

The Three that follow to the Grave



IBN RAJAB AL-ḤANBALI



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al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī

THE THREE that
FOLLOW to the GRAVE

being a translation of his
Sharḥ ḥadīth yatba'ū al-mayyit thalāth



THE PROPHET (ﷺ) SAID,

“Three things follow the deceased person (to the grave), two of them return, and only one remains...”

[TIRMIDHĪ #3383 AND IBN MĀJAH #3800]

Explanation to the ḥadīth of the
**The Three that
follow to the Grave**

by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū'l-Faraj ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī



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THE AUTHOR

Ḥāfīz Abū'l-Faraj ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī

His Name and Lineage

He is the Imām and Ḥāfīz, Zaynu'l-Dīn 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū-l-Barakāt Mas'ūd al-Sulamī al-Ḥanbalī al-Dimashqī. His agnomen was Abū'l-Faraj, and his nickname was Ibn Rajab, which was the nickname of his grandfather who was born in the month of Rajab.

His Birth and Upbringing

He was born in Baghdād in 736H and was raised in a pious household that was firmly rooted in knowledge, nobility and righteousness. His grandfather, 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan, was one of the scholars of Baghdād who had a circle in which he would teach students ḥadīth using an ancient method for memorisation. Ibn Rajab would attend these lessons of his grandfather on several occasions even though he was just four-five years of age. As for his father, he was also a scholar and *Muhaddith*, well-known for his knowledge and virtue.

His Teachers

He learned and took knowledge from the greatest scholars of his time. In Damascus, he studied under:

- Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, studying closely with him until his death in 751H
- Zaynu'l-Dīn al-'Irāqī, ibn an-Naqīb
- Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Khabbāz
- Dāwūd ibn Ibrāhīm al-'Attār
- Ibn Qāṭī al-Jabal
- Aḥmad ibn 'Abdu-l-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī

In Makkah, he heard from:

- al-Fakhr 'Uthmān ibn Yūsuf al-Nuwayrī

In Jerusalem, he heard from:

- al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Alā'ī

In Egypt, he heard from:

- Ṣadru'l-Dīn Abū'l-Faṭḥ al-Maydūmī
- Nāṣiru'l-Dīn ibn al-Mulūk

and many others.

His Students

Many students of knowledge came to him to study under him. Amongst the most famous of his students were:

- Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanbalī, known as Ibn al-Risām [d. 884H]
- Abū'l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, the *Muḥṭi* of the lands of Egypt [d. 844H]

- Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān al-Mawsilī [d. 844H]
- 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Muqrī'
- Zaynū'l-Dīn 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān ibn Abū'l-Karam, well known as Abū Shī'ar;
- Abū Dharr 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣrī al-Zarkashī [d. 846H]
- al-Qāḍī 'Alā'ū'l-Dīn ibn al-Lahām al-Ba'li [d. 803H], who was the closest of his students to him.
- Aḥmad ibn Ṣayfū'l-Dīn al-Ḥamawī
- and many others.

Ibn Rajab devoted himself to knowledge and spent the vast majority of his time researching, writing, authoring, teaching, and giving legal rulings.

The Scholars Praise for Him

Many scholars praised him for his vast knowledge, asceticism and expertise in the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah said of him, 'He read and became proficient in the various fields of science. He engrossed himself with the issues of the *madhhab* until he mastered it. He devoted himself to the occupation of knowledge of the texts, defects and meanings of the ḥadīth.'¹

Ibn Ḥajr said of him, 'He was highly proficient in the science of ḥadīth in terms of the names of reporters, their biographies, their paths of narration and awareness of their meanings.'²

Ibn Mufliḥ said of him, 'He is the Shaykh, the great scholar,

¹ Ibn Qāḍī al-Shuhbah, *Tārikh*, vol. 3, p. 195.

² ibn Ḥajr, *Inbā'u'l-Ghamr*, vol. 1, p. 460.

the Ḥāfiẓ, the ascetic, the Shaykh of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* and he authored many beneficial works.³

His Written Works

He wrote many beneficial works, some of them outstanding such as *al-Qawā'id al-Kubrā fi'l-Furū'* about which it was said, 'It is one of the wonders of this age.'⁴ His commentary to al-Tirmidhī is said to be the most extensive and best ever written so much so that al-'Irāqī; about whom ibn Ḥajr said, 'He was the wonder of his age'; he would ask for his help when compiling his own commentary to the same book.

Moreover he has many valuable monographs explaining various aḥādīth such as:

- *Sharḥ Ḥadīth Mā Dhī'bāni Jā'ān Ursilā fi Ghanam;*
- *Ikhtiyār al-Awlā Sharḥ Ḥadīth Ikhtisām al-Mala' al-A'lā;*
- *Nūr al-Iqtibās fi Sharḥ Waṣṣiyah al-Nabi li ibn 'Abbās;*
- *Kashfū'l-Kurbah fi Waṣfi Ḥālī Abli-l-Ghurbah.*
- *al-Dhull wa'l-Inkīsār li'l-'Azīz al-Jabbār,* this book has also been published under the title *al-Khushū' fi'l-Salāh.*
- *Ghayāt al-Nafa' fi Sharḥ Ḥadīth Tamthīl ul-Mu'min bi-Khāmat al-Zara'*
- *al-Mahajjah fi Sayri'l-Dulja*

In exegesis his works include:

- *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Ikhlās;*
- *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Fātiḥah;*
- *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Naṣr;*

³ *al-Maqṣad al-Arshad*, vol. 2, p. 81.

⁴ ibn 'Abdu'l-Hādī, *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāt ibn Rajab*, p. 38.

- *I'rāb al-Basmalah*
- *al-Istighnā' bi'l-Qur'ān.*

In ḥadīth his works include:

- *Sharḥ Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*
- *Fathu'l-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*
- *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa'l-Ḥikam*

In *fiqh* his works include:

- *al-Istikbrāj fi Ahkām al-Kharāj,*
- *al-Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyyah.*

In biographies his works include:

- The monumental *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāti'l-Hanābilah*
- *Mukhtaṣar Sīrah 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz*

In exhortation his works include:

- *Latā'if al-Ma'ārif fimā li-Mawāsīm al-'Ām min al-Wadhā'if*
- *al-Farq baynan al-Naṣīḥah wat-Ta'yīr*
- *al-Takhwīf min al-Nār*
- *Aḥwāl Abl ul-Qubūr*
- *Ṭabqīq Kalimatu'l-Ikhlās*

His Death

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab, may Allāh have mercy on him, on a Monday night, the fourth of Ramaḍān, 795H died while in Damascus.

His Published Works in English

Some of his fine works have been translated and published in the English language under the Dār as-Sunnah Classic Collection, Ibn Rajab series:

- The Excellence of Knowledge
The Virtue of the *Salaf* over the *Khalaf*
- Humility in Prayer
- The Journey to Allāh - An explanation to the Ḥadīth,
“*Your actions alone will not save any of you*”
- The Key to Paradise
An explanation to '*The Testimony of Faith and its Benefits*'
- The Legacy of the Prophet
An explanation to '*The Advice given to Ibn 'Abbās*'
- The Heavenly Dispute
- The Journey of the Strangers
- Difference between Advising and Shaming - with additional commentary

Introduction

My Lord, make this easy, you are the Most Generous. All praises are due to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessings be upon our leader Muḥammad, the chosen one, and upon his Family and Companions.

In the saḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim, it is reported that Anas ibn Mālik¹ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Three things follow the deceased person (to the grave), two of them return, and only one remains. His family, wealth and actions follow him. His family and wealth return, but his actions will remain.”²

In another report, Anas (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “There is no person except that he has three companions. The first companion says, ‘Whatever you spend is for you, and whatever you withhold is not for you’, and this is his

¹ Anas Ibn Mālik: Ibn al-Naḍar Ibn Ḍamḍam al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, the servant of the Messenger (ﷺ). He witnessed *Badr* but was not of age to actually participate. He died in the year 93H.

² Bukhārī, ‘*Kitāb al-Raqa’iq*’ #6514 and Muslim, ‘*Kitāb al-Zuhd*’ #2960.

wealth. The second says, 'I am with you, but when you come to the door of the King (Allāh), I will return and leave you', and this is his family and nobility. The third says, 'I am with you wherever you enter, and wherever you go', and this is his deeds. The person will say: 'You were the one I gave the least consideration to from these three.'"³

And similar narration was also reported by al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr⁴ (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*), in *marfū'* form and also reported as the words of the Companions.⁵

An explanation of this, is that it is upon the son of Adam to have a family that he lives with, and wealth that he supports himself with, and these two companions will leave him, and he will leave them. The intelligent person is the one who takes from these things enough to help him remember Allāh, and what benefits him in the next life. So a person takes from wealth what helps him in reaching the next life, and takes a righteous wife to assist him in his faith.

³ Ḥākim in his *al-Mustadrak*, (1/371); al-Tayālsī in his *Musnad* #2013 and Bazzār, *Kashf al-'Astar* #3229. Ḥākim who declared it *ṣaḥīḥ* and Dhahabī agreed with him..

⁴ Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr: Ibn Sa'd al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī Abū 'Abdullāh. He was a poet and lecturer and died in the year 65H.

⁵ Ḥākim in his *al-Mustadrak*, (1/372); Ṭabarānī in his *Kabīr* (7/263) and Al-Bazzār, *Kashf al-'Astar* #226. Ḥākim who declared it *ṣaḥīḥ* upon the condition of Muslim and Dhahabī agreed with him. The wording of the narration of Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr is: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The example of a man and his death is like that of a man who has three companions. The first says: 'This is my wealth, so take what you wish from it.' The second says: 'I am with you as long as you live, and when you die I will leave you.' The third says: 'I am always with you, when you enter and exit, and when you live and die.' The first is his wealth, the second is his family, and the third is his actions.'"

As for the person who has taken his wealth and family that distracts him from Allāh, then he will be a loser. As the Bedouins say,

شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْنَا

“Our possessions and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.”

[*al-Fath* (48): 11]

And Allāh said,

لَا تُهْكَرُ

أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ
ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allāh. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers.”

[*al-Munāfiqūn* (63): 9]

He also said,

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَنَا
زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا

“And it is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us in position, but it is [by being] one who has believed and done righteousness.”

[*Saba'* (34): 37]

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī⁶ (*raḥimabullāh*) said to himself while he was at a funeral: “O son of Adam, if you return to your family and wealth now, then know that your stay with them is only for a short time.”

It is mentioned in a ḥadīth: “O son of Adam, live as you want, for you will die. Love who you want, for you will leave him. Do what you want, for you will meet your actions. And be however you wish. And as you do, you will be recompensed.”⁷

Once the son of Adam dies and leaves this world he will not benefit from his family and wealth at all, except for the supplication of his family and their asking forgiveness for him; and for the wealth that he sent forth in Allāh’s cause (in charity). Allāh said:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children, but only one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart”

[*al-Shūrā* (26): 88-89].

⁶ Al-Ḥasan ibn Abī al-Ḥasan Yaṣar al-Baṣrī Abū Sa’īd, the freed slave of Zayd ibn Thābit, the example of ascetic scholars and one of the great characters of the Ṭabī’in. He died in 110. Ayyūb al-Sakhtīyānī said: “Had you seen him you would have said that you have never sat with a scholar of jurisprudence.” Abū Ja’far al-Bāqir said: “That is the person whose speech resembles that of the Prophets.” Refer to his biography: Ibn Sa’d: *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 7/156, *Ḥilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, 2/131, Aḥmad: *al-Zuhd*, 2/225, *Siyar al-A’lām al-Nabulā’*, 4/563, *Tatbīkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, 1/66.

⁷ Wording of the ḥadīth is upon the authority of Sahl ibn Sa’d. Recorded by Ḥākim in his *al-Mustadrak*, (4/324) who declared it ṣaḥīḥ and Dhahabī agreed with him. Also recorded by Abū Nu’aym in his *Ḥilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, (3/253) and graded ḥasan by al-Mundhīrī in *al-Targhib*; (2/239 [#1213]) and al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-ḥadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, (2/484 [#831]).

He also said,

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فَرَادَى
كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرْكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ

“And you have certainly come to Us alone as We created you the first time. And you have left behind you whatever We bestowed upon you.”

[*al-An‘ām* (6): 94]

If however, he left behind a family member who would pray for him, or some charity that he sent forth, then he will benefit from that. It was narrated in Muslim upon the authority of Abū Hurayrah⁸ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*): that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “When a person dies his deeds are severed, except from three things; from a charity that is continuous, or a righteous child who supplicates for him, or (leaving behind) knowledge that provides benefit.”⁹

⁸ Abū Hurayrah: ‘Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Ṣakhr al-Dusī. His name is greatly differed over. He accepted Islām in the year 7H and reported the most ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ). He died in the year 59H.

⁹ Muslim, ‘*Kitāb al-Wasiyyah*’ #1631. Commenting on this ḥadīth, Imām al-Nawawī said: “The scholars say that the action of the dead person ends with his death, and the reward ends, except for these three, because he was the cause of them. This narration shows; the virtue of marriage out of hope of having a righteous child, and that a *waqf* (endowment) has a great reward, and the great virtue of knowledge, and that one is encouraged to gain much knowledge and spread it by teaching, writing and explaining it. Also that one should choose the most useful types of knowledge. It also shows that the reward of supplication and charity reach the dead person, and these two are agreed upon.” [*Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 11/87-88]

CHAPTER ONE

The First Companion

The Family

A person's family will not benefit the deceased after one's death, except for a family member that asks forgiveness for deceased and supplicates for him, but they might not do so in reality. For sometimes someone who is not related to the dead person might be more beneficial for him than one's own family, as some of the righteous have said, "and who is like the righteous companion? While your family is busy dividing your inheritance, he sits alone in his sadness, supplicating for you while you are under the earth."

Rather, some families are an enemy to the dead person as Allāh said,

يَا أَيُّهَا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمِنَ أَرْوَاحِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا
لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ

“O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them”

[*al-Taghabun* (64): 14]

And some of them are distracted from the dead person being busy taking from one’s inheritance, as was said (in some lines of poetry):

“My relatives pass by my grave, as if they do not know me!
And those who receive my inheritance divide my wealth,
And they even dispute my debts
(so they can increase their own share)!
They take their shares and go on with life,
O Allāh, how fast they forget me!”

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣṭī (*raḥimabullāh*) said, “From the people who are least interested in a person of knowledge (and benefiting from him) are his neighbours. And the person in the worst state is the dead person whose family cries over him, but they do not pay his debts.” What he meant by this is that they perform what harms him, and they leave what benefits him. For a dead person is punished by the crying of his family, if it involves wailing or screaming, or complaining about the decree of Allāh.¹⁰

So the family is one of the three companions of the dead person, they follow him to the door of the King (Allāh), which is the grave, and then they leave him.

¹⁰ As the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The dead person is punished because of the crying of his family over him.” (Reported by al-Bukhārī), and he explained it to refer to a person who encourages wailing. There are also a number of other interpretations of this ḥadīth.

CHAPTER TWO

The Second Companion

The Wealth

As for the second companion of a dead person, it is one's wealth. It returns first and does not enter the grave. The saying of the Prophet (ﷺ), "*his wealth returns*" means that it will not accompany one in the grave, nor enter it with him.

Others explained "*his wealth returns*" to mean a person's slaves that he owns, for they come with his family to the grave and then they leave with them. So a person will not benefit at all from one's wealth except for that which he spent in a good cause, for he will find it later on and it will be included amongst the deeds that will accompany him in his grave. As for the wealth that a person leaves for his heirs, then in reality it does not stay with him, and he was only temporarily holding that wealth for his heirs.¹¹

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām Muslim, it is recorded that the Prophet

¹¹ Ibn Ḥajr is among the scholars who understood the statement: "*His wealth returns*" in this sense (see *Fath al-Bārī*, 11/373]

(ﷺ) said, “The son of Adam says: My wealth, my wealth! He said, ‘O son of Adam, what belongs to you of your wealth except what you ate, so it perished; or clothing that became worn out; or you gave as charity so you put it forward?’”¹²

So a person does not benefit from his wealth except from what he puts forward for himself, and spends in the path of Allāh. As for what he eats and wears, it is neither for him nor against him, unless he had a righteous intention. It was also said that he is rewarded for what he spends on food and clothing in all cases.

As for a person that spends money for sins, then this is against him and does not benefit him. Likewise for what he stingily kept and did not give the right of Allāh regarding it. For this person, it will come in the form of a terrifying poisonous snake.¹³ It will follow him while he flees from it until it bites him. It will say: I am your wealth, I am your treasure! He will put his hand out and it will bite it as a horse bites.¹⁴

If the treasure is gold or silver it will be made into plates, then heated up, and he will be branded by it on his brow, forehead, and side.¹⁵

¹² Muslim, ‘*Kitāb al-Zuhd*’, #292.

¹³ Ar. ‘*Shujā’ Aqra*’ denotes a horrifying looking white snake which is extremely poisonous.

¹⁴ This was reported in a ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī #1403 and Muslim #987.

¹⁵ Referring to the ḥadīth recorded by Muslim: “There is no owner of gold or silver who does not pay its dues, except that on the Day of Judgement metal plates will be heated up in the Hellfire, and he will be branded by them on his

A poetry states:

“Do not store except *taqwā*,
 for wealth cannot be stored,
 Obey the order of our Lord,
 be on the straight path,
 and take heed and consideration”

So whoever realises this, let him put forward of his wealth that which he loves. For if he puts it forward, it will be for him and he will benefit from it in the next life.

If he leaves his wealth behind it will be for someone else, not for him. A man could be stingy in spending his wealth in the path of Allāh, so he will see that wealth on the Day of Judgement in the scale of another person who spent it as charity. At that time he will have great sorrow and regret, for this same wealth that entered his heir into Paradise was a cause for him to enter the Hellfire!

The intelligent person is the one who puts forward the wealth that he loves, so that he will find it in the next life. For the person who loves something keeps it close to himself, and does not leave it to others so that he will regret when the regret will be of no benefit to him.

=

side, forehead, and back. Every time the plates cool down they will be reheated, on a day which is the length of fifty thousand years.”

This ḥadīth explains the verse: ***“And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allāh - give them tidings of a painful punishment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell and seared therewith will be their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, [it will be said], “This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard.” [al-Tawbah (9): 34-35]”***

Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (*rahimahullāh*) mentioned the narration of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr that a man said, “O Messenger of Allāh, why don’t I love death?” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Do you have any wealth?” He replied, “Yes.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Then put it forward.” He said, “I am unable to do that O Messenger of Allāh.” He said “The heart of a person is with his wealth, if he puts it forward then he loves to meet it. But if he keeps it back he loves to stay back with it.”¹⁶

One of the kings said to the known ascetic, Abū Hāzim, “Why do we hate death?” He replied, “Because you revere this worldly life. You have put your wealth in front of your eyes, so you hate to part with it. If you put it forward for the next life, you would have loved to meet it!”

Allāh, the Most High said:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

“You will never achieve piety until you spend from that which you love”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 92]

If Ibn ‘Umar¹⁷ (*radīyAllāhu ‘anhumā*) loved anything of his wealth he would spend it for Allāh. One day he was riding a camel that impressed him, so he immediately got down and dedicated it as a sacrifice for Allāh.

¹⁶ Recorded as mursal by Ibn al-Mubārak in his ‘*Kitāb al-Zuhd*’ #234, and it’s isnād is ḍa‘īf (weak).

¹⁷ ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar: Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-‘Adawī, Abū ‘Abdul-Raḥmān, the noble Companion and scholar. He reported many ahādīth from the Messenger (ﷺ) and died in the year 73H.

He once had a slave girl that he loved, so he freed her and married her to his freed slave, Nāfi'. If Ibn 'Umar (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*) ever held one of Nāfi's children and smelled her, he would say "O the fragrance of so-and-so!" Meaning the mother of the child.¹⁸

A man entered upon Abū Dharr¹⁹ (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*), and he began to look around his house. He finally asked, "O Abū Dharr, where are your possessions?" He replied, "We have another house where we place our good possessions." The man said, "You must have some possessions, as long as you are here." So Abū Dharr said, "The owner of the house will not allow us indefinite leave to remain in it!"

"You have gathered money,
but have you gathered days to spend it?
Wealth is only deposited with you for its inheritors;
wealth is only yours once you spend it
(in the path of Allāh.)"

Al-Hasan al-Baṣrī (*rahimahullāh*) said, "What a bad companion is wealth. It does not benefit you until it parts from you!"

It was said to someone, "So-and-so has gathered much wealth." He said, "Has he also gathered more lives for him to spend it in?" They said, "No." He replied, "Then he has gathered nothing."

A poetry states:

¹⁸ Publisher: This narration cannot be accepted to be authentically attributed to Ibn 'Umar, who was the leader of the *warā'* and *ṣūbd*. For how could he say this about a free woman that belonged to another man.

¹⁹ Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: Jundub Ibn Junādah Ibn Sakan, he was of those who accepted Islām early on but delayed his migration and hence did not witness *Badr*. His virtues are many and he died in the year 32H.

“You who have gathered wealth,
have you gathered days to spend it
Wealth is only deposited with you for its inheritors,
wealth is only yours once you spend it
(in the path of Allāh.)”

Thus whoever spends something today will benefit from it tomorrow, and whoever does not spend will come to find nothing, and he will have a great loss in the house of dwelling (in the Hereafter).

Some of the Salaf said, “O son of Adam, you will only live on the Day of Judgment in what you have built, and you will find on that day what possessions you have prepared in your life.”

A women entered upon ‘Ā’ishah²⁰ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhā*), and her hand was paralysed. She said, “O mother of the Believers, I went to sleep yesterday and my hand was healthy, and I woke up and it was paralysed ‘Ā’ishah said, “How is that?” She said, “I had wealthy parents, and my Father used to pay *zakaat*, host guests, and give to beggars, and he did not see any good except that he would do it. As for my mother, she was stingy, and did nothing good with my Father’s wealth. Then my Father died, and my mother died only two months after him. So I saw my Father in a dream last night, and he was wearing two yellow garments and in front of him was a flowing river. I said, “Father, what is this?” He said, “Whoever does good in this life will see it, this is what Allāh has given me.” I said, “What has happened to my mother?” He asked, “Your mother died?” I said, “Yes.”

²⁰ ‘Ā’ishah: bint Abū Bakr *al-Siddīq*, the Mother of the Believers and most beloved wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). She reported many ahādīth from the Prophet (ﷺ) and many Companions and Successors reported from her. She died in the year 58H.

He said, “She has been turned away from me, so look for her on your left.” So I turned to my left, and I saw mother standing naked, covering her lower half with a rag and in her hand was a piece of fat. She was calling out, “My sadness, my thirst!” When she became tired she would rub the fat with her hand and then lick it, while in front of her was a flowing river. I said, ‘O mother, why are you crying out of thirst, and there is a flowing river in front of you?’ She said, ‘I am not allowed to drink from it.’ I said, ‘Can I give you some of the water?’ She said, ‘I wish you would do that.’ So I filled my hand with water and let her drink, and when she swallowed it I heard a voice on my right, ‘Whoever has given this woman water, may his hand be paralysed,’ and they repeated it twice. Then I awoke and my hand was paralysed, and I am not able to do anything with it. ‘Ā’ishah asked: ‘Did you recognise the rag she was wearing?’ I said, ‘Yes, O Mother of the Believers, it was exactly the same one I saw her wearing, for I had never seen my mother give anything as charity, except that one day my Father slaughtered a bull. So a beggar came to ask for some, so my mother gave him a bone that had some fat on it. And I saw one day that a beggar asked her for charity, so she gave him that exact rag.’

‘Ā’ishah (*radīy* *Allāhu ‘anhā*) said, ‘Allāh is the Most Great! Allāh has told the truth, and the Messenger has delivered his message.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا
يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۖ

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it”

[*al-Zalzalah* (99): 7-8]”

This was narrated by Ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā al-Madīnī with a good

isnād.²¹

Whoever goes on a journey without any provisions will regret when he is need of his provisions, but this regret will not benefit him in the least, and perhaps he would even perish. So how about a person that takes the long and difficult journey to the Afterlife without any provisions!

A poetry states:

“The sickness in my body increases,
and life is getting shorter and my sins are many.
How long is my journey,
and I have no provision!”

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib²² (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) used to say in the night: ‘Oh, how little provision for a long journey and a lonely path.’

Abū Hurayrah²³ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) wept before his death and said, ‘I am crying because of the long journey ahead, and how little provision I have.’

If the people who have many provisions complain of how little

²¹ Ḥākim in his *al-Mustadrak*, (4/471) and by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā in his *Kitāb al-Mujābi al-Du‘ā*, (p.74-75). Ibn Rajab also authenticated it.

²² ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib: Ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib Ibn Hāshim al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the fourth Rightly Guided Khalīfah and one of ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām at the age of thirteen and was famous for his chivalry, bravery and knowledge. He married Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and was martyred in the year 40H.

²³ Mentioned already

they have, then what about a person who has no provisions at all?

A poetry states:

O gatherer of wealth,
what have you prepared for the dug grave?
Is a person who is departing for a journey
heedless of his provision?

Ibn al-Sammāk said, "They did not weep because of the pains of death, they only wept from the regret of what they missed. They left the land from which they did not take provisions with them, and they arrived in a new land with no provisions for them."

A poetry states:

If you did not make your journey with provisions of *taqwā*,
and you see after your death those who prepared,
You would regret that you were not like him,
and wish that you had made provisions as he did!

CHAPTER THREE

The Third Companion

The Deeds

The deeds of a person are the third companion of a person to follow one into the grave. They enter the grave with the deceased, and stay with him in the grave, and when he is resurrected, and while he is waiting on the Day of Judgment, and on the *al-Sirāt* (the bridge above the Hellfire), and at the scales. By one's deeds, a person's level in Heaven or Hell will be decided.

Allāh said,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا

“Whoever does righteousness - it is for his [own] soul; and whoever does evil [does so] against it...”

[*Fussilat* (41): 46]

He also said,

مَنْ
كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا نَفْسَ لَهُ يَمْهَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

“Whoever disbelieves - upon him is [the consequence of] his disbelief. And whoever does righteousness - they are for themselves preparing”

[*al-Rūm* (30): 44]

Some of the *Salaf* said that ‘*preparing*’ in this verse refers to the grave, meaning that a good deed is a preparation for its companion in the grave. For a person will not have in his grave a bed, nor a pillow or furniture. Rather every person will have his deeds as his bed and pillow, whether they are good or evil deeds.

So the intelligent person is the one who prepares his home that he will live in forever. Even if he were to prepare his eternal home by destroying his worldly home that he will shortly leave, he would still be profitable.

Wahb ibn Munabbih (*rahimahullāh*) said, ‘Luqmān said to his son, ‘My son, every person has two homes, a home that he sees, and a home he does not. So do not be distracted by your present home that you will only stay in for a short time, over your house you cannot see, that you will live a long life in.’²⁴

Some of the *Salaf* said, ‘Work for this life in relation to how long you will stay in it, and work for the next life in relation to how long you will stay in it.’ Others said, ‘The son of Adam has two homes, a home on the earth, and a home under the earth (the grave). So he went to the home on the earth and decorated and beautified it, and made many doors in it on the right and left, and

²⁴ The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, “The lifespan of my *ummah* is between sixty and seventy years, few of them exceed that.” Reported by al-Tirmidhī #2331 and Ibn Mājah #4236. At the same time, a person could die suddenly, for death does not discriminate between the young and old. Many of the early Muslims would dedicate themselves solely to worship once they turned forty years old.

made it comfortable for the winter and summer. Then he went to the home that is under the earth and destroyed it! So if he is asked; how long will you stay in the house that you perfected? He would say, I do not know. But if he was asked; how long will you stay in the home that you destroyed, he will say, forever! You admit this, and you claim to be a person with intellect and understanding!?’

‘Uthmān ibn Abī al-Āṣ was once at a funeral in the graveyard, and with him was a young man from his relatives who was somewhat heedless. ‘Uthmān said to him, ‘Look at your home.’ So he looked in the grave, and he said ‘What do you see?’ He said, ‘I see a tight and dark home, which has no food or drink or wife, while I have left behind a home that has food, drink, and my wife in it.’ ‘Uthmān said, ‘By Allāh, this will be your home.’ The young man said, ‘You have told the truth. By Allāh, even if I return home now, I will eventually be transferred to this grave.’

Al-Hasan al-Baṣrī (*rahimabullāh*) said: ‘A Muslim man followed his brothers funeral procession, and when he was placed in his grave the man said, ‘I do not see that anything from this life is with you except the three garments you are wrapped in! By Allāh, I have left behind a home that has many possessions. By Allāh, if Allāh allows me to return home, I will present it before Him.’ So when the man returned, by Allāh, he gave his home as charity for Allāh. And they used to say that this man was ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdu’l-‘Azīz (*rahimabullāh*).’

He used to recite the following poetry often:

“Who is it that avoids the sun and dirt,
out of fear of the dust and hardship,
He loves to stay in the shade to retain his beauty,
one day he will be forced to live in a grave!

In the shade of the graveyard,
 dusty and dark, he will have a lengthy stay,
 Prepare yourself before your death with
 a provision that will help you reach your destination,
 O soul, you were not prepared without a purpose!”

The righteous deeds of a believer come to him in his grave in the best form, and give him glad tidings of happiness from Allāh, while the disbeliever will be granted the opposite.²⁵

²⁵ This was reported in a long ḥadīth narrated by al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib who said: “We went out with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) for the funeral of a man from among the Anṣār. We came to the grave and when [the deceased] was placed in the grave, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) sat down and we sat around him, as if there were birds on our heads [i.e. very quiet and still]. He had a stick in his hand with which he was scratching the ground. Then he raised his head and said, ‘Seek refuge with Allāh from the torment of the grave’, two or three times. Then he said, ‘When the believing slave is about to depart this world and enter the Hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with white faces like the sun, and they sit around him as far as the eye can see. They bring with them shrouds from Paradise and perfumes from Paradise. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head, and he says, “O good soul, come forth to forgiveness from Allāh and His pleasure.” Then it comes out easily like a drop of water from the mouth of a water skin. When he seizes it, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they take it and put it in that shroud with that perfume, and there comes from it a fragrance like the finest musk on the face of the earth. Then they ascend and they do not pass by any group of angels but they say, “Who is this good soul?” and they say, “It is So and so the son of So and so,” calling him by the best names by which he was known in this world, until they reach the lowest heaven. They ask for it to be opened to them and it is opened, and [the soul] is welcomed and accompanied to the next heaven by those who are closest to Allāh, until they reach the seventh heaven. Then Allāh says: “Record the book of My slave in *‘Ilīyūn* in the seventh heaven, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again.” So his soul is returned to his body. Then two angels come to him and make him sit up. They ask him, “Who is your Lord?” He says, “Allāh.” They ask, “What is your religion?” He says, “My religion is Islām.” They ask, “Who is this man who was sent among you?” He

= says, "He is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)." They ask, "What did you do?" He says, "I read the Book of Allāh and I believed in it." Then a voice calls out from heaven, "My slave has spoken the truth, so prepare for him a bed from Paradise and clothe him from Paradise, and open for him a gate to Paradise." Then there comes to him some of its fragrance, and his grave is made wide, as far as he can see. Then there comes to him a man with a handsome face and handsome clothes, and a good fragrance, who says, "Receive the glad tidings that will bring you joy this day." He says, "Who are you? Your face is a face which brings glad tidings." He says, "I am your righteous deeds." He says, "O Lord, hasten the Hour so that I may return to my family and my wealth." But when the disbelieving slave is about to depart this world and enter the Hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with black faces, bringing sackcloth, and they sit around him as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head, and he says, "O evil soul, come forth to the wrath of Allāh and His anger." At hearing this, his soul disperses itself inside his body. The Angel of Death orders the soul to come out. So the soul is unwillingly torn from the body cutting the veins and nerves, like a skewer passing through wet wool. When he seizes it, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they snatch it and put it in the sackcloth, and there comes from it the foulest stench like the worst smell that has ever come from a rotten corpse. Then they ascend and they do not pass by any group of angels except they say to it, "Who is this evil soul?" and they say, "It is So and so the son of So and so," calling him by the worst names by which he was known in this world, until they reach the lowest heaven. They ask for it to be opened to them and it is not opened.' Then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited: "**For them the gates of heaven will not be opened, and they will not enter Paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle.**" [*al-A'raf* (7): 40]

He said: "Then Allāh says, "Record the book of My slave in *Sijjīn* in the lowest earth, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again." So his soul is cast down.' Then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited the verse: "**And whoever as-signs partners to Allāh, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place.**" [*Hajj* (22):31] He said: "Then his soul is returned to his body. Then two angels come to him and make him sit up. They ask him, "Who is your Lord?" He says, "Oh, oh, I don't know." They ask him, "What is your religion?" He says, "Oh, oh, I don't know." Then a voice calls out from heaven, "Prepare for him a bed from

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The righteous deeds of a believer surround him in his grave, as was narrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān, upon the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “By the one in whose hand is my soul, he (the dead person) hears the sounds of their shoes when they walk away from his grave. If he was a believer, his prayers would be near his head, and his *zakaat* would be on his right, and his fasting on his left, and his righteous deeds and goodness towards people would be at his feet. He would be attacked from the direction of his head, but the prayer will say, ‘you cannot enter from my direction.’” Then the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the rest of the deeds would also say the same. He then said about the disbeliever, “He would be attacked from all these directions, and nothing would be there to protect him, and he will sit there terrified.”²⁶

‘Atā’ Ibn Yaṣār said, “When the dead person is placed in the grave, the first thing that will come to him is his actions. It will hit him on his left thigh and say, ‘I am your actions.’ He will say, ‘where are my family, children, tribe and all that Allāh has given me?’ His deeds will say, ‘You left your family, children, tribe and all that Allāh has given you behind, and nothing will enter your grave with you except me!’ He will say, ‘I wish I favored you over

Hell and clothe him from Hell, and open for him a gate to Hell.” Then there comes to him some of its heat and hot winds, and his grave is constricted and compresses him until his ribs interlock. Then there comes to him a man with an ugly face and ugly clothes, and a foul stench, who says, “Receive the bad news, this is the day that you were promised.” He says, “Who are you? Your face is a face which brings disastrous news.” He says, “I am your evil deeds.” He says, “O Lord, do not let the Hour come, do not let the Hour come.” Abū Dāwūd #4753 and Aḥmad (4/287)

²⁶ Ibn Ḥibbān #3113, ‘Abdu’l-Razzāq #6703, and Ḥākim (1/379) who graded it *ṣaḥīḥ* upon the condition of Muslim and Dhahabī agreed with him.

my family, children, tribe and all that Allāh has given me, since nothing will enter with me except for you!”

Yazīd al-Raqqāshī said, “It has reached me that when the dead person is placed in his grave his deeds will surround him, and then Allāh will make them speak. They will say: ‘O Slave who is alone in his grave! Your family and loved ones have been cut off from you, and nothing will stay with you except us!’” Then Yazīd wept and said, “Glad tidings for a person whose companion (and social circle) is righteous, and woe to the one whose companion (and social circle) is a destruction upon him.”²⁷

A poetry states:

“Prepare yourself with your deeds soon,
for the only companion of a person in his grave is his actions,
If you are busy with anything, then do not make (that act)
what will not please Allāh,
For nothing will accompany a person after his death,
except that which he used to do,
A person is only a guest amongst his family,
he resides with them a short while and then departs.”

And all praise is due to Allāh the One Alone, and may Allāh send abundant blessing of peace upon our leader Muḥammad, upon his Family and his Companions until the Day of Judgement.

²⁷ For this reason, every person will regret at his time of death, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “No one dies except that he is regretful. If he was a good-doer, he regrets that he did not increase in good deeds. And if he was an evil-doer, he would regret that he did not stop doing evil.” Reported by Tirmidhī #2403. However, in its isnād is Yahyā Ibn Ubaydullāh, about whom Ibn Rajab said in his *‘Ahwāl al-Qubur’* that he is ḍa‘īf (weak). Ibn Ḥajr said in his *‘Taqrīb’* that he was abandoned.

APPENDIX ONE

Working for the Hereafter by Ḥāfīz Ibn Jawzī¹

O my brothers, turn down this worldly life (*dunya*), for it has rejected those who were more enamored by it than you. Take heed from the lessons of those who were before you, before you become a lesson for those who will come after you. This life is intoxicating and enrapturing, and the indwelling chants of mankind's nature inherently support it, therefore the lightheadedness of those who drink from it becomes stronger, until the season of profit has passed them by. Thereafter they wake up from their unconsciousness only to prepare for punishment; the feelings of sorrow overwhelming them, though just the reality of all the good they have missed [of the hereafter] is a sufficient lash upon them, a fact that they grasp only after death.

Woe to you; death is like clouds, and grey hair is its raindrops. Whoever reaches the age of seventy would complain of pain even without reason, and so the sensible person is he who wakes up in

¹ Taken from, '*Seeds of Admonishment and Reform*' pg68-70, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2013.]

fear, because he realises the nearness of death. O you, this life is behind you, and ahead of you is the Hereafter; and to seek what is behind is a retreat and a defeat, whereas victory lies in advancing forward with strong will. The flood of death has arrived so embark for safety onto the ships of righteousness and do not accompany the “Kan’ān”² of hope. Woe to you, pay heed and start benefiting yourself from your lifespan, for how long is an earthly creature to live in confusion?

Illnesses distress the bodies necessarily causing emaciation, and you appear as if you are in your grave, lying down on the bed of regret while it is, by Allāh, coarser than a rock. That said, plant (good deeds) during the spring of your life before the onset of sterility afflicts the field that is your body, and amass [good deeds] in your period of capability, setting them aside before the time of weakness and incapability arrives. Prepare your supplies before travelling so you do not suffer poverty during the journey where there is no food to consume. Beware, beware, of [being in a state where you will be among those whom Allāh said they will say on the Day of Judgment],

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ بِحَسْرَتٍ عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ

“Lest a soul should say, “Oh [how great is] my regret over what I neglected in regard to Allāh”

[*al-Zumar* 39: 56]

The wise and determined is he who acquires his provision [of good deeds] before the time of his return [to his Lord] comes. The root of the tree of strong will and firmness is wise and has percep-

² The son of Prophet Nūḥ (*alayhi as-salām*) who drowned in the flood as he hoped to survive if he just get on the top of a mountain.

tive thinking, its branches are seeking the advice over problematic issues, and its fruit is taking advantage of available opportunities, and the loss of opportunity in itself is sufficient cause of regret.

I wonder at the one who wastes his lifetime in lazy indifference, until the day the collector of souls (i.e. Angel of death) arrives, whence he says,

إِنِّي بُتُّ الْفَنَنَ

“Indeed, I have repented now”

[*al-Nisā*’ 4: 18]

وَأَنَّى لَهُمُ التَّنَاقُشُ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

“But how for them will be the taking [of faith] from a place far away?”

[*Saba*’ 34: 52]

APPENDIX TWO

Unmindfulness of the Hereafter

O you, the love of this worldly life is more lethal than poison, and the evils of this world are more numerous in number than ants. But despite that, the eye of your assiduousness in obtaining it is sharper than the eyes of the hoopoe, the belly of your hope is thirstier [to this worldly life] than sand is for water, the mouth of your gluttony when it comes to life is more rapacious than that of camels. Whenever you engage in discourse about it, you are more eloquent than Saḥbān¹; whenever you scrutinise coins for counterfeit, you are more proficient than Daghfal.² The strategies you deploy to fulfill your desires are finer than hair, you are more organised than the honey bees when it comes to managing it, and you go through it for its most precious possessions, just like how ants collect the smallest particles.

O you whose idiocy matches that of the silkworm, truly I wonder at you! Have you not benefited at all from the blessing of intellect and reasoning? Your diligence for this worldly life after growing

¹ Saḥbān ibn Wail: Known eloquent speaker.

² Daghfal ibn Handhahah: Known lineage expert.

old is hotter than an ember! Is there any more time to live, O you who are colder in your insensate numbness than ice! Despite all this, the worldly life is dearer to your heart than your own soul is, even though after you die you shall become more insignificant than even the ground below your feet.

When you are involved in evil you are faster than a speedy stallion but when it is concerning good and charitable deeds, you are slower than a cripple. Your sins are more inglorious than the sun, while your repentance is more concealed than *al-Sahā*.³ Paying alms [*Zakaat*] is heavier on you than the mountain of *Uḥud*⁴, and praying is as heavy as a boulder laid on your chest. The road to the Masjid in the scale of your laziness is as the two *farsak*⁵ distance of *Dair Ka'b*.⁶ And although when talking about worldly affairs your chest is more expansive than the sea, when the time of worship comes, it becomes tighter than the knot of ninety.⁷

O you whose sleep is heavier than that of a leopard when it comes to your deliverance (from punishment), you have wasted time more precious than jewels. If you catch sight of a sin you leap upon it like a tiger, but if you catch a glimpse of a good deed

³ Name of a small dim star.

⁴ A huge mountain located in the outskirts of Madīnah.

⁵ An obsolete unit of distance of variable length (usually three miles).

⁶ Arabic saying refers to the distance needed to pass the town of *Dair Ka'b* which was known as too difficult road.

⁷ Arabs used to make symbols by using the fingers of the hand to refer to numbers. The number ninety was given the shape resulting from the circle made by having the index touching the bottom of the thumb.

you dodge and evade it like a fox. When you interact with people you are as treacherous as a wolf. While committing injustice you boldly step forward like a lion, and you seize a trust, just like a buzzard snatches his prey.

O you whose oppression is greater than al-Jalandī⁸, even the deer of *al-Harām*⁹ would never trust you. O you who is obsessive in his love for the worldly life, an exegetic of Kufah¹⁰ when it comes to achieving it, and an ascetic of Basrah¹¹ when it comes to seeking the hereafter. I wonder at a heart that is weaker than a fly yet more rigid than a rock. It is a heart that finds the poetry of Qais¹² unimpressive, the exhortations of al-Ḥasan¹³ unmoving, and the

⁸ A known Umanī saying refers to the king who used to seize every good ship. This king is mentioned in Qur'ān in the *Surah al-Kahf* in the story of Mūsā and the pious slave of Allāh.

⁹ Sacred place in Makkah.

¹⁰ This is used because scholars of Kufah were known of their scholarship in the field of *Fiqh*.

¹¹ This is used because people of Basrah are known of their asceticism.

¹² Qais alias the madman of Layla; a famous eloquent poet who had platonic love with Layla.

¹³ Al-Ḥasan ibn Abī al-Ḥasan Yasar al-Baṣrī Abū Sa'īd, the freed slave of Zayd ibn Thābit, the example of ascetic scholars and one of the great characters of the Tabi'īn. He died in 110 AH. Ayyūb al-Sakhtīyānī said: "Had you seen him you would have said that you have never sat with a scholar of jurisprudence." Abu Ja'far al-Bāqir said: "That is the person whose speech resembles that of the Prophets." Refer to his biography: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/156, *Ḥīyātū'l-Anbiyā'*, 2/131, Aḥmad: *al-Zubd*, 2/225, *Sīyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/563, *Tatbīkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 1/66. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a book for the life and virtues of this Imam which is printed and available.

poems of coquetry of Jarir¹⁴ unprovoking. Were it that a person with such a heart would at least have his dream of hope [to live long] interpreted by Ibn Sirin,¹⁵ to wake him up to live reality; for indeed the lock of such heart is of Roman manufacture and thus too difficult to break.¹⁶

¹⁴ Jarir, a famous poet.

¹⁵ Muḥammad ibn Sirin, the Imām and Shaikh al-Islām, Abū Bakr al-Anṣārī al-Anasī al-Baṣrī, the freed slave of Anas ibn Mālik, the companion and servant of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). He died in 110 A.H. Abū 'Uwana said: 'I saw Muḥammad ibn Sirin in the marketplace, and nobody saw him without him mentioning Allāh.' For his biography, refer to: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/193, *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'*, 2/263, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 5/331, *Tathkirat al-Huffāz*, 1/73, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/606, *al-Ibar*, 1/135, *Mir'āt al-Janān*, 1/232, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 9/267, *Shatbarāt al-Thahab*, 1/138.

¹⁶ Taken from, 'Seeds of Admonishment and Reform' pg77-80, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2013]

APPENDIX THREE

Taking Advantage of Life

My brothers, he who observes the vagaries and vicissitudes of time will take heed; for indeed what happen to others serve as lessons for us. The cradle of the child connotes the reality of the grave. The gust of the end of life breaks apart the clouds of hope [to live long]; if youth be the fruit of life then old age is the garment of doom. If the days of youth could be purchased we would have spent the most precious [of wealth] for their sake. Upon the onset of gray hair the star of the self's desires declines, and when a person knocks the door to his forties, then he is in reality asking permission to enter the house of the ruins. And he who reaches his sixties exhibits self-denial, and he who reaches the age of seventy will start receiving emissaries of his [approaching] death.

O you whose youth has been wrapped up and put aside, whose castle is torn apart, whose sailing ship has reached the shore [of its destination], it is the time for you to stand on the hill of farewell. You have only a few more moments to enjoy before your grey hair cuts off the necklace of life, so pick up the falling beads and give up on foolish hopes, for it is time to work hard to mend some of these falling beads. Your life melts away like snow melts, and your

laziness and indifference is even colder than ice.

You wish to stay but it is not in your hands; for indeed the wish of the rider may differ from the wish of his ride; indeed if the rider were to dismount, his animal would fall asleep. A sensible and wise person is he who prepares for contingencies, so how could a person neglect what is known to happen with certainty! The time of irresoluteness is brief, so there should be no hesitation or postponement. I wonder at a person whose life may be in risk of destitution even if he had surplus possession, so how would it be if furthermore he was an idle layabout?! I wonder at a person who publicises his lost possessions [in case somebody finds them] while he himself is lost, and I wonder at a person who is frugal in spending his wealth [fearing wastage], although his whole life he has wasted.

Thallāj's (literally, the ice seller) only source of income was selling ice, and (someday) he had not sold all his ice, so he started calling out [as he peddled his ware]: have mercy on a person whose capital is melting away!

Your poverty in terms of good deeds is due to your laziness, because whenever a poor person is indolent he shall never become rich. If you ever had a distaste for slackness, you would have not have accepted humiliation. You have traded night prayers for an extra mouthful of food, and you have drunk from the cup of drowsiness, due to which you missed the company of those who

تَجَافَى جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ
يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

“arise from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord

in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend.”

[*al-Sajdah* 32: 16]

You have filled your belly with food, then as if the creditor of the bed came to collect from you his debt of sleep, so he put a veil over your ears until you slept as deeply as (but not for the end as) the seven sleepers. However, as you have been intoxicated by the wine of sleepiness you drank, the watcher caught you and punished you by preventing you from night prayers. And soon thereafter the story of the night you spent ended with the onset of Fajr, and you were among

رَضُوا بِأَن يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

“They were satisfied to be with those who stay behind, and their hearts were sealed over, so they do not understand.”

[*al-Taubah* 9: 87]

By Allāh, if you sold one moment of solitary worship of Allāh for the entire lifespan of Nūḥ (*alaybi as-salām*) with the wealth of Qārūn¹, you would have lost in the bargain. No, in reality, even if you got everything in the heavens in return for that moment, it would not be a profitable sale. And those who have experienced this can attest to its truth.²

¹ He is from the Bani Israel whose wealth was tremendous and he opposed Prophet Mūsā (*alaybi as-salām*) and hence Allāh punished him by commanding the earth to swallow him and all his wealth.

² Taken from, *‘Seeds of Admonishment and Reform’* pg91-93, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2013]

APPENDIX FOUR

Dispraise of Tireless Desire for Wealth

O you, whose time is fully occupied working to gain this worldly life, although this life is actually enslaving you: why do you collect that which separates you [from your Lord] and join that which tears you apart?! Woe to you: you are focused on building a palace while, in fact, you are demolishing a country! Seek advice so that you may recognise the shortcomings of this life.

The malady of human beings is vain desires, and its treatment is found in firmness. When an ailment has already reached a very advanced stage, then cauterisation is the best course of action; you cannot prevent the harm of a bad neighbour simply by shunning him. Money is like water; the more you have of it the more you shall drown in it. The spider suffices with a corner in the house to build its home, but the assiduity of the fly to take it ended with its becoming food for the spider. All the while, the voice of exhortation tells you; though people make effort to seek their provision in this life, but many a time it is the provision that seeks out and lands on the doorstep of its rightful owner instead.

Woe to you, divorce your false hopes so you can become the

heir to your own wealth. The most deprived ones are those whose hard work benefits only others without benefiting themselves. The greatest good deed that a miser may do is to give charity, because by giving charity he actually combats two devils; the smaller of the two being *Shaytān* and the greater being his desires and its troops among whose ranks are the lion of covetousness, the dog of desires and the swine of gluttony.

Forward charity with outstretched hands; but if you are unable to, then at least restrain your hands from oppressing others. Liberate your tongue to indulge in the remembrance of Allāh; but if you are unable to do so, then at the very least, restrain it from backbiting.

How long does a beggar stand on your door in humiliation with his tears flowing down his cheek, but you rebuke him by saying, all what you say is nonsense! Indeed, the words of the starving on the ears of the one with a full belly will sound like nonsense! Woe to you, did you not know that charity is the mahr of Paradise! So stop piling up bags upon bags of money and be amongst those regarding whom Allāh said,

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا

“who is he that will lend unto Allāh a goodly loan”

[*al-Hadid* 57: 11]

And if you give charity, beware of saying or doing what may offend or hurt the beneficiary of your charity; the longer your wishful hopes live the more the deaths among the poor.

I wonder at those who greedily amass wealth, only to be dispossessed of it in a single stroke of misfortune! O you with a grieving heart, the agitation of your innermost self is apparent to

the onlooker, because the secret emotion of your heart manifests itself through the expressions of your face. Had you heard my words with your heart, you would have paid heed at the time, but my words only reached your ears, and there is a big difference between two. The example of the former is Tha'labah who jealously guarded his wealth, while the example of the latter is Abū Bakr (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) who forsook all his wealth [for the sake of Allāh]. Indeed there is difference between miserliness and forsaking worldly pleasures for the sake of Allāh.¹

¹ Taken from, *'Seeds of Admonishment and Reform'* pg172-174, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2013]

APPENDIX FIVE

The Worldly Life is Unsuitable for Settlement

My brothers, this life is like a farewell assembly, so be patient over its pleasures, for one day it will cease to exist, and beware of its evil, for it even succeeded in casting a spell upon the magicians of Babylon. Indeed, the things that people are averse to doing in this life are actually to be found in the branches of the beloved [i.e. the things you dislike are often the ones that draw you near to your beloved]. Everyone who felt secure from its evil, ended up in state of fear regarding its outcome.

You have spent all your life seeking the pleasures of this life, and yet you have not gained from it anymore than what the hand of Qais could gain from Layla.¹

When you are in the assembly [at which sermons and religious reminders are given] you awake from the intoxication of this worldly life briefly, but it is not long before you start to crave

¹ They never married or met but their love remained only expressed in words. This example is used to show that a person will not achieve anything out of it as Qais could not marry the one he loved.

again for the heat of its wine. Indeed, there is no joy in sighting the flashes of lightning, if you are walking through the darkness. You rein yourself back in with awakening, but by the time you leave the assembly your nature becomes unleashed again [i.e. back to its previous state of worldly indulgence]. Your nature prevents you from changing yourself; because although you are present in body, your heart is completely absent; though you desire attaining the [the reward of the] Hereafter, your endeavors are only focused on obtaining this worldly life.

This worldly life is a land unsuitable for settling down; it is only when the harvest has been reaped that it is taken to its place of final settlement.

I wonder at a person standing at the foot of a bridge for so long that he forgets the name of the town across it, which he was meaning to get to. Woe to you, though the pleasures of this worldly life are sweet and tempting, know that the questioning over it will be strict and severe. The time at which a woman conceives is one of playfulness, but the actual hardship that awaits her is at the time of her delivery. This life is like a promiscuous woman who does not settle for one man; those who sought after it are shamed and condemned.

The worldly life is a bridge leading over an ocean of doom, so you had better be serious about learning to swim before passing over it, because you can never be certain that you will not slip off it, or encounter a storm that blows you off the bridge into the water. Thus be wary of it despite how safe, you feel in it, and expect its sorrow in spite of your contentment with it.

This life is a house of trials and calamities, similar to the palace

in Egypt wherein Yūsuf (*‘alayhi as-salām*) fled to the door with his forbearance [running from the seduction of the wife of his master] whereas Zalikhah rushed to the door [chasing Yūsuf (*‘alayhi as-salām*)] enflamed by her desires. The garments of deeds shall be presented for intercession; therefore those whose garments were torn from the front will express their woefulness, whereas those whose garments were torn from behind, their intercession shall be saved for their time of need.

O you whose desire cast him into the well of love for this worldly life, you should know that the caravan of fate brings you a message every night saying: “Is there anyone requesting anything so that I may fulfill it for him?”

So, ensure your attentiveness when this message tosses down to you the rope of salvation, and stand up all night on the feet of those

تَجَافَى جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ

“Their sides part [i.e., they arise] from [their] beds.”

[*al-Sajdah* 32: 16],

stretch out the fingers of

يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

“they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration”

[*al-Sajdah* 32: 16],

وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ

“Throw that which is in thy right hand!”

[*Tabā* 20: 69]

So that you may climb out [of your well of desires] as quickly

as possible, and do not grasp at the walls of the well of desires, because it is built of loose dirt that will collapse over you. After you have rescued yourself, by your determination of returning [to Allāh], beware of the beasts on the road; so walk in the light of the lamp of certainty and conviction, and leave behind you the signposts veering you off the right course towards the ways of desire, because only after arriving at your destination in the morn shall you be able to breathe a sigh of relief.¹

¹ Taken from, '*Seeds of Admonishment and Reform*' pg124-127, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2013]

APPENDIX SIX

In the saying of Allāh: “*The reckoning of mankind draws ever near*”¹

Is the warning of

أَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ

“The reckoning of mankind draws ever near”

[*Anbiyā’* 21: 1]

was called out in the midst of the companions of the Prophet, the apprehension in their hearts, arising out of their fear of Allāh, reflected in their eyes, causing them to cry rivers of sadness

فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا

“so that valleys flow according to their measure”

[*al-Ra’d* 13: 17]

Abū Bakr² (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) gave away all his wealth, not even

¹ *Anbiyā’* 21: 1

² Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq: ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Āmir al-Qurashī. The first *Khalīfah* of the Messenger (ﷺ), his Companion in the cave, his closest friend and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was the first man to accept Islām and died in the year 13H.

sparing his garment, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) wished he were an inanimate shrub, and ‘Uthmān (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) wished after his death never to be resurrected [out of fearing Allāh]. And ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) shouted at this worldly life, I divorce you thrice, therefore you are unlawful to me now for ever; even though a single divorce would have sufficed, but he did it thrice to ensure that someday his self-desire would not rekindle the hope of returning to it; not that his nobility would ever allow him to seek a loophole by means of which he could return to it. Abū al-Dardā³ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) wished he were a fodder plant chewed by animals, and ‘Imrān ibn al-Ḥusayn⁴ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) wished he was reduced to ashes. Indeed you listen to the Qur’ān but undoubtedly you do not hear it [its message and injunctions] the way they heard it.

Devotees are focused upon worshipping their Lord; their feet are lined up in harmony within the rows [of *Ṣalāh*], standing [in *Ṣalāh*] their weight on the throes of fear [of Allāh] so when they are affected by their fear [of Allāh] they shift their weight off the foot of fear to the foot of hope.

The condition of people differ at the time of their death; some endured the fear [of Allāh] until the moment they died, such as ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), who said on his death

³ Abū ad-Dardā’: Uwaymir ibn Mālik ibn Zayd ibn Qays al-Khazrajī al-Anṣārī. There is a difference of opinion concerning his name. He accepted Islām on the day of *Badr* and witnessed *Uḥud*. He was from the Legal Jurists and ascetics of the Companions. He died in the year 32H.

⁴ ‘Imrān bin Ḥusayn: al-Khuzā’ī al-Ka’bī Abū Nujaid. He accepted Islām during the year of *Khaybar* and reported some *aḥādīth* from the Prophet (ﷺ). He died in the year 52H.

bed: 'woe to 'Umar should his Lord not forgive him', and some were distressed by the thirst of their fearful cautiousness so they cooled themselves down with the water of hope, such as Bilāl ibn Abī Rabah⁵ (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*), whose wife lamented while he was on his death bed saying; 'how grievous and sorrowful is this moment for me!' while he on the other hand said jubilantly 'how joyous and pleasant a moment this is, soon I will meet Muḥammad and his companions!' This is because Bilāl (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) knew that the Imām who lead the *Ṣalāh* [i.e. the Prophet (ﷺ)] would never forget the one who announced the call for *Ṣalāh* [i.e. Bilāl] and so he mitigated death with the comfort of hope.

While Sulaymān al-Taimī⁶ was on his death bed he said to his son: 'Narrate to me the ḥadīths related to concessions, so that I meet Allāh, Exalted is He, while I am optimistic in Him.' For how long should a traveler walk. Surely he must stop and seek repose at some point.

O you of feeble will: How far are you from the path on which Adam (*'alayhi as-salām*) suffered, because of which Nūḥ (*'alayhi as-salām*) mourned, for the sake of which Ibrāhīm (*'alayhi as-salām*) was thrown into fire, on which Ishāq (*'alayhi as-salām*) was laid down to be slaughtered, Yūsuf (*'alayhi as-salām*) was sold for a meager price, Zakarīyyah (*'alayhi as-salām*) was cut into pieces, Yaḥyā (*'alayhi as-salām*) was murdered, Ayyūb (*'alayhi as-salām*) suffered all kinds of

⁵ Bilāl ibn Abī Rabah: His story is almost certainly the most famous of all of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). He was born in Makkah into slavery, and was tortured by Umayya ibn Khalaf when he refused to renounce his new faith. He was purchased by Abū Bakr as-Ṣiddīq, who set him free. He became the Prophet's muezzin at Medīnah, and later moved to Syria, where he died in the year 17H.

⁶ One of the famous worshippers

calamities, Dāwūd (*'alayhi as-salām*) wept so much, Sulaymān (*'alayhi as-salām*) did not rejoice despite all that he possessed, Mūsā (*'alayhi as-salām*) desired to see His Lord, 'Īsā (*'alayhi as-salām*) wandered with the beasts in the desert, and Muḥammad (ﷺ) endured poverty!

The first step in the path towards Allāh is to sacrifice one's soul; this is the path, yet where are those who will walk it! This is the shirt of Yūsuf (*'alayhi as-salām*) waiting for Ya'qūb (*'alayhi as-salām*), and here is the Mountain of Sinai awaiting Mūsā (*'alayhi as-salām*); where is Junayd⁷ to witness and where is al-Shiblī⁸ to listen to all this?⁹

⁷ He is the nephew [i.e. sister's son] of al-Sarī al-Saqtī. He is among the known pious worshippers of his time.

⁸ Known pious worshipper.

⁹ Taken from, '*Seeds of Admonishment and Reform*' pg128-131, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2013]

APPENDIX SEVEN

Portrayal from the Punishment of the Grave

Samurah ibn Jundub (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to us: ‘Last night, two angels came to me, and woke me up and said, ‘Let’s go!’ I set out with them, and we came across a man who was lying down, with another man standing over him, holding a big rock. He threw the rock at the man’s head, smashing it. The rock rolled away, and the one who had thrown it followed it, and picked it up. By the time he came back to the man, his head had been restored to its former state. Then he (the one who had thrown the rock) did the same as he had done before. I said to my two companions, ‘*Subhān Allāb!* Who are these two persons?’ They said, ‘Move on!’ So we went on, and came to a man who was lying flat on his back, with another man standing over him, holding an iron hook. He put the hook in the man’s mouth and tore off that side of his face to the back (of his neck), and he tore his nose and his eye from front to back in a similar manner. Then he turned to the other side of the man’s face and did likewise. No sooner had he finished the second side but the first side was restored to its former state, then he went back and

did the same thing again. I said to my two companions, 'Who are these two persons?' They said, 'Move on!' So we went on, and came to something like a *tannūr* (a kind of oven, lined with clay, usually used for baking bread). We looked into it and saw naked men and women. A flame of fire was reaching them from underneath, and when it reached them, they cried out loudly. I asked them, 'Who are these?' They said to me, 'Move on!' So we went on and came to a river. In the river there was a man swimming, and on the bank there was a man who had gathered many stones. Whilst the swimmer was swimming, the man who had gathered the stones approached him. The swimmer opened his mouth and the man on the bank threw a stone into it, then the swimmer carried on swimming. Each time he came back, he opened his mouth again, and the man on the bank threw another stone into his mouth. They said to me: The first man you came across, whose head was being smashed with the rock, is the man who studies the Qur'ān then he neither recites it nor acts upon it, and he goes to sleep, neglecting the obligatory prayers. The man you came across whose mouth, nose and ears were being torn from front to back, is the man who goes out of his house in the morning and tells a lie that is so serious that it spreads all over the world. The naked men and women whom you saw in a structure that resembled an oven are the adulterers and adulteresses. The man you saw swimming in the river with rocks being thrown into his mouth is the one who consumed *ribā* (usury)."¹

Sahl ibn Sa'd narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "A man may do the deeds of [the people of] Paradise, or so it may seem to the people, although he is one of the people of Hell, and a man may do the deeds of [the people of] Hell, or so it may seem

¹ Its origin is found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (9/1566). See also *Musnad Aḥmad* (19716)

to the people, although he is one of the people of Paradise. [The determining factor of] deeds depends on what the last of them will be.’^{2,3}

² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (5/169) and Muslim (112)

³ Taken from, ‘*Disturber of the Hearts*’ pg58-60, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2012]

APPENDIX EIGHT

Three Things that follow the Deceased

Anas ibn Mālik (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Three things follow a dead person: Members of his family, his property and his deeds. Two of them return; and one remains with him. The people and his wealth return; his deeds remain with him.”¹ Also Anas ibn Mālik (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) related: “The Prophet (ﷺ) used to say often,

« يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ »

“O over-turner of hearts, make my heart firm on your religion.”

He continue saying: we asked: O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), we believe in you and that which you have brought, do you still fear for us?” He said, “Yes, for people’s hearts are between two of the fingers of the Most Merciful and He turns them as He wills.”^{2,3}

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/134), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2960)

² Sunan al-Tirmidhī (2141) and Sunan Ibn Mājah (3834)

³ Taken from, ‘*Disturber of the Hearts*’ pg25, by Ibn al-Jawzī. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2012]

APPENDIX NINE

The Virtues of Patience

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Know that great good lies in bearing with patience what you dislike.” The narration of ‘Umar, the freed-slave of Ghufrah, on the authority of ibn ‘Abbās has an additional sentence before this phrase, “If you are able to work deeds for the sake of Allāh, being content and in a state of certainty, do so. If you are unable, know that great good lies in bearing with patience what you dislike.”¹

The meaning of certainty here is to actualise faith in the decree. This is mentioned explicitly in the narration of his son, ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, on the authority of his father which has the additional wording, ‘I asked, ‘Messenger of Allāh, how can I act with certainty?’ He replied, “That you know that what afflicted you could never have missed you and what missed you could never have afflicted you.” However, the isnād is ḍa‘īf.

When you have consolidated the topic of certainty, attaining certainty in the heart of the decree and ordainment necessitates the heart being at rest and peace with it. This very meaning is

¹ Abū Nu‘aym, vol. 1, pg. 314

articulated by the Qur’ān:

مَا أَصَابَ
 مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ
 مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

“Nothing occurs, either in the earth or in your selves, without its being in a Book before We make it happen. That is so that you will not be grieved about the things that pass you by or exult about the things that come to you.”²

In exegesis to this verse, Dahḥāk said, ‘He strengthened their resolve: “so that you will not be grieved about the things that passed you by,” so grieve not about worldly effects (that have missed you), for We have not decreed them for you. “Or exult about the things that come to you,” exult not about the worldly effects that We have granted you for they would never have been held back from you.’ This was recorded by ibn Abī al-Dunyā.

Sa’id ibn Jubayr explained the verse with the words, “So that you will not be grieved about the things that passed you by,” of well-being and affluence, this because you know that it was decreed for you before He even created you.’ This was recorded by ibn Abī Hātim.

It is in light of this that one of the Salaf said, ‘Faith in the decree removes worry and distress.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) alluded to this with his words, “Be desirous of all that would benefit you and seek Allāh’s aid and do not despair. If you are afflicted with something, do not say, ‘If only I had done [this], such and such would have happened,’ rather say, ‘Allāh decreed and did what He willed.’

² *al-Ḥadīd* (57): 22-23

[Saying], 'If only,' opens [the door to] the actions of Shayṭān."³

Alluded to in this ḥadīth is that if one were to, at the onset of affliction, remind one's self of the decree, the whisperings of Shayṭān which lead to worry, distress and sorrow would go away.

Anas said, 'I served the Prophet (ﷺ) for ten years and he never once said to me about something I did, "Why did you do that?" or about something I did not do, "Why didn't you do that?"'⁴ He said, 'When one of his family would reprimand me, he would say, "Let him be, if something is decreed, it will happen."' The ḥadīth with this additional wording was recorded by Imām Aḥmad.⁵

Ibn Abī al-Dunyā records with an isnād that is problematic that 'Ā'ishah said, 'The most frequent words of the Prophet (ﷺ) when he came home were, "Whatever matter Allāh has ordained will happen."' He also records, with an isnād that is mursal, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to ibn Mas'ūd, "Do not worry too much, what has been decreed will happen, and what you are to be provided with will come to you."⁶ The ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah has the Prophet

³ Muslim #2664 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

⁴ Bukhārī #2768-6038-6911, Muslim #2309

⁵ Aḥmad #13418, Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #8070 with an isnād meeting the criteria of Bukhārī and Muslim.

cf. Arnā'ut, *Takebrīj Musnad*.

⁶ Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #1188, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah*.

Ibn Ḥajr, *al-Isābah*, vol. 1, pg. 104 said that the isnād contained 'Ayyāsh ibn 'Abbās who was ḍa'if. It was ruled ḍa'if by Albānī, *al-Da'if* #4793. cf. Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* vol. 4, pg. 34 who mentions two more weak narrations of this ḥadīth on the authority of 'Umar and Abū Dharr.

(ﷺ) saying, “[Saying], *‘Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi’llāh’* is a cure for ninety nine ailments, the least of which is worry.” This was recorded by Ṭabarānī and Ḥākim.⁸

Actualising this statement necessarily leads to relegating all affairs to Allāh and believing that nothing will happen unless Allāh wills it. Faith in this removes worry and distress. The Prophet (ﷺ) advised a man, saying, “Do not impugn Allāh for something He has ordained for you.”⁹

When the servant sees the workings of Allāh’s wisdom and mercy through His decree and ordainment and knows that He is not to be impugned for His decree, he will attain contentment at Allāh’s ordainment. Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, says,

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ
مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ

“No misfortune occurs except by Allāh’s permission. Whoever has faith in Allāh - He will guide

⁷ lit: There is no might nor motion except with Allāh.

⁸ Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ* #5028, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Faraj ba’d al-Shiddah*.

Ḥākim #1990 said it was ṣaḥīḥ but Dhahabī pointed out that it had a weak narrator, Bishr. Haythamī, vol. 10, pg. 98 said the isnād contained Bishr ibn Rāfi’ who was ḍa’if. Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Ilāl*, vol. 2, pg. 348 said that it was not authentic and it was ruled ḍa’if by Albānī, *Da’if al-Targhib* #970-1147

⁹ Aḥmad #17814-22717, Bukhārī, *Khalq Af’āl al-’Ibād* #163

Mundhirī, *al-Targhib* vol. 2, pg. 257, after quoting two chains, said of one of them that the isnād was ḥasan. It was ruled ḥasan li ghayriḥi by Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #3334, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhib* #1307. Arna’ūt said that the ḥadīth was a candidate for being ḥasan.

his heart.”¹⁰

In exegesis to this verse, ‘Alqamah said, ‘This refers to a misfortune that befalls a person, but he knows that it is from Allāh so he accepts it and is content.’

In an authentic ḥadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “There is nothing that Allāh ordains for the believer except that it is good for him. If he encounters times of ease, he is grateful and that is good for him. If he encounters misfortune, he is patient and that is good for him. This only holds true for the believer.”¹¹

The Qur’ān also proves this,

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ
اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ هَلْ تَرْتَوُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَحَدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ

“Say: ‘Nothing can happen to us except what Allāh has ordained for us. He is our Master and it is in Allāh that the believers should put their trust.’ Say: ‘What do you await for us except for one of the two best things?...’”¹²

Here, He informs us that nothing could happen to them except what He has decreed. This indicates that, regardless if what they encounter is hard or easy, it is the same to them. He then informs

¹⁰ *al-Taghābun* (64): 11

¹¹ Muslim #2999 on the authority of Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān

¹² *al-Tawbah* (9): 51-52

us that He is their Master and whoever is in such a position will not be forsaken by Allāh; indeed He will take charge of effectuating good for him,

فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

“Know that Allāh is your Master, the Best of Masters and the Best of Helpers!”¹³

هَلْ تَرْتَضُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا أَحَدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ

“What do you await for us except for one of the two best things?...”¹⁴

i.e. either aid and victory or martyrdom: both are best.¹⁵

Tirmidhī records on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “When Allāh loves a people, He tries them. Whoever is content will have good-pleasure, and whoever is displeased will have displeasure.”¹⁶

¹³ *al-Anfāl* (8): 40

¹⁴ *al-Tawbah* (9): 52

¹⁵ Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ṭabarī quote this as the exegesis of ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid.

¹⁶ Tirmidhī #2396, ibn Mājah #4031.

Tirmidhī said that it was ḥasan gharīb. Mundhirī, *al-Targhib*, vol. 4, pg. 233 said the isnād was ḥasan or ṣahīḥ. Ibn Mufliḥ, *al-Adāb al-Shar‘iyyah*, vol. 2, pg. 181 said that the isnād was jayyid. It was ruled ḥasan by Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #146

Aḥmad #23623-23633-23641 records a similar ḥadīth on the authority of Maḥmūd ibn Labīd with the words, “When Allāh loves a people, He tries them. Whoever is patient, for him is patience and whoever despairs, for him is despair.” Arna‘ūt said that the isnād was jayyid.

Abū'l-Dardā' said, 'Allāh loves that a [servant] be content with a matter when He ordains it.' Ummu'l-Dardā' said, 'Those who are truly content with the ordainment of Allāh are people who are content, no matter what is ordained. On the Day of Rising they will have such stations in Paradise as would make the martyrs envious.'

Ibn Mas'ūd said, 'By Allāh's justice and knowledge did He place relief and joy in certainty and contentment, and worry and distress in doubt and displeasure.' This is also reported as a ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) but is ḍa'if.¹⁸

'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz would say, 'These invocations have left me with no further needs, only submission to the decree of Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent. He would employ them in supplication frequently, saying, "O Allāh make me content with your ordainment and bless me in your decree to the extent that I would not wish to hasten something I delayed or delay something I hastened."'”¹⁹

Ibn 'Awn said, 'In both times of ease and difficulty be content with Allāh's decree, it will decrease your distress and serve you better in your pursuit of the Hereafter. Know that the servant will never attain the reality of contentment until his contentment at times of poverty and tribulation is the same as his contentment at times of affluence and ease. How can you go to Allāh to adjudge your affair and then be discontent when you find that His ordainment does not accord to your desires?! It is well possible that, were

¹⁷ Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #209, ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Yaqīn* #32 with a ḍa'if isnād.

¹⁸ cf. Chapter 8 fn #8

¹⁹ Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #227

your desire to come to fruition, you would be destroyed! When His ordainment accords to your desires, you are content, and both cases arise because of your scant knowledge of the unseen. How can you go to Him for judgment when this is your condition! You have not been fair to yourself and neither have you hit the mark with regards to contentment.’

These are fine words. The meaning is that when the servant turns to Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, to aid him in a decision (*istikhāra*), he should be content with what Allāh chooses for him regardless if it conforms to his desires or not. This is because he, himself, does not know in which course the good lies and Allāh, Glorious is He, is not to be impugned for His ordainment. It is for this reason that some of the Salaf, such as ibn Mas‘ūd²⁰ and others, would order a person who feared that he would not be able to bear a decision which opposed his desires, to add the words, ‘in all well-being,’ to his *istikhāra* since He could choose trial for him and he not be able to bear it. This has also been recorded from the Prophet (ﷺ) but it is *ḍa‘īf*.²¹

Bakr al-Muzanī narrates that a man would frequently make *istikhāra* and as result was tried and was unable to bear it with patience, instead sinking into despair. So Allāh revealed to one of their Prophets, “Tell My servant that if he lacks due resolve then why does he not ask for My decision [with the words], ‘in all well-being?’”

The ḥadīth of Sa‘d has the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, “From the good fortune of a servant is His seeking a decision from his Lord, Mighty

²⁰ Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab* #205

²¹ Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #10012-10052 on the authority of ibn Mas‘ūd and it is *ḍa‘īf*.

and Magnificent, and being content with what He ordains. From the misery of a person is his abandoning seeking a decision and his dislike of what He ordains.” This was recorded by Tirmidhī and others.²²

There are numerous ways to achieve contentment with the decree:

1. The servant having certainty in Allāh and a firm trust that whatever He decrees for a believer will be good for him. As such he will be like a patient who has submitted to the ministrations of a skilled doctor: such a patient will be content with his ministrations be they painful or not because he has a complete trust that the doctor is doing only that which will be of benefit to him. This is what ibn ‘Awn alluded to in his aforementioned words.

2. Looking to the reward that Allāh has promised for contentment. The servant could well be so engrossed in pondering this that he forgets all about the pain he is facing. It is reported that a righteous woman from the Salaf tripped and broke a nail whereupon she laughed saying, ‘The delight of His reward has made me forget the bitterness of His pain.’

3. Immersing oneself in love of the One who sends tribulation, constantly being aware of His magnificence, beauty, greatness and perfection which is without limit. The potency of such awareness will cause the servant to drown in it such that he no longer senses pain much in the same way that the women who saw Yūsuf forgot

²² Aḥmad #1445, Tirmidhī #2151

Tirmidhī said that it was gharīb and that its isnād contained Ḥammād ibn Ḥumayd who was not strong. Arna‘ūt said that the isnād was da‘if. It was ruled da‘if by Albānī, *al-Da‘if* #1906

about the pain of cutting their hands.²³ This is a higher station than those previously mentioned.

Junaid said that he asked Sirrī if the lover senses the pain of tribulation to which he replied, 'No.' In these words, he is alluding to this station. It is in this light that a group of those facing tribulation said, 'Let Him do what He wills with us. Even if He were to cut us up, limb by limb, we would only increase in our love.'

One of them said,

If ardent love tore me apart, limb from limb,
 The pain would only increase me in love.
 I will remain a prisoner to love,
 Until, in the pursuit of your pleasure, I pass away.

Ibrāhīm ibn Adham left his wealth, property, children and servants. While performing *tawāf*, he saw his son but did not speak to him. He said,

I migrated from all people for love of You.
 I bereaved my dependants that I may see You.
 If You tore my limbs apart, in my love
 The heart would still long for You.

A group of the lovers such as Fuḍayl and Faṭḥ al-Mawṣili, if they went to sleep without an evening meal and without a lamp being lit, they would cry in joy.

During the winter nights, Faṭḥ would gather his family and cover

²³ Mentioned in, "When they saw him, they were amazed by him and cut their hands. They said, 'Allāh preserve us! This is no man. What can this be but a noble angel here!'" [*Yūsuf* (12): 31]

them with his cloak and say, 'You made me go hungry so I have made my family go hungry. You have made me a stranger so I have made my family strangers. This You do with Your beloved and Your friends, am I one of them? Should I exult in joy?'²⁴

They entered upon one of the Salaf who was ill and asked him, 'Is there anything you want?' He replied, 'That whatever He finds most pleasing, I find most pleasing.'²⁵

In this light, one of them said,

For Your sake, his punishment is sweet.
For Your sake, his distance is closeness.
You are like my very soul,
Rather, You are more beloved!
Sufficient is it in my love
That I love only what You love.

Abū'l-Turāb composed the following lines:

Be not deceived, the lover has signs.
He has routes to the gifts of the Beloved:
Taking delight at the bitterness of His trial,
Being joyous at all that He does,
His withholding is a gift accepted,
Poverty is honour and generosity, transient.

They entered upon a man whose son had been martyred in Jihād and he wept saying, 'I do not cry at his loss, I only cry when thinking what his state of contentment with Allāh was when the

²⁴ Abū Nu'aym, vol. 8, pg. 192

²⁵ Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 9, pg. 182 quoting it from Yahya ibn Sa'īd al-Qattān.

swords struck!

If Ghada's people wish me dead, so be it
By Allāh, I have never begrudged the beloved's wish!
I am like a slave to them: I cannot object.

The point here is that the Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined ibn 'Abbās to work deeds while in state of contentment if he was able to. If not, he said, "If you are unable, know that great good lies in bearing with patience what you dislike," this then proves that being content with decrees that are hard to bear is not an obligation but rather a recommendation, a state of excellence. Whoever is unable to be content must instead be patient. Patience is obligatory, it must be present, and it contains great good. Allāh, Most High, has commanded patience and promised a great reward for it:

إِنَّمَا يُوفَى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

"The patient will be paid their wages in full without any reckoning."²⁶

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾
أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

"Give good news to the patient: those who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'We belong to Allāh and to Him we will return.' Those are the people who will have blessings and mercy from their Lord; they are the ones who are guided."²⁷

²⁶ *al-Zumar* (39): 10

²⁷ *al-Baqarah* (2): 155-157

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ

“Give good news to the humble hearted, whose hearts quake at the mention of Allāh, and who are patient in the face of all that happens to them.”²⁸

al-Ḥasan said, ‘The state of contentment is rare, but patience is the recourse of the believer.’²⁹ Sulaymān al-Khawāṣ said, ‘The station of patience is below that of contentment. Contentment is that a person, before the onset of tribulation, is content whether it is present or not. Patience is that a person, after the onset of tribulation, bears it steadfastly.’

The difference between patience and contentment is that patience is to restrain the soul and to prevent it from displeasure while sensing discomfort or pain.³⁰ Contentment necessitates that

²⁸ *al-Hajj* (22): 34-35

²⁹ Abū Nu‘aym, vol. 5, pg. 342 from ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdu’l-‘Azīz

³⁰ *Ṣabr*: to refrain and withhold. Rāghib said, ‘It is to withhold the soul as determined by the Legal Law and the intellect.’ Jāḥiẓ said that it is a quality made up of sobriety and courage and Munāwī said that it was the ability to face disturbing and painful circumstances, both physical and mental. It is to withhold the soul from misery and displeasure, the tongue from complaining and the limbs from derangement; it is to remain firm upon the laws of Allāh in all circumstances and to face adversity with the best of conduct.

Ibn Ḥibbān, *Rawḍatu’l-‘Uqalā’*, pp. 126-128, said, ‘It is obligatory upon the intelligent, in the beginning, to adhere firmly to *ṣabr* at the onset of difficulty and when he becomes firm in this he should then move on to the level of contentment (*riḍā*). If one has not been nourished with *ṣabr* he should adhere firmly to inculcating *ṣabr* in himself (*taṣabbur*) for that is the first stages of *riḍā*.

the heart readily accept what it is facing and, even if it was to feel some pain at what it is facing, the sense of contentment will lessen it, perhaps even remove it altogether. This is because the heart has felt the soothing breath of certainty and cognisance.³¹

This is why a large group of the Salaf such as ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdu’l-‘Azīz, Fuḍayl, Abū Sulaymān and ibn al-Mubārak would say, ‘The person who is content does not desire a state other than the one he is in whereas the patient does.’ This state of being is reported from a group of the Companions, amongst whom were ‘Umar and ibn Mas‘ūd.

‘Abdu’l-‘Azīz ibn Abū Ruwwād said, ‘Amongst the Children of Israel there was a devout worshipper who saw a dream in which he

= If a man was to have *ṣabr*, truly would he be noble; for *ṣabr* is the fount of all good and the foundation of all obedience... The stages leading to it are concern (*ihitimām*), awakening (*tayakkuz*), examination and circumspection (*tathabbu*), and *taṣabbur*, after it comes *riḍā* and that is the peak of the spiritual stations... *ṣabr* is displayed in three matters: *ṣabr* from sin; *ṣabr* upon obedience; and *ṣabr* in the face of adversity and calamity.’ cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pp. 162-165

³¹ *Riḍā*: the opposite of displeasure and malcontent. Jurjānī said that it referred to the joy of the heart at the occurrence of the decree. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij*, vol. 2, pg. 185 mentioned that it is the tranquillity of the heart in the face of the vicissitudes of the decree and the firm knowledge that it has that Allāh would only that which is good for it.

Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab* #209 records that ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said, ‘*Riḍā* is that you not please the people at the expense of the displeasure of Allāh; that you not praise anyone for the provision Allāh has granted you; and that you not blame anyone for that which Allāh has not given you. The grant of provision is not dictated by the avarice of a person and neither is it withheld because of the aversion of another. By Allāh’s justice and knowledge did He place relief and joy in certainty and contentment, and worry and distress in doubt and displeasure.’

was told that so-and-so would be his wife in Paradise. So he went to her as a guest for three nights to see what she did. She would sleep while he prayed by night and she would eat while he fasted. When he left her, he asked her about the greatest deed she felt she did. She replied, "I do no more than what you have seen except that I have one quality: If I am in trying times, I do not want to be in times of ease. If I am ill, I do not wish to be healthy. If I am hungry, I do not wish to be full. And if I am in the sun, I do not wish to be in the shade." He said, "By Allāh, this is a quality that is beyond the reach of the servants!"

Patience is to be shown at the onset of calamity as is authentically reported from the Prophet (ﷺ).³² Contentment is shown after the onset of calamity as the Prophet (ﷺ) said in his supplication, "I ask You for contentment after the decree."³³ This is because a servant could well resolve to be content at the decree before it occurs, but the resolve dissipate when he actually faces it. Whoever is content after the decree has befallen is one who is truly content.³⁴

Therefore, in summary, patience is obligatory and must be present. Beyond patience there is displeasure and malcontent and whoever is displeased at the decree of Allāh, his lot will be displeasure. Moreover, the pain he will face and the malice of his enemies will be far greater than his despair, just as one of them said,

Despair not at any mishap that befalls

³² Bukhārī #1283-1302-7154, Muslim #626 on the authority of Anas

³³ Aḥmad #18325, Nasā'ī #1306-1307 on the authority of 'Ammār ibn Yāsir
It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #1971, Ḥakīm #1923 with Dhahabī agreeing, Albānī, *Takhrīj al-Nasā'ī* and Arna'ūt.

³⁴ cf. Khattābī, *Shā'n al-Du'ā*, pg. 132

Allow not the malice of the enemy free hold
 People, through patience will you see your hopes
 When you meet the opposing army, stand firm!

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever inculcates patience in himself, Allāh will grant him patience. Allāh has not granted anyone a gift better and more expansive than patience.”³⁵

‘Umar said, ‘The best times of our lives have been those accompanied by patience.’³⁶ ‘Alī said, ‘Patience with respect to faith is like the head with respect to the body: a person who has no patience has no faith.’³⁷

al-Hasan said, ‘Patience is one of the treasures of Paradise. Allāh only confers it to those He ennobles.’ Maymūn ibn Mihrān said, ‘No Prophet or anyone else has ever attained good except through patience.’ Ibrāhīm al-Taymī said, ‘Allāh does not gift a servant with patience at harm, patience at tribulation and patience at calamity except that He has conferred on him the best [gift] after faith in Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent.’ He derived this from the saying of Allāh, Most High, in *al-Baqarab* (2):177.*

³⁵ Bukhārī #1469-6470, Muslim #1053 on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī

³⁶ Bukhārī as a ta‘līq report. Ibn Ḥajr, *Fath*, vol. 11, pg. 309, said, ‘Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-Zuhd* (#117), provided a complete chain to Mujāhid who said that “Umar said...” and it is ṣaḥīḥ.’ It is also recorded by ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd* #630, Wakī‘, *al-Zuhd* #198

³⁷ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Īmān* #130, Wakī‘ #199, Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab* #40, Abū Nu‘aym, vol. 1, pp. 75-76

Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi‘* #5136 ruled it ḍa‘īf.

* Adapted from, ‘*The Legacy of the Prophet*’ pg.110, by Ibn Rajab. [Published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, 1st ed., 2009]