DISCIPLINE: THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

by Imam Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi [d 689H]
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
“Whoever pollutes [the soul] has failed.”

[QUR’ĀN (91): 10]
Imām Aḥmad Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī [d. 689H]

DISCIPLINE: The PATH to SPIRITUAL GROWTH
A textbook on the Ethics of Self-Discipline
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In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī said:

All praise is due to Allāh Whose Mercy covers all of his servants and has specified those who have obedience with guidance to the path of guidance and has granted them, by His Ḥusn (Subtlety and Gentleness), to righteous actions and they have gained success by reaching the intent.

I praise Him, affirming the abundant aid which He imparts, and I seek refuge in Him from expulsion and distance [from Him]. I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh alone with no partner, a testimony which is stored for the Abode of Resurrection. I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger who clarified the path of guidance and accuracy, suppressed the rejectors and deniers from the people of deviation and stubbornness. May Allāh’s peace and blessings be upon him, to proceed:
I came across the book *Minhāj al-Qāsidin* by Shaykh al-Imām al-'Alim al-Awbad, Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Jawzī (rahimahullāh). I saw that it was of the most magnificent and beneficial of books containing many benefits. I came across at a certain location and I desired to obtain it and read through it. When I contemplated on it for a second time I found more than what I had thought was in it. However, I found that the book was simple and thus I wanted to comment on it in this *Mukhtasar* which will contain most of its intents and important aspects and benefits whether it be the clear issues mentioned in the beginning of it related to the *furūʿ*, as these are famous matters in the books of *fiqh* and known among the people, as the intent of the book is not to deal with those matters.¹

I did not adhere to preserving the arrangement of the book and its specific terminologies, rather I mentioned some of them in a way and meaning so as to be brief. I may have mentioned a hadith or something else which was relevant to it and Allāh knows best. I ask Allāh the Most Kind to bring benefit with it and from reading, listening or looking at it, and to make it sincerely for Allāh’s Face, and to seal it with good for us; and to grant us success to whatever statements and actions please Him. And may Allāh overlook our shortcomings and our negligence, He is Sufficient for us and the Best Trustee of affairs.

¹ The intent of the book is as an admonishment, it is a work of heart softening (*ragī‘a*), *suluk* and actions of the heart (*a‘mal al-qulūb*).
Know that the most honoured (ashraf) part of a person is his heart (qalb). If a person has knowledge of Allāh, works for Him, strives for Him, gains nearness (muqarrab) to Him and unveils (mukāshafā) what Allāh has¹, then the limbs will but follow and serve and the heart will utilise it just as kings utilise slaves.

Thus, whoever knows his heart will know his Lord. Most people are ignorant of their own hearts and souls, Allāh can come between a person and his heart and this is manifested in preventing him from understanding Him and being conscious of Him. Understanding the heart and its characteristics is a foundation (asl) of the religion and the basis (asās) of the path of the wayfarers (salikin).

¹ The meaning here is not to be understood in the way of the innovators which is found among some people!
Section One:
Exposition of the Ways by which Satan enters the Heart

Know that the heart in its natural state accepts guidance (huda) yet due to desire (shahwa) and appetite (hawa) which can be found therein it can deviate from guidance. Thus, there is a constant battle between the armies of the angels and the forces of the devils, up until the heart opens up to one of the two sides and becomes established and settled (ikhtilās). As Allah says,

\[\text{From the evil of the retreating whisperer}\]
\[\text{[al-Nās (112): 4]}\]

This is the one who, when Allah is mentioned, withdraws and when there is heedlessness (ghafla), he finds an avenue. The armies of devils are not expelled from the heart except through remembrance (dhikr) of Allah as Shajtan cannot find a way through when dhikr is present.

Know that the heart is like a fortress (hisn) while Shajtan is like the enemy attempting to penetrate the fortress, possess it and gain control of it. It will not be possible to protect the fortress except via guarding its gates yet this cannot be done by those who do not know the gates, and thus it is not possible to avert Shajtan except by knowing how and from where he enters.

Shajtan's points of entry and his gates are the characteristics of a servant (sifat al-'abd), these are many but I will suffice with indicating the main gates which are not found to be narrow by many of Shajtan's armies: Among the great doors for his entrance is that of envy (hasad), and greed (hirs). For whenever the servant is greedy for anything his greed makes him blind and deaf, covering the light (nūr)
of his insight (baṣira). This becomes known to Shayṭān as a potential point of entry.

Likewise, if he envies, Shayṭān finds an opportunity. Shayṭān makes fair-seeming to the one who has greed all that pleases his desire despite it being evil (munkar) or immoral (fahisha).

Also among the great doors for his entrance is that of anger (ghadab), desire and harshness (hidda). Anger corrupts the mind (‘aql) and if the mind of the soldier weakens, Shayṭān finds a point of attack and plays about with a person.

It has been reported that Iblīs said: ‘If the servant is hard-hearted (hadīd) we will toy with him as a child does with a ball.”

One of his great doors is love (hubb) of adorning and decorating one’s home, clothes or furnishings. A person can dedicate their entire life to such things.

Another of his great doors is a satiety (shab) for food, as it strengthens ones desire and weakens obedience (ta’at).

Another of his great doors is covetous desire (tama) towards people—whoever suffers from this exaggerates in praising another person with things which do not benefit the person. Compromising to him and not instructing him to do good (al-‘amr bi’l-ma’ruf) or forbidding him from evil (al-nahy ‘an al-munkar).

Another of his great doors is haste (‘aja‘a), and abandoning steadfastness (tark al-tathabbut), the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Haste is from Shayṭān.”

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1 Abū Ya‘lā, Musnad, vol.3, p.1054; al-Bayhaqī, Sunan, vol.10, p.104—from Anas and its isnaḍ is hasan; also refer to Silsilat ut-Aḥadīth as-Sahihah, #1795.
Another of his great doors is love of wealth (hubb al-mal), and whenever this enters a person’s heart, it corrupts it and leads him to seek wealth wherever it may be. This in turn leads him to become miserly (bukhb), which results in poverty (faqr) as he does not pay obligatory rights.

Another of his great doors is encouraging the common people to have bigoted fanaticism (ta’assub) to schools of thought without acting on what the schools oblige.

Another of his great doors is encouraging common people to delve into reflecting (tafkir) on Allah’s Essence (dha’f) and Attributes (sifā’), and on matters which their minds cannot perceive until this eventually culminates in them having doubt about the basics of the religion.

Another of his great doors is bad suspicion of Muslims (sī’ al-gann bi’il-muslini). Whoever judges a Muslim based on having bad suspicion of him, will hate him, speak about him unjustly and view himself as being better than him. This is due to his vile thinking, as the believer makes excuses for another believer, whereas the hypocrite (munāfiq) searches out flaws.

A person has to protect himself from accusations as this is a point of entry for Shaytān and the cure of this obstacle is to block this point through purifying the heart (tathir al-qalb) from censured characteristics (sifāt al-madmama)—which we will discuss later in detail insha’Allāh.

If you were to cut out of the heart the roots of these characteristics, Shaytān would still be able to pass through it and makes suggestions to it, but it would not be abiding-place for him. Remembrance of Allāh prevents him from passing through it and filling the heart with piety (taqwā).
Shayṭān is like a hungry dog which stands in front of you. If you have neither meat nor bread in your hands it is driven back by your saying, ‘you are at a loss!’ But if you have something in your hands and the dog is hungry, it will rush and will not be driven away by mere talk. Thus Shayṭān can be driven away from the heart which is devoid of his food by merely remembering Allāh. But if desire overcomes the heart it drives the true nature of remembrance of Allāh to the marginal regions of the heart so that it does not gain the mastery over its core. The core is thus the abiding-place that Shayṭān seeks.

If you want confirmation (miṣdaq) of that, contemplate on this with the prayer. Observe how Shayṭān occupies your heart with thinking about: shopping, paying bills and planning worldly affairs.

Know that a person’s inner discourses (hadith al-nafs) are forgiven and this includes evil that he intended to commit. Yet whoever leaves that out of fear (kauf) of Allāh will have a good deed written for him even if he leaves it due to a hindrance (‘ā’iq) we hope that he will achieve pardon. Unless he had intent, as intending to commit an evil, is itself evil. The proof for this is the saying of the Prophet (ṣa)：“If two Muslims face each other with their swords, then both the killer and the killed are in the Hellfire.” It was asked: “Why is the killed [to be in the Hellfire]?” The Prophet (ṣa) said: “He had firm resolve to kill the other.”

How can firm resolve (‘azm) and actions (‘aml) based on intents (niyya) not be applicable? Are the vices of pride (kibr), ostentation (riya’) and vanity (‘ujb) just inner matters? If a man saw a woman lying on his bed that he thought was his wife, when it was actually an unrelated woman, the man would not be sinful if he has sexual intercourse with her. Yet if he knew it was his wife lying on the bed and he thought her to be as another woman, he would be sinful for

1 Bukhārī, vol.12, p.173; Muslim, #2888—from Abu Bakrah (rādī Allāhu ‘anhu).
having sexual relations with her with this in mind. All of this is connected to the intents of the heart (‘aqd al-qalb).

Section two:

Exposition on the Hearts Steadfastness on Goodness

It is related from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said:

ْبَلْ أَقِمُوا ٱلْقُلُوبَ تَبَيَّنَ ۖ فَلَبِّ عَلَى دِينِكَ

"O Turner of the hearts, keep our hearts steadfast on Your religion."

ْبَلْ ّمَنَصِرَ ٱلْقُلُوبِ صَرَفْ قَلْبُنا عَلَى طَاعَنَاتٍ

"O Averter of the hearts, avert our hearts to Your obedience."

In another hadith: “The heart is like a feather which gets turned over by the wind.”

Know that in regards to the hearts being steadfast (thabāt) on goodness or evil, then hearts can fluctuate between three levels:

The first heart is which is filled with piety (taqwa), which gets purified by means of discipline (riyāda) and cleansed of vile manners (akhlāq al-dhamima).

The second heart is forsaken, burdened by desire, corrupted by foul actions and stained by blameworthy characteristics. Shayṭān’s authority is strengthened with such a broad scope for his action. The authority of faith (imān) however is weakened due to the heart

4 Tirmidhi, #2141 and Muslim #2654—from ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (radī Allāhu ‘anhu)

5 Ahmad, vol.4, pp.419, 408; Ibn Abī ‘Asim, al-Sunnah, #227—from Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī (radī Allāhu ‘anhu) with a saḥīḥ isnād.
being filled with the smoke of passion. Light is therefore darkened and the eyes become filled with smoke which affects sight and thus it does not pay heed to admonishment (wa'z).

The third heart is that in which there appears suggestion of desire and which summon to evil (sharr), but there follows them a suggestion of faith which summon it to good (khayr).

For example, Shaytān can affect the intellect and strengthen base desires and say “do you not see so and so and how he is able to take pleasure in desires?” To the extent that he will specify a group of scholars, and in this way the soul inclines to Shaytān. Then the angel who encourages good launches a counter-campaign against Shaytān and says to the soul: “were they not destroyed except on account of forgetting the final destination? So do not be deceived by peoples’ heedlessness of their own souls. Do you not see that if the people stood out in the sun during summer while you had a cool house, would you [blindly] agree with what they are doing or would you seek the benefit [of coolness]?” Then the soul would incline to what the angel encourages and there will be hesitation between the two soldiers until the heart becomes overcome by whatever takes precedence. Whoever is created for good, good will be easy for him; and whoever is created for evil, evil with be easy for him. Allāh says,

كَيْفُ الْأَرْضِ نُخُذُكُمْهَا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ فِيهَا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهَا يَكْبِرُهَا وَيَغْرَبُهَا

في الإسلام

“So whoever Allāh wants to guide—He expands his breast to [contain] Islām; and whoever He wants to misguide—He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky.”

[al-An’ām (6): 125]
Know that good character (khulq al-hasan) is a characteristic (sifah) of the Prophets and of the Truthful (siddiqin). Bad character (akhlāq al-sayyīda) on the other hand is a destructive poison which leads a person who possesses it to traverse the path of Shaytān. You therefore have to know the sicknesses and flaws and then proceed to find the cures. We will indicate some of the sicknesses of the heart and how to treat them generally, without going into too much detail as this will be clarified [later] insha’Allāh.
Section One:

Exposition of the Merit of Good Character and a Condemnation of Bad Character

Some of this has been noticed in regards to the etiquettes of companionship (adab al-suhba).

Know that people have spoken about good character from the aspect of presenting its fruits (thamarat) not its reality (haqiqa), and even in this regard not all of the fruits [of good character] were either presented or covered. Rather, those who presented their versions of the fruits of good character did so based only on their own views.

In uncovering the reality of that it should be said therefore that: ‘good character’ is often used in regards to appearance, so for example it is said: ‘so and so is good in appearance (khalq) and in character (khuluq)’ meaning: good appearance and good inner essence. The intent of ‘khalq’ is: the apparent (zabir) appearance, while the intent of ‘khuluq’ is: the inner (batin) appearance—as a person is comprised of both a body (jasad) and soul (nafs).

The body comprehends things through sight (basar) and the soul through insight (basira) and unto each is its arrangement and form, either beautiful or vile. The soul which comprehends through insight has a greater status than the body which comprehends through sight, as a result Allāh extolled it by saying,

إِنِّي خَلَقَهُ مِنْ نَفْسٍ إِنَّفَاسَ هَيْنَ لَهَا نَفْسُهُ وَفَخْرَهَا فِيهِمَا

“...I shall create a man from clay; and when I fashioned him, and have breathed into him something of My spirit.”

[Sad (38): 71-72]
Allāh brings attention to the fact that the body is ascribed to clay (tin) and that the soul (rubh) is ascribed to Him, glory unto Him. 'Khubq' is a reflection of the soul from which actions are brought out easily without the need of reflection (fikr) or deliberation (rawiya). So if actions are beautiful they are referred to as 'good character' (khuluq al-hasan) and if they are vile they are known as 'bad character' (khuluq al-sajyi'ah).

Some could claim that whoever is heroic by and large will find it difficult and burdensome to discipline (rijada), and that character (akhlaq) cannot be changed just as appearance (sira) cannot be changed.

The answer to this is that: if character cannot be changed then admonitions (mawa’iz) and advices (wasa’ya) [so as to change character] will carry no meaning. Yet how can change of character be denied when we see that wild beasts can be tamed, dogs trained to not eat [when instructed] and horses trained how to walk properly and to be adequately led. Yet it is the case that the nature of some people is much quicker to be open to rectification (islāb) than other natures which may be more stubborn (mutas’abu).

As for the idea that people’s characters cannot be changed then you should know that the intent (maqsud) [of changing one’s character] is not to suppress these attributes totally but rather to discipline oneself to avert desires and traverse the moderate way (i’tidāl) which is median between excess (iifrāṭ) and neglect (tafrīṭ). Total suppression [of desires] is not the main goal. How could it be when desires (shahwa) were created for a necessary benefit embedded in people’s natures? So for example, if the desire for food was removed, a person would die; if the desire for sexual relations (wiqā) was removed lineages would be severed and if the impulse of anger (ghadab) was removed totally a person would not defend himself from what seeks to destroy him and Allāh has said,
And describing the believers as ‘severe’ (shidda): severity can only arise from anger, and were there to be no anger, there could be no struggle against the unbelievers.

“And those that suppress their rage.”

[Al-İmran (3): 134]

Allah did not say ‘those that have no rage’! Likewise is the case with the desire for food: moderation should prevail, rather than greed or indifference. Allah has said,

“Eat and drink, but be not extravagant.”

[Al-‘Araf (7): 31]

A Shaykh who guides his student if he sees from him any inclination towards anger or desire it is good if he exaggerates the dispraise of these two aspects in order for the student to traverse the moderate route. What also indicates that the intent of disciplining [the soul] is moderation in the fact that generosity (sikhd) is a trait which is sought-after in the Divine Legislation (shar) and it is middle point between the two extremes of miserliness (taqtir) and wastefulness (tabdhir). Allah has praised this moderation by saying,

“And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor grudging; and there is ever a middle point between the two.”

[Al-Furqan (28): 67]
Know that this moderation (i'tidāl) can at times be obtained on account of one's perfect natural disposition (kamāl al-fītra) as how many young children have the characteristics of truthfulness (sidq) and forbearance (hi'm)? And at other times moderation can be obtained through earning it and this is through disciplining [the soul] which involves making the soul conduct lofty actions so as to achieve the sought-after characteristics. Thus, whoever requires the character of generosity has to take on board generous actions such as giving so that it becomes natural to him.

Likewise, whoever wants the character of humility (tawādū') has to take on board the actions of the humble (mutawād'in).

Likewise is the case for all of the praiseworthy characteristics (akhlāq al-mahmūda), habitual practice has a major impact. This is the same for one who wants to be a writer, he has to assume the actions of writing; or one who wants to be a jurist, he has to assume the actions of the jurists and this is through repetition so that his heart becomes accustomed to fiqh. Yet it is inadequate to assume that this can be acquired in two or three days as rather it is only achieved through continual practice.

In the same way, it is inappropriate to depend on the scarcity of acts of obedience as their continuance has an impact, likewise to depend on the scarcity of sins.

Also, taking on board means which lead to virtuous traits can impact the soul and change it. Likewise, taking on board laziness (kasl) can become habitual and as a result prevent all goodness.

Good character can be achieved by accompanying the people of goodness, as nature is akin to a thief who steals both good and evil.

I say: what supports this is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “A person
The Second Foundation: On Disciplining the Soul

is on the religion of his friend, so let each of you look to whom he takes as a friend.”

Section Two:
The Method used in Refining the Character

Know that moderation (i'tidāl) in regards to good character is to be sound (siha) in soul, and inclination away from moderation is a sickness (suqm) and disease (marad). You should thus know that similitude of the soul when it needs to be cured is just like that of the body when it needs to be cured. So just as the body was not created entirely complete except through cultivation (tarbiya) and nutrition likewise the soul was created deficient (nāqis) with the propensity for completion through purification (tażkiya), refining the character (tabdhib al-akhlaq) and nourishment with knowledge (tagdhya bi'l 'ilm).

So when a body is healthy (sahib) in such a case a physician would work to preserve its good health, and if the body was sick the physician would work to ensure that good health will reach it. The same is the case for the soul, for if it is pure and well-trained with good manners such a condition of the soul has to be preserved along with additional facets which will strengthen it, and even though it is imperfect it must still strive to obtain perfection.

In the same way, a sickness ('illa) which affects a body is not treated except with that which is oppositional to it, thus hot flushes are treated with cooling and cold flushes are treated with warmth. Likewise, lowly characteristics which are due to sicknesses of the heart are treated with that which is oppositional to it. The sickness of ignorance (jahl) is thus treated with knowledge ('ilm), the sickness of miserliness (bukhl) is treated with generosity (sikhdwa), the sickness

1 Reported by Abū Dāwūd, #4833; Tirmidhi, #2379—from Abū Hurayrah (radīy Allāhu 'anhu) with a hasan chain of transmission.
of pride (kibr) is treated with humility (tawādu') and the sickness of greed (sharr) is treated by avoiding the object of desire (mushtahan).

So just as the possibility of the bitter taste of medicine is inevitable, as is the intensity of patience (shidda al-sabr) when avoiding desired objects (mushtabaya) for the positive rectification (silah) of sick bodies, likewise is the case for striving (mujahada) and patience when curing the heart, in fact it is more so as bodily illnesses end with death whereas illnesses of the heart are a punishment which continues after death forever.

The one who treats the sick hearts of people should not impose any specific duties and forms of self-discipline (riyada) upon them until he has learnt about their character and sickness from which they suffer. This is because there is not just one cure for every sick person. Thus, if he sees that a person is ignorant of the Divine Legislation, he teaches him; if he sees a person is arrogant (mutakabbir) he encourages him to perform that which instils humility and if he sees a person who has anger (ghadab) management problems he exhorts him to be forbearing.

The one who trains his soul is mostly in need of having strong determination ('azmi), whenever he is hesitant, his success is distanced and whenever he senses that his soul has weak determination he applies patience. If his determination is deficient, he punishes his soul so that it does not become accustomed to this. This is like the man who said to his soul: "You speak about that which does not concern you?! I will surely punish you with fasting for a year!!"
Section Three:

Symptoms by which the Diseases of the Heart may be Recognised, and the Signs which indicate a Return to Health, and an Exposition of the Way in which a Man may Discover the Faults in his Soul

Know that each organ was created for a specific function. The sign of sickness in an organ is when its key function cannot perform or emanates with a kind of confusion. So for example, an illness with the hand rescinds force; and illness with the eye rescinds sight and an illness in the heart rescinds what the heart was specifically created for, which is knowledge (‘ilm), wisdom (hikma), understanding (ma’rifah), love (hubb) and worship (‘ibada) of Allah, and preferring Him to every other object of desire (shahwa).

For if a person knows everything but does not know Allah it is as if he does not know anything at all.

The sign of understanding is: love, for whoever knows and understands Allah will love Him. The sign of love [of Allah] is not to prefer any beloved thing over Allah. Whoever prefers anything over Allah then his heart is sick. This is like a stomach which prefers eating figs over bread which leads to the desire for bread to dissipate, it will become sick.

The sickness of the heart if hidden (kafi) and one who has this sickness may not know that he has it and thus could be heedless (ghafla) to it. Yet if he knows of his heart’s sickness it could be difficult for him to be patient with the bitter taste of the cure for the heart’s illness, as the cure is contrary to desire. Or, patience could be present but there could not be a skilled physician to administer the cure, and in regards to the [spiritual] sicknesses of the hearts the physicians in this regard are the scholars. It could even be the case that the sick-
ness itself overcomes them [the scholars] and a sick physician very rarely notices his own sicknesses.

As for punishing the soul and bringing it back to good health after treatment then this is through observing its deficiencies. So if one wants to cure the sickness of miserliness, he treats it by spending out wealth in charity but without being wasteful as that could just lead to another sickness. This is like one who treats cold with warmth but then the warmth overcomes him causing another sickness. Hence, moderation is sought-after in all cases.

If you want to know moderation, then look at your own self. If holding on to wealth and gathering it is more delightful to you and easier for you than spending it out on those who deserve it, then you should know that miserliness (bukhl) has overcome you and you need to cure yourself with spending out in charity. Yet when spending out wealth for those who deserve it become more delightful to you, and easier for you than holding on to money, then you should know that wastefulness has overcome you and you need to return to withholding. You should not cease inspecting your own self until your heart becomes severed from the attachment to wealth, neither inclining to wasting it nor to holding on to it. Rather, you should take it like water: do not seek to withhold it from a person who needs it; and do not incline to wasting it.

Every heart which is like this will become healthy and sound (salim) with Allâh in this matter, and one should be healthy in regards to all character traits so that the heart does not become attached to anything from the worldly life and so that the soul leaves the world severed from any attachments to it, without being averted towards it and without desiring means to attain it. At that point, it will return to its Lord as a soul which is assured (nafs al-mutma'ina).
When real moderation is between two sides is of the utmost obscurity (gumūd), indeed, it is finer than a strand of hair, and sharper than a sword, the man who keeps to the Straight Path (sirāt al-mustaqim) in this world shall cross the bridge (al-sirāt) in the Afterlife. It is because of the difficulty of being steadfast (istiqāma) on the path, the servant of Allāh has been instructed to say every day:

آهَدْنَا الْصَّرْطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

“Guide us to the Straight Path.”
[al-Fātihah (1): 6]

Whoever is unable to be steadfast has to strive to come as close to being steadfast as possible as salvation (najāh) is through righteous action (‘aml al-ṣāliḥ).

Righteous actions do not emanate except from good character, thus let every servant [of Allāh] lose his [negative] traits and character and preoccupy himself with treating each one; and let those of determination be patient reluctantly on this matter, as it will become sweet to him just as weaning becomes sweet to a child after he hates it and going back to breastfeeding will become disliked to him. Whoever knows how short life is in comparison to the length of the life in the Afterlife will bear the difficulty of travelling for a few days in order to gain eternal favours and blessings.

Know that if Allāh wants good for a servant [of His] He grants him insight (basira) of the faults (‘uyūb) of his own self. Thus, whoever has insight will not be oblivious to his faults, and when he knows them he will try to cure them. However, most of the people are ignorant of their own faults and you will even see one of them take out the twig in the eye of his brother yet ignore the log in his own eye.

Whoever wants to know the faults of his own self should take four steps:
Firstly, he should sit before a Shaykh who has insight (basir) of the soul’s flaws and who will let him know of his soul’s faults and how to cure them. This may be difficult to find in these times, yet whoever can find such a man has truly found a proficient physician who should not be left.

Secondly, he may seek out a good truthful religious friend whom he takes as a close companion who will bring attention to his faults in terms of character and actions.

The leader of the believers, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (rādī Allāhu ‘anhu) said: ‘May Allāh grant His mercy to a man who informs us of our faults.’

Salmān (rādī Allāhu ‘anhu) was asked when his faults were brought to him: ‘I have heard that you combine two kinds food at one meal, and that you have two sets of clothing, one to wear at night and the other for the day’ He asked: ‘Has anything else other than this reached you?’ The man replied: ‘no.’ He then said: ‘I now renounce them.’

‘Umar (rādī Allāhu ‘anhu) used to ask Hudhayfah (rādī Allāhu ‘anhu): ‘Can you see any of the signs of hypocrisy in me?’

This is because the more a person’s level is raised in terms of its wakefulness the more he will accuse his own self. The problem in these times is that it is very difficult to find a close friend who has this description as it is rare to find friends who abandon complimenting and flattering you.

The Salaf on the other hand used to love it when people would

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2 Then how about in our times, some nine centuries after this was written?!
3 These are amazing words by the author here and it is almost as if this is written for people of our times, for the general public and for the preachers to Islām in particular!
inform them of their faults, yet with us today we are mostly a people who hate the most any person who may inform us of our own faults.

This is a proof of weak faith, for bad traits of character are like a scorpion. If a person informed us that there is a scorpion lurking under our clothes, we would blindly follow whatever he said and we would strive to kill it, yet the reality is that vile character is more harmful than a scorpion.

Thirdly, is to benefit in understanding about the faults of one’s soul based on the words of one’s enemies, for a hostile eye brings out defect: it may happen that a man can benefit from an enemy who reminds him of his faults more than from a close friend who may merely compliment and flatter him and hide his faults.

Fourthly, is to mingle with people, and whatever blameworthy things which one sees among them he stays away from.4

Section Four:

Exposition on the Appetites of the Soul

We have mentioned that soul’s desires (shahwāt al-nufūs) were not put in place except for a reason and benefit to them. As if not for the desire of food, nutrition would not reach the body; and if not for the desire of sexual intercourse, lineages would be severed—what is rather censured however is preferring desires and transgression (tugyān) in order to attain them. Many people do not understand this issue and they thus begin to abandon all which the soul desires and this itself is transgression as it is not giving the soul its right.

The soul has a right based on the Prophet (ﷺ) saying: “Your soul

4 Whoever can combine all four ways has combined between the good of all of them.
has a right upon you.’’

To the extent that one of them even said: “Such and such from the sunnah is indulgence in desire so I will not perform it”—this is a deviation (inbirāf) from what is permissible and opposition (khillāf) to the sunnah of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). For the Prophet (ﷺ) indulged in eating sweet things, honey and other similar dishes.

Thus, do not turn to the ascetic (zāhid) who has no knowledge and absolutely prohibits his self from indulgence in sweet things, as this is closer to oppression than it is to justice. Such sweet delights should only be abandoned if the route to attaining them is difficult, such as if they can only be attained by doing something disliked or increases his desire for it which in turn makes his worship harder for him to perform. As for indulging in it sometimes so as to strengthen the body then this is like medicine for the sick and is praiseworthy and not to be dispraised. There is no problem in being gentle with the soul (rifq bi’l-nafs) so as to strengthen its wayfaring (sulūk).

Section Five:
Exposition of the Signs of Good Character

The aspirant (murid) can possibly strive with his soul until he abandons immoralities and acts of disobedience, and then may think that he has refined [his soul] and made good his character, and may dispense with any further struggle (mujābada). Yet this is not the case, as good character contains a number of traits of the believers which Allah has described when He said,

3 1
The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely. The ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend. Such are the true believers.”

[al-Anfal (8): 2-4]

And He said,

“[Such believers are] the repentant, the worshippers, the praisers [of Allah], the travellers [for His cause], those who bow and prostrate [in prayer], those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and those who observe the limits [set by] Allah. And give good tidings to the believers.”

[al-Tawbah (9): 112]

And He has said,
“Certainly will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive. And they who turn away from ill speech. And they who are observant of zakáb. And they who guard their private parts. Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed. But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors. And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive. And they who carefully maintain their prayers. Those are the inheritors”

[al-Mu'minun (23): 1-10]

Similarly, He has said,

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are they who walk gently upon the earth.”

[al-Furqân (25): 63]

to the end of Surah al-Furqân

Whoever is uncertain what his condition might be should measure himself against these verses. The presence of all these characteristics [within him] is a sign of good character (husn al-khutuq). The absence of any of them is a sign of bad character (su' al-khulq), while the presence of some of them is a sign that he has some good but has to strive so as to maintain them and work to achieve the rest. Allâh’s Messenger (saww) described the believers with many features and those which indicated good traits of character (mahâsin al-akhlaq).

In the Two Sahîhs from the hadith of Anas (radiyAllahu 'anhu) the Prophet (saww) said: “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, a serv-
ant does not believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”

Also in the Two Sahih from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (radiy-Allahu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (saw) said: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honour his guest; whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should say good or keep quiet.”

In another hadith: “The believer with the most perfect faith is he with the finest character.”

From good character is enduring the harshness of other. In the Two Sahih a Bedouin grabbed the garment [so roughly] of the Prophet (saw) to the extent that the cloak’s edge had left a mark there, saying: ‘O Muhammad! Give me some of Allah’s wealth which you have.’ And Allah’s Messenger (saw) turned to him and then laughed and ordered that he be given some wealth.

And if his people harmed him he would say: “O Allah forgive my people as they are a people who do not know.”

Whenever young children would throw stones at Uways al-Qarni

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bibliography:

1. Bukhari, vol.1, pp.53, 54; Muslim, #45; Nasawi, vol.8, p.115; Tirmidhi, #2517 and Ibn Majah, #66.
2. Bukhari, vol.1, p.373; Muslim, #47 and Abu Dawud, #5154—from Abu Shari‘ Adawi.
4. Bukhari, #5809 and Muslim, #1057—from Anas (radiy-Allahu ‘anhu).
5. Al-Hafiz al-Iraqi said in al-Mugdhar, vol.3, p.71: “Reported by Ibn Hibbân and al-Bayhaqi in Dalal al-Nahw and from the hadith of Sahl Ibn Sa‘d (radiy-Allahu ‘anhu) and in the Two Sahih from the hadith of Ibn Mas‘ud (radiy-Allahu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (saw) narrated from a Prophet who was beaten by his people.”
6. Al-‘Allamah al-Albani in his commentary to al-Mishkat, #5313 stated: “It has been narrated that the Prophet (saw) narrated the like of this about his people yet it is not authentic.”
he would say to them: ‘O my young brothers!, If you must throw anything at me then at least throw small stones at me, so that my shins will not bleed and thus prevent me from the prayer.’

Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham went out one day to some rural desert areas and he met a soldier out in the wilderness. He asked Ibrāhīm: ‘Where is the nearest inhabited place [al-‘Umrān]?’ Ibrāhīm pointed to a graveyard, and so the solider hit Ibrāhīm on the head causing it to bleed [as he thought Ibrāhīm was mocking him]. When the solider was aware that it was Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham he had just hit, the solider began kissing the hands and feet of Ibrāhīm. Ibrāhīm then said: ‘When my head was hit I asked Allāh for Paradise as I knew that I would be rewarded for the hit, and I did not wish for my portion to be good and his portion to be bad [as a result of his hitting me].’

These are examples of souls which were made humble through discipline, thus their characters were made just and purified from the deception of its inner core leading to contentment (ridā) with all that Allāh has decreed (qada). Whoever is unable to find in himself some of these signs which those [of the Salaf] discovered has to discipline his soul constantly so as to reach them.

Section Six:
Exposition of the way in which Young Children should be Disciplined

Know that a child is a trust (amāna) on his parents and his heart is an uncut jewel which is open to every inscription. So if good is presented to it, it will be raised on that and will share in the rewards with his parents or teachers. Yet if he becomes accustomed to evil, he will be raised on that and the burden of that will be around his neck and also around the necks of those who cultivated him on that. Thus, a child has to be protected, taught manners, well-trained, taught exquisite
etiquettes and protected from negative peers. A child should become accustomed to receiving favours and rewards or love high standards as he will then waste his life in seeking that when he grows older.

Rather, he has to be observed from the start of his life and permit none but a woman of virtue and religion who consumes the *halāl* should nurse and raise him; as the milk which arrives from the *harām* will have no blessing (*baraka*) in it whatsoever.

If the first sign of puberty with a child is shyness (*hayā*) this is a sign of nobility (*najāba*) and is a glad-tiding of sound mind which helps in teaching the child manners in his life.

The first negative trait to take control of him will be greed for food, as a result a child has to be taught the manners of eating and become accustomed to eating a single load of bread at times and overeating should be made out to be vulgar to the child, and made out to be the way of wild animals.

He should be encouraged to like white clothing rather than silk garments, so that it becomes acknowledge by him that such material is of the attire of women and effeminate men.

He should also be encouraged not to mix with those children who are accustomed to luxury and comfort [i.e. spoilt].

He should start preoccupying himself in the library learning the Qur'ān, the traditions, and narrations of the good people, so that love of the righteous people becomes ingrained in him. He should not memorise love songs or poetry and rhymes which discuss love and passion.

When beautiful manners and praiseworthy actions manifest in a child, the child has to be honoured as a result and rewarded in a way
which makes him happy, the child is also to be praised in front of people for those good qualities. Likewise, if at times the child may do contrary to this, this is to be put aside and not exposed as he is to rather be admonished secretly and made to be fearful of people finding out. A child is not be admonished often as this will weaken his desire to listen to the one who reproaches him.

Similarly a mother should make the child become fearful of the father, and the child should be prevented from sleeping during the day as this will lead to laziness in the child. Yet the child should not be prevented from sleeping at night, but he should be prevented from sleeping on a soft bed as this will weaken his limbs.

Also he should become used to a coarse bed, coarse clothing and coarse food.

He should acquire the habit of walking, moving about and taking exercise so that he does not become overcome by laziness.

He should be prevented from boasting in front of his peers due to something which his parents possessions, whether these be anything he eats or wears.

He should become used to humility and honouring those whom he associates.

He should be prevented from accepting anything from other boys.

He should be taught that taking is lowly [and blameworthy] while giving is the upper-hand [and honourable].

He should always be made to judge the love of gold and silver as vulgar thing.
A child should know that spitting in gatherings is improper etiquette as is to clear mucus from one's throat in public. The child should also know that it is inappropriate to yawn in public, and to place his leg over his other leg in public gatherings. He should also be raised to know that it is inappropriate to speak excessively.

The child should also be cultivated on not speaking except when answering questions, and that he should listen attentively when others are speaking who are older than him. And that the child should stand for those who are above him and sit in front of them out of respect.

The child should be cautioned against immoral speech and foul language, and mingle with those who speak in such ways. This is in order to preserve the child from bad company.

It is good and advisable to let the child play after leaving the school, so that the child can relax after lessons. As is said, 'Relaxation of the heart encourages remembrance.'

He should be taught to obey his parents and his teachers, and to look upon them with respect and admiration.

When the child reaches seven years of age, he should be instructed to pray and that it is not allowed to abandon ritual ablution. He should also be warned against lying and deception, and then as he approaches adulthood he will come to understand the reasons for these matters.

Know that foods is a means of maintaining health, and that its purpose is to enable man to gain strength for the worship of Allâh, and that this world will not endure, and that death must bring its pleasures to an end and it should be awaited for at each hour. The intelligent one is the one who makes provisions for the Afterlife. If his upbringing is righteous therefore this becomes ingrained in his heart like an inscription is ingrained in stone.

38
Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh said: ‘When I was [only] three years old I used to get up at night and see my maternal uncle Muḥammad ibn Suwār praying.’ One day he said to me: ‘Do you not remember Allāh who created you?’ I said: ‘How do I do that?’ He said to me: ‘Say in your heart, without moving your tongue’ three things: ‘Allāh is with me, Allāh is watching me and Allāh is looking at me.’ So I said that until I learned it, then my uncle said to me: ‘Say it ten times per night.’ So I did so and its sweetness entered within my heart. A year later my uncle said to me: ‘Memorise what I have taught you and keep doing it until you reach your grave.’ So I did not cease doing it for all of these years and I found its sweetness within myself. Then my uncle said to me: ‘O Sahl, whoever has Allāh with him, watching and looking over him, will he disobey Allāh?’ And so I went to school, where I memorised the Qur’ān by the time I was six or seven years of age, then I fasted for a lifetime, ate just barley-bread, and then I prayed through the entire night.’

According to the jurists this is not to be defined as “dhikr” as the tongue has to be moved!
Know that whoever witnesses the Afterlife with his heart has done so with certainty (yaqin), and by necessity becomes a follower of it and an ascetic (zāhid) in the world. Whoever possesses a gem and then sees a precious stone will no longer have any desire (raghba) for the gem, and if it is said to him: ‘Sell it for the precious stone’ he will do so without hesitation.

Know that whoever is granted vigilance (intibāh) to this by Allāh has to traverse the way of self-discipline (riyāda) as an essential condition (shart) which is given priority, and as a hand-hold (tamassuk) which has to be held onto, and as a protection (bisn) which has to be used as a fortification: as for the condition it is to lift the veil (hijab) by abandoning sins, and as for the hand-hold, it is a Shaykh to indicate the way otherwise the devils may distract you from the path, and as for the protection, it is seclusion (khalwa), and daily duties and litanies (waqā'if) opposing desires (hawa), and much remembrance (dhikr), and adopting a middle course with regards to devotional practices (awrād).

The end result of self-discipline, then, is to find one’s heart to be with Allāh constantly and this is not possible except by being secluded from others and this is only done with long in ward striving (mujāhada). This is the methodology (minhāj) for the follower to train the soul and cultivate (tarbiyya) it in stages. As for the details of disciplining the soul in each description then this will shortly follow insba’Allah.

12 Yet this is not the way of the Salaf.
On Breaking the Two Desires: 
The Desire of the Stomach and the Desire of the Private Parts

The desire of the stomach (shahwa al-batn) is of the greatest of the destructive vices (muhlikāt), and it is what caused Ādam ('alayhis-salām) to be expelled from Paradise (jannāt). The desire of the private parts (shahwa al-farj) and greed for wealth (raghba fi'l-māl) both start from the desire of the stomach and is followed by many obstacles all of which is begotten of satiety and eating one's fill.

In a hadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The believer eats from one intestine [i.e. is satisfied with little] while the disbeliever eats from seven intestines [i.e. eats too much]." 

In another hadīth: "The son of Ādam does not fill a vessel more

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1 Muslim, #2062—from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī with this wording; also reported by al-Bukhārī, vol.9, p.468; Muslim, #2060; Tirmidhi, #1819 with the wording “the Muslim”—from Ibn 'Umar and also from Abū Hurayrah (radiy-Allāhu 'anhum).
evil than his own stomach. It is enough for the son of Ādam to eat that which keeps his back straight. If this is not possible, then at least a third for food, a third for drink and a third for air.”

‘Uqbah al-Rāsibī stated: ‘I went to visit al-Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī] while he was eating. He said: ‘Come and join me.’ I said: ‘I have already eaten to my fill to the extent that I am unable to eat any more.’ Al-Ḥasan said: ‘Subḥān Allāh, does a Muslim eat until he is no longer able to eat any more?!’

A group of ascetics (ṣubhād) went to excess in eating a little and being patient (sabr) with hunger (jûţ), and in this book we have already explained the inaccuracy of those who traversed such a course.¹

Justice in regards to eating is to raise ones two hands [to indicate enough] while still having some appetite left, and the very least of levels is as the Prophet (ﷺ) indicated: “…a third for food, a third for drink and a third for air.”

Eating with justice is healthy for the body and averts illness, this is to only eat when hungry and then to raise ones hands [to indicate enough] when satiated. To constantly eat a little however weakens the body and a people did this to the extent that it led them to become deficient in performing the obligations. They thought, due to their ignorance, that what they were doing was noble when in reality it was not nobility in the slightest. Whoever praises hunger (jûţ) has indicated to a median path in this matter which have mentioned prior.

The way of self-discipline (riyāḍa) is to break (kasr) the desire of the stomach (bātîn) and whoever has become accustomed to continual

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² Reported by Tirmidhi, #2381 and Ḥākim, vol.4, p.121—from al-Miqdām Ibn Ma‘dī Kanb and its chain of transmission is strong.

satiation should lessen his food intake slightly slowly until he reaches
the median way which have discussed, for indeed the best of things
is its middle. Firstly, he should eat that which does not withhold him
from acts of worship and that which maintains his strength so that
he does not feel hungry or unsatisfied, at this point his body will
be healthy, his focus vibrant and his mind clear. Yet whenever he
increases his food he becomes sleepy and dim-witted to the extent
that his thinking becomes covered and this leads to other diseases.

Those who leave desires should be warned from ostentation (riyā'),
some of the ascetics would buy an object of desire and hang it in
their homes while refraining from it, hiding his asceticism (zuhd),
and this is the epitome of asceticism in asceticism by manifesting
the contrary, this is the action of the sincere believers to drink from
the sour cup of patience (sabr) two times over.

As for the desires of the private parts, then you should know that
the sexual desire in humans is for two beneficial reasons. The first of
these is that it allows the human race to continue. The second reason
is that by knowing its delight (ladha) which can be made somewhat
analogous to the delight of the Afterlife, as if he does not compre­
hend this by taste (dhawq) he will not magnify his longing (shawq)
[for the Afterlife]. However, a person must be balanced in his sexual
appetite as otherwise it may lead to numerous obstacles and trials.
If this was not the case women would not be Shaytān's entrapments
[against men].

In a hadith the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I have not left among people
after me a temptation (fitna) more harmful to men than women."4

Some of the righteous people said: 'If I was entrusted over the
public treasury I think I could trust myself to fulfil that. But if I was

4 Bukhārī, vol.9, p.118; Muslim, #2740; Tirmidhī, #2781—from Usāmah (radīy Allāhu 'anhu).
entrusted over a black female [slave] for an hour, I cannot be sure that she will be safe with me.\(^5\)

This may find support in the hadith, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “A man does not seclude himself with a woman except the third one with them is \(Shaytān\).”\(^6\)

Excess in regards to this desire can deviate men’s concern to enjoying women and preoccupy a man from remembering the Afterlife and could even culminate in indulgence in immoralities. A man could even fall into infatuated passion (‘\(išbq\)) and this is of the vilest of desires. Many people fall into infatuation with wealth and property, or status, or playing backgammon, playing chess, or with playing stringed instruments (\(tunb\)\(ū\)r) and the likes. These things could overcome the hearts and people cannot be patient with them. To break the power of infatuated passion in its early stages is like pulling at the reins of a riding-beast when it heads for a gate it would like to enter: to rein it back is a very easy thing, whereas to treat such a passion after it has taken hold of one is like letting the beast go in, and then catching it by its tail and pulling it from behind: a much more difficult task.

\(^5\) [Translator’s note]: in the poor translation of this book conducted by Wa’il Shihab, he translated the word ‘\(Zu\(n\)jyy\(a\)b\)’ as ‘black woman’, when the intent is actually a ‘black female slave’ as opposed to it meaning black women generally like this.

\(^6\) Reported by Tirmidhī, #2166; Ahmad, vol.1, pp.18, 26; Ibn Mājah, #2363; al-Tayālīsī, al-Humaydī, #32; Abū Ya‘lā, #141, 142; al-Qādā‘ī, #403; al-Tahāwī, ‘\(Sharb Ma‘āni\) al-\(A\)ibā‘, vol.4, p.150; and others from ‘Umar (\(ra\)) with an authentic chain of transmission.
On the Defects of the Tongue

The dangers and harms of the tongue (ِلِسَانُ) are many, it has a sweetness (ِبَلَأْوَة) in the hearts and its motives spring from nature. There is no salvation from its dangers except by silence (ِسَمْتُ). We will firstly mention the virtues of silence (ِفَادِلَة الْسَمْتُ) and follow this up with mention of its faults in detail ِإِنِّي لَعَلَّٰلِّهِ بَارِحًا.

Know that silence contains aspiration (ِهِمَمَةُ) and empties one’s mind from void thoughts (ِفِيْكَرُ).

In the ḥadīth the Prophet ِ(سَلَّم) said: “Whoever can guarantee for me what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his legs I can guarantee for him Paradise (ِجَانَانِي).”

In another ḥadīth the Prophet ِ(سَلَّم) said: “The faith of a servant [of Allāh] is not made straight until he makes straight his heart. And his heart will not be made straight until he makes his tongue

1  Bukhārī, vol.11, p.264; Tirmidhi, #2410 from Sahl Ibn Sa’d (ِرَاضٍ يَا لَيْسِ اللَّهِ بِشَأْنِهِ).
In the ḥadīth of Muʿādh (radiyAllahu 'anhu) the Prophet (ṣa) said, taking hold of his tongue: “Withhold this.” Muʿādh said: “O Allāh’s Messenger, will we be taken to account for what we say?” Allāh’s Messenger (ṣa) replied: “May your mother be bereaved of you O Muʿādh! People will be thrown into the Fire upon their faces—or he said “on their noses” — only due to the traps of their tongues.”

In another ḥadīth, the Prophet (ṣa) said: “Whoever can withhold his tongue (lisān) Allāh will hide his secrets.”

Ibn Masʿūd (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) stated: ‘There is nothing which needs to be imprisoned for a long time except for my tongue.’

Abū ’l-Darda’ (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) stated: ‘Be just with your ears as you are with your mouth, for two ears have been made for you and one mouth so that you will hear more than you speak.’

Makhład Ibn al-Ḥusayn stated: ‘I have not spoken a word for fifty years except that I wanted to be excused for it.’

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3 Part of the ḥadīth of Tirmidhī, #2619; Ibn Majah, #3973; Ahmad, vol.5, p.231; Abū’l-Razzāq, #20303; Tabarānī, al-Kabir, vol.20, p.130—from Mu’adh (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) with a hasan chain of transmission.

Section one:

The Defects of the Tongue

First defect: Speaking of what does not concern you

Know that the one who knows the true estimation of his time, and that it is his capital, will not spend out from it except for that wherein there is benefit. This understanding necessitates imprisoning the tongue from speaking about that which does not concern him. This is because the one who leaves remembrance of Allah and preoccupies himself with that which does not concern him is like one who is able to take a jewel yet takes a piece of sticky wet mud in its place, this is a great loss in life.

In an authentic hadith the Prophet (saw) said: “Of the good Islam of a person is that he leaves that which does not concern him.”¹

It was said to Luqman the wise: “What has your wisdom led you to reach?” He replied: “To ask about what neither suffices me nor speak about what does not concern me.”

It was reported that Luqman visited Dawud (alayhi-salām) while he was putting on armour. Luqman was amazed at what he saw and wanted to ask Dawud about the armour, but Luqmān’s wisdom withheld him. When Dawūd finished preparing himself he stood and said: “What a fine suit of armour for combat.” Luqmān said: “Silence is wisdom and few are able to do it.”

¹ Tirmidhi, #2318; Ibn Majah, #3976; al-Baghawi, #4132—from Abu 1 lurayrah (radhiy Allāhu 'anhu) and it contains some slight weakness however it is strengthened by what is reported by Malik, al-Muvattī vol.2, p.470 from ‘Ali Ibn Husayn in a mursal form with an authentic chain of transmission; also reported from Abū Dharr, Abū Bakr and ‘Ali Ibn Abī Talib (radhiy Allāhu 'anhu).
Second defect: Engaging in vain and sinful talk, such as the gatherings of intoxicants and the stations of the sinners

The types of falsehood (bâtil) are many, from Abû Hurayrah (radiyAllahu 'anhu) that the Prophet (saw) said: “A servant may say a word without thinking about its implications, and because of it he will plunge into the Hellfire the distance between the East and West.”6

Close to this is argumentation (jiddl) and disputation (mirâ') which is much controversy (mulâha) with a person in order to show his error and outdo him. The main motive for this is prominence. A person has to reject evil speech and clarify what is correct, either it will be accepted from him and if it is not then he abandons disputation (mujâdala). This is if the matter is related to the religion (din), as for if it is related to the world (duñyâ) then there is no scope for argumentation regarding it. The cure for this flaw is to destroy pride (keibr) which is a key motive in the manifestation of preference over others. The worst type of disputation is quarrelling and arguing as it is a matter which is more dispraised.

The Prophet (saw) said: “The worst of men unto Allâh are the most argumentative.” This is in regards to argumentation with falsehood or without knowledge. As for the one who has the truth then he should avoid arguing as much as possible as it constricts the chest, incites anger (ghadâh), instils hatred (hiqd) and resorts in dishonouring others.

Third defect: Showing-Off with Eloquent Speech (tashadduq)

Abû Tha’labah said: ‘Allâh’s Messenger (saw) said: “The most beloved to me, and the closest to me in sitting on the Day of Judgement, is the best of you in character. The most hated to me, and the furthest from me in sitting on the Day of Judgement, are the talka-

6 Bukhâri, vol.11, p.266 and Muslim, #2988.
7 TN: the Mutashaddiq is the loud-mouthed person who speaks loudly so as to display his eloquence.
tive (*al-tharthārīn*), boastful (*al-mutashaddiqūn*) and condescending (*al-mutafayhiqūn*).”

What does not enter into the dislike of rhymed prose (*ṣaḥ*') and the craft (*tasanni*) of sermonisers is to give reminders without excess as the intent of that is to move the hearts, generate interest, demonstrate graceful pronunciation and the likes.

**Fourth defect: Vulgarity (*fuḥs*), Abuse (*sabb*) and Vile Language (*badḥa*)**

This is prohibited, in the ḥadīth it says: “Beware of vulgarity, as Allah neither loves vulgar language nor vulgarity.”

In another ḥadīth also: “Paradise is forbidden (*ḥaram*) to every vulgar person.”

In another ḥadīth: “The believer is not one who curses, is vulgar or vile.”

Know that vulgarity (*fuḥs*) and vile language (*badḥa*) is an expres-
sion for frank expressions of discourtesy, mainly in regards to terms related to sexual activity. The people of good (ahlul-khayr) refrain from such expressions and condemn them.

Also of the faults [of the tongue] is singing (ghina‘), and this has been discussed prior in a number of instances.

**Fifth defect: Excessive Joking (mizah)**

As for slight joking then that is not prohibited as long as it is truthful.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to joke yet only spoke the truth, he said to a man: "O you with two ears!"¹⁴

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to another man: "We should give you a baby-camel to ride on then!"¹⁵

The Prophet (ﷺ) also stated to an old lady: "No old ladies will enter Jannah!" Then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the āyah:

> "Indeed, We have produced the women of Paradise in a [new] creation, And made them virgins..."
>
> [al-Waq‘îb (56): 35-36]

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¹⁴ Reported by Tirmidhi in his Sunan, #1993 and in al-Shama‘il (the abridged version), #200; Abū Dawūd, al-Adab, #5002; Ahmad, vol.3, p.117—from Anas and it contains weakness yet it is strengthened by what was reported by Tabarānī in al-Kabir, #662 via another route of transmission from Anas (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu).

¹⁵ Tirmidhi, Sunan, #1992; Tirmidhi, al-Shama‘il (the abridged version), #203; Ahmad, vol.3, p.267—from Anas (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu) and the isnad is saḥīḥ.

¹⁶ Tirmidhi, al-Shama‘il (the abridged version), #205 from Al-Hasan in mursal form; relayed by Suyūṭī in al-Durr al-Manthur, vol.6, p.158, and he further ascribed it to 'Abdullāh Ibn Humayd; Ibn Mundhir; al-Bayhaqī, al-Ba‘th; al-Bayhaqī, al-Sham‘ī; Tabarānī, al-Awsat from ‘Ā’ishah (radīy Allāhu ‘anhhā); Al-‘Iraqī in Tākhrīj al-Iljma’ ascribes it to Ibn al-Jawzī in al-Wajh—from Anas and it is ḥasan insha‘Allāh, as al-‘Allāmah al-Albānī confirms in Ghayat al-Maram, #375.
The Prophet (ﷺ) said to another woman: “Your husband who has white in his eyes?”

There are thus three things which are agreed on in regards to the Prophet’s joking:
- Firstly, that it was truthful (haqq)
- Secondly, that it was with women and young children and those weak men who need to be cultivated (ta’dib).
- Thirdly, that it was something done rarely, it cannot be used to justify constant joking as the ruling of something done rarely is not the same ruling for something to be done continually. So for example if a person watched Ethiopians playing with their weapons and wrestling all the time and used as a proof for this that the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up ‘Ā’ishah (radiy-Alláhu ‘anhu) to watch the Ethiopians,¹⁸ that would be erroneous due to that action being rare. Going to excess in joking and jesting and constant joking is prohibited as it lessons one’s standing and causes hatred. As for the slight joking which has preceded, which was of the kind which the Prophet (ﷺ) utilised, then this contains pleasantries.

Sixth defect: Belittling Others (sukhríyyah) and Mockery (istibzā’)
The meaning of belittlement (sukhríyyah) is “to belittle and humiliate, and bring attention to faults and deficiencies to make a laughing stock of someone else.” This can be via copying actions or statements or via pointing and indication. All of that is prohibited in the Law (al-shar) and the prohibition of this has been related in the Book and Sunnah.

¹⁷ Al-‘Irāqī stated in Takhrij ut-Ihya’, vol.3, p.129:
Reported by al-Zubayr Ibn Bakkār in the book al-Fakdah wa’t-Muḥā; reported by Ibn Abīl-Dunwa from the hadīth of ‘Ubaydah Ibn Sahm al-Fihri with some different wordings... I say: he did not say anything about the isnad at all.
Seventh defect: Disclosing Secrets (ifshā’ al-sīr), Breaking Promises (khilāf al-wa’d), Lying (khadīb) in Statements (qawl) and Oaths (yāmin)

All of it is prohibited, except that there is a concession (ruks) for lying to one’s wife and lying during warfare, lying is allowed in these instances.

The rule for it is that for every praiseworthy objective (maqsūd māhmūd) which cannot be attained except via lying, is permitted so long as the objective is permissible (mubah). If the objective is obligatory, then it would likewise become obligatory (wājib), yet it is a must to protect oneself from lying as much as possible.

Being ambiguous (ma’ārid) is allowed, this is based on the Prophet’s (ﷺ) saying: “Indeed within ambiguous expressions, is avoidance of lying.”19 Ambiguous expressions are only allowed when there is a need for them, as for when there is no need (hāja) it is disliked to utilise them as they resemble lying.

An example of ambiguity is what has been relayed from ‘Abdullāh Ibn Rawāhah (radiyAllāhu ‘anhu) when he went to visit one of his servant-girls. His wife became aware of that, so she took a spear and went to approach ‘Abdullāh about it who she saw [by the quarters of the servant-girl]. His wife asked him: “Were you with her?” ‘Abdullāh replied: “I have not done anything.” His wife said: “then you will either recite the Qur’ān [to show that you are not in a state of Janāba] or I will surely cut you up with her!” ‘Abdullāh Ibn Rawāhah (radiyAllāhu ‘anhu) then recited some poetry to her:

Among us is Allah’s Messenger who recites Allah’s Book, and good has arisen from the clear dawn,

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19 Relayed by Suyūṭī in al-Jami‘ al-Saghir, #2332, and Suyūṭī weakened it; al-Munawwī in Fayd al-Qadīr ascribed it to Ibn as-Sunni in addition to Ibn ‘Adiyy and al-Bayhaqi, and al-Munawwī weakened it; reported by Bukhārī in al-Adab al-Mufrad, #885 in mawqūf form up to ‘Imrān Ibn Husayn with a isnād containing trustworthy narrators.
He spends the night praying away from his bed, while the disbelievers are sleeping heavily. He showed us guidance after our hearts were blinded from it, certainty and what he states is the reality.

His wife said: “I believe in Allah and my eyes have lied.”

If Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī was sought-after he would say to his servant-girl: “Tell them that I can be found in the Masjid.”

**Eighth defect: Backbiting (ghiba)**

The Mighty Book has relayed this to be prohibited and the one who indulges in it has been likened to one who eats dead flesh.

In the hadith: “Indeed your lives, wealth and honour is sanctified to each other.”

Abū Barzah al-Aslami said: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “O gathering of youth who believes with the tongue while *imān* has not entered his heart: do not backbite the Muslims or search for their faults. For whoever searches for the faults of his brother Allah will search for his faults. And whoever Allah searches their faults they will be disgraced even while in the depths of his home.”

In another hadith: “Beware of backbiting as it is worse than *zina*. For a man could commit *zina* and consume intoxicants and then repent and Allah would forgive him; yet the person who backbites will not

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20 Reported by Ibn ‘Āsākir in his *Tarikh*, p.243—it contains weakness.

TN: ‘Abdullah Ibn Rawahah (radiy.ūlahu ‘anhu) recited this poetry while his wife thought it was a verse from the Qur‘ān which had been revealed and she had not heard it yet.


22 Abu Dawūd, #4880 and Ahmad, vol.4, p.421—it is *ṣahih*. 

53
The Fourth Foundation: On the Defects of the Tongue

be forgiven by Allah until the backbiter seeks Allah’s forgiveness.”

The traditions and narratives on backbiting (ghiba) are many and numerous.

The meaning of ghiba is: ‘...to mention your brother who is absent in a way which he would not like if informed. This is whether it is in regards to a bodily deficiency such as having blurry eyes, being one-eyed, being cross-eye, bald, tall, short and the likes.’

Or to speak about his lineage, such as you saying for example: ‘his father is a Nabatean’, or ‘his father is an Indian’, or ‘his father is a sinner’, or ‘his father is despicable’ and the likes.

Or to speak about his character by saying: ‘he has bad character’, or ‘he is miserly’, or ‘he is arrogant’ and the likes.

Or you speak about his clothing by saying: ‘it is too long’, or ‘it is too wide’ or ‘it is dirty.’

The proof for this is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about ghiba and said: “Mentioning your brother with what he dislikes.” The man said: “Even if what I say about my brother is actually the case O Messenger of Allah?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “Even if what you say about your brother is actually the case, you have backbitten him. And if what you say about your brother is not the case then you have falsely spoken about him.”


24 Muslim, #2589; Abu Dawūd, #4874 and Tirmidhī, #1935—from Abū Hurayrah (radiy. Allâhu 'anhu).
Know that all which is understood as intending dispraise is included within "ghiba" whether it is via speech or not. Such as to throw insults, point at someone or to write something, as the pen is one of the two tongues.

The vilest type of ghiba is when it is done by those who claim to be ascetic (mutazabid) for show. They will mention a person and say about him “all praise is due to Allâh who has neither tested us with visiting the rulers nor wasting time in seeking their ruins [i.e. wealth].” Or they say: “We seek refuge in Allâh from the lack of modesty” or say “we ask Allâh for good health”—as here they combine between both censure (dhanni) of another person and praise (mahd) of their own selves.

It may also be the case that one of them says, when another person is mentioned “that miskin, he has been greatly tested, may Allâh forgive us and him”—manifesting a du’a for him although he actually hides his real intent [which is to disgrace and backbite the person].

Know that the one who listens to ghiba is an associate (shank) in it and the one who listens is not free from sin until he condemns it with his tongue. If he fears doing that, then he condemns it in his heart, and if he is able then he cuts the words with other words.

It has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “Whoever hears of a believer being disgraced in front of him while he is able to aid the believer, then Allâh will disgrace him in front of all of creation.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever defends a believer from a munâfiq

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25 Ahmad, Musnad, vol.3, p.487; Tabarâni, al-Kabir, #5554—from Sahl Ibn Hanîf; relayed by Haythami in al-Majma’, vol.7, p.267 and he said: “It contains Ibn Lahi'ah and he is hasan in hadith yet he contains weakness. The rest of the narrators are all trustworthy.”

I say: what is correct is that the narrations of Ibn Lahi'ah from al-'Abadalah are authentic and from others weak.
who is defaming him, Allâh will send an angel to protect his flesh on the Day of Judgement from the fire of Jahannam.\footnote{Abû Dâwûd, #4883; Ahmad, Musrad, vol.3, p.441; Ibn ul-Mubârak, al-Zuhd, p.686; Tabarâni, al-Kabîr, vol.20, p.194 and it contains Ismâ‘îl Ibn Yahyâ al-Mu‘âfiri and he is majhûl. It also contains ‘Abdullâh Ibn Sulaymân and he is sudûq yet errs.}

‘Amr Ibn ‘Utba saw his freed slave with a man and they were both talking about another man. He said to them: ‘Woe to you! Remove you hearing from listening to immorality, just as you should remove yourselves from speaking it. For the listener is an associate with the speaker, he looks at the evil within his own vessel and then pours it into your vessel. If the word of a fool was returned back into his own mouth, the one who returned it would be happy as the one who spoke with it would dislike it.’

Many ahâdîth about the right of a Muslim towards another Muslim have been relayed and we mentioned some of them prior in regards to good company.

Section Two:
An Exposition of the Causes for Backbiting and the Remedy for it

There are many reasons for backbiting, such as:

- Firstly, alleviating anger (ghayz), a person may take to backbiting another person due to his anger with him.
- Secondly, to concur with contemporaries and flatter friends and associates. If he cuts them while they are backbiting someone else, he views that he will be abandoned, so he joins in with them for his own interest.
- Thirdly, the desire to raise one’s own status via defaming others, so he says “so and so is ignorant, his understanding is poor”\footnote{This is what we have been tested with during this era from those who do not know authentic knowledge whatsoever!}
and the like. His intent within that is to affirm his own self-worth and to show that he is more knowledgeable.

Likewise, envy (hasad) when people praise a person, love and honour him—the backbiter can defame a person so that such regard of him will be removed.

- Fourth, amusement and jest (hazâl); the backbiter mentions others so that the people will laugh at him and make a mockery of him, to the extent that such backbiters make a profit from such jesting.²⁸

As for the cure of gheeba then the backbiter (maghtâb) has to know backbiting brings Allah's Anger and Abhorrence. Also the good deeds of the backbiter transfer to the one being backbitten. If he the backbiter has no good deeds then the bad deeds of the one being backbitten will be transferred to the backbiter. Whoever comprehends this will not unleash his tongue to backbite others.

It is appropriate that the one presented with backbiting should stop and reflect on his own faults, and preoccupy himself with rectifying himself. He should also feel ashamed to find shame in others while he himself is shameful, as one of the poets said:

If you find fault in a people on account of the like which is also in you, how can one who is one-eyed find faults with other people?
And if you find fault with a people on account of what they are free of, then with Allah and the people that is even more major

If he thinks that he is safe (sâlih) from faults ('ayûb) then he should

²⁸ Meaning acting and comedy as is well-known during our times!
occupy himself with thanking (shukr) for the favour of Allāh and not pollute himself with the vilest of faults which is ghība. Just as he is not pleased for others to speak about him behind his back, he also should not be pleased for it from him towards others.

So observe at the motive for backbiting and strive to sever it as the remedy to a defect ('illa) is to sever its cause (sabab).

We have mentioned some of the reasons for backbiting, so he cures anger (ghadab) with what will follow in the chapter 'On the Censure of Anger'. He cures concurring with those whom he sits with by knowing that Allāh is angered at the one who seeks to please the creation, as a person rather has to show anger with his associates.

Section Three:
Backbiting with Bad Suspicion

Backbiting (ghība) can be with the heart (qalb) and this is by having bad suspicion (su' al-gann) of Muslims, you are not to have bad suspicion of Muslims. Except if a matter has become exposed with no possibility of interpretation and you have been notified by a credible individual and your heart inclines to complete affirmation (tasdiq) of what he informs you of—in such an instance you will be excused (ma'dhur). For if you were to deem what he narrates to you as a lie you would have had bad suspicion of the narrator. It is not appropriate for you to have good suspicion of one and bad suspicion of another, rather you are to research if there is enmity ('adāwa) and envy (hasad) between the two. Accusations will spread as a result of that, so when a bad thought comes to you about a Muslim you have to increase in supplicating good for him as that angers Shaytān and averts him from you and he will not present to you a bad thought due to your preoccupation with supplication (du‘ā').
If you come across the slip-up (hafu'a) of a Muslim then you should advise him in secret.

Know that the fruits (thamarât) of bad suspicion is spying (tajussus) as the heart is not convinced by mere suspicion (gann), it rather seeks inspection (tahqiq) and thus becomes preoccupied with spying which is prohibited as it leads to removing a Muslim's cover (sitr) and if it was not exposed your heart would be assured regarding that Muslim.

Section Four:
Explanation of Concessions for Backbiting

Know the concession for mentioning the bad qualities of another is an accurate objective in the Divine Legislation. These objectives avert the sin of backbiting, such as:

Firstly, to complain of an injustice (tagalam), it is permissible for one who has been wronged to complain to mention the oppressor so as to regain his right.

Secondly, seeking assistance (isti'ana) to change an evil, and returning a disobedient person to the right path.

Thirdly, to seek a legal ruling (istiftâ), by telling a Mufti: “So-and-so has oppressed me”, or saying “So-and-so took my rights, so what is the way to regain them?” Such specification is permitted, it takes preference to utilise an alternative mode of expression however by saying for example: “What do you say about a man who oppresses his father or brother?”

The proof for the permissibility of specifying an individual when seeking a ruling is the hadith of Hind when she said: ‘Indeed Abū Sufyân is tight-fisted’ and the Prophet (ﷺ) did not condemn her for
Fourthly, warning (تذكير) the Muslims [about evil] and give them advice, like when you see a person frequent an innovator (مبتدع) or open-sinner (فسق), you warn him of that so as to expose his situation.

Likewise if you know that your servant is known for theft or sin, you can warn the one who wants to purchase his services.

Likewise, the one who is consulted about marriage [to a certain person] or in regards to fulfilling trusts (أمانة), one is to mention what he knows out of advice (نصب) to the one who wants to know about the person [whom will be getting married to his daughter or conducting business with]. All of this is not merely to backbite.

Fifthly, for identification, if a person being spoken about is well-known by that nickname (لقب) such as “المرطي” [the crooked-legged one] or “المسح” [the bleary-eyed one] and so forth. There is no sin in mentioning this. Yet if an alternative mode of description can be utilised that takes precedence (ولا).

Sixthly, if the person being spoken about is an open sinner, it is permissible to mention him [and what he does publicly].

It has been relayed from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he said: “Whoever discards the garment of shyness there is no backbiting in regards to him.”

Bukhārī, vol.4, p.338 and Muslim, #1714 from ‘A’ishah (رَضِيُ اللَّهُ عَنَّاهَا).

This name and the others are in fact the common names of well-known early scholars.

Al-Hasan al-Basri was asked about an open sinner who is open with his immorality: 'Is speaking about him considered ghiba?' Al-Hasan replied: ‘No. [for he has] no honour (karāma).’

As for the expiation for ghiba, then you should know that the backbiter has committed two crimes: one is against the right of Allāh, as he has done that which Allāh has forbidden—the expiation for this is repentance (tawba) and regret (nadm). Two is against the creation’s sanctities, if the one being spoken about knows of the backbiter’s actions, the backbiter should seek pardon and manifest regret for what he has done.

It was narrated by Abū Hurayrah (radij Allāhu ‘anhu) from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “Whoever has wronged his brother, whether in regards to wealth or honour, should ask for his pardon before he pays for it [in the Afterlife] when he will have neither a dirham nor a dinar. If he had any good deeds they will be taken and given to the one whom he wronged, or the bad deeds of the one whom he wronged will be loaded on to him.”

If the person being backbitten is not aware of the backbiter, the backbiter should ask Allāh’s pardon and forgiveness, so that the person will not be made aware of what he has done [regarding his right].

It has been reported in a ḥadith: “The expiation of the one whom you have backbitten is that you ask Allāh to forgive him.”

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32 Bukhārī, vol.5, p.73; Tirmidhī, #2421.
33 In the Šam edition of the manuscript of the book it words the ḥadith as “The expiation for the one who backbites is that you seek forgiveness for him”! This contains two textual errors, what is accurate however is how I have rendered the ḥadith as in the main text. The ḥadith was reported by Ibn Abī’l-Dunya in al-Samt; al-Hārith Ibn Abī Usāmah in his Musnad; al-Kharā’ī, al-Musāwī; al-Bayhaqī, al-Su‘ūdī, Abū’l-Shaykh, al-Tawbikh; al-Dinawārī, al-Majlisī; al-Khāṭib, al-Tārīkh and in al-Itbāj, vol.7, p.558—it contains ‘Anbasah Ibn ‘Abdul-Rahman and Bukhārī said about him: “Abandon him”, Abū Hātim said: “He used to fabricate hadith”. Our Shaykh, al-Albānī ruled that he fabricates hadith, see Da’if al-jāmi’, #4195.
Mujāhid said: ‘The expiation of you eating the dead flesh of your brother is that you praise him and supplicate for him for goodness, likewise if he has died.’

**Ninth defect: Namimah (Tale-Carrying)**

In the hadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ): “A person who carries tales will not enter paradise.”[^1] He is al-nāmmām (The person who spreads namimah)

Know that namimah mainly applies in regards to a person speaking about another, like saying for instance: “So-and-so said such and such about you”, yet it is not restricted just in regards to this. It is actually also in regards to disclosing that which is disliked to disclose, from a saying or action. Even if you saw a person bury wealth for himself and you were to mention that to someone else—it is deemed as namimah. All which is transmitted in such ways in namimah, like for example someone saying to you: “So-and-so said that you have such and such issue” or the likes. In this case, there are six things which you should do [when receiving such tales]:

- Firstly, he should not believe him, for the tale-carrier is a sinner whose testimony (shahāda) is to be rejected and returned back to him.
- Secondly, he should tell him not to do it, counsel the tale-carrier and warn him from such actions.
- Thirdly, he should hate him for the sake of Allāh, for he is hateful to Allāh.
- Fourthly, he should not think evil of his brother who is being spoken about in his absence.
- Fifthly, not to allow what has been conveyed to you to indulge in spying (tajassus) and investigation (ba‘ith), as Allāh says:

[^1]: Bukhāri, vol.10, p.394; Muslim, #105; Abū Dawūd, #4771 and Tirmidhī, #2027—from Hudhayfah (nādi: Allāhu ‘antī).

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“And do not spy.”

[al-Hujurat (49): 12]

Sixthly, he should not be pleased for himself on account of what he has told the tale-carrier not to do; so do not relate what he says to you to anyone else.

It has been reported that Sulaymān Ibn 'Abdu'l-Malik said to a man: ‘It has reached me that you have spoken about me and said such and such about me?’ The man replied: ‘I have not done that!’ Sulaymān said to him: ‘The one who has told me is truthful.’ The man said: ‘A tale-carrier is never truthful.’ Sulaymān then replied: ‘You have spoken the truth, depart in safety.’

Yahyā Ibn Abl Kathīr said: ‘A tale-carrier destroys in an hour what a magician does not destroy in a month.’

**Tenth defect: Two-Faced Speech (dhū’l-lisānayn)**

This occurs between two adversaries when a two-faced person transmits things to each of them about the other. The two-faced person praises one of them in his face while dispraising the other and then he goes to the one he has just dispraised and praises him while dispraising the other.

In the hadith: “The worst of people is the two-faced person who goes to one set of people with a face and then goes to another set of people with a different face.”

Know that this is in regards to one who is not compelled to do this, as for if he is forced to be harmonious with the leaders—then this is permitted.

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Abūl-Darda' said: 'We smile in the faces of people while our hearts are cursing them.'

When one cannot manifest agreeing with them then it is not permitted.

*Eleventh defect: Excessive Praise (madh)*

This has a number of faults, such as: that which is related to the one making the praise, and that which is related to the one being praised.

As for in regards to the one making the praise then he could say that which he has not affirmed and he has no way of knowing the reality of what he is praising. This is like him saying for example: “he is abstemious and an ascetic” and he could go to such excess in praise that he ends up lying, or he could praise one who actually deserves to be censured.

It has been relayed in the hadith: “Allāh is angered if an open-sinner is praised.”

Al-Ḥasan said: ‘Whoever supplicates for an oppressor to remain [in place], loves to disobey Allāh.’

As for in regards to the one being praised then praise can instil pride (kür) and self-amazement (a'jah) within him, and these two traits are destructive, for this reason the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the famous hadith, when he heard a man praising another: “Woe to you, you have cut

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64 Bukhārī commented on this in his sahīh, vol.10, p.437, and al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajr said: “This narration was connected by Ibn Abīl-Dunyā and Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbi “...it is disconnected [Munqati’].” It was reported by Abū Nu'aym in al-Hīyab also in a Munqati' form.

37 Al-Ḥāfiz Al-'Iraqī stated in al-Mughnī, vol.3, p.160:

“Reported by Ibn Abīl-Dunyā in al-Samt and al-Bayhaqī in al-Vu'ub from the hadith of Anas, and in the isnād is Abū Khalaf, the servant of Anas and he is weak.”
the neck of your companion."  

It was reported from Al-Hasan who said: "Umar (radiyAllâhu ‘anhu) was sitting and he had his cane (dirra) with him and people were around him. Al-Jârûd arrived and a man said to him: 'This is Master Rabî'ah!' 'Umar heard this, so did the people around him and as did al-Jârûd. When the man went 'Umar hit al-Jârûd with his cane. Al-Jârûd said: 'What is with me and you O leader of the believers?' 'Umar replied: 'What is with me and you? Did you not hear?' Al-Jârûd said: 'Yes, I heard, and what of it?' 'Umar said: 'I feared that your heart would become mixed with something [from the praise] so I wanted to put you down a level.'

This is because if he praised him with good, he would have become pleased with his own self and he would have thought that he has reached the objective, and thus slacken in action. It is for this reason that the Prophet (sa.) said: "You have cut the neck of your brother."

As for a person who is safe from these faults when praised then there is no problem in that, as the Prophet (sa.) praised Abû Bakr, 'Umar (radiyAllâhu ‘anhumâ) and others from the Companions."

It is for the one being praised to greatly protect himself from the flaws of pride, self-amazement and thinking himself exempt from doing actions. None is safe from these flaws except for the one who knows his own self and reflects on the one praising him that if he knew of him what he knows about his own self, he would not praise him in the slightest! It has been reported that a man from the righteous ones was praised and he said: "O Allâh those people do..."

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36 Bukhârî, vol.5, p.202; Muslim, #3000 and Abû Dâwûd, #4805—from the hadîth of Abû Bakrah (radiyAllâhu ‘anhu).
37 [TN]: The Dirra of ‘Umar (radiyAllâhu ‘anhu) is mentioned often within the literature and symbolises ‘Umar’s justice and authority.
38 Refer to Imâm Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Fada’il al-Sahîbah (Makkah al-Mukarramah Print).
not know me yet You know me.”

Twelfth defect: Errors in Speaking about the Religion, especially regarding Allah

Only the eloquent scholars are able to adequately articulate on these matters, so whoever is deficient in terms of knowledge or eloquence should not expose his words to error in the subject, but Allah will pardon him for his ignorance (jahl).41

Like what has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “None of you should say ‘what Allah Wills and what you will’, rather one should say: whatever Allah Wills and then what you will.”42

This is because joining them with an absolute conjunction necessitates association (tasbīq) and similarity (taswiya), this is similar to when the Khāṭib was criticised for saying: “Whoever obeys the two of them has been misguided” and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Rather say: whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger.”43

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “None of you should say ‘my slave’ or ‘my female slave,’ rather you are all slaves of Allah, and all of your women are servant women of Allah. Rather say: ‘my boy’ or ‘my girl’.44

Al-Nakha’i stated: ‘If a man says to another: ‘O donkey’, or ‘O pig’, it will be said to him on the Day of Judgement: ‘Did you see that I created him as a donkey?’ or ‘Did you see that I created him as a pig?’”45

Whoever contemplates on what we have relayed about the flaws in

41 This principle is of the utmost importance.
44 Bukhārī, vol.5, p.129; Muslim, #2249; Abū Dāwūd, #4975—from Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu).
speech will know that if he opens his mouth to unleash his tongue he will not be safe from falling into such flaws. At that point he will know the secret of the Prophet’s saying: “Whoever is silent will be saved” This is because these flaws are destructive and are in accordance with the method of the speculative theologian (mutakallim) so if he is silent he is safe.

Section Five:

Asking ‘how’ about Allāh’s Attributes

Of the flaws of the common people are their questions about Allāh’s Attributes (Sūfāt) and His Speech (Kalam).

Know that Shaytān deludes a common person into thinking that if he enters into issues of knowledge he will be of the scholars and people of merit (ahlul-fadl). Shaytān does not cease to make the man love that until he utters a statement of disbelief (kufr) or says that which he does not comprehend.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The people will continue to ask questions until they say ‘Allāh created the creation, but who created Allāh?’”

The common people asking questions about obscure (ghawāmid) areas of knowledge are of the worst flaws of speech, as is their investigation into Allāh’s Attributes. It will corrupt them more than rectify them as it is more obligatory on them to merely submit (taslim). It takes precedence for a common person to have imān in what has been relayed in the Qur’ān and submit to what Allāh’s Messenger

45 Tirmidhi, #2618; Ahmād, #6481; Ibn ul-Mubārak, al-Zuhd, p.385; Ibn Wahh, al-jami’, p.49; Tabaranti, al-Kabīr, p.17; Abu’l-Shaykh, al-Ashrāfī, p.207; al-Qadā’i, Munad al-Shihāb, p.334—from Abū Hurayrah (radī, Allāhu ‘anhu) and the hadith is saḥīh.

46 Bukhārī, vol.6, p.240; Muslim, #135; Abū Dāwūd, #4721—from Abū Hurayrah (radī, Allāhu ‘anhu).
(لز) came with, without question or investigation. They should also preoccupy themselves with acts of worship (ُўُبَادَة) as their attempt to preoccupy themselves with the secret areas of knowledge (عْسَرَة الْإِلْمِ) is like a horse trying to investigate the secrets of why they are owned.
Know that anger (ghadab) is a spark of fire and a person when angry resembles the accursed Shaytān who said:

"I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."

[al-A'raf (7): 12]

The case of mud is that it is tranquil (sukūn) and has esteem (waqār), whereas fire is flare (talagg), ignition (isti'āl), movement (baraka) and disturbance (idtirāb).

The results of anger are: malice (hiqd) and envy (hasad), and what indicates the censure of anger (dhamm al-ghadab) is the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) to a man who asked: '[O Prophet], advise me!' The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "Don't get angry!" And he repeated it.¹

¹ Buhārī, vol.1, p.431 and Tirmidhī, #2021 from Abū Hurayrah (raddī Allāhu 'anhu).
In another hadith Ibn ‘Umar asked the Prophet (ﷺ): ‘What will distance me from Allāh’s Anger?’ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Don’t get angry.”

Also a hadith which is agreed upon, from Abū Hurayrah (raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu) who said: Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The strong person is not the one who is able to overpower others by strength, rather the strong person is the one who is able to control himself when angry.”

“Ikrimah stated in regards to Allāh’s saying,

وَسَيْنَا وَحْصُوْيًا

“and [who will be] honourable, abstaining.”

[Al-‘Imrān (3): 39]

That: ‘the honourable is the one who is able to control himself when angry, and his anger does not overcome him.’

We reported that Dhu’l-Qarnayn met an angel and said to him: ‘teach me some knowledge which will increase my faith (īmān) and certainty (yaqīn).’ The angel said to him: ‘Don’t get angry, as Shaytān is more able to control the son of Ādam when he is angry. Anger can be averted by withholding anger and tranquillising it. So beware of haste as if you were to be hasty you will err.’

We also reported that Iblis, may Allāh curse him, said to Mūsā (‘alayhis-salām): “O Mūsā, beware of rage (ḥiddā), for I play with a man when he is in a state of rage just as a child plays with a ball. And beware of women, for I have not placed a trap (fakkh) more stable than that of a woman; and beware of stinginess (shuhh) for I corrupt the world (dunyā) and Afterlife of the stingy person.”

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2 Al-‘Irāqī stated in al-Mughni, vol.3, p.165: ‘Abū Ya’lā reported the like with a hasan isnad.’
3 Bukhārī, vol.10, p.431; Muslim, #2609 and Mālik, al-Muwatta’, vol.2, p.906
And it was said: “Beware of anger, as it corrupts faith (imán) just as how patience (sabr) is honey and anger is the enemy of the intellect (‘aql).”

The reality of anger is that: it is the seething feeling of the blood boiling in the heart of a person so as to seek revenge (intiqám). Whenever a person becomes angry the fire of anger is ignited which overcomes the blood of the heart and spreads to the veins and reaching the highest parts of the body just as how water rises when it fills a vessel. This is why a person’s face, eyes and skin will become red and this exposes the redness of the blood.

Revenge is but the product of intense anger, and people are of three categories when it comes to their levels of anger: Excessive (ifrát), negligent (tafrif) and moderation (i’tidal).

Excess in anger is not praiseworthy as it expels the intellect and the religion from its control of its affairs and to adequately investigate (näzîr), think (fikr) or choose (ikhtiyar).

Negligence in regards to anger is also censured as it leads to a lack of protective jealously (hamiya) and whoever loses anger in totality will be unable to discipline his soul. As disciplining the soul involves being angry against desires (shahwa) and anger with one’s own self for inclining towards lowly desires. Thus, the loss of anger is censured and rather moderation is to be sought between excess and neglect.

Know that when the fire of anger is strengthened it blinds a person, deafens him from any admonition, as anger reaches the brain, clouds thinking and can even affect sensation. It will then affect and cloud his vision so he cannot see, and make dark the world in his face and his brain becomes like a cave in which there is a fire and heats the abode, filling it with fire which spreads so that you neither take a step forward nor hear a word, and neither see anything nor be able
to put it out. This is what happens to the heart and brain. Anger can increase and kill a person.

Of the effects of anger on the outer body is that it can change the colour, leads to manic behaviour, change one’s character and make on resemble the mentally insane. If a person in a state of anger was to see his own self while angry he would deem himself as vile.

Section one:

Causes Which Incite Anger and the Remedy for Anger

You know that the remedy for every deficiency is by removing its causes. Of its causes are: self-amazement (‘ujb), joking (mazzâh), controversy (mumâra), argumentation (mudâdda), betrayal (gadr) and covetousness (hirs) for wealth (mâl) and status (jâb). These characteristics (akhlaq) are vile and censured in the Divine Legislation (shari‘ah), and each of these traits has to be faced with their opposites. So a person must be aware of the reasons for anger and strive to sever them.

When anger is incited, it is cured by the following:

Firstly: by reflecting on the reports relayed regarding the virtue of suppressing anger (kazîm al-ghayz), forgiving (‘afuw), compassion (bilm) and making possible excuses (ibtimal)—as mentioned in Bukhârî in the ḥadîth of Ibn ‘Abbâs (ra’dîy Allâh ‘anhumâ) that a man sought permission from ‘Umar and said to him: ‘O Ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, by Allâh you do not give us abundance in gifts and wealth, and you do not judge between us with justice.’ ‘Umar became angry to the extent that he was about to punish the man.

Al-Ḥurr Ibn Qays said: ‘O leader of the believers, indeed Allâh said to His Prophet (ﷺ),
"Choose forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant."

[al-Åfrâf (7): 199]

And this man [who said this to you] is one of the ignorant. By Allâh 'Umar did not ignore what was recited to him and he withheld based on the Book of Allâh, Mighty and Majestic.

Secondly: that he instils fear in himself of Allâh’s Punishment and says: ‘Allâh’s Ability is greater than my ability over this person. So if I continue venting my anger on him, I am not assured that Allâh will continue to vent His Anger on me on the Day of Judgement when I will be in most need for forgive [rather than punishment].’

Thirdly: that he warns himself from the consequences of enmity (‘adâwâ), revenge (intiqâm) and the enemy’s plans (tashmir al-‘adîw) to destroy his character. As a person is not free of calamities which may also befall him as they did his enemy. So he should be fearful of the world consequence if not the Afterlife consequences, his desire overcomes his anger and there is no reward for this as he merely gave precedence to fortune. Yet if it was based on the Afterlife he would be rewarded for that.

Fourthly: that he reflects on his vile (qubh) appearance when he gets angry, an appearance which resembles a rabid hunting dog or a carnivorous animal. He also reflects on how he is acting contrary to the manners of the Prophets and the scholars in their customs.

Fifthly: that he reflects on the reason which entices him to take out revenge, such as the cause of his anger being Shaytân saying to him: ‘This is not something for which it is possible for you to show incapability (‘ajîf), humiliation (dulla) and denigration (mahâna), as if
you do then you will become small and insignificant in the eyes of the people.' Then he should say to his soul in response to this: ‘Do you fear the possibility of humiliation now yet not fear the humiliation on the Day of Judgement? You caution against being made to look small in front of people but you do not caution against being made small in front of Allāh, the angels and the prophets?!’

One must suppress anger (ghayr) as this will honour him with Allāh, and so what about the people?! Does one not love that he will stand on the Day of Judgement when it will be called: ‘Let the one who has attained reward from Allāh stand’ and none will stand except for those whom He has forgiven. Such examples have to be acknowledged in his heart.

Sixthly: that he knows that his anger occurs in accordance with what Allāh Wants and not according to what he wants. So how can he put his own wants before Allāh’s?

As for action, he should have tranquillity (sukūn), seek refuge (ta’ūdh) and change his situation—so if he is standing, he sits; if he is sitting, he lies down. We have been instructed to make ablution also when angry and these are things which are relayed in the ahādīth.

The wisdom of making ablution (wudu’) when angry has been explained in the ḥadīth, as reported by Abū Wā’il who said: We were with ‘Urwah Ibn Muḥammad and a man said some words to him and he became very angry. He got up and made ablution and then came and said: My father narrated to me from my grandfather ‘Atiyyah, who was a companion, who said: ‘Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Anger is from Shajṭān, Shajṭān was created from fire and fire is put out with

4 Recite: A’udhu bi’l-Lāhi min’Shayṭān ‘r-rajim, ‘I seek refuge in Allāh from Satan the accursed.’
DISCIPLINE: THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

water. So if one of you becomes angry, make ablution.”

As for sitting and lying down, then this has been instructed possibly because it is nearer to the earth from which man has been related, so man remembers his origin and also possibly so that he becomes humble by such lowering. Anger gives rise to pride (kibr), based on what has been reported by Abū Sa‘īd (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) from the Prophet (ﷺ) about anger that: “Whoever finds any of that [i.e. pride], should place his cheek to the ground.”

Section Two:

Suppressing Anger (kaẓm al-ghayz)

Allāh, Most High says,

وَالَّذِينَ يَفْضَلُونَ الْسَّيْفَ

“And those who swallow anger.”

[Al-‘Imrān (3): 134]

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever suppresses his anger, while being fully able to release it, will be called by Allāh in front of all creatures and allow him to choose whichever of the ḥir al-‘ayn he so wants.”

Ibn ‘Umar (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) said: ‘Whoever fears of Allāh does

5 Ahmad, Musnad, vol.4, p.226; Abū Dawūd, #4784; Bukhārī, Tarikh, vol.4, p.1, #8—in the isnad is a majhūl as our Shaykh al-Albānī explained in Silsilat al-Ahādīth al-Da’ījah, #582.
6 Al-Khattāb, Tarikh, vol.1, p.127—and the isnād is hasan; also refer to Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id, vol.1, p.128.

Ahmad, Musnad, vol.3, p.438; Tabarānī, al-Kabīr, vol.20, p.188—and it contains in the isnād the narrator Ibn La‘lāh, there are other routes of transmission for it in Musnad Ahmad, vol.3, p.440; Abū Dawūd, #4756; Tirmidhī, #2090, 2611. There is also a third route of transmission from Tabarānī in al-Kabīr, vol.20, p.189; Tabarānī, al-Saḥīḥ, vol.2, p.123—all of them from Mu‘ādh from Anas and it is hasan insāh‘Allāh.
not release his anger, and whoever fears Allah does not do as he wants and if not for the Day of Judgement it would be other than what you see.'

Section Three: Forbearance (hilm)

Abū Hurayrah (radiyaAllāhu ‘anhu) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Knowledge is only by learning it and forbearance (hilm) is only by forbearing (tahalum)." 8

Also: "Seek knowledge (‘ilm), and seek tranquillity (sakina) and forbearance (hilm) with knowledge. Be gentle with those whom you teach and with those whom teach you. Do not be tyrannical scholars allowing your ignorance to overcome you." 9

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Ḥāṣāṣ Ibn Qays: "There are two traits in you which Allah and His Messenger loves: forbearance (hilm) and serenity (anāf)." 10

A man slandered Ibn ‘Abbās (radiyaAllāhu ‘anhu) and when the man finished, Ibn ‘Abbās said to him: ‘O Ikrīmah, look what this man needs and grant it to him.’ The man then lowered his head and

8 Part of a long hadith reported by Tirmidhi, #2192; Ahmad, vol.3, p.61—it contains weakness. There is another route of transmission which strengthens it and this is reported by al-Khatib, Tānkīh, vol.9, p.127—with an isnād which is close to being hasan. It has a supporting narration from Mu‘āwiyah (radiyaAllāhu ‘anhu) as found in al-Majm‘a, vol.1, p.128; and yet another route of transmission for it from Abū’l-Dardā’ (radiyaAllāhu ‘anhu) as relayed in al-Maghrīb, vol.3, p.176. Refer to Sharh al-Ihya‘, vol.8, p.27.
9 Al-‘Īraqī stated in Takhrij al-Iḥyā‘, vol.3, p.176: "Reported by Ibn as-Sunnī in Riyādat al-Mutahā’immin with a weak chain of transmission."
10 Reported by Muslim, #18; Tirmidhi, #2012; Nasā‘ī, vol.8, p.306; Tabarānī, Tahkīk, #12969—from Ibn ‘Abbās (radiyaAllāhu ‘anhu). Al-‘Īraqī in al-Maghrīb, vol.3, p.178 ascribes it to those hadith which are agreed upon, yet I did not find it within Sahih al-Bukhārī!
felt ashamed.

A boy came to Abū Dharr and he had broken the leg of a sheep. Abū Dharr (radiyAllahu 'anhu) said: 'Who broke the leg of this sheep?' The boy said: 'I did it on purpose just to anger you so that you would beat me and then sin.' Abū Dharr said: 'I will now make the one who incited you to anger me, angry.' Then Abū Dharr freed the slave boy.

A man defamed 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥātim (radiyAllahu 'anhu) and he remained silent. When the man finished, 'Adiyy said to him: 'Is there anything else more you would like to say? If there is then say it before the youth of the area hear you as if they hear you speak about their master they would not be pleased.'

`Umar Ibn `Abdu'l-ʿAziz entered a Masjid one night when it was dark and disturbed a man who was asleep there. The man raised his head and said to `Umar: 'Are you mad?' `Umar said: 'No,' and `Umar's bodyguards were about to discipline the man. `Umar said: 'Leave him, he only asked if I was mad and I replied: no.'

A man met `Alī Ibn al-Husayn (radiyAllahu 'anhu) and the man defamed him, at which point the servants started shouting at the man. `Alī Ibn al-Husayn said: 'Take it easy', and then he approached the man and said: 'What is hidden from you regarding us is more than what you have just said! Is there something which you need which we are able to fulfil?' The man felt ashamed and said nothing. `Ali gave him a garment which he was wearing and also instructed that the man be given a thousand dirhams. After that the same man would say about `Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn: 'I testify that indeed you are of the descendants of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ).'

A man said to Wahb Ibn Munabbih: 'A man has defamed you.'
Wahb replied: ‘Has Shaytān not found a postal method other than you?!’

Section Four:
Forgiving People (‘afuw) and Kindness (rifq)

Know that the meaning of forgiving (‘afuw) is: ‘that you deserve a right yet you forfeit it’, that right could be in regards to retaliation (qiṣāṣ) or penisation (gharāmāh), it is not related to forbearance (ḥilm) or controlling anger (kāfūm).

Allāh says,

وَالَّذِينَ افْتَرَسُونَ ٍ عَنِ الْكَبَارِ

“and those who forgive the people.”
[Al-‘Imrān (3): 134]

And He says,

اِنْفَرَسْتُمْ وَأَلْقَيْتُمْ فَاحِرَةً عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ

“but those who forgive and makes reconciliation—his reward is [due] from Allāh.”
[Al-Shūrā (42): 40]

The Prophet (ṣallīllāhu ‘alaihi wasallāhu ‘alaihī) said: “Charity does not decrease one’s wealth; Allāh does not increase a servant due to his forgiving except in honour, and none humbles (tawādū’) himself except that Allāh elevates him.”11

‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) said: ‘Allāh’s Messenger (ṣallīllāhu ‘alaihi wasallāhu ‘alaihī) said: “O ‘Uqbah, have I not informed you of the best of manners of the people of this life and the next? Contact whoever has cut off relations with you and give him something of yours, and forgive

11 Muslim, #2588 and Tirmidhī, #2030 from Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu)
the one who has oppressed you.”12

It has been relayed that on the Day of Judgement a crier will ex­claim: ‘Let he who has attained Allāh’s reward stand’, and none will stand except for the one who forgave the one who oppressed him.

Anas (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu) said: ‘Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Allāh is Kind (rafiq) and Loves kindness (rifq) and gives for it what he does not give for harshness (unf).”’13

In the Two Sahihs from the hadith of ‘A’ishah (radīy Allāhu ‘anha) from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “Indeed Allāh Loves gentleness (rifq) in all affairs.”14

In another hadith: “Whoever is prevented from gentleness, is prevented from good.”15

Section Five:

Malice and Envy

Know that anger if restrained only due to not being able to release it can settle inside him and turn into malice (jiqād).

The sign of it is continual malice of some people and aversion towards him. Malice is a fruit of anger, and envy (hasad) is a result

12 Al-‘Irāqī stated in al-Mugnī, vol.3, p.182: ‘Reported by Ibn Abīl-Dunyā, Tabarāni in Makarim ut-Akhlāq and al-Bayhaqi in al-Shu’b, the isnad is da’if.’
13 Tabarāni, al-Saghīr, vol.1, pp.81, 154; al-Bazzār, #1961, 1962 from Kāshf ul-Astār. Saythānī stated in al-Majma’, vol.8, p.18: ‘Reported by al-Bazzār and Tabarāni in al-Iṣra‘ and al-Saghīr and in one of the chains of transmission from al-Bazzār contains trustworthy narrators, yet in some there is a difference of opinion [as to the narrators credibility]. A following hadith supports it and it is hasan from ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mughaffāl (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu).’
14 It is just in Muslim, #2593, and Ibn ul-Athir did not ascribe it Jam‘ ul-Uṣūl, vol.4, p.532 except to Muslim. It was also relayed by Abū Dawūd, #2478 and #4808.
15 Muslim, #2592; Abū Dawūd, #4809—from Jarīr Ibn ‘Abdullāh (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu).
of malice.

Al-Zubayr Ibn al-'Awwām (radīy Allāhu 'anhu) said: ‘Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The disease of the nations before you has affected you: envy and malice.”

In the Two Sahihs from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “Do not hate each other, do not cut off from each other, do not envy each other, do not turn away from each other [rather] be servants of Allāh and brothers.”

In another hadith the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Envy devours good actions just as fire consumes wood.”

In another hadith the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “A man of the people of Jannah will appear to you on this street.” Then a man appeared. The man was asked about his actions and he said: “I have no malice towards any Muslim or envy for what he has been given from Allāh.”

We have reported that Allāh has said: ‘The envious person (hasid) is an enemy to My Favour; is scornful towards My Decree and unhappy with Division among My servants.’

Ibn Sirīn said: ‘I have not envied anyone for anything of the world, as if he is of the people of Jannah how can I envy him for something of the world when he is traversing the way to Jannah? If he was from the people of Hellfire, how can I envy him when he is traversing the

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16 Tirmidhī, vol.2, p.83; Ahmad, vol.1, p.167—from al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu), yet within the chain of transmission is a Majhūl [unknown] narrator.
17 Bukhārī, vol.4, p.128; Muslim, vol.8, pp.8,9; Mālik, vol.2, p.907; Abū Dāwūd, #4910—from Anas, also from Abū Bakr and Abū Hurayrah (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu).
18 Ibn Mājah, #4210—from Anas (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu) yet it contains a Majhūl; also reported by Abū Dāwūd, #4903 from Abū Hurayrah (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu).
19 Ahmad, vol.3, p.166; al-Baghawi, #3535—from Anas (radīy Allāhu ‘anhu) with a sahīḥ chain of transmission.
path to the Fire?

Iblees said to Nūh (‘alayhis-salām): ‘Beware of envy, as it led me to this condition!’

Know that if Allāh has favoured your brother with something, there are two ways in which you deal with this: firstly: that you hate that favour (ni‘ma) and love its removal—this is envy. Secondly: that you do not hate its presence or love its removal, however you would love to have it for yourself—this is known as ghibta.

Know that the soul (nafs) can love esteem and that it is not surpassed anything like it, if this happens he dislikes it and loves for it to be removed so as to be on the same level. This is something ingrained in people’s nature. Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) narrated that the Prophet (saw) said: “Three [traits] are not devoid from anyone: evil suspicion (zann); looking for bad omens (al-tajr) and envy. I will speak to you about what you are in need of: if you have evil suspicion, check; if you seek omens, then don’t believe it; if you envy do not desire.”

The remedy for envy is to have pleasure (rida’) with the Divine Decree (qada’) at times; have asceticism (zuhd) in the world at times and to look at which is connected to those favours, such as worldly concerns and accountability in the Afterlife. By that, a person will not be harmed by what he has been apportioned.

20 Ghibta: envy, referring to the permissible form of envy where the envier wishes to the same blessings as the envied but without desiring to see them removed from the envied. This is opposed to hasad, the blameworthy form of envy where the envier wishes to see the blessings removed from the envied.

21 Al-Hāfiz Al-‘Irāqī stated in al-Mughni, vol.3, p.187: Reported by Ibn Abīl-Dunyā in the book Dhamm al-hasad from the hadīth of Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) and it contains Ya‘qūb Ibn Muhammad al-Zuhri and Mūsā Ibn Ya‘qūb al-Zam‘i and they have both been deemed as weak by the majority [of scholars of hadīth].
As for the one who envies a Prophet due to his Prophethood, and loves that he was not a prophet; or a scholar due to his knowledge, and loves that he was not provided with that or that it is removed from him—then such a person has no excuse and this can only be found in a disbelieving or evil soul. As for loving that he leads his contemporaries and discover what they have not, then there is no sin in that, as he does not love that whatever they have been given is removed from them, rather he loves to be elevated from them so as to increase his fortune with Allāh. Allāh says,

“..."The last of it is musk. So for this let the competitors compete."

[al-Muttafrīn (83): 26]

In the Two Sahīhs from the hadîth of Ibn ‘Umar (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (ṣallāAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “There is no envy in two: a man whom Allāh has given the Qur’ān and stands the night and day in prayer with it; and a man whom Allāh has given wealth and spends out from it for the truth throughout the day and night.”22

Section Six:
The Causes of Envy

One: enmity (‘adāwa), pride (takabbur), self-amazement (‘ujh), love of leadership (hubb al-riyasa), a vile soul (kubth al-nafs), miserliness (hukhl). The most severe is: enmity (‘adāwa) and malice (hughd), for whoever is harmed by a person or opposes his objective, will hate him in his heart and malice will be ingrained in his heart.

Malice necessitates gloating [over the harms inflicted on enemies] and revenge. When he hears of calamity which has befallen his en-

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22 Bukhārī, vol.9, p.65; Muslim, #815; Tirmidhi, #1937
As for pride (kibr), then when another person obtains some wealth (māl) and authority (waldāyā), he fears that he may become proud in front of him and show-off, and he cannot bear this. The envy of the disbelievers towards the Prophet (ﷺ) was similar to this, Allāh says,

وَقَالُوا

"And they said, 'Why was this Qur'ān not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities?"

[al-Zukhruf (43): 31]

And Allāh says in regards to the believers,

أَهْلَوْلاَمَّا مِنْ الْلَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِي

"Is it these whom Allāh has favoured among us."

[al-An'am (6): 53]

And He says,

مَا أَنتُمْ إِلَّا نَاسٌ كَانَ الْإِنسَانُ

"They said, 'You are not but human beings like us."

[Yāsīn (36): 15]

And He says,

وَلَيْنَ أَلْتِمَّ وَقَدْ كَانَتِ الْحَيَاةُ الْأَخْرَىٰ إِذَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا

"And if you should obey a man like yourselves, indeed, you would then be losers."

[al-Mu'minun (23): 34]

They became self-amazed and disliked for him to succeed with
the message as they viewed the Prophet (ﷺ) as being a man just like them, as a result they envied the Prophets and Messengers.

As for love of leadership and status (hubb al-riyāsa wa'l-jāb), then it is like a man who wants to be second-to-none in a particular field, art or craft. If he becomes overcome by the love of praise he becomes joyous by being praised [with expressions such as]: “he is unique in this era” and “he is precious on his field” etc. If he hears of a contemporary of his in another region of the earth, he hates that and wishes that he was dead, or for that favour, with which he has a share whether that be knowledge, bravery, worship, skill, expertise or anything else—to be removed from him. This is only due to pure [love] of leadership based on claiming to be unique.

The Jewish Rabbis and scholars rejected recognition of the Prophet (ﷺ) and did not believe in him out of fear of the invalidation of their leadership.

As for the filth of the soul (kuhth al-nafs) and its miserliness (shuhh) towards the servants of Allāh, then you will find that among people are those who do not preoccupy themselves with leadership or arrogance, yet when one of the servants of Allāh is described to him as being in a good condition, that displeases him. And if the same servant of Allāh is described to him in a bad way, that pleases him. He is thus miserly in regards to Allāh’s Favours on others, as if that takes away from Allāh’s Dominion.

Some of the scholars said: ‘the miser (bakhīl) is the one who is miserly in regards to his wealth, whole the stingy (shahih) is the one who is miserly in regards to the [rightful] wealth of others.’

So this one is miserly in regards to Allāh’s Favour on His servants whom do not have between them any enmity. This has no reason except for a vile soul and nature. Curing this is intense as it has no
intrinsic cause which can be easily remedied, rather an impure nature is the cause and thus it is difficult to remove. These are the causes of envy.

Section seven:

The Causes for Abundant Envy

Know that envy increases among people due to the reasons which we have mentioned, this may occur between contemporaries, people of similar interests, brother and cousins. This is because mutual envy is based on interests that may be different among people, this can lead to aversion and malice.

For that reason, you will see a scholar jealous of another scholar but not of a pious worshipper; and a worshipper jealous of another worshipper but not of a scholar; and a merchant jealous of another merchant.

The basis of envy is mutual interest over an objective, a person will envy whoever shares in a field in which he also prides himself in. The basis of all of that is love of the world (hubb al-dunya) and this is what constricts mutual competitors. As for the Afterlife, then there is no constriction in regards to it. For whoever loves knowledge of Allāh, His Angels, His Prophets and the dominion of the heavens and earth will not envy anyone else as he knows that knowledge does not construct the knowers (‘ārifin). The true scholars (‘ulamā‘) do not have envy between them as they have knowledge of Allāh and their main objective is to gain a position with Allāh. But if the intent of them is to seek knowledge for wealth and status, they will surely envy each other.

Know that envy is of the major sicknesses (amrād al-‘azima) of the
heart and sicknesses of the heart are not cured except with knowledge ('ilm) and action ('amal). Beneficial knowledge for the sickness of the envy is to know the reality that envy is harmful to you in this life and the next, and that the one being envied will not be harmed by your envy either in this life or the next, rather he will benefit from it. And the favour which has been given to the one whom you envy will not be removed due to your envy, and if you do not believe in the Resurrection you would not have the acumen to be intelligent enough to caution against envy due to the pain which it causes in the heart and its lack of benefit. How can you be like this when you know the punishment of the Afterlife?

To clarify what we just said about the person being envied (mahzūd) not being harmed in this life and the next and rather benefitting from the envy: then whatever favour Allāh has destined for him will continue until the period which Allāh has decreed. And there will be no harm to him in the Afterlife.

As for the benefit in the world: then it is by causing grief to one’s enemies.

If you contemplate on what we have mentioned, and you know that you are an enemy to your own self, which is the friend of your enemy, you are not but akin to one who throws a stone at his enemy so as to kill him, yet the stone does not affect him at all and rather bounces back to hit him and increase him in his anger. He tries to throw the stone a second time with more venom yet it comes back to hit him in the eye and blinds him in the process, again increasing his anger. He tries to throw a third time and then the stone comes back to hit him in the head, and all the while his enemy is looking on laughing at him. If a person reflects on this, the fire of envy will be put out in his heart.

As for beneficial action then it is to implement the opposite of what
envy involves, so if malice develops against one whom he envies, he exhorts himself to praise and extol the person; and if he develops pride and arrogance towards the person he humbles himself to him. When a group of Salaf were informed that a person had spoken about them behind their backs, they would send the person a gift.

These are very beneficial remedies for envy, yet they are bitter (murra).

And Allāh knows best
THE SIXTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of the World

There are many verses in the Qur’an which censure the worldly life and exhort to asceticism (taqhid) and simple-living within the world (dunya). Allah says,

زَينَ السَّهْوَاتِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَالْخَزَائِمَةِ وَالْعَذَابَةِ وَالْبِصَانَةِ وَالْمَكْتُوبَةِ

“Beautified for man is the love of that which they desire—of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return. Say, ‘Shall I inform you of [something] better than that?’”

[Al-Imran (3): 14-15]

And He has said,

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَنْ عَرَضَ الْمَغْفُورَةَ
“And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.”

[Al-‘Imrān (3): 185]

And He has said,

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَرَدتُّ مِنْ أَنْسَابٍ

“The example of [this] worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky.”

[Yūnus (10): 24]

And He has said,

أَنْتُواَلَمْ تَعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا لَعَبٌ وَتَرْفُعِيَةٌ

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment.”

[Al-Hādīd (57): 20]

And He has said,

وَإِنْ سَكَّنْتُ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَشَّتْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةُ عَنْدَ رَبِّكَ

“But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Afterlife with your Lord is for the righteous.”

[Al-Zukhruf (43): 35]

And He has said,

فَأَمَرْتُ عَنْ نَعْمَةِ ٍ مِّنِّي وَأَنْعَمْ لَكَ عَلَى الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا الْحَيَاةِ الْآخِرَةُ

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge.”

[Al-Najm (53): 29-30]

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As for the ahādīth, then within the Two Sahīhs from al-Masūrī Ibn Shaddād who said: Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The world compared to the Afterlife is nothing but like one of you placing his finger into the ocean, pulling it out and looking at what remains [on the finger].”

In another hadīth: “The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever.” Reported by Muslim.

In another hadīth: “If the world worth the wing of a mosquito to Allāh, He would not give an unbeliever a drink of water from it.” Reported by Tirmidhī and he authenticated it.

In another hadīth: “The world was accursed and what is in it is accursed save that within it which is for Allāh.”

Abū Musā reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “He who loves his world will suffer in his Afterlife; and whoever loves his Afterlife will suffer in his world. So work for that which will remain not over that which will depart.”

1 In the Šām print it states “al-Masūrī” which is a textual discrepancy which I have corrected.
2 Muslim, #2858; Tirmidhī, #2324; Ibn Mājah, #4108 and Bukhārī did not report it as the author mentioned.
3 Muslim, #2956; reported by Tirmidhī, #2325—from Abū Hurayrah (radīyy Allāhu ‘anhu).
4 Muslim, #2321; Ibn Mājah, #2410—from Sahl Ibn Sa‘d (radīyy Allāhu ‘anhu) with an isnād which is hasan.
5 Reported by Abū Nu‘aym, al-Hīyāh, vol.7, p.90—from Jābir (radīyy Allāhu ‘anhu) yet there is weakness in the isnād. However it has been reported by Tirmidhī, #2323; Ibn Mājah, #4112—from Abū Hurayrah (radīyy Allāhu ‘anhu) with a hasan chain of transmission.

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Al-Hasan wrote a long letter to ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azîz censuring the world, saying: ‘To proceed: Indeed, the world is an abode of departure and not one of settlement, Ādam was only sent down to it as a punishment, so beware of it O leader of the believers. Provisions of it are to be left, and sufficiency within it is poverty within it, those who honour it are disgraced and those who try to gather it are in poverty, like one who drinks poison without knowing what it is. So beware of this abode of deception (gharrār), imaginary (khayâh) and deceitful (khud’a). And if the Creator had not informed anything about it, and had not put forth any parables regarding it, a sleeping person would still awake to its reality and a heedless person (ghâfîh) would still be attentive. So then what if Allâh has mentioned it in the context of admonishing it?! It has no estimation or value with Allâh, and has not looked at it since creating it.

The keys and treasures of the world were presented to our Prophet (ṣallalla‘alá ‘aláhi wa sallama) and he did not accept them and he rather hated to love something which his Creator hates, or to elevate that which Allâh has abased the possessor. Allâh distances it* from the righteous and expands it out for His deceived enemies. The deceived one is he who considers that his possession of it is an honour, forgetting that what Allâh did with

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*I say: the hadith is weak, and some of those who ascribe themselves to knowledge should pay attention as they regard Haythami’s words ‘the narrators are trustworthy’ as indicating that the hadith is sahih, when this is not the case. Authentic hadith have the following conditions:

- The trustworthiness [and credibility] of the narrators
- A connected chain of transmission
- No irregularities
- No hidden defects
- And other conditions which have been acknowledged, and Allâh knows best.

Al-‘Iraqî stated in al-Muqaddam, vol.3, p.212:

Reported by Ibn Abîl-Dunya in Mursal form; reported by Ahmad and Tabârânî in connected forms from the hadith of Abu Muwayhabah and the isnâd is sahih. Tirmidhi reports if from the hadith of Abu Umarah (radiyAllâhu ‘anhu).
the Prophet (ﷺ) when he (ﷺ) used to tie a stone to his stomach.\(^8\)

By Allāh there is no one unto whom the world has been given except that his intelligence goes, his view becomes incapable.

Mālik Ibn Dīnār stated: ‘Fear the sorceress (sahhara) [i.e. the world] as it bewitches the hearts of the scholars (ʻulamā).’

Yūnus Ibn ’Ubayd stated: ‘The world has been compared to a sleeping man who has a dream in which he sees both that which he loves and that which he hates, then he awakes upon seeing that.’

Some of them said: ‘People are asleep and when they die they pay attention.’

Meaning that they pay attention at death and they have nothing in their hands with which to be joyous.

It was said that [Prophet] ʻIsā (ʻalayhis-salām) saw the world in the form of an old woman who had no teeth but had adorned herself. He said to her: ‘How many times have you been married?’ She replied: ‘I have lost count now.’ He said: ‘Did you outlive all of them or did they all divorce you?’ She said: ‘Rather I killed all of them!’ ʻIsā (ʻalayhis-salām) said: ‘How wretched were your husbands! How could they have not taken admonition from what happened to your other ex-husbands? You destroyed one after the other and yet they paid no attention to this whatsoever!’

It was reported from Ibn ‘Abbaṣ (radiyAllāhu ‘anhu) that he said: ‘The world will come on the Day of Judgement in the form of a

\(^8\) Al-ʻIrāqi stated in al-Mughni, vol.3, p.2102: ‘Reported by Ibn Abīl-Dunyā also like this [i.e. in Mursal form].’ Al-Zabīdī stated in Shurṭ al-Iyyā, vol.8, p.101: ‘Bukhārī reports it from Jābir, and Tirmidhī from the ḥadīth of Anas (radiyAllāhu ‘anhu)’ and he said that the ḥadīth is gharīb.
middle aged woman with blue back teeth and an ugly appearance. It will be said: ‘do you know what this is?’ They will say: ‘we seek refuge in Allāh from knowing this.’ Then it will be said: ‘This is the world over which you dispute, and for which you sever ties of the womb; and over which you have enmity; and over which you have hatred; and for which you are deluded!’ Then she will depart to the Fire (jannah) and say: ‘O my Lord, where are my followers?’ Allāh will say: ‘Place her followers with her.’

Abūl-'Ala reported: ‘I saw in a dream an old woman (ajūz) who was wearing all sorts of make-up and adornment and the people were surrounding her in amazement. I said: ‘Woe to you, what are you?!’ She said: ‘Do you not recognise me?’ I said: no. She said: ‘I am the world.’ I said: I seek refuge in Allāh from your evil (sharr). She said: ‘If you truly love to seek refuge from me and my evil then hate the dirham.’

Some of them said: ‘I saw in a dream an ugly old woman.’

Others said: ‘Know that your condition is of three states: The first is a state in which you were nothing, prior to your existence. The second is a state which is the hour of your death up until when there is eternal existence. You will remain after it leaves your body—either destined for paradise or Hellfire, this is eternal. The third state is a median state which refers to your lifetime in the world, and this is nothing in comparison to the two above mentioned states, it is less than the twinkling of an eye.’

Whoever looks at the world in this way will not be connected to it, and will not be concerned with how he spent his days whether it was with harm and constriction or with vastness and comfort. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “What is the world? The world is only like a traveller who [during his travel] takes shade under a tree, rests there
a while and then departs.”

‘Īsā (‘alayhis-salām) said: ‘The world is a bridge, so cross it and do not waste time on it.’

This similitude is clear, as the world is but a bridge to the Afterlife and the first pathway towards the second pathway which is at the end of the bridge, which is the Afterlife. There are people who cross half way across the bridge, and those who cross a third of it, and those who remain on it without taking a step, completely heedless. As for the one who stops on the bridge to build a house on it, then this is of the utmost ignorance (jahil) and idiocy (humq).

It was said: ‘The one who seeks the world is like the one who drinks from an ocean. Whenever he drinks more his thirst increases until it kills him.’

One of the Salaf said to his companion one day: ‘Let’s go and I will show you the world.’ He would go with him to the rubbish dump and say: ‘Look at their fruits, chickens, honey and fat!’

In the Two Şahīḥs from Abū Mūsā (radiy-Allāh ‘anhu) who said: Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: ‘I and what Allāh has sent me with, is like a man who goes to his people and says: ‘O people, I have seen an army with my eyes and I am a clear warner unto you.’ A group of people obey him and depart at the beginning of the night, and are thus saved; while another group deny him and become destroyed in their homes, with the army taking their place. This is like the one who obeys me and follows what I have come with, and like the one who disobeys me and denies the truth which I have come with.”

9 Tirmidhi, #2378—from Ibn Mas’ūd (radiy-Allāh ‘anhu) and the chain of transmission is saḥīḥ.
10 Bukhārī, vol.13, p.218 and Muslim, #2283
Section one:

Exposition on the Reality of the world and Its Censure and Praiseworthy Aspects

Many people have heard of the complete censure of the world and thus believe that it is an indication to turning away from what has been created for people’s benefit, such as food and drink.

Allāh has placed in the souls of people a yearning for that which is beneficial to them. Yet the souls of some people yearn for these things yet they prevent themselves from partaking in them as they think that they are implementing asceticism (zuhd) and out of ignorance of the rights of the soul [for such things]. Based on this, many of the people of asceticism (mutazabidān) did that due to their lack of knowledge (qila al- 'ilmi). However, we will put forward the truth without fear and say:

Know that the world is an expression of certain objects which exist for people’s benefit, such as: the earth and all that is upon it, as it is the dwelling place for humans; clothing; food; drink and marriage—all of which assists him on his journey unto Allāh. So whoever takes from these things according to what is useful to him as has been instructed, is praised. Yet whoever takes more than his need of them will fall into censure, and move from benefit to harm. He will become preoccupied away from seeking the Afterlife.

There also should be no deficiency in taking one’s needs, the sound path (al-tariq al-salim) therefore is the middle way: to take from the world the amount which one needs, sufficient provision for the journey even if he is hungry. Giving the soul that which is craves helps it and fulfils its right.

Sufyān ath-Thawrī used to only eat at times when food was adequate
and he used to carry with him when he was on a journey some sweet dish (fālūdḥaj).

Ibrāḥīm Ibn Adham used to eat of the good foods at certain times and say: ‘If we find anything [to eat] then we eat as men do, and if we do not find [anything to eat] we are patience (sabr) as men are.’

Let us look at the biography (sirah) of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) and his companions, they were neither excessive (iifrāf) in partaking from the world, nor neglectful (tafrīf) in regards to the rights of the soul (nafṣ).

11 A sweet dish made from flour, water and honey.
Translator’s Note: Fālūdḥaj is a sweet dish still popular today in the Middle East and Persia, it is made from eggs, butter, ground almonds, sugar/honey and rose water.
Know that wealth is not censured in and of itself, rather the censure arrives in how a human uses it wrongly by having covetousness (hirs), consuming it without end, hoarding, using it wrongly or showing off with it, for this reason, Allāh says,

\[
\text{"For your riches and your children are but temptation."}
\]

\[\text{[al-Anfāl (8): 28]}\]

In the Sunan of Tirmidhī from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “Two hungry wolves sent to a flock of sheep are not more harmful than how a person’s covetousness for wealth and status is to his dīn.”

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1 Tirmidhī, #2482; Ahmad, vol.3, p.456; Ibn ul-Mubārak, \textit{Al-Zuhd}, p.181 (additions of Nu‘ayn ibn Hammād); Dārimi, #2733; Ibn Hibbān, #2472; Tabarānī, \textit{Al-Kabir}, vol.19, p.190—from Ka'b Ibn Malik and the isnād is sāḥīh. It has also been reported from Abū
The Salaf used to fear the temptation of wealth (fitna al-mal), when ‘Umar (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) used to see a conquest [and the wealth which would come with it] he would cry.

Yahyā Ibn Mu‘adh said: ‘The dirham is a scorpion, so if you cannot handle it properly do not touch it otherwise it will sting you and its poison will kill you.’ It was asked: ‘How can we handle it properly?’ He replied: ‘Gain it lawfully and spend it rightfully.’

He also said: ‘There are two calamities which befall a servant in regards to his wealth when he died, the like of which the creation have not heard.’ It was asked: ‘and what are they?’ He said: ‘That all of it is taken from him and that he will be asked about all of it.’

Section One:
On the Praise of Wealth

We have clarified that wealth is not censured in and of itself rather it is to be praised as it is a reason to obtain benefits (masāliḥ) in the religion and world (dunya). Allāh named it as being “good” (khayr) as Allāh says at the beginning of Sūrah al-Nisā:

وَلَا تَذْهَبْنَ بِالْمَلْعُونَةِ الَّتِي نَجْعَلُكُمْ ضُرْبالْقُرْآنِ

“And do not give the weak-minded your riches, which Allāh has made a means of sustenance for you.”

[al-Nisā’ (4): 5]

Sa‘īd Ibn al-Musayyib (rahimahullāh) stated: ‘There is no good in the one who does not acquire wealth lawfully in order to protect himself from [begging] people, or maintain the ties of kinship or give from...
Abū Ishāq al-Sabay‘ī stated: ‘They would see affluence a helper (‘aum) in the religion.’

Sufyān said: ‘Wealth and riches during our time is the weapon (silāh) of the believer.’

In conclusion therefore, wealth and riches is like a snake which has poison and a cure. Whoever is able to separate the poison and protected himself from it can benefit from the cure.

As for the benefits (fāvaid) of wealth and riches, then this divides into the religious and worldly benefits:

Worldly benefit: is known by the people and hence they destroy themselves in trying to acquire it.

Religious benefit: this splits into three types:

THE FIRST TYPE: that he spends on himself, either for worship, such as bajj and in the way of Allāh; and either in seeking help in worship (‘ibadah), such as food, clothing, lodging and other necessities of life. These needs if they are not met, the heart will not be free to focus on the religion and worship, and whatever completes an act of worship becomes an act of worship itself. Thus, taking sufficiency from the world so as to seek aid (isti‘āna) for the religion is of the religious benefits. Extra favours and blessings and extra needs are not included in this, as that is of the fortunes of the world.

THE SECOND TYPE: what is spent on other people, this is of four categories:

One: charity (sadaqa), and its virtues are many and well-known.
Two: hospitality (marū‘a), we mean by this spending money to
host, give gifts and support to the wealthy and the notables. There is a religious benefit in this as the servant of Allah gains brothers and friends.

Three: protecting honour (*wqiyyah al-'ird*), and spending money to avert the propaganda of the poets and the insults of the foolish, so as to sever their evil. There is a religious benefit in this as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whatever a man uses to defend his honour is charity." This is because it prevents a backbiter from the disobedience of backbiter (*ghiba*). It also protects from the one whose words insight enmity which leads to revenge which transgresses the bounds of the shari'ah.

Four: what is given for using other people's services, employees who are needed by people for a variety of different jobs.

**The third type:** that which a person does not give out to a specific person however good is generally obtained, such as with: building Masjids, bridges and long-lasting endowments.

These are some of the benefits of wealth (*fawaid al-mal*) from the angle of the religion, whether it is connected to an immediate fortune such as sincerity (*ikhlās*) from the humiliation of begging, the shame of poverty (*faqr*) or honour (*'izā*) among people and respect (*kirmā*) and estimation in the heart.

As for the detriments of wealth (*ghawā'il al-mal*) and property then they are also split into the religious and worldly harms:

**One:** it mainly causes him to fall into disobedience, and this can eventually culminate in him being a promoter of disobedience. Wealth is a type of ability (*qudra*) which can incite disobedience, the *fitna* of

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2 Abū Ya'la, #210— from Jābir; relayed also by Ḥaythamī, *al-Majma‘*, vol.3, p.136 and he said that within the chain of transmission is Muslim Ibn al-Salt and he is weak; also relayed by al-Hafiz, *al-Fāhib*, vol.10, p.447 and he ascribed it to Ḥakīm and al-Dāraquṭnī.
ease (sarra) is greater than the fitna of hardship (darra).

Two: it makes him seek enjoyment from that which is permitted (mubahat) to the extent that he becomes an addiction which he cannot do without. He may also be unable to participate in them except via doing that which is doubtful (shubhat), or he may be led to compromising (mudhana) or hypocrisy (nif), as the one who has more money mixes with more people [who may not be righteous]. If he mixes with them he will not be safe from hypocrisy, enmity ('adwa), envy (basad) and backbiting.

Three: that, and no one is free of this, one’s wealth and property takes him away from the dhikr of Alläh, this is an incurable disease. As the foundation of acts of worship (asl al-'ibadah) is a heart which is free to reflect (tafkar) on Alläh’s Glory and Magnitude.

As for the person of waste, then he wakes up thinking about his business competitors and their finances and plots. He reflects on the disagreements with his business partners and how the authorities will levy taxies which will affect his properties and the like.

The business person goes to sleep and wakes up constantly thinking about who to deceive, his business partners, how to lessen his work and how to waste more money.

This is the case with all types of wealth and property, as even the person who has amassed great wealth thinks about how he can preserve it due to his fear for it.

Whoever has their daily subsistence is safe from all of that and is free of the fear (kauf), grief (huyn), worry (hamm), concern (ghammi) and tiredness (tab) which befall the rich and wealthy in the world.
Section Two:
Exposition on the Censure of Covetousness and Greed, complimenting of contentment and shunning what others possess

Know that poverty (faqr) is praiseworthy, however the pauper (faqir) one has to be content and severed from people’s greed (tama) and neither be interested in that which people possess, nor covet (haris) the amassing of wealth. Nothing establishes him on that except for his contentment with an amount of dire necessities of food and clothing.

It was reported in Šahih Muslim from ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-Āṣ (radiyAllahu ‘anhuma) that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The one who has accepted Islam, been provided with what is sufficient for him and is content with what Allah has given him—has surely succeeded.”

In the hadith of Jābir (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Contentment (qana‘a) is a wealth which does not get squandered.”

Sulaymān Ibn Dawūd (‘alayhumā-salam) said: ‘We have experienced living, and we have been through its hardships, and we found that the least of it is sufficient.’

Abū Hāzim said: ‘Whoever of you has three things will have complete intelligence (‘aql): whoever knows his own self; whoever preserves his tongue and whoever is content with what Allah has provided for him.’

As for avarice (hiris), then the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade it saying: “O
people, be content in your seeking [of provision] as the servant [of Allāh] gains nothing except for what has been written for him.”

Some of them said: ‘If it was said to greed (tama): ‘who is your father?’ Greed would respond saying: ‘doubt in the Divine Decree (maqdur).’ And if it was said to greed: ‘what is your profession?’ Greed would respond: ‘Acquiring humiliation.’ And if it was said to greed: ‘what is your aim?’ Greed would respond: ‘Deprivation.’

It was said,

Greed humiliates the prince
And is despair which honours the poor

Section Three:
Exposition on the Remedy of Covetousness and
Greed and the medicine which the trait of
contentment is acquired

Know that this medicine is comprised of three pillars: patience (sabr), knowledge (‘ilm) and action (‘aml). This covers five matters:

The firstly: economising in one’s living and spending out frugally. A person should suffice with whatever food is available, a little drink and one garment and become used to this as much as possible and encourages his family to also live in this simple way.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Economising is half of living.”

In another hadith: “Three things are causes of salvation: fearing

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2 Al-Qādā‘i, Musnad al-Shihab, p.32 with a weak chain of transmission.
The Seventh Foundation: On the Censure of Miserliness, Covetousness

Allāh secretly and openly; moderation during wealth and poverty and justice when happy or angry.”

Secondly: if it is easy for him [to be provided with] what is sufficient for him, he will not be severely worried and confused about the future, and not having long aspirations will help him in that, along with the certainty that his provision has to come to him one way or another, and he knows that Shaytān causes him to fear poverty.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allāh has rejected to provide for His believing servant except from whence he does not realise.”

Thirdly: that he knows the honour of independence in being from content; and the humiliation on greed and avarice.

Contentment is nothing but patience from doubtful matters and embellishments, and with this is the reward of the Afterlife. Whoever does not honour his own self from his desires is weak-minded and deficient in his faith (imān).

Fourthly: that he reflects often on the ease of life of the Jews, Christians, lowly people and foolish individuals. Then he is to look

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1 Reported by al-Bazzār, #81; al-'Uqaylī, vol.3, p.447; al-Qadāʾi, Musnad al-Shabāb, #325; Abū Nuʿaym, al-Hīyāh, vol.2, p.343—from Anas (rādiyAllāhu 'anhu) and in the isnād is al-Fadl Ib n Bakr and he is Majhūl; reported by Tabārānī, al-Awsat, vol.15 (the Bahrain compendium) via another route from Anas (rādiyAllāhu 'anhu); Tabārānī, al-Awsat, vol.15 from Ibn 'Umar (rādiyAllāhu 'anhumā). Haythamī stated in al-Majma', vol.1, p.91: ‘Ibn Lā'āh is within the chain along with those who are unknown’; al-Bazzār, #80; Abū Nuʿaym, al-Hīyāh, vol.6, p.268 via another route from Anas (rādiyAllāhu 'anhu). Haythamī stated in al-Majma', vol.1, p.91: ‘it contains Zāʾidah Ib n Abīl-Raqād and Zivād al-Nimrī and there is a difference of opinion on both of them as to utilising them’; reported by Abū Nuʿaym, vol.3, p.219; al-Bazzār, #82—in an abridged form from Ibn 'Abbas (rādiyAllāhu 'anhumā). The hadlth is hasan inshaAllāh as our Shaykh stated in Siṣṣāt al-Ahādīth al-Sahihah, #1802.

2 Ibn Hibbān, al-Majrūhin, vol.1, p.147; al-Qadāʾi, Musnad al-Shabāb, #383 from 'Ali (rādiyAllāhu 'anhu); and it has other routes of transmission mentioned by Suyūṭī in al-Laʿlī al-Masūʿah, vol.2, pp.70-72 and all of them are very weak.
at the conditions of the Prophets, awliya’ and righteous. He listens to their ahādeeth and reads about how they were, and then makes his mind up and chooses between the vile ones or those who were pure creations with Allāh. This is so that patience with little becomes easy for him. If he enjoys food then animals eat more than him, and if he enjoys sex then sparrows reproduce more often than him!

Fifthly: that he understands the danger in amassing wealth, as we mentioned prior in regards to the flaws in wealth. He is to look at the reward in poverty and complete that by always looking at whoever is beneath him in the world and whoever is above him in the din. As has been mentioned in the hadith reported by Muslim that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Look at those who are lower than you and do not look at those who are above you, as it is more worthy that you do not despise Allāh’s Favours upon you.”

In conclusion, the reality of the matter is to be patient and have short aspirations and to know that the objective (gāya) of his patience in the world are just a few days in order to attain eternal enjoyment. He is like a sick person who is patient with the bitterness of a medicine hoping to be cured [in the long term].

¹ Muslim, #2963 and at-Tirmidh?, #2515 from Abū Hurayrah (radī Allāhu ‘anhu).
Section four:

Holding onto Contentment for One Who Loses Money

The one who loses wealth has to exact contentment as we mentioned, while the one who finds wealth exacts generosity (sakhbah), giving preference to others and doing good. Generosity is of the manners of the prophets and is a foundation for salvation.

Jābir (radiy-Allahu 'anhu) reported from the Prophet (للهم) that he said: "Jibril (الله) said: Allah has said: Islām is a religion which He is pleased with for Himself and it will not be rectified except with generosity and good manners so honour Him by those traits...."10

In another hadith: “Paradise is the abode of the generous....”11

Anas (radiy-Allahu 'anhu) who said that Allāh’s Messenger (للهم) said: “My ummah will not enter Paradise on account of their worship of fasting, but they will enter due to the generosity of their souls, the dependability of their hearts and their advice to Muslims.”12

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10 Al-'Irāqi stated in al-Mughni, vol.3, p.243 and al-Zabīḍī transmitted it from him in Sharh al-Iftyā', vol.8, p.171 that: It was reported by Dārāqūṭnī in al-Mustajād without the words “...and good character” with a weak chain of transmission; and with his own route of transmission by Ibn al-Jawzī in al-Mawdū'at. This addition was mentioned by Ibn ’Adīyy from the narration of Baqīyyah from Yūsuf ibn al-Safar from al-Awza’ī from al-Zuhri from ’Urwhah Ibn ’Ā’ishah, and Yūsuf is da‘if. I say: Baqīyyah is Mudallis and utilises ambiguous transmission terms 'an‘ama.


12 Al-‘Irāqi stated in al-Mughni, vol.3, p.245: Reported by Dārāqūṭnī in al-Mustajād and Abū Bakr Ibn Lāl in Makārim al-Mukhlīaq from the hadith of Anas (radiy-Allahu ‘anhu), and it contains Muhammad Ibn ’Abdu'l-'Azīz Ibn al-Mubārak al-Dinawari. Ibn ’Adīyy relays it and there are some Munkar versions of it.
In another hadith: “It is upon you to instruct to goodness as it prevents evil.”

Section Five:
From the Stories of the Generous

It has been authenticated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he was more generous than the fair winds sent [by Allah],¹⁴ and that he was not asked for anything and replied: “no”¹⁵ and that a man asked him [for something] and he gave him sheep. The same man went to his people and said: ‘O my people, become Muslim! for indeed Muḥammad gives as one who does not fear poverty.”¹⁶

¹³ Reported with this wording from Ibn Abīl-Dunyā in Qaddā'ul-Hāwā'ī, p.3 and Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Rāzī in Masha‘īkh, #1168. It contains Jābir al-Dadhāk in the chain and he is Matrūk however the hadith has other routes of transmission and supporting narrations, refer to a detailed verification in Sīratul-Sahab, #1908 and Irwā’ul-Ghaṭīl, #885.
¹⁴ Bukhārī, vol.1, p.29; Muslim, #2308; Nāṣir, vol.4, p.125 from Ibn ‘Abbas (radiyAllahu 'anhum).
¹⁵ Bukhārī, vol.10, p.381; Muslim, #2311 from Jābir (radiyAllahu ‘anhu).
¹⁶ Muslim, #2312, from Anas (radiyAllahu ‘anhu).
It was said that: ‘Uthmān owed Ṭalḥah fifty thousand dirhams and he went to the Masjid. Ṭalḥah said to him: ‘Here is your money, take it.’ ‘Uthmān said: ‘But it is your money O Abū Muḥammad to help you in your integrity.’

‘Urwah said: ‘I saw ‘Ā’ishah (radiyAllahu ‘anha) divide seventy thousand [dirhams] while patching up her garment.’

It has also been reported that she divided one hundred and eighty thousand [dirhams] in one day alone among the people and when evening came she asked her servant girl to bring her bread and oil. Umm Durrah said to her: ‘Were you not able to even buy us some meat to eat from the money which you divided up today?’ ‘Ā’ishah (radiyAllahu ‘anha) replied: ‘If you reminded me I would have done so.’

‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Āmir purchased the house of Khalid Ibn ‘Uqbah which was in the market for ninety thousand dirhams. When night time came ‘Abdullāh heard the family of Khalid crying. ‘Abdullāh said to his family: ‘what is wrong with them?’ They replied: ‘They are crying over the house.’ ‘Abdullāh said: ‘O servant boy, go to them and inform them that the house and the money are all theirs!’

A man was sent to ‘Abdullāh as he had heard about the milk from his cows. The man said: ‘let me have a cow so that I can drink its milk.’ ‘Abdullāh sent him seven hundred cows and said: ‘the farm in which this one is from is all yours!’

‘Ali Ibn al-Ḥasan went to visit Muḥammad Ibn Usāmah Ibn Zayd while he was sick. Muhammad began crying, and then ‘Ali Ibn al-Ḥasan said to him: ‘what is wrong with you?’ Muhammad replied: ‘I have a debt.’ ‘Ali asked: ‘how much is it?’ Muḥammad said: ‘About ten or fifteen thousand dinār.’ ‘Ali said: ‘It’s on me [to repay it for you].’
Qays Ibn Sa’d Ibn ‘Ubādah was sick but none of his brother went to visit him. It was said to him: ‘They are all shy to visit you due to the debts which you owe them.’ He said: ‘May Allah disgrace a wealth which prevents brothers from visits.’ Then he instructed someone to call out: ‘Whoever has a right with Qays, is free from it at once.’ Then the steps to his house broke due to the number of people who came to visit him.

A man stood up and asked Sa’īd Ibn al-‘Āṣ [for money] and he instructed that the man be given a hundred thousand dirhams. Sa’īd cried and it was said: ‘Sa’īd, why do you cry?’ He replied: ‘I cry for the earth which will consume the like of you,’ and then he ordered that the man be given another hundred thousand.

Section six:
Exposition on the Censure of Miserliness

Abū Sa’īd said: ‘Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Two features are not found in a believer: miserliness (bukhl) and bad character (su’ al-khuluq).”’

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: “Stinginess (shuhh) and faith (iman) are never ever combined in the heart of a servant [of Allāh].”

Also from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said:

اللهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْوَدُ بِاللهِ وَالْحُجَّةِ

“O Allah, indeed I seek refuge in You from cowardice and miserliness.”


18 Nasā’ī, vol.6, p.12 from Abū Ḥurayrah (raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu) — Sahih.

19 Bukhārī, vol.11, p.154; Tirmidhī, #3562; Nasā’ī, vol.8, p.266 from Sa’d (raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu).
The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “There are three destructive sins: stinginess which is obeyed; a desire which is followed and a person’s amazement with his own self.”

Al-Khaṭṭābī stated that being stingy (ṣūhā) in giving is worse than being miserly (bukhl).

Salmān al-Fārisī (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) said: ‘If a generous person dies, the earth and angels say: ‘O Lord forgive Your servant due to his generosity in the world. If a miser dies the earth and the angels say: ‘O Allah block this servant from Paradise as he blocked Your servants from what you gave him in the world.’

Some of the wise people said: ‘Whoever is miserly will have his wealth inherited by his enemies.’

A Bedouin censured some people saying about them: ‘They fast from good deeds and break their fast on immorality.’

Section Seven:

From the Stories of the Misers

It was reported from Ibn ‘Abbās (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) that he said: ‘al-Hājīb, a man who was of the Arab nobles, yet was a miser (bakhil), never used to light fires at night so that no one else would see and try to benefit from the light. If he had to start a fire and then saw some people benefiting from it he would put the fire out!’

It was said: ‘Marwān Ibn Abi Ḥafṣah was of the stingiest of people. One day he went out to meet [the Caliph] al-Mahdi and his wife said to him before he left out: ‘What will you give me if he gives you a gift?’ Marwān replied: ‘If I am given a hundred thousand dirhams I

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Imām al-Albānī judged it to be hasan in Sīrah al-Sabīhah, #1802
will give you a *dirham*. He was given sixty thousand *dirhams* and gave her less than a *dirham*.

It was said: some of the misers were very rich and used to inspect everything in detail. One of them purchased some items and called for a porter to help carry them. He asked the porter: ‘how much will you charge me to carry these items?’ The porter replied: ‘a *dirham*.’ The miser said: ‘not less than that?’ The porter said: ‘What is less than that? I do not know what to say.’ The miser said: ‘We can buy some carrots for a *dirham* and eat them together!’

Section Eight:

The Merits of Giving Preference to Others

Know that generosity and miserliness are of levels:

The highest level of generosity (*sakba’*) and giving preference to others (*ithar*) is to give out wealth while you are in need of it.

The most severe level of miserliness is when a person is miserly and stingy even with his own self and he has a need.

How many stingy people hold on to money to the extent that they get sick and do not want to spend money on treatment, or even has a desire yet prevents himself from doing it on account of his miserliness.

Allāh praised the companions of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) for their giving preference to others:

> لَيْفَظْ أَلْمَهَنْجُرُنَّ الَّذِينَ أُخْرَجُوْا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَاهُمْ

> “They give them preference over their own selves, even though they are poor.”

*[al-Hasr (59): 8]*

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The reason for the revelation of this ayah was the story of Abū Ṭalḥah when he gave preference to that man in the famous narration.

During the Battle of Yarmūk, 'Ikrīmah Ibn Abī Jahl brought some water and looked at Suhayl Ibn 'Amr and he looked at him [to give it to him] and Suhayl said: “not at all for this” and then Suhayl looked at al-Ḥārith and he looked at him and said: “not at all for this” and all of them gave preference to the other over his own self in regards to the water. They all died before they could drink from it. Khaḍīd Ibn al-Walld (radiyAllahu 'anhu) passed by them and said: “By my soul [look at] how you are.”

A man from the Companions (radiyAllahu 'anhurri) was once given the head of a sheep and he said: ‘My brother is in more need of it than me’, so he sent it to another man. Then that man sent it to another, until it passed through seven homes before going back to the first.

‘Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far went out to a palm grove where a black servant boy was working. Someone came to bring the boy food, a dog then came and the boy saved three bits of the food for the dog to eat. Then the boy threw a second morsel of food to the dog, which it ate, and then he threw a third morsel, which it ate. ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far looked and said: ‘O young boy, how much food do you usually get in a day?’ The boy replied: ‘That which you have seen.’ ‘Abdullāh said: ‘Then why have you preferred to give it all to a dog?’ The boy said: ‘This is not a place where dogs usually come, it must have come from far and it was hungry so I did not want it to go without eating anything.’ ‘Abdullāh said to the boy: ‘But what will you do for today [to eat]?’ The boy said: ‘I will fast for the rest of the day.’ ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far then said: ‘Am I blamed for being generous when this boy is more generous than me?’ Then he purchased the palm grove and all that was within it, and he also purchased the servant boy, freed him and gave him the entire palm grove as a gift.
A group of poor righteous people sat in a place and they had a few loaves of bread which was not really enough for all of them. They broke up the bread and then turned out the lights to sit to eat. Yet when the food was presented, each sat in their place without moving to eat out of deference to their fellow companion.

Section Nine:

The Limit of Miserliness and Generosity

The people have spoken about the limit of miserliness and generosity. Some have stated that the limit of miserliness is 'not giving what is obligatory'. Whoever gives what is obligatory on him to give is not considered to be a miser. But there is more, as the one who does not give to his family except a small amount which has been obligated on him by the leader and then after that still constricts them to not take more is also enumerated among the misers. Thus, it is correct that liberty from miserliness is obtained by doing that which is obligatory in the Divine Legislation with adherence to integrity and a heart which consents to this spending out.

As for the obligation in the Divine Legislation, it is *Zakat* and spending out on the family.

As for adherence to integrity then this is by not constricting [family members and others]. The miser withholds that which is inappropriate to withhold. The one who does not give extra is not to be described as being generous.

Some of them said: ‘The generous person (*jawwād*) is he who gives without *mann* [wanting to be praised for it].’ It was said: ‘he is the one who is happy with giving.’ As for the cure for miserliness, then know: the reason for miserliness is love of wealth.
The Seventh Foundation: On the Censure of Miserliness, Covetousness

Love of wealth has two reasons:

Firstly: love of desires (hubb al-shahawāt) which can only be attained via wealth and long aspiration and hopes.

Secondly: that he loves the source of wealth. From the people are those who have that which is enough for them for the rest of their lives even if it is little yet he prefers to have thousands. And you may find an old man who has no children yet he does not allow for the payment of charity or other obligatory payments even though he knows full well that when he dies his wealth will be inherited by his enemies or wasted, this is a disease for which a cure is difficult to find.

An example is like a man who loves someone, yet when the person’s delivery person comes the man starts to be preoccupied with the delivery person and forgets his beloved. The world is like a delivery person of dire necessities, but a man loves the money and forgets the dire necessities, this is of the utmost misguidance.

Love of desire is cured by contentment (qanā’a), patience (sabr), long aspiration (tul al-‘amt) and abundant reminders of death (dhikr al-mawt).

Preoccupation with offspring is treated by remembering that the one who created him also created his provision, and how many people have not inherited anything are in a better situation than those who have inherited.

One should be warned against leaving good to his offspring, and then doing evil with it. If the offspring is righteous then Allah will assume care of him yet if the offspring is evil nothing should be left for him which aids him in disobedience. The offspring should also listen regularly to what we have mentioned about the censure of miserliness and praising generosity.
Know that if the amount of beloved things increases, so will the amount of calamity at their loss. Whoever realises the danger and flaw of wealth will not be attached to it. While whoever suffices with taking wealth that which fulfils his needs and holds it for his own needs—such a person is not a miser.

And Allāh knows best.
THE EIGHTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of Seeking Fame and Ostentation, and the Remedy

It has been relayed from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "The thing I fear the most my ummah is ostentation (riya') and hidden desire (shahwa al-kafiyya)." ¹

This hidden desire even effects scholars, not to mention the common servants of Allah, are at times unable to notice it. Only the scholars and worshippers are tested by this, who are trying to traverse (suluk) the path to the Afterlife. As when they have conquered their souls, withdraw from desires and go towards acts of worship (ibaddt), their souls do not fall into apparent acts of disobedience (ma'asi)—which manifest on the limbs (jawarih). They rather relax with the apparent manifestation of knowledge ('ilm) and action ('amil) and in this they find, with the difficulty of striving (mujabada), some delight (ladha) in being accepted by people [for that] and being held

in great esteem—the soul can find great delight in this and think himself to be sincere (muklis) unto Allāh.

For this reason it has been said: ‘The last thing which leaves the heads of the sincere truthful (siddiqin) believers is love of leadership (hubb al-riyasa).’ It is a latent sickness which is of the greatest traps of Shayṭān set for people. As a result, it is obligatory to explain the reason for it along with its reality and categories.

Know that reputation (jāh) is based on the love of the spread of reputation and fame, and that is a great danger. Safety is with obscurity (khumul) and the people of good neither intend to gain fame nor present themselves to it or its factors. And if it came to them from Allāh, they fled from it and implemented obscurity.

As has been reported from Ibn Mas'ūd (rādiyAllāhu 'anhu) who said when he left his house once and was being followed by a group of people [who wanted to see him and witness him]: ‘Why are you following me? For if you knew what I do behind closed doors not a single one of you would want to follow me!’

In another wording he said to them: ‘Go back! As it is humiliation for the follower and a temptation (fitna) for the one being followed.’

When more than four people would sit around Abū’l-‘Āliyah (rahimahullāh) he would get up and go.

If the gatherings of Khalid Ibn Ma’dān (rahimahullāh) would become crowded he would get up and walk off out of hating fame (karāba al-shubra).

Al-Zuhrl (rahimahullāh) said: ‘We have not seen asceticism (zubd) in anything less than the love of leadership. For you will see a man having asceticism in his food, drink and wealth yet when it comes to leader-
ship he will become angry for it and have enmity on account of it.'

A man said to Bishr al-Hafi (raḥimabullāh): ‘Advise me!’ Bishr responded: ‘Make your food good.’ Then Bishr said: ‘A man who loves that people know him in the world will not find the sweetness (ḥalāwa) of the Afterlife.’

It has been reported in Muslim that ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d went to his father Sa’d who was tending to sheep outside of Madīnah. When Sa’d saw him he said to him: ‘I seek refuge in Allāh from evil of this rider.’ When he came he said: ‘O father, you tend to your camels and sheep while leaving the people to dispute over dominion among themselves.’ Then Sa’d hit ‘Umar in his chest and said: ‘Keep quiet! For I heard Allāh’s Messenger (ṣallallāhu ’alayhi wasallām) say: “Indeed Allāh loves the servant who fears Him, is free from want and is hidden.”’

Abū Umāmah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) said: Allāh’s Messenger (ṣallallāhu ’alayhi wasallām) said: “Indeed the most honourable of my awliya’ [allies] is the believer who has a small amount of wealth, a small family, maintains the prayer, perfects the worship of his Lord, obeys His Lord in secret, is obscure among people, is not recognised, has small provision and is patient with that.” Then the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ’alayhi wasallām) raised his hand and said: “His death will come quickly, his mourners will be a few and the wealth that he leaves will be little.” The hadith is hasan.

Ibn Mas’ūd (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) advised his companions saying: ‘Be springs of knowledge, lanterns of guidance, adherents of your homes, lanterns of the night, pure hearts and simple in your garments—then you will be known in the heavens and fearing of

2 Muslim #2965
3 Rather it is weak, as in the chain of transmission is ‘Abī Ibn Yazīd al-Alhānī and he is weak. Reported by Ahmad, Musnad, vol.5, p.252; Ahmad, Zubd, p.11; Wāki’, al-Zuhd, p.133; Ibn ul-Mubarak, al-Zuhd, p.54 (with the additions of Nu‘aym Ibn Hammād); Tirmidhi, vol.4, p.575; Tabarānī, al-Kabīr, vol.8, p.242 and others.
the people of the earth.’

If it is said: ‘Within this are the virtues of obscurity and the censure of fame (dhamm al-shuhrā)’ but what fame is greater than the fame of the Prophets, Imāms and the Scholars?!

We say: it is censured for a person to seek fame, as for its presence from Allāh without the person seeking it, then this is not censured yet it will be a trial for the weak person, like a person inexperienced in swimming drowning due to holding on to someone else who is himself drowning. As for the skilled swimmer then if a person who is nearly drowning holds onto him then that will be a cause for his safety and escape.

Section One:

Reputation and Wealth are Pillars of the World

Know that repute and wealth are pillars of the world. Reputation is to hold a position in people’s hearts, the belief that a description of perfection is found in a particular person [this leads to a person gaining a reputation], either due to knowledge, worship, lineage, strength, good appearance or any other reason over which people will believe there is some sort of perfection within. Hearts will then begin to obey the person, praise him, serve him and hold him in high esteem.

This indicates that reputation is loved naturally more than the love of wealth as wealth is not attached to anything specifically, rather it is just a means (wasila) to gain something desirable (mahbūbāt). Reputation however is more loved [by people] than wealth, though both may be loved.

Know that from repute is that which is praiseworthy and that which is censured as it is well-known that a person has to have wealth for
the necessities of food, drink and the likes. Likewise, it is a must for him to have repute for the necessity of living with the creation. As people are not free from the need of a ruler to protect them; a friend to help him and a servant to serve him, his love of that is not censured as such repute is a means to an end, such as wealth.

Realisation of that is to know that wealth and reputation are not to be loved on their own merits. Whenever a person seeks for his repute to be known due to a feature which he has for a true objective [then that is not censured], such as Yusuf (‘alayhis-salam) saying:

`أَعْمَلُ عَلَى خَزَائِنِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَى مِثْلِ عَلَيْهِمْ`

"Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian."

[Yūsuf (12): 55]

Or if one intends to hide a flaw so that it will not decrease his status among people, then that is also permitted. Yet if one was to seek status on account of a people’s belief that he has a trait which he does not actually possess, such as knowledge, asceticism or lineage, then that is prohibited.

Likewise, if a person makes his prayer proper in front of people so that they think that he has humility (khushū’i) in prayer then this is just to be seen and it is not permitted to gain people’s hearts based on falsehood or to gain wealth by deception (talbis).
Section Two:

Exposition on the Remedy for Loving Reputation

Know that whenever a person's heart is overcome by love of repute (hubb al-jahāb), it has become infatuated with people seeing him and it seeing them. It not cease loving to frequent people so that it can hear their words and actions which raise his status with them, this is the seed of hypocrisy (nifaaq) and the basis for corruption (aṣl al-fasād), as all who seek status within people's hearts are coerced to be hypocritical to them by manifesting that which in reality bereft in them. One could also be led to performing acts of worship just for show, thereby falling into prohibition and trying to grab the hearts.

For this reason, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) resembled the love of wealth (hubb al-māl) and status (sharaf), and their corruptive nature to one’s religion, as two hungry wolves sent to a flock of sheep.4

Thus, love of reputation is of the destructive factors (muhliqaṭ) which have to be cured and the remedy is compounded from knowledge and action. As for the first [i.e. knowledge], then it is to know the reason for which he loves reputation and he has to reflect in himself the dangers which befall those who seek repute in the world, and the many ways in which they were envied which led to people wanting to harm them. You will see them in constant fear of the loss of their repute and trying to preserve against their status changing in people’s hearts.

As for the remedy from the aspect of action, then it is by removing reputation form people’s hearts by doing actions which necessitate that, as has been relayed from a king who intended to visit one of

1 4 Ahmad, Musnad, vol.3, pp.456, 460; Tirmidhī, #2482; Ibn ul-Mubarak, al-Zuhd, p.181 (with the additions of Nu’aym Ibn Hammād); al-Dārīmī, #2733; Ibn Hibbān, #2472; Tabarānī, al-Kabir, vol.19, p.190 from Ka’b Ibn Malik (radī Allāhu ‘anhu) and also from Abū Hurayrah (radī Allāhu ‘anhu) and others.
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the ascetics (zāhid). When the king came close to him the ascetic prepared food and milk for him, but began eating from it in a way which made the king lose regard for him.

When Ibrāhīm Ibn Nakhi'ī assumed the position of judge he wore a red garment and sat in the market.

Know that when an ascetic cuts off from people this necessitates that he will gain reputation among them. If he fears that temptation then he should mix with them so as to be safe from that and he should walk in the markets to buy his needs and carry them, so as to sever his greed for their worldly things and fulfil his objective [of not gaining a reputation for being a recluse ascetic].

Bishr al-Hāfi used to sit with the fragrance-seller ('attār).

Section Three:
Fearing People’s Censure

Know that many people were destroyed due to their fear (karaf) of people’s censure and love (hubb) of their praise (madh). Thus, all of their movements became so as to please people and to hope (rajā') for their praise, out of fear of censure—this is of the destructive traits which have to be cured.

1. So that people would not look at him and think that he was a scholar or an Imām.
2. Translator’s note: today, particularly in the West and the non-Arab countries, some of the students of knowledge have developed an erroneous concept that it is censured to work in the market place or to go shopping for one’s needs! This is due to a misconception that such things are in some way from the Khawārin ul-Mari’ah [invalidators of personal integrity]. First of all, not only is such a notion wholly out of place, as in any case it cannot be said that the Khawārin ul-Mari’ah set by the scholars of the past [such as eating in the street for example] can be applied to today’s situation, as the people of the past were no doubt of a higher standard which cannot be adequately compared to the people today to argue that they lack personal integrity. Secondly, the notion can inculcate a form of riḍā’ and seeking of reputation [i.e. “so and so is so righteous that he does not even go the market to buy his needs or work”]. Thirdly, there is an element of ghulū in such a notion.
This is by looking at the feature which has been praised and knowing that even if it is found within you, you are still not free of: that which can bring joy, such as knowledge (‘ilm) and carefulness (wara’); or that which does not deserve joy such as repute and wealth.

As for the first, then it has to be cautioned against for one’s end. This is because fear of one’s end is a preoccupation from joy (farh) with praise. Then if you are joyous with it, out of hoping for a good end, then your joy has to be with Allah’s merit on you with knowledge and taqwâ, not with people’s praise.

As for the second category, praise due to reputation and wealth, then joy with this is like the joy with plants on the earth which soon become dry, dead and flat—none is joyous with this except for one who does not have any intelligence. And if you are devoid of this trait for which you have been praised, your joy with such praise is of the utmost madness. You should not be joyous with it, rather you should hate it as the Salaf hated it and would be angry with the one who did it.

The remedy for disliking censure (karâba al-dbâmi) is understood from the remedy for loving praise (hubb al-madhî), as it is its opposite. In brief, whoever censures you is either truthful (sâdiq) in what he says and intends counsel (nush) for you, and in this instance you must follow him in that and not get angry as he has gifted you with seeing your bad traits (‘ayûb). Even if he has not intended counsel by what he has said to you—you will benefit from his words as he has informed you of your errors which you have forgotten. And if he has accused you of things which you are absolved from, you still have to reflect on three:

Firstly: though you may be free of such faults (‘ayh), you are not devoid of their like.
Secondly: that is expiation of your sins
Thirdly: he has committed a crime against his religion and pre-
sented himself to Allâh’s Anger. As a result, he has to ask Allâh for pardon, as it has been relayed that a man hit Ibrâhîm Ibn Adham, and then Ibrâhîm supplicated for the man to be pardoned saying: ‘Due to him, I have been reminded, so I will not cause him to be punished due to me.’ This story has been mentioned prior in the virtue of forbearance (*hilâl*).

Part two

Ostentation, its Reality and Categories, and its Censure

Ostentation (*riyâ*) has been censured in the Book and Sunnah, Allâh says,

\[
\text{فَوَمَا لَيْلَيْتُمُ الصَّلَايَةُ فَلَيْيَلِيْتُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ، يُمِيعُ حَمَامَهُمُ السَّاهِمَ.}
\]

“So woe to those who pray; [But] who are heedless of their prayer—Those who make show [of their deeds].”

[al-Mâ’in (107): 4-6]

And He says,

\[
\text{فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو مَثَلَّهُ الْجَمِيعِ، فَلْيَكُنْ مَسْلِمًا عَلَى الْمَيْتَةِ وَلَا يَحْضُرَ الْمَيْتَةَ.}
\]

“So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord—let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.”

[al-Kahf (18): 110]

As for the ahâdîth, then it has been relayed from Allâh’s Messenger (ﷺ) that from what he relayed from His Lord is that He said: “Whoever does an action in which he associates other than Me, then he is the one who has associated partners [in worship with Me] and
I am free from him.”

In another hadith Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “What I fear the most for you is minor shirk.” They asked: “O Allah’s Messenger, what is minor shirk?” He replied: “al-Riya.’ Allah will say to them [those who showed-off] on the Day of Judgement when people will be rewarded for their actions: ‘Go to those whom you wanted to see you in the world, do you find anything with them now?’”

Bishr al-Hāfi stated: “That I seek the world by way of a musical instrument is more beloved to me than seeking the world by way of the religion.”

Know that riya’ (showing off) is derived from ru’yah (sight or vision), while sum’ah (reputation) is derived from sama’a (hearing), the one who wants to be seen desires what is with the people and this is of different categories:

THE FIRST: Ostentation (riya’) in the religion, and this is of types:

FIRST TYPE: through the body, by manifesting slenderness (izhār al-nuhūt) so that people can see intense effort [in worship] an apparent fear of the Afterlife. Likewise, also displaying dishevelled hair to make it look as if he gives concern to the religion and has no time to care for his hair and appearance.

Included in this is to speak with a low voice, lowered eyes and wilted lips so as to show that he fasts constantly. For this reason, ‘Īsā Ibn Maryam (‘alayhunna-salām) said: ‘If any of you fast he should moisturise his head and comb his hair, so that the one fasting does

1 Ḥafīz Al-‘Iraqī in al-Mughnī, vol.3, p.294 ascribed it to Mālik; it was also reported by Ibn Mājah, #4202; Abū Balbān, al-Maqaṣid al-Sunnīyih, #56—from Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) with a şaḥīḥ isnād; Muslim, #2985.

not fall into riya'. This therefore is how riya' can be through the body among people of religion.

As for the people of the world, they manifest being overweight, paleness of complexion, good appearance and cleanliness.

**SECOND TYPE:** Ostentation through clothing, leaving signs of prostration on the head, wearing coarse clothing, wearing woollen garments, wearing short-sleeved clothing, wearing heavy clothing and leaving clothes to be tatty.

This include wearing torn clothing and blue coloured clothing resembling the clothing of the Sufiya yet being bankrupt (iflās) in terms of their actual inner characteristics [of piety of righteousness].

He masks himself with a turban so that people will look and so as to be distinguished by such a habit.

That generational level (tabagat) of people include those who seek status from people of rectification (ahl al-silāb) by manifesting asceticism by their dress and wearing tatty and dirty coarse clothing so that they will be seen [as being pious and righteous]. If he has to wear clothing which is moderate and clean as the Salaf used to wear he fears that he may lose prestige and that people will say about him: “Look, he used to manifest asceticism and now he has retracted from that way.”

Another generational level sought acceptance from both the people of rectification and the people of the world like kings, princes and merchants. If they were to wear expensive clothing the reciters (qurra') of the people of rectification would not accept them, and if they were to wear the dishevelled clothing of religion the kings and wealthy people would shun them. Thus, they want to combine between acceptance of the people of religion and the people of world.
They therefore wear fine clothing made from expensive material and the cheapest item of clothing he has will be an item of clothing that a rich person wears. He will guise himself with the garments of the people of rectification so as to attain acceptance from both sides [the rich and wealthy, and the people of righteousness and rectification].

If such people had to wear coarse clothing it will be as if he had been slaughtered in that he fears that he will lose recognition in the eyes of the kings and wealthy people, whereas if he wore fine slender gleaming garments and the like he fears that he will lose rank with the people of rectification.

As for the people of world, then openly they display a certain image so as to be seen, one of expensive attire, a nice ride and various types of beautification in clothing, lodging, home decor and furnishing. Yet when at home they themselves wear coarse clothing, thus they are only coerced, as they want to be seen, into manifesting that image.

**Third Type:** Ostentation by speaking (*bi’l-qawl*), this ostentation by religious people is through: admonishing, reminding, narrating reports and narrations—so as to manifest good speech, knowledge and to indicate intense concern with the status of the Salaf; moving the lips out of dhikr when people are present, manifesting anger (*ghadab*) at evils among people, lowering the voice while reciting the Qur’ān so as to show fear (*kauf*), grief (*huṣn*) and the like.

As for the people of the world—he shows them his memorisation of poetry, parables, his mastery of eloquence and the like.

**Fourth Type:** Ostentation in action (*bi’l-‘aml*), such as a praying person lengthening his prayer, prolonging the bowing and prostration and manifesting humility (*khushū‘*) and the likes.

Likewise, he manifests fasting, combat, *hajj*, charity and the likes.
As for the people of the world, they desire to be seen through conceited swaggering (tabakhtur), arrogant strutting (ikhiyār), moving their hands pompously etc. So as to indicate self-importance.

**Fifth type:** wanting to be seen as a visitor of scholars and worshippers, so that it will be said: “so and so visits so and so, and the people of religion flock around him and see barakah from him”. This is the same as the one who wants to be seen with many shaykhs so that it can be said: “he met many shaykhs” and “he has benefitted from the shaykhs”. All of this is in order to stand out and by doing so they hope to achieve reputation and status within the hearts of the pious worshippers [and shaykhs].

Included among them are those who seek repute. How many worshippers have retreated to the mountains, and how many monks withdrew to the monasteries, yet despite their desire to cut off from greed for people’s wealth and property, still desired fame and repute [for their piety]. Of them are those who seek wealth, some seek praise and spread of his name and repute.

So if it is said: “Is riya’ forbidden (harām), disliked (mukrūh) or permitted (mubah)?”

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[TN]: Subhān-Allāh, this is exactly what is found today, especially with the rise of ‘social media’. People effectively advertise their meetings with Shaykhs all so that it can be said “they met with so and so.” People even share the most mundane facets and the most trivial of details, merely so that it can be advertised that they “were with” (?!!) so and so from the Shaykhs. This is all the more popular with the increase in what has been termed as “Selfies” wherein people take pictures of their own selves and advertise these to the whole world all for name and fame, in what must be one of the clearest manifestations of riya’ and ‘ujb in the modern age. Moreover, for name and status, some people will even advertise scholars “praise” of them, and some of these details contain falsehood and riya’. So one will hear that a so-called “Shaykh”, who himself may not have actually studied Islām at all himself, will say about his friend and associate, who could even be a business associate, that “he has been my student for several years”?! When neither the one speaking, nor the one alluded to, have any thorough knowledge of Islām in anyway, saying such things just to flatter him!
The answer: there is some detail in regards to this. *Riya'* is either through acts of worship or otherwise. If *riya* is through acts of worship, then it is forbidden. The one who just wants to be seen for his prayer, charity and *bajj* is disobedient and sinful, as they intend other than Allāh, who alone deserves worship. Such a person who just wants to be seen has incurred Allāh’s Wrath. As for if *riya* is with something other than acts of worship, such as in collecting wealth and seeking status and prestige in people’s hearts then it is not prohibited if not done with prohibited means. Just as the slight profit in wealth as a person needs is praiseworthy, the same is the case with repute, and this is what Yūsuf (‘alayhis-salām) sought when he said:

> “Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian.”

[Yūsuf (12): 55]

We do not say that reputation is forbidden even if it is much, unless if it leads a person to that which is not permissible as we have mentioned. As for the gaining repute without desperately trying to seek it, and without sadness with its removal, then there is no harm in this.

For there is no repute broader than that of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) and the scholars of the religion, however to seek out repute shows a deficiency in ones religion but it cannot be said to be forbidden.

Likewise, wearing nice clothes when going out in front of people, so that people see him, and likewise all forms of beautification, cannot be said to be “forbidden”.

The objectives in that could all differ, as most people love not to be seen in a deficient manner.

Muslim solely reported in the hadith from Ibn Maṣ‘ūd (radīy Allāhu
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‘anhu) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever has an atom’s weight of pride will not enter Paradise.” A man asked: “What of the man who loves to wear nice clothes and shoes?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “Allah is beauty and loves beauty, pride is to reject the truth and belittles people.”

Some people like to manifest Allah’s favour on them, and Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) instructed to do this.

Section One:

Some Doors to Ostentation are More Severe than Others

Know that some doors to ostentation are more severe than others, as they are of levels.

First Level: the worst is that his intent (murād) with worship is not all due to gaining reward (thawb)—like one who prays when people are around, but if he is alone he does not pray.

Second Level: that he intends a reward from his ostentation with a weak intent (qasd da’if), in that if it was absent he would not do it. This is close to the first level in that it is hated by Allah.

Third Level: that he intends ostentation (qasd al-riyā’) and at the same time to gain the reward of those who earn reward, this could corrupt whatever he rectifies.

Fourth Level: that people watching him strengthens his activities and if no one was looking at him he would not move for worship.

10 Muslim, #91; Abū Dāwūd, #4091; Tirmidhi, #199
Such a person is rewarded for his good intention (qaṣd al-sahih) and also punished for his corrupt intention (qaṣd al-fasid). This is like one who prays and manifests short bowing and prostration, and recites in a way which is not lengthy, so that the people will think good of him by that; this is also ostentation which is prohibited. It includes hidden glorification of people [and their thoughts of him] yet it is less than ostentation in the foundation of acts of worship.

Section Two:

Ostentation is More Hidden than a Black Ant

Know that there is both clear (jalli) and hidden (kaffî) ostentation (riya’).

Clear ostentation is: that which encourages action.

There is another kind of riya’ which is not as clear as the above mentioned type.

It does not encourage a man to do an action but it may undermine the value of an action which he intended for Allâh alone. Like one who makes it his habit to pray tabajjûd, yet when a guest comes he becomes lax in regards to it.

More hidden than that type of riya’ is that which neither affects man doing an action nor makes it easier for him to do it, yet it is rooted (mustabtanûn) in his heart. A servant of Allâh could be sincere in his action, and not intend riya’, and in fact hates it, but when people come to know of his secret righteous action he likes that and this encourages him to worship in his heart. This happiness [with the people knowing] indicates hidden riya’, and if he was not aware of the people coming to know of his actions he would not develop
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dthis happiness (surur). A person knowing about him instils in him joy (farh) and happiness, and then if he feels this enjoyment of people knowing about him—he does not counter this with disdain, rather he has a hidden movement [of ostentation for their benefit].

More hidden than that still, is the riya' wherein a man does not want people to know about his worship or actions, yet when people see him he likes for people to greet him with the salutations of peace and to be met with honour and estimation, so that they fulfil his needs, deal with him good and make room for him. If they do not do this for him, he has trouble as if the soul feels that it deserves respect for hidden acts of worship.

As long as the presence or absence of acts of worship are connected to people they will not be free of hidden riya', and all of that is feared to reduce the reward and only the siddiqin are safe from this.

We relayed from Wahb Ibn Munabbih that one of the pious worshippers said to his companion: ‘We have left wealth, property and children out of fear of transgression, yet we fear that we may fall into a greater transgression: that when we meet people we love to be praised on account of our religious status; and that if he has a need he loves to use his religious position [to acquire that need]; and that if he buys something he loves to get a discount based on his religious position.’

The sincere ones did not cease fearing hidden riya', and they strove to deceive people away from righteous actions, being careful to hide them more than how people care to hide their immoralities. All of this is in order to make sincere their actions so that Allah will reward them on the Last Day for their sincerity.
The branches of hidden \textit{riya}' are many and cannot be restricted, and whenever a person comprehends from himself a difference between people becoming aware of his acts of worship or not, then he has within him a branch of \textit{riya}'. However, not all branches of it render as worthless the reward or invalidate action, as rather there is some detailed explanation in regards to the matter.

So if it is said: “You do not see any person who is not happy if his acts of obedience are known, so is all of that to be censured?”

The answer to this is: “happiness is divided into that which is praiseworthy and that which is censured.

What is praiseworthy: that he intends to hide acts of obedience and sincerity for Allāh however when people come across his actions he knows that Allāh has caused them to come across them and has manifested to them the beauty of his condition. He thus becomes joyful with this, as also his acts of disobedience have been concealed by Allāh, so his joy is on account of that and not due to gaining people’s praise or wanting prestige in their hearts. When he has sins vile actions concealed in the world, they will likewise be concealed in the Afterlife, as has been mentioned in the hadith.\footnote{The hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Allāh does not conceal a servant in the duniyā except that He also conceals him on the Day of Judgement.” Muslim, #2590 from Abū Hurayrah (radīyAllāhu ‘anhu).}

So if it is said: “What about the hadith of Abū Hurayrah (radīyAllāhu ‘anhu) who said: a man said: “O Allāh’s Messenger, a man does actions and he does it in secret, and when it gets known he likes that. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “He gets two rewards: one for doing it in secret and another for it being known of.””\footnote{The hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Allāh does not conceal a servant in the duniyā except that He also conceals him on the Day of Judgement.” Muslim, #2590 from Abū Hurayrah (radīyAllāhu ‘anhu).}
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Answer: this hadith is weak, it was reported by Tirmidhi\(^{12}\) and some of the people of knowledge explained it meaning: “that he likes people praising him for goodness…”

Muslim solely relayed from the hadith of Abū Dharr (radiyAllahu 'anhu) who said: It was said: “O Allah’s Messenger, do you see that a man does an action of good and the people praise him for it?” The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “That is a glad-tiding for the believer.”\(^{13}\)

Yet if he is pleased for people to know good from him and to be honoured on account of that—then that is \textit{riya}.

Section Three:

The Ostentation which Renders Actions as Worthless, and That Which Does Not

If \textit{riya} presents itself to a servant [of Allah], then:

Either it occurs after finishing an act of worship or before, if it after finishing the act there is apparent happiness without attracting attention to himself—then this does not render the action as worthless. As he could have completed the act with sincerity (\textit{ikhlas}), regardless of what occurred to him subsequently [of \textit{riya}], especially if he neither made it apparent nor spoke of it. As for if he spoke about it after completing it and made it apparent—then this is feared for. Most often within his heart will be a type of \textit{riya} when he begins the action. In this case he is safe from \textit{riya} but deficient in reward, for there are

\(^{12}\) Al-'Irāqī stated in \textit{al-Mughni}, vol.3, p.308:

Reported by al-Bayhaqi in \textit{Shu'ub al-Imān} from the narration of Dhakwān from Ibīn Mas'ūd (radiyAllahu 'anhu) and the narration of Tirmidhī and Ibn Ḥībān from the narration of Dhakwān from Abū Ḥurayrāh (radiyAllahu 'anhu).

Tirmidhī said of the hadith “\textit{gharib} [meaning by that: weak]” as we have ascertained in our book \textit{al-Radd al-'Ilmi}, may Allah ease its publication. It was also weakened by our Shaykh, al-'Allāmah al-Albahānī in \textit{Da'īf al-Jāmi'}, #4790.

\(^{13}\) Muslim, #2642
seventy levels between secret (ṣīr) action and open (ʿalāniyā) action.

Or this occurs before finishing an act of worship, such as the prayer which he begins with sincerity. If he just has mere happiness, then this does not affect the action, yet if ʿrīyaʾ is the motive for the action, like lengthening the prayer so that people can see him, then this renders his reward as worthless.

As for what accompanies an act of worship, like when one begins the prayer intending ʿrīyaʾ and if he completes it on that without relying on it [subsequently], along with feeling remorse for doing that, he has to repeat it, and Allāh’s knows best.

Section Four:
The Remedy for Ostentation and the Way to Cure the Heart from it

You have now come to know that ʿrīyaʾ renders actions as worthless and the reason is that it is hated unto Allāh as it is of the destructive traits. One should strive earnestly in eliminating it.

Treating it is of two levels:
Firstly: uprooting it from its foundation
Secondly: avert it as soon as it arises

First Level: Know that the foundation of ostentation is love of repute and position, and when this is examined in details it goes back to three factors: loving the delight of praise (ḥubb ladhha al-hamd); fleeing (fīrār) from the pain of censure and avarice (tamaʾ) for what people have.

What testifies to this is what is relayed in the Two Šāhihs from Abū Mūsā (rādīy Allāhu ‘anhu) that he said: a man came to the Prophet (ṣallalla huwa alaikum wa sallam)
and said: "O Allah's Messenger, do you view that a man who fights so that it be said 'he is brave'; and fights for integrity and fights just to show off—which of them are fighting in the path of Allah?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever fights to make the word of Allah the Uppermost, he is the one who has fought in Allah's Path."14

A person may not crave praise, yet he dislikes censure like a coward between two brave people, he stays firm just so as not to be censured. And a person could give a fatwa without knowledge just so as not to be censured by being known as ignorant.15 These three matters are that which cause ostentation.

Its cure is for a person to only intend something if he thinks it is good and beneficial for him either now or later. If he knows that it is delightful for the time being but harmful in the long-term, it will become easy for him to stay away from it, like one who knows that honey is delicious yet if it becomes clear to him that there is poison in it he stays away from it. One also has to know the harms within ostentation and how it conflicts with the heart’s rectification, affects one’s position in the Afterlife and results in punishment and disgrace. This is along with his concerns about people and pleasing them, yet no matter how much one group may be happy with a person, another group will never be happy.

Whoever seeks people’s pleasure in angering Allah, Allah will be angry with him. Furthermore, what use to him is their praise if it incurs Allah’s Anger? Their praise neither increases him in provision nor time, nor will it aid him on the day of his poverty. Likewise, their censure does not harm him nor hasten any reward, nor delay any provision. Their praise does not increase him in power or reward,

14 Reported by Bukhārī, vol.6, pp.21, 22; Muslim, #1904; Tirmidhi, #1646; Abū Dāwūd, #2517; Nasāʾī, vol.6, p.23; Ibn Mājah, #2783.
15 This is of the calamities among many du’āt and claimants to knowledge during our times.
16 Al-Bayhaqī, vol.8, p.330; Tahāwī, Mushkīl at-‘Āthār, vol.1, p.20; Hākim , vol.4, p.244 from Ibn ʿUmar (raḍy Allāhu ‘anhu) with a good chain of transmission.
and they do not possess the ability to give life or bring death.

As for avarice for what the people have, he removes this trait by knowing that Allah is the One Who subjects the hearts by withholding and giving, and that there is no provider except Allah. Whoever covets what the people want has exposed himself to dishonour and humiliation, so how can a person leave what is with Allah for a false hope?

Of the beneficial remedies is for a person to hide the acts of worship that he does, there is no remedy for ostentation like hiding ones actions. This is difficult when a person first starts striving, yet if he is patient, and the weightiness of the worship is relieved from him Allah will extend help for him. Thus, a person has to strive.

Second Level: averting ostentation within acts of worship by removing its roots from the heart and despising people’s praise. Shaytân does not leave while he is doing an act of worship, rather he slowly introduces the steps to ostentation.

Section Five:
The Concession for Manifesting Acts of Obedience and the Concession for Hiding Sins

As for the first [i.e. the concession for manifesting acts of obedience], then you should know that the secrets of actions are the benefit of sincerity and salvation from riya’, and in manifesting the benefit of guidance, people are encouraged to do good.

Of the actions which are not possible to keep secret are hajj and jihad.

The one who manifests his actions has to guard his heart so that
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it does not contain love of hidden *riya*, or that he intends people to follow him.

It is inappropriate for a weak person to be deceived by that, as such a weak person is like a drowning person who is a poor swimmer and is followed by other people drowning as they think that he is a good swimmer, and this leads to all of them drowning together.

As for the one who is strong and his sincerity is complete, then the people will be minuscule in his eyes and both their praise and censure will be the same. For such a person there is no harm in him manifesting his actions of obedience as exhorting to do good is itself good.

It has been reported that a group of the Salaf used to manifest some of their noble condition so that they may be followed in such a noble practice. As for the concession for hiding one’s sins, then some may possibly think that hiding sins is *riya* when this is not the case.

If a truthful person who is not a show-off commits an act of disobedience he is to cover it as Allāh hates the manifestation of disobedience and loves that it be concealed. It has been relayed from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Whoever commits any of these vile acts should conceal it with Allāh’s covering."[16]

When such a person commits an act of disobedience his love of Allāh does not leave his heart and this comes from the strength of *iman*. He has to dislike the manifestation of sin from others, this is the effect of his truthfulness.

Also of these effects is that he may dislike being censured but only in so far as it preoccupies his heart away from obeying Allāh, and as

people by nature are harmed by censure. Yet in the same way he has to also dislike praise as it too preoccupies from Allāh and dhikr, this would also indicate the strength of his imān.

Section Six:
Abandoning Acts of Obedience Out of Fear of Ostentation

As for abandoning acts of obedience out of fear of riya', then if the motive for this is out of obedience other than the religion, then this should be ignored as it is in fact an act of disobedience.

Yet if the motive is based on the religion, and out of being sincere to Allāh, then it is inappropriate for him to abandon action as the motive is the religion.

If any notions of those acts of obedience somehow being for show, then this is a notion which is of the plots of Shaytān.

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha’ī said: “If Shaytān comes to you during Salah and says to you: it is for show, then make your Salah longer.”

As for what has been relayed from some of the Salaf that they would leave an act of obedience out of fear of riya’, then this would be if their souls sensed any adornment in an act of worship then they would cut-off the act.
Section Seven:
What is Accurate of a Servant’s Activity on Account of People Watching and What is Inaccurate

A man could stay up a night with those who pray tāḥajjud and pay most of the night, yet his own habit is to pray at night for an hour, yet he follows their practice [of praying the whole night], or if they fast then he fasts—yet if not for their presence he would not participate in such activity.

Someone could think that this is ṭaḥārā’, yet it is not at all, there rather needs to be some explanation in this matter. Every believer desires to perform acts of worship but obstacles may distract him and he may become heedless. But maybe when he sees others [performing acts of worship] it is a reason for the removal of that heedlessness and its accompanying distractions.

If a person is comfortable at home where is sleeps on a bed and has enjoyment with his wife [he may get distracted from acts of worship], yet if he was then to sleep in a strange place then these preoccupations would disappear and he would achieve motivation for acts of good, such as seeing the worshipers.

Likewise, fasting at home may be difficult for him yet when he is somewhere else he does not have the same difficulty. In such instances, Shayṭān wants to block him from acts of obedience.

These are the flaws of ṭaḥārā’ so be aware of them and check your intention as ṭaḥārā’ is more hidden than a black ant.

The follower has to also make sure that his heart is attached to contentment with Allāh’s Knowledge in all of his acts of obedience. The one who fears Allāh and has hope in Him is the only one who
is content with that and he must not give in to despair of not being sincere and say things like: “Only the strong ones are able to be sincere, while I am not of those”. Such statements and feelings lead him to give up striving (mujahada) to obtain sincerity.

Ibrihim Ibn Adham said: “I learnt true understanding from a monk called Sam'an [Simeon]. I went to his monastery and said to him: how long have you been here? He replied: “seventy years.” I said: what do you eat? He replied: “every night I eat himsah [a chick-pea seed]” I said: what needs has been removed from your heart which has sufficed you with such food? He said: “Do you see that monastery next to you?” I said: yes. He said: “They come once a day every year, adorn my monastery and circumbulate it, glorifying me by doing so. So whenever worship becomes heavy on me I remember the honour of that hour, and I put up with the effort of the whole year for the honour of one hour, so O upright person you should put up with the effort of an hour in exchange for eternal honour.” True understanding then became established in my heart. Sam'an then said: “Shall I increase you with more?” I said: yes. He said: “Descend from the hermitage.” I descended and he handed down to me a rikwah [small vessel made from leather] full of twenty chick-pea seeds and then said to me: “Go inside the monastery.” When I went inside the monastery the Christians were gathered and they said to me: “O upright person, what did the old man give you?” I said: some of his sustenance. They said: “what are you doing with it? We actually have more right to it, so what is your price for it all?” I said: twenty dinars. Then they gave me twenty dinars and I went back to the monk, he said to me: “You erred, for if you would have asked for twenty thousand dinars they would have given it to you. This is the honour of the one who does not worship him. So look how the honour is for those who worship him O upright person. Proceed to worship your Lord.”’’

This makes clear that the souls’ feelings are a great honour in the hearts and is what motivates isolation, this is a tremendous flaw. The
sign that one is free from it is when he regards both the creation and animals on the same level, and that his action is the action of one alone on earth. If any weak thoughts come to him Allâh repels them.

And Allâh knows best.
THE NINTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of Pride and Self-Conceit

Section One:
On Pride (kibr)

Allâh Most High says,

سَأَصِرِّفْ عَنْ أُمَلِيِّنَّ يَاكُرَابُونَا فِي الأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

“I will divert My signs from those who show arrogance (yatakabbaruna) upon the earth, without right.”

[al-An'âf (7): 146]

And He says,

إِنَّمَا يَلَبِّيُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرَاتِ

“Verily, He does not love the arrogant (mustakbirat).”

[al-Nahl (16): 23]

In an authentic hadith solely relayed by Muslim from Allâh’s Messenger (ﷺ) that he said: “He who has a grain of pride (kibr) in his
heart will not enter Paradise.”¹

In the Two Şahih Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Hellfire has said: I have been ignited for the arrogant (mutakabbinin).”²

He also said (ﷺ): “The tyrants (jabbirin) and arrogant (mutakabbinin)³ will be gathered on the Day of Judgement in the form of grain strewn under feet that people will walk upon.”⁴

Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah (rahimahullah) stated: ‘Whoever’s disobedience is in regards to desire (shahwa) will incline to repent as Ādam (‘alayhis-salam) disobeyed due to his desire and was forgiven. Yet if one’s disobedience is as a result of pride (kibr), then a curse on him is feared as Iblis disobeyed based on pride (mustakbaran) and was cursed.’

In the Two Şahih the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “Whoever drags his thobe out of arrogance then on the Day of Judgement Allāh will not look at him.” Abū Bakr (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) said: ‘O Allāh’s Messenger, one side of my lower garment (iżār) drags down unless I am cautious [is this to be included]?’ Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “This is not done out of pride (kuyalad’).”⁵

Know that pride is an inner characteristic (kbuluq bdtin) from which actions emanate and then manifest on the limbs (Jawdrih). [The arrogant] views himself as being above others in perfect attributes (sifāt

¹ Verification mentioned prior.
² Bukhārī, vol.8, p.458; Muslim, #2846; Tirmidhi, #2564—from Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu).
³ Al-‘Irāqī stated in al-Mughnr. ‘al-Bazzār reported it without the word “tyrants” and its isnad is ḥasan.’
⁴ Its basis is in Bukhārī, vol.10, p.223; Muslim, #2085 from Ibn ’Umar (radiyAllahu ‘anhum); however the addition within it which mentions Abū Bakr (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) has not been reported by Muslim; also reported by Nasā’ī, vol.2, p.299; Ahmad, vol.2, pp.5, 10; Abū Dawūd, #4085.
⁵ Refer to the comments of Sh. al-Albānī in Mukhtasar al-Shama’il al-Muhammadiyah, p.10.
al-kamāl), at which point he is to be deemed as arrogant (mutakabbir). Conceit ('ujb) develops from this, he views himself as above others and whenever a person look at himself with the eye of greatness he will begin to despise others and view them as being like donkey compared to him.

The flaw of pride is immense and many notables have been destroyed as a result of it, and it rarely even leaves the pious worshipers (‘ubbad), ascetics (zuhhād) and scholars (‘ulāma). How can it not be a flaw when the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “He who has a grain of pride (kibr) in his heart will not enter Paradise.”

Pride prevents a person attaining the characteristics of the believers (akhlāq al-mu’minin) as he will be unable to love for the believers what he loves for himself and he will be unable to be humble (tawādhu) and unable to abandon malice (hiqād), envy (hasad), anger (ghadab), restrain anger (każm al-ghayd), accept advice (qubūl al-nush), avoid despising and backbiting people. In short, he is subject to all blameworthy characteristics.

Of the worst forms of pride is that which prevents one from benefiting in terms of knowledge (‘ilm), accepting the truth (qubūl al-haqq) and submitting to it (inqiyād labu).6

Understanding may reach the arrogant but he does not exert himself to accept the truth, as He Most High said:

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\text{“And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness.”}
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[al-Naml (27): 14]

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6 If the Muslims, preachers and scholars removed this trait from them their differences would be removed and they would become one hand against others.
And He says,

“…They said, ‘Should we believe two men like ourselves?’”

[al-Mun’mun (23): 47]

And He says,

“…They said, ‘You are not but men like us.’”

[Ibrahim (14): 10]

And there are many other verses similar regarding arrogance unto Allâh and His Messenger.

It was mentioned prior that having pride over the servants [of Allâh] is despising them and a person viewing himself as greater than them. This also leads to arrogance towards Allâh’s Commands. Just as Iblîs had pride (kibr) towards Âdam (alayhi-salâm) and rejected his Lord’s instruction to prostrate.

Allâh’s Messenger (ﷺ) explained pride and said: “Pride is: to reject the truth (batr al-haqq) and condescension of others (gamt al-nâs)” The statement “batr al-haqq” denotes disdain and rejection of the Truth, while “gamt al-nâs” implies contempt and condescension of others from amongst mankind.
Section Two:
The Categories of Pride

Know that the scholars and the worshipers are of three levels regarding the flaw of pride:

FIRST LEVEL: that pride is firmly established in a person’s heart, and he views himself as better than others, except that he strives and humbles himself. Within his heart the tree of pride is well-rooted yet he cuts off its branches.

SECOND LEVEL: that his action manifest to you seeking loftiness in gatherings and primacy over contemporaries and censure of whoever denigrates him. So you will see a scholar turn away from people out of pride, and a worshiper who lives as if he belittles people—both types are ignorant of what Allah admonished His Prophet about, saying,

وَخُضِطَ جَنَابَكَ لَا يَفْلَعُكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”
[al-S̄u'ara' (26): 115]

THIRD LEVEL: that he manifests pride with his tongue via claims, boasting (muṣākīr), purification of the soul (tazkiya al-nafs) and stories of conditions (ḥaqaykat al-ahwal) so as to deem himself above others. Likewise, pride (takabbur) in lineage (insāb) wherein whoever has an honourable lineage scorns whoever does not have such a lineage, even if that person has more lofty actions than him.

Ibn `Abbās (radiyAllahu `anhumā) stated: a man said to another: “I am more generous than you.” Yet there is no one who is more generous than anyone else except with taqwā, Allah says,

إِنَّا نَعِمَكُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."  

[al-Injurāt (49): 13]  

Likewise, pride in regards to wealth, beauty, power, abundant followers and the like. Pride based on wealth largely occurs among kings, merchants and the like.  

Pride on account of beauty largely occurs among women and this leads them to belittling other women, backbiting, gossiping and fault-finding.  

As for pride due to having followers and supporters, then this occurs among kings who have many soldiers and among scholars who have many people who benefit from them.  

In summary, all which can possibly be thought as being a perfect trait, even though in himself it is not perfect, is possible to be boasted over. To the extent that a sinner could be proud of drinking alcohol and immorality as he thinks that it is perfection.  

Know that pride is apparent in a person’s appearance, his statements, voice, tones, speech and even in his walking, standing, sitting, movements, moments of silence and in all of his actions.  

Of the aspects of the arrogant (muṭakkabīr) is: That he loves people to stand for him: whether he is coming or while he is sitting—both of which are prohibited. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever loves that men stand for him then let him await his seat in the Hellfire.” This is the practice of the non-Arabs and the arrogant.  

7 Bukhārī, al-Adab al-Mufrad, #977; Abū Dāwūd, #5229; Tirmidhī, vol.2, p.125; Aḥmad, vol.4, pp.93, 100—from Mu‘āwiyyah (radi-Allah ‘anhu) with a saḥīh chain of transmission.  
8 [TN]: Unfortunately, it is currently a common practice among the Arabs today!
Secondly: standing when people come, and the Salaf did not do this.

Anas (radiy Allāhu 'anhu) said: ‘There was no person more beloved to us than Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). If they saw him they would not stand for him as they knew he disliked that.’

The scholars have said that: ‘It is recommended to stand for one’s parents and for the just Imām, and for the virtuous people’ — this became a symbol among virtuous people. If a person abandons this for one who deserves it, he will not be safe from humility and belittling him, this will instil hatred (hīqā).

The recommendation of this for the one standing does not prevent it being disliked by the one who is being stood for, in that he may deem himself as being unworthy of such regard.

Of the features of the arrogant is: that he does not walk except that he has someone walking behind him.

Also, that he does not visit anyone out of pride over people.

Also, that he rejects anyone sitting next to him or walking with him.

It was narrated that Anas (radiy Allāhu ‘anhu) said: ‘If a female slave among the people of Madīnah were to take the hand of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), he would not take his hand from hers until she had taken him wherever she wanted in Madīnah so that her need

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10 There is no proof for such a recommendation as has been explained by our Shaykh al-Albānī in Siyīlat ul-Abādith al-Sahībah, vol.1, pp.627-632.
may be met.'

Ibn Wahb said: ‘I sat next to ‘Abdu'l-‘Azīz Ibn Abī Ruwwād, my thigh touching his; then he took my garment, pulled it towards him and said: ‘why do you do with me that which you do with tyrants? I do not know a man worse than me.”

Of being arrogant also is: for a man not to even lift a hand to do any housework, this is contrary to the way of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ).

Also of the signs of being arrogant, that he does not carry his own shopping back to his house, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) would buy something and then carry it himself. Abū Bakr (rādīAllāhu ‘anhu) used to carry cloth to the market to trade with. ‘Umar (rādīAllāhu ‘anhu) used to buy meat and carry it back to his house. ‘Ali (rādīAllāhu ‘anhu) used to buy dates and carry them back to his house, and once a man said to him: ‘Shall I carry it for you?’ ‘Ali replied: ‘No, the head of the family has more right to carry.’

Abū Hurayrah (rādīAllāhu ‘anhu) one day came from the market carrying some wood, and at that time he was the Caliph of Marwān. A man said to him: ‘Make way for the Amīr.’

Whoever wants to negate pride and utilise humility has to look at the sirah of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), as indicated prior in the ‘Chapter on the Ethics of Earning a Livelihood’.12

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11 Ibn Mājah, #4177; Ahmad, vol.3, p.174, 216—and in the isnād is ‘A‘īb Ibn Zayd and he is weak. Also narrated on the authority of Anas (rādīAllāhu ‘anhu) that he said: ‘Any of the female slaves of Al-Madinah could take hold of the hand of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) and take him wherever she wished.’ Bukhārī, #6072—The Prophet (ﷺ) was the most humble of people having not the least of pride, and he used to help all and was very kind to everybody.

Section Three:
An Exposition on the Remedy for Pride and acquisition of Humility

Know that pride is of the destructive qualities and curing it is an individual obligation (jārī ḍayn). Upon you are two levels in curing it:

The first Level: uprooting it and cutting it off its branches, by a person knowing himself and his Lord. If he truly knows himself, he will know that he is more abased than all others and that it is enough for him to look at the origin of his existence after non-existence, from mud; then from a sperm-drop which emits from where urine exits; and then from a leech-like clot; and then from an altered lump of flesh; and then he became something to be mentioned. This was all after being solid and neither hearing, nor seeing, neither sensing anything nor moving. His death was approaching before his life began, his weakness before his strength and his poverty before his enrichment. Allāh indicates this by saying:

"From what substance did He create him? From a sperm-drop He created him and destined for him."
[‘Abasa (80): 18-19]

Then He said:

"Then He eased the way for him."
[‘Abasa (80): 20]

With His saying,

"and We made him hearing and seeing."
[al-Insān (76): 2]
Allāh will bring him to life after death, make his appearance good and sends him to the world, giving him food, drink, clothing and strength. Whoever has this as an origin, how can he possibly be arrogant (kibr) and boastful (fakr)?

For later he will then die and return to being a solid mass, he will end up in mud, his limbs will become moist, his bones will rot and worms will eat his corpse. He will return to being dust from which crockery and pottery is made from. Then after a while, his limbs will be gathered, he will be prepared for the Day of Resurrection, and he will see the earth as a plain level, the mountains crumbled, the heavens cleft asunder, the stars scattered, the sun folded, dark starts, Hellfire close and the records open. It will be said to him:

أقرأ كتبك فإن نقشت اليوم عليك حساباً

"Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant.’’

[al-İsrā’ (17): 14]

Of the practical remedies of pride and arrogance therefore is humility to Allāh and His servants, this is via perseverance in adhering to the character of the humble ones.

The second Level: what is related to pride based on lineage (insāb), whoever is prone to this should remember that his father, grandfather and ancestors came from a despised sperm-drop, while is distant ancestor came from mud. As for the one who suffers from pride based on beauty then such a person should inspect their own inner with intelligence; while the one who suffers from pride based on power should realise that if a part of his body was to become injured he would be rendered totally incapable.

While whoever suffers from pride based on riches (ghina’) should contemplate (ta’ammul) on the character of the Jews and how they
are wealthier than him, and with that away with the nobility with which they boast!

As for the one who has pride based on knowledge ('ilm) which he may possess, then he should know that the Allāh's proof upon the scholar is weightier than what is upon an ignorant person and thus his situation is more dangerous.

One should therefore know that pride is only appropriate for Allāh, glory unto Him, as for a human being becoming arrogant then this only brings about Allāh's Anger on him. Allāh could however love a person if the person is humble unto Him, and likewise Allāh loves all means to cure pride by doing actions which are contrary to pride and instil humbleness.

Know that these characteristics are like other characteristics and thus have two extremities and a median:

- An extremity which inclines towards increased pride
- An extremity which inclines to deficiency, which is known as that which is lowly and humiliated
- The median which is known as "humility" (tawāḍu') and is praiseworthy. That one is humble without being humiliated. The best part of matters is its middle. Whoever puts himself before his contemporaries is arrogant and whoever puts himself after them is humble. If a cobbler came to the gathering of a scholar, and the scholar recognised him, spoke with him, then gave him his shoes and walked with him to the door, this would be making himself lowly and humiliated—and that is not praiseworthy. Rather, what is praiseworthy is to be just ('adl) and give each their due right. Moreover, his humbleness towards a common man is to be kind and gentle (rifq) with him when he asks questions, answer his invitation and fulfil his need without despising him, and Allāh knows best.
Section Four:
On Self-Conceit (‘ujb)

On the authority of Abū Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “While a man was strutting with two garments while admiring himself, Allāh caused the earth to swallow him up wherein he will be submerged up until the Day of Judgement.”¹²

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “There are three destructive sins: miserliness which is obeyed; a desire which is followed and a man pleased with himself.”¹³

It was reported from Ibn Mas'ūd (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) that he said: “Destruction is in two: self-conceit (‘ujh) and despair (qunûf).”

This is because happiness (sa'āda) cannot be attained except after exerting effort, but the one who despairs (qānîf) does not even bother to make any effort because of his despairing. The one who is amazed with his own self also feels that he does not have to make any effort whatsoever as he has what he wants.

Al-Mutarrif said: ‘That I remain the night asleep and awake regretful is more beloved to me than remaining the night standing [in prayer] and awaking amazed with my own self.’

Know that self-conceit invites to pride and arrogance as it is of the causes of pride, and arrogance is born from self-conceit, and arrogance has numerous flaws with the creation and the Creator.

¹² Bukhārī, vol.10, p.222; Muslim, #2088
¹³ Al-Bazzār, #80; al-'Uqaylī, vol.3, p.447; al-Qadā‘ī, Masmād al-Shī‘ah, #325; Abū Nu‘aym, vol.2, o.343 from Anas and it is weak however it has other supporting narrations from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar (radiyAllahu 'anhu) and others form which Imam al-Albānī judged to be authentic in Sīsīlāb al-Sahīhah, #1802
Section Five:  
The Remedy for Self-Conceit

Know that Allāh is the One who has favoured you, not the action of a person who does action, or the knowledge of a scholar, or the beauty of a beautiful person or the wealth of a rich person—all of that is due to Allāh’s virtue, while a human is merely a location in which Allāh places a favour and this in itself is a favour from Allāh.

In the Two Šahihs from the hadith of Abū Hurayrah (raddiyy Allāhu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (ṣallī Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “The actions of any of you will not grant you entry into Paradise.” They asked: “Even you O Messenger of Allāh?” He replied: “Even me, unless Allāh bestows His Mercy and Virtue on me.”

Know that self-conceit is one of the reasons which lead to pride, which has been mentioned prior along with the cures.

Of that is self-conceit with ones lineage, like a noble person who imagines he will be saved on account of the nobility of his forefathers. The remedy for this is for him to know that whenever he opposes his forefathers yet thinks that he is actually in agreement with them, that he is being ignorant, and even if he has followed them correctly he would still be ignorant as self-conceit was not from their character.

In fact, they were only honoured due to their praiseworthy acts of obedience (taʿāt mahmūda) and not due to their lineage, Allāh says,

"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you."

[al-Ḥujurāt (49): 13]

Bukhārī, vol.10, p.109; Muslim, #2816; Nāṣār, vol.8, p.121
The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “O Fāṭimah, I will not be able to suffice you from Allāh whatsoever.”

So if it is said: ‘the noble person hopes to have intercession (shafā‘a) based on his close relation.’

The answer: ‘all Muslims hope for intercession, and a person could achieve intercession after being burnt in the Hell-fire, and sins could be so immense that intercession will not save him.’

In the Two Šâhîhs from the hadîth of Abu Hurayrah (radiyAllahu ‘anhu) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I will not find that any of you come on the Day of Judgement with a bleating camel around his neck saying: ‘O Messenger of Allâh help me’ and I say ‘I have no authority at all, for I have conveyed.’”

The one who is entrenched in sin and depends solely on intercession is like a sick person who is entrenched in desires and relies on a skilled doctor to cure him—this is nothing but pure ignorance. For a doctor’s striving can benefit with some sicknesses but not all.

What clarifies this is that all of the Companions (radiyAllahu ‘anhîm) feared the Afterlife, so how can a person who is not even of their level begin to depend on anything?!

There is also self-conceit with one’s own erroneous opinion (ra‘î), as Allâh says,

غيثا حسباً

“Then is one to whom the evil of his deed has been made
The remedy for this is more intense than it is for anything else. Whenever one is self-conceit with his own opinion, he will not leave it based on a person advising him, so how can he leave it when he thinks it is salvation (najât)? The cure for this is for him to always criticise his own views and not to become deluded unless he has some decisive proof from the Book and Sunnah or a logical proof based on the conditions of evidence (which does not oppose the Book and Sunnah)—this will not be known unless he sits with the people of knowledge who act by the Book and Sunnah.

It takes precedence for the one who has not dedicated himself to seeking knowledge, is for him to not delve into differences of opinion, rather he stops at having sound comprehensive belief, that Allāh is One with no partner,

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\text{“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”}
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\[\text{[al-Shūrā (42): 11]}\]

And that His Messenger is truthful in what he came with and to believe in what is in the Qur'an without investigation, and to dedicate his life to taqwā and acts of obedience. For whenever he delves into differences of opinion and that which he cannot understand, he will be destroyed.
Of the people are those who are deluded (ghurûr) by the worldly life, and the ones who commit acts of disobedience, though they may possess sound belief, can concur with the non-Muslim (kuffâr) in this delusion due to preferring the world over the Afterlife except that their affair is less than that of the non-Muslims from the aspect that the foundation of faith (asl al-imân) prevents them from eternal punishment.

Some of the people who commit disobedience can be deluded and say: ‘Allâh is Kind, so we will rely on His Pardon.’ While some could be deluded on account of their righteous forefathers.

Some of the Scholars have said: ‘Whoever hopes for something will seek it, and whoever fears something will flee from it. Whoever hopes for pardon while persisting [in sins] is deluded (maghrûr).’

One should know that though Allâh has vast mercy (rahma), He is
also harsh in punishment (shadid al-'iqāb) for He has judged that the disbelievers eternally dwell in the Hellfire though their kufr does not harm Him at all. He may test His believing servants with illness in the worldly life yet He, glory unto Him, is Ever-Able to remove such sicknesses. How then can we not be fearful of Him?

Fear (khawf) and hope (raja‘) are two drives which motivate action, whatever does not motivate action is delusion. What explains this is that the hope of most of creation makes them inactive and prefer disobedience.

What is also strange is that the first generation practised and feared, and yet the people of this time believed and became assured. Do you see that they know Allāh’s Generosity [for things] which were not known of by the Prophets and righteous?

As for whoever becomes deluded due to having righteous forefathers, then maybe the story of Nūh (‘alayhis-salām) and his son needs to be mentioned, and the story of Ibrāhīm (‘alayhis-salām) and his father, and Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his mother.1 Close to this is the delusion of some people with their acts of obedience and disobedience, yet their acts of disobedience are more so. They think that their good actions are more, you will see one of them give a dirham in charity and rely on that, this is like who puts one dirham on a scale with a thousand dirhams in the other pan and hopes that the one dirham will outweigh a thousand.

And of the people are those who actually think that their acts of obedience are more than their acts of disobedience, due to memorising their good deeds and not memorising their bad deeds. This is

1 Perhaps he is alluding to what has been relayed by Muslim, #971; Abū Dawūd, #3234 and Nasā‘ī, vol. 4, p. 90 from Abū Hurayrah (ra’dy Allāhu ‘anhu) who said: Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “I sought permission to seek forgiveness for my mother and I was not given permission for this; and I sought permission visit her grave and He gave me permission.”
like one who seeks Allâh’s forgiveness and praises Him a hundred times a day yet spends most of the day backbiting others. Such a person will look at the merits of *tasbih* and *istighfar* yet will not look at the punishment for backbiting (*ghiba*).

Section One:

**Delusion Which Affects the Scholars and the Worshippers**

Delusion largely affects four categories of people:
- The Scholars (*'ulamâ’)*
- The worshippers (*'ubbâd)*
- the Şûfis (*mutâsawwifâh*)
- and the wealthy (*aghniyâ’*).

The first category:

**The Scholars (*'ulamâ’*)**

As for the people of knowledge (*ahlul-'ilm*), the deluded of them are different groups:

Of them are those who judge by the Divine Legislation (*sharîyya*) and intellectual (*'aqliyya*) sciences, yet neglect actions of the limbs (*jawârîh*) and preserving them from disobedience, and adhering them to actions of obedience. They become deluded by their knowledge and think that they have a status with Allâh. Yet if they were to look with the eye of foresight (*'ayn al-basîra*), they would know that knowledge must be accompanied with action, otherwise it will have no regard. Allâh says,

قَدْ أَفْقَحَ مَنْ رَمَيْتَهُمْ

“He has succeeded who purifies it...”

[*al-Shams* (91): 9]

Allâh did not say “*he has succeeded who learns how to purify it.*” And if
Shayṭān tries to delude him with the merits of the people of knowledge then he should remember what has been relayed in regards to the sinful scholar (‘alim al-fājir), and He says,

So his example is like that of the dog: if you chase him, he pants, or if you leave him, he [still] pants.’

[Al-A‘rāf (7): 176]

And He says,

“Like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books].”

[Al-Jumu‘ah (62): 5]

There are other groups who have knowledge and apparent action yet they have not purified their hearts to be absolved of censured characteristics, such as: pride (kibr), envy (hasad), showing-off (riyā’), seeking status (talab al-‘ulū), seeking fame (talab al-shuhra) etc. They have adorned their apparent actions and neglected their inner. They have forgotten the Prophet’s (ﷺ) saying: “Allāh does not look at your features or at your wealth, rather He Looks at your hearts and actions.”

Thus, they focused on actions and not on the hearts even though the heart is at the foundation. They are like a man who cultivates a farm with weeds which spoil the plot so he has to remove the weeds yet instead of taking out the roots he just focuses on the leaves.

Another group knew that their inner characteristics were censured, but due to their self-amazement with their own selves they thought

2 Muslim, #525; Ahmad, vol.2, p.285; Ibn Mājah, #4143; al-Baghawi, #4150 -from Abū Hurayrah (rādy-Allāhu ‘anhu).
that they were devoid of them, and that they were loftier with Allāh than to be tested with that “as that is something which only tests the common people and not those who had reached their level of knowledge”. Thus, if any of the aspects of pride, arrogance and leadership afflicted them, they would say: “this is not pride, rather this is seeking honour for the religion and manifesting the nobility of knowledge and restraining the innovators, and even if I was to wear lowly clothing or sit with the lowly people in gatherings, the enemies of the religion would be happy with my humiliation in which would also be the humiliation of Islām”—he says all of this forgetting ُغُنْر [delusion].

We relayed from 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (radiyAllahu 'anhu) that when he arrived in ِشَام he came to a river and descended from his camel, remove his shoes, held on to them and went into the water with his camel. Abū 'Ubaydah (radiyAllahu 'anhu) said to him: “today you have done something tremendous among the people of the earth.” Then 'Umar slapped him on the chest and said: “Woe to you, if only other than you would have said this O Abū 'Ubaydah. For we were the most lowly and despised of people and Allāh honoured us by His Messenger. Whatever else you seek honour by other than him, Allāh will disgrace you.”

What is also strange is that those who are deluded seek honour of the worldly life by expensive garments and strutting, if the very thought that they may be doing that out of ِرِيْجاء comes to their mind they repel it by saying: “my intent is to manifest knowledge and action so that people follow me in the religion”—yet if this was his intent he would be joyous with people following other than him. As whoever intends people’s rectification will be joyous at their rectification at the hands of whoever it may be.

Some of them could be deluded to the point that he takes ḥarām wealth and says “this wealth has no owner so it is appropriate to be
used for the benefit of the Muslims, and you are the leader of the Muslims”—he could thus be deluded by this deception (talbis) from the angle of how he deems himself.

Or he could be a profuse liar (dajjāh) when he says “this wealth has no owner” when the reality is that there is some sort of mixing in the wealth which in any case would not remove it from being harām. He could even know from whom the wealth was illegally taken.

Another group emphasised knowledge, purified their limbs and adorned them with acts of obedience and they purified their hearts from ostentation (riyā'), envy (hasad), pride (kibr) and the likes. However there still remained in their hearts hidden defects from the plots of Shayṭān which they neglected. Thus, you will see one of them stay up all night and tire himself all day in gathering areas of knowledge and articulating them well. He may think that the motive for this is to maintain the manifestation of Allāh’s religion, yet the real motive for all of that is to seek fame and reputation. And perhaps his writings are not devoid of him praising himself either frankly via void claims or via defaming others by claiming he is better than them or that he has more knowledge than them.3

Such hidden character flaws are only comprehended by the astute and strong, it is not the domain of the likes of us who are weak, yet the weakest level is for a person to know his own faults and work to rectify them. Whoever is pleased by his good deeds and saddened by his bad deeds—then his affair is accurate. This is as opposed to a person who purifies himself and thinks that he is of the best of people.

Of them are those who restrict themselves to knowledge of legal verdicts (fatāwa) within governmental and personal contexts, and

3 [TN]: This is common in this age!
engross themselves in the personal details which occur between people. They could even be lax in apparent actions and commit disobedience such as backbiting and looking at what is prohibited, or going to places which are prohibited and they do not guard their hearts from pride, envy, showing-off and other destructive qualities. Such people are deluded from two aspects:

Firstly: action ('aml)
Secondly: knowledge ('ilm)

The reason for their delusion is that they hear what has been mentioned about the greatness of fiqh yet they do not comprehend that true fiqh is initially related to fiqh of Allāh and understanding His Attributes, so as to instil fear (ka'if) and taqwa. Allāh says,

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\text{“For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion.”} 
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\text{[al-Tawbah (9): 122]} 
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This is like one who restricts himself to the knowledge of differences of opinion and has no interest other than disputation, one-upmanship and eristic dialogue. Such a person is worse than the type above, for argumentation over fiqh matters is an innovation which was not known of by the Salaf.

Another group of scholars preoccupied themselves with 'ilm ul-kalām and argumentation (jadat) over desires, and refuting the opposer.

These were of two types: a group who were misguided and a group who were right. The misguided group called to innovation while the group who were right called to the Sunnah yet delusion encompassed both.
As for the misguided group, then their delusion was apparent, while with the group who were right [in their calling to the Sunnah] then their delusion was due to thinking that argumentation was of the most important matters and the most virtuous thing which gained nearness to Allāh in His religion. They claimed that no one will be able to complete his religion without investigation, and that whoever believed in Allāh and His Messenger without being able to logically prove it had deficient imān. Due to this corrupt belief they wasted their lives studying logical arguments.

They blinded themselves and did not refer back to the first generation about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) testified to in terms of their goodness and their primacy over other subsequent people. For they came across many innovations (bid‘ah) and desires (bawa) yet they did not delve into argumentation and disputes, they only spoke in such matters if there was a dire necessity to do so. If they saw a person who persisted in innovation they would boycott him without argumentation.

It has been relayed in a hadith: “A people did not become misguided, after guidance, except that they were given to argumentation.”

Another group preoccupied themselves with admonition, the highest level of them speaking about character (akhlāq), qualities of the heart (sifat al-qalb), fear (kawf), hope (rajā‘), patience (sabr), thankfulness (shukr), reliance (tanwakul), asceticism (zuhd), certainty (yaqin) and sincerity (ikhlas). They thought that if they spoke of these traits (sifāt), which they do not actually have themselves, they would be considered to be of its people. They call to Allāh yet flee from Him at the same time, they are of the most heedless (ghirra) of people.

Of them are those who divert from the obligatory method (mithab) of giving admonitions (wa'z) and utilise word formations and styles in a way which is outside the scope of the Divine Legislation and intellect so as to seek obscurity in speech.

Of them are those who utilise poems of union (wisaal) and firaq separation and their intent with that is to increase screaming and cheering within their gatherings even for corrupt ends—such people are human devils.

Of them are those who engross their time in hearing (samā') hadith and gathering narrations (rawāyah) and strange chains of transmission (asānid) and chains with just a few narrators. They travel the lands and see Shaykhs so that they can say “I relay from so and so” and “I met so and so” and “I have chains (asānid) which no one else has.”

Of them are those who preoccupy themselves with grammar (nabw), linguistics (lugha) and poetry (sha'r) and they claim that they are Scholars of the ummah, when they have just spend their lives studying the details of grammar and language. If they had truly used their minds they would have known that wasting their lives studying the details of the Arabic language is just the same as wasting time studying the details of the Turkish language, except that the Sharī'ah has been relayed in Arabic.

What is sufficient to know from Arabic is knowledge of the obscure terms in the Qur'ān and Hadith, and from grammar that which straightens the tongue. As for immersing oneself in grammar to a point of no end then this preoccupies from that which is more important to know. This is the same entrenchment which is done by those who entrench themselves in correcting the makbārij al-hurūf in tajwid of the Qur'ān—this is delusion.
Second Category:

The Worshipper ('ubbād)

The Heads of Worship and Action, they Are of Different Levels:
A group who neglected the obligations and preoccupied themselves
with the optional (nawāfīl) and the virtues (fadsīl). Perhaps he may go
to excess in regards to the water which he uses for ablution (wudu') as
he thinks by doing so he will be free of satanic whispering (waswas). You
may even see such a person make all forms of excuses to argue
that the water he is using is impure.

This is even though it has been authenticated that the Prophet
(ﷺ) made wudu' from a mushrik's vessel.3

Then there are those who waste so much water that the time for
Ṣalāh elapses.

Then there are those who have satanic whispering in regards to
the takbirat ul-ihram to the extent that they miss the first rak'ah with
the Imam.

Then there are those who waswas in regards to the pronunciation of
the letters (makhārij ul-hurūf) of al-Fātihah and the adhikār, neglecting
reflection on the meanings, this is of the vilest kind of delusion as
people have not been burdened with achieving the makhārij of the
hurūf in recitation except for that which is common in speech. They
are like the one who carry a letter to a ruler and convey it and repeat
it uncritically heedless to the main intent of the letter, such a person
is worthy of expulsion and chastisement.

Another group became deluded by recitation of the Qur'ān, and

3 Part of a long hadith reported by Bukhārī, vol.1, p.379 from 'Imrān.
they may even complete it twice over in a day, their tongues move but their hearts are elsewhere, they do not actual reflect on the meanings and semantics of the Qur'an and do not take admonition from it, they do not contemplate on its instructions and prohibitions—such people are deluded, thinking that the intent of the Qur'an is merely to recite it [on the tongue] alone.

There are those who take delight with their own voices when reciting the Qur'an, yet turn away from the Qur'an’s meanings. In this case, such a person has to make his heart open to reflect on whether his delight with the Qur'an is due to its rhythm, or his voice or the meanings.

Another group became deluded by their abundant fasting yet their fasting does not preserve their tongues from backbiting or from *riya*.

There are also those who become deluded by *hajj* and depart without repaying any due rights, repaying debts, gaining the pleasure of the parents or seeking *halal* provision—all of which they do only after making *hajj*. They may also not give any attention to restraining anger and argumentation whilst on *hajj*, they think that they are upon goodness when in reality they are deluded.

Another group took to instructing the good and forbidding the evil and forgot their own selves, and of them are those who lead people in *Salah* in the Masjid, and if someone arrives who is more knowledgeable than him he does not like it.

Of them are those who call the *adhān* and think that they are doing it for Allah and when anyone else calls the *adhān* when they are not present they do not like it and say “this one is trying to take my

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6 Compare this with what has been relayed in the book *Iqamat al-Injub 'ala Ana'l-Akhbar min al-Ta'alib alayna bi-Bid'ah*.
Of them are those who live next to Makkah or Medinah yet their hearts are still attached to their lands.

There is no action except that it has faults associated with it, and those who are unaware of them may fall into them. Whoever wants to know what they are however should refer to our book and check the faults of *riya* which can occur when one does acts of worship such as fasting, praying and all other acts of nearness to Allāh.

Of them are those who were ascetic in regards to wealth and sufficed with lowly clothing and food along with residing in Masjids. They thought that they had reached a level of *zuhd* while at the same time they were the most severe in their love of leadership and reputation. They left something lesser in harm of two matters and fell into a severe destructive characteristic.

Another group maintained the *nawāfīl* and paid little concern to the obligatory actions, thus some of them were joyous with *Ṣalāt al-Ḍuḥā* and *Ṣalāt al-Layl* yet do not find any delight in the obligatory actions, and do not perform them as soon as they come in. They do not contemplate what the Prophet’s (ṣallī Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) relayed from his Lord: “The ones who are near to Me do not seek nearness to Me by anything like the fulfilment of what has been obligated on them.”

*Part of a hadith reported by Bukhārī, vol.11, p.292 from Abū Hurayrah (radiy Allāhu 'anhu) with the wording “My servant does not seek nearness to Me...”*
Third Category:

The Şūfis (muṭāsawwifāh)

The deluded from them are of different groups:

A group of them were deluded by clothing, words and appearance. They resembled the truthful ones from the Şūfis apparently yet they did not dedicate themselves to striving (mujaḥada) and spiritual training (riyāda). Moreover, they indulged in the ḥarām and took from the wealth of the rulers, and dishonoured each other if they differed on anything—such Şüfyya became deluded by the apparent display [of piety].

These Şūfis are like an old woman who hears of the arrival of heroic soldiers and that their names will be documented in the diwān. She goes to have her name documented and puts on a shield and a helmet on her head and learns some of the heroic chants, along with their clothing and features. She then goes to the military encampment for her name to be documented as a heroic soldier. When the soldiers are lined up however, she is instructed to remove the helmet and shield so that the duelling skills can be tested. When she removes the helmet low and behold it is exposed that she is in fact a chronically ill old woman! It is said to her: “you have just come here to mock the king and his soldiers, take her and throw her to the elephants!”

This will be the condition of such claimants to taṣāwuf on the Day of Judgement when they will be exposed and the covers removed and they will be lined up in front of the Judge who will look at their hearts not at their mere attire and uniform.

Another group claimed to have knowledge of understanding and witness the truth, and to have surpassed the states and reached the rank of proximity [to Allāh], yet they only know the mere names and
terms in regards to all of those matters. You will thus see them think that they have a higher rank of knowledge than the first people and the later people. He will despise the jurists (fuqaha) and the scholars of ḥadith (muhaddithin), not to mention the common people. To the extent that some of them will even mix with common people and utilise these words and terms as if they are speaking from revelation, and in doing so he belittles the Scholars and pious worshippers, claiming to be of those close to Allāh. In reality, such a person is, with Allāh, of the sinful hypocrites and considered a fool and ignoramus with those specialised in the hearts.

Another group of them neglected the Divine Legislation and rejected the rulings, making the haram and halāl equal and some of them even stated that “Allāh is Sufficient from my actions, so why should I tire myself?”

Some of them said: “Actions of the limbs have no value, rather the hearts have to be looked at and our hearts contain intense love of Allāh and have attained His understanding. We delve into the world with our bodies and our hearts are devoted to the divine presence. We fall prey to desires only apparently, not internally with our hearts.”

They claim that they have left the level of the common people and are sufficed from admonishing their own selves with bodily actions. They claim that desires do not block them from the path of Allāh due to their strength in facing such desires. They raise themselves to the level of the Prophets as the Prophets (‘alayhiya-salam) used to cry for years for one sin.

The different types of those who made things permissible for themselves are many, all of that being due to error and whisperings from Shayṭān, Shayṭān deceived them due to their preoccupation with mujāhada before grasping comprehension of knowledge and without sticking to a Shaykh who has knowledge and righteous action worthy
The Tenth Foundation: On the Censure of Self-Delusion, its Categories

of being followed.

Fourth Category:

The Wealthy (aghniyā’)

They are of different types:

A group of them who focused on building masjids, schools, forts, bridges and other constructions which people see. They have their names written on these constructions so that their names will be mentioned forever and for their influence to remain after their deaths. If one of them had to give a dinār, yet not have his name written with that dinār where it was being donated, it would be hard for him to give that dinār! Such a person wants to people’s faces [to turn to him] and does not want Allāh’s Face. Some of them avert wealth in adorning masjids with inscriptions which themselves are forbidden and preoccupy the worshippers.\(^8\)

For the intent of Salāh is humility (khushū’) and having an attentive heart (hadur al-qalb).

If the wealth being used is in itself haram, then this is of the most severe types of delusion. Mālik Ibn Dinār (rahimahullah) said: “A man came to a masjid, and stood at its door and said: ‘the like of me cannot enter the House of Allāh’—then it was written that he was a Siddiq.”

This is how the masjids are to be honoured, that one seeks it becoming polluted by his entry.

Another group hold on to wealth out of miserliness (bukhl) and then preoccupy themselves with bodily acts of worship which do not require spending any wealth, such as fasting, praying and comple-

\(^8\) How common is this today! Millions of dinars are spent on Masjids only for show, Allāh’s Refuge is sought!
ing the Qur’ān. They are deluded as miserliness is destructive and it has overcome their hearts yet they are in need of suppressing this miserliness and spending out their wealth not being preoccupied with extra acts which are not obligated on them.

Of them are those who do not allow themselves to spend out form their wealth except for zakāh. Another group of wealthy people became deluded by attending the gatherings of remembrance thinking that their attendance would suffice them from action when this is not the case.

As the gatherings of remembrance are supposed to inculcate good. Some of them may even hear that which instils fear yet it has no impact on them further than them saying “Yā Salām” or “I seek refuge in Allāh”, paying mere lip service yet thinking that he has attained the objective. Their similitude is like a sick person who goes to the doctor to hear what is wrong with him, or a hungry person who has food described to him, it has no impact on them whatsoever. Likewise, the one who hears of acts of obedience without action, or hears admonitions without it resulting in change, it will be a proof against you.

And if it is said: “what you have mentioned about delusion is almost impossible to be free of”.

Answer: the matter of the Afterlife revolves around the heart and making it right, this is only done by the one who can make right his intention. If a person gives concern to the Afterlife as he gives to the worldly life he will attain it as the Salaf ul-Ṣāliḥ and those who followed them did.

Three things help to get rid of delusion:

- The intellect: which is the foundational light by which a person comprehends the reality of things.
- Understanding: by which a person knows himself, his Lord,
Within the ‘Chapter on Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment’, ‘Chapter on Explanation on Marvels of the Heart’, ‘Chapter on Contemplation’ and ‘Chapter on Patience and Thankfulness’ are signs which describe the soul and how to reach Allah the Glorious.

What can also help to understand the world and the Afterlife is what was mentioned in the section on the censure of the world and the section on death. If these understandings are reached the heart will be motivated with the understanding of Allah and of the Afterlife. An intense love of aspiration for Allah and the Afterlife will thus be instilled, along with an intense aspiration away from the worldly life. The most important matters to him will then be whatever leads him to Allah and benefits him in the Afterlife. If this desire takes over the heart his intention will be corrected in all matters and all forms of delusion will be removed. If love of Allah overcomes his heart to understand Allah and his own self, three matters will be required:

Knowledge, and we mean by this knowledge of how to traverse the path to Allah and what are its pitfalls; and knowledge of what will gain him nearness to Allah and guide him to it, all of that has been mentioned in our book.

In the section of the book which deals with acts of worship and habits will be of use, as it will clarify what he is missing and he will be able to learn manners by the manners of the Divine Legislation.

In the section on the means of destruction, one will know all of the punishments which block the path of Allah and the censured qualities within people.

In the section on the means of salvation, one will come to know of praiseworthy qualities which have to be put in place once the
censured qualities have been removed. If he instils all of the praiseworthy qualities he could be able to be warned of the negative traits which we have alluded to, such as delusion, and Allāh knows best.

If he does all of that, he has to be fearful of Shayṭān trying to deceive him by calling him to seek leadership; and he should be fearful of being safe and assured from Allāh’s Plot.

For that reason it is said: “the sincere ones are upon great danger.”

When Imam Ahmad (rahimahullah) was on his deathbed, he said to Shayṭān: “No, not yet.”

It is inappropriate for fear to ever leave the hearts of the ‘ulīyā’, we ask Allāh for safety from delusion and for a good end, indeed He is Ever-Near (qarīb) and Ever-Answering (mujīb).

With this, the section on the means for destruction is complete and now we will move on to ‘The Purification of the Soul’.

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10 [i.e. the soul has not departed and so long as it is present it is prone to fitna].
