nūḥ ﷺ said to Allah ﷻ:

﴿إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي﴾

My son is one of my family. (11:45)

And Allah responded,

﴿إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

I admonish you lest you should be among the ignorant. (11:46)

MANNERS AND GENEROSITY

One day, Ibn al-Mubārak visited Ḥammād ibn Zayd, so the students of Ḥadīth said to Ḥammād, ‘Ask Abā ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān to narrate to us.’ So he said, ‘Abā ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, will you narrate to them? They told me to ask you.’ Ibn al-Mubārak responded, ‘Glory be to Allah, Abā Ismā‘īl! How can I narrate when you are present?’ ‘I implore you to do it,’ he pleaded. So he said, ‘Listen. Abū Ismā‘īl Ḥammad ibn Zayd related to us. . .’ and he proceeded to narrate every narration he had heard from only Ḥammād.

Ibn Ḥumayd said, ‘A man sneezed in the company of Ibn al-Mubārak, so he asked him, “What does one say when he sneezes?” The man replied,

"*Al-ḥamdu lillāh*," and Ibn al-Mubārak said to him, "*Yarḥamuk Allāh*." We were all amazed at his politeness.'

Ibn al-Mubārak ﷺ strove to teach good etiquette and he expounded its significance.

Abū Nu'aym 'Ubayd ibn Hishām said that he heard Ibn al-Mubārak saying to his students of hadith, 'Possessing a few good manners is more important for you than possessing abundant knowledge.'

He also used to say, 'We sought the knowledge of manners because the well-mannered had all passed away.'

Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Andalūsī said,

We were in Mālik's gathering when permission was sought for Ibn al-Mubārak to enter and Mālik granted it. We then saw Mālik move for him, in his own gathering, and give him space close to him. I have never seen him move for anyone in his own gathering. The reciter would read to Mālik and occasionally, he would stop at a narration and ask Ibn al-Mubārak, 'Do you have anything to share here?' and Ibn al-Mubārak would answer very quietly. He then got up and left. Mālik, impressed with his manners, said to us, 'This is Ibn al-Mubārak, Jurist of Khorasan.'

In addition to having good manners and a sound character, he was also the most generous and charitable of people. There are many stories about his generous spending, but mentioning a few here will suffice.

Ḥibbān ibn Mūsā said,

When Ibn al-Mubārak was criticised for giving wealth to people in different cities but not his own, he responded, 'I know the status of those who possess virtue and sincerity. They sought knowledge of hadith and they excelled in it because the people needed them. If we do not help them, it would have all gone to waste. But if we assist them, they will spread the knowledge to the Community of Muḥammad ﷺ. Aside from prophethood, I do not know of any endeavour more virtuous than spreading knowledge.'

Salamah ibn Sulaymān said,

A man asked Ibn al-Mubārak to help him clear a debt he owed, so Ibn al-Mubārak wrote to his accountant. When the letter reached the accountant, he asked the man, 'How much was the debt you asked him to clear?' '700 dirhams,' he answered. But Abdullāh had [mistakenly] written that he should be given 7,000 dirhams. So the accountant wrote back to him, saying, 'The

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funds have almost run out.' 'Abdullāh finally wrote to him, 'The funds have almost run out and life is almost over too. So give him what my pen has carelessly written.'

Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā said,

Ibn al-Mubārak would often visit Tarsus, and on the way, he would stop at Riqqah and stay at an inn there. There was a youngster who also used to go there to tend to his needs and listen to hadiths from him. On one occasion, 'Abdullāh came there but did not see him, and then he hurriedly left with the party. When he returned, he asked about the youngster and they told him, 'He has been detained for a debt of 10,000 dirhams.' So Ibn al-Mubārak asked to be taken to the debtor, and he cleared the 10,000 and took an oath from him that he would not tell anyone about this as long as he (i.e. Ibn al-Mubārak) was alive. He then released the man and Ibn al-Mubārak set off that night. Thereafter, the youngster met him on two more trips to Riqqah, and 'Abdullāh asked him, 'Where did you go, young man? I did not see you.' He answered, 'I was detained because of a debt.' 'Abdullāh asked, 'How were you freed?' He said, 'A man, whom I do not know, came and he cleared my debt.' 'Abdullāh said, 'Praise Allah!' And the man only found out the truth after 'Abdullāh has passed away.

'Amr ibn Ḥaḥṣ, the Sufi of Manbij said,

Ibn al-Mubārak left Baghdad for Mopsuestia accompanied by some Sufis. He said to them, 'Your souls are too shy to allow anyone to spend on you. Young boy, give me the dish and spread a cloth over it. Now, each of you will place whatever wealth he has under the cloth.' Some of them placed ten dirhams and others placed twenty dirhams under the cloth. From that moment onwards, he began spending on them until they arrived at Mopsuestia. Then, when they arrived, he said, 'This is where the war is, so we will split what remains,' and when he proceeded to give them twenty dirhams, one of them said, 'But, Abā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, I put twenty dirhams in.' Ibn al-Mubārak said to him, 'Do you deny that Allah blesses the wealth of a warrior?'

Muḥammad ibn 'Alī in Shaqīq narrated from his father,

When it was the time for Hajj, Ibn al-Mubārak's companions from Merv would gather around him and say, 'We shall accompany you on the Hajj, Abā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān,' and he would say, 'Give me your wealth.' He would then take their

wealth and lock it away in a chest. On the journey from Merv to Baghdad, he employed people to serve them, and he continued to spend on them and feed them the best foods and tastiest sweets. Then they left Baghdad in honour and wearing the best clothes, until they reached the Prophet's ﷺ city. When they arrived at Madinah, he asked every person, 'What gifts have your families asked you to buy from Madinah?' and they responded, 'Such-and-such.' Then they set off and arrived at Makkah. Once they had completed their Hajj, he asked each of them, 'What goods have your families asked you to buy from Makkah?' They answered, 'Such-and-such,' and he purchased it for them. Then they left Makkah, and he continued to spend on them until they arrived at Merv. Once at Merv, he had their homes and their entrances repaired and decorated, and after three days he prepared a meal for them and gifted them new clothes. When the meal was over, he called for the chest, opened it and handed to each of them a purse with their names on it.

HUMILITY AND RENOUNCING FAME

Despite possessing all of these virtues and good qualities, he was filled with humility—and Allah ﷻ raises the rank of those who are humble for His sake.

Ḥasan said, 'Naḍr ibn Muḥammad married off his son and he invited Ibn al-Mubārak to the wedding. When Ibn al-Mubārak came, he got up to serve the people but Naḍr refused to let him, imploring him until he finally sat down.'

Ḥasan also said,

Ibn al-Mubārak's house in Merv had a big courtyard which was approximately 50x50 cubits. If you wanted to see any scholar, worshipper or reputable man of Merv, you would find them gathered in Ibn al-Mubārak's home, every day, in study circles discussing knowledge, and when he left his home, they would stick to him. When Ibn al-Mubārak moved to Kufa, he lived in a small house and he would go out for prayer and then return. He hardly left his house and he did not have many visitors. One day, I asked him, 'Abā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, do you not get lonely here, considering how you lived in Merv?' He told me, 'I fled from Merv to escape the scene which you were amazed by, and I prefer this scene here which you do not approve of. In Merv, whenever there was an issue, they would come to me and whenever there was some matter, they would say, "Ask Ibn al-Mubārak." Here, however, I am safe from all of that.'

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He also said, 'I was with Ibn al-Mubārak once, when he came by a watering-hole. People were drinking from it and he got close to drink too, and the people, not knowing who he was, pushed and shoved him. When he emerged from the crowd, he said, "This is the life!" meaning, when no one recognises and reveres us.'

BRAVERY AND MILITARY SERVICE IN JIHAD

In addition to his knowledge, his self-discipline, his generosity and his worship, he was also known for his bravery while serving in Jihad.

ʿAbdah ibn Sulaymān al-Marwazī said,

We were on an expedition with ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak in Roman lands, when we unexpectedly encountered the enemy. As the two rows faced off, a Roman stepped forward and called for a duel. So a man came out to meet him but he was killed, and then another stepped out and he too was killed. He again called for a duel and someone came out to him. They fought for a while, but then he stabbed the Roman and killed him. The people crowded around him and I was one of them. He had covered his face with his sleeve so I tugged on the edge of it, and it was ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak! He said, 'Abā ʿAmr, you would expose me?'

ʿAbdullāh ibn Sinān said,

I was with Ibn al-Mubārak and Muʿtamir ibn Sulaymān in Tarsus when the call to arms was made. Ibn al-Mubārak and Muʿtamir came out with the people. Once the Muslims and the enemy had formed their ranks, a Roman stepped out and asked for a duel. So a Muslim came out to meet him, but he was attacked and killed. This carried on until the enemy had duelled six Muslims and killed them all. He then began to prance between the ranks, calling for more duels but no one took the challenge. At that moment, Ibn al-Mubārak turned to me and said, 'ʿAbdallāh, if I am killed, do such-and-such,' and he jolted out with his horse. The enemy came out and they fought for a moment before Ibn al-Mubārak killed him. He then asked for another duel and he killed that opponent too. He carried on until he had duelled six opponents and killed them all. He again called for a duel, but now, it seemed as though they were afraid of him. So he hit his steed and penetrated the ranks and disappeared. Then, before I could notice, Ibn al-Mubārak had returned back to his place, and he said to me, 'ʿAbdallāh, if you tell anyone about this while

I am still alive. . . and he gave me a stern warning. So I did not divulge it to anyone as long as he was alive.

As well as practically demonstrating bravery, chivalry and taking part in Jihad, he also invited people to these endeavours using poetry and prose.

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Sakīnah said,

ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak dictated these lines to me at Tarsus. I bid him farewell as he departed with the army, and I delivered the words to Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyād in the year 170/787 (or the year 177/794 according to Abū ʿl-Ghanāʾim's narration).

يا عابد الحرمين لو أبصرتنا	لعلمت انك في العبادة تلعب
من كان يخضب خده بدموعه	فنجورنا بدمائنا تتخضب
أو كان يتعب خيله في باطلٍ	فخيولنا يوم الصبيحة تتعب
ريح العبير لكم ونحن عبيرنا	رهب السنابك والغبار الأطيب
ولقد أتاننا من مقال نبينا	قول صحيح صادق لا يكذب:
لا يستوي وغبار خيل الله في	أنف امرئ ودخان نارٍ تلهب
هذا كتاب الله ينطق بيننا	ليس الشهيد بميتٍ لا يكذب

O worshipper of the two Holy Masjids, if only you could see us,
you would realise that you are merely playing in your worship.

O one whose cheek is wet with his tears,
know that our necks are drenched with our blood.

O one whose horse tires from frivolity,
know that our steeds tire from the morning of battle.

You enjoy the sweet aroma of perfume, while our perfume—
the dirt and dust from the horses' hooves—is sweeter.

The words of our Prophet ﷺ have reached us.

It is an authentic statement that cannot be denied:

The dust on a man's face, kicked up by the steeds of Allah,
can never be combined with the smoke of the raging fire.

This is the Book of Allah, speaking to us, saying,

'The martyr is not dead!' which cannot be denied. (Ibn ʿAsākir in *Tārīkh* 32:449).

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I met Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ in the Holy Masjid and handed him the letter. When he read it, tears began to fall and he said, ‘Abū ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān has spoken the truth in his advice to me.’ He then asked me, ‘Are you one of those who writes narrations?’ I answered, ‘Yes, Abā ‘Alī.’ So Fuḍayl said, ‘Then write this hadith as a wage for delivering Abū ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s letter to me,’ and he dictated to me, with his chain:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، عَلَّمَنِي عَمَلًا أَتُنَلِّ بِهِ ثَوَابَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: هَلْ تَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ فَلَا تَفْتُرَ، وَتَصُومَ وَلَا تُفْطِرَ؟ قَالَ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ، أَنَا أَضْعَفُ مِنْ أَنْ أَسْتَطِيعَ ذَلِكَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَوْ طَوَّقْتَ ذَلِكَ مَا بَلَغْتَ فَضْلَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ. أَمْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ فَرَسَ الْمُجَاهِدِ لَيْسَتْ فِي طَوْلِهِ، فَتُكْتَبُ بِذَلِكَ حَسَنَاتٌ؟

Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrated, that a man said, ‘Messenger of Allah, teach me an action whereby I can attain the reward of those who fight for the sake of Allah.’ The Prophet ﷺ asked the man, ‘Are you able to pray *ṣalāh* without stopping and fast without breaking it?’ He said, ‘Prophet of Allah, I am too weak for that.’ So, the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘By the One Who holds my life in His Hand, even if you were able to do that, you would still not reach the reward of those who fight for the sake of Allah. Are you not aware that good deeds are written for the one going on Jihad for the steps his horse takes while grazing tied by its rope?’ (Bukhārī 2785).

SCHOLARS’ PRAISE OF HIM

In this world, one sign of a believer’s good fortune is the people’s praise of him. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about a man who acts for the sake of Allah and people love him or praise him. He ﷺ said,

تِلْكَ عَاجِلُ بُشْرَى الْمُؤْمِنِ.

‘That is immediate good news of the believer.’ (Muslim 2642).

The great scholar, ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak was afforded the greatest share of praise. Dhahabī said, ‘By Allah, I love him for the sake of Allah, and I hope to receive reward for loving him because of his god-consciousness, his wor-

ship, his sincerity, his military service, his great knowledge, his excellence, his hospitality, his chivalry and the rest of his good qualities.'

There is no doubt that the love we have for these pious personalities is a kind of provision from Allah ﷻ and regarding provisions, He ﷻ says,

﴿اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ﴾

Allah expands provision to anyone He wills and restricts it. (13:26)

It is the love Allah ﷻ has promised his righteous, believing slaves:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا﴾

As for those who believe and do right actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them, (19:96)

It is the love mentioned in the hadith:

إِذَا أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا نَادَى جِبْرِيلُ: يَا جِبْرِيلُ، إِنِّي أُحِبُّ فُلَانًا فَأَحِبَّهُ، فَيَحِبُّهُ جِبْرِيلُ. ثُمَّ يُنَادِي جِبْرِيلُ فِي أَهْلِ السَّمَاءِ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَبَّ فُلَانًا فَأَحِبُّوهُ، فَيَحِبُّهُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ. ثُمَّ يُوضَعُ لَهُ الْقَبُولُ فِي الْأَرْضِ.

When Allah loves a slave, He calls out to Jibril, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so love him!' and so Jibril loves him. Then a call goes out among the people of heaven, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so love him!' and so the people of heaven love him. Thereafter, people of the world begin to adore him. (Bukhārī 3209 and Muslim 2637).

The following is a small sample of the love the scholars had for Ibn al-Mubārak:

Shu'ayb ibn Ḥarb said, 'Ibn al-Mubārak never met a man who was better than him.'

Mu'tamir ibn Sulaymān said, 'I never saw anyone accomplish what Ibn al-Mubārak accomplished.'

When Ibn al-Mubārak passed away, the Khalīf, Hārūn said, 'The chief of the scholars has died.'

ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd al-Jahḍamī said that Awzāʿī asked him, 'Did you see Ibn al-Mubārak?' When he replied in the negative, Awzāʿī said, 'If you had seen him, he would have delighted you.'

ʿAṭāʾ ibn Muslim asked ʿUbayd ibn Jannād, 'Did you see ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak?' ʿUbayd answered, 'Yes. I have not seen anyone like him. You will never see anyone like him.'

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī said, ‘I have never seen anyone with more concern for this Muslim community than ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak.

Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn commented, when Ibn al-Mubārak was mentioned in his company, ‘He is one of the leaders of the Muslims.’

Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdah said, ‘Fuḍayl, Sufyān and other scholars were sat in the Holy Masjid, when Ibn al-Mubārak came from the direction of the mountains. Sufyān said, ‘This is the great man of the East.’ Fuḍayl then said, ‘This is the great man of the East, the West and whatever lies between them.’

Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr was asked why he did not write hadith from Shu‘bah and Sufyān. He answered, ‘Once I met Ibn al-Mubārak, I cared little for anyone else.’

‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī said, ‘Knowledge ends at two people: Ibn al-Mubārak and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn.’

Khārijah said to his brothers, ‘If you want to see a man who seems to be from the Companions, look at ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak.’

‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan said,

إذا سار عبد الله من مرو ليلة فقد سار عنها نورها وجمالها
إذا ذكر الاحبار في كل بلدة فهم انجم فيها وأنت هلالها

When ‘Abdullāh left Merv at night,
its beauty and radiance left too.

They speak of the great scholars of the world,

but they are merely its stars, while you are its moon. (Ibn ‘Asākir in

Tārikh 32:434).

Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā said, ‘I was with Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn, when a man came and asked him, “Abā Zakariyyā, who is more reliable in relating from Ma‘ūd; ‘Abd ar-Razzāq or ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak?’ He was reclining at the time but then he sat up straight and said, “Ibn al-Mubārak is better than ‘Abd ar-Razzāq and his whole family.”’

Sufyān said, ‘I would love to be like ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak for one year of my life, but I cannot even manage three days!’

Yaḥyā ibn Ādam said, ‘If I am searching for some subtle information from the scholars and I do not find it in Ibn al-Mubārak’s books, I give up.’

Aswad ibn Sālim said, ‘Ibn al-Mubārak was an exemplary Imam and he was the most reliable in knowledge of the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. If you see a person slandering Ibn al-Mubārak, be suspicious of his claim of being a Muslim.’

SAYINGS

Ibn al-Mubārak's pearls of wisdom indicate his keen intelligence and high status. When a person has refined his character and perfected himself as a human being, he begins to speak wise words and indisputable truths. The following are some examples of his sayings:

Ibn al-Mubārak said, 'Whoever is miserly with knowledge will be afflicted by one of three; death, forgetfulness, or political alliance with rulers.'

When Abū Wahab al-Marwazī asked Ibn al-Mubārak about pride, he said, 'It is to deprecate people.' When he asked him about conceit, he said, 'It is thinking you have something that others do not have.'

A man asked Ibn al-Mubārak, 'Abā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, what should I dedicate most of my time to; learning Qur'an or seeking knowledge?' Ibn al-Mubārak asked him, 'Do you know enough of the Qur'an to pray your *ṣalāh*?' The man said, 'Yes.' Ibn al-Mubārak then said, 'In that case, dedicate your time to seeking knowledge, since the Qur'an is only understood through the medium of knowledge.'

Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith said, 'A man asked Ibn al-Mubārak about a hadith while he was walking, so he said, "This is disrespectful to knowledge." I found that extremely commendable.'

Ibn al-Mubārak said, 'When a person realises who he truly is, he sees himself as more insignificant than a dog.'

When a man asked Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak, 'What is humility?' he answered, 'To be proud in front of the rich.'

Ibn al-Mubārak said, 'Nothing has made me more weary than trying to find a brother for the sake of Allah ﷻ.'

A man asked Ibn al-Mubārak, 'Is there anyone left to advise us?' He replied, 'Do you know anyone who will heed the advice?'

Ibn al-Mubārak said, 'We sought knowledge for the sake of the world, but knowledge told us to abandon the world.'

Ibn al-Mubārak said, 'The souls of righteous ones in the past obliged when they did voluntary good acts. Our souls, on the other hand, do not comply without force, so we must force them.'

NOTABLE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Ibn al-Mubārak's most senior teacher was Rabi' ibn Anas al-Khurasānī, although he had to trick his way into prison to meet him. He heard ap-

proximately 40 hadiths from him, and then in the year 141/758 he travelled extensively to take hadiths from the remaining *tabi'īn* (followers of the Companions ﷺ). Among the *tābi'īn* Ibn al-Mubārak met were Hishām ibn 'Urwah, Ismā'īl ibn Abī Khālid, A'mash, Sulaymān at-Taymī, Ḥumayd at-Ṭawīl, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Awn, Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā', Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṣārī and from Mūsā ibn 'Aqabah.

Ibn 'Asākir has presented a lengthy list of teachers Ibn al-Mubārak studied with. Among them were: Awzā'ī, Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr, Ibn Lahī'ah, Layth ibn Sa'd, Ibn 'Ajlān, Ibn Jurayj, Mas'ūd, Mūsā ibn 'Aqabah, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Mubārak ibn Faḍālah, Shu'bah, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Awn and many others. This is but a brief sample of his teachers, while the actual number is much higher. Ibn al-Mubārak himself said, 'I studied with 4,000 teachers and I relate from a thousand of them.' 'Abbās ibn Muṣ'ab said, 'I have counted 800 of his teachers.'

His students too, like his teachers, are so numerous that it is difficult to count them. One of the reasons the number of his teachers and students is so high is because of his extensive travels. The following are some of his students, some of whom were also his teachers and contemporaries: Thawrī, Mas'ūd ibn Rāshid, Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī, Ja'far ibn Sulaymān aḍ-Ḍubā'ī, Baqiyyah ibn al-Walīd, Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān, Walīd ibn Muslim, Muslim ibn Ibrāhīm, Abu Usāmah, Abū Salamah at-Tabūdhakī, Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, Ibn Mahdī, Qaṭṭān, Abū Bakr ibn 'Ayyāsh, Ishāq ibn Rāhuwayh, Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn, Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq at-Ṭāliqānī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Marduwayh, Ismā'īl ibn Abān al-Warrāq, Bishr ibn Muḥammad as-Sakhtiyānī, Ḥibbān ibn Mūsā, Ḥakam ibn Mūsā, Zakariyyā ibn 'Adī, Sa'īd ibn Sulaymān, Sa'īd ibn 'Amr al-Ash'athī, Sufyān ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Marwazī, Salamah ibn Sulaymān al-Marwazī, Sulaymān ibn Ṣāliḥ Salmuwayh, Abū Bakr and 'Uthman (sons of Abī Shaybah) and others.¹

LITERATURE

Ibn al-Mubārak also wrote books in many fields, some of which are listed hereunder:

1. *Tafsīr*: Dāwūdī mentioned it in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn*. (Dāwūdī 1:250).
2. *Musnad*: Through the transmission of Ḥasan ibn Sufyān ibn 'Āmir

1 Refer to Mizzi's *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* for a detailed list of his teachers and students. (16:6–14)

an-Nasawī. It is published through Maktabah al-Ma'ārif in Riyadh (1987) with Ṣubḥī al-Badrī as-Sāmīrā'ī's verification.

3. *Kitāb al-Jihād*: It is published through ad-Dār at-Tūnisiyyah in Tunis (1972) with Dr Nazih Ḥammād's verification.

4. *Kitāb al-Birr waṣ-Ṣilah*: Dhahabī has mentioned it in *Tārikh al-Islām* (Dhahabī 31:294), and Ibn Ḥajar has added some excerpts from it in *Iṣābah* (Ibn Ḥajar 2:138 and 7:332).

5. *Sunan*: Dāwūdī mentioned it in *Ṭabaqāt* (Dāwūdī 1:250).

6. *Kitāb at-Tārikh*: Ibn an-Nadīm has mentioned it (Ibn an-Nadīm in *Fihrist* p.280).

7. *Arba'īn fi 'l-Ḥadīth*: Ḥājī Khalīfah has mentioned it (Ḥājī Khalīfah in *Kashf* 1:1).

8. *Riqā' al-Fatāwā*: Ḥājī Khalīfah has mentioned it. (Ḥājī Khalīfah in *Kashf* 1:911).

9. *Kitāb az-Zuhd and Kitāb ar-Raqā'iq*: The book currently in front of you. It was published by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah in Beirut with Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād's *Zuhd* and Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān al-A'zamī's verification.

DEATH

The reliable position regarding his death date is that it was on the 13th of Ramadan, in the year 181/797. Ibn al-Madīnī has mentioned another date which is not so accurate. He said, 'The best of men all died in the same year, 179/795; Mālik, Ḥammād, Khālid, Sallām ibn Sulaym Abū 'l-Aḥwaṣ and ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak.' Ḥasan ibn ar-Rabī' agrees with the former position. He said, 'I was present around the time of Ibn al-Mubārak's death. He passed away on the morning of the 10th of Ramadan in the year 181/797 and we buried him in Hīt.' Ḥasan asked Ibn al-Mubārak about his age before he died, so he answered, 'I am 63 years old.' Muḥammad ibn Sa'd said, 'He died in Hīt, at the age of 63, while returning from battle, in the year 181/797. He was born in the year 118/736.'

Abū ʿAbdillāh said, 'When Ibn al-Mubārak was on his deathbed, a man urged him to recite the Testimony of Faith, saying, "Say: *lā ilāha ill Allāh*!"' So Ibn al-Mubārak told him, "You are not doing it right. I fear you will harm some other Muslim after me [so listen to my instructions]. After encouraging me to say *lā ilāha ill Allāh*, if I do so and I do not say anything after that, then leave me be. If, however, I say something after that, then encourage me to say *lā ilāha ill Allāh* again, until it is the last thing I say."

Softening the Heart

It is said that at the time of his death, Ibn al-Mubārak opened his eyes, smiled and said,

﴿لِمِثْلِ هَذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ﴾

It is for the like of this that all workers should work! (37:61)

And with that, this shining sun set, after illuminating the world with his brilliant light. His pure body which constantly strove in worship, learning and teaching, fighting, spending, assisting and other praiseworthy endeavours was now covered in sand. All that remains is his remembrance and love for him which fills the hearts of the believers.



BIOGRAPHIES OF THE NARRATORS
OF IBN AL-MUBĀRAK'S *ZUHD*

ḤUSAYN IBN AL-ḤASAN ḤARB
AS-SULAMĪ IBN ʿABDILLĀH AL-MARWZĪ

Among his teachers were: Ibn al-Mubārak, Hushaym, Yazīd ibn Zurayʿ, Ibn ʿUlayyah, Ibn ʿUyaynah, Jaʿfar ibn ʿAwn, Ibn Abī ʿAdī, Muʿtamir ibn Sulaymān and others. Some of his most notable students were: Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Baqiyy ibn Makhlad, Ibn Abī ʿĀsim and Ibn Ṣāʿid.

He lived and taught in Makkah. Ibn Ḥibbān, Maslamah and others considered him reliable. He passed away in the year 246/860.

YAḤYĀ IBN MUḤAMMAD IBN ṢĀʿID IBN
KĀTIB AL-HĀSHIMĪ AL-BAGHDĀDĪ

Some of his teachers were: Luwayn, Aḥmad ibn Manīʿ, Siwār ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Qāḍī, Yaḥyā ibn Sulaymān ibn Faḍlah, Ḥasan ibn Ḥammād Sajjādah and others. Among his students were: Abū ʿl-Qāsim Baghawi, Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Jīʿabī, Ibn al-Muẓaffar, Dārquṭnī and many others.

He was a *Ḥāfiẓ* and a reliable Imam. He was born in the year 228/843 and passed away in 318/930. Abū ʿAlī an-Naysābūrī said, 'In Iraq, none of his contemporaries could match him in understanding. Understanding, to us, is far greater than mere memorisation.' Dhahabī said, 'Ibn Ṣāʿid is firm in his discussions on the critical analysis of the narrators, and this shows the depth of his knowledge.'

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ABŪ ʿUMAR IBN ḤAYYUWAYH

His teachers were: Bāghandī, ʿAbdullāh ibn Ishāq al-Madāʿinī and their contemporaries.

He is Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Baghdādī al-Khazzāz. He passed away in Rabīʿ al-Ākhir in the year 382/992 at 87 years of age. Khaṭīb said, ‘He is reliable. He spent his whole life writing and he transmitted voluminous collections of hadith.’

ABŪ BAKR AL-WARRĀQ

He was Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Baghdādī al-Mustamlī. His father oversaw his pursuit of knowledge, instructing him to study under Ḥasan ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Balkhī, ʿUmar ibn Abī Ghaylān and their contemporaries.

He was considered a reliable scholar of hadith. He lived for 85 years, and he passed away in the year 378/988.



SOFTENING THE HEART

Kitāb az-Zuhd wa'r-Raqā'iq




ENCOURAGEMENT TO
OBEY ALLAH ALMIGHTY

Shaykh Abū Ghālib Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Banā' reported from Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Jawharī from Abū 'Umar Muḥammad ibn 'Abbās ibn Muḥammad al-Warrāq from Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd on Thursday 24 Rabi' al-Awwal in 315 at the door of his house that Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-Marwazī Abū 'Abdillāh related in 245 that 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak and Faḍl ibn Mūsā said:

1. Ibn 'Abbās  narrated that the Messenger of Allah  said,

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصَّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ.

'There are two blessings which many people are deceived in: health and free time.' (Bukhārī 6412, Tirmidhī 2304 and Ibn Mājah 4170).

2. 'Amr ibn Maymūn al-Awdī said that the Prophet  said to a man he was exhorting,

اغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ: شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ، وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ، وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ، وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ، وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ.

'Take advantage of five before five; your youth before you are old, your health before you are sick, your wealth before you are poor, your free time before you are occupied and your life before you are dead.' (Nasā'ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* 11832, Ḥākim 7846 and Abū Nu'aym 4:148).

3. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī  said,

مَا نَنْتَظِرُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا كَلًّا مُحْزِنًا، أَوْ فِتْنَةً تُنْتَظَرُ.

‘We do not expect from this world anything besides melancholic burdens or impending trials.’ (Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah*, 5).

4. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ said,

مَا أَكْثَرَ أَشْبَاهَ الدُّنْيَا مِنْهَا.

‘How numerous are the uncertainties of the world!’ (Ibn Abī ‘d-Dunyā in *Zuhd*, 171).

5. Abū Hurayrah related that the Prophet ﷺ said,

مَا يَنْتَظِرُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا غِنًى مُطْغِيًا، أَوْ فَقْرًا مُنْهِيًا، أَوْ مَرَضًا مُفْسِدًا، أَوْ هَرَمًا مُفْنِدًا، أَوْ مَوْتًا مُجْهِزًا، أَوِ الدَّجَالَ، فَالدَّجَالُ شَرُّ غَائِبٍ يُنْتَظَرُ، أَوِ السَّاعَةِ، وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَى وَأَمَرُّ.

‘What are you waiting for except oppressive wealth, delayed poverty, debilitating illness, feeble-minded senility, certain death, or the Dajjāl (and the Dajjāl is an absent evil which is awaited) or the Final Hour? And the Final Hour is more terrible and bitter.’ (Ṭabarānī in *Awsaṭ* 3945, Ḥākim 7906 and Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab* 10088).

6. Ḥasan used to say,

ابْنُ آدَمَ! إِيَّاكَ وَالتَّسْوِيفَ، فَإِنَّكَ يَوْمُكَ وَلَسْتَ بِعَدٍ، فَإِنْ يَكُنْ غَدًا لَكَ فَكَيْسَ فِي غَدٍ كَمَا كُنتَ فِي الْيَوْمِ، وَإِلَّا يَكُنْ لَكَ لَمْ تَنْدَمْ عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتَ فِي الْيَوْمِ.

‘Son of Adam, beware of procrastination. You are involved in today and not tomorrow. If you reach tomorrow, then be wise tomorrow as you are today and if you have no tomorrow, then you will not regret what you missed today.’ (Ibn Abī ‘d-Dunyā in *Qaṣr* 219).

Ḥasan also used to say,

أَدْرَكْتُ أَقْوَامًا كَانَ أَحَدُهُمْ أَشَحَّ عَلَى عُمُرِهِ مِنْهُ عَلَى دَرَاهِمِهِ وَدَنَانِيرِهِ.

‘I have met people who are more miserly about their lives than their dirhams and dinars.’ (Ibn Abī ‘d-Dunyā in *Qaṣr* 91 and Baghawī 14:225).

7. Abū 'd-Dardā' رضي الله عنه said,

مَنْ يَتَفَقَّدُ يَفْقَدُ، وَمَنْ لَا يَعُدُّ الصَّبْرَ لِفَوَاجِعِ الْأُمُورِ يَعْجَزُ.

‘Whoever seeks will not find, and whoever is not steadfast in calamities is powerless.’ (Abū Dāwūd in *Zuhd* 206, Ibn Abī Shaybah 34596 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 1:218).

8. ‘Awn ibn ‘Abdillāh used to say,

كَمْ مِنْ مُسْتَقْبِلِ يَوْمًا لَا يَسْتَكْمِلُهُ، وَمُنْتَظِرٍ غَدًا لَا يَبْلُغُهُ، لَوْ تَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْأَجَلِ وَمَسِيرِهِ لَا بَعْضُتُمْ الْأَمَلَ وَغُرُورَهُ.

‘How often a person looks forward to a day, but does not meet it! How often one waits for tomorrow, but does not reach it! If you are going to wait for an appointed time and its departure, fallacious hope is going to vex you.’ (Ibn Abī Shaybah 34963 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 4:243).

9. Abū Ishāq said that a man of the ‘Abd al-Qays was told in his illness,

أَوْصِنَا. قَالَ: أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ سَوْفَ.

‘Instruct us!’ He replied, ‘I caution you about “will do.”’¹

10. Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said,

أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَعْضِ جَسَدِي فَقَالَ: كُنْ كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ، وَعُدَّ نَفْسَكَ فِي أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ.

‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took hold of me and said, “Be in the world as though you are a stranger or a traveller, and count yourself from the inhabitants of the graves.”’²

Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه also said,

إِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلَا تُحَدِّثْ نَفْسَكَ بِالْمَسَاءِ، وَإِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلَا تُحَدِّثْ نَفْسَكَ

¹ Ibn Abī Shaybah transmits a variation where Thumāmah ibn Bijād said, ‘I caution you about “I will get up,” “I will pray,” and “I will fast.”’ (35247)

² Aḥmad (5002), Tirmidhī (2333) and Ibn Mājah (4114) transmit this as a hadith elevated to the Prophet ﷺ.

بِالصَّبَاحِ، وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ، وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ؛ فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَدْرِي يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ مَا اسْمُكَ غَدًا.

‘If you reach the morning, do not think about the evening, and if you reach the evening, do not think about the morning. Make the most of your health before your sickness and your life before your death, for you do not know, slave of Allah, what your reputation will be tomorrow.’ (Tirmidhī 2333).

11. Ḥasan said,

إِذَا شِئْتَ رَأَيْتَ بَصِيرًا لَا صَبْرَ لَهُ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ بَصِيرًا ذَا صَبْرٍ فَهُنَالِكَ.

‘You can find someone with insight lacking patience if you wish, but if you see an insightful person with patience, then that is something!’ (Ibn Abī ‘d-Dunyā in Ṣabr 71).

12. Ḥasan commented on the words of Allah ﷻ: *Those who give (ya’tūna) what they have been given (ātū) (23:60),*

يُعْطُونَ مَا أُعْطُوا.

‘They give (yu’tūna) what they have been given (u’tū),’

And he said about: *While their hearts are fearful (23:60),*

يَعْمَلُونَ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الْبِرِّ وَهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ أَنَّ لَا يُنْجِيَهُمْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

‘They perform whatever good actions they perform while they still fear that it will not save them from the punishment of their Lord ﷻ.’ (Ṭabarī 19:45).

13. ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wrote to Yazīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik:

إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تُدْرِكَكَ الصَّرَعَةُ عِنْدَ الْغُرَّةِ، فَلَا تُقَالُ الْعُتْرَةُ، وَلَا تُمَكَّنُ مِنَ الرَّجْعَةِ، وَلَا يَحْمَدُكَ مَنْ خَلَفْتَ بِمَا تَرَكْتَ، وَلَا يَعْذُرُكَ مَنْ تَقَدَّمَ عَلَيْهِ بِمَا اسْتَعَلَّتْ بِهِ، وَالسَّلَامُ.

‘Beware of sudden death, for your calamity will be dismissed, you will not be able to return, those you have left behind will not praise you for what you have

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left and those to whom you have delegated your occupation will not pardon you. Peace be with you.’ (Nasā’ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 11864).

14. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said,

لَيْسَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ رَاحَةٌ دُونَ لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ رَاحَتُهُ فِي لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ فَكَأَنُ قَدْ.

‘A believer has no comfort except in [the thought of] meeting Allah ﷻ. Whoever feels comfort in meeting Allah then it will be as though it is so.’ (Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah*, 1:136).

15. Jarīr ibn Ḥāzim said that he heard Ḥasan say,

أَيُّ قَوْمٍ، الْمُدَاوِمَةِ الْمُدَاوِمَةِ! فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لِعَمَلِ الْمُؤْمِنِ أَجَلًا دُونَ الْمَوْتِ.

‘People! Perseverance! Perseverance! Allah has not appointed a time limit for a believer’s actions besides death.’ (Ibn al-Muqri’ in his *Mu‘jam*, 720)

16. Mubārak ibn Faḍālāh related from Ḥasan about the words of Allah ﷻ: *Worship your Lord until what is Certain comes to you* (15:99). He said that it is death. (Ṭabarī 17:160).

17. Ḥasan said,

إِذَا نَظَرَ إِلَيْكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَرَأَكَ مُدَاوِمًا فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ، فَبَغَاكَ وَبَغَاكَ، فَرَأَكَ مُدَاوِمًا مَلَكًا وَرَفَضَكَ، وَإِذَا كُنْتَ مَرَّةً هَكَذَا وَمَرَّةً هَكَذَا طَمِعَ فِيكَ.

‘When Shayṭān looks at you and sees you constant in obeying Allah, he seeks you and seeks you again. If he sees that you are constant, he is controlled and leaves you. If you sway this way and that, then he has hopes for you.’ (Ibn al-Jawzī has recorded this narration, *Talbīs* p.346)

18. ‘Abdullāh رضي الله عنه said,

إِذَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي صَلَاتِهِ فَإِنَّهُ يَفْرَعُ بَابَ الْمَلِكِ، وَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَدَأُّ بِقَرْعِ بَابِ الْمَلِكِ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُفْتَحَ لَهُ.

‘When someone is in the prayer, he is knocking on the door of the King. If he

continues to knock on the door of the King, it will soon be opened for him.’
(Abū Dāwūd in *Zuhd* 144 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 1:130).

19. ‘Abdullāh ﷺ said about the verse: *Fear Allah as He should be feared* (3:102):

حَقُّ تَقَاتِهِ أَنْ يُطَاعَ فَلَا يُعَصَى، وَأَنْ يُشْكَرَ فَلَا يُكْفَرُ، وَأَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فَلَا يُنْسَى.

‘Real fear of Him is that He is obeyed and not disobeyed, gratitude is shown to Him and not ingratitude and He is remembered and not forgotten.’ (Nasā’ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* 11847, Ṭabarānī in *Kabīr* 8502 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 7:238).

20. ‘Abdullāh ﷺ said,

فَضْلُ صَلَاةِ اللَّيْلِ عَلَى النَّهَارِ كَفَضْلِ صَدَقَةِ السِّرِّ عَلَى الْعَلَانِيَةِ.

‘The superiority of the night prayer over the day prayer is like the superiority of secret charity over public charity.’ (Ṭabarānī in *Kabīr* 8998 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 4:166).¹

21. Murrah narrated:

قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ: ﴿وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ﴾ وَأَنْتَ حَرِيصٌ شَحِيحٌ تَأْمَلُ الْغِنَى، وَتَخْشَى الْفَقْرَ.

‘Abdullāh ﷺ said about: *Give away their wealth despite their love for it* (2:177), “While you are eager and stingy, hoping for wealth and fearing poverty.” (Nasā’ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* 11847 and Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab* 3197).²

22. Ṭāwūs narrated:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّهُ مَرَّ بِقَوْمٍ بَعْدَ مَا أُصِيبَ فِي بَصَرِهِ يَجْدُونَ حَجَرًا، وَقَالَ: مَا يَصْنَعُ هَؤُلَاءِ؟ قَالَ: يَجْدُونَ حَجَرًا، فَقَالَ: عُمَالُ اللَّهِ أَقْوَى مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ.

‘After Ibn ‘Abbās’ ﷺ eyesight became impaired, he passed by some people while they were breaking stones. He asked, “What are those people doing?”

¹ This hadith has been related directly from the Prophet ﷺ and is recorded in some copies of *Zuhd*. We have sufficed on only making reference to it in this footnote to avoid repetition.

² These words have also been related from the Prophet ﷺ in response to a man who asked about the best kind of charity. Ṭabarānī in *Awsaṭ* (8648)

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His companions said, “They are breaking up stones.” He said, “The workers of Allah are stronger than these.” (Baghawī 14:270).

23. Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

مَا رَأَيْتُ مِثْلَ النَّارِ نَامَ هَارِبُهَا، وَلَا مِثْلَ الْجَنَّةِ نَامَ طَالِبُهَا.

‘I have not seen anything like the Fire whose escapees are asleep nor anything like the Garden whose seekers are asleep.’ (Tirmidhī 2601).

24. ‘Isā ibn ‘Umar said,

كَانَ عَمْرُو بْنُ عُتْبَةَ بْنِ فَرْقَدٍ يَخْرُجُ عَلَى فَرَسِهِ فَيَقِفُ لَيْلًا عَلَى الْقُبُورِ فَيَقُولُ:
يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ، قَدْ طُوِيَتِ الصُّحُفُ، وَقَدْ رُفِعَتِ الْأَعْمَالُ! ثُمَّ يَبْكِي، ثُمَّ يَصْفِي
بَيْنَ قَدَمَيْهِ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ فَيَشْهَدُ صَلَاةَ الصُّبْحِ.

‘Amr ibn ‘Utba ibn Farqad would leave on his horse and spend the night at the graves, saying, “People of the graves, the scrolls have been rolled up and actions removed.” Then he wept and pondered in front of them until the morning. He then returned and was present for the *Fajr* prayer.’ (Nasā’ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* 11865).

25. A freed-slave of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه said,

نَظَرَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَمْرِ إِلَى الْمَقْبَرَةِ، فَلَمَّا نَظَرَ إِلَيْهَا نَزَلَ فَصَلَّى رُكْعَتَيْنِ، فَقِيلَ
لَهُ: هَذَا شَيْءٌ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَصْنَعُهُ، قَالَ: فَقَالَ: ذَكَرْتُ أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ، وَمَا حِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُ، فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أَتَقَرَّبَ إِلَى اللَّهِ بِهِمَا.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr looked towards the graveyard. When he saw it, he got down and offered a prayer of two units. Someone then said, “This is something you do not usually do.” He answered, “I remembered the inhabitants of the graves and what is between them and it so I wished to gain Allah’s proximity through that.”¹

26. Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Ubaydillāh reported that Umm ad-Dardā’ رضي الله عنها related to him:

¹ It would be correct to assume ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr رضي الله عنه offered the prayer outside the graveyard when he saw it, since he said, ‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade the praying of *ṣalāh* in graveyards.’ Ibn Hibbān (2319)

أَنَّهُ أُغْمِيَ عَلَى أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ، فَأَفَاقَ فَإِذَا بِلَالٍ ابْنُهُ عِنْدَهُ، فَقَالَ: قُمْ فَاخْرُجْ عَنِّي. ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَنْ يَعْمَلُ مِثْلَ مُضْطَجِعِي هَذَا؟ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ مِثْلَ سَاعَتِي هَذِهِ؟ ﴿وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ﴾ أُتِيْتُمْ. ثُمَّ أُغْمِيَ عَلَيْهِ، فَلَبِثَ لَبْثًا ثُمَّ يُفِيْقُ فَيَقُوْلُ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يَرُدُّدُهَا حَتَّى قُبِضَ.

Abū 'd-Dardā' ﷺ fainted, and when he regained consciousness, his son Bilāl was there with him. He said, 'Get up and leave me.' Then he said, 'Who will do as I do lying down? Who will do as I have done in this moment? We will overturn their hearts and sight, just as they did not believe in it at first and We will abandon them to wander blindly in their transgression (6:110). You will be brought forth!'¹ He then fainted and remained for a time and then recovered. He said that again and continued to repeat it until he died. (Nasā'ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* 11849, and Ibn Abī Shaybah 34607).

27. Abū Hurayrah ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَمُوتُ إِلَّا نَدِمَ. قَالُوا: وَمَا نَدَامَتُهُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: إِنْ كَانَ مُحْسِنًا نَدِمَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ أَزْدَادًا، وَإِنْ كَانَ مُسِيئًا نَدِمَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ نَزَعًا.

'There is no one who dies who does not have regrets.' They asked, 'What does he regret, Messenger of Allah?' He ﷺ answered, 'If he did good, he regrets that he cannot do more. If he did evil, he regrets that he cannot remove it.' (Tirmidhī 2403).

28. Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Amīrah ﷺ, one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, said,

لَوْ أَنَّ عَبْدًا خَرَّ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ مِنْ يَوْمٍ وُلِدَ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يَمُوتُ هَرَمًا فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ لَحَقَّرَهُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ، وَلَوْ أَنََّّهُ زِيدَ كَيْمَا يَزْدَادُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ وَالْثَوَابِ.

If a slave were to fall on his face [in prostration] from the day he was born until the day he died of old age obeying Allah, he would think that insignificant on the Day of Rising. He will wish that he had done more so that his reward

¹ Another variation has *abaytum* (but you refuse), instead of *utitum* (you will be brought forth). Nasā'ī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* (11849).

and wage would be greater. (Aḥmad 17650, Abū Nuʿaym in *Hilyah* 5:133 and Bayhaqī in *Shuʿab* 2:218).

29. Ḥurayth ibn Qays said,

إِذَا أَرَدْتَ أَمْرًا مِنَ الْخَيْرِ فَلَا تُؤَخِّرْهُ لِعَدٍ، وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِي أَمْرِ الْآخِرَةِ فَاْمُكُثْ
مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ، وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِي أَمْرِ الدُّنْيَا فَتَوَخَّ، وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَقَالَ لَكَ
الشَّيْطَانُ: إِنَّكَ تُرَائِي، فَرُدَّهَا طَوَّلًا.

When you want to do a good act, do not delay it until tomorrow. If you are involved in a matter of the Next World, persist in it for as long as you can, and if you are involved in a matter of the world, stick to your purpose. If you are in prayer and Shayṭān tells you, ‘You are showing off,’ then make it longer. (Nasāʾī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* 11856 and Ibn Abī Shaybah 8357).¹

30. ʿAwn and Maʿn (or one of them) related that a man went to ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd رضي الله عنه and said, ‘Instruct me.’ He said,

إِذَا سَمِعْتَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا﴾ فَأَرْعَهَا سَمْعَكَ؛ فَإِنَّهُ خَيْرٌ
يَأْمُرُ بِهِ، أَوْ شَرٌّ يَنْهَى عَنْهُ.

When you hear Allah say, ‘Believers!’ then listen. It is either good that He commands you or evil that He forbids you. (Abū Nuʿaym in *Hilyah* relates it from Maʿn 1:130).

31. Ḥasan said,

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَنَّهُ يُحِبُّ اللَّهَ فَلْيَعْرِضْ نَفْسَهُ عَلَى الْقُرْآنِ.

‘If someone wants to know if he loves Allah, let him examine himself through the Qurʾan.’ (Ibn Samʿūn in *Amālī* 171).

32. ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUkaym related that ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd رضي الله عنه said,

مَا مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا سَيَخْلُو بِهِ رَبُّهُ كَمَا يَخْلُو أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ، ثُمَّ
يَقُولُ: ابْنِ آدَمَ، مَا غَرَّكَ بِي؟ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، مَاذَا عَمِلْتَ فِيمَا عَلِمْتَ؟ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ،
مَاذَا أَجَبْتَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ؟

¹ Nasāʾī and Ibn Abī Shaybah both have Ḥarith instead of Ḥurayth.

‘Your Lord will be with each and every one of you in seclusion, just as any one of you are alone with the moon on a night when it is full. He will then say, “Son of Ādam, what seduced you away from me? Son of Ādam, which of your knowledge have you practiced? Son of Ādam, how did you respond to the Messengers?”’ (Ṭabarānī in *Kabīr* 8899 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 1:131).

33. Abū ‘d-Dardā’ ﷺ said,

إِنَّ أَخَوْفَ مَا أَخَافُ إِذَا وَقُفْتُ عَلَى الْحِسَابِ أَنْ يُقَالَ لِي: قَدْ عَلِمْتَ، فَمَاذَا عَمِلْتَ فِيَمَا عَلِمْتَ؟

‘My greatest fear is that when I am stopped for the reckoning, I will be told, “You had knowledge, so how much of your knowledge did you practice?”’ (Ibn Abī Shaybah 34598 and Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah* 1:213).

34. Abū Kabshah as-Salūlī related that he heard Abū ‘d-Dardā’ ﷺ say,

إِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَالِمٌ لَا يُنْتَفَعُ بِعِلْمِهِ.

‘Among the worst of people with the worst station in the sight of Allah on the Day of Rising is a scholar who did not benefit from his knowledge.’ (Dārimī 268).

35. Abū Ja‘far (‘Abdullāh al-Hāshimī, not Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī) said,

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ فِيكَ، فَخَصَّنِي مِنْكَ بِخَاصَّةٍ خَيْرٍ، قَالَ: مُسْتَوْصِ أَنْتَ؟ أَرَاهُ قَالَ: ثَلَاثًا، قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: اجْلِسْ، إِذَا أَرَدْتَ أَمْرًا فَتَدَبَّرْ عَاقِبَتَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ خَيْرًا فَأَمْضِهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ شَرًّا فَانْتِهِ.

‘A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “Allah sent you as a blessing for all Muslims. Single me out with a specific blessing from yourself.” He ﷺ said, “Are you asking for advice?” (I think he said it three times.) He answered, “Yes.” He ﷺ said, “Sit. When you intend to do something, ponder over its outcome. If it is good, proceed and if it is bad, desist.”’ (Aṣam transmitted a variation. *Majmū‘ Muṣannafāt* 54).