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DISCIPLINE: THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

by Imām Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdīsī [d 689H]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"Whoever pollutes [the soul] has failed."

[QUR'ĀN (91): 10]

Imām Aḥmad Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī [d. 689H]

DISCIPLINE: The PATH to SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A textbook on the Ethics of Self-Discipline

A TRANSLATION OF

'Mukhtaṣar Minḥāj al-Qāṣidīn'

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī said:

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

I praise Him, affirming the abundant aid which He imparts, and I seek refuge in Him from expulsion and distance [from Him]. I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh alone with no partner, a testimony which is stored for the Abode of Resurrection. I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger who clarified the path of guidance and accuracy, suppressed the rejectors and deniers from the people of deviation and stubbornness. May Allāh's peace and blessings be upon him, to proceed:

I came across the book *Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn* by *Shaykh al-Imām al-ʿAlim al-Awḥad*, Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Jawzī (*raḥimahullāh*). I saw that it was of the most magnificent and beneficial of books containing many benefits. I came across at a certain location and I desired to obtain it and read through it. When I contemplated on it for a second time I found more than what I had thought was in it. However, I found that the book was simple and thus I wanted to comment on it in this *Mukhtaṣar* which will contain most of its intents and important aspects and benefits whether it be the clear issues mentioned in the beginning of it related to the *furūʿ*, as these are famous matters in the books of *fiqh* and known among the people, as the intent of the book is not to deal with those matters.[1]

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

[1] The intent of the book is as an admonishment, it is a work of heart softening (*raqāʾiq*), *sulūk* and actions of the heart (*aʿmal al-qulūb*).

THE FIRST FOUNDATION

On the Marvels of the Heart

Know that the most honoured (*ashraf*) part of a person is his heart (*qalb*). If a person has knowledge of Allāh, works for Him, strives for Him, gains nearness (*muqarrab*) to Him and unveils (*mukāshafa*) what Allāh has[1], then the limbs will but follow and serve and the heart will utilise it just as kings utilise slaves.

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

[1] The meaning here is not to be understood in the way of the innovators which is found among some people!

Section One:
Exposition of the Ways by which Satan enters the Heart

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

مِن شَرِّ ٱلْوَسْوَاسِ ٱلْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾

"From the evil of the retreating whisperer"
[*al-Nās* (112): 4]

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

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

Shayṭān's points of entry and his gates are the characteristics of a servant (*ṣifāt al-ʿabd*), these are many but I will suffice with indicating the main gates which are not found to be narrow by many of *Shayṭān's* armies: Among the great doors for his entrance is that of envy (*ḥasad*), and greed (*ḥirs*). For whenever the servant is greedy for anything his greed makes him blind and deaf, covering the light (*nūr*)

of his insight (*baṣīra*). This becomes known to *Shayṭān* as a potential point of entry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Another of his great doors is haste (*'ajala*), and abandoning steadfastness (*tark al-tathabbut*), the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Haste is from *Shayṭān*."[2]

[2] Abū Ya'lā, Musnad, vol.3, p.1054; al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, vol.10, p.104—from Anas and its isnad is hasan; also refer to *Silsilat ul-Aḥādīth as-Saḥīḥah*, #1795.

Another of his great doors is love of wealth (*ḥubb al-māl*), and whenever this enters a person's heart, it corrupts it and leads him to seek wealth wherever it may be. This in turn leads him to become miserly (*bukhl*), which results in poverty (*faqr*) as he does not pay obligatory rights.

Another of his great doors is encouraging the common people to have bigoted fanaticism (*ta'aṣṣub*) to schools of thought without acting on what the schools obligate.

Another of his great doors is encouraging common people to delve into reflecting (*tafkīr*) on Allāh's Essence (*dhāt*) and Attributes (*ṣifāt*), and on matters which their minds cannot perceive until this eventually culminates in them having doubt about the basics of the religion.

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

A person has to protect himself from accusations as this is a point of entry for *Shayṭān* and the cure of this obstacle is to block this point through purifying the heart (*taṭhīr al-qalb*) from censured characteristics (*ṣifāt al-madhmūma*)—which we will discuss later in detail *insha'Allāh*.

If you were to cut out of the heart the roots of these characteristics, *Shayṭān* would still be able to pass through it and makes suggestions to it, but it would not be abiding-place for him. Remembrance of Allāh prevents him from passing through it and filling the heart with piety (*taqwā*).

Shayṭān is like a hungry dog which stands in front of you. If you have neither meat nor bread in your hands it is driven back by your saying, 'you are at a loss!' But if you have something in your hands and the dog is hungry, it will rush and will not be driven away by mere talk. Thus *Shayṭān* can be driven away from the heart which is devoid of his food by merely remembering Allāh. But if desire overcomes the heart it drives the true nature of remembrance of Allāh to the marginal regions of the heart so that it does not gain the mastery over its core. The core is thus the abiding-place that *Shayṭān* seeks.

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

Know that a person's inner discourses (*ḥadīth al-nafs*) are forgiven and this includes evil that he intended to commit. Yet whoever leaves that out of fear (*ḫawf*) of Allāh will have a good deed written for him even if he leaves it due to a hindrance (*'ā'iq*) we hope that he will achieve pardon. Unless he had intent, as intending to commit an evil, is itself evil. The proof for this is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): "If two Muslims face each other with their swords, then both the killer and the killed are in the Hellfire." It was asked: "Why is the killed [to be in the Hellfire]?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "He had firm resolve to kill the other."[3]

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

[3] Bukhārī, vol.12, p.173; Muslim, #2888—from Abū Bakrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

having sexual relations with her with this in mind. All of this is connected to the intents of the heart (*'aqd al-qalb*).

Section two:
Exposition on the Hearts Steadfastness on Goodness

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

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ.

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

يَا مُصَرِّفَ الْقُلُوبِ صَرِّفْ قُلُوبَنَا عَلَى طَاعَتِكَ.

"O Averter of the hearts, avert our hearts to Your obedience."[4]

In another ḥadīth: "The heart is like a feather which gets turned over by the wind."[5]

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

The first heart is which is filled with piety (*taqwā*), which gets purified by means of discipline (*riyāḍa*) and cleansed of vile manners (*akhlāq al-dhamīma*).

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

[4] Tirmidhī, #2141 and Muslim #2654—from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*)
[5] Aḥmad, vol.4, pp.419, 408; Ibn Abī 'Āsim, *al-Sunnah*, #227—from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.

being filled with the smoke of passion. Light is therefore darkened and the eyes become filled with smoke which affects sight and thus it does not pay heed to admonishment (*wa'ẓ*).

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

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

فَمَن يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ أَن يَهْدِيَهُۥ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُۥ لِلْإِسْلَٰمِ ۖ وَمَن يُرِدْ أَن يُضِلَّهُۥ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُۥ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۚ

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

[*al-An'ām* (6): 125]

THE SECOND FOUNDATION

On Disciplining the Soul, Refining the Character, and Curing the Sicknesses of the Heart

Know that good character (*khulq al-ḥasan*) is a characteristic (*ṣifah*) of the Prophets and of the Truthful (*ṣiddīqīn*). Bad character (*akhlāq al-sayyi'a*) on the other hand is a destructive poison which leads a person who possesses it to traverse the path of *Shayṭān*. You therefore have to know the sicknesses and flaws and then proceed to find the cures. We will indicate some of the sicknesses of the heart and how to treat them generally, without going into too much detail as this will be clarified [later] *insha'Allāh*.

Section One:

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

Some of this has been noticed in regards to the etiquettes of companionship (*ādāb al-ṣuḥba*).

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

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

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

إِنِّي خَٰلِقٌۢ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ﴿٧١﴾ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُۥ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي

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

[*Ṣād* (38): 71-72]

Allāh brings attention to the fact that the body is ascribed to clay (*tīn*) and that the soul (*rūḥ*) is ascribed to Him, glory unto Him. '*Khulq*' is a reflection of the soul from which actions are brought out easily without the need of reflection (*fikr*) or deliberation (*rawīya*). So if actions are beautiful they are referred to as 'good character' (*ḵhuluq al-ḥasan*) and if they are vile they are known as 'bad character' (*ḵhuluq al-sayyi'ah*).

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

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

As for the idea that people's characters cannot be changed then you should know that the intent (*maqṣūd*) [of changing one's character] is not to suppress these attributes totally but rather to discipline oneself to avert desires and traverse the moderate way (*i'tidāl*) which is median between excess (*ifrāṭ*) and neglect (*tafrīṭ*). Total suppression [of desires] is not the main goal. How could it be when desires (*shahwa*) were created for a necessary benefit embedded in people's natures? So for example, if the desire for food was removed, a person would die; if the desire for sexual relations (*wiqā'*) was removed lineages would be severed and if the impulse of anger (*ghaḍab*) was removed totally a person would not defend himself from what seeks to destroy him and Allāh has said,

أَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى ٱلْكُفَّارِ

"Severe against the unbelievers"

[*al-Fatḥ* (48): 29]

And describing the believers as 'severe' (*shidda*): severity can only arise from anger, and were there to be no anger, there could be no struggle against the unbelievers.

وَٱلْكَٰظِمِينَ ٱلْغَيْظَ

"And those that suppress their rage."

[*Āl-'Imrān* (3): 134]

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

وَكُلُوا۟ وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوٓا۟

"Eat and drink, but be not extravagant."

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 31]

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

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَنفَقُوا۟
لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا۟ وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا۟ وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾

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

[*al-Furqān* (28): 67]

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

Likewise, whoever wants the character of humility (*tawāḍu'*) has to take on board the actions of the humble (*mutawāḍi'īn*).

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

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

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

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

I say: what supports this is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): "A person

is on the religion of his friend, so let each of you look to whom he takes as a friend."[1]

Section Two:
The Method used in Refining the Character

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

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

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

[1] Reported by Abū Dāwūd, #4833; Tirmidhī, #2379—from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with a ḥasan chain of transmission.

of pride (*kibr*) is treated with humility (*tawāḍu'*) and the sickness of greed (*sharr*) is treated by avoiding the object of desire (*mushtahan*).

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

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

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

Section Three:

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

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

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

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

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

ness itself overcomes them [the scholars] and a sick physician very rarely notices his own sicknesses.

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

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

Every heart which is like this will become healthy and sound (*salim*) with Allāh in this matter, and one should be healthy in regards to all character traits so that the heart does not become attached to anything from the worldly life and so that the soul leaves the world severed from any attachments to it, without being averted towards it and without desiring means to attain it. At that point, it will return to its Lord as a soul which is assured (*nafs al-muṭma'ina*).

When real moderation is between two sides is of the utmost obscurity (*gumūd*), indeed, it is finer than a strand of hair, and sharper than a sword, the man who keeps to the Straight Path (*ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*) in this world shall cross the bridge (*al-ṣirāt*) in the Afterlife. It is because of the difficulty of being steadfast (*istiqāma*) on the path, the servant of Allāh has been instructed to say every day:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾

"Guide us to the Straight Path."

[*al-Fātiḥah* (1): 6]

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

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

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

Whoever wants to know the faults of his own self should take four steps:

Firstly, he should sit before a Shaykh who has insight (*baṣīr*) of the soul's flaws and who will let him know of his soul's faults and how to cure them. This may be difficult to find in these times,[2] yet whoever can find such a man has truly found a proficient physician who should not be left.

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

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

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

'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to ask Hudhayfah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*): 'Can you see any of the signs of hypocrisy in me?'

This is because the more a person's level is raised in terms of its wakefulness the more he will accuse his own self. The problem in these times is that it is very difficult to find a close friend who has this description as it is rare to find friends who abandon complimenting and flattering you.[3]

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

[2] Then how about in our times, some nine centuries after this was written?!

[3] These are amazing words by the author here and it is almost as if this is written for people of our times, for the general public and for the preachers to Islām in particular!

inform them of their faults, yet with us today we are mostly a people who hate the most any person who may inform us of our own faults.

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

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

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

Section Four:
Exposition on the Appetites of the Soul

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

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

[4] Whoever can combine all four ways has combined between the good of all of them.

has a right upon you."[5]

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

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

Section Five:
Exposition of the Signs of Good Character

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

[5] Abū Dāwūd, #1369—from 'Ā'ishah (*radiya Allāhu 'anhā*); Tirmidhī, #748—from Muslim al-Qurashī, yet it also contains in the isnad 'Ubaydullāh Ibn Muslim al-Qurashī and no one has deemed him as trustworthy except for Ibn Ḥibbān. Based on this the ḥadīth is ḥasan *insha'Allāh*.

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتُهُۥ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَٰنًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ
يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا

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

[*al-Anfāl* (8): 2-4]

And He said,

ٱلتَّٰٓئِبُونَ ٱلْعَٰبِدُونَ ٱلْحَٰمِدُونَ ٱلسَّٰٓئِحُونَ
ٱلرَّٰكِعُونَ ٱلسَّٰجِدُونَ ٱلْءَامِرُونَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ
وَٱلنَّاهُونَ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَٱلْحَٰفِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ
وَبَشِّرِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾

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

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 112]

And He has said,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ فِى صَلَاتِهِمْ خَٰشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ ٱللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَوٰةِ
فَٰعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَٰفِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰٓ
أَزْوَٰجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾

فَمَنِ ٱبْتَغَىٰ وَرَآءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ
لِأَمَٰنَٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَٰعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَٰتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

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

[*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 1-10]

Similarly, He has said,

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

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

[*al-Furqān* (25): 63]

to the end of *Surah al-Furqān*

Whoever is uncertain what his condition might be should measure himself against these verses. The presence of all these characteristics [within him] is a sign of good character (*ḥusn al-khuluq*). The absence of any of them is a sign of bad character (*sū' al-khuluq*), while the presence of some of them is a sign that he has some good but has to strive so as to maintain them and work to achieve the rest. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) described the believers with many features and those which indicated good traits of character (*maḥāsin al-akhlāq*).

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, a serv-

ant does not believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."[6]

Also in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day should honour his guest; whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour; and whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day should say good or keep quiet."[7]

In another ḥadīth: "The believer with the most perfect faith is he with the finest character."[8]

From good character is enduring the harshness of other. In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs a Bedouin grabbed the garment [so roughly] of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the extent that the cloak's edge had left a mark there, saying: 'O Muḥammad! Give me some of Allāh's wealth which you have.' And Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) turned to him and then laughed and ordered that he be given some wealth.[9]

And if his people harmed him he would say: "O Allāh forgive my people as they are a people who do not know."[10]

Whenever young children would throw stones at Uways al-Qarnī

[6] Bukhārī, vol.1, pp.53, 54; Muslim, #45; Nasā'ī, vol.8, p.115; Tirmidhī, #2517 and Ibn Mājah, #66.

[7] Bukhārī, vol.1, p.373; Muslim, #47 and Abū Dāwūd, #5154—from Abū Sharīḥ al-'Adawī.

[8] Tirmidhī, #1162 and Abū Dāwūd, #4682—from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiy Allāhu 'anhum*).

[9] Bukhārī, #5809 and Muslim, #1057—from Anas (*raḍiy Allāhu 'anhu*).

[10] Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Irāqī said in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.71: "Reported by Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Bayhaqī in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* from the ḥadīth of Sahl Ibn Sa'd (*raḍiy Allāhu 'anhu*) and in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiy Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated from a Prophet who was beaten by his people."

al-'Allāmah al-Albānī in his commentary to *al-Mishkāt*, #5313 stated: "It has been narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated the like of this about his people yet it is not authentic."

he would say to them: 'O my young brothers!, If you must throw anything at me then at least throw small stones at me, so that my shins will not bleed and thus prevent me from the prayer.'

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

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

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

Know that a child is a trust (*amāna*) on his parents and his heart is a uncut jewel which is open to every inscription. So if good is presented to it, it will be raised on that and will share in the rewards with his parents or teachers. Yet if he becomes accustomed to evil, he will be raised on that and the burden of that will be around his neck and also around the necks of those who cultivated him on that. Thus, a child has to be protected, taught manners, well-trained, taught exquisite

etiquettes and protected from negative peers. A child should become accustomed to receiving favours and rewards or love high standards as he will then waste his life in seeking that when he grows older.

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

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

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

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

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

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

When beautiful manners and praiseworthy actions manifest in a child, the child has to be honoured as a result and rewarded in a way

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

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

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

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

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

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

He should be prevented from accepting anything from other boys.

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

He should always be made to judge the love of gold and silver as vulgar thing.

A child should know that spitting in gatherings is improper etiquette as is to clear mucus from one's throat in public. The child should also know that it is inappropriate to yawn in public, and to place his leg over his other leg in public gatherings. He should also be raised to know that it is inappropriate to speak excessively.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh said: 'When I was [only] three years old I used to get up at night and see my maternal uncle Muḥammad ibn Suwār praying.' One day he said to me: 'Do you not remember Allāh who created you?' I said: 'How do I do that?' He said to me: 'Say in your heart, without moving your tongue[11] three things: 'Allāh is with me, Allāh is watching me and Allāh is looking at me.' So I said that until I learned it, then my uncle said to me: 'Say it ten times per night.' So I did so and its sweetness entered within my heart. A year later my uncle said to me: 'Memorise what I have taught you and keep doing it until you reach your grave.' So I did not cease doing it for all of these years and I found its sweetness within myself. Then my uncle said to me: 'O Sahl, whoever has Allāh with him, watching and looking over him, will he disobey Allāh?' And so I went to school, where I memorised the Qur'ān by the time I was six or seven years of age, then I fasted for a lifetime, ate just barley-bread, and then I prayed through the entire night.'

[11] According to the jurists this is not to be defined as *"dhikr"* as the tongue has to be moved!

Section Seven:
The Requisites for Self-discipline

Know that whoever witnesses the Afterlife with his heart has done so with certainty (*yaqīn*), and by necessity becomes a follower of it and an ascetic (*zāhid*) in the world. Whoever possesses a gem and then sees a precious stone will no longer have any desire (*raghba*) for the gem, and if it is said to him: 'Sell it for the precious stone' he will do so without hesitation.

Know that whoever is granted vigilance (*intibāh*) to this by Allāh has to traverse the way of self-discipline (*riyāḍa*) as an essential condition (*sharṭ*) which is given priority, and as a hand-hold (*tamassuk*) which has to be held onto, and as a protection (*ḥisn*) which has to be used as a fortification: as for the condition it is to lift the veil (*ḥijāb*) by abandoning sins, and as for the hand-hold, it is a Shaykh to indicate the way otherwise the devils may distract you from the path, and as for the protection, it is seclusion (*khalwa*),[12] and daily duties and litanies (*waẓā'if*) opposing desires (*hawā*), and much remembrance (*dhikr*), and adopting a middle course with regards to devotional practices (*awrād*).

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

[12] Yet this is not the way of the Salaf.

THE THIRD FOUNDATION

On Breaking the Two Desires: The Desire of the Stomach and the Desire of the Private Parts

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

In a ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The believer eats from one intestine [i.e. is satisfied with little] while the disbeliever eats from seven intestines [i.e. eats too much]."[1]

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

[1] Muslim, #2062—from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī with this wording; also reported by al-Bukhārī, vol.9, p.468; Muslim, #2060; Tirmidhī, #1819 with the wording "the Muslim"—from Ibn 'Umar and also from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhum*).

evil than his own stomach. It is enough for the son of Ādam to eat that which keeps his back straight. If this is not possible, then at least a third for food, a third for drink and a third for air."[2]

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

A group of ascetics (*zuhhād*) went to excess in eating a little and being patient (*ṣabr*) with hunger (*jū'*), and in this book we have already explained the inaccuracy of those who traversed such a course.[3]

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

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

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

[2] Reported by Tirmidhī, #2381 and Ḥākim, vol.4, p.121—from al-Miqdām Ibn Ma'dī Karib and its chain of transmission is strong.

[3] Refer to Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbis Iblis*. Refer to the complete English translation, *'The Devil's Deception'*, published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2014 under the Ibn Jawzī Series.

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

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

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

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

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

[4] Bukhārī, vol.9, p.118; Muslim, #2740; Tirmidhī, #2781—from Usāmah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

entrusted over a black female [slave] for an hour, I cannot be sure that she will be safe with me."[5]

This may find support in the ḥadīth, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A man does not seclude himself with a woman except the third one with them is *Shayṭān*."[6]

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

[5] [Translator's note]: in the poor translation of this book conducted by Wa'il Shihab, he translated the word *'Zunjiyyah'* as 'black woman', when the intent is actually a 'black female slave' as opposed to it meaning black women generally like this.

[6] Reported by Tirmidhī, #2166; Aḥmad, vol.1, pp.18, 26; Ibn Mājah, #2363; al-Ṭayālisī, al-Humaydī, #32; Abū Ya'lā, #141, 142; al-Qadā'ī, #403; al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Athār*, vol.4, p.150; and others from 'Umar (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with an authentic chain of transmission.

THE FOURTH FOUNDATION

On the Defects of the Tongue

The dangers and harms of the tongue (*lisān*) are many, it has a sweetness (*ḥalāwa*) in the hearts and its motives spring from nature. There is no salvation from its dangers except by silence (*ṣamt*). We will firstly mention the virtues of silence (*faḍīla al-ṣamt*) and follow this up with mention of its faults in detail *insha'Allāh*.

Know that silence contains aspiration (*himma*) and empties one's mind from void thoughts (*fikr*).

In the ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever can guarantee for me what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his legs I can guarantee for him Paradise (*jannah*)."[1]

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

[1] Bukhārī, vol.11, p.264; Tirmidhī, #2410 from Sahl Ibn Sa'd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

straight."[2]

In the ḥadīth of Muʿādh (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) the Prophet (ﷺ) said, taking hold of his tongue: "Withhold this." Muʿādh said: "O Allāh's Messenger, will we be taken to account for what we say?" Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) replied: "May your mother be bereaved of you O Muʿādh! People will be thrown into the Fire upon their faces—or he said "on their noses"— only due to the traps of their tongues?"[3]

In another ḥadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever can withhold his tongue (*lisān*) Allāh will hide his secrets."[4]

Ibn Masʿūd (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) stated: 'There is nothing which needs to be imprisoned for a long time except for my tongue.'

Abū'l-Dardā' (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) stated: 'Be just with your ears as you are with your mouth, for two ears have been made for you and one mouth so that you will hear more than you speak.'

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

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[2] Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-ʿIrāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.109:
Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in *al-Ṣamt* and al-Kharā'iṭī in *Makārim al-Akhlāq* with a chain of transmission which contains weakness.
al-Zabīdī stated in *al-Itḥāf*, vol.7, p.451: "Likewise reported by Aḥmad and al-Bayhaqī." Then he relayed the isnād of Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā and stated: "and ʿAlī Ibn Masʿada, and Ibn Ḥibbān stated about him that 'he is not to be utilised [in ḥadīth narrations]'."

[3] Part of the ḥadīth of Tirmidhī, #2619; Ibn Mājah, #3973; Aḥmad, vol.5, p.231; ʿAbdu'l-Razzāq, #20303; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*, vol.20, p.130—from Muʿādh (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) with a ḥasan chain of transmission.

[4] Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā, *al-Ṣamt*; Abū Yaʿlā; Ibn Shāhīn; al-Kharā'iṭī, *Musawī' al-Akhlaq*; Diyā", *al-Mukhtarah*—from Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*). In the isnad is Hishām Ibn Abī Ibrāhīm and he is Majhūl. Refer to *Sharḥ ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.7, p.452 and *Majmuʿ al-Zawā'id*, vol.10, p.298.

Section one:

The Defects of the Tongue

First defect: Speaking of what does not concern you

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

In an authentic ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Of the good Islām of a person is that he leaves that which does not concern him."[5]

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

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

[5] Tirmidhī, #2318; Ibn Mājah, #3976; al-Baghawī, #4132—from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allahu 'anhu*) and it contains some slight weakness however it is strengthened by what is reported by Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, vol.2, p.470 from 'Alī Ibn Ḥusayn in a mursal form with an authentic chain of transmission; also reported from Abū Dharr, Abū Bakr and 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radiy-Allahu 'anhum*).

Second defect: Engaging in vain and sinful talk, such as the gatherings of intoxicants and the stations of the sinners

The types of falsehood (*bāṭil*) are many, from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A servant may say a word without thinking about its implications, and because of it he will plunge into the Hellfire the distance between the East and West."[6]

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

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

Third defect: Showing-Off with Eloquent Speech (tashadduq)[7]

Abū Thaʿlabah said: 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The most beloved to me, and the closest to me in sitting on the Day of Judgement, is the best of you in character. The most hated to me, and the furthest from me in sitting on the Day of Judgement, are the talka-

[6] Bukhārī, vol.11, p.266 and Muslim, #2988.

[7] TN: the *Mutashaddiq* is the loud-mouthed person who speaks loudly so as to display his eloquence.

tive (*al-tharthārūn*),[8] boastful (*al-mutashaddiqūn*)[9] and condescending (*al-mutafayhiqūn*).'"[10]

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

Fourth defect: Vulgarity (fuḥs), Abuse (sabb) and Vile Language (badhā')

This is prohibited, in the ḥadīth it says: "Beware of vulgarity, as Allāh neither loves vulgar language nor vulgarity."[11]

In another ḥadīth also: "Paradise is forbidden (*ḥarām*) to every vulgar person."[12]

In another ḥadīth: "The believer is not one who curses, is vulgar or vile."[13]

Know that vulgarity (*fuḥs*) and vile language (*badhā'*) is an expres-

[8] TN: *al-Thartharūn* (loudest) is the plural of '*Tharthar*' which comes from the word '*Thartharah*', which means: to speak repeatedly in an artificial manner.

[9] TN: the *Mutashaddiq* is the loud-mouthed person who speaks loudly so as to display his eloquence.

[10] Reported by Tirmidhī, #2018—from Jābir (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*); Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.2, p.369—from Abū Hurayrah (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*). It is ṣaḥīḥ with other supporting narrations as noted in *Targhib wa'l-Tarhib*, vol.3, p.261. The *Mutafayhiq* is the arrogant person who fills his mouth with speech and is vast in his speech so as be appear lofty among people and to manifest his (assumed) virtue above others.

[11] Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.121:
Reported by Nasā'ī in *al-Kubrā* and Ḥākim in *al-Tafsir*, and he authenticated it based on the ḥadīth of 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (*radiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) and reported by Ibn Ḥibbān from Abū Hurayrah (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[12] Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in *al-Ṣamt*; Abū Nu'aym in *al-Ḥilyah*, yet this contains some weakness as is also found in *Fayḍ ul-Qadir*, vol.3, p.363.

[13] Reported by Tirmidhī, #1978; Aḥmad, #3839; Ibn Ḥibbān, #48; Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, #312—from Ibn Mas'ūd (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and the isnād is ṣaḥīḥ .

sion for frank expressions of discourtesy, mainly in regards to terms related to sexual activity. The people of good (*ahlul-khayr*) refrain from such expressions and condemn them.

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

Fifth defect: Excessive Joking (mizāḥ)

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

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

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

The Prophet (ﷺ) also stated to an old lady:[16] "No old ladies will enter *Jannah*!" Then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the *ayah*:

إِنَّآ أَنشَأْنَٰهُنَّ إِنشَآءً ﴿٣٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَٰهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾

"Indeed, We have produced the women of Paradise in a [new] creation, And made them virgins..."

[*al-Wāqi'ah* (56): 35-36]

[14] Reported by Tirmidhī in his *Sunan*, #1993 and in *al-Shamā'il* (the abridged version), #200; Abū Dāwūd, *al-Adab*, #5002; Aḥmad, vol.3, p.117—from Anas and it contains weakness yet it is strengthened by what was reported by Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabir*, #662 via another route of transmission from Anas (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

[15] Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, #1992; Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il* (the abridged version), #203; Aḥmad, vol.3, p.267—from Anas (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) and the isnad is ṣaḥīḥ.

[16] Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il* (the abridged version), #205 from Al-Ḥasan in mursal form; relayed by Suyūṭī in *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol.6, p.158, and he further ascribed it to 'Abdullāh Ibn Ḥumayd; Ibn Mundhir; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Ba'th*; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Shu'b*; Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ* from 'Ā'ishah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhā*); Al-'Irāqī in *Takhrīj ul-Iḥyā'* ascribes it to Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-Wāfā'*—from Anas and it is ḥasan *insha'-Allāh*, as al-'Allāmah al-Albānī confirms in *Ghāyat ul-Marām*, #375.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to another woman: "Your husband who has white in his eyes?"[17]

There are thus three things which are agreed on in regards to the Prophet's joking:

- Firstly, that it was truthful (*ḥaqq*)
- Secondly, that it was with women and young children and those weak men who need to be cultivated (*ta'dīb*).
- Thirdly, that it was something done rarely, it cannot be used to justify constant joking as the ruling of something done rarely is not the same ruling for something to be done continually. So for example if a person watched Ethiopians playing with their weapons and wrestling all the time and used as a proof for this that the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*) to watch the Ethiopians,[18] that would be erroneous due to that action being rare. Going to excess in joking and jesting and constant joking is prohibited as it lessons one's standing and causes hatred. As for the slight joking which has preceded, which was of the kind which the Prophet (ﷺ) utilised, then this contains pleasantries.

Sixth defect: Belittling Others (sukhriyyah) and Mockery (istihzā')

The meaning of belittlement (*sukhriyyah*) is "to belittle and humiliate, and bring attention to faults and deficiencies to make a laughing stock of someone else." This can be via copying actions or statements or via pointing and indication. All of that is prohibited in the Law (*al-shar'*) and the prohibition of this has been related in the Book and Sunnah.

[17] Al-'Irāqī stated in *Takhrīj ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.3, p.129:

Reported by al-Zubayr Ibn Bakkār in the book *al-Fakāhah wa'l-Muzāḥ*; reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā from the ḥadīth of 'Ubaydah Ibn Sahm al-Fihrī with some different [wordings]... I say: he did not say anything about the isnad at all.

I say: in *al-Itḥāf*, vol.7, p.500 it mentions "'Abdullāh Ibn Sahm".

[18] Bukhārī, vol.2, p.366; Muslim, #892 and Nasā'ī, vol.3, p.195 from 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

Seventh defect: Disclosing Secrets (ifshā' al-sirr), Breaking Promises (khilāf al-wa'd), Lying (khadib) in Statements (qawl) and Oaths (yamīn)

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

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

Being ambiguous (*ma'ārīd*) is allowed, this is based on the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying: "Indeed within ambiguous expressions, is avoidance of lying."[19] Ambiguous expressions are only allowed when there is a need for them, as for when there is no need (*ḥāja*) it is disliked to utilise them as they resemble lying.

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

> Among us is Allāh's Messenger who recites Allāh's Book,
> and good has arisen from the clear dawn,

[19] Relayed by Suyūṭī in *al-Jāmi' al-Saghir*, #2332, and Suyūṭī weakened it; al-Munāwī in *Fayḍ ul-Qadir* ascribed it to Ibn as-Sunnī in addition to Ibn 'Adiyy and al-Bayhaqī, and al-Munāwī weakened it; reported by Bukhārī in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, #885 in mawqūf form up to 'Imrān Ibn Ḥusayn with a isnad containing trustworthy narrators.

He spends the night praying away from his bed,
while the disbelievers are sleeping heavily,
He showed us guidance after our hearts were blinded from it,
certainty and what he states is the reality

His wife said: "I believe in Allāh and my eyes have lied."[20]

If Ibrāhīm al-Nakhā'ī was sought-after he would say to his servant-girl: "Tell them that I can be found in the Masjid."

Eighth defect: Backbiting (ghība)

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

In the ḥadīth: "Indeed your lives, wealth and honour is sanctified to each other."[21]

Abū Barzah al-Aslamī said: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "O gathering of youth who believes with the tongue while *īmān* has not entered his heart: do not backbite the Muslims or search for their faults. For whoever searches for the faults of his brother Allāh will search for his faults. And whoever Allāh searches their faults they will be disgraced even while in the depths of his home."[22]

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

[20] Reported by Ibn 'Āsākir in his *Tārikh*, p.243—it contains weakness.
TN: 'Abdullāh Ibn Rawāhah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) recited this poetry while his wife thought it was a verse from the Qur'ān which had been revealed and she had not heard it yet.

[21] Bukhārī, vol.3, p.352—from Ibn 'Abbās, and also from Ibn 'Umar, Jābir and others (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhum*).

[22] Abū Dāwūd, #4880 and Aḥmad, vol.4, p.421—it is ṣaḥīḥ.

be forgiven by Allāh until the backbiter seeks Allāh's forgiveness."[23]

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

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

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

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

Or you speak about his clothing by saying: '*it is too long*', or '*it is too wide*' or '*it is dirty.*"

The proof for this is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about *ghība* and said: "Mentioning your brother with what he dislikes." The man said: "Even if what I say about my brother is actually the case O Messenger of Allāh?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "Even if what you say about your brother is actually the case, you have backbitten him. And if what you say about your brother is not the case then you have falsely spoken about him."[24]

[23] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.141: "Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in *al-Ṣamt*; Ibn Ḥibbān in *al-Ḍu'afā'*; Ibn Mardawayh in *al-Tafsīr*." Al-Zubaydī stated in *al-Ithḥāf*, vol.7, p.532: Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā also in the book *Dhamm ul-Ghība*; Abu'l-Shaykh al-Asbahānī in *al-Tawbīkh*; reported by Ṭabarānī from Jābir (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*)- yet it contains 'Abbād Ibn Kathīr and he is Matrūk.

[24] Muslim, #2589; Abū Dāwūd, #4874 and Tirmidhī, #1935—from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

Know that all which is understood as intending dispraise is included within *"ghība"* whether it is via speech or not. Such as to throw insults, point at someone or to write something, as the pen is one of the two tongues.

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

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

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

It has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Whoever hears of a believer being disgraced in front of him while he is able to aid the believer, then Allāh will disgrace him in front of all of creation."[25]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever defends a believer from a *munāfiq*

[25] Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.3, p.487; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*, #5554—from Sahl Ibn Ḥanīf; relayed by Ḥaythamī in *al-Majma'*, vol.7, p.267 and he said: "It contains Ibn Lahī'ah and he is ḥasan in ḥadīth yet he contains weakness. The rest of the narrators are all trustworthy."

I say: what is correct is that the narrations of Ibn Lahī'ah from al-'Abādalah are authentic and from others weak.

who is defaming him, Allāh will send an angel to protect his flesh on the Day of Judgement from the fire of *Jahannam.*"[26]

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

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

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

There are many reasons for backbiting, such as:

- Firstly, alleviating anger (*ghayẓ*), a person may take to backbiting another person due to his anger with him.
- Secondly, to concur with contemporaries and flatter friends and associates. If he cuts them while they are backbiting someone else, he views that he will be abandoned, so he joins in with them for his own interest.
- Thirdly, the desire to raise one's own status via defaming others, so he says "so and so is ignorant, his understanding is poor"[27]

[26] Abū Dāwūd, #4883; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.3, p.441; Ibn ul-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, p.686; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabir*, vol.20, p.194 and it contains Ismā'īl Ibn Yahyā al-Mu'āfirī and he is majhūl. It also contains 'Abdullāh Ibn Sulaymān and he is sudūq yet errs.

[27] This is what we have been tested with during this era from those who do not know authentic knowledge whatsoever!

and the like. His intent within that is to affirm his own self-worth and to show that he is more knowledgeable.

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

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

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

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

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

If he thinks that he is safe (*salīm*) from faults (*'ayūb*) then he should

[28] Meaning: acting and comedy as is well-known during our times!

occupy himself with thanking (*shukr*) for the favour of Allāh and not pollute himself with the vilest of faults which is *ghība*. Just as he is not pleased for others to speak about him behind his back, he also should not be pleased for it from him towards others.

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

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

Section Three:
Backbiting with Bad Suspicion

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

If you come across the slip-up (*hafwa*) of a Muslim then you should advise him in secret.

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

Section Four:
Explanation of Concessions for Backbiting

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

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

Secondly, seeking assistance (*istiʿāna*) to change an evil, and returning a disobedient person to the right path.

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

The proof for the permissibility of specifying an individual when seeking a ruling is the ḥadīth of Hind when she said: 'Indeed Abū Sufyān is tight-fisted' and the Prophet (ﷺ) did not condemn her for

saying this.[29]

Fourthly, warning (*tahdhīr*) the Muslims [about evil] and give them advice, like when you see a person frequent an innovator (*mubtada'*) or open-sinner (*fāsiq*), [you warn him of that] so as to expose his situation.

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

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

Fifthly, for identification, if a person being spoken about is well-known by that nickname (*laqab*) such as *"al-A'raj"* [the crooked-legged one] or *"al-A'mash"*[30] [the bleary-eyed one] and so forth. There is no sin in mentioning this. Yet if an alternative mode of description can be utilised that takes precedence (*ulā*).

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

It has been relayed from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Whoever discards the garment of shyness there is no backbiting in regards to him."[31]

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[29] Bukhārī, vol.4, p.338 and Muslim, #1714 from 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*).

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

[31] Al-Bayhaqī, vol.10, p.210; al-Khaṭīb, vol.8, p.438; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #426, 427—from Anas. It contains severe weakness as explained by our Shaykh al-Albānī in *al-Silsilah al-Ḍa'īfah*, #575.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was asked about an open sinner who is open with his immorality: 'Is speaking about him considered *ghība*?' Al-Ḥasan replied: 'No. [for he has] no honour (*karāma*).'

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

It was narrated by Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Whoever has wronged his brother, whether in regards to wealth or honour, should ask for his pardon before he pays for it [in the Afterlife] when he will have neither a *dirham* nor a *dīnār*. If he had any good deeds they will be taken and given to the one whom he wronged, or the bad deeds of the one whom he wronged will be loaded on to him."[32]

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

It has been reported in a ḥadīth: "The expiation of the one whom you have backbitten is that you ask Allāh to forgive him."[33]

[32] Bukhārī, vol.5, p.73; Tirmidhī, #2421.

[33] In the Shām edition of the manuscript of the book it words the ḥadīth as "The expiation for the one who backbites is that you seek forgiveness for him"! This contains two textual errors, what is accurate however is how I have rendered the ḥadīth as in the main text. The ḥadīth was reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in *al-Ṣamt*; al-Ḥārith Ibn Abī Usāmah in his *Musnad*; al-Kharā'iṭī, al-Musāwi'; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Shu'b*; Abu'l-Shaykh, *al-Tawbikh*; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Majālisah*; al-Khaṭīb, *al-Tārikh* and in *al-Itḥāf*, vol.7, p.558—it contains 'Anbasah Ibn 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān and Bukhārī said about him: "Abandon him", Abū Ḥātim said: "He used to fabricate ḥadīth". Our Shaykh, al-Albānī ruled that he fabricates ḥadīth, see *Ḍa'īf ul-Jāmi'*, #4195.

Mujāhid said: 'The expiation of you eating the dead flesh of your brother is that you praise him and supplicate for him for goodness, likewise if he has died.'

Ninth defect: Namīmah (Tale-Carrying)

In the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ): "A person who carries tales will not enter paradise."[34] He is *al-nammām* (The person who spreads *namīmah*)

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

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

[34] Bukhārī, vol.10, p.394; Muslim, #105; Abū Dāwūd, #4771 and Tirmidhī, #2027—from Hudhayfah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا

"And do not spy."

[*al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 12]

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

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

Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Kathīr said: 'A tale-carrier destroys in an hour what a magician does not destroy in a month.'

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

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

In the ḥadīth: "The worst of people is the two-faced person who goes to one set of people with a face and then goes to another set of people with a different face."[35]

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

[35] Bukhārī, vol.10, p.395; Muslim, #2526 and Mālik, vol.2, p.991—from Abū Hurayrah.

Abū'l-Dardā' said: 'We smile in the faces of people while our hearts are cursing them.'[36]

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

Eleventh defect: Excessive Praise (madḥ)

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

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

It has been relayed in the ḥadīth: "Allāh is angered if an open-sinner is praised."[37]

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

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

[36] Bukhārī commented on this in his ṣaḥīḥ, vol.10, p.437, and al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajr said: "This narration was connected by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā and Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī "...it is disconnected [Munqatiʿ]." It was reported by Abū Nuʿaym in *al-Ḥilyah* also in a Munqatiʿ form.

[37] Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.160:

"Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in *al-Ṣamt* and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Shuʿb* from the ḥadīth of Anas, and in the isnād is Abū Khalaf, the servant of Anas and he is weak."

the neck of your companion."[38]

It was reported from Al-Ḥasan who said: "Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) was sitting and he had his cane (*dirra*)[39] with him and people were around him. Al-Jārūd arrived and a man said to him: 'This is Master Rabī'ah!' 'Umar heard this, so did the people around him and as did al-Jārūd. When the man went 'Umar hit al-Jārūd with his cane. Al-Jārūd said: 'What is with me and you O leader of the believers?' 'Umar replied: 'What is with me and you? Did you not hear?' Al-Jārūd said: 'Yes, I heard, and what of it?' 'Umar said: 'I feared that your heart would become mixed with something [from the praise] so I wanted to put you down a level.'

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

As for a person who is safe from these faults when praised then there is no problem in that, as the Prophet (ﷺ) praised Abū Bakr, 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) and others from the Companions.[40]

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

[38] Bukhārī, vol.5, p.202; Muslim, #3000 and Abū Dāwūd, #4805—from the ḥadīth of Abū Bakrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[39] [TN]: The Dirra of 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) is mentioned often within the literature and symbolises 'Umar's justice and authority.

[40] Refer to Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah* (Makkah al-Mukarramah Print).

not know me yet You know me."

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

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

Like what has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "None of you should say 'what Allāh Wills and what you will', rather one should say: whatever Allāh Wills and then what you will."[42]

This is because joining them with an absolute conjunction necessitates association (*tashrīq*) and similarity (*taswīya*), this is similar to when the Khaṭīb was criticised for saying: "Whoever obeys the two of them has been misguided" and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Rather say: whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger."[43]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None of you should say 'my slave' or 'my female slave,' rather you are all slaves of Allāh, and all of your women are servant women of Allāh. Rather say: 'my boy' or 'my girl'."[44]

Al-Nakha'ī stated: 'If a man says to another: 'O donkey', or 'O pig', it will be said to him on the Day of Judgement: 'Did you see that I created him as a donkey?' or 'Did you see that I created him as a pig?!"

Whoever contemplates on what we have relayed about the flaws in

[41] This principle is of the utmost importance.

[42] Abū Dāwūd, #4980; al-Ṭahāwī, Mushkil ul-āthar, vol.1, p.90; al-Bayhaqī, vol.3, p.216; Aḥmad, vol.5, p.384—from Hudhayfah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.

[43] Muslim, vol.3, p.12; Abū Dāwūd, vol.1, p.172; Nasā'ī, vol.2, p.79; al-Bayhaqī, vol.3, p216; Aḥmad, vol.4, pp.256, 379—from 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥātim.

[44] Bukhārī, vol.5, p.129; Muslim, #2249; Abū Dāwūd, #4975—from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allahu 'anhu*).

speech will know that if he opens his mouth to unleash his tongue he will not be safe from falling into such flaws. At that point he will know the secret of the Prophet's saying: "Whoever is silent will be saved"[45] This is because these flaws are destructive and are in accordance with the method of the speculative theologian (*mutakallim*) so if he is silent he is safe.

Section Five:
Asking *'how'* about Allāh's Attributes

Of the flaws of the common people are their questions about Allāh's Attributes (*Ṣifāt*) and His Speech (*Kalām*).

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

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The people will continue to ask questions until they say 'Allāh created the creation, but who created Allāh?'"[46]

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

[45] Tirmidhī, #2618; Aḥmad, #6481; Ibn ul-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, p.385; Ibn Wahb, *al-Jāmi'*, p.49; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*, p.17; Abu'l-Shaykh, *al-Amthāl*, p.207; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, p.334—from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) and the ḥadīth is ṣaḥīḥ.

[46] Bukhārī, vol.6, p.240; Muslim, #135; Abū Dāwūd, #4721—from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

(ﷺ) came with, without question or investigation. They should also preoccupy themselves with acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) as their attempt to preoccupy themselves with the secret areas of knowledge (*asrār al-'ilm*) is like a horse trying to investigate the secrets of why they are owned.

THE FIFTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of Anger, Malice and Envy

Know that anger (*ghaḍab*) is a spark of fire and a person when angry resembles the accursed *Shayṭān* who said:

خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُۥ مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

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

[*al-Aʿrāf* (7): 12]

The case of mud is that it is tranquil (*sukūn*) and has esteem (*waqār*), whereas fire is flare (*talaẓẓī*), ignition (*istiʿāl*), movement (*ḥaraka*) and disturbance (*iḍṭirāb*).

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

[1] Bukhārī, vol.1, p.431 and Tirmidhī, #2021 from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*).

In another ḥadīth Ibn 'Umar asked the Prophet (ﷺ): 'What will distance me from Allāh's Anger?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Don't get angry."[2]

Also a ḥadīth which is agreed upon, from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The strong person is not the one who is able to overpower others by strength, rather the strong person is the one who is able to control himself when angry."[3]

"Ikrimah stated in regards to Allāh's saying,

وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا

"and [who will be] honourable, abstaining."
[*Āl-'Imrān* (3): 39]

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

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

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

[2] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.165: 'Abū Ya'lā reported the like with a ḥasan isnad.'
[3] Bukhārī, vol.10, p.431; Muslim, #2609 and Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, vol.2, p.906

And it was said: "Beware of anger, as it corrupts faith (*īmān*) just as how patience (*ṣabr*) is honey and anger is the enemy of the intellect (*'aql*)."

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

Revenge is but the product of intense anger, and people are of three categories when it comes to their levels of anger: Excessive (*ifrāṭ*), negligent (*tafrīṭ*) and moderation (*i'tidāl*)

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

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

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

to put it out. This is what happens to the heart and brain. Anger can increase and kill a person.

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

Section one:
Causes Which Incite Anger and the Remedy for Anger

You know that the remedy for every deficiency is by removing its causes. Of its causes are: self-amazement (*'ujb*), joking (*mazzāḥ*), controversy (*mumārā*), argumentation (*muḍādda*), betrayal (*ġadr*) and covetousness (*ḥirs*) for wealth (*māl*) and status (*jāh*). These characteristics (*akhlāq*) are vile and censured in the Divine Legislation (*sharī'ah*), and each of these traits has to be faced with their opposites. So a person must be aware of the reasons for anger and strive to sever them.

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

Firstly: by reflecting on the reports relayed regarding the virtue of supressing anger (*kaẓim al-ghayẓ*), forgiving (*'afuw*), compassion (*ḥilm*) and making possible excuses (*iḥtimāl*)—as mentioned in Bukhārī in the ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) that a man sought permission from 'Umar and said to him: 'O Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, by Allāh you do not give us abundance in gifts and wealth, and you do not judge between us with justice.' 'Umar became angry to the extent that he was about to punish the man.

Al-Ḥurr Ibn Qays said: 'O leader of the believers, indeed Allāh said to His Prophet (ﷺ),

خُذِ ٱلْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِٱلْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾

"Choose forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant."

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 199]

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

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

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

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

Fifthly: that he reflects on the reason which entices him to take out revenge, such as the cause of his anger being *Shayṭān* saying to him: 'This is not something for which it is possible for you to show incapability (*'ajz*), humiliation (*dulla*) and denigration (*mahāna*), as if

you do then you will become small and insignificant in the eyes of the people.' Then he should say to his soul in response to this: 'Do you fear the possibility of humiliation now yet not fear the humiliation on the Day of Judgement? You caution against being made to look small in front of people but you do not caution against being made small in front of Allāh, the angels and the prophets?!'

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

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

As for action, he should have tranquillity (*sukūn*), seek refuge (*ta'ūdhu*)[4] and change his situation—so if he is standing, he sits; if he is sitting, he lies down. We have been instructed to make ablution also when angry and these are things which are relayed in the aḥādīth.

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

[4] Recite: *A'ūdhu bi'Llāhi mina'sh-Shayṭāni 'r-rajīm*, 'I seek refuge in Allāh from Satan the accursed.'

water. So if one of you becomes angry, make ablution."[5]

As for sitting and lying down, then this has been instructed possibly because it is nearer to the earth from which man has been related, so man remembers his origin and also possibly so that he becomes humble by such lowering. Anger gives rise to pride (*kibr*), based on what has been reported by Abū Sa'īd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ) about anger that: "Whoever finds any of that [i.e. pride], should place his cheek to the ground."[6]

Section Two:
Suppressing Anger (*kaẓm al-ghayẓ*)

Allāh, Most High says,

وَٱلْكَٰظِمِينَ ٱلْغَيْظَ

"And those who swallow anger."

[*Āl-'Imrān* (3): 134]

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whoever suppresses his anger, while being fully able to release it, will be called by Allāh in front of all creatures and allow him to choose whichever of the *ḥūr al-'ayn* he so wants."[7]

Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Whoever fears of Allāh does

[5] Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.4, p.226; Abū Dawūd, #4784; Bukhārī, *Tārīkh*, vol.4, p.1, #8—in the isnad is a majhūl as our Shaykh al-Albānī explained in *Silsilat ul-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah*, #582.

[6] Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vol.1, p.127—and the isnād is ḥasan; also refer to *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, vol.1, p.128.

[7] Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.3, p.438; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabir*, vol.20, p.188—and it contains in the isnad the narrator Ibn Laī'ah, there are other routes of transmission for it in *Musnad* Aḥmad, vol.3, p.440; Abū Dāwūd, #4756; Tirmidhī, #2090, 2611. There is also a third route of transmission from Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabir*, vol.20, p.189; Ṭabarānī, *al-Ṣaghir*, vol.2, p.123—all of them from Mu'ādh from Anas and it is ḥasan *insha'Allāh*.

not release his anger, and whoever fears Allāh does not do as he wants and if not for the Day of Judgement it would be other than what you see.'

Section Three:
Forbearance (*ḥilm*)

Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Knowledge is only by learning it and forbearance (*ḥilm*) is only by forbearing (*taḥalum*)."[8]

Also: "Seek knowledge (*'ilm*), and seek tranquillity (*sakīna*) and forbearance (*ḥilm*) with knowledge. Be gentle with those whom you teach and with those whom teach you. Do not be tyrannical scholars allowing your ignorance to overcome you."[9]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Asḥajj Ibn Qays: "There are two traits in you which Allāh and His Messenger loves: forbearance (*ḥilm*) and serenity (*anāt*)."[10]

A man slandered Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) and when the man finished, Ibn 'Abbās said to him: 'O 'Ikrimah, look what this man needs and grant it to him.' The man then lowered his head and

[8] Part of a long ḥadīth reported by Tirmidhī, #2192; Aḥmad, vol.3, p.61—it contains weakness. There is another route of transmission which strengthens it and this is reported by al-Khaṭīb, *Tārikh*, vol.9, p.127—with an isnād which is close to being ḥasan. It has a supporting narration from Mu'āwiyah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) as found in *al-Majma'*, vol.1, p.128; and yet another route of transmission for it from Abū'l-Dardā' (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) as relayed in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.176. Refer to *Sharḥ ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.8, p.27.

[9] Al-'Irāqī stated in *Takhrij ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.3, p.176: "Reported by Ibn as-Sunnī in *Riyāḍat ul-Muta'allimin* with a weak chain of transmission."

I say: refer to *Sharḥ ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.8, p.27.

[10] Reported by Muslim, #18; Tirmidhī, #2012; Nasā'ī, vol.8, p.306; Ṭabarānī, *Tārikh*, #12969—from Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*). Al-'Irāqī in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.178 ascribes it to those ḥadīth which are agreed upon, yet I did not find it within Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Bukhārī!

felt ashamed.

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

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

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

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

A man said to Wahb Ibn Munabbih: 'A man has defamed you.'

Wahb replied: 'Has *Shayṭān* not found a postal method other than you?!'

Section Four:
Forgiving People (*'afuw*) and Kindness (*rifq*)

Know that the meaning of forgiving (*'afuw*) is: 'that you deserve a right yet you forfeit it', that right could be in regards to retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) or penalisation (*gharāmah*), it is not related to forbearance (*ḥilm*) or controlling anger (*kazm*).

Allāh says,

وَٱلْعَافِينَ عَنِ ٱلنَّاسِ

"and those who forgive the people."

[*Āl-'Imrān* (3): 134]

And He says,

فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُۥ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ

"but those who forgive and makes reconciliation—his reward is [due] from Allāh."

[*al-Shūrā* (42): 40]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Charity does not decrease one's wealth; Allāh does not increase a servant due to his forgiving except in honour, and none humbles (*tawādu'*) himself except that Allāh elevates him."[11]

'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "O 'Uqbah, have I not informed you of the best of manners of the people of this life and the next? Contact whoever has cut off relations with you and give him something of yours, and forgive

[11] Muslim, #2588 and Tirmidhī, #2030 from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy. Allāhu 'anhu*)

the one who has oppressed you."[12]

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

Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Allāh is Kind (*rafīq*) and Loves kindness (*rifq*) and gives for it what he does not give for harshness (*'unf*)."[13]

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*) from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Indeed Allāh Loves gentleness (rifq) in all affairs."[14]

In another ḥadīth: "Whoever is prevented from gentleness, is prevented from good."[15]

Section Five:
Malice and Envy

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

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

[12] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.182: 'Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā, Ṭabarānī in *Makārim ul-Akhlāq* and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Shu'b*, the isnad is ḍa'īf.'

[13] Ṭabarānī, *al-Ṣaghir*, vol.1, pp.81, 154; al-Bazzār, #1961, 1962 from *Kashf ul-Astār*. «aytham? stated in *al-Majma'*, vol.8, p.18: 'Reported by al-Bazzār and Ṭabarānī in *al-Awsaṭ* and *al-Ṣaghir* and in one of the chains of transmission from al-Bazzār contains trustworthy narrators, yet in some there is a difference of opinion [as to the narrators credibility]. A following ḥadīth supports it and it is ḥasan from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mughaffal (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).'

[14] It is just in Muslim, #2593, and Ibn ul-Athīr did not ascribe it *Jāmi' ul-Uṣūl*, vol.4, p.532 except to Muslim. It was also relayed by Abū Dāwūd, #2478 and #4808.

[15] Muslim, #2592; Abū Dawūd, #4809—from Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullāh (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

of malice.

Al-Zubayr Ibn al-'Awwām (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The disease of the nations before you has affected you: envy and malice."[16]

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Do not hate each other, do not cut off from each other, do not envy each other, do not turn away from each other [rather] be servants of Allāh and brothers."[17]

In another ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Envy devours good actions just as fire consumes wood."[18]

In another ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A man of the people of *Jannah* will appear to you on this street." Then a man appeared. The man was asked about his actions and he said: "I have no malice towards any Muslim or envy for what he has been given from Allāh."[19]

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

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

[16] Tirmidhī, vol.2, p.83; Aḥmad, vol.1, p.167—from al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), yet within the chain of transmission is a Majhūl [unknown] narrator.

[17] Bukhārī, vol.4, p.128; Muslim, vol.8, pp.8,9; Mālik, vol.2, p.907; Abū Dāwūd, #4910—from Anas, also from Abū Bakr and Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhum*).

[18] Ibn Mājah, #4210—from Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) yet it contains a Majhūl; also reported by Abū Dāwūd, #4903 from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[19] Aḥmad, vol.3, p.166; al-Baghawī, #3535—from Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) with a ṣaḥīḥ chain of transmission.

path to the Fire?'

Iblees said to Nūḥ (*'alayhis-salām*): 'Beware of envy, as it led me to this condition!'

Know that if Allāh has favoured your brother with something, there are two ways in which you deal with this: firstly: that you hate that favour (*ni'ma*) and love its removal—this is envy. Secondly: that you do not hate its presence or love its removal, however you would love to have it for yourself—this is known as *ghibṭa*.[20]

Know that the soul (*nafs*) can love esteem and that it is not surpassed anything like it, if this happens he dislikes it and loves for it to be removed so as to be on the same level. This is something ingrained in people's nature. Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Three [traits] are not devoid from anyone: evil suspicion (*ẓann*); looking for bad omens (*al-ṭayr*) and envy. I will speak to you about what you are in need of: if you have evil suspicion, check; if you seek omens, then don't believe it; if you envy do not desire."[21]

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

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

[21] Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.187:
Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in the book *Dhamm ul-ḥasad* from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and it contains Ya'qūb Ibn Muḥammad al-Zuhrī and Mūsā Ibn Ya'qūb al-Zam'ī and they have both been deemed as weak by the majority [of scholars of ḥadīth].

As for the one who envies a Prophet due to his Prophethood, and loves that he was not a prophet; or a scholar due to his knowledge, and loves that he was not provided with that or that it is removed from him—then such a person has no excuse and this can only be found in a disbelieving or evil soul. As for loving that he leads his contemporaries and discover what they have not, then there is no sin in that, as he does not love that whatever they have been given is removed from them, rather he loves to be elevated from them so as to increase his fortune with Allāh. Allāh says,

وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

> "The last of it is musk. So for this let the competitors compete."
>
> [*al-Muṭaffifīn* (83): 26]

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of Ibn ʿUmar (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is no envy in two: a man whom Allāh has given the Qur'ān and stands the night and day in prayer with it; and a man whom Allāh has given wealth and spends out from it for the truth throughout the day and night."[22]

Section Six:
The Causes of Envy

One: enmity (*ʿadāwa*), pride (*takabbur*), self-amazement (*ʿujb*), love of leadership (*ḥubb al-riyāsa*), a vile soul (*ḵubth al-nafs*), miserliness (*bukhl*). The most severe is: enmity (*ʿadāwa*) and malice (*bughḍ*), for whoever is harmed by a person or opposes his objective, will hate him in his heart and malice will be ingrained in his heart.

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

[22] Bukhārī, vol.9, p.65; Muslim, #815; Tirmidhī, #1937

emy, he rejoices and thinks that it is from Allāh, yet when his enemy obtains a favour, he holds that negatively. Envy therefore necessitates malice and enmity.

As for pride (*kibr*), then when another person obtains some wealth (*māl*) and authority (*walāya*), he fears that he may become proud in front of him and show-off, and he cannot bear this. The envy of the disbelievers towards the Prophet (ﷺ) was similar to this, Allāh says,

وَقَالُوا۟
لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنَ ٱلْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣١﴾

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

[*al-Zukhruf* (43): 31]

And Allāh says in regards to the believers,

أَهَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنۢ بَيْنِنَآ

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

[*al-An'ām* (6): 53]

And He says,

مَآ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا

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

[*Yāsīn* (36): 15]

And He says,

وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُم بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَّخَٰسِرُونَ

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

[*al-Mu'minin* (23): 34]

They became self-amazed and disliked for him to succeed with

the message as they viewed the Prophet (ﷺ) as being a man just like them, as a result they envied the Prophets and Messengers.

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

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

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

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

So this one is miserly in regards to Allāh's Favour on His servants whom do not have between them any enmity. This has no reason except for a vile soul and nature. Curing this is intense as it has no

intrinsic cause which can be easily remedied, rather an impure nature is the cause and thus it is difficult to remove. These are the causes of envy.

Section seven:
The Causes for Abundant Envy

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

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

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

Know that envy is of the major sicknesses (*amrāḍ al-'aẓima*) of the

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

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

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

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

As for beneficial action then it is to implement the opposite of what

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

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

And Allāh knows best

THE SIXTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of the World

There are many verses in the Qur'ān which censure the worldly life and exhort to asceticism (*tazhīd*) and simple-living within the world (*dunyā*). Allāh says,

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ
وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ
وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِندَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ ﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ
أَؤُنَبِّئُكُم بِخَيْرٍ مِّن ذَٰلِكُمْ

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

[*Āl-'Imrān* (3): 14-15]

And He has said,

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

"And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion."

[Āl-'Imrān (3): 185]

And He has said,

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ

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

[*Yūnus* (10): 24]

And He has said,

ٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ

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

[al-Hadīd (57): 20]

And He has said,

وَإِن كُلُّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَٰعُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۚ وَٱلْءَاخِرَةُ عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

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

[*al-Zukhruf* (43): 35]

And He has said,

فَأَعْرِضْ عَن مَّن تَوَلَّىٰ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩﴾ ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ ۚ

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

[*al-Najm* (53): 29-30]

As for the aḥādīth, then within the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from al-Mastūr[1] Ibn Shaddād who said: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The world compared to the Afterlife is nothing but like one of you placing his finger into the ocean, pulling it out and looking at what remains [on the finger]."[2]

In another ḥadīth: "The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever." Reported by Muslim.[3]

In another ḥadīth: "If the world worth the wing of a mosquito to Allāh, He would not give an unbeliever a drink of water from it." Reported by Tirmidhī and he authenticated it.[4]

In another ḥadīth: "The world was accursed and what is in it is accursed save that within it which is for Allāh."[5]

Abū Mūsā reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "He who loves his world will suffer in his Afterlife; and whoever loves his Afterlife will suffer in his world. So work for that which will remain not over that which will depart."[6]

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[1] In the Shām print it states *"al-Masūr"* which is a textual discrepancy which I have corrected.

[2] Muslim, #2858; Tirmidhī, #2324; Ibn Mājah, #4108 and Bukhārī did not report it as the author mentioned!

[3] Muslim, #2956; reported by Tirmidhī, #2325—from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

[4] Muslim, #2321; Ibn Mājah, #2410—from Sahl Ibn Sa'd (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with an isnad which is ḥasan.

[TN]: the ḥadīth means that whatever the disbelievers have been given in terms of the worldly life it is of no value in the sight of Allāh.

[5] Reported by Abū Nu'aym, *al-Ḥilyah*, vol.7, p.90—from Jābir (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) yet there is weakness in the isnad. However it has been reported by Tirmidhī, #2323; Ibn Mājah, #4112—from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with a ḥasan chain of transmission.

[6] Aḥmad, vol.4, p.412; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #418; Ibn Ḥibbān, #2473; Ḥākim, vol.4, p.308; relayed by Ḥaythamī in *al-Majma'*, vol.10, p.249 and he said: 'The narrators are trustworthy' and Dhahabī stated in his *Talkhīṣ*: 'the chain of transmission contains a severance". Al-Mundhirī stated in *al-Targhīb*, vol.6, p.17: 'al-Muṭallib did not hear from Abū Mūsā'.

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

The keys and treasures of the world were presented to our Prophet (ﷺ) and he did not accept them and he rather hated to love something which his Creator hates, or to elevate that which Allāh has abased the possessor. Allāh distances it[7] from the righteous and expands it out for His deceived enemies. The deceived one is he who considers that his possession of it is an honour, forgetting that what Allāh did with

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I say: the ḥadīth is weak, and some of those who ascribe themselves to knowledge should pay attention as they regard Ḥaythamī's words 'the narrators are trustworthy' as indicating that the ḥadīth is ṣaḥīḥ, when this is not the case. Authentic ḥadīth have the following conditions:

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

[7] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.212:

Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in Mursal form; reported by Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī in connected forms from the ḥadīth of Abū Muwayhabah and the isnād is ṣaḥīḥ. Tirmidhī reports if from the ḥadīth of Abū Umāmah (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*).

the Prophet (ﷺ) when he (ﷺ) used to tie a stone to his stomach.[8]

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

Mālik Ibn Dīnār stated: 'Fear the sorceress (*saḥḥāra*) [i.e. the world] as it bewitches the hearts of the scholars (*'ulamā*).'

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

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

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

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

It was reported from Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that he said: 'The world will come on the Day of Judgement in the form of a

[8] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughni*, vol.3, p.2102: 'Reported by Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā also like this [i.e. in Mursal form].' Al-Zabīdī stated in *Sharḥ ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.8, p.101: 'Bukhārī reports it from Jābir, and Tirmidhī from the ḥadīth of Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*)' and he said that the ḥadīth is gharīb.

middle aged woman with blue back teeth and an ugly appearance. It will be said: 'do you know what this is?' They will say: 'we seek refuge in Allāh from knowing this.' Then it will be said: 'This is the world over which you dispute, and for which you sever ties of the womb; and over which you have enmity; and over which you have hatred; and for which you are deluded!' Then she will depart to the Fire (*jahannam*) and say: 'O my Lord, where are my followers?' Allāh will say: 'Place her followers with her.'

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

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

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

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

a while and then departs."[9]

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

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

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

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

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from Abū Mūsā (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I and what Allāh has sent me with, is like a man who goes to his people and says: 'O people, I have seen an army with my eyes and I am a clear warner unto you.' A group of people obey him and depart at the beginning of the night, and are thus saved; while another group deny him and become destroyed in their homes, with the army taking their place. This is like the one who obeys me and follows what I have come with, and like the one who disobeys me and denies the truth which I have come with."[10]

[9] Tirmidhī, #2378—from Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and the chain of transmission is ṣaḥīḥ.

[10] Bukhārī, vol.13, p.218 and Muslim, #2283

Section one:

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

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

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

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

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

Sufyān ath-Thawrī used to only eat at times when food was adequate

and he used to carry with him when he was on a journey some sweet dish (*fālūdhaj*).[11]

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

Let us look at the biography (*sīrah*) of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and his companions, they were neither excessive (*ifrāṭ*) in partaking from the world, nor neglectful (*tafrīṭ*) in regards to the rights of the soul (*nafs*).

[11] A sweet dish made from flour, water and honey.
Translator's Note: Fālūdhaj is a sweet dish still popular today in the Middle East and Persia, it is made from eggs, butter, ground almonds, sugar/honey and rose water.

THE SEVENTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of Miserliness, Covetousness and Greed; Along with the Censure and Praise of Wealth

Know that wealth is not censured in and of itself, rather the censure arrives in how a human uses it wrongly by having covetousness (*ḥirṣ*), consuming it without end, hoarding, using it wrongly or showing off with it, for this reason, Allāh says,

وَاعْلَمُوٓا أَنَّمَآ أَمْوَٰلُكُمْ وَأَوْلَٰدُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ

"For your riches and your children are but temptation."
[*al-Anfāl* (8): 28]

In the *Sunan* of Tirmidhī from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Two hungry wolves sent to a flock of sheep are not more harmful than how a person's covetousness for wealth and status is to his *dīn*."[1]

[1] Tirmidhī, #2482; Aḥmad, vol.3, p.456; Ibn ul-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, p.181 (additions of Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād); Dārimī, #2733; Ibn Ḥibbān, #2472; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*, vol.19, p.190—from Ka'b Ibn Mālik and the isnād is ṣaḥīḥ. It has also been reported from Abū =

The Salaf used to fear the temptation of wealth (*fitna al-māl*), when 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to see a conquest [and the wealth which would come with it] he would cry.

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

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

Section One:
On the Praise of Wealth

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

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا۟ ٱلسُّفَهَآءَ أَمْوَٰلَكُمُ ٱلَّتِى جَعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَٰمًا

> "And do not give the weak-minded your riches, which Allāh has made a means of sustenance for you."
>
> [*al-Nisā'* (4): 5]

Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyib (*raḥimahullāh*) stated: 'There is no good in the one who does not acquire wealth lawfully in order to protect himself from [begging] people, or maintain the ties of kinship or give from

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Hurayrah and Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiy-Llāhu 'anhum*), and al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī has a treatise with this title which has been published and worth referring to.

[TN]: This was translated into English as The Evil Craving for Wealth and Status.

it its due right.'

Abū Ishāq al-Sabay'ī stated: 'They would see affluence a helper (*'aun*) in the religion.'

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

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

As for the benefits (*fawā'id*) of wealth and riches, then this divides into the religious and worldly benefits:

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

Religious benefit: this splits into three types:

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

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

One: charity (*ṣadaqa*), and its virtues are many and well-known

Two: hospitality (*marū'a*), we mean by this spending money to

host, give gifts and support to the wealthy and the notables. There is a religious benefit in this as the servant of Allāh gains brothers and friends.

Three: protecting honour (*wiqāyah al-'ird*), and spending money to avert the propaganda of the poets and the insults of the foolish, so as to sever their evil. There is a religious benefit in this as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whatever a man uses to defend his honour is charity."[2] This is because it prevents a backbiter from the disobedience of backbiter (*ghība*). It also protects from the one whose words insight enmity which leads to revenge which transgresses the bounds of the *shari'ah*.

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

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

These are some of the benefits of wealth (*fawā'id al-māl*) from the angle of the religion, whether it is connected to an immediate fortune such as sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) from the humiliation of begging, the shame of poverty (*faqr*) or honour ('*iẓa*) among people and respect (*kirāma*) and estimation in the heart.

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

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

[2] Abū Ya'lā, #2040—from Jābir; relayed also by Ḥaythamī, *al-Majma'*, vol.3, p.136 and he said that within the chain of transmission is Musawwar Ibn al-Ṣalt and he is weak; also relayed by al-Ḥāfiẓ, *al-Fatḥ*, vol.10, p.447 and he ascribed it to Ḥākim and al-Dāraquṭnī.

ease (*sarrā'*) is greater than the *fitna* of hardship (*darrā'*).

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

THREE: that, and no one is free of this, one's wealth and property takes him away from the *dhikr* of Allāh, this is an incurable disease. As the foundation of acts of worship (*aṣl al- 'ibādāt*) is a heart which is free to reflect (*tafkīr*) on Allāh's Glory and Magnitude.

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

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

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

Whoever has their daily subsistence is safe from all of that and is free of the fear (*kawf*), grief (*ḥuzn*), worry (*hamm*), concern (*ghamm*) and tiredness (*ta'b*) which befall the rich and wealthy in the world.

Section Two:

Exposition on the Censure of Covetousness and Greed, complimenting of contentment and shunning what others possess

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

It was reported in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The one who has accepted Islām, been provided with what is sufficient for him and is content with what Allāh has given him—has surely succeeded."[3]

In the ḥadīth of Jābir (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Contentment (*qana'a*) is a wealth which does not get squandered."[4]

Sulaymān Ibn Dāwūd (*'alayhumā-salām*) said: 'We have experienced living, and we have been through its hardships, and we found that the least of it is sufficient.'

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

As for avarice (*ḥirs*), then the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade it saying: "O

[3] Muslim, #1054 and Tirmidhī, #2349

[4] Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsat*, #496; Abu'l-Shaykh, *al-Amthāl*, p.83; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Zuhd*, p.26—and in the isnad are two weak narrators, refer to *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #63 and the comments.

people, be content in your seeking [of provision] as the servant [of Allāh] gains nothing except for what has been written for him."[5]

Some of them said: 'If it was said to greed (*ṭama'*): 'who is your father?' Greed would respond saying: 'doubt in the Divine Decree (*maqdūr*).' And if it was said to greed: 'what is your profession?' Greed would respond: 'Acquiring humiliation.' And if it was said to greed: 'what is your aim?' Greed would respond: 'Deprivation."

It was said,

Greed humiliates the prince
And is despair which honours the poor

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

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

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

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Economising is half of living."[6]

In another ḥadīth: "Three things are causes of salvation: fearing

[5] Ḥākim, vol.2, p.4; al-Bayhaqī, vol.5, pp.264, 265; Abū Nu'aym, *al-Ḥilyah*, vol.3, p.156, vol.7, p.158; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #1152—from Jābir with a Ṣaḥīḥ isnad. Also reported from Abū Umāmah, Hudhayfah and Ibn Mas'ūd.

[6] Al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, p.32 with a weak chain of transmission.

Allāh secretly and openly; moderation during wealth and poverty and justice when happy or angry."[7]

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

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allāh has rejected to provide for His believing servant except from whence he does not realise."[8]

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

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

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

[7] Reported by al-Bazzār, #81; al-'Uqaylī, vol.3, p.447; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #325; Abū Nu'aym, *al-Ḥilyah*, vol.2, p.343—from Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and in the isnād is al-Faḍl Ibn Bakr and he is Majhūl; reported by Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*, vol.15 (the Bahrain compendium) via another route from Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*); Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*, vol.15 from Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*). Ḥaythamī stated in *al-Majma'*, vol.1, p.91: 'Ibn Laī'ah is within the chain along with those who are unknown'; al-Bazzār, #80; Abū Nu'aym, *al-Ḥilyah*, vol.6, p.268 via another route from Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*). Ḥaythamī stated in *al-Majma'*, vol.1, p.91: 'it contains Zā'idah Ibn Abi'l-Raqād and Ziyād al-Nimrī and there is a difference of opinion on both of them as to utilising them'; reported by Abū Nu'aym, vol.3, p.219; al-Bazzār, #82—in an abridged form from Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*). The ḥadīth is ḥasan *insha'Allāh* as our Shaykh stated in *Silsilat ul-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥiḥah*, #1802.

[8] Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn, vol.1, p.147; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #383 from 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*); and it has other routes of transmission mentioned by Suyūṭī in *al-La'li' al-Maṣnū'ah*, vol.2, pp.70-72 and all of them are very weak.

at the conditions of the Prophets, *awliyā'* and righteous. He listens to their aḥādeeth and reads about how they were, and then makes his mind up and chooses between the vile ones or those who were pure creations with Allāh. This is so that patience with little becomes easy for him. If he enjoys food then animals eat more than him, and if he enjoys sex then sparrows reproduce more often than him!

Fifthly: that he understands the danger in amassing wealth, as we mentioned prior in regards to the flaws in wealth. He is to look at the reward in poverty and complete that by always looking at whoever is beneath him in the world and whoever is above him in the *dīn*. As has been mentioned in the ḥadīth reported by Muslim that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Look at those who are lower than you and do not look at those who are above you, as it is more worthy that you do not despise Allāh's Favours upon you."[9]

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

[9] Muslim, #2963 and at-Tirmidh?, #2515 from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

Section four:

Holding onto Contentment for One Who Loses Money

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

Jābir (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "Jibrīl (*'alayhis-salām*) said: Allāh has said: Islām is a religion which He is pleased with for Himself and it will not be rectified except with generosity and good manners so honour Him by those traits...."[10]

In another ḥadīth: "Paradise is the abode of the generous...."[11]

Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "My *ummah* will not enter Paradise on account of their worship of fasting, but they will enter due to the generosity of their souls, the dependability of their hearts and their advice to Muslims."[12]

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[10] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.243 and al-Zabīdī transmitted it from him in *Sharḥ ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.8, p.171 that:

It was reported by Dāraquṭnī in *al-Mustajād* without the words "...and good character" with a weak chain of transmission; and with his own route of transmission by Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-Mawḍū'āt*. This addition was mentioned by Ibn 'Adiyy from the narration of Baqiyyah from Yūsuf ibn al-Safar from al-Awzā'ī from al-Zuhrī from 'Urwah Ibn 'Ā'ishah, and Yūsuf is ḍa'īf.

I say: Baqiyyah is Mudallis and utilises ambiguous transmission terms [*'an'ana*].

[11] Ibn 'Adiyy, vol.1, p.190; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, p.117—from 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anha*). Ibn al-Jawzī ruled it to be fabricated in *al-Mawḍū'āt*, vol.2, p.185. Refer to Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah*, vol.2, p.96; *al-Mīzān*, vol.1, p.116 and *al-Durr al-Multaqat*, #4

[12] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.245:

Reported by Dāraquṭnī in *al-Mustajād* and Abū Bakr Ibn Lāl in *Makārim ul-Akhlāq* from the ḥadīth of Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), and it contains Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz Ibn al-Mubārak al-Dīnawarī. Ibn 'Adiyy relays it and there are some Munkar versions of it.

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In another ḥadīth: "It is upon you to instruct to goodness as it prevents evil."[13]

Section Five:
From the Stories of the Generous

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

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In al-Mīzān it states:

He is weak and Munkar al-ḥadīth. It is relayed by al-Kharā'iṭī in *Makārim ul-Akhlāq* from the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd and it contains Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī and he has been spoken about.

Translator's note: Abū Bishr Ṣāliḥ ibn Bashīr al-Murrī' al-Nājī al-Zāhid (*raḥimahullāh*) one of the great du'āt of the Salaf. He was considered to be munkar (rejected) in ḥadīth by Imām al-Bukhārī due to his memory, there are also some unconfirmed reports attributed to him. Ibn Abī Hātim states in *al-Jarḥ wa'l-Ta'dīl* (vol.4, p.395) that Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn stated that Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī' was weak in ḥadīth. Ibn Ḥibbān in *al-Majrūhīn* (vol.1, p.371) mentioned the piety of Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī' and his voice when reciting Qur'ān, while mentioning his weakness in ḥadīth due to his memory which would cause him to confuse the narrations that he heard from the trustworthy and he would thus narrate rejected ḥadīth.

Ibn 'Adī stated in *al-Kāmil* (vol.4, p.60) that Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī' was not a liar but he used to err in transmitting chains of narration and texts and thus erred in his exposition of ḥadīth. Dhahabī states in *al-Siyar* [vol.8, p.47, al-Arna'ūṭ (ed.)] that some people died upon hearing his recitation of the Qur'ān. Allāh knows best. Abū Nu'aym in *al-Ḥilyah* brings a narration from 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn al-Mahdī about Sufyān al-Thawrī weeping after hearing an admonishment from Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī'.

[13] Reported with this wording from Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā in *Qaḍā' ul-Ḥawā'ij*, p.3 and Abū 'Abdullāh al-Rāzī in *Mashāyikh*, #1168. It contains Jābir al-Dahhāk in the chain and he is Matrūk however the ḥadīth has other routes of transmission and supporting narrations, refer to a detailed verification in *Silsilah al-Ṣaḥiḥah*, #1908 and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl*, #885.

[14] Bukhārī, vol.1, p.29; Muslim, #2308; Nasā'ī, vol.4, p.125 from Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*).

[15] Bukhārī, vol.10, p.381; Muslim, #2311 from Jābir (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[16] Muslim, #2312, from Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

It was said that: 'Uthmān owed Ṭalḥah fifty thousand dirhams and he went to the Masjid. Ṭalḥah said to him: 'Here is your money, take it.' 'Uthmān said: 'But it is your money O Abū Muḥammad to help you in your integrity.'

'Urwah said: 'I saw 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*) divide seventy thousand [dirhams] while patching up her garment.'

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

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

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

'Alī Ibn al-Ḥasan went to visit Muḥammad Ibn Usāmah Ibn Zayd while he was sick. Muḥammad began crying, and then 'Alī Ibn al-Ḥasan said to him: 'what is wrong with you?' Muḥammad replied: 'I have a debt.' 'Alī asked: 'how much is it?' Muḥammad said: 'About ten or fifteen thousand dīnār.' 'Alī said: 'It's on me [to repay it for you].'

Qays Ibn Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah was sick but none of his brother went to visit him. It was said to him: 'They are all shy to visit you due to the debts which you owe them.' He said: 'May Allāh disgrace a wealth which prevents brothers from visits.' Then he instructed someone to call out: 'Whoever has a right with Qays, is free from it at once.' Then the steps to his house broke due to the number of people who came to visit him.

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

Section six:
Exposition on the Censure of Miserliness

Abū Sa'īd said: 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Two features are not found in a believer: miserliness (*bukhl*) and bad character (*sū' al-khuluq*)."'[17]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: "Stinginess (*shuḥḥ*) and faith (*īmān*) are never ever combined in the heart of a servant [of Allāh]."[18]

Also from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ»

"O Allāh, indeed I seek refuge in You from cowardice and miserliness."[19]

[17] Tirmidhī, #2028; Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, p.282; 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd, *al-Muntakhab min al-Musnad*, p.995; Abū Nu'aym, *al-Ḥilyah*, vol.2, p.289; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #319—from Abū Sa'īd. Within the chain of transmission is Ṣadaqah Ibn Mūsā al-Daqīqī and he is weak.
[18] Nasā'ī, vol.6, p.12 from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*)—Ṣaḥīḥ.
[19] Bukhārī, vol.11, p.154; Tirmidhī, #3562; Nasā'ī, vol.8, p.266 from Sa'd (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*).

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There are three destructive sins: stinginess which is obeyed; a desire which is followed and a person's amazement with his own self."[20]

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

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

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

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

Section Seven:
From the Stories of the Misers

It was reported from Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) that he said: '*al-Ḥājib*, a man who was of the Arab nobles, yet was a miser (*bakhīl*), never used to light fires at night so that no one else would see and try to benefit from the light. If he had to start a fire and then saw some people benefitting from it he would put the fire out!'

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

[20] Imām al-Albānī judged it to be ḥasan in *Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, #1802

will give you a *dirham*.' He was given sixty thousand *dirhams* and gave her less than a *dirham*!

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

Section Eight:
The Merits of Giving Preference to Others

Know that generosity and miserliness are of levels:

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

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

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

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

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ

"They give them preference over their own selves, even though they are poor."

[*al-Ḥashr* (59): 8]

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

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

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

'Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far went out to a palm grove where a black servant boy was working. Someone came to bring the boy food, a dog then came and the boy saved three bits of the food for the dog to eat. Then the boy threw a second morsel of food to the dog, which it ate, and then he threw a third morsel, which it ate. 'Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far looked and said: 'O young boy, how much food do you usually get in a day?' The boy replied: 'That which you have seen.' 'Abdullāh said: 'Then why have you preferred to give it all to a dog?' The boy said: 'This is not a place where dogs usually come, it must have come from far and it was hungry so I did not want it to go without eating anything.' 'Abdullāh said to the boy: 'But what will you do for today [to eat]?' The boy said: 'I will fast for the rest of the day.' 'Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far then said: 'Am I blamed for being generous when this boy is more generous than me?' Then he purchased the palm grove and all that was within it, and he also purchased the servant boy, freed him and gave him the entire palm grove as a gift.

A group of poor righteous people sat in a place and they had a few loaves of bread which was not really enough for all of them. They broke up the bread and then turned out the lights to sit to eat. Yet when the food was presented, each sat in their place without moving to eat out of deference to their fellow companion.

Section Nine:
The Limit of Miserliness and Generosity

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

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

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

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

Love of wealth has two reasons:

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

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

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

Love of desire is cured by contentment (*qanā'a*), patience (*ṣabr*), long aspiration (*ṭul al-'aml*) and abundant reminders of death (*dhikr al-mawt*).

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

One should be warned against leaving good to his offspring, and then doing evil with it. If the offspring is righteous then Allāh will assume care of him yet if the offspring is evil nothing should be left for him which aids him in disobedience. The offspring should also listen regularly to what we have mentioned about the censure of miserliness and praising generosity.

Know that if the amount of beloved things increases, so will the amount of calamity at their loss. Whoever realises the danger and flaw of wealth will not be attached to it. While whoever suffices with taking wealth that which fulfils his needs and holds it for his own needs—such a person is not a miser.

And Allāh knows best.

THE EIGHTH FOUNDATION

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

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

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

[1] Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*, #7144, 7145; Ibn Mājah, #4205 from Shaddād Ibn Aws and al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Irāqī weakened it in *Takhrīj ul-Iḥyā'*, vol.3, p.274. It has supporting narrations in Aḥmad, vol.5, p.428 and al-Baghawī, #4135 from Maḥmūd Ibn Labīd and the chain of transmission is ṣaḥīḥ.

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the gatherings of Khālid Ibn Ma'dān (*raḥimahullāh*) would become crowded he would get up and walk off out of hating fame (*karāha al-shuhra*).

Al-Zuhrī (*raḥimahullāh*) said: 'We have not seen asceticism (*zuhd*) in anything less than the love of leadership. For you will see a man having asceticism in his food, drink and wealth yet when it comes to leader-

ship he will become angry for it and have enmity on account of it.'

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

It has been reported in Muslim that 'Umar Ibn Sa'd went to his father Sa'd who was tending to sheep outside of Madīnah. When Sa'd saw him he said to him: 'I seek refuge in Allāh from evil of this rider.' When he came he said: 'O father, you tend to your camels and sheep while leaving the people to dispute over dominion among themselves.' Then Sa'd hit 'Umar in his chest and said: 'Keep quiet! For I heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say: "Indeed Allāh loves the servant who fears Him, is free from want and is hidden."'[2]

Abū Umāmah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Indeed the most honourable of my *awliyā'* [allies] is the believer who has a small amount of wealth, a small family, maintains the prayer, perfects the worship of his Lord, obeys His Lord in secret, is obscure among people, is not recognised, has small provision and is patient with that." Then the Prophet (ﷺ) his hand and said: "His death will come quickly, his mourners will be a few and the wealth that he leaves will be little." The ḥadīth is ḥasan.[3]

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

[2] Muslim #2965

[3] Rather it is weak, as in the chain of transmission is 'Alī Ibn Yazīd al-Alhānī and he is weak. Reported by Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.5, p.252; Aḥmad, *Zuhd*, p.11; Wākī', *al-Zuhd*, p.133; Ibn ul-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, p.54 (with the additions of Nu'aym Ibn Ḥammād); Tirmidhī, vol.4, p.575; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabir*, vol.8, p.242 and others.

the people of the earth.'

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

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

Section One:
Reputation and Wealth are Pillars of the World

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

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

Know that from repute is that which is praiseworthy and that which is censured as it is well-known that a person has to have wealth for

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

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

اجْعَلْنِي عَلَىٰ خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ ۖ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

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

[*Yūsuf* (12): 55]

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

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

Section Two:
Exposition on the Remedy for Loving Reputation

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

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

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

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

[4] Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.3, pp.456, 460; Tirmidhī, #2482; Ibn ul-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, p.181 (with the additions of Nu'aym Ibn Ḥammād); al-Dārimī, #2733; Ibn Ḥibbān, #2472; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabir*, vol.19, p.190 from Ka'b Ibn Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and also from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and others.

the ascetics (*zāhid*). When the king came close to him the ascetic prepared food and milk for him, but began eating from it in a way which made the king lose regard for him.

When Ibrāhīm Ibn Nakhi'ī assumed the position of judge he wore a red garment and sat in the market.[5]

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

Bishr al-Hāfī used to sit with the fragrance-seller (*'aṭṭār*).[6]

Section Three:
Fearing People's Censure

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

[5] So that people would not look at him and think that he was a scholar or an Imām.

[6] Translator's note: today, particularly in the West and the non-Arab countries, some of the students of knowledge have developed an erroneous concept that it is censured to work in the market place or to go shopping for one's needs!? This is due to a misconception that such things are in some way from the *Khawārim ul-Murū'ah* [invalidators of personal integrity]. First of all, not only is such a notion wholly out of place, as in any case it cannot be said that the *Khawārim ul-Murū'ah* set by the scholars of the past [such as eating in the street for example] can be applied to today's situation, as the people of the past were no doubt of a higher standard which cannot be adequately compared to the people today to argue that they lack personal integrity. Secondly, the notion can inculcate a form of *riyā'* and seeking of reputation [i.e. "so and so is so righteous that he does not even go the market to buy his needs or work"]. Thirdly, there is an element of ghulū in such a notion.

This is by looking at the feature which has been praised and knowing that even if it is found within you, you are still not free of: that which can bring joy, such as knowledge (*'ilm*) and carefulness (*wara'*); or that which does not deserve joy such as repute and wealth.

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

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

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

FIRSTLY: though you may be free of such faults (*'ayb*), you are not devoid of their like.

SECONDLY: that is expiation of your sins

THIRDLY: he has committed a crime against his religion and pre-

sented himself to Allāh's Anger. As a result, he has to ask Allāh for pardon, as it has been relayed that a man hit Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham, and then Ibrāhīm supplicated for the man to be pardoned saying: 'Due to him, I have been reminded, so I will not cause him to be punished due to me.' This story has been mentioned prior in the virtue of forbearance (*ḥilm*).

Part two

Ostentation, its Reality and Categories, and its Censure

Ostentation (*riyā'*) has been censured in the Book and Sunnah, Allāh says,

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾

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

[*al-Mā'ūn* (107): 4-6]

And He says,

فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾

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

[*al-Kahf* (18): 110]

As for the aḥādīth, then it has been relayed from Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) that from what he relayed from His Lord is that He said: "Whoever does an action in which he associates other than Me, then he is the one who has associated partners [in worship with Me] and

I am free from him."[7]

In another ḥadīth Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "What I fear the most for you is minor *shirk*." They asked: "O Allāh's Messenger, what is minor *shirk*?" He replied: "*al-Riyā.*' Allāh will say to them [those who showed-off] on the Day of Judgement when people will be rewarded for their actions: 'Go to those whom you wanted to see you in the world, do you find anything with them now?'"[8]

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

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

THE FIRST: Ostentation (*riyā'*) in the religion, and this is of types:

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

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

[7] Ḥāfiẓ Al-'Irāqī in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.294 ascribed it to Mālik; it was also reported by Ibn Mājah, #4202; Abū Balbān, *al-Maqāṣid al-Sunniyyah*, #56—from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād; Muslim, #2985.

[8] Aḥmad, vol.5, pp.428, 429; al-Baghawī, vol.14, p.324—from Maḥmūd Ibn Labīd with a good chain of transmission.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Another generational level sought acceptance from both the people of rectification and the people of the world like kings, princes and merchants. If they were to wear expensive clothing the reciters (*qurrā'*) of the people of rectification would not accept them, and if they were to wear the dishevelled clothing of religion the kings and wealthy people would shun them. Thus, they want to combine between acceptance of the people of religion and the people of world.

They therefore wear fine clothing made from expensive material and the cheapest item of clothing he has will be an item of clothing that a rich person wears. He will guise himself with the garments of the people of rectification so as to attain acceptance from both sides [the rich and wealthy, and the people of righteousness and rectification].

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

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

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

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

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

Likewise, he manifests fasting, combat, *ḥajj*, charity and the likes.

As for the people of the world, they desire to be seen through conceited swaggering (*tabakhtur*), arrogant strutting (*ikhtiyāl*), moving their hands pompously etc. So as to indicate self-importance.

FIFTH TYPE: wanting to be seen as a visitor of scholars and worshippers, so that it will be said: "so and so visits so and so, and the people of religion flock around him and see *barakah* from him". This is the same as the one who wants to be seen with many shaykhs so that it can be said: "he met many shaykhs" and "he has benefitted from the shaykhs". All of this is in order to stand out and by doing so they hope to achieve reputation and status within the hearts of the pious worshippers [and shaykhs].[9]

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

So if it is said: "Is *riyā'* forbidden (*ḥarām*), disliked (*mukrūh*) or permitted (*mubāḥ*)?"

[9] [TN]: *Subḥān-Allāh*, this is exactly what is found today, especially with the rise of *'social media'*. People effectively advertise their meetings with Shaykhs all so that it can be said *"they met with so and so."* People even share the most mundane facets and the most trivial of details, merely so that it can be advertised that they *"were with"* (!?) so and so from the Shaykhs. This is all the more popular with the increase in what has been termed as *"Selfies"* wherein people take pictures of their own selves and advertise these to the whole world all for name and fame, in what must be one of the clearest manifestations of *riyā'* and *'ujb* in the modern age. Moreover, for name and status, some people will even advertise scholars *"praise"* of them, and some of these details contain falsehood and *riyā'*. So one will hear that a so-called *"Shaykh"*, who himself may not have actually studied Islām at all himself, will say about his friend and associate, who could even be a business associate, that "he has been my student for several years"!? When neither the one speaking, nor the one alluded to, have any thorough knowledge of Islām in anyway, saying such things just to flatter him!

The answer: there is some detail in regards to this. *Riyā'* is either through acts of worship or otherwise. If *riyā'* is through acts of worship, then it is forbidden. The one who just wants to be seen for his prayer, charity and *ḥajj* is disobedient and sinful, as they intend other than Allāh, who alone deserves worship. Such a person who just wants to be seen has incurred Allāh's Wrath. As for if *riyā'* is with something other than acts of worship, such as in collecting wealth and seeking status and prestige in people's hearts then it is not prohibited if not done with prohibited means. Just as the slight profit in wealth as a person needs is praiseworthy, the same is the case with repute, and this is what Yūsuf (*'alayhis-salām*) sought when he said:

إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

"Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian."

[*Yūsuf* (12): 55]

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

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

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

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

Muslim solely reported in the ḥadīth from Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiyAllāhu*

'anhu) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever has an atom's weight of pride will not enter Paradise." A man asked: "What of the man who loves to wear nice clothes and shoes?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "Allāh is beauty and loves beauty, pride is to reject the truth and belittles people."[10]

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

Section One:
Some Doors to Ostentation are More Severe than Others

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

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

Second Level: that he intends a reward from his ostentation with a weak intent (*qaṣd ḍa'īf*), in that if it was absent he would not do it. This is close to the first level in that it is hated by Allāh.

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

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

[10] Muslim, #91; Abū Dāwūd, #4091; Tirmidhī, #199

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

Section Two:
Ostentation is More Hidden than a Black Ant

Know that there is both clear (*jallī*) and hidden (*khafī*) ostentation (*riyā'*).

Clear ostentation is: that which encourages action.

There is another kind of *riyā'* which is not as clear as the above mentioned type.

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

More hidden than that type of *riyā'* is that which neither affects man doing an action nor makes it easier for him to do it, yet it is rooted (*mustabṭanun*) in his heart. A servant of Allāh could be sincere in his action, and not intend *riyā'*, and in fact hates it, but when people come to know of his secret righteous action he likes that and this encourages him to worship in his heart. This happiness [with the people knowing] indicates hidden *riyā'*, and if he was not aware of the people coming to know of his actions he would not develop

this happiness (*surūr*). A person knowing about him instils in him joy (*farḥ*) and happiness, and then if he feels this enjoyment of people knowing about him—he does not counter this with disdain, rather he has a hidden movement [of ostentation for their benefit].

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

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

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

The sincere ones did not cease fearing hidden *riyā'*, and they strove to deceive people away from righteous actions, being careful to hide them more than how people care to hide their immoralities. All of this is in order to make sincere their actions so that Allāh will reward them on the Last Day for their sincerity.

The branches of hidden *riyā'* are many and cannot be restricted, and whenever a person comprehends from himself a difference between people becoming aware of his acts of worship or not, then he has within him a branch of *riyā'*. However, not all branches of it render as worthless the reward or invalidate action, as rather there is some detailed explanation in regards to the matter.

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

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

What is praiseworthy: that he intends to hide acts of obedience and sincerity for Allāh however when people come across his actions he knows that Allāh has caused them to come across them and has manifested to them the beauty of his condition. He thus becomes joyful with this, as also his acts of disobedience have been concealed by Allāh, so his joy is on account of that and not due to gaining people's praise or wanting prestige in their hearts. When he has sins vile actions concealed in the world, they will likewise be concealed in the Afterlife, as has been mentioned in the ḥadīth.[11]

So if it is said: "What about the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said: a man said: "O Allāh's Messenger, a man does actions and he does it in secret, and when it gets known he likes that. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "He gets two rewards: one for doing it in secret and another for it being known of.""

[11] The ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ): "Allāh does not conceal a servant in the dunyā except that He also conceals him on the Day of Judgement." Muslim, #2590 from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

Answer: this ḥadīth is weak, it was reported by Tirmidhī[12] and some of the people of knowledge explained it meaning: "that he likes people praising him for goodness..."

Muslim solely relayed from the ḥadīth of Abū Dharr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said: It was said: "O Allāh's Messenger, do you see that a man does an action of good and the people praise him for it?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "That is a glad-tiding for the believer."[13]

Yet if he is pleased for people to know good from him and to be honoured on account of that—then that is *riyā'*.

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

If *riyā'* presents itself to a servant [of Allāh], then:

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

[12] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*, vol.3, p.308:

Reported by al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'b ul-Īmān* from the narration of Dhakwān from Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) and the narration of Tirmidhī and Ibn Ḥibbān from the narration of Dhakwān from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

Tirmidhī said of the ḥadīth "*gharīb* [meaning by that: weak]" as we have ascertained in our book *al-Radd al-'Ilmī*, may Allāh ease its publication. It was also weakened by our Shaykh, *al-'Allāmah* al-Albānī in *Ḍa'if ul-Jāmi'*, #4790.

[13] Muslim, #2642

seventy levels between secret (*sirr*) action and open (*'alāniya*) action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

What testifies to this is what is relayed in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from Abū Mūsā (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that he said: a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ)

and said: "O Allāh's Messenger, do you view that a man who fights so that it be said 'he is brave'; and fights for integrity and fights just to show off—which of them are fighting in the path of Allāh?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever fights to make the word of Allāh the Uppermost, he is the one who has fought in Allāh's Path."[14]

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

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

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

[14] Reported by Bukhārī, vol.6, pp.21, 22; Muslim, #1904; Tirmidhī, #1646; Abū Dāwūd, #2517; Nasā'ī, vol.6, p.23; Ibn Mājah, #2783.

[15] This is of the calamities among many *du'āt* and claimants to knowledge during out times.

[16] Al-Bayhaqī, vol.8, p.330; Ṭahāwī, *Mushkil ul-Āthār*, vol.1, p.20; Ḥākim , vol.4, p.244 from Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhumā*) with a good chain of transmission.

and they do not possess the ability to give life or bring death.

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

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

SECOND LEVEL: averting ostentation within acts of worship by removing its roots from the heart and despising people's praise. *Shayṭān* does not leave while he is doing an act of worship, rather he slowly introduces the steps to ostentation.

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

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

Of the actions which are not possible to keep secret are *ḥajj* and *jihād.*

The one who manifests his actions has to guard his heart so that

it does not contain love of hidden *riyā'*, or that he intends people to follow him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

[16] Al-Bayhaqī, vol.8, p.330; Ṭahāwī, *Mushkil ul-Āthār*, vol.1, p.20; Ḥākim , vol.4, p.244 from Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) with a good chain of transmission.

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

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

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

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

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

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī said: "If *Shayṭān* comes to you during *Ṣalāh* and says to you: it is for show, then make your *Ṣalāh* longer."

As for what has been relayed from some of the Salaf that they would leave an act of obedience out of fear of *riyā'*, then this would be if their souls sensed any adornment in an act of worship then they would cut-off the act.

Section Seven:

What is Accurate of a Servant's Activity on Account of People Watching and What is Inaccurate

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

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

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

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

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

The follower has to also make sure that his heart is attached to contentment with Allāh's Knowledge in all of his acts of obedience. The one who fears Allāh and has hope in Him is the only one who

is content with that and he must not give in to despair of not being sincere and say things like: "Only the strong ones are able to be sincere, while I am not of those". Such statements and feelings lead him to give up striving (*mujāhada*) to obtain sincerity.

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

This makes clear that the souls' feelings are a great honour in the hearts and is what motivates isolation, this is a tremendous flaw. The

sign that one is free from it is when he regards both the creation and animals on the same level, and that his action is the action of one alone on earth. If any weak thoughts come to him Allāh repels them.

And Allāh knows best.

THE NINTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of Pride and Self-Conceit

Section One:
On Pride (*kibr*)

Allāh Most High says,

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ ءَايَٰتِيَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ ٱلْحَقِّ

"I will divert My signs from those who show arrogance (*yatakabbarūna*) upon the earth, without right."

[*al-Aʿrāf* (7): 146]

And He says,

إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

"Verily, He does not love the arrogant (*mustakbirīn*)."

[*al-Naḥl* (16): 23]

In an authentic ḥadīth solely relayed by Muslim from Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) that he said: "He who has a grain of pride (*kibr*) in his

heart will not enter Paradise."[1]

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Hellfire has said: I have been ignited for the arrogant (*mutakabbirīn*)."[2]

He also said (ﷺ): "The tyrants (*jabbārūn*) and arrogant (*mutakabbirūn*)[3] will be gathered on the Day of Judgement in the form of grain strewn under feet that people will walk upon."[4]

Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah (*raḥimahullāh*) stated: 'Whoever's disobedience is in regards to desire (*shahwa*) will incline to repent as Ādam (*'alayhis-salām*) disobeyed due to his desire and was forgiven. Yet if one's disobedience is as a result of pride (*kibr*), then a curse on him is feared as Iblīs disobeyed based on pride (*mustakbarān*) and was cursed.'

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "Whoever drags his thobe out of arrogance then on the Day of Judgement Allāh will not look at him." Abū Bakr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'O Allāh's Messenger, one side of my lower garment (*iẓār*) drags down unless I am cautious [is this to be included]?' Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "This is not done out of pride (*kuyalā'a*)."[5]

Know that pride is an inner characteristic (*khuluq bāṭin*) from which actions emanate and then manifest on the limbs (*jawāriḥ*). [The arrogant] views himself as being above others in perfect attributes (*ṣifāt*

[1] Verification mentioned prior.

[2] Bukhārī, vol.8, p.458; Muslim, #2846; Tirmidhī, #2564—from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[3] Al-'Irāqī stated in *al-Mughnī*: 'al-Bazzār reported it without the word *"tyrants"* and its isnad is ḥasan.'

[4] Its basis is in Bukhārī, vol.10, p.223; Muslim, #2085 from Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*); however the addition within it which mentions Abū Bakr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) has not been reported by Muslim; also reported by Nasā'ī, vol.2, p.299; Aḥmad, vol.2, pp.5, 10; Abū Dāwūd, #4085.

[5] Refer to the comments of Sh. al-Albānī in *Mukhtaṣar al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyyah*, p.10.

al-kamāl), at which point he is to be deemed as arrogant (*mutakabbir*). Conceit (*'ujb*) develops from this, he views himself as above others and whenever a person look at himself with the eye of greatness he will begin to despise others and view them as being like donkey compared to him.

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

Pride prevents a person attaining the characteristics of the believers (*akhlāq al-mu'minīn*) as he will be unable to love for the believers what he loves for himself and he will be unable to be humble (*tawādu'*) and unable to abandon malice (*ḥiqd*), envy (*ḥasad*), anger (*ghaḍab*), restrain anger (*kaẓim al-ghayẓ*), accept advice (*qubūl al-nuṣḥ*), avoid despising and backbiting people. In short, he is subject to all blameworthy characteristics.

Of the worst forms of pride is that which prevents one from benefiting in terms of knowledge (*'ilm*), accepting the truth (*qubūl al-ḥaqq*) and submitting to it (*inqiyād lahu*).[6]

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

وَجَحَدُوا۟ بِهَا وَٱسْتَيْقَنَتْهَآ أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا

"And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness."

[*al-Naml* (27): 14]

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

And He says,

فَقَالُوٓاْ أَنُؤۡمِنُ لِبَشَرَيۡنِ مِثۡلِنَا

"They said, 'Should we believe two men like ourselves?'"
[*al-Mu'minīn* (23): 47]

And He says,

إِنۡ أَنتُمۡ إِلَّا بَشَرٞ مِّثۡلُنَا

"They said, 'You are not but men like us.'"
[*Ibrāhīm* (14): 10]

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

It was mentioned prior that having pride over the servants [of Allāh] is despising them and a person viewing himself as greater than them. This also leads to arrogance towards Allāh's Commands. Just as Iblīs had pride (*kibr*) towards Ādam (*alayhis-salām*) and rejected his Lord's instruction to prostrate.

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) explained pride and said: "Pride is: to reject the truth (*baṭr al-ḥaqq*) and condescension of others (*gamṭ al-nās*)" The statement *"baṭr ul-ḥaqq"* denotes disdain and rejection of the Truth, while *"gamṭ al-nās"* implies contempt and condescension of others from amongst mankind.

Section Two:
The Categories of Pride

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

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

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

وَٱخۡفِضۡ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ﴿٢١٥﴾

> "And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers."
>
> [*al-Shu'arā'* (26): 115]

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

Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) stated: a man said to another: "I am more generous than you." Yet there is no one who is more generous than anyone else except with *taqwā*, Allāh says,

إِنَّ أَكۡرَمَكُمۡ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتۡقَىٰكُمۡ

> "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you."
>
> [*al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 13]

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

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

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

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

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

Of the aspects of the arrogant (*mutakkabir*) is: That he loves people to stand for him: whether he is coming or while he is sitting—both of which are prohibited. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whoever loves that men stand for him then let him await his seat in the Hellfire."[7] This is the practice of the non-Arabs and the arrogant.[8]

[7] Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, #977; Abū Dāwūd, #5229; Tirmidhī, vol.2, p.125; Aḥmad, vol.4, pp.93, 100—from Mu'āwiyah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) with a ṣaḥīḥ chain of transmission.

[8] [TN]: Unfortunately, it is currently a common practice among the Arabs today!

Secondly: standing when people come, and the Salaf did not do this.

Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'There was no person more beloved to us than Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). If they saw him they would not stand for him as they knew he disliked that.'[9]

The scholars have said that: 'It is recommended to stand for ones parents and for the just Imām, and for the virtuous people'[10] —this became a symbol among virtuous people. If a person abandons this for one who deserves it, he will not be safe from humility and belittling him, this will instil hatred (*ḥiqd*).

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

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

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

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

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

[9] Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, #946; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, vol.2, p.125; Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, #289; Abu'l-Shaykh, *Akhlāq al-Nabi*, p.63; Ṭahāwī, *Mushkil ul-Athār*, vol.2, p.39; Aḥmad, vol.3, p.132 and the isnad is ṣaḥīḥ.

[10] There is no proof for such a recommendation as has been explained by our Shaykh al-Albānī in *Silsilat ul-Aḥādith al-Ṣaḥiḥah*, vol.1, pp.627-632.

may be met.'[11]

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

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

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

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

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

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

[12] See the English translation of *'The Refinement of Character'*, pp.48-56, published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2019.

Section Three:

An Exposition on the Remedy for Pride and acquisition of Humility

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

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

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُۥ ﴿١٨﴾ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُۥ فَقَدَّرَهُۥ ﴿١٩﴾

"From what substance did He create him? From a sperm-drop He created him and destined for him."

[*ʿAbasa* (80): 18-19]

Then He said:

ثُمَّ ٱلسَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُۥ ﴿٢٠﴾

"Then He eased the way for him."

[*ʿAbasa* (80): 20]

With His saying,

فَجَعَلْنَٰهُ سَمِيعًۢا بَصِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

"and We made him hearing and seeing."

[*al-Insān* (76): 2]

Allāh will bring him to life after death, make his appearance good and sends him to the world, giving him food, drink, clothing and strength. Whoever has this as an origin, how can he possibly be arrogant (*kibr*) and boastful (*fakr*)?

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

اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

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

[*al-Isrā'* (17): 14]

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

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

While whoever suffers from pride based on riches (*ghina'*) should contemplate (*ta'ammul*) on the character of the Jews and how they

are wealthier than him, and with that away with the nobility with which they boast!

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

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

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

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

Section Four:
On Self-Conceit (*'ujb*)

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

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

It was reported from Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that he said: "Destruction is in two: self-conceit (*'ujb*) and despair (*qunūṭ*)."

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

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

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

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[12] Bukhārī, vol.10, p.222; Muslim, #2088

[13] Al-Bazzār, #80; al-'Uqaylī, vol.3, p.447; al-Qaḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, #325; Abū Nu'aym, vol.2, o.343 from Anas and it is weak however it has other supporting narrations from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhum*) and others form which Imām al-Albānī judged to be authentic in *Silsilah al-Ṣaḥiḥah*, #1802

Section Five:
The Remedy for Self-Conceit

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

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The actions of any of you will not grant you entry into Paradise." They asked: "Even you O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied: "Even me, unless Allāh bestows His Mercy and Virtue on me."[14]

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

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

In fact, they were only honoured due to their praiseworthy acts of obedience (*ṭa'āt maḥmūda*) and not due to their lineage, Allāh says,

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ

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

[*al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 13]

[14] Bukhārī, vol.10, p.109; Muslim, #2816; Nasā'ī, vol.8, p.121

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O Fāṭimah, I will not be able to suffice you from Allāh whatsoever."[15]

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

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

In the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I will not find that any of you come on the Day of Judgement with a bleating camel around his neck saying: 'O Messenger of Allāh help me' and I say 'I have no authority at all, for I have conveyed.'"[16]

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

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

There is also self-conceit with one's own erroneous opinion (*ra'y*), as Allāh says,

أَفَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُۥ سُوٓءُ عَمَلِهِۦ فَرَءَاهُ حَسَنًا

"Then is one to whom the evil of his deed has been made

[15] Bukhārī, vol.8, p.386; Muslim, #206; Tirmidhī, #3184; Nasā'ī, vol.6, p.248 from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[16] Bukhārī, vol.6, p.129; Muslim, #1831 and Aḥmad, vol.2, p.426

attractive so he considers it good?"

[*Fāṭir* (35): 8]

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

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

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing."

[*al-Shūrā* (42): 11]

And that His Messenger is truthful in what he came with and to believe in what is in the Qur'ān without investigation, and to dedicate his life to *taqwā* and acts of obedience. For whenever he delves into differences of opinion and that which he cannot understand, he will be destroyed.

THE TENTH FOUNDATION

On the Censure of Self-Delusion, its Categories and Levels

Of the people are those who are deluded (*ghurūr*) by the worldly life, and the ones who commit acts of disobedience, though they may possess sound belief, can concur with the non-Muslim (*kuffār*) in this delusion due to preferring the world over the Afterlife except that their affair is less than that of the non-Muslims from the aspect that the foundation of faith (*aṣl al-īmān*) prevents them from eternal punishment.

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

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

One should know that though Allāh has vast mercy (*raḥma*), He is

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

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

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

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

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

[1] Perhaps he is alluding to what has been relayed by Muslim, #971; Abū Dawūd, #3234 and Nasā'ī, vol.4, p.90 from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) who said: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I sought permission to seek forgiveness for my mother and I was not given permission for this; and I sought permission visit her grave and He gave me permission."

like one who seeks Allāh's forgiveness and praises Him a hundred times a day yet spends most of the day backbiting others. Such a person will look at the merits of *tasbīḥ* and *istighfār* yet will not look at the punishment for backbiting (*ghība*).

Section One:
Delusion Which Affects the Scholars and the Worshippers

Delusion largely affects four categories of people:
The Scholars (*'ulamā'*), the worshippers (*'ubbād*); the Ṣūfīs (*mutaṣawwifah*) and the wealthy (*aghniyā'*).

The first category:
The Scholars (*'ulamā'*)

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

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

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّىٰهَا ﴿٩﴾

"He has succeeded who purifies it..."
[*al-Shams* (91): 9]

Allāh did not say *"he has succeeded who learns how to purify it."* And if

Shayṭān tries to delude him with the merits of the people of knowledge then he should remember what has been relayed in regards to the sinful scholar (*'alim al-fājir*), and He says,

كَمَثَلِ ٱلْكَلْبِ إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ

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

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 176]

And He says,

كَمَثَلِ ٱلْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا

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

[*al-Jumu'ah* (62): 5]

There are other groups who have knowledge and apparent action yet they have not purified their hearts to be absolved of censured characteristics, such as: pride (*kibr*), envy (*ḥasad*), showing-off (*riyā'*), seeking status (*ṭalab al-'ulu*), seeking fame (*ṭalab al-shuhra*) etc. They have adorned their apparent actions and neglected their inner. They have forgotten the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying: "Allāh does not look at your features or at your wealth, rather He Looks at your hearts and actions."[2]

Thus, they focused on actions and not on the hearts even though the heart is at the foundation. They are like a man who cultivates a farm with weeds which spoil the plot so he has to remove the weeds yet instead of taking out the roots he just focuses on the leaves.

Another group knew that their inner characteristics were censured, but due to their self-amazement with their own selves they thought

[2] Muslim, #525; Aḥmad, vol.2, p.285; Ibn Mājah, #4143; al-Baghawī, #4150 -from Abū Hurayrah (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

that they were devoid of them, and that they were loftier with Allāh than to be tested with that "as that is something which only tests the common people and not those who had reached their level of knowledge". Thus, if any of the aspects of pride, arrogance and leadership afflicted them, they would say: "this is not pride, rather this is seeking honour for the religion and manifesting the nobility of knowledge and restraining the innovators, and even if I was to wear lowly clothing or sit with the lowly people in gatherings, the enemies of the religion would be happy with my humiliation in which would also be the humiliation of Islām"—he says all of this forgetting *ghurūr* [delusion].

We relayed from 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that when he arrived in *Shām* he came to a river and descended from his camel, remove his shoes, held on to them and went into the water with his camel. Abū 'Ubaydah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said to him: "today you have done something tremendous among the people of the earth." Then 'Umar slapped him on the chest and said: "Woe to you, if only other than you would have said this O Abū 'Ubaydah. For we were the most lowly and despised of people and Allāh honoured us by His Messenger. Whatever else you seek honour by other than him, Allāh will disgrace you."

What is also strange is that those who are deluded seek honour of the worldly life by expensive garments and strutting, if the very thought that they may be doing that out of *riyā'* comes to their mind they repel it by saying: "my intent is to manifest knowledge and action so that people follow me in the religion"—yet if this was his intent he would be joyous with people following other than him. As whoever intends people's rectification will be joyous at their rectification at the hands of whoever it may be.

Some of them could be deluded to the point that he takes ḥarām wealth and says "this wealth has no owner so it is appropriate to be

used for the benefit of the Muslims, and you are the leader of the Muslims"—he could thus be deluded by this deception (*talbīs*) from the angle of how he deems himself.

Or he could be a profuse liar (*dajjāl*) when he says "this wealth has no owner" when the reality is that there is some sort of mixing in the wealth which in any case would not remove it from being *ḥarām*. He could even know from whom the wealth was illegally taken.

Another group emphasised knowledge, purified their limbs and adorned them with acts of obedience and they purified their hearts from ostentation (*riyā'*), envy (*ḥasad*), pride (*kibr*) and the likes. However there still remained in their hearts hidden defects from the plots of *Shayṭān* which they neglected. Thus, you will see one of them stay up all night and tire himself all day in gathering areas of knowledge and articulating them well. He may think that the motive for this is to maintain the manifestation of Allāh's religion, yet the real motive for all of that is to seek fame and reputation. And perhaps his writings are not devoid of him praising himself either frankly via void claims or via defaming others by claiming he is better than them or that he has more knowledge than them.[3]

Such hidden character flaws are only comprehended by the astute and strong, it is not the domain of the likes of us who are weak, yet the weakest level is for a person to know his own faults and work to rectify them. Whoever is pleased by his good deeds and saddened by his bad deeds—then his affair is accurate. This is as opposed to a person who purifies himself and thinks that he is of the best of people.

Of them are those who restrict themselves to knowledge of legal verdicts (*fatāwā*) within governmental and personal contexts, and

[3] [TN]: This is common in this age!

engross themselves in the personal details which occur between people. They could even be lax in apparent actions and commit disobedience such as backbiting and looking at what is prohibited, or going to places which are prohibited and they do not guard their hearts from pride, envy, showing-off and other destructive qualities. Such people are deluded from two aspects:

Firstly: action (*'aml*)

Secondly: knowledge (*'ilm*)

The reason for their delusion is that they hear what has been mentioned about the greatness of *fiqh* yet they do not comprehend that true fiqh is initially related to *fiqh* of Allāh and understanding His Attributes, so as to instil fear (*kawf*) and *taqwā*. Allāh says,

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا۟ فِى ٱلدِّينِ

"For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion."
[*al-Tawbah* (9): 122]

This is like one who restricts himself to the knowledge of differences of opinion and has no interest other than disputation, one-upmanship and eristic dialogue. Such a person is worse than the type above, for argumentation over *fiqh* matters is an innovation which was not known of by the Salaf.

Another group of scholars preoccupied themselves with 'ilm ul-kalām and argumentation (*jadal*) over desires, and refuting the opposer.

These were of two types: a group who were misguided and a group who were right. The misguided group called to innovation while the group who were right called to the Sunnah yet delusion encompassed both.

As for the misguided group, then their delusion was apparent, while with the group who were right [in their calling to the Sunnah] then their delusion was due to thinking that argumentation was of the most important matters and the most virtuous thing which gained nearness to Allāh in His religion. They claimed that no one will be able to complete his religion without investigation, and that whoever believed in Allāh and His Messenger without being able to logically prove it had deficient *īmān*. Due to this corrupt belief they wasted their lives studying logical arguments.

They blinded themselves and did not refer back to the first generation about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) testified to in terms of their goodness and their primacy over other subsequent people. For they came across many innovations (*bid'ah*) and desires (*hawā*) yet they did not delve into argumentation and disputes, they only spoke in such matters if there was a dire necessity to do so. If they saw a person who persisted in innovation they would boycott him without argumentation.

It has been relayed in a ḥadīth: "A people did not become misguided, after guidance, except that they were given to argumentation." [4]

Another group preoccupied themselves with admonition, the highest level of them speaking about character (*akhlāq*), qualities of the heart (*ṣifat al-qalb*), fear (*kauf*), hope (*rajā'*), patience (*ṣabr*), thankfulness (*shukr*), reliance (*tawwakul*), asceticism (*zuhd*), certainty (*yaqīn*) and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*). They thought that if they spoke of these traits (*ṣifāt*), which they do not actually have themselves, they would be considered to be of its people. They call to Allāh yet flee from Him at the same time, they are of the most heedless (*ghirra*) of people.

[4] Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol.5, pp.552, 256; Tirmidhī, #3306; Ibn Mājah, #48; Ḥākim , vol.2, pp.447-448; Ibn Jarīr, vol.25, p.88; Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabir*, #8067—from Abū Umāmah (*raḍiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with an authentic chain of transmission.

Of them are those who divert from the obligatory method (*minhāj*) of giving admonitions (*wa'ẓ*) and utilise word formations and styles in a way which is outside the scope of the Divine Legislation and intellect so as to seek obscurity in speech.

Of them are those who utilise poems of union (*wiṣāl*) and (*firāq*) separation *firāq* and their intent with that is to increase screaming and cheering within their gatherings even for corrupt ends—such people are human devils.

Of them are those who engross their time in hearing (*samā'*) ḥadīth and gathering narrations (*rawāyāt*) and strange chains of transmission (*asānīd*) and chains with just a few narrators. They travel the lands and see Shaykhs so that they can say "I relay from so and so" and "I met so and so" and "I have chains (*asānīd*) which no one else has."

Of them are those who preoccupy themselves with grammar (*nahw*), linguistics (*lugha*) and poetry (*sha'r*) and they claim that they are Scholars of the *ummah*, when they have just spend their lives studying the details of grammar and language. If they had truly used their minds they would have known that wasting their lives studying the details of the Arabic language is just the same as wasting time studying the details of the Turkish language, except that the *Sharī'ah* has been relayed in Arabic.

What is sufficient to know from Arabic is knowledge of the obscure terms in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, and from grammar that which straightens the tongue. As for immersing oneself in grammar to a point of no end then this preoccupies from that which is more important to know. This is the same entrenchment which is done by those who entrench themselves in correcting the *makhārij al-ḥurūf* in *tajwīd* of the Qur'ān—this is delusion.

Second Category:
The Worshipper (*'ubbād*)

The Heads of Worship and Action, they Are of Different Levels:

A group who neglected the obligations and preoccupied themselves with the optional (*nawāfil*) and the virtues (*faḍā'il*). Perhaps he may go to excess in regards to the water which he uses for ablution (*wuḍū'*) as he thinks by doing so he will be free of satanic whispering (*waswas*). You may even see such a person make all forms of excuses to argue that the water he is using is impure.

This is even though it has been authenticated that the Prophet (ﷺ) made *wuḍū'* from a *mushrik*'s vessel.[5]

Then there are those who waste so much water that the time for *Ṣalāh* elapses.

Then there are those who have satanic whispering in regards to the *takbīrat ul-iḥrām* to the extent that they miss the first *rak'ah* with the Imām.

Then there are those who *waswas* in regards to the pronunciation of the letters (*makhārij ul-ḥurūf*) of *al-Fātiḥah* and the *adhkār*, neglecting reflection on the meanings, this is of the vilest kind of delusion as people have not been burdened with achieving the *makhārij* of the *ḥurūf* in recitation except for that which is common in speech. They are like the one who carry a letter to a ruler and convey it and repeat it uncritically heedless to the main intent of the letter, such a person is worthy of expulsion and chastisement.

Another group became deluded by recitation of the Qur'ān, and

[5] Part of a long ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī, vol.1, p.379 from 'Imrān.

they may even complete it twice over in a day,[6] their tongues move but their hearts are elsewhere, they do not actual reflect on the meanings and semantics of the Qur'ān and do not take admonition from it, they do not contemplate on its instructions and prohibitions—such people are deluded, thinking that the intent of the Qur'ān is merely to recite it [on the tongue] alone.

There are those who take delight with their own voices when reciting the Qur'ān, yet turn away from the Qur'ān's meanings. In this case, such a person has to make his heart open to reflect on whether his delight with the Qur'ān is due to its rhythm, or his voice or the meanings.

Another group became deluded by their abundant fasting yet their fasting does not preserve their tongues from backbiting or from *riyā'*.

There are also those who become deluded by *ḥajj* and depart without repaying any due rights, repaying debts, gaining the pleasure of the parents or seeking *ḥalāl* provision—all of which they do only after making *ḥajj*. They may also not give any attention to restraining anger and argumentation whilst on *ḥajj*, they think that they are upon goodness when in reality they are deluded.

Another group took to instructing the good and forbidding the evil and forgot their own selves, and of them are those who lead people in *Ṣalāh* in the Masjid, and if someone arrives who is more knowledgeable than him he does not like it.

Of them are those who call the *adhān* and think that they are doing it for Allāh and when anyone else calls the *adhān* when they are not present they do not like it and say "this one is trying to take my

[6] Compare this with what has been relayed in the book *Iqāmat al-Ḥujjah 'ala Ana'l-Ikthār min al-Ta'abbud laysa bi-Bid'ah'*.

position!"

Of them are those who live next to Makkah or Medinah yet their hearts are still attached to their lands.

There is no action except that it has faults associated with it, and those who are unaware of them may fall into them. Whoever wants to know what they are however should refer to our book and check the faults of *riyā'* which can occur when one does acts of worship such as fasting, praying and all other acts of nearness to Allāh.

Of them are those who were ascetic in regards to wealth and sufficed with lowly clothing and food along with residing in Masjids. They thought that they had reached a level of *zuhd* while at the same time they were the most severe in their love of leadership and reputation. They left something lesser in harm of two matters and fell into a severe destructive characteristic.

Another group maintained the *nawāfil* and paid little concern to the obligatory actions, thus some of them were joyous with *Ṣalāt al-Ḍuḥā* and *Ṣalāt al-Layl* yet do not find any delight in the obligatory actions, and do not perform them as soon as they come in. They do not contemplate what the Prophet's (ﷺ) relayed from his Lord: "The ones who are near to Me do not seek nearness to Me by anything like the fulfilment of what has been obligated on them." [7]

[7] Part of a ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī, vol.11, p.292 from Abū Hurayrah (*radiy-Allāhu 'anhu*) with the wording "My servant does not seek nearness to Me..."

Third Category:
The Ṣūfīs (*mutaṣawwifah*)

The deluded from them are of different groups:

A group of them were deluded by clothing, words and appearance. They resembled the truthful ones from the Ṣūfīs apparently yet they did not dedicate themselves to striving (*mujāhada*) and spiritual training (*riyāḍa*). Moreover, they indulged in the *ḥarām* and took from the wealth of the rulers, and dishonoured each other if they differed on anything—such *Ṣūfiyya* became deluded by the apparent display [of piety].

These Ṣūfīs are like an old woman who hears of the arrival of heroic soldiers and that their names will be documented in the *diwān*. She goes to have her name documented and puts on a shield and a helmet on her head and learns some of the heroic chants, along with their clothing and features. She then goes to the military encampment for her name to be documented as a heroic solider. When the soldiers are lined up however, she is instructed to remove the helmet and shield so that the duelling skills can be tested. When she removes the helmet low and behold it is exposed that she is in fact a chronically ill old woman! It is said to her: "you have just come here to mock the king and his soldiers, take her and throw her to the elephants!"

This will be the condition of such claimants to *taṣawwuf* on the Day of Judgement when they will be exposed and the covers removed and they will be lined up in front of the Judge who will look at their hearts not at their mere attire and uniform.

Another group claimed to have knowledge of understanding and witness the truth, and to have surpassed the states and reached the rank of proximity [to Allāh], yet they only know the mere names and

terms in regards to all of those matters. You will thus see them think that they have a higher rank of knowledge than the first people and the later people. He will despise the jurists (*fuqahā'*) and the scholars of ḥadīth (*muḥaddithīn*), not to mention the common people. To the extent that some of them will even mix with common people and utilise these words and terms as if they are speaking from revelation, and in doing so he belittles the Scholars and pious worshippers, claiming to be of those close to Allāh. In reality, such a person is, with Allāh, of the sinful hypocrites and considered a fool and ignoramus with those specialised in the hearts.

Another group of them neglected the Divine Legislation and rejected the rulings, making the *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl* equal and some of them even stated that "Allāh is Sufficient from my actions, so why should I tire myself?"

Some of them said: "Actions of the limbs have no value, rather the hearts have to be looked at and our hearts contain intense love of Allāh and have attained His understanding. We delve into the world with our bodies and our hearts are devoted to the divine presence. We fall prey to desires only apparently, not internally with our hearts."

They claim that they have left the level of the common people and are sufficed from admonishing their own selves with bodily actions. They claim that desires do not block them from the path of Allāh due to their strength in facing such desires. They raise themselves to the level of the Prophets as the Prophets (*'alayhium-salām*) used to cry for years for one sin.

The different types of those who made things permissible for themselves are many, all of that being due to error and whisperings from *Shayṭān*, *Shayṭān* deceived them due to their preoccupation with *mujāhada* before grasping comprehension of knowledge and without sticking to a Shaykh who has knowledge and righteous action worthy

of being followed.

Fourth Category:
The Wealthy (*aghniyā'*)

They are of different types:

A group of them who focused on building *masjids*, schools, forts, bridges and other constructions which people see. They have their names written on these constructions so that their names will be mentioned forever and for their influence to remain after their deaths. If one of them had to give a *dīnār*, yet not have his name written with that *dīnār* where it was being donated, it would be hard for him to give that *dīnār*! Such a person wants to people's faces [to turn to him] and does not want Allāh's Face. Some of them avert wealth in adorning *masjids* with inscriptions which themselves are forbidden and preoccupy the worshippers.[8]

For the intent of *Ṣalāh* is humility (*khushū'*) and having an attentive heart (*ḥaḍūr al-qalb*).

If the wealth being used is in itself *ḥarām*, then this is of the most severe types of delusion. Mālik Ibn Dīnār (*raḥimahullāh*) said: "A man came to a *masjid*, and stood at its door and said: 'the like of me cannot enter the House of Allāh'—then it was written that he was a *Ṣiddīq*."

This is how the *masjids* are to be honoured, that one seeks it becoming polluted by his entry.

Another group hold on to wealth out of miserliness (*bukhl*) and then preoccupy themselves with bodily acts of worship which do not require spending any wealth, such as fasting, praying and complet-

[8] How common is this today! Millions of *dināars* are spent on Masjids only for show, Allāh's Refuge is sought!

ing the Qur'ān. They are deluded as miserliness is destructive and it has overcome their hearts yet they are in need of suppressing this miserliness and spending out their wealth not being preoccupied with extra acts which are not obligated on them.

Of them are those who do not allow themselves to spend out form their wealth except for *zakāh*. Another group of wealthy people became deluded by attending the gatherings of remembrance thinking that their attendance would suffice them from action when this is not the case.

As the gatherings of remembrance are supposed to inculcate good. Some of them may even hear that which instils fear yet it has no impact on them further than them saying *"Yā Salām"* or "I seek refuge in Allāh", paying mere lip service yet thinking that he has attained the objective. Their similitude is like a sick person who goes to the doctor to hear what is wrong with him, or a hungry person who has food described to him, it has no impact on them whatsoever. Likewise, the one who hears of acts of obedience without action, or hears admonitions without it resulting in change, it will be a proof against you.

And if it is said: "what you have mentioned about delusion is almost impossible to be free of".

Answer: the matter of the Afterlife revolves around the heart and making it right, this is only done by the one who can make right his intention. If a person gives concern to the Afterlife as he gives to the worldly life he will attain it as the *Salaf ul-Ṣāliḥ* and those who followed them did.

Three things help to get rid of delusion:

- The intellect: which is the foundational light by which a person comprehends the reality of things.
- Understanding: by which a person knows himself, his Lord,

his world and his Afterlife.

Within the *'Chapter on Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment'*, *'Chapter on Explanation on Marvels of the Heart'*, *'Chapter on Contemplation'* and *'Chapter on Patience and Thankfulness'* are signs which describe the soul and how to reach Allāh the Glorious.

What can also help to understand the world and the Afterlife is what was mentioned in the section on the censure of the world and the section on death. If these understandings are reached the heart will be motivated with the understanding of Allāh and of the Afterlife. An intense love of aspiration for Allāh and the Afterlife will thus be instilled, along with an intense aspiration away from the worldly life. The most important matters to him will then be whatever leads him to Allāh and benefits him in the Afterlife. If this desire takes over the heart his intention will be corrected in all matters and all forms of delusion will be removed. If love of Allāh overcomes his heart to understand Allāh and his own self, three matters will be required:

Knowledge, and we mean by this knowledge of how to traverse the path to Allāh and what are its pitfalls; and knowledge of what will gain him nearness to Allāh and guide him to it, all of that has been mentioned in our book.

In the section of the book which deals will acts of worship and habits will be of use, as it will clarify what he is missing and he will be able to learn manners by the manners of the Divine Legislation.

In the section on the means of destruction, one will know all of the punishments which block the path of Allāh and the censured qualities within people.

In the section on the means of salvation, one will come to know of praiseworthy qualities which have to be put in place once the

censured qualities have been removed. If he instils all of the praiseworthy qualities he could be able to be warned of the negative traits which we have alluded to, such as delusion, and Allāh knows best.

If he does all of that, he has to be fearful of *Shayṭān* trying to deceive him by calling him to seek leadership; and he should he fearful of being safe and assured form Allāh's Plot.

For that reason it is said: "the sincere ones are upon great danger."[9]

When Imām Aḥmad (*raḥimahullāh*) was on his deathbed, he said to *Shayṭān*: "No, not yet."[10]

It is inappropriate for fear to ever leave the hearts of the *awliyā'*, we ask Allāh for safety from delusion and for a good end, indeed He is Ever-Near (*qarīb*) and Ever-Answering (*mujīb*).

With this, the section on the means for destruction is complete and now we will move on to *'The Purification of the Soul'*.[11]

[9] Part of a fabricated report which many of the admonishers and common people ascribe to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). Refer to al-Ṣaghānī, *al-Mawḍū'āt*, #39; al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah*, p.257; al-'Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-Khifā'*, vol.2, p.433; our Shaykh, al-Albānī, *Silsilat ul-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah*, vol.1, p.89; al-Hūt al-Bayrūtī, *Asnā' ul-Maṭālib*, p.240.

[10] [i.e. the soul has not departed and so long as it is present it is prone to *fitna*].

[11] See the English translation of *'The Purification of the Soul'*, published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2019.