

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S

adapted summary of

Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn

The Forty Principles of the Religion



Translated by

NASIR ABDOUSSALAM

Al-Arbaʿīn fī Uṣūl ad-Dīn

The Forty Principles of the Religion

An Adapted Summary of
Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Dīn

IMĀM ABŪ ḤĀMID
MUḤAMMAD AL-GHAZĀLĪ

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*To my two dear friends and my guides in life,
Mufti Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed &
Mufti Dr. Abdur-Rahman Mangeri,
whose practice and teaching of Imām al-Ghazālī's
works have benefitted many. I pray that Allāh
accepts their efforts. Āmīn.*

YAHYA BATHA
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FOREWORD



In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, who created mankind on the natural faith (*fiṭrah*), guided them through prophets, scriptures and signs, divinely enabled the obedient and righteous among them to choose the way of salvation, promised them His pleasure, and prepared for them the Eternal Gardens. May Allāh send His abundant blessings and peace on His Messenger of Mercy, Muḥammad ﷺ, and on his family and followers into limitless eternity.

The human body starts off as a limp, lifeless and dark substance. When the soul enters it, the body becomes alive and illuminated, as do the five senses. However, the soul in its initial state is also dark and without awareness. When bestowed with intellect, it too becomes bright and illuminated. Similarly, the intellect is also not complete in its illumination, sharpness and purity until it matures. This occurs through recognition of its Creator and His Attributes, knowledge of the states of souls and bodies, and realising the reality of the two worlds—a gnosis which is achieved by means of the Qur’ān and Divine Revelation. In other words: the Qur’ān provides knowledge of the Divine which illuminates the intellect; the matured intellect then illuminates the soul, which in turn illuminates the body and gives it life.¹

This book by the great sage and Proof of Islām, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭūsī al-Ghazālī (d. 505/C. 1111), details the nurturing of the ideal human being and his connection with his Creator. It discusses the soul, the states of servitude, obedience and disobedience, praiseworthy and blameworthy character, illumination and purification of the heart, success and salvation, and this transient world and the eternal abode of the afterlife.

Many great individuals have passed through this world, but not all have left their mark on Islām as Imām Ghazālī did. In his student days, he was fortunate to have studied under one of the greatest scholars of his time, Imām al-Ḥaramayn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, in Nishapur. This teacher recognized Imām Ghazālī’s outstanding intellectual gifts and used to say that Ghazālī possessed encyclopedic knowledge. Later, the student was said to have surpassed his teacher. Imām Ghazālī was not only recognized as an intellectual genius, but also became one of the most influential scholars of Sufism. Having achieved probably the highest academic post in the Muslim world at that time as the rector of the Nizāmiyyah College in Baghdad, he decided to abandon this position and embarked on a life of seclusion. He spent over a decade in solitary meditation and contemplation, enjoying the bliss of spiritual visions. He could have remained in this state until his death but God had destined for him otherwise. Ghazālī saw that many challenges had confronted the Muslim Ummah. He observed that the faith of many was shaken, conviction had been lost, and religious practices had been reduced to lifeless forms. He says:

I realised that I could easily remove their doubts. I saw myself, in fact, fully capable of exposing the hollowness and implausibility of their philosophical convictions because of my deep knowledge of the speculative sciences. I therefore felt an ardent desire to take up this work, since it appeared to be

the crying need of the time. I said to myself, “How does it befit you to sit in seclusion? It is an epidemic that is spreading like wildfire, and the learned have themselves fallen victim to the same disease? The servants of Allāh have reached the brink of destruction.”²

He finally returned to teaching in 499, this time to the Nizāmiyyah College in Nishapur, and took up his revival efforts, writing several enduring works.

Imam Ghazālī is well-known today for this literary legacy. Many of his spiritual works embody a sense of understanding and urgency that is hard to find in other works. He discusses issues in a very practical and holistic way, while all his advice and conclusions are based on their impact on the hereafter. For a person of faith, there can be no other beneficial approach, since any decision made only for this world—as most decisions are—is limited to this world and cannot include the hereafter. In contrast, any decision made with the hereafter in mind must include this world, since all pass through it to reach the next world.

One of the most celebrated works of Imām Ghazālī is his magnum opus, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), which he wrote on his return. Readers of it will discover that he aims at nothing less than nurturing a perfect slave of God and a genuine human personality. He tackles each topic in a comprehensive manner, weaving together the relevant Qur’ānic verses, Prophetic narrations, anecdotes and counsels from great sages, and employing his outstanding eloquence and psychological insight to get his points across. He takes no prisoners and fearlessly says things as they are. Scholars, traders, the ruling elite and laypeople are all addressed according to their frames of reference and relevant examples. Ghazālī appears as an expert psychologist,

sociologist, theologian, philosopher, religious preacher and spiritual guide all in one, his words tugging at readers' heartstrings, beautifying their minds, and beckoning them to take up a life of piety and purify their souls before it is too late.

Some of his accounts of ascetics and worshippers may appear extreme and a number of his prescriptions may seem unattainable in the materialistic times we live in. However, they should not be arbitrarily dismissed, for they serve the important purpose of shocking people into realisation, waking them from their intoxicated states and inspiring them to a life of steadfastness rather than a perilous existence on the edge of spiritual destruction.

It is the case that for a corner to be straightened

The paper has first to be folded in the opposite direction.

The *Iḥyā'* has been a continuous inspiration until present times and has been highly regarded by many of the author's admirers and detractors alike. Ḥāfiẓ Zayn ad-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī considered it the foremost literary composition of Islām. Muḥammad Gāzarūnī declared that were all the Islamic sciences to be completely effaced, he could revive them with the help of the *Iḥyā'*. Despite his differences with Ghazālī, the great historian and ḥadīth master of Baghdad, Ibn al-Jawzī, acknowledged the popularity and matchless sincerity of the *Iḥyā'* and wrote a summary of it, titled *Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn* (Path of the Truth Seekers).³ Shiblī Nu'mānī said that every word of the *Iḥyā'* possesses a magnetic effect on the reader."⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah stated that the *Iḥyā'* contains many beneficial points, despite his other criticism of it.⁵

Notwithstanding this, the *Iḥyā'* is a large work spanning four volumes, with ten detailed chapters in each. It incorporates nearly all that a person of faith needs for successful obedience in this world

and salvation in the hereafter. Despite the near guaranteed effectiveness of the book, one of the obstacles in deriving benefit from it has been its length. Imām Ghazālī perceived this and therefore penned a number of abridgements and adaptations of it, such as *Kīmīyā-i Sa‘ādat* (The Alchemy of Happiness) and *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* (The Beginning of Guidance).⁶ However, it is *The Forty Principles* that appears to be the closest in format and theme to the *Iḥyā’*. In the second section of his *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān* (Jewels of the Qur’ān), Imām Ghazālī presented a number of Qur’ānic verses embodying various types of knowledge and practice. He then compiled an appendix to enumerate and elaborate in detail upon the objectives contained in those verses. He named this appendix *Al-‘Arba‘īn fī Uṣūl ad-Dīn* (The Forty Principles of the Religion), stating that it could stand as an independent book.⁷ In it he covered many of the themes and subjects that are found in the *Iḥyā’* and also arranged it in four major parts of ten chapters, each with an epilogue. However, it is difficult to call it a direct chapter for chapter abridgment of the *Iḥyā’*, since neither the contents nor the chapter order are entirely the same.

A partial English translation of this work was published several years ago.⁸ However, no complete translation appears to have existed. Therefore, Nasir Abdussalam is to be commended for undertaking the important and painstaking task of translating the entire work into English and Turath Publishing for acquiring it and seeing it through the various editorial phases to publication. Since this is a much smaller treatise than the *Iḥyā’*, containing the essence of most of what is found there, it should allow more people to access Gazālī’s pearls of wisdom and inspire them to a life of divine love and obedience.

Providence is from Allāh alone. May He make this work a source of blessing for all, an inspiration toward common virtue, and a means of reinstilling humanity in people during these troubled times.

ABDUR-RAHMAN IBN YUSUF MANGERA

London , UK

1 Rabīʿ al-Awwal | December 12, 2015

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- 1 See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Sūrat al-Naḥl 2.
- 2 See Nadwī, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, p. 121, London: White Thread Press, 2015.
- 3 See Nadwī, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, p. 127.
- 4 Shibli Nu‘mānī, *Al-Ghazzālī*, Azamgarh: Maṭba‘a Ma‘ārif, 1928, p. 48.
- 5 See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā’l-Kubrā*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1987, 86/5.
- 6 English translation published as Ghazālī, *The Beginning of Guidance*, edited by Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf [Mangera], London: White Thread Press, 2010,
- 7 *Jawāhīr al-Qur’ān*, p. 17–18.
- 8 *Ghazali on the Principles of Islamic Spirituality: Selections from the Forty Foundations of Religion Annotated & Explained*, Ghazzālī, Aaron Spevack, Fethullah Gülen, SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2011.

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION



IN THE NAME OF ALLĀH, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is to Allāh, and may Allāh bless and give peace to our master, Muḥammad, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them in excellence until the Day of Recompense.

Before you is the work of the Proof of Islām, Imām Abū Hāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī , *The Forty Principles of the Religion*. It is an immensely valuable work that he wrote toward the end of his life. He structured the work in four parts: the first dealing with basic creed, the second with external deeds such as worship, the third with purifying the self from destructive character traits, and finally the fourth discussing how to adorn one's self with good character.

Imām al-Ghazālī was a brilliant teacher, and had an incredible gift for illustrating his often profound insights on human nature and behavior. *The Forty Principles* contains elements found in his other works, such as *The Beginning of Guidance*, *The Path of the Worshippers*, and most notably his magnum opus, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, of which this work is essentially an abridgement. It presents to the reader, step-by-step, a tried and proven method for spiritual development and improving one's relationship with both the Creator and the creation.

The Proof of Islām, Imām Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī was born in 450H (c. 1058) in Tus, Iran. Imām al-Ghazālī—jurist, legal theorist, logician, theologian, and mystic—was a master of both the outer and inner sciences of the Sharī‘ah. His contributions to the Islamic intellectual tradition bear witness to why he came to be known as the Proof of Islām. He was a leading authority of the Shāfi‘ī school of jurisprudence, and his work *al-Wajīz* is the foundation for over a dozen of the most important works in the school. His book on legal theory, *al-Mustaṣfā*, is a seminal work on the subject and studied until this day. His refutation of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and his ilk, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, is considered by many to have dealt the deathblow to Aristotelian philosophy in the Muslim world and consolidated the dominance of Sunnī theology.

At the height of his career, while teaching at the Niẓāmīyyah Seminary in Baghdad, Imām al-Ghazālī experienced a spiritual crisis that resulted in a ten-year self-imposed exile. It was during this period that he authored *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, a masterpiece composed of 40 books that explores the spiritual depth of virtually every aspect of Islām. *The 40 Principles of the Religion* is largely based on *The Revival* and is similarly formatted. It was originally a part of a broader work entitled *Jewels of the Qur’ān*, but Imām al-Ghazālī gave permission for it to be published as an independent work due to its comprehensive (albeit concise) nature.

In translating the text, I tried to maintain the conversational tone of Imām al-Ghazālī. Whenever an idiom was used, I opted for an idiomatic translation with a corresponding English phrase in order to remain faithful to the intended meaning (as opposed to a literal rendering). There are also some terms that I left in the original Arabic due to them either having no English equivalent or because

they are now incorporated into the English lexicon. Referencing is in accordance with the Arabic convention. The voice of Imām al-Ghazālī, who passed away in 505 H (c. 1112), is just as relevant and urgent now as it was over 900 years ago. It is my prayer that Allāh benefits us through the knowledge of this great imām, and places this translation on the scale of his good deeds.

AUTHOR’S PREFACE



IN THE NAME OF ALLĀH the Beneficent, the Merciful, from Whom we seek Help. *The Forty Principles of the Religion* is a third, additional section of *Jewels of the Qur’ān*—an appendix, if you will. Perhaps you say, “These verses which you have presented in the second section comprise various types of knowledge and practices. Is it possible to distinguish their objectives and elaborate upon what was summarized in a more detailed, analytical manner, enabling a person to reflect upon each one from its proper perspective? This is so that he may come to know the details of the gates of bliss regarding both knowledge and practice—so that attaining their keys becomes easy for him through perseverance and reflection.”

To this I say: Yes! That is possible, and I will distinguish it for you, if Allāh ﷻ wills. The sum of its objectives is divided into knowledge and practice; while practice itself is divided into outer practice and inner practice; finally, inner practice is divided into purification and adornment. Thus, there are four divisions: knowledge; outer practice; blameworthy characteristics, from which it is required to purify oneself; and praiseworthy characteristics, with which it is required to adorn oneself. Each division goes back to ten principles; hence, the name of this section is *The Forty Principles*

of the Religion. Whoever wishes to write it as a separate work may do so; for indeed, it comprises the quintessence of Qur'ānic knowledge.

Part One

THE SUM OF KNOWLEDGE AND ITS
PRINCIPLES (WHICH ARE TEN)



The First Principle
THE DIVINE ESSENCE
(*ADH-DHĀT*)

We say: All praise is for Allāh Who—through His Book revealed upon the tongue of His prophetic emissary—made known to His slaves [the following] about His Essence: He is Unique without a partner, Alone without a likeness, Absolute without an opponent and One without an equal. Furthermore, He is Sempiternal without a cause, Eternal without a beginning, Perpetually Existent without an end, Everlasting without finality, Self-subsistent without fail, Ongoing without cessation. He has always been and will never cease to be described with the Qualities of Majesty. The passing of ages has no effect on Him; rather, He is the First and the Last, the External and the Internal, and Knowledgeable of everything.

The Second Principle
TRANSCENDENCE
(*AT-TAQDĪS*)

He is not a body possessing form, nor a substance with limits or measure. He does not resemble bodies, whether through quantification or being subject to division. He is not a substance, nor does He inhabit substances. He is not an accidental characteristic, nor does He inhabit them. Rather, He does not resemble anything in existence; nor does anything in existence resemble Him. Nothing is like Him, and He is like nothing. He cannot be defined in terms of quantity; place does not encompass Him; directions do not surround Him; and the heavens do not enclose Him.

His establishment on the Throne is in the manner that He said, and with the meaning that He intended—an establishment beyond touch, settlement, placement, embodiment, and movement. The Throne does not hold Him; rather, the Throne along with its carriers are held by the subtlety of His Power and overwhelmed by His Grip. He is above the Throne, and above everything to the ends of the earth, with an Exaltedness that does not bring Him closer to the Throne or the heavens, nor distance Him further from the ground or whatever is beneath it. Rather, He is far beyond the Throne just as He is far beyond the ground.

However, He is close to everything in existence—closer to His slaves than their jugular veins. He witnesses everything. His Proximity is not like a physical proximity, just as His Entity is not like physical entities. He does not inhabit anything, nor does

anything inhabit Him. He is exalted beyond being enclosed by a place, just as He transcends being limited by time. Rather, He existed before creating time and place, and He is now just as He has always been.

He is distinguished from His creation by His Attributes. There is nothing within His Essence other than Him, and His Essence is not within anything. He is Transcendent above change and transition. Occurrences do not subsist within Him. He has always been described with Majesty that transcends cessation, and His perfect Attributes have no need of completion. His existence is known through the mind and He shall be seen by the virtuous in the Permanent Abode as a blessing and kindness from Him, and a completion of bliss which will be achieved by looking upon His Noble Face.

The Third Principle
LIFE AND POWER
(*AL-QUDRAH*)

He is Living, Omnipotent, Overpowering, and Overwhelming. He is not afflicted with inability or incapacity, not beset with fatigue or sleep, and not affected by annihilation or death. He possesses Dominion, Might and Omnipotence. All power, all force, all creation, and all authority belong to Him. The heavens are enfolded in His Right Hand, and all of creation is subjected to the force of His Grip.

He is the sole Creator and Inventor, the only One capable of bringing things into existence. He created the creation and their actions, and determined their provision and their life spans. Nothing imaginable is outside of His Grasp, and the realisation of any matter cannot escape His Power.

The Fourth Principle
KNOWLEDGE (*AL-ILM*)

He is Knowledgeable of all things, and his knowledge encompasses whatever may happen—from the bowels of the earth to the highest heaven. An atom's weight in the heavens or the earth does not escape His Knowledge; rather, He sees the black ant as it crawls along a jet-black boulder in the dark of the night, and perceives the most miniscule creature as it is tossed about by the wind. He knows every secret and what is still yet more hidden. He is aware of the misgivings of every conscience, the development of every conscious thought, and every secret's innermost details. The knowledge by which He perceives all this is a timeless, eternal Knowledge with which He is unceasingly described; it is not a newfound knowledge that occurs within Himself by conveyance or transmission.

The Fifth Principle

WILL (*AL-IRĀDAH*)

All things in existence are the objects of His Will and He is the Planner of everything that occurs. There is nothing that happens in His Realm and Dominion—whether much or little, small or big, good or bad, beneficial or harmful, faith or disbelief, knowledge or ignorance, victory or defeat, gain or loss, obedience or disobedience—except that it is with His Decree, Determination, Judgment, and Will. Whatever He wills is, and whatever He does not will shall never be.

Neither the glance of an onlooker nor any whimsical thought is beyond His Will. Rather, He is the Beginning and the End, the Doer of whatever He wills. There is no one who can reject His Judgment, no nullifier of His Decree, no refuge for a slave from disobedience except in His Providence and Mercy, and no ability for the slave to obey Him except with His Support and Will. If all of humanity, jinn, angels, and demons were to join forces to move or to stop any particle in the universe—they would be incapable of doing so without His Will and Desire.

His Will subsists in His Essence, along with the sum of His Attributes. He has never ceased to be described as such—eternally Willful of the existence of all things in the times that He determined. He brings them into existence in their appointed times as He willed from eternity, without any earliness or lateness. Rather, they happen according to His Knowledge and Will, without any substitution or

change. He has planned every matter, but not with sequenced thoughts or by waiting for time. For this reason, nothing preoccupies Him from one affair to another.

Know that this position is very slippery and many have stumbled, for a complete investigation of it is drawn from the tide of a tremendous ocean—the mighty ocean of Divine Oneness—and they seek it through research and debate. But Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ has said: “No people have gone astray after being guided, except that they were given to argumentation.”¹

Such people will adduce verses of the Qur’ān and interpret them, although they are not qualified to interpret. If achieving the level of interpretation was possible for just anyone, the Prophet ﷺ would have never said, supplicating for Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ: “O Allāh, make him understand the religion and teach him interpretation!”² Neither would Ya‘qūb have said to Yūsuf ؑ:

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ﴾

In this way, your Lord has chosen you and teaches you the interpretation of dreams. (12:6)

The author of *al-Kashshāf* said, in his explanation of this verse: “He intended by this the meanings of Allāh’s Books and the ways of the Prophets ﷺ, and those points and objectives therein which are obscure or ambiguous to people—you [i.e. Yūsuf ؑ] will explain and expound upon them, and direct people to the wisdom found within them.”³

The reason many slip up here is because they follow those who follow what is ambiguous from the Qur’ān, seeking tribulation and seeking its interpretation; however, no one knows its interpretation

except Allāh and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. These people are not firmly grounded in knowledge; rather, they are inadequate and incapable. Because of their inadequacy they cannot perceive the reality of this matter. Thus, they are restrained from plunging into the depths of what is beyond their capability, by the same harness that restrains the rest of the inadequate. They are told: “Be silent! You were not made for this!”

﴿لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ﴾

He is not asked about what He does, but they will be asked. (21:23)

It is narrated on the authority of Abū Hurayrah : “The Messenger of Allāh  came out to us while we were debating about predetermination (*qadar*). He  became extremely angry, to the point that his noble face turned red. He said: ‘Is this what you have been commanded? Is this what I was sent to you with? Those before you were destroyed when they took to debating about this matter! I am determined that you will not debate about this.’”⁴ It is also narrated on the authority of Abū Ja‘far, who said: “I once said to Yūnus ibn ‘Ubayd: ‘I came across a people disputing about predetermination.’ He said: ‘If they had any concern for their sins, they would not have been disputing about predetermination.’”⁵

The lamps of some have been filled with a light taken from Allāh’s Light; its oil was pure, nearly shining on its own without fire ever touching it. It was as light shining upon light, illuminating all realms before them with their Lord’s Light. They perceived these matters as they truly are, and it was said to them: “Follow the example of Allāh’s Conduct and be silent. If predetermination is mentioned, then refrain from speaking.” For this reason, ‘Umar

refrained from speaking when asked about predetermination. He said to the questioner, “It is a deep sea that you cannot penetrate.” When the question was repeated he said, “It is a dark path that you cannot tread.” When it was repeated for a third time he said: “It is Allāh’s secret that He has concealed from you, so do not attempt to expose it.”⁶

Whoever wishes to know the secrets of the divine realm. . . must adhere to its gate with love, sincerity, and truthfulness; he must turn away from its adversaries, and avoid obeying them or seeking to please them.

﴿إِنَّمَا يُوفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

Indeed, the patient ones are given their reward without account.

(39:10)

The Sixth Principle

HEARING AND SEEING
(*AS-SAM‘ WA’L-BAŞAR*)

Allāh ﷻ is Hearing and Seeing; He hears and He sees. No sound—no matter how low—escapes His Hearing, and nothing seen is hidden from His Vision, no matter how minute; neither does distance block His Hearing, or darkness obscure His Vision.

He sees without an eyeball or eyelids and He hears without an auditory canal or ears. In the same way, He knows without a heart, grasps without a limb, and creates without a tool; for His Attributes do not resemble the attributes of the creation, just as His Essence does not resemble the essence of the creation.

The Seventh Principle

SPEECH (*AL-KALĀM*)

Allāh ﷻ possesses Speech. He commands, forbids, promises, and threatens with timeless, eternal speech that subsists in His Essence. It does not resemble the speech of the creation; thus it is not with a voice that occurs with the passage of air and the contact of organs, nor with letters that stop with the closing of the lips or the movement of the tongue.

The Qur'ān, the Torah, the Gospel, and the Psalms are His books revealed to His messengers. The Qur'ān is recited with the tongue, written in volumes (*maṣāḥif*) and memorized by hearts. However, it is eternal and subsists in the Essence of Allāh ﷻ. It is not subject to joining or separation by transmission to hearts or paper.

Moses ﷺ heard Allāh's speech without a voice or letters just as the virtuous will see the Essence of Allāh ﷻ without substance, shape, color, or quality.

If Allāh possesses these Attributes, then He is Living, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Willful, Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking; with Life, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Will, Hearing, Sight, and Speech—not merely His Essence.

The Eighth Principle

DIVINE ACTIONS (*AL-AF'ĀL*)

There is nothing existent besides Him except that it occurred by His Action and emanated from His Justice in the best, perfect, complete, and fairest way. He is Wise with His actions and Just in His decisions. His Justice is not compared to the justice of His slaves; for wrongdoing is conceivable for the slave by him meddling with another's property, but it is inconceivable for Allāh ﷻ, because none other than Him has any property to be wrongly dealt with in the first place!

Everything besides Him—whether jinn or human, demon or angel, heaven or earth, animal or plant, substance or thought, abstract or concrete—is an occurrence which He invented with His Power and fabricated from nonexistence, bringing it into existence after it had been nothing. He has existed Alone throughout eternity, and nothing was with Him. He brought about the creation as a manifestation of His Power and a realisation of His Will; to actualize what He had spoken since eternity, not because of any need for it.

His creating, inventing, and making us responsible was out of His Grace, not out of obligation. He has been immensely generous by blessing us and making the world suitable for our existence, which he was not obliged to do. He possesses Grace and Good Will, Blessings and Gifts; for on the other hand, He is capable of afflicting His slaves with every sort of torture, and testing them with agony

and suffering. Indeed, if He were to do so, it would be just—not immoral or wrong.

He rewards His slaves for their obedience as His Generosity and Promise dictate, not due to entitlement or necessity. Nothing is required of Him, and it is inconceivable that He would be unjust. No one has any right over Him. All of creation, on the other hand, is required to recognize His Right to obedience, as He ordained it by the tongues of His messengers, not by mere reason. Rather, He sent the messengers and manifested their truthfulness by means of clear miracles. They conveyed His commands, prohibitions, promises, and threats; it is required of the creation to affirm their truthfulness in delivering their message.

The Ninth Principle
THE LAST DAY
(*AL-YAWM AL-ĀKHIR*)

Allāh ﷻ separates the soul from the body at death, and then returns the soul to the body at the Resurrection and the Gathering. That which is in the graves will be brought out, and that which is in the breasts will come to fruition. Every responsible person will see his deeds, whether good or bad, present before him; he will find everything he did, no matter how small or great, recorded in a book which leaves nothing unaccounted for. Everyone will know the measure of his deeds—good or bad—by a most truthful standard referred to as the Scale (*Al-Mizān*). However, the Scale of Deeds is not the same as a scale for heavy objects. In the same way, the astrolabe, which is a standard for measuring time; the ruler, which measures lengths; and meter, which is the measure for poetry, are not the same as other kinds of measurement.

Then He will take them to account according to their actions and statements, their secrets and their consciences, their intentions and their beliefs—whether they showed them or concealed them. They will be of differing levels on that Day: some will be confronted about their account; some will be pardoned; and some will enter Paradise without having to account for their deeds at all.

They will be driven to the Path over Hell—a bridge that is stretched between the dwelling places of the miserable and the dwelling places of the joyful. It is sharper than a sword and finer than a hair. It will be easy to cross for whoever kept to the Straight

Path in the worldly life in a manner commensurate to his uprightness. Whoever deviated from the straight path will fall from it, except someone who has been pardoned by Divine Generosity.

There they will be questioned. Allāh will ask whomever He wills from the prophets about their conveying the Message, whomever He wills from the disbelievers about their denial of the messengers, whomever He wills from the heretics about the Sunnah, and whomever He wills from the Muslims about their deeds. He will ask the truthful about their truthfulness, and the hypocrites about their hypocrisy.

Then the joyful will be herded to the Merciful as a group, and the criminals will be driven into Hell (*Jahannam*). Allāh will command that those who testified to His Oneness be brought out of Hell after retribution, until no one who had an atom's weight of faith in his heart will remain there. Some will leave before the completion of their punishment, due to the intercession of the prophets, scholars, martyrs, or anyone who has the rank of intercession.

The people of joy will abide in Paradise, blessed for an eternity and taking delight in beholding Allāh's noble Face. The people of misery will abide in Hell, forced back and forth repeatedly between all sorts of punishment—remote and blocked-off from beholding the Face of Allāh ﷻ, the Possessor of Majesty and Nobility.

The Tenth Principle
PROPHETHOOD
(AN-NUBUWWAH)

Allāh ﷻ created the angels, sent the prophets, and aided them with miracles. All of the angels are His slaves.

﴿لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ﴾
﴿يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْطُرُونَ﴾

They are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary of it. Rather, they glorify Him night and day without tiring. (20:20–21)

The prophets are His messengers sent to the creation. His Revelation is conveyed to them through the medium of the angels. They speak according to that which is revealed to them, not according to whimsical desire.

He sent the Unlettered Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, from the tribe of Quraysh, with His message to the entirety of Arabs and non-Arabs, jinn and humankind. Through the Law which He gave to Muḥammad ﷺ, He abrogated all other revealed laws. He made him ﷺ the master of humanity, and precluded the attainment of complete faith through declaring Divine Oneness (i.e. by stating: ‘There is no god but Allāh’), unless it is coupled with attesting to the Messenger (i.e. by stating: ‘Muḥammad is Allāh’s Messenger’). He has obligated the creation to affirm the truthfulness of the Messenger

in everything which he ﷺ communicated from Him concerning the affairs of this world and the afterlife, and to follow him ﷺ and take him as an example. He ﷺ said:

﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا﴾

Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. Whatever he forbids you from, desist. (59:7)

He ﷺ left nothing which would bring them closer to Allāh ﷻ, without commanding them to do it and directing them to its path. Likewise, he left nothing that would bring them closer to Hell and distance them from Allāh ﷻ, without forbidding them from it and teaching them what leads to it. These are matters which cannot be comprehended by mere reason and intelligence; rather, they are divine secrets, unveiled to the hearts of the prophets from within His sacred realm.

All praise is due to Allāh who directed and guided us and manifested His beautiful Names and sublime Attributes! And may abundant peace and blessings be upon Muḥammad the Chosen One, Seal of the Prophets, along with his family and companions!

Epilogue

A CAUTION ABOUT THE BOOKS FROM WHICH THE REALITY OF THIS CREED (*‘AQĪDAH*) IS SOUGHT

Know that what we have mentioned is the gist of the Qur’ānic sciences. What I mean by this is that it is a summation of what relates to Allāh and the Last Day, and an introduction to the creed that the heart of every Muslim must contain; meaning that he believes it and affirms the truth of it conclusively. Beyond this creed are two levels: the first of them is to know the evidences of this plain creed without delving into its recondite aspects. The second is to know its recondite aspects, its inner meanings, and the reality of its outward purport.

None of the laity are required to acquire either of these two levels. That is to say that neither their salvation nor success in the afterlife is dependent on them. What depends on them is the perfection of eternal joy. What I mean by salvation is deliverance from punishment. What I mean by success is achieving fundamental bliss. What I mean by eternal joy is obtaining the utmost bliss.

If a sultan conquers a land and takes it by force, then a person is saved if he avoids being killed or punished, even if he is expelled from the country. If another person not only avoids punishment, but is given a position, has his family spared, and is provided with the means to make a living, he is successful as well as saved. As for a person whom the sultan honours, makes a partner in his dominion, and appoints as a successor to his kingdom and rule, he is joyful in

addition to having salvation and success. Thereafter, the extent to which this joyfulness may increase has no limit.

Know that in the hereafter, the creation is divided into these types; in fact, into types more numerous than these. We have explained this to the greatest extent possible in ‘The Book of Repentance’ from *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, so seek it therein.

With regards to the first of the two levels mentioned, which is to know the evidences of this creed, we have placed it in *The Jerusalem Epistle*, in about twenty pages; this is one of the chapters of ‘The Book of Creedal Principles’ from *Revival of the Religious Sciences*. As for knowledge of its evidences with additional investigation and a meticulous presentation of questions and problems, we have placed this in the book: *Moderation in Belief*, in about one hundred pages. It is a unique book that comprises the core of theology; however it is more far-reaching in its investigation and closer to knocking on the door of realisation (*maʿrifah*) than the codified discourse found in most theological books—all of which go back to creed, not realisation. Indeed, the theologian is no different from the layperson, except that he actually knows while the layperson simply believes. The theologian is a believer too—who learns the evidence of his belief in order to make it certain, firmly instill it, and protect it from the confusion of heretics. However, he does not learn how to untie the knot of mere belief and attain the joy of true realisation.

If you wish to absorb something of the breezes of realisation, you will find a small measure of them spread throughout ‘The Book of Patience and Gratitude’, ‘The Book of Love’, and the Chapter on Divine Oneness in the first part of ‘The Book of Reliance’, all of which are from *Revival of the Religious Sciences*. You will also find an amount sufficient for teaching you how to knock on the door of realisation in the book: *The Brilliant Objective in Explaining the*

Meanings of Allāh's Beautiful Names (Al-Maqṣid al-Asnā fī Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā), especially under those Names that are derived from Divine Actions.

If, on the other hand, you want explicit realisation of the realities of this creed, without any clarification or advisory notes, then you will not find it except in some of our books which are withheld from those who are not qualified to read them. Beware of deluding yourself and telling yourself that you are qualified (thereby overextending yourself in seeking them and subjecting yourself to outright rejection) unless you have combined three characteristics:

The first of them is having independence in the outer sciences, and achieving the level of a leading authority in them.

The second is the removal of one's heart from the material world in its entirety, after having eradicated all blameworthy characteristics (which will be mentioned in 'The Foundations of Blameworthy Characteristics'), such that no longing remains within you except a longing for the Truth, no concern except a concern for Him, no preoccupation except with Him, and no turning except to Him.

The third is that you have been felicitous in the innate disposition that you have been given, being endowed with pure natural brilliance along with keen intelligence. You are not tired by the acquisition of abstruse knowledge or the problematic issues that come with it, doing so by way of intuitive insight and inspiration. After all, even an idiot may understand something abstruse if he exerts his mind and is hard on himself; however, he only comprehends a small portion of it after a long period. Thus, only a pure heart is suited to take from the light of true realisation—as if it were an immaculately polished mirror. That only occurs to someone

with a strong nature and correct intention, after removing the filth of the material world from his face; for indeed it is by a hardness of the natural disposition that Allāh prevents hearts from knowing Him.

﴿أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ﴾

. . .that Allāh intervenes between a man and his heart (8:24)

Part Two

OUTER ACTIONS
(WHICH ARE TEN)



The First Principle

PRAYER (AṢ-ṢALĀH)

Allāh said:

﴿وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي﴾

Establish the prayer for my remembrance. (20:14)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Prayer is the religion’s pillar.”⁷ Know that in your prayer you are conversing with your Lord; therefore look at how you pray, and be vigilant regarding three matters, so that you may be from among those who guard and establish the prayer. Allāh ﷻ only commands that prayer be established; He said:

﴿وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ﴾

Establish the prayer (20:14)

And:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ﴾

All of you establish the prayer (2:43)

He did not say merely “Pray” (ṣalli or ṣallū); He lauded those who guard the prayer, saying:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ﴾

Those who believe in the afterlife [truly] believe in it, and they are vigilant about their prayer.

The first matter in this is being vigilant about ritual purification by performing ablution well before the prayer. Performing ablution well is to carry out all of its recommended acts and the related remembrances for each part of it. Also make sure of the purity of your clothes, your body, and the water that you use for ablution with a concern that does not allow the door of misgivings to open—for by whispering about purification, Satan causes much time that could be spent in worship to be wasted.

Know that the objective of purifying clothes (the outer covering) and then purifying the body (the covering that is close to the heart) is to purify the heart, which is the inner seed. Purifying the heart from filthy characteristics is the most important purification, as we shall mention in Part Three.

However, it is not farfetched that the shining light of outer purification also has an effect on the heart. Indeed, if you perform ablution well and are conscious of your outer-self's cleanliness, you find an expansion of your heart and a clarity therein that you did not find previously. That is because of the secret relationship between the sensory world and the spiritual realm. The outer body is of the sensory world, yet the heart is primordially of the spiritual realm, and its descent to the sensory world is like the stranger out of his element or away from his tribe.

Just as remnants of the heart's realisations descend to the limbs, likewise lights from the state of the limbs could rise to the heart. For this reason, the prayer was commanded, despite its being only physical motions of the sensory world. Thus, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ regarded it as being of and from the material world, and said: "Three

things from your world have been made beloved to me . . .”⁸ Nor is it farfetched that an effect of outer purity should spread to the inner-self; for there are matters concerning the wonders of Allāh’s work that are more amazing than that.

For instance, it is known through experience that, while making love, if a person were to stare at something bright-white or blood-red until that image overcame his conscious, the child’s complexion would incline to that color which the conscious was overcome with. Similarly, the first time a foetus moves in the belly, its form inclines to beauty if its mother was beholding a beautiful image in that state to the extent that the image overcame her conscious. For this reason, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ commanded that while making love, a person should have a righteous child present in his heart and pray to Allāh for that, saying: “O Allāh, keep Satan away from us and away from what you provide us with.”⁹ This is so that Allāh ﷻ spreads the beginnings of righteousness over the spirit that He creates, when the seed is planted in the place of harvest through the medium of predominant righteousness in the heart of the tiller. In the same way, Allāh ﷻ spreads light through the medium of a mirror facing the sun to the objects facing the mirror.

Now we are knocking on a great door that leads to knowing the wonders of Allāh’s work in His Dominion and in the spiritual realm. Closely related to this is the secret of intercession (*shafā‘ah*) in the hereafter; however, we will pass over it.

Our objective now is to mention practice sans realisation. So far, we have given you a slight whiff of the aroma of the secrets of outer purification. If, after purification and performing ablution well, you do not gain something of the clarity that we described, then know that the filth to which your heart has been exposed, as a result of the drudgery of worldly desire and its distractions, has led inevitably to

exhaustion of the heart's perceptive faculties. Consequently, it has become unable to sense subtle, delicate things; and nothing remains of its strength except the perception of the obvious (if even that!). Therefore devote yourself to polishing and clearing-up your heart, for that is more pressing upon you than anything else you are engaged with.

The second matter is to be vigilant about the prayer's recommended acts, outer practices, remembrances, and glorifications. You should perform it with all the recommended acts, etiquettes, and positions—as we have compiled in the book: *The Beginning of Guidance (Bidāyat al-Hidāyah)*. Truly, every one of them contains a secret and has an effect on the heart, in the same manner that we brought to attention regarding the effect of purification. In fact, it is even more potent and far-reaching, but explaining all that would take too long. If you do all of the aforementioned, you will benefit from it even if you do not know its secrets—just as a person who consumes medicine benefits from doing so, even if he does not know the nature of its components or the ways in which it is compatible with his illness.

In summary, know that the prayer has a form made by the Lord of Lords, just as He formed animals, for example. Its spirit is intention, sincerity, and presence of heart; its body is action; its organs are the pillars; and its limbs are the emphatically recommended acts. Sincerity and intention in it function like the spirit; standing and sitting function like the body; bowing and prostrating function like the head, arm, and leg; and perfecting the bow and prostration with repose and good form function like good limbs with a nice shape and tone. The remembrances and glorifications contained in it function like the keen senses contained in the head and limbs—such as the eye, the ear, and others; knowledge of the meanings of the

remembrances and presence of heart when reciting them function like the strength of a keen sense—such as strong hearing, strong vision, and strong senses of smell and taste—each one with its particular value.

Know that your drawing close [to Allāh] with your prayer is like the manner in which some servants of a sultan draw close to him by presenting him with a young maidservant. The absence of intention and sincerity in the prayer is like the absence of the young maidservant's spirit—someone who presents the sultan with a dead corpse is mocking him and thus deserves to have his blood spilt. The absence of bowing and prostrating is like the absence of limbs. The absence of the remembrances is like the absence of the young maidservant's eyes and hacking off her nose and ears. The heart's lack of presence and its heedlessness to knowing the meanings of the recitation and remembrances is like the absence of hearing and sight, though the eye and ear remain intact. If anyone presents a young maidservant to the sultan in such a state, you are well aware of the predicament in which he will find himself!

Know also that if a jurist (*faqīh*) says that a prayer deficient in its emphatically recommended and recommended acts is in fact valid, that is like a physician saying about the mutilated young maidservant that she is still alive and not dead! If that were enough to get close to the sultan and attain some generosity from him, then you would know that the deficient prayer is suitable to drawing close to Allāh  and attaining some generosity from Him. However, if such an offering is more likely to be thrown back at the giver and result in him being disciplined, then the equivalent regarding the deficient prayer is not farfetched; for indeed, it may be thrown back like a tattered rag at the one who prays, as has been related in the ḥadīth¹⁰.

Finally, know that the foundation of prayer is veneration and respect, and to omit the prayer's etiquettes is to nullify veneration and respect.

The third matter is to be vigilant regarding the spirit of the prayer, which means having sincerity, presence of heart throughout its entirety, and for the heart to take on the qualities of the prayer's inner meanings during the act. Therefore do not prostrate or bow, except that your heart is submissive and humble—in agreement with your outer condition—for verily the intent of prayer is humility of the heart, not humility of the body. Do not say, “*Allāhu Akbar*” (God is Great), while there is anything in your heart greater than Allāh ﷻ. Do not say, “*Wajjahtu wajhī. . .*” (I turn my face. . .)¹¹, except that all of your heart is directed to Allāh and has turned away from everything other than Him. Do not say, “*Al-ḥamdu li'llāh*” (All praise is for Allāh), except that your heart is overflowing with gratitude to Him, rejoicing in Him and smiling. Do not say, “*wa iyyāka nasta'in*” (and from You Alone we seek help), except that you can feel your weakness and inability, and that neither you nor anyone else determines the outcome of your affairs. This goes for all the rest of the remembrances and actions of the prayer; however, explaining all that would be too long, and I have already explained it in *Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

Persevere with yourself in returning your heart to the prayer, until you are not heedless from its first part to its last; for indeed, a man is only recorded as having performed that part of his prayer which he is conscious of. If presence of mind is difficult for you—and I do not see you as being any other way—then bear in mind the following: If the heedlessness persists for the duration of two units of prayer (*rak'atān*), then do not repeat it. However, understand that supererogatory prayers (*nawāfil*) mend the obligatory ones (*farā'id*)¹²;

therefore, pray voluntarily to the extent that your heart is present for the length of two units. Whenever heedlessness increases, increase your supererogatory prayers until your heart is present; for example, pray ten units to avoid heedlessness for the duration of four, which is the length of the obligatory prayer. It is from Allāh's Mercy upon you that He accepts your mending of the required prayers through the supererogatory. These are the principles of being vigilant about the prayer.

The Second Principle
ZAKAT AND CHARITY
(AṢ-ṢADAQAḤ)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ
سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾

The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is the likeness of a seed from which seven ears grow. Each ear has a hundred seeds. Allāh multiplies for whomever He wills. (2:261)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Most are destroyed, except he who has proclaimed such and such [reward] through giving his wealth."¹³

Know that spending wealth for charity is one of the pillars of the religion. The secret of accountability for one's wealth—which is according to the amount connected with the welfare of countries and people, and warding off need and poverty—is that wealth is loved by the creation, whereas they are commanded to love Allāh. In professing faith, they proclaim their love for Him; hence, giving of their wealth was made into a gauge for their love and a test of the truthfulness of their claim. Indeed, all beloved things are sacrificed for the sake of that greatest of loves in a person's heart. In this regard, people are divided into three levels:

The first level: the strong—those who spend everything they own and save nothing for themselves. These people are truthful about the love that they promised to Allāh. Such was the case of Abu Bakr ﷺ

when he came with all of his wealth, to which Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “What have you left for your family?” He replied: “Allāh and His Messenger.” He ﷺ also said to ‘Umar ﷺ: “What have you left for your family?” He replied: “The like of what I came with.” Then Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “The difference between the two of you is the same as the difference between your two statements.”¹⁴

The second level: the moderates—those who are not able to remove their hands from wealth in one gesture; however, they do not keep it for the sake of luxurious living. Rather, they keep it in case of a needy person’s plea. They are content with an amount that enables them to worship, and when another’s need is evident, they hurry to fulfill that need. They do not limit their giving to the required amount of zakat. Their primary goal in abstaining from spending on themselves is to wait for another’s need and fulfill it.

The third level: the weak—those who limit their giving to paying only the required zakat—nothing more, nothing less. These are the degrees of giving. Everyone gives according to the degree of his or her love for Allāh. I do not see you as being able to give at the first or second level; therefore, persevere until you get past the third level and reach the lowest level of intermediate giving. Slowly yet gradually, increase your giving in excess of the requirement; for sufficing with merely what is required is the definition of a miser. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمْوهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبْخُلُوا﴾

If He were to ask you for it [i.e. your wealth] and press you, you would withhold. . . (47:37)

That is, He probes you for it and you are stingy.

Therefore persevere and do not let a day go by without giving something beyond what is required—even a slice of bread—and thereby rise above the level of stingy people. If you do not own anything, remember that not all charity is with money. Rather, it is every kind word, every act of intercession or help in a time of need, every visit you pay to a sick person, every time you attend a funeral. In short, whenever you spend from what you can in terms of status, self or speech in order to gladden a Muslim’s heart—all of this is recorded for you as charity.

Be vigilant with your zakat, your prayer and your charity regarding five matters:

The first of these matters is secrecy (*isrār*); for indeed, it is mentioned in the ḥadīth: “Secret charity extinguishes the Lord’s Wrath”¹⁵; and: “The one who gives charity with his right hand while the left hand does not know [what the right is giving] is one of the seven whom Allāh will shade on the Day when there is no shade except His shade.”¹⁶ Allāh ﷻ has said:

﴿وَأِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ﴾

If you hide it and give it to the poor then it is better for you. (2:271)

By this you are relieved of ostentation (*riyāʾ*), which truly overpowers the ego and is destructive. When a person is put in his grave, it turns into the form of a snake within his heart—that is, it causes pain as a snake causes pain. Similarly, stinginess (*bukhl*) turns into the form of a scorpion. The purpose of all kinds of giving is deliverance from the base quality of stinginess. If it is combined with ostentation, it is as if the person has made the scorpion nourishment for the snake. Hence, he is not relieved from the scorpion, but the strength of the snake is increased; since every one of the destructive

attributes in the heart takes nourishment and draws strength from responding to its circumstances.

The second matter is to beware of largesse (‘*ann*), the reality of which is that you regard yourself as doing the poor person a good turn and being gracious to him. The sign of this is that you expect him to thank you; or that you detest any instance of his infringing on your right or supporting your enemy to a greater degree than prior to giving him charity. This indicates that you saw it as a favour to him that he would owe you.

The treatment for it is to know that he, in fact, is the one who did you a good turn by accepting Allāh’s Right from you; for truly, the secrets of zakat include the cleansing of the heart, and its purification from the base quality of stinginess and the filth of covetousness. For this reason, zakat is purifying; since through it purification occurs. It is as if it is a washboard for impurity. Hence, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ and the people of his household are above taking zakat. He said: “Indeed, it is the filth of people’s wealth.”¹⁷

Since the poor person’s taking from you is a cause for your purification, he has done you a favour. Imagine a cupper were to cup you for free, thereby removing from your body blood that is potentially harmful in the life of this world. Would you be doing him a favour, or vice versa? The one who removes from your inside the base quality of stinginess and its harm in the afterlife is even more worthy of your regarding him as being gracious to you.

The third matter is that you give from the best and finest of your wealth. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ﴾

They make what they dislike for Allāh (16:62)

And:

﴿وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ﴾

*And do not intend [to give] from what is bad, spending [from it]
while you would not take it [yourselves] (2:267)*

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Truly, Allāh is Good and does not accept anything unless it is good"¹⁸—i.e. lawful. The objective from this is manifesting the extent of one's love; and the human being prefers and loves most that which is most precious to him, not that which is most contemptible.

The fourth matter is that you give with a happy, smiling face and that you are overjoyed at doing so—not resentful. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "A single dirham exceeds one hundred thousand dirhams."¹⁹ What he meant is that what one gives from the most excellent and precious of one's wealth with joy and cheerfulness is better than one hundred thousand of the same given with dislike.

The fifth matter is that you choose for your charity a place in which it will thrive. This could be the God-fearing scholar who uses it in obedience and mindfulness of Allāh ﷻ, or the righteous relative with a family to provide for. If these qualities do not occur altogether, then charity thrives when they are present individually as well. Deferring to righteousness is the foundation of every matter. Indeed, the world was not created except as a sufficiency for Allāh's slaves and a provision for them on their journey to the hereafter; so spend on the travellers—those who take this abode as one of the rest stops on the road. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Do not eat anything but the food of a God-fearing person, and do not let anyone eat your food but

a God-fearing person.”²⁰ He  also said: “Give your food to the God-fearing, and display kindness to the believers.”²¹

The Third Principle

FASTING (AŞ-ŞIYĀM)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Allāh ﷻ says: 'Every good deed is rewarded with ten of its like, multiplied by up to seven hundred, except fasting; for verily it is for Me, and I reward it directly.'"²² He ﷺ also said: "Everything has a gate, and the gate of worship is fasting."²³

Fasting is singled-out with these distinctions on account of two matters:

The first of them is that it is essentially an act of abstention, which is practiced secretly. No one is aware of it other than Allāh ﷻ—unlike prayer, zakat, and other forms of worship.

The second is that it is a victory over Allāh's enemy; and indeed, Satan is the enemy. He does not grow strong except by means of desires, and hunger breaks all the desires that are the tool of Satan. For this reason, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Verily, Satan flows through the Son of Ādam like the flow of blood; so tighten the paths of Satan with hunger."²⁴ It is also the secret of his ﷻ statement: "When Ramadan arrives, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, devils are shackled, and an announcer calls: 'O seeker of good, come forth! O seeker of evil, desist!'"²⁵

Know that fasting is relative to its amount at three levels, and relative to its secrets at three levels.

As for the levels relative to its amount, the least of them is fasting limited to the month of Ramaḍān, and the highest of them is the fast

of Dāwūd , which is that you fast for a day and break your fast the next day. It is reported in a rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*) ḥadīth that this is better than fasting all the time²⁶, and that it is the best fast²⁷. Its secret is that for a person who fasts all the time, fasting becomes normal; thus, he does not feel its breaking impact within himself, or clarity in his heart, or weakness in his desires. Truly, the self is only affected by what is thrust upon it, not by what it is conditioned to. This is not farfetched; for indeed, physicians also proscribe the habitual consumption of medicine. They say that anyone who does so habitually will not benefit from it if he gets sick, because his body is accustomed to it and therefore not affected by it.

Know also that the medicine of hearts is very much like the medicine of bodies. This is the secret of the statement of Allāh's Messenger  to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr²⁸  when he was asking about fasting. He  said: "Fast a day, and break your fast another day." 'Amr replied, "I can do better than that"; so he  said, "There is nothing better than that."²⁹ For the same reason, when it was said to Allāh's Messenger : "So and so fasts all the time," he said, "He has not fasted, nor has he broken his fast."³⁰ This is like when 'Ā'ishah  said to a man who would recite the Qur'ān mumbling: "This person has not recited the Qur'ān, nor has he been silent."³¹

As for the middle level relative to the amount of fasting, it is that you fast for a third of the time. Whenever you fast Monday (*al-Ithnayn*) and Thursday (*al-Khamīs*) along with the month of Ramaḍān, you will have fasted four months and four days out of the year, which is in excess of a third. However, it is impossible to avoid 'breaking' [i.e. not fasting] one of the days of *Tashrīq* [i.e. 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhū'l-Ḥijjah], in which case the excess will be three

days. It is also conceivable that one ‘breaks’ the two Eid days—making three days—in which case the excess would be of one day. Think about the calculation and you will know that this is the case. Your fasting should not be less than this amount, for indeed it is easy on the self and its reward is abundant.

As for the levels of its secrets, they are three: The lowest of them is for a person to limit abandonment to food items, without his limbs abandoning foul deeds. That is the fast of general people and it brings them contentment in name only. The second is that you add to this the abstention of the limbs; thus, you guard the tongue from backbiting, the eye from looking askance, and likewise the rest of the body parts. This is the fast of the elite. The third is that you add to that the preservation of the heart from thoughts and whisperings, limiting it to the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. This is the fast of the elite of the elite, which is the perfect fast.

Finally, fasting has a seal by which it is completed. It is that a person breaks fast with undoubtedly permissible food, and does not eat excessively (compensating for what he missed in the morning by combining two meals at once). Doing so will cause his gut to become heavy and strengthen his desire, whereby the secret of fasting and its benefit is nullified. This leads to laziness with the night vigil prayer (*taḤajjud*) and perhaps him not waking up before the Morning Prayer (*aṣ-Ṣubḥ*), all of which is a great loss that perhaps the benefit of fasting cannot balance out.

The Fourth Principle

THE ḤAJJ

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا﴾

*Allāh has a right over people that they make pilgrimage to the House
—whoever can make his way there. (3:97)*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever dies without having made Ḥajj, let him die as a Jew or a Christian if he likes.”³² He ﷺ also said: “Islām is built on five things. . .”³³

The Ḥajj has outer practices that we have mentioned in *The Revival*. Now we will alert you to some refined etiquettes and inner secrets.

As for the etiquettes, they are seven:

The first is that a person takes a righteous friend with him along with good, permissible spending money. Permissible provisions illuminate the heart, and a righteous friend reminds one of good and deters one from evil.

The second is that a person removes his hand from commercial wealth so that his thinking is not variegated, his mind is not divided, and his heart is clear for the visit.

The third is that a person shares food on the road and speaks well to his travelling companions and hired drivers.

The fourth is that a person leaves off using profanity, arguing, idle chatting, or talking worldly affairs. He should restrict his tongue

to—aside from expressing his needs—remembrance (*dhikr*) and reciting the Qur’ān.

The fifth is that a person rides a camel without a saddle and is of shabby appearance, dusty with unkempt hair, as is the appearance of the poor—as opposed to being dressed-up. This is to ensure that he is not written as being in the company of those who live in comfort.

The sixth is that a person gets off the riding beast occasionally to relieve it, to gladden the heart of the hired driver, and as a lightening of the limbs through movement. He should not make the beast carry more than what it can bear; rather, he should be kind to it whenever possible.

The seventh is that a person should be cheerful about whatever money he spends and whatever fatigue or loss befalls him. He should see that as a sign of his Ḥajj’s acceptance and thus expect the reward for it.

As for its secrets, they are many. We will mention two that symbolize the gist of them:

The first of them is that it takes the place of the monasticism that was in other religions, as has been related in the ḥadīth³⁴. Allāh ﷻ made the Ḥajj monasticism for the community (*ummah*) of Muhammad ﷺ. He honoured the Ancient House, attached it to Himself, and raised it as a place sought after by His slaves. He made what is around it a sanctuary for His House to magnify His Command, and made ‘Arafāt like a square in the courtyard of His Sanctuary. He emphasized the sanctity of the place by prohibiting hunting and cutting down trees in it. He established it like the presence of royalty, so that visitors come to it from every deep passage, disheveled and dusty, humbled by the Lord of the House, submissive to His Majesty and lowered by His Might. (All of this is

with the acknowledgement of His transcendence beyond a house enclosing Him or a place encompassing Him.)

This makes them sense their servitude and slavery to the fullest, and for that reason He has instructed them to perform strange practices that do not agree with natural disposition or reason. Their undertaking of these things is in the order of pure slavery, and fulfilling the command is without any other supporting motivation. This is an immense secret of enslavement, and for that reason the Prophet ﷺ said: “I am truly at your beck and call with Ḥajj, worshipful and subservient!”³⁵

The second category is that this journey was veritably set up as a likeness of the journey of the afterlife; hence, the aspirant should remember with each of its practices one of the affairs of the afterlife that is parallel to it. Truly therein is a reminder for those who remember and a lesson for the insightful.

So at the beginning of your journey, when you say goodbye to your family, remember saying goodbye to family in the pains of death. When departing from your homeland, remember departing from the world. When riding the camel, remember riding in the funeral procession. When donning the garb of ritual consecration (*iḥrām*), remember donning the shroud. When entering through the desert to the appointed rendezvous, remember what lies between exiting the world and the appointed rendezvous of the afterlife. From the fear of highway robbers, remember the interrogation of [the angels] Munkar and Nakīr. From the predatory beasts of the desert, remember the scorpions of the grave and its worms. From the separation from your family and relatives, remember the loneliness of the grave and its separation. From responding with the *talbiyah*, remember responding to the call of Allāh’s ﷻ announcer at the

Resurrection. The same goes for the rest of the practices. Indeed, in every practice there is a secret and beneath it is a symbol. Every slave pays attention to it to the extent of his readiness to pay attention, commensurate to his heart's clarity or the paucity of his aspiration regarding the important matters of the religion.

The Fifth Principle

RECITING THE QUR'ĀN

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "My community's best act of worship is reciting the Qur'ān."³⁶ He ﷺ also said: "If the Qur'ān was in a skin. . .the Fire would not touch it."³⁷ He ﷺ also said: "There is no intercessor in a better position with Allāh on the Day of Resurrection than the Qur'ān—not a prophet, not an angel, nor other than them."³⁸ He ﷺ also said: "Allāh ﷻ says: 'Whoever was preoccupied with reciting the Qur'ān from supplicating me or beseeching me. . .I will give him the best reward of those who are grateful.'"³⁹

Know that reciting the Qur'ān has outer manners and inner secrets.

As for the outer manners, they are three:

The first is that you recite it with respect and a posture of veneration, and that sanctity attaches to your heart and a posture of sanctity attaches to your outer form. Sanctity will not attach to your heart as long as the posture of sanctity is not attached to your outer form. You already know the relationship between the heart and the limbs, and the way in which lights ascend from it to them.

The posture of sanctity is that you sit still with your head bowed and are in a state of ritual purity, facing the direction of prayer; not reclining, or sitting cross-legged, or sleeping—just as you sit in front of a Qur'ān teacher. You should read slowly and with emphasis, articulating each letter without mumbling. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "It is more beloved to me to recite *Idhā Zulzilāt* and *Al-Qāri'ah* with

reflection than it is to recite *Al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān* by mumbling.”⁴⁰

The second is to yearn, at certain times of the day, for the greatest level of virtue in reciting it. This means reciting it in prayer whilst standing, especially in the mosque and at night. The heart is clearer at night because it is empty. Even if you were free during the day, the hustle and bustle of creation with their work would disturb your inner state and distract you from contemplation. This would be especially the case if you were expecting to be requested for some business affair. Yet, no matter how you read it—even if it is while lying down without being in a state of ritual purity—it is not bereft of virtue. Indeed Allāh ﷻ praised all forms of recitation when He said:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ﴾

. . .those who remember Allāh while standing, sitting, or on their sides. . . (4:191)

Nevertheless, in what we have mentioned there is additional virtue.

If you are one of the merchants on the path to the afterlife, then it is not easy for you to leave off virtue. ‘Alī ﷺ said: “Whoever reads the Qur’ān while he is standing in prayer receives for every letter the reward for one hundred good deeds. Whoever reads the Qur’ān while he is sitting in prayer receives for every letter the reward for fifty good deeds. Whoever reads the Qur’ān outside of prayer yet in a state of ritual purity receives the reward for twenty-five good deeds. Whoever reads the Qur’ān while not in a state of ritual purity receives the reward for ten good deeds.”⁴¹

The third manner is the amount of recitation, which has three levels:

The least of them is that you complete the Qur'ān once a month. The highest of them is that you complete the Qur'ān once every three days. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever reads the entire Qur'ān in less than three days has not understood it." The middle level is to complete the Qur'ān once every week. As for completing it once daily, this is not recommended.

Beware of taking liberties with your intellect and saying: "Whatever is good and beneficial, must be even better and more beneficial if done more frequently." Indeed, your intellect does not guide to the secrets of divine affairs; it is only the force of prophethood that can obtain them, so it is your obligation to follow! The special properties of things cannot be comprehended by analogy. Or do you not see how you were encouraged to pray throughout the day and forbidden from abandoning the prayer during it? Yet you were commanded to abandon it after dawn and in the late afternoon or when the sun rises, sets, and reaches its zenith—all of which amounts to a third of the day? How, then, do you figure, when this analogy of yours is clearly unsound? It is like someone stating that medicine is beneficial to the sick person, so whenever more is taken it is more beneficial! But you know well that excessive medication might kill you.

As for the inner secrets of reciting the Qur'ān, they are five:

The first is that you feel at the beginning of your recitation the magnitude of the Speech by feeling the magnitude of the Speaker. Bring to mind the Throne (*al-ʿArsh*), the Footstool (*al-Kursī*), the heavens, the Earth, and all that is between them—whether jinn, human beings, animals, or plants. Remember that the Creator of all of them is One, and that everything is in the grasp of His Power, moving back and forth between His Grace and His Mercy. You want to recite His Speech and thereby look at the qualities of His Essence, and

attain awareness of the beauty of His Knowledge and His Wisdom. Know that just as no one touches the exterior of the bound Qur'ānic text (*muṣḥaf*) except the outwardly pure—it is precluded from other than them—likewise, the reality of its meanings and its inner dimensions are precluded from entering the heart unless it is pure from every impurity and inner filth. With the likes of this magnification, when 'Ikrimah  opened up the *muṣḥaf* he would sometimes be overwhelmed and repeat: “This is the Speech of my Lord; this is the Speech of my Lord.”⁴²

Know that had the lights and magnitude of His Mighty Speech not been covered with the garment of letters, human capacity could not bear hearing it, due to its magnitude, power, and radiant splendour. Had Allāh  not firmly established Mūsā , he would not have been able to bear hearing it stripped of the garments of letter and sound—just as the mountain was unable to bear the initial stages of His manifestation, and thus crumbled to dust.

The second of the inner secrets is that you read while contemplating its meanings, if you are qualified to do so. Everything that rolls off your tongue while in a state of heedlessness should be repeated—do not count it from among your actions. Reciting slowly is obviously only for buttressing contemplation. 'Alī  said: “There is no good in worship without understanding or reciting without contemplation.”⁴³

And do not dare fall in love with yourself due to the number of times you can complete the entire Qur'ān, for slowly reciting a single verse with contemplation for the whole night is better for you than reading the entire Qur'ān twice in a row. Allāh's Messenger  once recited “In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful,” twenty times repeatedly⁴⁴.

Abu Dharr  said: “Allāh’s Messenger  once spent a night with us. While standing in prayer he recited over and over again:

﴿إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

If You punish them, they are Your slaves. If You forgive them, then indeed You are the Mighty, the Wise. (5:118)⁴⁵

Tamīm ad-Dārī once stood at night reciting His  Words:

﴿أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ﴾

Do those who perpetrate evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do righteous deeds? (45:21)

Sa‘id ibn Jubayr once stood at night reciting His Words:

﴿وَامْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ﴾

But stand aside this day, O you criminals! (36:59)

Perhaps the most suited to you is what one of the gnostics said: “I complete a recitation of the entire Qur’ān once every Friday, once every month and once every year. I have also been in the process of completing its recitation for the past thirty years, and have not finished yet.” This is all according to the level of contemplation. Verily, the heart cannot bear long contemplation sometimes; hence, prolonged contemplation should be for a special kind of complete recitation.

The third of the inner secrets is that in your contemplation, you harvest the fruits of realisation from its branches, and pick them from their proper places. Do not seek out poison from where you seek jewels, nor jewels from where you seek out scent and aloes. Each fruit

has its branch, and each jewel has its mine. Understanding this will be easy for you if you know the ten categories into which we have divided the Qur'ān, which are ten mines.

Whatever in the Qur'ān relates to Allāh ﷻ, His Attributes and His Actions, acquire through it knowledge of His Majesty and Magnificence. Whatever relates to guidance toward the Straight Path, acquire through it knowledge of His Mercy, Clemency, and Wisdom. Whatever relates to the destruction of enemies, acquire through it knowledge of His Might, Independence, Overwhelming Force, and Absolute Authority. Whatever relates to the states of the prophets, acquire through it knowledge of His Gentleness, Kindness, Grace, and Generosity. In this way, for every category, acquire through it whatever is appropriate to it and do not look at it from a single perspective—something for which a full explanation here would be too long.

The fourth of the inner secrets is that you free yourself from barriers to understanding; these are the coverings that prevent deep understanding. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا﴾

We have placed coverings over their hearts so that they do not understand it, and in their ears, deafness. (18:57)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "If it were not for demons hovering over the hearts of the children of Ādam, they would gaze upon the spiritual realms of heaven."⁴⁶

Know that the meanings of the Qur'ān are from the overall spiritual realm, whereas its letters are only from the seen world. The coverings with which a God-fearing person who is desirous of the truth is tested are of two types: either something of the veil of doubt

and denial with which a person of weak faith is tested, or something of the veil of desires which drown the heart with which a person absorbed in the world is tested. This is abundantly clear, and the fact that it is a block to understanding the subtleties of the Qur'ān and acquiring something of its lights is obvious. It is by these two types of covering that most of creation is veiled.

As for those devout worshippers who have removed themselves from the world to traverse the path of Allāh ﷻ, two other types of covering veil them:

The first of them is the whisperings that divert the heart to over-consideration of one's intention: How was it in the beginning? Has it remained up until now? Is it currently pure? This is if he were in prayer.

Or the whisperings that occur concerning obsession with correct pronunciation of letters, recurring doubt about them, and repeating them for this reason. This happens in prayer and otherwise. How can a heart turned toward studying the motion of the lips, tongue, and throat and the way that air flows from between them become aware of the secrets of the spiritual realm? This is the very meaning of over-articulating letters and constantly correcting their pronunciation.

The second type is blindly following the apparent meanings of the Qur'ān and being stuck on them, which is a huge veil to understanding. I do not mean by this false blind following, like the blind following of a heretic; rather, true blind following also. The truth with which the creation has been charged with believing has various levels—it has an obvious starting point, which is like a rind; and it has an inner depth, which is like the core. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily, the Qur'ān has an inner and an outer, a limit and a place of ascent.” ⁴⁷

Someone who is stuck on the apparent, who thinks that there is no higher level behind it that he can elevate to, how is it conceivable that its secrets will be revealed to him? For example, the creation has been charged with believing that Allāh ﷻ will be seen. However, vision has an obvious sense and a secret one. Whoever believes that the vision of Allāh ﷻ is related to the vision that human beings know in this world, how is it conceivable that he would be aware of the secret of His ﷻ Words:

﴿لَنْ تَرَانِي﴾

You will not see Me (7:143)?

How would he understand that that is precluded in this worldly life, with these eyes that are dependent on perceiving directions and locations? How would he understand His Words:

﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ﴾

Vision does not perceive Him (6:103)

along with His Words:

﴿وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ﴾

That day, faces will be bright, looking at their Lord (75:22)?

This one example will suffice you, for we shall not reveal more than this to you. By writing these principles, we intend only to allude to the starting points of acquiring secret insights—in order to make those who are prepared for them desirous of them.

The fifth of the inner secrets is that you are not limited to acquisition of the lights; rather, you add to that the acquisition of

states and effects. This means that you do not recite a verse without becoming described by its quality, such that you will have an understanding, state, and perception according to each verse. Thus, at the mention of mercy and the promise of forgiveness, you rejoice as if you will fly out of joy. At the mention of wrath and the severity of punishment, you shrink as if you will die from anxiety. At the mention of Allāh ﷻ, His Names and His Magnificence, you bow your head and feel diminished, as if beholding the majesty effaces you. At the mention of an unbeliever and the wife and child that he will lose, you turn your head and lower your voice as if you are obliterated from shyness. Do like this for each of the ten categories, for which a full explanation would also be too long.

The effect of this should appear on your limbs—whether crying from sorrow; sweating from shyness; goose bumps appearing on the skin; shivering from awe and reverence; relaxation of the limbs, tongue, and voice from happiness; or their tightening from anxiety. If you do this, all of your parts share in obtaining a portion of the blessedness of the Qur’ān, and the lights of the Qur’ān will emanate over your three dimensions—by which I mean: the spiritual dimension, the dimension of Divine Authority, and the seen world. Know that you are composed of these three dimensions, and that a part of each one is within you.

Know that unadulterated lights of realisation emanate from the spiritual realm. It is the heart that causes them to emanate, because it is also from the spiritual realm.

As for the effects of fear, dread, happiness, awe, and the remaining states, they descend from the dimension of Divine Authority. It is the chest, which is from the dimension of divine authority, that causes them to descend. This is another dimension of yours; we have labeled it “the chest” (just as we have labeled the first

as “the heart”) because the dimension of divine authority is between the spiritual realm and the seen world—just like the chest is between the heart and the limbs.

As for crying, groaning, goose bumps, and shivering, they descend from the seen world, and it is the limbs that cause them to descend because they are from the seen world.

I do not see that you understand from “the heart” anything other than the sinewy form of flesh, and from “the chest” anything other than the ribs that surround the heart. Indeed, all that you understand of any given thing is its covering and outer layer. How farfetched it is that you would comprehend the realities! The outer is present for both the dead and the dumb beast, but the lights of realisation and knowledge do not descend upon him, nor their effects—whether fear, awe, or happiness.

So if you want to inhale something from the aroma of these secrets—and I do not see that you want to—yet Satan has tied your neck with the ropes of desire, then you must take it upon yourself to read the chapter on Divine Unity (*Tawḥīd*) from the first part of “The Book of Reliance” from the *Revival*.

Know that the Qur’ān is like the sun. The emanation of the secrets of realisation from it over the heart is like the emanation of the light of the sun over the earth. The spreading of the effects of fear, dread, awe and the remaining states from it over the chest is like the spreading of the sun’s heat into the earth as a consequence of its radiating light. Indeed, fear is an effect of the light of realisation, and only the knowledgeable among His slaves truly fear Allāh. The effects of fear and the remaining states bring forth movement and change—whether crying, sweating, or goose bumps. This is like the motion of the Earth’s parts caused by the rising of steam and gas when the temperature increases. Motion is thus a consequence of heat, and heat

is a consequence of light, and light is a consequence of the Earth facing the sun.

Persevere in turning your heart in the direction of the sun of the Qur'ān, and seek illumination from its lights in that way. If you are unable to do so, then [as it is narrated of Mūsā ,] heed the call from the right side of the mountain. If you find a fire, capture a flame from it and light a lamp. If your oil nearly illumines, even without fire touching it, then if it were touched by fire it would glow with light. You will find guidance at the fire, and for you it stands in the sun's place—emanating radiance and light.

The Sixth Principle

REMEMBRANCE (*DHIKR*) OF ALLĀH ﷻ IN
EVERY STATE

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Remember Allāh much, so that you may be successful. (62:10)

And:

﴿اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾

Remember Allāh with much remembrance. (33:41)

He also said to our Prophet ﷺ:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا﴾

*And remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him
with complete devotion. (73:8)*

Our Prophet ﷺ said: “The remembrance of Allāh in the morning and the evening is surely better than breaking swords in the path of Allāh and giving wealth profusely.”⁴⁸ He ﷺ also said: “Shall I not teach you about the best of your deeds, the purest of them to your Owner, the loftiest of them in degree, that is better for you than giving silver and gold, and better for you than meeting

your enemy and smiting their necks and them smiting your necks?” The Companions said: “What is it, O Messenger of Allāh?” He said: “The remembrance of Allāh ﷻ.”⁴⁹

He ﷻ also said: “The single-mindedly devoted are ahead; the single-mindedly devoted are ahead.” It was said: “Who are they, O Messenger of Allāh?” He said: “Those who are obsessed with the remembrance of Allāh. The remembrance of Allāh has removed their burdens from them, so they will come light to the Resurrection.”⁵⁰

Know that it has been revealed to the possessors of insight that remembrance is the best deed. However, it also has three layers, some of which are closer to the core than others. It has a core behind the three layers, and the layers have been given precedence due to their being a way to the core.

The first layer is remembrance of the tongue only. The second is remembrance of the heart—if the heart is in need of supervision until it becomes present with remembrance, and if it were abandoned it would be preoccupied with various thoughts. The third is for remembrance to be established in the heart and to overwhelm it, to the extent that it would require force to turn it away from remembrance to something else—just as, in the second layer, force is needed to establish remembrance and constantly maintain it.

The fourth, which is the core, is for the remembered to be established in the heart, and remembrance to be erased and hidden. This is the core which is sought after, whereby the heart turns its attention neither to remembrance nor to the heart; rather, its entire being is immersed in the remembered. Whenever, in the course of this, the heart becomes aware of turning to remembrance, it is a distracting partition.

This state is what the gnostics call ‘self-oblivion’ (*fanā*’), which is for a person to be oblivious to himself to the extent that he does not sense anything from his outer limbs, anything external, or any of the inner fluctuations within him. Rather, he is absent from all of that and all of that is absent from him. He is going to his Lord first, and then going to himself last. If, during this, it occurs to him that he is oblivious from himself entirely, then that also is an adulteration and a blemish. Rather, completion is for him to be oblivious to himself and oblivious to oblivion as well, for indeed oblivion of oblivion is the pinnacle of oblivion.

The formal jurist might think that this is an incomprehensible calamity, but this is not the case. Rather, this state of theirs relative to their Beloved is like your state the majority of the time relative to your beloved—whether status, wealth, or lover. Indeed you could become immersed in extreme anger by thinking about your enemy, or extreme desire for your lover, to the extent that there is not room in your mind for anything else. You are spoken to, yet you do not understand; someone passes in front of you, yet you do not see him although your eyes are open; a conversation is taking place next to you, yet you do not hear despite there being no deafness in your ears. In this immersion, you are heedless to everything, including the immersion itself; for surely the one who is attentive to immersion has turned away from that which he is immersed in.

They named this state ‘oblivion’ even though a person and his shadow remain, because people and traces—actually, all sensory things—have no real existence. Rather, real existence is in the dimension of the Divine Command and the spiritual realm, and the heart is from the dimension of the Divine Command. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي﴾

Say: 'The soul is from my Lord's Command.' (17:85)

Forms are from the dimension of creation. What I mean by 'heart' is the subtlety that knows and remembers, and is the station of divine light; not the outer heart, for truly that is from the dimension of creation. This is not to be understood as an allusion to the eternity of the soul and the occurrence of form; rather they are both occurrences. By creation, I mean only whatever is subject to dimension and measure; that is, physical bodies and their properties. By the dimension of the Divine Command, I mean whatever is immeasurable. The physical world does not have a real existence; rather, it is to the unseen world as shadow is to bodies. The shadow of a human being is not the reality of the human being, nor does a person have the reality of existence; rather, he is the shadow of reality, and all is from the making of Allāh ﷻ:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا
وَكَرْهًا وَظِلَالُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ﴾

Whoever is in the heavens or the Earth prostrates to Allāh, willingly or unwillingly; and their shadows are with the early morning and late afternoons. (13:15)

The prostration of the dimension of the Divine Command is voluntary and the prostration of the shadows is coerced. Behind this is a secret—rather secrets. The first of them rattles the chain of the insane and the foolish, not to speak of the last of them; so we should pass over them.

Now we have made you understand what they intend by ‘self-oblivion’, so leave off backbiting and denial of what you have not fully comprehended—just as Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ﴾

Rather, they have denied what they have not fully comprehended
(10:39)

And:

﴿فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ﴾

They will say: ‘This is an old lie.’ (46:11)

If you have understood oblivion in the remembered, then know that it is the first step on the path that leads to Allāh ﷻ. Guidance only comes after it. By guidance, I mean the guidance of Allāh, as the Friend of Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ﴾

Verily, I am going to my Lord; He will guide me. (37:99)

So the first stage is going to Allāh; and after that, going in Allāh—and that is oblivion and immersion in Him. However, this immersion is at first like a sudden bolt of lightning that is established and stays. If it stays and becomes a firmly rooted norm and established form, a person will rise to the highest dimension; he will become cognizant of the real, pure existence; the spiritual realm will be engraved in him; and the holiness of divinity will manifest to him.

The first images to appear to him from that dimension are the substance of the angels and the souls of the prophets and saints in beautiful forms. Through their mediation, some realities flow down to him. This is the beginning, until his level elevates beyond image and he is face to face with the pure truth in everything.

When he is returned to this transient world that is like a shadow, he looks at the creation with a look of compassion for them because they are veiled from seeing the beauty of the Holy's Presence. He is amazed at their satisfaction with shadows and their subservience to the world of delusion and imagination. He is present with them in person, but his heart is absent. He is amazed by their presence, and they are amazed by his absence.

This is the fruit of the core of remembrance. Its starting point is the remembrance of the tongue, then the remembrance of the heart by compulsion, then the remembrance of the heart naturally, then the remembered overwhelming the heart and the erasure of remembrance. This is the secret of his ﷺ words: "Whoever would like to frolic in the meadows of Paradise, he should perform much remembrance of Allāh ﷻ." ⁵¹ Indeed, it is the secret of his ﷺ statement: "The hidden remembrance is better than the remembrance that the guardian angels hear seventy times over." ⁵²

Know that every remembrance that you feel in your heart, the guardian angels hear. Indeed, their sense is comparable to your sense (and in this is a hidden secret), to the extent that if your remembrance is oblivious to your sense, as a consequence of your having gone entirely to the remembered, your remembrance is then oblivious to the sense of the guardian angels. As long as the heart senses remembrance and pays attention to it, it is turning away from Allāh ﷻ and is not removed from hidden association (*shirk*)—unless

you become immersed in the One, the Truth. This is unification (*tawhīd*).

The same can be said for realisation. Whoever seeks realisation for realisation's sake has merely proclaimed the latter; whoever genuinely finds it, it is as if he has not found it. Rather, he finds the realised in it; hence, he is the one who is positioned for the reality of communion and has entered the circle of the Holy.

You may say: "Why are these unveilings exclusive to the state of self-oblivion?" Know, then, that investigation into this matter is lengthy. If you reflect, however, then you will not fail to comprehend that the senses and fluctuations of the self and its desires draw to this sensory world—the world of falsity and delusion. This is why the pure truth is revealed at death, since the authority of the senses and fancies that turn the heart to the lowly world ceases.

If the authority of the senses is limited by sleep, you become aware of something of the unseen, according to the degree or your readiness, reception, and aspiration; however, it is by means of an image that needs to be interpreted. I do not hold that you have never experienced a true dream that has given you a glimpse of some future matter, albeit by means of an image; for the imagination does not subside with sleep, even if the senses are stagnant. As a result, awareness is weakened and is not free of corrupted images.

As for self-oblivion, it expresses a state in which the senses are stagnant and do not function, and the imagination is static and thus does not muddle. If some meagre portion of the imagination remains, it has no effect other than to imitate what is manifested from the dimension of the holy, such that the prophets, angels, and sanctified souls assume imaginary forms.

We instruct you about these affairs so that you long to become from the people of mystical experience; and if not, then from the people of knowledge; and if not, then from the people of faith. Allāh raises by degrees those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. Beware of being from among the deniers of these affairs! In that case, you will meet severe punishment when you are shown the truth during the agony of death that you were avoiding, and it is said to you: “You were heedless of this; we have removed your visor and your vision is keen today!”

Know that faith, knowledge, and mystical experience are three levels that are far from one another. Indeed, it is conceivable that someone who is impotent, for example, may affirm the existence of sexual desire in someone else by accepting that from someone whom he has a good opinion of and does not accuse of lying. This is faith. It is also conceivable that he knows of its existence in someone else through decisive evidence, which is knowledge as understood through analogy; for example, by considering his own desire for food and comparing it to sexual desire. Yet all of that is far from perceiving the reality of sexual desire existing for him.

Sickness is also like this. The layman knows about it and believes it. The doctor knows it through decisive evidence, which is knowledge. Yet, so long as he does not become sick, he does not attain experience. The same is true of proclaiming self-oblivion in unification. Experience is by witnessing, knowledge is by analogy, and faith is by acceptance that thinks well of the claimant without accusation of lying. Therefore strive to become one of the people of witnessing; for information is not like seeing directly.

You may say: “You have made a big deal of the matter of remembrance; so is it better than reciting the Qur’ān?” Then know that reciting the Qur’ān is better for all of creation except the one

going to Allāh, for remembrance is better for the one going to Allāh in all of his states in the beginning, and some of his states in the end. Indeed, the Qur'ān is comprised of different types of knowledge, states, and guidance to the path. So long as the slave needs to refine his morals and attain knowledge, the Qur'ān is more appropriate for him. If he passes beyond that and remembrance overwhelms his heart to the point that he expects it to overflow and immerse him, then constant remembrance is more appropriate for him. The Qur'ān will attract his thoughts and release him into the meadows of Paradise. However, the one who is desirous and going to Allāh ﷻ should not turn to Paradise and its meadows; rather, he should make his aspiration a single goal and his remembrance a single remembrance, until he perceives the level of self-oblivion and immersion. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾

. . .the remembrance of Allāh is surely greater (29:45)

Likewise is he who reaches the level of immersion yet does not remain established upon it. If he returns to himself, then reciting the Qur'ān will benefit him. This is a rare, valuable state; like red sulphur that is talked about yet never found. If this is the case, then reciting the Qur'ān is better absolutely, because it is better in any state except in the state of someone who is distracted from the Speech by the Speaker. The core of the Qur'ān is knowledge of its Speaker and His Beauty, and immersion in Him. The Qur'ān leads and guides to Him, and whoever is on the verge of attaining the objective does not pay attention to the path of attainment.

You may ask: “Which remembrances are the best?” Then know that the best—as we have mentioned—is for the remembered to overcome the heart; and it is one, without any multiplicity from which to choose the best. It is the essence of communion and unification, whereas separation and multiplicity come only before that, for as long as you are in the position of remembering with the tongue or the heart. This is where remembrance may be divided into the best and other than the best. Here, the best is according to the attributes that are referred in the remembrances.

The Attributes and reported Names in reference to Allāh ﷻ are divided into that which is literal in reference to the slaves and figurative in reference to Him ﷻ, such as the Patient, the Grateful, the Merciful, and the Vengeful; and that which is literal in reference to Him ﷻ and metaphorical when used in reference to other than Him.

Among the best remembrances is “Allāh, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-subsistent” (*Allāhu lā illāha illā Huwa’l-Ḥayyu’l-Qayyūm*), since it contains Allāh’s greatest Name. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Allāh’s greatest Name is in the Throne Verse and the first verse of [*Sūrah*] *Āl ‘Imrān*.”⁵³ These two verses do not share anything except this, and it has a secret whose mention is too subtle for your understanding.

The amount that it is possible to indicate is that your statement, “There is no god but Allāh,” gives a sense of unification. The meaning of oneness in both essence and status are literal in reference to Allāh ﷻ, not figurative; it is in reference to other than Him that they are metaphorical and figurative.

The same applies to “the Living,” for indeed, its meaning is ‘He who senses Himself and knows Himself’, whereas ‘the dead’ is he

who has no knowledge of his essence. This is also literal in reference to Allāh ﷻ, not figurative.

“The Self-subsistent” gives the sense of His subsisting in Himself and that the subsistence of everything is through Him. This, too, is literal for Allāh, not figurative. It does not exist for other than Him; rather, it is not even conceivable.

As for other Names that indicate actions, such as the Merciful, the Fair, the Just, and others, they are beneath those which indicate Attributes, because Attributes are the source of action. The Attribute is the basis, and the action is the consequence.

On the other hand, the Attributes that signify Omnipotence, Omniscience, Will, Speech, Hearing, and Sight are from Allāh’s ﷻ established Attributes, for which it is believed that only the apparent sense is understood. How preposterous that would be! What is understood from their apparent sense are matters that are relative to the attributes of a human being—his speech, power, knowledge, will, hearing, and sight. These Attributes, however, possess realities that are impossible to establish for human beings; you should therefore extract from these terms some sort of figurative interpretation.

This, in turn, alerts you to the understanding that these words are applied exclusively to something much greater. You come closer to this by saying: “Glory to Allāh; all praise is for Allāh; there is no god but Allāh; Allāh is the Greatest,” because “glory to Allāh” is for sanctification, which is literal in reference to Him, and indeed is a reality that is not conceivable except for Him ﷻ. Saying: “all praise is for Allāh,” gives a sense of ascribing all blessings to Him. It is literal, as He is literally the Sole Creator of all actions without any figurative interpretation. He alone ﷻ is Worthy of praise, since

none can be associated with Him in His action by any means—just as the pen has no association with the writer in deserving accolades for the beauty of his handwriting. Know that everyone besides Him from whom you see a blessing is subjected to Him like the pen. This illustration should instruct you about His Uniqueness in deserving praise.

As for saying: “there is no god but Allāh”, you already know that it signifies true unification. Your statement: “Allāh is Greatest” does not mean that He is Greater than another. There is none with Him besides Him ﷻ for it even to be said that He is Greater than all else other than Him—it is a light from the lights of His power. The light of the sun relative to the sun is not in a position of togetherness, such that it can be said that it is greater than it. Rather, it is in the position of subjugation. Instead, the meaning of the statement is that He is Greater than what the senses can grasp, and His Majesty is comprehended by reason and analogy. He is Greater than ever having his reality comprehended by other than Him, Greater than being truly known by other than Him; for indeed, no one knows Allāh ﷻ in reality, except Allāh. The pinnacle of the slave’s knowledge is for him to know that it is impossible for him to truly know Him. And no one completely knows this except a prophet or a perpetually truthful person. As for the Prophet ﷺ, it is expressed in his statement: “I cannot fully praise You. You are as You have praised Yourself.”⁵⁴ As for the Truthful One, he said: “The inability to comprehend is comprehension.”

If you yearn for some additional verification of this meaning and reject my statement that no one truly knows Allāh except Allāh, then seek knowledge of His reality through decisive evidence from the book, *The Radiant Objective in Explaining the Meanings of Allāh’s*

Beautiful Names. For now, this amount of allusion to the secrets of remembrance and the best of those remembrances will suffice you.

The Seventh Principle
SEEKING THE LAWFUL (*AL-HALĀL*)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا﴾

Eat from the wholesome things and do righteous deeds. (23:51)

The prohibited is filthy, not wholesome; and He ﷻ has paired eating wholesome things with acts of worship. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Seeking the lawful is an obligation upon every Muslim after the obligation”⁵⁵; that is, after the obligations of faith and prayer.

He ﷻ said: “Whoever eats that which is lawful for forty days, Allāh will illumine his heart and the springs of wisdom will pour from his heart onto his tongue”⁵⁶; and in another narration: “Allāh will enable him to abstain from the world.” He ﷻ also said: “Indeed Allāh ﷻ has an angel over Jerusalem. Every night, he calls out: ‘Whoever eats from the prohibited, neither spending nor justice will be accepted from him.’”⁵⁷ Spending is voluntary worship and justice is obligatory worship. He ﷻ also said: “Whoever buys a garment for ten dirhams while there is a single prohibited dirham in its cost, Allāh will not accept his prayer for as long as anything from it is on him.”⁵⁸

‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ said: “If you prayed until you were like arcs and fasted until you were like strings, Allāh would not accept it from you unless there was restraining piety.” It has been said that worshipping while eating from the prohibited is like building on garbage.

Know that the wholesomeness of food has a tremendous special effect on cleansing the heart, illuminating it and reinforcing its readiness to accept the lights of realisation. Within it is a secret that this book is unable to mention; however, you should understand that the levels of pious caution (*warʿ*) are four:

The first level is the caution of the just (*al-ʿudūl*), an infraction of which entails sin. Probity ceases when it ceases, and it is that which the verdict of a jurist prohibits. The second is the caution of the righteous (*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*), which is caution regarding that which has the possibility of being prohibited, even if a muftī is of the opinion that it is lawful at face value. It is that which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said regarding it: “Leave what makes you doubt for what does not make you doubt.”⁵⁹

The third is the caution of the God-fearing (*al-muttaqūn*). The Prophet ﷺ said: “The slave will not reach the level of the God-fearing until he leaves that in which there is no sin out of caution and fear of that in which there is sin.”⁶⁰ ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said: “We used to leave nine out of ten lawful things out of fear of falling into the unlawful.”⁶¹

From this principle, if some of them deserved 100 dirhams, they would limit themselves to 99 and leave one as a barrier between themselves and Hell out of fear of excess. Some of them used to take whatever they took with one grain removed, and give whatever they gave with an additional grain. For this reason, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz رضي الله عنه was on his guard about some scent that was being measured in front of him for the treasury. When he was asked about it, he said: “Does it have any benefit other than its scent?”⁶²

An example of this type of caution is when a person scrupulously avoids adornment and consumption of desires, out of fear that his ego will predominate and call him to desires that are forbidden. Another example is to abandon looking at the beautification of worldly people, for indeed it stirs the causes of longing for the world. Thus, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

And do not turn your eyes towards that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the ornamentation of worldly life. . . (20:131)

For this reason, ‘Īsā ibn Maryam ﷺ said: “Do not look at the wealth of the people of this world, for surely the lustre of their wealth goes away through the sweetness of your faith.” For the same reason, the pious predecessors (*as-salaf*) would say: “Whoever’s clothes are fine, his religion is weak.”

That which is absolutely lawful and wholesome (*ṭayyib*) can be defined as any lawful thing which is free from the likes of such fearfulness [that it may be unlawful] and in which there is no source of harm.

The fourth level is the caution of the truthful ones (*aş-şiddiqūn*), which is caution about everything that is partaken of not as an intended means of strength to obey Allāh ﷻ, or that could be a cause of falling into disobedience. An example of this is that which has been related about Dhū’n-Nūn, the Egyptian. He was imprisoned and hungry, so a righteous woman sent him some food bought with her permissible wealth by way of the jailer; however, he did not eat it. He excused himself by saying that it came to him through an oppressor; i.e., by way of the jailer.

Another example of this is Bishr al-Ḥāfi not drinking water from canals constructed by the rulers. Someone else used to put out lamps lit by his servants if they were from the home of an oppressor. Another would take medicine, and his wife would insinuate its dubiousness by pacing or moving back and forth; then he would say: “I do not know this walk, and I am watchful of all her movements.” This is the level of a people who were true to Allāh’s ﷻ statement:

﴿قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۖ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ﴾

Say: ‘Allāh,’ then leave them to play in their delving. (6:91)

Hence, they counted everything that was not for the sake of Allāh alone as forbidden. Neither you nor the one advising you were built for this, so proceed gradually and persevere in fulfilling the piety of the just that the jurists rule on.

In fact, you should add to these two strategies:

The first of them is to be careful with regard to positions of delusion and not to heed their statement: “Whoever gives his wealth and wife at the end of the year and persuades her to give her wealth, zakat is not obligatory for them.” If they mean by this that the sultan does not demand zakat from them because the scope of his interest is external authority, then this is true. The level of the jurists and their verdicts is to mention what relates to the external; hence, they rule in favour of exemption from zakat if the collector’s demand is withdrawn. Similarly, they rule for the validity of prayer [behind the sultan] if killing him is precluded due to his abiding by its form. Law is not in their power, except the law that the sultan uses for politics and ordering the means of worldly life, which is merely a stop on the road, as mentioned earlier.

As for you, if you think about what will benefit you tomorrow with the Authority of authorities and the Sultan of sultans, then you will not pay attention to this. Know that the purpose of zakat is to remove the base quality of stinginess, for indeed it is destructive. As the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Three qualities are destructive: stinginess that is obeyed. . .”⁶³

Giving the wealth of zakat for the sake of putting it off makes stinginess obeyed, for indeed it becomes obeyed in that it obligates that which it necessitates. Before this it was not obeyed, so how can that be a means to salvation?

Likewise is he who treats his wife badly until she gives up her dowry to leave him. Between him and Allāh ﷻ, it is not permissible for him to take the dowry, even if a jurist rules for the cancellation of the dowry and the validity of her leaving because Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَرِيئًا﴾

But if they amicably return any of it to you, then take it and enjoy.

(4:4)

However, this is referring to amicableness within the heart, not simply of the gesture; but the jurist does not distinguish between the two affairs because his work is in ending external disputes and nothing else.

The self is not made well through cupping or taking a nasty medicine; rather, it is the heart that is made well. The same goes for everything that natural taste finds repulsive but which reason desires for the ultimate welfare of the body. This is the subject of a long chapter founded upon the principle that you do not make the wealth of another permissible for yourself, except with his or her pure and absolute satisfaction.

Nor should you eat through asking; and if you were to ask someone, then be careful of asking for your fill. Perhaps you will be given because of the giver's shame, and that does not come with satisfaction. Indeed, the one who is ashamed would prefer the pain of giving up wealth to the pain of shame. There is no difference between you taking his wealth by beating him externally with a whip and taking it than by beating him internally with the whip of shame. Each one is an unlawful seizure.

Also be careful about someone giving to you because of religion; then he is giving to you because he believes you are pious and God-fearing, and thus you eat through religion. One of the conditions of its lawfulness is that there should be nothing inside you that, if the giver were aware of it, would prevent him from giving. There is no difference between someone who takes through Sufism and piety—when these are not his inward characteristics—and someone who falsely claims that he is a descendant of ‘Alī⁶⁴ in order to be given things. All of that is forbidden according to possessors of insight, even if a jurist rules that it is lawful based on the apparent meaning.

The second strategy is that you refer to your heart even if you are given a ruling, for indeed sin is that which disturbs the heart⁶⁵. What harms you is what knots in your heart. That is why the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Consult your heart, even if you are given a ruling, even if you are given a ruling.”⁶⁶ This is a secret too long to mention.

In sum, however, know that the peril of that which is unlawful (*ḥarām*) is that it darkens the heart, while that which is sought from the lawful is its enlightenment. This results from your belief, not from that which you believe itself. Thus, if someone sleeps with a woman believing that she is unrelated but she is his wife, he is subject to a darkening of the heart; yet if he were to sleep with an unrelated woman believing that she was his wife, it would not occur.

The same applies to ritual impurity and purity (*ṭahārah*) that effect the enlightenment of the heart, your aspiration, and your belief. You were not commanded to pray while your clothes are pure; rather, you were commanded to pray while believing that they are pure. The feeling of ritual purity has an effect on the radiance of the heart, even if the reality is otherwise. For this reason, we say: truly, whoever prays and then remembers that there is some impurity on him, it is not required of him to repeat the prayer according to what is most correct; for the Prophet ﷺ removed his sandals in the middle of his prayer and thereafter continued when Jibrīl ﷺ informed him that there was some filth on them⁶⁷. This is why the affair of someone who constantly doubts his state of ritual purity is extremely difficult. Indeed, as long as his heart is not settled on believing he is ritually pure, it is required of him to investigate the matter and repeat the prayer. These people have made things extremely difficult for themselves, so Allāh made things difficult for them and they are destroyed by their always having to investigate. As the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “The obsessive are destroyed.”⁶⁸ Likewise in regards to the lawful—you worship by means of what settles your heart, not by what the muftī rules for. Therefore, ask your heart, even if you are given a ruling.

[ON TAKING FROM DOUBTFUL WEALTH THAT PEOPLE POSSESS.]

Beware of going to extremes with yourself and saying: “All the wealth of the world is unlawful, and the hands of people and their corrupt dealings have soiled it. Hence, I will either be content with living ascetically or I will take hold of it all comprehensively without distinguishing between the lawful and the unlawful.” Rather, know decisively that the lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between them are affairs that are dubious. It was like that in the time of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ and will be like that forever.

So go forth from the secret that we have mentioned, for indeed you do not worship with what is in itself lawful; rather, you worship with what you believe to be lawful and do not know of any apparent reason for its unlawfulness. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ performed ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) from the satchel of an idolatress⁶⁹, and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه performed ablution from a Christian woman’s jar⁷⁰. If they were thirsty, they would have drunk from each respectively, and drinking impure water is prohibited. However, they assumed its original state of certain purity and did not abandon the thought of it because of the mere notion of impurity.

Likewise is every form of wealth that you have acquired from the hand of a man whose state is unknown to you. You have the right to buy from him and eat the food he serves you as a way of having a good opinion of a Muslim. The basic principle is to assume that what he owns is lawful. As for what you acquire from a man whom you know to be righteous, it is even more appropriate for you to believe that what he possesses is lawful.

Of course, it is obligatory to be cautious of what you acquire from an oppressive sultan or a man whom you know deals in interest or selling alcohol. It is obligatory to be cautious of him until you ask, investigate, and come to know where he got his wealth from. If the manner in which he acquired it appears lawful to you, then you have

the right to take it. If it does not, then it is necessary to rely upon an external sign as the indication of his state.

This is if the majority of his wealth is unlawful. If the majority of it is lawful, then you have the right to eat from it; but if you leave it, that is caution. One of the agents of Ibn al-Mubārak once wrote to him from Baṣrah, asking him about dealing with a man who had dealings with the sultan. He said: “If he does not deal with anyone but the sultan, then do not deal with him. If he deals with other than him as well, then deal with him.”

Generally, people are of six divisions in respect of you:

The first of them is that the person is unknown. Eat from his wealth and caution is not obligatory; rather, it is pure piety.

The second is that you know a person to be righteous and good. Eat from his wealth without precaution, for precaution in his case is a baseless misgiving. If it leads to offense or embarrassment, then it is an unlawful act of disobedience, due to the offense it contains and because it involves holding a bad opinion of a righteous man.

The third is that you know a person to be oppressive and one who deals with interest, to the extent that you know that either all or the majority of his wealth is unlawful—like oppressive sultans and others. Their wealth is unlawful.

The fourth is that you know that the majority of a person’s wealth is lawful; however, it is not completely free of the unlawful—like a man who has a business or some inheritance while at the same time works for the sultan. While you have the right to take from where the bulk of his wealth derives, it is important to leave it for the sake of precaution.

The fifth is that a person is unknown to you but you see about him a sign that he is an oppressor—such as a long-sleeved outer garment, a flashy head covering, or posing like a Turk or an oppressive ruler.

These outer signs necessitate caution. Do not eat from his wealth except after investigation.

The sixth is that you see about a person the sign of sin, rather than the sign of oppression—such as a long mustache, a partially shaved head, seeing him curse another or looking at an unrelated woman. If you know that he has some wealth that was inherited or from business, his wealth from that is not unlawful. However, if his affair is unknown to you, then there must be some examination regarding this, for the sign of sin is weaker than the sign of oppression. Nevertheless, the most apparent ruling to me is that his wealth is not unlawful, because obvious possession and Islām indicate ownership more clearly than these signs are an indication of unlawfulness. Neither is this indication stronger than the indication given by a person's Christianity or Zoroastrianism of the impurity of his water, and Allāh's Messenger ﷺ and 'Umar ؓ did not give heed to it.

As for the sign of oppression, it is like as if we saw a gazelle urinating in water and thereafter found that the water had changed. While it is possible for the change to have come from prolonged standing of the water or from the urine, it would be obligatory to avoid it in view of the obvious cause.

In addition to all of this, it is obligatory for a person to ask his heart. If he finds in his heart any disturbance then he should avoid it, for sin is the disturbance of the heart and the friction of the chest.

There is, however, a subtlety that many pious people are heedless of. It is that whenever something is forgone out of precaution or a disturbed conscience, it is nevertheless not permissible to forgo it or enquire about it if doing so would cause offense. Thus, if an unknown person serves you food and you ask him: "Where is this from?" he would be embarrassed and offended. Causing annoyance and having a bad opinion of others are both unlawful. If you ask someone else

but he knows that you asked, then the offense is even greater. If you ask someone else about him without him knowing, then you have spied on him, held a bad opinion (and sometimes opinion is sinful), made light of backbiting, and accused him without basis—all of which is unlawful. On the other hand, leaving off precaution is not unlawful, so there is nothing you can do but show kindness by leaving it. If caution is not possible without offending him, then you must eat. Indeed, gladdening a Muslim's heart and protecting it from offense is more important than caution.

Know that Allāh's Messenger ﷺ ate from charity given to Barīrah and did not ask about the giver⁷¹. Gifts used to be brought to him ﷺ and he accepted them without asking⁷².

Yes, when he ﷺ first arrived to al-Madinah he used to ask whether what was brought was a gift or charity⁷³, because there is no offense in that, and because the circumstantial evidence pointed to the equal likelihood of it being either a charity or a gift. He ﷺ used to be invited to people's homes and he would accept without asking⁷⁴; instances of him questioning have only been narrated rarely, in cases of doubt.

You may say: "If there is unlawful food in a market, do I buy from that market?" I say: If you have verified that the unlawful is the majority, then do not buy from it except after investigating. If you know that the unlawful is abundant but not the majority, then you have the right to buy and should investigate as a precaution. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ and his Companions used to shop in various markets during their travels, knowing that there were people who dealt in interest and stole and people who unlawfully took booty; yet they did not refrain from dealing with them. This subject calls for a long explanation; if you desire that, then read "The Book of the Permissible and the Prohibited" from *The Revival*. On reading it, you

will see that, with respect to its verification, conveyance, and comprehensive detail, nothing of its kind has been written.

The Eighth Principle

UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS (ḤUQŪQ) OF MUSLIMS AND GOOD COMPANIONSHIP (ṢUḤBAH) WITH THEM

This is one of the pillars of the Religion, since the meaning of the Religion is travelling to Allāh ﷻ, and one of the pillars of travelling is good companionship with fellow travellers on the way. All creatures are travellers, and life passes along with them as the boat passes along with its passenger.

Know that a person in this world is either alone, with people related particularly to him—whether his wife, child, relative, or neighbour—or with the creation in general. These are three states—good companionship and the upholding of rights apply to all of them.

The first state is for a person to be alone. He should know that in himself he is a world and that his inner is comprised of various forms of creation whose nature and character differ. If he does not accompany them well, he has not upheld their rights and will be destroyed. The various types of inner forces are many:

﴿وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ﴾

No one knows the forces of your Lord, except Him. (74:31)

We have examined some of them thoroughly in “The Book of the Heart’s Wonders” from *The Revival*.

Now we will mention the commanders and leaders of those forces: Within you is desire through which you attract benefit to yourself; anger through which you repel harm; and reason through which you contemplate matters and organize things for those under your care. With regard to your anger, you are a ravenous dog. With regard to your desire, you are a dumb beast—like a horse, for example. With regard to your reason, you are a king. You are commanded to do justice between the dog and the dumb beast, uphold their rights, and aid them so that they may avail themselves of eternal happiness with your assistance.

If you train the horse, tame the dog, and subject them to your dominion, then it will be easy for you to grab hold of what you seek. On the other hand, if you subject reason to extracting loopholes in order to attain what the dog in its anger and the horse in its desire and greed dictate, then you have come close to perdition—far from attaining the object that you seek. You have turned upside down and inside out, sinful and oppressive; because oppression is to put something in other than its proper place. If you were to see a person to whom a king, a dog, and a pig were made obedient, yet the king was constantly compelled to submit to the dog and the pig—would you not see him as being wrong and deserving of curses?

If you were exposed to your state during sleep, you would see that he who obeys his desire and his anger is prostrating to a dog or a pig. A dog is not a dog because of its form; rather, because of its meaning. Likewise you will see yourself after death, because meanings in the world of the afterlife are not a consequence of forms but, instead, entail them. Each thing takes the form of an image that matches its meaning. Arrogant people are gathered in the form of particles and stepped upon front and back⁷⁵, while humble people are full of might. As for this world, it is the world of covering. The

meaning of ‘pig’ and ‘dog’ might be put in the form of a human; so do not be fooled by it, for indeed, this will be exposed on the day when inner secrets will be brought forth.

You must accompany your three companions well. Break the evil of your desires with the whip of anger; break the extremes of anger with the tricks of desire; and use one to subjugate the other. That is extremely useful in setting them both straight, until they comply with reason and Revealed Law. Reason uses them wherever it benefits from them, just as the hunter uses the horse and the dog whenever he needs them and allows them to rest whenever he is free of need. To fully explain this training and the nature of this companionship would take too long. We have mentioned it in “The Book of Training the Self” from *The Revival*.

The second state is keeping good company with the generality of creation. The least level of good companionship is to leave off offending or harming them. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The Muslim is he from whom the Muslims are safe from his tongue and his hand.”⁷⁶ Beyond this is that you benefit them and do them good. The Prophet ﷺ said: “All creatures are Allāh’s children. The most beloved of you to Allāh is the most beneficial to His children.”⁷⁷ Beyond this is that you forbear any offense or harm from them and do them good despite the bad that they have done to you. This is the level of the truthful ones. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said to ‘Alī عليه السلام: “If you want to surpass the truthful ones, then reach out to the one who has cut you off, give to the one who withholds from you, and forgive the one who does you wrong.”⁷⁸ This is a summation of good companionship.

The details of the rights to be upheld are many. We shall give an abridged account of them in the form of twenty practices:

Among them is that you only love for people what you love for yourself. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever is delighted by the thought of being far removed from Hell, then his wish will come true if he testifies that there is no god but Allāh and that Muhammad is Allāh’s Messenger, and gives to people whatever he loves to be given to him.”⁷⁹

Also among them is that a person be humble with everyone and not boast to anyone; for truly, Allāh does not like any conceited, boastful person. If another were to act arrogantly with him, he should forbear it. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

Take [the high ground of] forgiveness, enjoin the good, and turn away from the ignorant.

Also among them is that a person be respectful of elders and compassionate toward children. The Prophet ﷺ said: “He who is not compassionate to our children or respectful of our elders is not one of us.”⁸⁰ He ﷺ also said: “It is veneration of Allāh ﷻ to honour the Muslim with grey hair.”⁸¹ He ﷺ also said: “No youth honours an elder for the sake of his age except that Allāh ordains someone to honour him in his old age.”⁸²

Also among them is that a person meet the entirety of creation with a bright, smiling face. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Do you know what Hell is prevented from?” The Companions said: “Allāh and His Messenger are more knowledgeable.” He said: “It is prevented from the soft, gentle, easygoing, approachable person.”⁸³ He ﷺ also said: “Allāh most certainly loves the easygoing, cheerful person.”⁸⁴

Also among them is reconciling between Muslims, even if it were with exaggeration or embellished speech. The Prophet ﷺ said: "He who reconciles between two people and says something good or causes some good to come about is not a liar."⁸⁵ He ﷺ also said: "Shall I not inform you of that which is better than fasting, prayer, and charity?" The Companions said: "Of course, O Messenger of Allāh!" He said: "Reconciling between people. Ruining what is between them is like cutting them with a razor."⁸⁶

Also among them is that you do not listen to people's rumors about others and do not convey the rumors that you hear. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The slanderer will not enter Paradise."⁸⁷ It is said that the one who gossips to you will gossip about you.

Also among them is not to exceed more than three days when avoiding another due to some estrangement. The Prophet ﷺ said: "It is not permissible for a Muslim to avoid his brother for more than three days."⁸⁸ He ﷺ also said: "Whoever pardons a Muslim's infraction, Allāh ﷻ will pardon him on the Day of Resurrection."⁸⁹

Also among them is that you do everyone good, whether he is worthy of it or not. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Do well to he who is worthy of it as well as he who is unworthy of it. If you do right to the worthy, then he was worthy of it. If you do so to the unworthy, then you are the worthy one."⁹⁰

Also among them is that you treat each kind of person according to his standards. So do not deal with the ignorant and the fool in the way you would deal with the pious and the knowledgeable. David, Allāh's blessings be upon him, once said: "My God! How can it be that people love me and I submit to what is between me and you?" Allāh ﷻ revealed to him: "Treat the people of the world by the

standards of the world, and treat the people of the afterlife by the standards of the afterlife.”⁹¹

Also among them is that you treat people according to their status. Hence, you should increase in honouring a person of high status, even if his status is worldly. Indeed, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ spread out his upper garment for some people and said: “If the nobles of a people come to you, then honour them.”⁹²

Also among them is that you cover the faults of Muslims. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “There is not anyone who covers a fault that he sees from his brother except that he will enter Paradise.”⁹³ He ﷺ also said: “O all those who have believed with their tongue without faith having entered their heart! Do not backbite Muslims and do not follow after their faults. Truly, whoever follows after the faults of his Muslim brother, Allāh will follow after his faults. Whoever has Allāh follow after his faults, He will expose him even if he is in the recesses of his home.”⁹⁴

Also among them is that you stay away from places in which you are likely to be accused of misbehavior if seen there, as a way of preserving people’s hearts from having a bad opinion and their tongues from backbiting. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “Stay away from the places of accusation.”⁹⁵ Once Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ was speaking with one of his wives and a man walked by and greeted him. When he walked past, the Prophet called him and said: “O so-and-so, this is my wife, Ṣafīyyah.” The man said: “O Messenger of Allāh, whoever I might think ill of, I would certainly never think ill of you.” He ﷺ: “Indeed, Satan flows through the son of Ādam like the flow of blood.”⁹⁶

Also among them is that you hurry to fulfill the needs of Muslims, even by merely interceding. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Intercede with me for one another and be rewarded; for indeed, I want to do a thing, but put it off so that you may intercede with me and be rewarded.”⁹⁷ He  also said: “Whoever moves for a moment during the night or the day to fulfill his brother’s need, whether he fulfills it or not, it is better for him than seclusion in a mosque for two months.”⁹⁸ He  also said: “To stand with your brother for a moment is better than your seclusion in a mosque for a year.”

Also among them is to initiate greeting every Muslim with peace and by shaking his hand, so that you will have the virtue of starting. The Prophet  said: “If two Muslims meet and shake hands, seventy portions of mercy are divided between them. Sixty nine are for the most virtuous of the two of them.”⁹⁹

Also among them is that a person should aid his brother in his absence, and defend his honour and his wealth. The Prophet  said: “There is no Muslim person who supports a Muslim when his honour is disparaged or his sanctity is violated, except that Allāh  will support him when he would love to be supported. There is no one who forsakes a Muslim whose sanctity has been violated, except that Allāh will forsake him when he would love to be supported.”¹⁰⁰

Also among them is that you stay away from unsavory people so as to be safe from them. ‘Ā’ishah  said: “A man sought permission to see Allāh’s Messenger , so he said: ‘Give him permission, for he is extremely unlikeable.’ When he entered, the Prophet spoke gently to him until I thought that he had some sort of status. When he left, I asked the Prophet about what had just happened and he said: ‘O ‘Ā’ishah! Truly, the person in the worst position with Allāh on the Day of Resurrection is he whom the people abandon in order to get away from his vileness.”¹⁰¹ He  also said: “Whatever a

person does to protect his honour is an act of charity for him.”¹⁰² He  also said: “Mingle with people with your bodies, yet be separate from them with your hearts.”¹⁰³

Also among them is that you be cautious of sitting with the rich and sit frequently with the poor. The Prophet  said: “Beware of sitting with the dead!” It was said: “And who are they?” He said: “The rich.”¹⁰⁴ He  also said: “O Allāh! Make me live as a poor person; make me die as a poor person; and raise me up in the company of the poor.”¹⁰⁵ Whenever Sulaymān  saw a poor person in the mosque, he sat beside him and said: “A poor person sitting beside a poor person.” Moses  said: “My God! Where should I seek you?” Allāh said: “With those whose hearts are broken for my sake.”¹⁰⁶

Also among them is that a person only sitting with someone who will benefit one in regards to the religion, or whom one will benefit. As for the people of heedlessness, beware of them. The Prophet  said: “Being alone is better than bad company, and righteous company is better than being alone.”¹⁰⁷ If a person sits with the people of heedlessness frequently, he loses a part of his religion every time he is with them. Imagine if each one of them took a thread from his garment or a hair from his beard every time he sat with them—would he not beware of them out of fear that he would soon end up beardless and naked? Caution for the sake of the religion is even more fitting.

Also among them is that a person visit the sick; attend people’s funerals; visit their graves; pray for them when they are absent; bless people when they sneeze; return the greeting of peace; be fair with people even at his own expense; give advice when it is solicited; and other rights for which there are many ḥadīths (we have preferred to

be concise here). In summary, you should do in regards to their rights what you would love to be done in regard to your rights—whether beneficence, consideration, or simply not offending.

The third condition is good companionship with someone (aside from the generality of Islām) who relates to you especially—such as a neighbour, a relative, or a slave. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The first two disputants on the Day of Resurrection will be neighbours.”¹⁰⁸ He ﷺ also said: “If you reproach your neighbour’s dog, you have harmed him.” It was once said to him ﷺ: “So-and-so fasts during the day and prays at night, yet disturbs her neighbours.” He said: “She is in Hell.”¹⁰⁹

He ﷺ also said: “Do you know the right of the neighbour? If he seeks your aid, then aid him. If he asks you for a loan, then give him a loan. If he is impoverished, then give to him generously. If he is sick, then visit him. If he dies, then attend his funeral. If some good comes to him, then congratulate him. If he is struck with a calamity, then support him. Do not build your home or fence so high that you block the air from him unless you have his permission. If you buy some fruit, give him some directly; and if you do not do that, then give him some secretly. Do not let your child go out with fruit so that your neighbour’s child sees it and becomes jealous. Do not infringe upon him with the aroma of what is cooking in your home unless you prepare some for him. Do you know the right of the neighbour? By Him Who possesses my soul, no one fulfills the right of the neighbour except someone to whom Allāh has shown mercy.”¹¹⁰

As for the relative, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Allāh ﷻ says: ‘I am the Beneficent, and I have derived this womb from one of My Names. Whoever maintains ties with it, I maintain ties with him.

Whoever cuts it off, I cut him off.”¹¹¹ He ﷺ also said: “Maintaining ties of kinship prolongs life.”¹¹² He ﷺ said: “The scent of Paradise extends for 500 years. Neither the disobedient child nor the one who cuts off family will smell it.”¹¹³

He ﷺ also said: “Filial piety is better than prayer, fasting, the Ḥajj, the minor pilgrimage (*‘Umrah*), and fighting in the path of Allāh ﷻ.”¹¹⁴ He ﷺ also said: “The mother is twice as worthy of filial piety as the father.”¹¹⁵ He ﷺ also said: “Give gifts to your children equally.”¹¹⁶

As for the slave, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Fear Allāh in regards to what your right hands possess. Feed them from what you eat; dress them from what you wear; and do not burden them with work that they do not have the energy for. Indeed, Allāh has given you possession of them; but if He willed, He could surely give them possession of you.”¹¹⁷ He ﷺ also said: “If the slave of any one of you prepares food that suffices him as both a relief from heat and a remedy, and puts it before him, then sit him down and eat with him or take a portion; divvy it up, give him some and say: ‘Eat this.’”¹¹⁸ Once, the Prophet ﷺ was asked: “How often should we pardon a slave in a single day and night?” He said: “Seventy times.”¹¹⁹

A summary of the rights of a slave is that a person shares his food and clothes with him; does not burden him with anything above his ability; pardons his slip-ups; does not look at him with the eye of arrogance or disdain; and teaches him the important matters of his religion.

As for the rights of the wife, they exceed this; for it is obligatory (in addition to upholding her marital rights) to treat her well and maintain pleasant relations with her in the home. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “The best of you is the best of you to his wife; and I am the

best of you to my wives.”¹²⁰ He ﷺ was among the most humorous of people with his wives and his family¹²¹, and the reports in that regard are more than can be counted.

[ON TAKING BROTHERS FOR THE SAKE OF ALLĀH ﷻ]

From the foundations of the religion with regards to good companionship is taking brothers for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ said to one of His prophets: “As for your abstention from the world, you have accelerated true comfort thereby. As for your cutting yourself off from everything but Me, you have been dignified by Me. But have you befriended a friend of Mine for My sake? Have you shown enmity to an enemy of Mine for My sake?”¹²² The Prophet ﷺ said: “Allāh will say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Where are those who loved one another for the sake of My Majesty? Today I shall shade you in My Shade, the day in which there is no shade but My Shade.’”¹²³

Allāh ﷻ revealed to ‘Īsā ﷺ: “If you had worshiped Me with all the devotion of the people of the heavens and the earth, yet love for Allāh’s sake and hate for Allāh’s sake were not present, that would have done you no good.”¹²⁴ The Prophet ﷺ said: “There are platforms of light around the Throne. There are a people standing on them whose clothes and faces are light. They are neither prophets nor martyrs. The prophets and the martyrs are happy for them.” The Companions said: “O Messenger of Allāh, describe them for us!” So he said: “Those who love one another for Allāh’s sake, sit with one another for Allāh’s sake, and visit one another for Allāh’s sake.”¹²⁵

Know that all love is inconceivable without faith in Allāh and the Last Day. It is love for the sake of Allāh; however, it is of two levels:

The first of them is that you love someone in order to acquire from him in the world a portion of something that will benefit you in the afterlife—like your love for your teacher and shaykh; or your student through whom your knowledge develops by teaching him; or your servant who frees your heart from worrying about cleaning your home and washing your clothes so that you are free because of him to obey Allāh ﷻ at leisure; or the one who pays for you from his wealth (if your purpose in that is freeing the heart for worshipping Allāh ﷻ).

The second, which is the highest level, is that you love someone because he is beloved to Allāh ﷻ and loves Allāh ﷻ, even if you have no interest related to him either in this world or the afterlife—whether knowledge, assistance in the religion, or anything else. This is more complete; because when love overcomes, it spills over to everyone who relates to the beloved for any reason. Thus, a person loves the one who loves his beloved, loves the beloved of the beloved, and even distinguishes from other dogs the stray dog that roams the street where his beloved lives. The extent to which love pervades is commensurate to the extent to which it overcomes. Whoever loves to meet Allāh cannot help but love His slaves that please Him, and this love could strengthen to the point that he looks at them as if he were looking at himself; rather, he prefers their wellbeing to his own. Or he could fall short in this; his preference for them is in accordance to the level and strength of his love.

Likewise, he inevitably hates the one who disobeys Allāh and opposes His command; the effect of this appears through his distancing himself from and avoiding him, and frowning when he sees him. For this reason, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "O Allāh! Do not make an open sinner gracious to me so that my heart loves him

as a result.”¹²⁶ In summary, whoever does not find within himself love for the sake of Allāh and hate for the sake of Allāh for these reasons has weak faith. This subject has some verification and detail, so seek it in the book “Good Companionship for the Sake of Allāh” from the books of *Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

The Ninth Principle

COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

*Let there be from among you a community that calls to virtue,
commands good, and forbids evil. Those are the successful. (3:104)*

And:

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ﴾

*The believing men and the believing women are supporters of one
another. (9:71)*

And:

﴿كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ ۚ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ﴾

*They used to not forbid one another from the evil that they did. How
terrible was what they used to do! (5:79)*

Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ said in a sermon: “O people! Indeed you recite this verse and interpret it in a manner that differs from its true interpretation:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ ۚ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ﴾

O you who have believed! You are responsible for yourselves. He who has strayed cannot harm you when you are guided. (5:105)

I once heard Allāh's Messenger ﷺ: "There is no people who perpetrated acts of disobedience while there were those among them who could have forbid them yet did not, except that Allāh nearly punished them all."¹²⁷

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said: "Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: 'The people of a village of 18,000 whose deeds were like the deeds of the prophets were punished.' The Companions said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! How was that?' He said: 'They used to not become angry for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, nor did they command good or forbid evil.'"

[AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT SOMEONE WHO WITNESSES AN EVIL SHOULD DO]

Anyone who witnesses an evil and does not forbid it, but rather is silent about it, is a party to it. Hence, the listener is a party to backbiting, and this applies to all other acts of disobedience—even including sitting with someone who wears silk brocade, wears a gold ring and sits on silk; or sitting in a home or Turkish bath in which there are pictures on the wall or gold or silver utensils; or sitting in a mosque in which people pray poorly by not completely bowing or prostrating; or sitting in the gathering of a preacher who mentions heresy, or a debate or argument in which there is offensive speech and obscenity in the form of insolence and abuse.

In summary, whoever mingles with people, his sins are abundant—even if he himself is God-fearing—unless he abandons cordiality, fearing no criticism for the sake of Allāh, and busies himself with

admonishing and preventing others from misbehavior. Two things remove the obligation of commanding good and forbidding evil:

The first is that a person knows that if he were to forbid he would not be listened to, the evil would not be left, and he would be looked at with mockery. This is overwhelmingly the case in regards to the evils that jurists and people who claim to be religious commit. It is permissible to be silent here. However, a verbal reprimand is recommended, and it is obligatory to leave that place. It is not permissible to witness an act of disobedience by choice. Hence, whoever sits in a gathering where there is drinking is an open sinner—even if he does not drink. Likewise, whoever sits with a backbiter, someone wearing silk, or someone consuming interest or prohibited wealth is an open sinner—unless he gets up and leaves that place.

The second is that a person knows that he is able to prevent an evil, such as by seeing a bottle of wine and throwing it to break it, or taking a musical instrument from the hand of its owner and busting it on the ground. However, he knows that he will be beaten or afflicted by another evil. Composure is recommended here, but it is not obligatory, due to Allāh's ﷻ statement:

﴿وَأَنَّهُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ﴾

Forbid evil and be patient with what afflicts you. (31:17)

The evil that could afflict a person has many degrees that it would take too long to examine here. We have mentioned them in the book “Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil” from *The Revival*.

In summary, the obligation is not removed except when a person fears physical harm, damage to his property, or damage to his reputation in a way that would detract from his honour. As for fear of being ostracized, being subjected to people talking about him and

disliking him, or an imagined risk to his future or the attainment of some anticipated good—all of these are mere whims and matters of personal weakness that do not remove the obligation.

[ON THE NECESSARY ENDOWMENTS OF SOMEONE WHO
COMMANDS GOOD AND FORBIDS EVIL]

Admonishing people must be supported by two things:

The first of them is gentleness and affability. Any admonition should begin with softness—not roughness, haughtiness, or self-righteousness. All of these things lead to further motivation for disobedience, and influence the disobedient to be defiant and offensive.

If the disobedient person offends the one forbidding evil, and if the latter has never attained good character, he will grow angry for his own sake and abandon forbidding for the sake of Allāh ﷻ; thereafter he will be preoccupied with relieving the bitterness he feels towards the offender. Thus he becomes disobedient. Instead, he should dislike having to admonish, and wish that the disobedient person would abandon his disobedience because of someone else's admonition; for if he loves being the one to admonish, this is because of the sign of status and sense of self-worth it affords his ego. The Prophet ﷺ said: “No one commands good or forbids evil except one who is gentle concerning what he commands and gentle concerning what he forbids; forbearing concerning what he commands and forbearing concerning what he forbids; and understanding of what he commands and understanding of what he forbids.”¹²⁸

Once an admonisher admonished al-Ma'mūn ﷺ harshly, so he said: “Hey, man! Go easy! Allāh ﷻ has sent him who is better than

you to him who is worse than me; yet he commanded him with gentleness. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى﴾

And speak to him with gentle speech, so that perhaps he will be reminded or fear [Allāh]. (20:44)

Abū Umāmah narrated that a young man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said to him: “Will you give me permission to fornicate?” The people yelled at him. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Leave him alone, leave him alone! Come close to me.” So he moved closer to him. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Would you like that for your mother?” He said: “No, may Allāh make me your ransom!” He said: “Likewise, people do not like it for their mothers.” Then he ﷺ said: “Would you like that for your daughter?” He replied: “No.” He said: “Likewise, people do not like it for their daughters.” Thereafter, he asked him about his sister and aunts and said: “Likewise, people do not like it.” Then he placed his hand on his chest and said: “O Allāh! Purify his heart, forgive his sin, and protect his privates.” After this, nothing was more loathsome to him than fornication¹²⁹.

Some people once said to al-Fuḍayl that Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah had accepted money from the sultan, so he said: “He did not take anything from them unless it was less than what he deserved.” Then he met with Sufyān privately and gently admonished him. Sufyān said: “O Abū ‘Alī! If we are not among the righteous then at least we love the righteous!”

The second essential support is that the admonisher should begin with himself, discipline his ego, and abandon what he has been forbidden from first. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: “If you command good, then

be from the staunchest of adherents to it. If this is not the case, you are destroyed.”¹³⁰ This is the most appropriate state if the admonisher’s words are to be of any benefit. If not, he will be mocked. It is not a condition, for admonishing is permissible for the disobedient as well. Anas said: “We said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Should we not command good until we practice all of it, and should we not forbid evil until we avoid all of it?’ He ﷺ said: ‘No. Go ahead and command good, even if you do not practice all of it; and forbid evil, even if you do not avoid all of it.’”¹³¹

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: “Satan wants to get one over on you with this quality—which is that you do not command good until you practice all of it.” By this, he means that it leads to shutting the door to practising admonishment; for who is protected from ever committing an act of disobedience?

The Tenth Principle

FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

Know that the key to happiness is following the Sunnah and taking Allāh's Messenger ﷺ as an example in all of his comings, goings, movements, and stillness—even the way he ate, stood, slept, and spoke. I do not say this in reference to matters of worship only; for indeed, there is no room for neglecting the narrated *sunan* (pl. of sunnah) for them. Rather, I am referring to all habitual matters—by this absolute following is achieved. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

If you love Allāh, then follow me—Allāh will love you. (3:31)

And:

﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا﴾

Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you from, desist. (59:7)

It is therefore your duty to put on trousers while sitting; put on a turban while standing; start with your right foot when putting on sandals; eat with your right hand; clip your nails by starting from the index finger of the right hand and finishing with its thumb; and for the foot, starting with the little toe of the right foot and finishing with the little toe of the left; and to follow like this in all of your movements and stillness. Indeed, Muḥammad ibn Aslam would not

eat watermelon because the way Allāh's Messenger ﷺ ate it was never transmitted. Once a person forgot and put on a leather sock by starting with his left foot, so he made penance for it with a *kurr*¹³² of wheat. A person should therefore not slack regarding such things and say, "This is something related to habits, so following is not important in respect of it"; for truly, that closes on you one of the great doors to happiness.

[ON THE MOTIVATING REASONS FOR FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH]

Perhaps you now desire to understand the motivating reason for following in regards to these actions, and consider it farfetched that behind them is some secret or important matter that warrants this tremendous harshness against contradicting the Sunnah.

Know that mentioning and explaining the secret in regards to one of these *sunan* would be too long for this book. However, you should understand that it comprises three categories of secrets:

The first: We have already taught you those places wherein there is a relationship between the outer dominion and the spiritual realm, between the limbs and the heart, and how the heart is affected by the deeds of the limbs. Truly, the heart is like a mirror—the realities of things do not manifest upon it except by its polishing, illumination, and straightening.

Polishing is achieved by the removal of filthy desires and the residue of blameworthy characteristics. Illumination is by the lights of remembrance and realisation; this is assisted by sincere worship—when offered with complete sanctification according to the Sunnah.

As for straightening, it is that you conform all the limbs' movements to the law of justice, for the hand does not reach the

heart unless you intend its straightening. Thus, you start to position it in a straight and correct form, without any crookedness in it. The heart can only be dealt with by means of straightening the limbs and straightening their movements. For this reason, the material world is a plot of farmland for the afterlife, and the sorrow is immense for whoever dies before straightening, because the path to straightening is closed at death. Then, the relationship between the heart and the limbs is cut off.

When the scale of justice weighs the movements of the limbs (and the movement of passing thoughts also), then a straight, even form occurs to the heart, by which it is prepared to receive realities according to the qualities of soundness and uprightness—just like a straightened mirror is prepared for the reflections of sound images without any crookedness.

The meaning of justice is to put things in the proper places. For example, there are four directions, and the direction of the prayer has been especially honoured. Justice is to face the direction of prayer while making remembrance, worshiping, or performing ablution; and to turn away from it when you answer the call of nature or expose the private parts, as a way of manifesting the virtue of that which is clearly virtuous.

The right usually has some superiority over the left, due to its strength; justice is therefore to prefer it over the left, and use it for noble deeds such as handling the Qur'ānic text or food, and to leave the left for cleaning one's self or handling repulsive things.

For example, clipping the nails is purification for the hand and ennoblement. A person should begin with the best and most noble; yet perhaps your intellect does not independently grasp the order and way to begin for that. Therefore follow the Sunnah in regards to it and begin with the right index finger, for the hand is better than the foot, the right is better than the left, and the index finger which signals testimony to Allāh's Oneness is better than the rest of the fingers. After that, proceed from the right of the index finger. (The palm has a back and a face, and its face is that which is opposite it. If you make the palm the face of the hand, then the right side of the index finger will be alongside the middle finger. Imagine the faces of the two hands are opposite one another, with the fingers like persons.) Go around with the clippers starting with the right index until you finish with the right thumb. This is how Allāh's Messenger ﷺ did it, and the wisdom of it is what we have mentioned.

If you become habituated to a concern for justice in slight movements, justice and soundness will have a firmly grounded stature in your heart and your form will be even. By this, you will be prepared to receive the form of happiness, which is why Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾

...when I have evened him out and blown My Spirit into him.

(15:29; 38:72)

The Spirit of Allāh is the key to the gates of happiness, and it blows only after evenness is attained. The meaning of evenness derives from straightening, and behind it is a secret whose revelation would take too long; we only wish to allude to its foundation.

If you are not capable of understanding this reality, then try it out and it will benefit you. Look at someone who has become habituated to truthfulness and how you usually believe his dreams. That is because truthfulness has become positioned in his heart, and correctly gathers affairs of the unseen during sleep. Look at how you deny the dream of a habitual liar—or, for that matter, the dream of a poet. This is because he is habituated to false figments of the imagination, so the form of his heart is crooked.

If you wish to behold the holy, then abandon both outer and inner sins; morally repugnant acts, whether obvious or hidden; and lying, even when just talking to yourself.

The second secret is for you to know that for those things that affect your body, their effect is apprehended through a kind of relationship with heat, cold, moisture, or dryness. Take for example your statement, “Honey is harmful to an overheated person, but something cool is beneficial to his temperament.” Among them also are things that are not comprehended through analogy, and these are called special properties. These special properties cannot be understood by analogy; rather, the starting point for understanding them is revelation and inspiration. For instance, magnetism attracts iron, and scammony attracts the humor of yellow bile from the recesses of the veins—not according to analogy, but by a special property discovered through inspiration or experience. The majority of special properties come to be known by inspiration, as are the majority of effects found in medicine, as well as other special properties.

In the same way, know that the effect of deeds on the heart is divided into that which relates to the heart in a manner that is understood—like your knowledge that following worldly desires reinforces a person’s relationship with this world, so that he will exit

from the world with his head turned, facing it because it contains that which he loves. Alternatively, like your knowledge that constantly remembering Allāh ﷻ reinforces fellowship with Him ﷻ and necessitates love, such that the pleasure of remembrance is magnified when departing from the world and meeting Allāh ﷻ. The amount of pleasure experienced is commensurate to the amount of love, and the amount of love is commensurate to the amount of knowledge and remembrance.

Among deeds are those that affect preparedness for happiness or sadness in the afterlife by a special property that has no analogy—only the light of prophethood can comprehend it. Hence, if you see that the Prophet ﷺ has turned from one permissible thing to another and preferred it, despite being able to do the other, then know that by the light of prophethood, he is cognizant of a special property in the latter that was revealed to him from the spiritual realm. As he ﷺ said: “O people, Allāh ﷻ has indeed commanded me to teach you from what He has taught me, and to refine you with what He has refined me. None of you should talk much when making love, for verily muteness of the child comes from it. None of you should look at the private part of his wife while he is making love to her, for verily blindness comes from it. None of you should kiss his wife while he is making love to her, for verily deafness of the child comes from it. None of you should stare at semen, for verily the loss of intellect comes from it.”¹³³

This is an example of what we have mentioned. It is our intention to alert you to his ﷻ cognizance of the special properties of things in addition to worldly affairs, so that you may see it as analogous with his ﷻ cognizance of what—through a special property—has an effect on eternal happiness and sorrow.

Do not allow yourself to be satisfied with believing the physician Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā ar-Rāzī in whatever he mentions about the special properties of things regarding cupping, minerals, and remedies; while at the same time disbelieving the Master of Humanity, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ﷺ in whatever he informed about—knowing that he ﷺ has been made privy to the higher dimension and all of its secrets. This will teach you the importance of following the Sunnah—even when the specific aspect of its wisdom is not understood—in the manner that we have mentioned in regards to the first secret.

The third secret is that human happiness is in resembling the angels by withdrawing from desires; breaking the ego that commands evil; and distancing oneself from any resemblance of an aimless and heedless beast that abandons itself to following its desire, according to what its nature dictates without any restraint.

Whenever a human being becomes habituated to doing whatever he wants without restraint in regards to every matter, he becomes accustomed to following his desires and wants, and the attribute of a beast overcomes his heart. Thus, it is in his benefit for all of his movements to be harnessed with a bridle that prevents him from this or that path, so that his ego does not forget slavehood or adherence to the Straight Path. The effect of slavehood on him will be apparent in every move, since he does nothing according to his nature, but rather, according to the Divine Command. Thus, in all of his states and despite the vicissitudes of time, he will continue to give precedence to certain matters over others.

Whoever places his bridle in the hand of a dog—for example—until his behavior and moving back and forth are not according to the dictate of his nature but rather according to another’s dictate, his

ego is more upright and closer to accepting real conditioning than he who puts his bridle in the hand of his desire and lets loose like a beast.

There is a tremendous secret behind this in regards to purification of the self, and this benefit is made attainable by the lawgiver's  implementation, according to the manner in which he implemented it. Any aphoristic benefit or special property does not change according to implementation; however, this does change with implementation, for indeed the objective is to not be free to choose. That happens by preventing one of the two sides, whichever side it may be. Through the likes of this, the differences within Revealed Law are conceivable, because it is the fruit of implementation. These three lessons will suffice you concerning the virtue of adhering to the Sunnah in every movement and stillness.

[ON ABANDONING THE SUNNAH IN ACTS OF WORSHIP
WITHOUT AN EXCUSE]

The aforementioned encouragement to follow the Sunnah was in regards to habits. As regards acts of worship, I do not know of any reason for abandoning the Sunnah without an excuse, except hidden disbelief or manifest stupidity.

To clarify: If the Prophet  said: "Prayer in congregation is better than prayer in solitude by twenty seven degrees", how can a believer allow himself to abandon it without an excuse? Of course, the reason for that is either stupidity or heedlessness for not reflecting on this immense difference.

Whoever considers another to be stupid if he prefers one to two, how could he not consider himself stupid if he prefers one to twenty

seven—especially with regard to the pillar of the religion and the key to eternal happiness?!

As for disbelief, it is for a person to think that the difference is not like that in reality, and that he  only mentioned it to motivate people to pray in congregation—for what is the relation between the congregation and this particular number from among all the other numbers? This is hidden disbelief. It might be rolled up in the chest without a person even feeling it.

How great is the foolishness of someone who believes the astrologist and the physician in regards to matters more farfetched than that, yet does not believe the Prophet  who has been exposed to the secrets of the spiritual realm! If the astrologist said to you: “At the completion of 27 days from the first change of your astrological sign you will be afflicted with a calamity, so be cautious on that day and stay in your house,” you would not cease to feel uneasy during that period and would leave all of your work. If you were to ask the astrologist about the reason for it, he would undoubtedly say to you: “I estimated it to be in this period because there are 27 degrees between the astrological sign’s degree and the position of Saturn, so with every degree the calamity is postponed for a day or a month.”

If it is said to you that this is silliness by the person who holds it—since the two matters are unrelated—and that therefore you should not believe him, your heart would not be void of feeling. You would say, “There are incredible things in the actions of Allāh ﷻ whose relationships with one another are unknown. Perhaps their special properties are not perceptible. It is known through experience that they have an effect even if their relations are unknown.” However, if the affair goes back to a prophetic report about the unseen, you deny the likes of these special properties and seek the explicit relation. Is there any reason for this except a hidden idolatry? No! Rather it is manifest disbelief, for there is no other interpretation for it besides this.

The reason for all of this laziness is that the matter of your afterlife does not concern you. Indeed, when the matter of your worldly life concerns you, you are cautious about it by heeding the statement of the astrologist and the physician and by doubt, optimism, and matters whose mutual interrelatedness is extremely farfetched. You conform to farfetched interpretations because you obsess over the mere thought of something bad happening. If you were to reflect, you would know that this degree of caution is more appropriate concerning the eternal consequence.

If you were to ask regarding what kind of works the Sunnah should be followed, I would say: In everything for which the Sunnah has been transmitted. The reports concerning it are many, such as his ﷺ statement: “Whoever performs bloodletting (*ḥijāmah*) on Saturday or Wednesday will be afflicted with leprosy, so let him blame no one but himself.”¹³⁴ One scholar of ḥadīth performed bloodletting on Saturday, saying, “This is a weak ḥadīth;” yet he was afflicted with leprosy which became so severe that he saw Allāh’s

Messenger ﷺ in his sleep and complained to him. He ﷺ said: “Why did you do bloodletting on Saturday?” He replied: “Because the narrator of the ḥadīth was weak.” He ﷺ then said to him: “Was it not transmitted from me?” He said: “We repent O Messenger of Allāh!” So Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ prayed for him to be healed and he woke up with what had afflicted him gone.

He ﷺ also said: “Bloodletting is a remedy for a year for whoever does it on a Tuesday, if it falls on the 17th of the month.”¹³⁵ He ﷺ said: “Whoever sleeps after the late afternoon prayer loses his reason, so let him blame no one but himself.”¹³⁶ He ﷺ also said: “If the strap of one of your sandals unties, then do not walk in just one tied sandal, but fix the other.”¹³⁷ He ﷺ said: “When a woman gives birth, the first thing she should eat afterwards is ripe dates. If there are none, then dried dates; for indeed, if there were anything better than dates, Allāh ﷻ would surely have fed Mary with it when she gave birth to Jesus ﷺ.”¹³⁸ He ﷺ also said: “If one of you is offered a sweet, then let him take it. If one of you is offered scent, then let him take it.”¹³⁹ There are many examples of this regarding ordinary practices, and not one of them is devoid of some secret.

Epilogue

THE ORDER OF LITANIES (*AWRĀD*) IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TEN PRINCIPLES

Know that among these acts of worship that we have detailed are those that can be joined together, such as fasting, prayer, and recitation of the Qur'ān; as well as those that cannot be joined together, such as recitation of the Qur'ān and remembrance of Allāh, or upholding people's rights and prayer.

The most important of your affairs should be dividing up your time according to the types of good actions, from your morning until your evening and from your evening until your morning. You should know that the purpose of all acts of worship is to reinforce fellowship with Allāh ﷻ through remembrance of Him, in order to turn towards the eternal abode and to shun the abode of delusion. No one rises to the eternal abode except he who comes to Allāh ﷻ loving Him, and no one loves Him except he who knows Him and mentions Him frequently. Neither knowledge nor love occurs except by constant thinking and remembrance, and remembrance does not remain constant in the heart except with reminders—which are those acts of worship that involve all times of the day consecutively. Their variety increases the effect of remembrance, prevents boredom, and removes the effect of constancy upon the heart that results in habituation.

Yes, if you were completely infatuated and enthralled with Allāh ﷻ, you would not need to order litanies. Rather, your litany would be one: that is, constant remembrance—and I do not think you are

like that; for indeed, the matter requires great resolve. Therefore, if you are not infatuated and enthralled with Him, then you must order your litanies. One of the litanies is from the time you wake up from sleep until the rising of the sun. During this noble time after finishing the prayer, you should combine remembrance, supplication, recitation of the Qur'ān, and contemplation. Truly, each one of these has a different effect on illumining the heart. You will know the way to do this and its details from the books: *The Beginning of Guidance* and "The Book of Ordering Litanies" from *Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

Do likewise between sunrise and noon, between noon and sunset, and between sunset and nightfall. Truly, these are among the noblest of times, because energy is only present when you can distinguish the litany of each time so that you may in each time be in another act of worship, moving from this one to that one. This is if you are from among the devout worshippers.

If you are a teacher, student, or governor, then preoccupation with that during the daytime is better than rituals of the body, because the foundation of the religion is the knowledge through which the magnification of Allāh's ﷻ Command is attained, and the benefit that emerges from having compassion for Allāh's ﷻ creation.

This applies if you work in a particular vocation and provide for others—since upholding the rights of your dependents through permissible earnings is better than rituals of the body. However, in all of that, you should not be devoid of or depart from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. Rather, you should be like the blindly devoted person is with his lover, who is compelled to work due to the necessity of the time. Hence, he works with his body; yet he is absent from his work and his heart is present with his lover.

It has been told about Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Jurjānī ﷺ that he used to always work with a shovel. He used to say: “We have been given a hand, a tongue, and a heart—the hand is for work, the tongue is for the creation, and the heart is for the Truth.” We will limit our discussion on outer acts of obedience to this; for therein is enough, if Allāh ﷻ wills.

Part Three

PURIFYING THE HEART FROM BLAMEWORTHY CHARACTERISTICS



Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى﴾

He who purifies it is surely successful. (87:14)

Purification here means cleansing. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “Purity is half of faith.”¹⁴⁰ So understand from this that the perfection of faith is in purifying the heart from what Allāh ﷻ does not like, and adorning it with what Allāh ﷻ loves. Purity is half of faith; yet how can one be busy with purification while not knowing what is filthy? We shall therefore mention the blameworthy character traits, which are many; however, the branches derive from ten principles.

The First Principle
GLUTTONY
(*SHARAH AT-TA'ĀM*)

Gluttony is among the greatest sources of harm to the religion, for the stomach is the wellspring of desires. From it derives the desire of the genitals. Then, if the desire for food and sex becomes overpowering, another desire comes forth: love of wealth—for one cannot attain the fulfillment of the first two desires except through it. Then desire for fame derives from desire for wealth—for it is difficult to acquire wealth without it.

Upon attaining fortune and fame, or seeking them, all spiritual diseases—such as pride, ostentation, envy, hate, enmity, and others—crowd together. The origin of all of that is the stomach. For this reason, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ attached great importance to (voluntary) hunger, saying: “There is no practice more beloved to Allāh than hunger and thirst.” He also said: “He who stuffs his belly will not enter heaven’s realm,” and: “The master of all actions is hunger.” He (may the best blessings and peace be upon him) also said: “Contemplation is half of worship, and small portions of food is worship itself.” He ﷺ also said: “The best of you to Allāh ﷻ is he who reflects and is hungry the longest. The most loathsome of you to Allāh ﷻ is anyone who eats, drinks, and sleeps excessively.”

He ﷺ also said: “The son of Ādam does not fill a vessel worse than his belly. A few bites to strengthen his back are enough. If there is no getting away from it, then a third (of his belly) is for his food, a third for his drink, and a third for his breath.”¹⁴¹ He ﷺ also said:

“Verily, Satan flows through the son of Ādam like the flow of blood; so let him tighten his paths with hunger and thirst.”¹⁴² He ﷺ said to ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ: “Continuously knock on the Gate of Paradise and it will be opened for you.” She said: “How do I knock continuously?” He ﷺ said: “With hunger and thirst.” He ﷺ also said: “Eat and drink for only half of your bellies; for indeed, it is a part of prophethood.”¹⁴³

[THE BENEFITS OF HUNGER]

Perhaps you desire to know the secret of attaching great importance to hunger, and the aspect of its relation to the path of the afterlife. Know that it has many benefits, yet their foundations go back to seven:

The first of them is clarity of the heart and keen insight; for indeed, satiation begets idiocy and blinds the heart. He ﷺ said: “Whoever deprives his belly, his thinking is greater and his heart is perceptive.” It is well known that the key to happiness is knowledge, which is not attained except with clarity and illumination of the heart. For this reason, to be hungry is to knock on the Gate of Paradise.

The second is softness of the heart, to the extent that one feels the pleasure of conversing [with Allāh] and being affected by remembrance and worship. Junayd (may Allāh have mercy on him and benefit us through him) said: “One of you will make a barrier between his self and Allāh ﷻ with food, and then desire to find the sweetness of conversing with Allāh ﷻ!” You well know that the states of the heart—whether fear and apprehension, softness and intimacy, or brokenness and awe—are from the keys of the Gates of

Paradise (even if the gate of knowledge is above these), and hunger is a way of knocking at these gates as well.

The third is the humbling of the ego and the removal of arrogance and imperiousness from it. Nothing breaks the ego like hunger. Imperiousness calls to heedlessness of Allāh ﷻ, which is a gate to hell and sorrow. To be hungry is to close that gate, and in closing the gate of sorrow is the opening of the gate of happiness. For this reason, when the world was presented to the Prophet ﷺ he said: “No. I would rather be hungry one day and sated another day; for if I am hungry, I am patient and humble; and if I am sated, I am grateful.”¹⁴⁴

The fourth is that tribulation is from the Gates of Paradise, because tribulation is to experience the taste of torment, through which dread of torment in the afterlife increases. A human being cannot torment himself with anything in the way that he can with hunger; for indeed, he needs no affectation for it (and other benefits are connected to it as well). Through hunger, he constantly experiences Allāh’s ﷻ tribulation, which exhorts to compassion and feeding the needy; whereas the sated is heedless of the hungry person’s pain.

The fifth, which is one of the greatest benefits, is breaking the other desires (which are the wellsprings of disobedience) and conquering the dictatorial ego. Dhū'n-Nūn  said: "I have never been sated without either disobeying or considering disobedience." As for the genitals' desires, their danger is well known. Hunger is enough to quell their evil. Whoever is sated does not control his genitals. If conscience prevents him, he still does not control his eyes—for like the genitals, the eyes fornicate. All acts of disobedience committed by the seven limbs are because of the strength attained through satiation.

A wise man once said: "No desire whatsoever will interfere with anyone (desirous of Allāh's pleasure) who endures eating nothing but plain bread for a year. When he eats for only half his belly, Allāh  will lift the burden of lusting for women from him." 'Ā'ishah  said: "The first innovation to occur after Allāh's Messenger  was satiation. Verily, if a people's bellies are sated, their egos defy them and turn to the world."¹⁴⁵

The sixth is lightness of the body for prayer vigils and worship, and the removal of sleep that prevents worship. Indeed, the capital of happiness is one's lifespan. Sleep detracts from one's lifespan, thus preventing worship, and its foundation is excessive eating. Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī said: "Six traits enter the character of whoever is sated—losing the sweetness of worship; difficulty in memorising wisdom; no compassion for the creation (because if he is sated, he thinks that all of creation is sated); heaviness of worship; increase of desires; and hanging around garbage while the rest of the believers hang around mosques."

The seventh is lightness of [financial] burden, the ability to be satisfied with a little from the world, and the ability to prefer

poverty. Truly, whoever is satisfied with little is freed from gluttony and does not need much money; most worldly aspirations are thereby rendered obsolete. Whenever he wants to take a loan to fulfill his belly's desire, he instead takes from his self and abandons the belly's desire. Whenever it was said to Ibrāhīm ibn Adham  that a thing was too expensive, he would reply: "Cheapen it with abandonment!"¹⁴⁶

[HOW TO REDUCE EATING]

Perhaps you say: "Satiation and eating a lot has become normal to me, so how do I leave it?" Know that doing so is easy for whoever wants to do it gradually. This means simply decreasing a little bit from the food one eats daily, until in a month's time the amount of a bun or a roll has been decreased without being noticeable, and minimizing food has become normal. Furthermore, if you desire to minimize, then you should pay attention to time, amount, and type.

As for amount, it has three degrees. The highest of them—which is the degree of the truthful ones—is limiting consumption to bare sustenance, after which any further decrease entails taking a risk with one's mind or health. That was the choice of Sahl at-Tustarī, who was of the opinion that to pray sitting due to weakness from hunger was better than to pray standing through strength from eating.

The second is for you to be satisfied with half a *mudd* everyday, which is one third of the belly. This was the habit of 'Umar  and a group of the Companions, whose weekly amount of food was one measure (ṣā') of barley each.

The third is one *mudd*; anything above that is the same as normal people and a deviation from the way of the sojourners to Allāh —

although differences between people and conditions may affect these amounts. The principle is for a person to extend his hand only when he is truly hungry, and thereafter to desist when he truly desires more. The sign of true hunger is that you desire any bread whatsoever without condiments. If it is hard to eat without condiments, then this is a sign of satiation.

As for time, it also comprises three degrees. The highest is to go for three days or more without food. Aṣ-Ṣiddīq  used to go for six days, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham and ath-Thawrī for seven, and one even went for forty days. The wonders of the spiritual realm will undoubtedly manifest to whoever goes for forty days without food; however, this is not possible except gradually.

As for the middle degree, it is to go for two days without food. The lowest is for a person to eat once daily. Whoever eats twice has never experienced the condition of hunger from the outset, and has thus abandoned its virtue.

As for type, the highest form is wheat bread with condiments. The lowest form is barley bread without condiments, and to constantly eat it with condiments is extremely disliked. ‘Umar  said to his son: “Eat bread with meat one time, bread with butter another time, bread with yogurt another time, bread with salt another time, and plain bread another time.” This is a lesson on the best way of eating according to the people of worship.

As for sojourners on the path, they have gone to an extreme in regards to abandoning condiments—rather, in abandoning desires altogether. This is to the extent that some of them would crave a desirable thing for ten or twenty years, oppose his self, and prevent it from its desire. The Prophet  said: “The worst of my community are those who relish in food and their bodies are

fattened by it. Their only concern is the colors of food and clothes, and they talk with affectation.”¹⁴⁷ We have already explained the way of the pious predecessors in regards to abandoning desires, in the book “Breaking the Two Desires” from *The Revival*.

The Second Principle
LOQUACIOUSNESS
(*SHARAH AL-KALĀM*)

There is no choice but to cut it out; for indeed, the deeds of all of the limbs affect the heart, but the tongue especially so. This is because it conveys the images that are within the heart. Thus, for every word there is an image in the heart that corresponds to it. If it is a lie, then a false image occurs in the heart and misdirects it. If it is something pointless and unnecessary, then the heart is blackened and made dark; until ultimately, excessive speech leads to the death of the heart. For this reason Allāh's Messenger ﷺ attached great importance to the tongue, saying: "Whoever can guarantee for me what is between his jaws and his legs, I can guarantee Paradise for him."¹⁴⁸ He was once asked about what would cause most people to enter the Fire and he said: "The two orifices—the mouth and the female private part."¹⁴⁹

He ﷺ said: "Are people turned on their noses in Hell for anything other than the harvest of their tongues?"¹⁵⁰ And: "Whoever is silent is saved."¹⁵¹ Mu'ādh once said to him: "What deed is the best?" The Prophet ﷺ stuck out his tongue, put his hand on it and said: "Surely the majority of the son of Ādam's sins are by his tongue."¹⁵² He ﷺ also said: "Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, he should speak good or be quiet"¹⁵³; and: "Whoever talks frequently blathers frequently, and whoever blathers frequently sins frequently. Whoever sins frequently, Hell is most fit for him."¹⁵⁴

Because of this, aṣ-Ṣiddiq  used to put a stone in his mouth to prevent himself from speaking.

Know that the tongue has twenty ailments that we have explained in “The Book of the Tongue’s Ailments” from *The Revival*. Mentioning them here would take too long, and acting upon one verse will suffice you. Allāh  said:

﴿لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نُّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ
أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ﴾

There is no good in much of their conversation except for he who commands charity, good, or reconciliation between people. (4:114)

This means that you do not speak about whatever does not concern you, and limit your speech to what is important. Therein is salvation. Anas  said: “A young man among us was martyred on the day of Uhud and a stone was found tied to his belly from hunger. His mother wiped the dust from his face and said: ‘Enjoy your place in Paradise, O my little son!’ So Allāh’s Messenger  said: ‘Do you not realise that maybe he used to speak about what did not concern him and withhold what it would not harm him to give?’”¹⁵⁵ The definition of what does not concern one is that which—if left—no reward is lost by it, nor any need fulfilled by it.

Whoever limits his speech to this will speak only a little. The slave should account for himself whenever he mentions what does not concern him. If he were to remember Allāh  instead of uttering that word, it would be a treasure from the treasures of happiness. How, then, can reason allow the abandonment of a buried treasure and take hold of a pile of mud? This is in the case of

there not being any sin involved. If sin were involved, then it is like leaving a buried treasure and taking hold of a flame. Speech that should be of no concern to anyone includes tales of travel, types of cuisine in different countries and their customs, the states of people, and the states of industry and business, all of which people are seen delving into.

Perhaps you would like to know the details of some of these ailments of the tongue. Know that there are five of the twenty ailments that predominate—lying, backbiting, arguing, praising, and joking.

The first is lying. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "The slave will not cease to lie and be bent on lying, until he is written as a pathological liar with Allāh."¹⁵⁶ He ﷺ also said: "Woe to he who talks and lies to make people laugh! Woe to him, woe to him!"¹⁵⁷ It was said: "O Messenger of Allāh! Does the believer fornicate? Does the believer steal?" He said: "That could be the case." So it was said: "Does he lie?" He said: "No. Only those who do not believe in Allāh's signs make up lies."¹⁵⁸

He also said: "Shall I not teach you about the greatest of major sins? Ascribing a partner to Allāh and disobeying parents." He was leaning back, then sat up and said: "And speaking falsehood!"¹⁵⁹ He ﷺ said: "Allāh will seal the believer upon any characteristic except treachery and lying."¹⁶⁰

[ON SOME OF THE RULINGS ON LYING]

Know that lying is unlawful in regards to everything except a dire need, to the extent that a woman once said to her small son: "Come here so I can give you something." The Prophet ﷺ said: "What were you going to give him if he came to you?" She said: "A date."

He replied: “If you had not done so, it would have been written against you as a lie.”¹⁶¹

A person should beware of lying, even in his imagination and inner thoughts. Indeed, this establishes a crooked image in the consciousness until even a person’s dreams lie and the secrets of the spiritual realm are not revealed to him in his sleep. Experience bears witness to this.

Of course, a lie is permitted if the truth would lead to another prohibited thing that is worse than lying. Then it is permissible, just as eating a carcass is permissible if leaving it leads to something prohibited that is worse than eating it—which is the soul perishing. Umm Kulthūm  said: “Allāh’s Messenger did not permit lying about anything except three matters—a man saying something with the intent of reconciliation, a man saying something in war, and a man talking to his wife.”¹⁶²

This is because if an enemy were to find out about the secrets of war, he would prosecute more boldly. If a woman were aware of the secrets of her husband, a corruption greater than the corruption of lying would result. Likewise disputants between whom there is constant conflict and enmity—if reconciliation is possible by lying, then that is more appropriate.

This is what is related in the report. Similar to it is a person lying to protect another’s wealth from an oppressor or denying another’s secret, and even denying his own disobedience; for indeed, publicising and speaking openly about sin is forbidden. Also: denying his treachery to another in order to gladden his heart, and likewise denying to one wife that her co-wife is more beloved to him. Lying is not permissible to bring about greater wealth or status, which is what most people lie for.

Furthermore, if a person absolutely must lie, then he should equivocate if possible so that his consciousness does not become habituated to lies. If Ibrāhīm [an-Nakhā'ī] were sought in his home, he would say to his servant: "Tell him: 'Ask for him in the place of worship.'" ¹⁶³ As-Sha'bī used to draw a circle and say to his servant: "Put your finger inside and say: 'Not here.'"

Another used to excuse himself from the Commander, saying: "Since I parted with you I have not raised my side from the ground except for what Allāh ﷻ willed." Someone else used to deny what he had said by saying: "Truly Allāh ﷻ knows that I did not say any of that," equivocating negation by use of 'mā' [which signifies either negation or 'whatever'], while intending something else ¹⁶⁴.

Equivocation is permissible for a lighthearted purpose, like the Prophet ﷺ saying: "An old woman will not enter Paradise" ¹⁶⁵; "We will carry you on the child of a camel" ¹⁶⁶; and "There is whiteness in your husband's eye." ¹⁶⁷ These words suggest something that was not intended, which it is permissible to do with women and children to make them feel good by joking.

Similarly, a person who is prevented from eating should not lie and say that he does not want any food if he really wants to eat. Rather, he should equivocate. The Prophet ﷺ once said to a woman who made such a remark: "Do not combine lying with hunger." ¹⁶⁸

The second ailment is backbiting. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُّبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ
يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ﴾

Do not backbite others. Would one of you like to eat the corpse of his brother? You would detest it! (49:12)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Backbiting is worse than fornication.”¹⁶⁹ Allāh ﷻ revealed to Mūsā ﷺ: “Whoever dies repenting from backbiting, he will be the last person to enter Paradise. Whoever dies persisting in it will be the first person to enter the Fire.” The Prophet ﷺ said: “The night I was taken up, I came across a people who were scratching their faces with their nails. I said: ‘Who are they?’ It was said to me: ‘These are those who committed backbiting against people.’”¹⁷⁰

Know that the definition of backbiting according to how Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ clarified it is to mention something about your brother that he would dislike if it were to reach him—even if you are truthful. This is the same whether you mention a deficiency in his person, mind, clothes, actions, statements, lineage, home, riding animal, or anything that relates to him. Even if you were to say: “His sleeves are too loose”, or “His hem is too long”. Once, a man was mentioned in front of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ. It was said: “He is so incompetent!” The Prophet said: “You have backbitten him.”¹⁷¹ Once, ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ signaled with her hand that a woman was short, so Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “You have backbitten her.”¹⁷² Through this, it is known that backbiting is not limited to the tongue; rather, there is no difference between communicating with the hand, a symbol, a signal, a movement, mocking, or equivocation—like saying: “Some of our relatives and some of our friends are such and such.”

Know that the filthiest kind of backbiting is the backbiting of the scholars, who say for example: “All praise is to Allāh who did not test us with coming before the sultan and seeking the world”; or: “We seek refuge in Allāh from having little modesty”. They understand what is implied by that and say: “How excellent the state of so and so would be if he had not been tested with the likes of what his peers were tested with—i.e. having little patience concerning the world—and we ask Allāh ﷻ to save us.” They intend backbiting through this. Thus, they combine backbiting and ostentation with dissemblance of the righteous in warning about backbiting and ostentation. These scoundrels are actually deluded by backbiting and think that they have abandoned it.

Likewise, someone may backbite another while those present are unaware. He will say: “Glory to Allāh! This is incredible!” So people listen up and he uses the remembrance of Allāh to assert his filth, saying: “My heart is busy with so and so—may Allāh accept both his and our repentance!” He does not intend to pray for him; rather, he intends to let others know about his sin. If he really wanted to pray for him, he would have concealed his supplication; and if his heart were really distressed for the person’s sake, he would have covered his flaw. Making it known is unlawful, because it is backbiting about an act of disobedience.

Likewise, the listener might show amazement at the words of the backbiter such that his excitement about backbiting increases. “The listener is one of the backbiters”, as Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said¹⁷³; so what about the listener who eggs the backbiter on through his amazement?!

Likewise, a person might say: “Stop backbiting people”; yet in his heart, he does not dislike backbiting. His sole intention is to be

known for piety. However, this does not remove him from the sin of backbiting, so long as he does not detest it in his heart; it also involves him in the sin of ostentation. Rather, what removes him from sin is to detest it in his heart, reject the backbiter, and not believe him in his heart. The open sinner deserves to be rejected, and the Muslim who is backbitten deserves to have a good opinion of him maintained. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Surely Allāh ﷻ has made the blood, wealth, and honour of a Muslim inviolable, and proscribed that he should be held in bad opinion." Backbiting with the heart is unlawful, just as it is unlawful with the tongue, unless a person is forced to know (of another's faults) and it is impossible to ignore.

[THE PLACES IN WHICH BACKBITING IS LICENSED]

Backbiting is licensed in only six places:

The first of them is the oppressed mentioning the oppression of the oppressor to the sultan, in order to repel his oppression. As for mentioning it to other than the sultan, or to someone incapable of repelling it, then it is backbiting. Al-Ḥajjāj was backbit according to one of the pious predecessors, who said: "Allāh will indeed take vengeance for al-Ḥajjaj on the one who backbit him, just as he will take vengeance on al-Ḥajjaj for the one whom he oppressed."

The second is someone with whom aid is sought in changing an evil. It is permissible for a person to mention something to him also.

The third is the muftī, if a person needs to mention something for a question—just as Hind said: "Abu Sufyān is indeed a stingy man. He does not give me what suffices my child and me. Should I then take without him knowing?" He [ﷺ] said: "Take what suffices you and your child according to custom."¹⁷⁴ She mentioned stinginess

and oppression yet Allāh's Messenger ﷺ did not censure her. All of this is complaining; however, it is permissible if there is benefit in it.

The fourth is warning a Muslim about another's evil if one knows that not mentioning it will result in that person's testimony being accepted—just as a person bearing witness in favor of someone mentions things. This is the case when someone engaging in business with or marrying that person would be harmed by them. Therefore, a person should mention something only to whomever he expects would be harmed.

The fifth is when a person is known by a name in which there is some deficiency, such as 'blear-eyed' or 'lame'. No sin has been committed by someone who mentions that, although using another name is more appropriate.

The sixth is when a person is open with his faults. He does not dislike for his faults to be mentioned, such as the effeminate or the owner of a brothel. Al-Ḥasan said: "There are three for whom there is no backbiting regarding them—the heretic, the sinner who is open with his sin, and the despotic ruler."¹⁷⁵ The commonality between these is that they all are open with their wrongdoing, so they do not dislike it being mentioned. According to the correct opinion, mentioning a sinner's act of disobedience that he conceals and would dislike being mentioned is not permissible without an excuse¹⁷⁶.

[METHODS FOR TREATING THE SELF AGAINST BACKBITING]

Treating the self in order to stop it from backbiting requires that a person reflect on the transmitted threat about it in his  statement: “Backbiting is surely faster in destroying the good deeds of the slave than fire when it consumes dry wood.” It is transmitted that the good deeds of the backbiter are transferred to the record of the one who was wronged through backbiting. The backbiter will look at the paucity of his good deeds and the abundance of his backbiting, and will shortly end up bankrupt.

Then a person should reflect on his own faults. If there is any fault in him, he should be busy with himself and no other—even if he has only committed a minor sin; for he knows that the harm done to him by his own minor sin is greater than that done to him by another’s major sin. If there is no fault in him, then he should know that his ignorance of his own faults is the greatest of all faults. When is the human being devoid of fault? If he is devoid of it, then he should thank Allāh  instead of backbiting; for truly, slandering people is like eating the flesh of a corpse, and eating the flesh of a corpse is from the greatest of all faults, so he should beware of it.

Whenever his tongue proceeds to backbite, he should seek Allāh’s  forgiveness, go to the one whom he was backbiting and say: “I have wronged you, please pardon me.” If he does not run into him, then he should increase his praise of him, increase his prayers for him, and increase his good deeds; so that if some of them are carried over to the record of the wronged—as it is the recompense of backbiting—what is sufficient for him will remain.

The third ailment is disputing and arguing. The Prophet  said: “Whoever abandons disputing while he is right, a home is built for him in the highest part of Paradise. Whoever abandons it while he is wrong, a home is built for him on the outskirts of Paradise.”¹⁷⁷ This

is because it is more difficult for the person who is right to abandon making his point. He ﷺ also said: “The slave does not perfect his faith until he leaves off disputing, even though he is right.” The definition of disputing is to oppose another’s speech by pointing out the mistakes in it, whether explicitly or implicitly.

Disputation is motivated by excessive pride in displaying superiority. It is caused by either malign offhandedness or the wickedness of being confrontational that is found in one’s nature and looks forward to belittling and overcoming another. Disputing and arguing are a means of strengthening these two filthy and destructive characteristics. The necessary course of action is for a person to affirm whatever he hears that is right and be quiet about whatever he hears that is a mistake, unless it were in regards to mentioning a beneficial religious point that would be listened to coming from him. In that case, he should remind the other with gentleness—not harshness.

The fourth ailment is joking. Too much of it increases laughter, causes the heart to die, provokes malice, and does away with dignity and gravity. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily, a man will speak with a word to make those sitting with him laugh, and thereby drop further than the Pleiades.”¹⁷⁸ He ﷺ also said: “Do not dispute with your brother, nor [always] joke with him.”¹⁷⁹

Know that there is no harm in a little bit of it sometimes, especially with women and children in order to make them feel good. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ did that; however, he said: “I most certainly joke around, but I say nothing but the truth,”¹⁸⁰ and precisely regulating that is difficult for other than him. It has been narrated that he once raced ‘Ā’ishah ¹⁸¹, and he once said to an

elderly woman: “Old women do not enter Paradise,”¹⁸² i.e. they will not remain old in Paradise.

He once said to a little boy: “O Abū ‘Umayr, what did the sparrow do?”¹⁸³ The sparrow was a chick that the little boy used to play with. He  once said to Ṣuhayb while he was eating some dates: “You eat dates while one of your eyes is sore?” Ṣuhayb said: “I only eat with my other half,” and Allāh’s Messenger  laughed.¹⁸⁴ There is no harm in the likes of this kind of joking on the condition that it is not taken as a habit.

The fifth ailment is praising, as has become the habit of people and poets whenever visiting decent people from the sons of this world; and as has become the habit of storytellers, for they praise any fool who attends their gatherings. There are six ailments in regards to praising—four of them are in the one who praises, and two of them in the one who is praised. As for the one who praises, the first ailment in him is that he goes to extremes and thus mentions about a person something that is not in him, and is thereby a liar.

The second is that he might show love towards someone that he does not really feel, and thus is hypocritical and two-faced.

The third is that he says what he does not really know, and thus is speculating—such as if he were to say: “Indeed, so-and-so is just and pious,” or something else concerning what he does not really know. A man once praised another man in front of Allāh’s Messenger , so he said: “Woe to you! You have cut your companion’s neck. If one of you must praise his brother, then let him say: ‘I believe that so-and-so is like such-and-such, yet I praise no one over Allāh.’ Allāh will honour him if he really thought that the person was like that.”¹⁸⁵

The fourth is that he delights through it the one who is praised—who perhaps is a wrongdoer—and thus is disobedient by putting joy in his heart. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Indeed, Allāh is angered when an open sinner is praised.”¹⁸⁶ Al-Ḥasan رضي الله عنه said: “Whoever prays for the longevity of an open sinner has liked for Allāh ﷻ to be disobeyed.”¹⁸⁷ The openly sinful wrongdoer should be censured so that his desire for wrongdoing and sin is abated.

As for the one who is praised, one of the ailments in him is for pride or self-admiration to occur within him, which are both destructive. For this reason, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “You have cut your companion’s neck.”¹⁸⁸

The second is that he becomes happy with it, dwells on his deeds, and becomes pleased with himself. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “If a man were to threaten another man with a sharpened knife, it would be better for him than praising him to his face.”

If the praise is secure from these ailments in the one who praises and the one who is praised, then there is no harm in it and it might even be recommended. The Prophet ﷺ said: “If the faith of Abū Bakr was weighed with the faith of the world, his faith would outweigh it.”¹⁸⁹ He also said: “If I had not been sent, indeed you would have been, ‘Umar!’”¹⁹⁰ He praised many of his Companions رضي الله عنهم, as he knew that doing so would increase their zeal and not cause self-admiration in them.

[WHAT THE ONE WHO IS PRAISED SHOULD DO]

It is the right course of action for the one who is praised to think deeply about the seriousness of his final works, the subtleties of ostentation, and his evil deeds, and to recollect the inner flaws that

he knows about himself—especially his thoughts and inner dialogue that if only the one praising him knew, he would cease from praising him.

He should show a dislike for praise and hate it in his heart. The Prophet ﷺ alluded to this with his statement: “Throw dust in the face of the one who flatters excessively.”¹⁹¹ Someone once said when he was praised: “O Allāh! This slave of yours has sought to get close to me through Your Disdain, and with you as my witness I disdain him.”¹⁹² ‘Alī رضي الله عنه said when he was praised: “O Allāh! Forgive me for what they do not know; do not take me to task regarding what they say; and make me better than what they think.”¹⁹³

The Third Principle

ANGER

Know that anger is a flame taken from Allāh's Blazing Fire that rises over the hearts. Whoever it overcomes has adopted the stock of Satan; for indeed, he is a creature made of fire. Breaking extreme anger is one of the most important matters of the religion. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The fierce is not the one who can wrestle; the fierce is the one who controls his self when angered."¹⁹⁴ He also said: "Anger spoils faith like aloe spoils honey."¹⁹⁵ He also said: "No one has ever become angry except that he was on the brink of Hell."¹⁹⁶

A man once said: "O Messenger of Allāh! What is the fiercest thing in existence?" The Prophet replied: "The Wrath of Allāh ﷻ." The man asked: "What will keep me away from the wrath of Allāh ﷻ?" The Prophet replied: "That you do not become angry."¹⁹⁷ Another man once said to Allāh's Messenger ﷺ: "Suggest some practice to me, but make it simple;" so the Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not become angry." The man asked again a number of times and each time the Prophet ﷺ repeated: "Do not become angry."¹⁹⁸

How can the sickness of anger not be grave, when its outward manifestation entails violence, cursing, and insulting; while inwardly it entails hatred, envy, the harbouring of ill will and profanity, the intention to expose another or spread his secrets, joy at the suffering of the person with whom one is angry, and sadness when he is made happy? Each one of these filthy characteristics is destructive by itself!

[BREAKING ANGER AND CONTAINING IT WHEN
AGITATED]

You have to do two things to deal with anger: the first of them is breaking it by practice. By breaking it I do not mean removing it, for its basis cannot be done away with, nor should it be. On the contrary, if it is done away with, it is an obligation to retrieve it once more, because it is the instrument of fighting disbelievers and preventing objectionable conduct and a means to establishing much good. It is like a hunter's dog—its training is to be disciplined until it is directed by reason and the Sacred Law; thus, it is provoked only when signalled by reason or the Sacred Law and likewise abated. It never conflicts with them, just as the hunter's dog is under its master's direction. This is possible through persevering until you are habituated to patience and forbearance in the face of things that anger you.

The second is controlling anger whenever provoked by containing it, and this is facilitated by knowledge and practice. As for knowledge, it is for a person to know that there is no reason for his anger except his refusal to accept that things happen according to Allāh's Will and not his own—which is ignorant to the extreme. It is also for a person to know that Allāh's  Anger is greater than his anger, yet Allāh's Grace is even greater. How many times has he disobeyed Him and broken His commands? So why should he become angry when someone opposes him? Does he think that the conformity of his slave, family member, or associate to his command is more binding than his conformity to Allāh's Command? It is most certainly not!

As for knowledge, it is for a person to say: "I seek refuge in Allāh from Satan the Accursed," for he knows that anger is from Satan. If

it is not abated by that, then he sits down if he was standing or lies down if he was sitting, as has been narrated¹⁹⁹; because changing one's position is effective in abating anger. If it is still not abated, then he should perform ablution. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, anger is from Satan, and Satan was created from fire. Fire is put out by water, so if one of you is angry he should perform ablution."²⁰⁰

He also said: "Surely anger is a hot coal in the heart of the son of Ādam. Do you not see the redness of his eyes and the bulging of the veins in his neck? Whoever senses anything of that within himself should put his cheek to the ground."²⁰¹ This is an allusion to placing the dearest part of the body on the lowest place in order to break one's pride (for it is without doubt the foremost cause of anger), so that a person may realise that he is nothing more than a humble slave for whom pride is not fitting. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Verily, through forbearance a man will attain the same level of reward as someone who stands in prayer at night and fasts during the day, and will be recorded as being of overwhelming might despite having control only over his household."²⁰² He also ﷺ said: "Whoever contains his fury despite having the ability to unleash it if he wanted, Allāh ﷻ will fill his heart with security and faith on the Day of Resurrection."²⁰³ Also: "There is no act of concealment more beloved to Allāh than for a slave to contain his fury and swallow it down. There is no slave that does so, except that Allāh ﷻ fills his heart with faith."²⁰⁴

The Fourth Principle

ENVY (*AL-HASAD*)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Envy consumes good deeds just like fire consumes wood."²⁰⁵ He also said: "There are three things from which no one is saved—speculation, foreboding, and envy. I will talk to you about the way out of these: If you speculate, then do not verify; if you consider something foreboding, then continue onward; if you envy, then do not transgress."²⁰⁶ He ﷺ also said: "The sickness of the previous communities has spread to you: envy and hatred—and hatred is a razor."²⁰⁷ Zakariyyā ﷺ said: "Allāh ﷻ says: 'The envious person is the enemy of My Blessing, angered by My Decree, and displeased with the division that I have allocated between My slaves.'"²⁰⁸

Know that envy—which is to like for the blessing of another to be removed or for a calamity to befall him—is unlawful. Competition—which is to be happy for another and dislike for his blessing to be removed, yet desire the same thing for yourself—is not unlawful. It is also permissible to like for a blessing to be removed from someone who uses it for oppression and disobedience, because you do not want the removal of the blessing—rather, you want the removal of the oppression. The sign of this is that if he were to leave disobedience, you would not like the removal of his blessing.

Envy is caused by pride, enmity, or the evil of the ego (which is stingy concerning Allāh's ﷻ blessings on His slaves when they are not in its interest).

[HOW TO TREAT ENVY AND REMOVE IT FROM THE HEART]

Know that envy is one of the heart's greatest sicknesses, and only the combination of knowledge and practice can treat a sickness of the heart.

As for the knowledge-based treatment, it is that a person knows that his envy harms him and does not harm the one he envies; rather, it benefits him. It harms the envier by nullifying his good deeds and exposing him to Allāh's  Wrath; for the envier is angered by Allāh's Decree, and is stingy about the blessings from His Treasure-troves being spread out over His slaves. This is harmful to his religion.

It harms his worldly affairs in that he never ceases to be in constant distress and grief—which is what his adversary desires for him; for indeed, the most important objective and most perfect blessing for his enemy, is the sorrow of the envier. The latter had intended for his enemy to be tested with affliction, yet it happened to him. The envious person is never devoid of distress and affliction, while his adversaries (or at least one of them) never cease to be blessed.

As for him benefiting his adversary and not harming him, this is because the blessing will not go away due to his envying it. In addition, the envier multiplies the good deeds of the envied—since the former's good deeds are transferred to the latter. This is especially so if the envier is always speaking ill of the envied, who is in this case wronged by the envier. The envier has sought the removal of a worldly blessing from the envied; yet in fact, he has added to it a blessing in the afterlife, and obtained for himself a worldly punishment along with punishment in the afterlife. He is like the one who throws a stone at his adversary but fails to hit him. The stone bounces back, hits his eye, causing him to lose his sight, and increases

the malicious joy of his enemy—Iblīs. The blessing has surely been lost on him, as well as contentment with Divine Decree. If he had been content with it, there would have been a reward for it—especially if he was envious of knowledge or piety; for indeed, the reward of the lover of knowledge is magnified.

As for practice, it is that a person knows the ruling of envy and what it entails in regards to both statement and action. He thus opposes it and practices its opposite by praising the envied, showing joy because of his blessing, and being humble with him. Through this, the envied will become a friend to him, envy will depart, and he will be freed from his sin and his pain. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ﴾

Repel [a bad deed] with that which is better, and he for whom there is enmity between you and him will be as if he were a close friend.

(41:34)

Perhaps your ego does not obey you concerning equality between your adversary and your friend. Rather, you dislike what is bad for your friend but not for your adversary; you like blessings for your friend but not for your adversary; and you do not trouble yourself with what you have no power over. If you are unable to control that, then you must free yourself from sin with two things:

The first of them is that you do not manifest envy with your tongue, limbs, or voluntary actions. Rather, you oppose what envy entails. The second is that you dislike your ego's love for the removal of Allāh's ﷻ blessing on any of His slaves. If this dislike is religiously motivated but yet still coupled with the love of the removal of a blessing—as dictated by your natural disposition—then there is no sin upon you, nor must you change your natural disposition (for you surely will be unable to do so most of the time).

The sign of your dislike [for the removal of Allāh's ﷻ blessing] is that whenever you might be able to remove his blessing, you do not proceed to do so—despite wanting it. Also, if you were able to assist him in keeping his blessing or increasing it, you would do so—despite your dislike of that. There is no sin upon you concerning what your natural disposition dictates; for indeed, natural disposition becomes risky only in regards to the one infatuated with Allāh—he whose vision has been cut off from material things and the creation. He knows that this blessing does not benefit the one who has received it if ultimately he will be in Hell. If he will ultimately be in Paradise, then what is this blessing relative to Paradise? Rather, he sees all creatures as slaves of Allāh ﷻ, and loves them because they are slaves of his Beloved. He loves that the effect of his Beloved's blessings on His slaves is manifest, and this is a rare state that is not included under the rubric of moral responsibility.

The Fifth Principle

STINGINESS (*AL-BUKHL*) AND LOVE OF WEALTH (*HUBB AL-MĀL*)

Know that stinginess is among the great destructive traits. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Whoever is protected from the stinginess of his self, these are the successful ones. (59:9; 64:16)

He ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾

Those who are stingy with what Allāh has given them from His Bounty should not think that it is good for them. Rather, it is bad for them. On the Day of Resurrection they will be closed-in by what they were stingy with. (3:180)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ﴾

Those who are stingy and order people to be stingy (4:37; 57:24)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Beware of stinginess, for indeed it destroyed those who were before you.”²⁰⁹ He ﷺ said: “Liberality is a tree that grows in Paradise, and no one except the liberally generous person will get into Paradise. Stinginess is a tree that grows in Hell, and no one enters Hell except the stingy person.”²¹⁰ He ﷺ said: “There are three destructive things: stinginess that is obeyed, caprice that is followed, and a person admiring himself.”²¹¹ He ﷺ said: “The worst thing in a man is desperate stinginess and wanton cowardice.”²¹² The Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily, Allāh hates the stingy person in his life, and loves the liberally generous person at his death.”²¹³ He said: “The ignorant generous person is more beloved to Allāh than the devoutly worshipful stingy person.”²¹⁴ He ﷺ also said: “Stinginess and bad character are not combined in a believer.”²¹⁵

[THE FOUNDATION OF STINGINESS IS LOVE OF WEALTH]

Know that the foundation of stinginess is love of wealth, which is blameworthy. The stinginess of someone who has no wealth does not appear through withholding; rather, it appears through love of wealth. And perhaps a man is generous yet loves wealth; hence, he gives liberally so that he is remembered for generosity. This is also blameworthy, because the love of wealth distracts from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and turns the heart’s direction to the material world, thus strengthening a person’s relationship with it, until death—through which he will meet Allāh ﷻ—becomes hard on him.

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ﴾

*O you who have believed! Do not let your wealth or your children
distract you from Allāh's remembrance. (63:9)*

He ﷺ said:

﴿إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ﴾

Your wealth and your children are only a trial. (64:15)

He ﷺ also said:

﴿الْهَاجِمُ التَّكَاثُرُ﴾

The mutual seeking of gain has distracted you. (102:1)

He ﷺ said: "Do not take a villa and thus love the world."²¹⁶

It was said to the Prophet ﷺ: "Which part of your community is the worst?" He ﷺ replied: "The rich." He also said: "Whoever takes from the world over and above what suffices him has taken his death while he does not know."²¹⁷

A man said: "O Messenger of Allāh! I certainly do not like death!" He ﷺ said: "Do you have any wealth?" He said: "Yes." He ﷺ said: "Give up your wealth, for a man's heart is surely with his wealth. If he gives it up, he wants to catch up with it. If he holds it back, he likes for it to stay behind with him."²¹⁸

He said: "When the slave dies the angels say: 'What did he put forward?' The people say: 'What did he leave behind?'"²¹⁹ He also said: "The slave of the dinar has perished; the slave of the dirham has perished; the slave of the embroidered garment has perished and suffered repeatedly; and if he is pricked by a thorn it is not removed."²²⁰

[THE REALITY OF WEALTH IN RESPECT OF BLAME AND
PRAISE]

Know that wealth is not blameworthy from every aspect. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "How excellent is the useful wealth of a righteous man!"²²¹ He also said: "The world is a field for cultivating the afterlife."²²²

How could it be absolutely blameworthy when the slave is a traveller to Allāh ﷻ? The world is one stop along his journey, and his body is his vehicle, without which it is impossible for him to travel. It cannot survive without food and clothing, and there is no way to them except through wealth! However, anyone who understands the benefit of wealth, knowing that it is a tool for feeding the beast of burden in order to traverse the path, never turns his attention toward it; nor does he take from it anything besides the amount he needs for the journey. If he limits himself to that, he is happy with it—as the Prophet ﷺ said to 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها: "If you want to meet up with me, then be content with the traveller's provision from the world; and do not get a new garment or discard an old one until you wear holes in it."²²³ He ﷺ also said: "O Allāh! Make the food of Muḥammad's family only what they need to subsist."²²⁴

On the other hand, if a person exceeds the sufficient amount, he is destroyed—as he ﷺ said: "Whoever takes from the world above what suffices him has taken his death and is destroyed without even feeling it."²²⁵

Likewise is the traveller—if he takes more than what he needs for the road, he will die under its weight and never reach the destination of his travel. Adding to the sufficient amount is a destructive thing from three perspectives:

One of them is that it calls to acts of disobedience and puts one in a position to commit them; whereas it is from Divine Protection that one is unable [to commit a sin]. The trial of ease is greater than the trial of hardship, and having patience when one is able is much more difficult [than when one is unable].

The second is that it calls to indulging in permissible things (at the least). Then a person's body grows out of indulgence, so that he is incapable of forbearing without it. Such a lifestyle is impossible to maintain without the support of the creation and turning to wrongdoers for help. That calls to hypocrisy, lying, ostentation, enmity, and hatred—a host of destructive things stem from it. For this reason he ﷺ said: “Love of the world is the head of every transgression.”²²⁶

The third is that it distracts from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ—which is the basis of happiness in the afterlife—for it crowds the heart with the disputes of farmers, keeping account of partners, thinking of cautionary plans concerning them, planning how to increase wealth, how to first acquire it, preserve it secondly, and thirdly make use of it. All of this is from among those things that blacken the heart, remove its clarity, and distract it from remembrance—as Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿الْهَاجِمُ التَّكَاثُرُ﴾

The mutual seeking of gain has distracted you. . . (102:1 to the end of the sūrah)

[THE SUFFICIENT AMOUNT]

Perhaps you desire to know the sufficient amount and say: “There is no rich person who does not claim that what he possesses is a

sufficient amount.”

Know that necessity only calls for food and clothing. If you were to abandon beautification regarding clothes, then two dinars a year would suffice you for both winter and summer, with which you would buy a garment of rough material to protect you from the heat and the cold.

If you abandon indulging in your food and satiation with food under all circumstances, then a *mudd* every day is enough for you. That would be five hundred *ritl* every year. Approximately three dinars a year are enough for you in regards to condiments assuming that the prices are low. If not, then five dinars are sufficient. Five hundred *ritl* is what we approximate for the bachelor. If you have a family, then take for each member that amount²²⁷.

If you are an earner and make in a day what suffices you for that day, then turn your attention to and preoccupy yourself with worship. If you seek more, you will be among worldly people. If you are not an earner but are busy with studying or worship and have acquired some property that constantly generates income, then I hope that you do not become a worldly person—especially in these times when hearts have changed, stinginess has prevailed, and concern has been diverted from aiding the needy. In any case, acquiring this income is more appropriate than asking, yet on condition: that it is your desire to be free from subjection to hunger and cold, so that you may leave the property; also, that you do not dislike death, and do not love the property. The property should be the entry point of your food, just as the outhouse is its point of exit. You must only want it out of necessity, and desire to be free of it so as to get out of the prohibition in the Prophet’s  statement: “Do not take a villa and thus love the world.”²²⁸ Indeed, if you intend to rid yourself of it in order to

support the religion, then you are a well-prepared traveller, not someone overly-concerned with property.

Perhaps some people would not have the ability to be satisfied with the amount that we have mentioned—except with extreme difficulty and hardship. There is no harm (religiously-speaking) in doubling the amount; for it would not turn one into a child of the world, nor remove one from the party of the children of the afterlife travelling to Allāh ﷻ—so long as one intends thereby to repel the pain of hunger that could distract one from remembrance and worship, without indulging in the world. Furthermore, any food that is left over should be given to the poor and widows. After this, there is no excuse that calls for increase except indulgence, charity, or preparation for a calamity that might befall one's wealth.

Indulgence is a turning away from Allāh ﷻ and a preoccupation with the world. As for charity, abandoning wealth is better than it—as 'Īsā ﷺ said: "O seeker of the world for virtue's sake! For you to leave it is twice as virtuous."²²⁹ As for preparation due to fear of a calamity, there is nothing that can repel it when it is a bad opinion that has no end. Rather, one should repel it with a good opinion of Allāh's ﷻ Plan; that means picturing that a calamity will befall one's wealth from where it is not expected, and at the same time picturing that a new door of provision will open from where one does not expect it:

﴿وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ﴾

Whoever fears Allāh, He will make a way out for him and provide for him from where he does not expect. (65:2–3)

If the rare opposite is supposed, a slave should not believe that life-long security from all trials is praiseworthy. Rather, trial is what polishes, purifies, and rids the heart of all filthy things. For this reason, it is assigned to the prophets, then the saints, then whoever is most like them. Therefore rely upon the bounty of Allāh ﷻ, and know that nothing befalls you except that there is good in it; for truly, the Planner of creation and all its dimensions is more Knowledgeable of what is in your welfare.

[WEALTH IS LIKE MEDICINE]

What we have mentioned is an approximation. Increasing or decreasing it is possible, according to the endeavor of some people and in some states. However, you should believe absolutely that wealth is like medicine—a specific dosage of it is what benefits; overdosing kills; and getting close to an overdose will cause one to be ill though it does not kill. So be careful and take only a little, and avoid overdosing on luxury; for it is certainly a great danger. There is only a small element of difficulty in having less for a few days. It is not hard on a prudent person to deprive himself for the sake of a feast in Paradise, due to his knowledge that the degree of [future] pleasure is commensurate to the degree of hunger in the present.

[THE DEFINITION OF STINGINESS]

Perhaps you desire to know the definition of stinginess; for an individual may doubt as to whether or not he is stingy, and people differ about it.

Know that the definition of stinginess is to prevent what the revealed law or public respectability obligates. Do not think that someone who submits to his wife or his relative what the judge has

dictated but is uptight about giving a morsel beyond this is not stingy. Do not think either that someone who returns a piece of bread or meat to the baker or butcher because of a slight deficiency is not stingy, even if he has a right to do so legally-speaking; for the meaning of the revealed Law in regards to these matters is to end the disputes of stingy people over an amount that the stingy person can bear. That is why Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمْوهَا فَيُخْفِكُمْ تَبْخُلُوا﴾

If He were to ask you for it and press you, you would be stingy.
(47:37)

Indeed, it is necessary to comply with respectability and refute those who would speak ill, and that differs according to the differences of people and amount of wealth. If someone has wealth and is able to prevent his disparagement and censure by a poet with a small amount, yet does not do it, then he is stingy—even if it was not obligatory upon him. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whatever a person protects his honour with is charity.”²³⁰

To verify: wealth was created for a benefit and is possessed for that sake. There is also a benefit in spending it. Whenever the benefit of spending appears to be greater than the benefit of holding, yet it is difficult for a person to spend, then he is a stingy person who loves wealth. Wealth should not be loved for itself but rather for its benefit. Therefore it should be directed to the strongest of its benefits. Preservation of public respectability is better and stronger than indulging in much eating, for example.

Stinginess and love of wealth could lead to a person being ignorant of the strongest and most appropriate of two benefits. This is the utmost stinginess. If he knows, yet spending is still difficult on

him, then he is also stingy—even if he spends affectedly. Rather, a person frees himself from stinginess only when spending wealth on what it should be spent on (rationally and legally) does not weigh heavily on him. As for the level of liberal generosity, only spending in excess of both legal obligation and public respectability attains it.

[THE TREATMENT OF STINGINESS]

Perhaps you would like to understand the treatment of stinginess. Know that its remedy is a mixture composed of knowledge and practice. As for knowledge, it is that you know the destruction in store for the stingy person in the afterlife and the censure connected to him in the world. It is also for you to know that wealth (assuming that it remains) does not follow you to your grave. Wealth is only for Allāh ﷻ. He enables one to possess it in order to use it for important matters. It is also for you to know that being spoken well of and receiving a reward in the afterlife is more delightful than withholding wealth for the sake of indulging in desires. Merely fulfilling desires is the nature of dumb beasts, while the former is the nature of rational people. If a person holds on to wealth for the sake of leaving it for his child, then it is as if he leaves him in goodness only to push himself forward to his Lord with evil. This is the essence of ignorance. How is this so? If his child is righteous, then Allāh ﷻ is enough for him. If he is a sinner, then he relies upon wealth to commit acts of disobedience and the parent is the cause of the child's empowerment to do them. Thus, he is harmed while another indulges!

As for practice, it is that a person forces himself to spend and does not cease to do so until it becomes a habit for him. Among a person's loopholes regarding this is that he should be duped by expectation of

a good name and anticipation of recompense, until he desires to spend. Thereafter, he graduates to subduing these qualities.

The Sixth Principle

FRIVOLITY (*AR-RU'ŪNAH*) AND LOVE OF STATUS (*HUBB AL-JĀH*)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا﴾

That is the abode of the afterlife. We have made it for those who want neither high status nor corruption on earth. (28:83)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Love of wealth and status grows hypocrisy in the heart like water grows plants.”²³¹ He ﷺ also said: “Love of wealth and status is more ruinous to a Muslim’s religion than two vicious wolves in a stable of sheep.”²³² He ﷺ said in praise of the low-profile person: “There are disheveled, dusty people in tattered clothes whom nobody pays attention to. If they were to swear to Allāh, He would fulfill it for them.”²³³ He ﷺ also said: “Verily, the person of Paradise is every disheveled, dusty person in tattered clothes whom nobody pays attention to. The one who, if he seeks permission to visit a leader, is denied; if he proposes to a woman, is not accepted for marriage; and if he says something, he is not listened to. Concern for his needs reverberates in his chest. If his light were spread out over people on the Day of Resurrection, it would encompass them for sure.”²³⁴

Sulaym bin Ḥanzalah said: “Once we were around Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, walking behind him, when ‘Umar saw him. Ubayy ibn Ka‘b was standing higher, as ‘Umar was milking an animal. So Ubayy said to

him: ‘O Commander of the Believers! Look at what you are doing!’ ‘Umar said: ‘Indeed this is a humble place for a leader, and a trial for a follower.’”²³⁵ Al-Ḥasan said: “It is indeed rare for the hearts of fools to be firm upon the tread of sandals behind a man.”²³⁶ Ayyūb said: “By Allāh, a slave has not been true to Allāh unless he is glad not to be made to feel his position.”²³⁷

You have come to know from the above the blameworthiness of fame and status. The exception to this is when Allāh ﷻ makes a slave famous in the religion without him seeking it—like the fame of the prophets, Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and saints.

[THE REALITY OF STATUS]

Know that the reality of status is the possession of people’s hearts in order for the person of status to use them according to his desire, for them to rush to fulfill his needs, and for tongues to praise him. Just as the meaning of wealth is the possession of dirhams in order to achieve some goal, likewise the meaning of status is the possession of hearts. However, status is more beloved, because to achieve wealth through it is easier than achieving status through wealth; and because it is impervious to theft, usurpation, or being subject to damage. Also, it grows and develops without difficulty. Indeed, when someone owns a person’s heart through that person’s reverence of him, the person will not cease to praise him and look for any opportunity to support him.

There is another secret in it as well, which is that the meaning of status is loftiness, haughtiness, and might. These are among the Divine Attributes, and Divine Attributes are naturally beloved to human beings. In fact, they are the most beloved of things to them, and that is because of a subtle secret between the soul and Divine affairs. This is expressed in Allāh's ﷻ statement:

﴿قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي﴾

Say: 'The soul is from my Lord's affair.' (17:85)

It is a Lordly matter that is naturally beloved on account of its independent authority and uniqueness, which is the reality of Divinity (as there is nothing in existence with Allāh). Rather, all existent things are like a shadow from the light of His Power. They have the position of subordination, not the position of parity. There is nothing else in existence alongside Allāh. It is as if the human being craves this, saying to everything: "I am your highest lord." While Pharaoh just said it plainly, others conceal it. Since he is devoid of a unique existence, he craves not to be devoid of authority and force over all other existent things, so that he may make use of them according to his desire—which is divinity.

Yet having that kind of authority and force over the heavens, stars, planets, angels, oceans, and mountains is too difficult for the human being. He therefore longs to overcome it all with knowledge, because knowledge is also a kind of force. Just as the one incapable of making an amazing thing desires to know how it was made, he likewise desires to know the wonders of the ocean and what is under the mountains.

It is conceivable that those entities found upon the face of the earth—animals, minerals, metals, and plants—be put to his use, and

thus he loves to control and exploit them. It is also conceivable that humanity be put to his use; thus, he loves to subjugate them by means of their hearts and by possessing them through instilling a sense of reverence in them. Reverence occurs when they believe that he has perfect qualities; for indeed, veneration is a consequence of believing that the venerated is perfect. For this reason, the human being loves for his status to grow and his reputation to spread—even into those countries that he is sure he will never travel to or meet their people—because all of that corresponds to Lordly Attributes. The more intelligent he becomes, the more dominant these attributes are, and his animalistic desires become weaker.

[THE REALITY OF HIGH STATUS IN RESPECT OF BLAME AND
PRAISE]

Perhaps you say: “If it is the case that seeking high status is a consequence of reason, is from the peculiarities of the soul, and corresponds to Lordly matters, then why is it blameworthy?”

Know that seeking truly high status is praiseworthy, not blameworthy. Closeness to Allāh ﷻ is something sought by all, and it is surely high status and perfection. It is a dignity with no baseness in it, richness with no poverty beside it, perpetuity with no end after it, and a pleasure that has no filth. Seeking that is praiseworthy. The only blameworthy thing is seeking an imagined perfection rather than the real thing. Real perfection derives from knowledge, freedom, and power—which are for a person to not be controlled by another. The reality of power is inconceivable for the slave; for his power is only in wealth and status, which are imaginary perfections. They are ephemeral matters that do not remain, and there is no good in what does not remain. Rather, it is said:

“The worst sorrow to me is a happiness that I am certain will go away.”²³⁸

How could this not be the case when this ephemeral power, quickly severed by death and remaining for just a moment, is not pure from grime? Someone imagines it to be perfection and then it disappears! Rather, perfection is in those righteous deeds that remain and through which closeness to Allāh ﷻ is attained. These do not disappear at death; rather, they are multiplied many times over without limit. This is real knowledge of Allāh’s ﷻ Essence, Attributes, and Actions—and that is the knowledge of all things in existence; for there is nothing in existence except Allāh ﷻ and His Actions. However, one may look at them from a perspective other than them being Allāh’s ﷻ Actions—like the one who looks at anatomy for the sake of medicine; or the one who looks at the position of the world in order to know what the stars indicate. This is of no value.

Also from real perfection is freedom, which is the cutting off of your relationship with all connections to the world—actually, from everything that separates from you at death—and limiting your attention to what inevitably stays with you, which is Allāh ﷻ. As Allāh revealed to Dāwūd ﷺ: “O Dāwūd! I am your inevitable end, so cling to the inevitable.”²³⁹ Knowledge and freedom are among the righteous deeds that remain, and they are both real perfections. Wealth and children are the worldly life’s adornment, and they are both imagined perfections.

The upside-down people are those who have reversed reality. They turn away from seeking real perfection and are preoccupied with seeking imaginary perfection. They are the ones who burn with the fire of sorrow at death, for they witness that they have lost both the world and the afterlife.

As for the afterlife, they lost it because they never sought it, and never attained the causes of happiness therein—whether knowledge or freedom. As for the world, they lost it because it called them and turned to their enemies (who are their inheritors).

Do not think that knowledge and faith depart from you at death. Death does not eradicate knowledge in the first place, nor is death nonexistence—in which case you might believe that when you die both you and your attributes are annihilated. Rather, the meaning of death is the cutting-off of the soul's relationship with the body until it is returned to it. When the body is stripped, it is in the same state of knowledge and ignorance that it was in before death. To understand this would take time, and behind it are secrets the unveiling of which this book cannot accommodate.

[QUELLING LOVE OF STATUS FROM THE HEART]

If you know the reality and essence of status and that it is an imaginary perfection, then you know that the way to treat it is in quelling the love of it from the heart. After all, you know that if the people of the earth prostrated to you—for example—it would be but a short while before there was no one prostrating and no one prostrated to. How could this not be the case when time gives of itself stingily? How could you be pleased to abandon an everlasting dominion with ever-high and far-reaching status with Allāh  and His angels, in exchange for your petty, low-life status that only excites fools who neither benefit nor harm you, and who have no control over life, death, resurrection, provision, or time?

Of course, controlling hearts is like controlling full entities, which you have need of to a small extent—in order to guard yourself from oppression, enmity, and whatever disturbs you in terms of your

health and free time, from which you derive support for your religion. Seeking this small amount is permissible on condition that it is strictly the necessary amount (as in the case of wealth); that you do not try to earn it through ostentatious worship (because that is prohibited, as shall be discussed later); and that you do not try to earn it through being phony (by displaying a quality that you do not really have within you), for there is no difference between controlling hearts with phoniness and controlling wealth.

If you attain status through its proper way and limit yourself to an amount impervious to corruption, then well-being will be easy for you. You will nevertheless be in grave peril—more dangerous than the peril of wealth. This is because a small amount of status calls to having more of it; for indeed, it is more pleasurable than wealth. For this reason, a person's religion is not safe—except for a low-profile, anonymous person who is unknown, as you have understood from the reports.

[TREATING THE LOVE OF PRAISE WHICH MOTIVATES
SEEKING STATUS]

Among the motivations for seeking status is the love of praise. Indeed, the human being takes pleasure in it from three aspects: the first of them is that it gives him the feeling of being perfect, and feeling this perfection is delightful because perfection is one of the Divine Attributes. The second is that it gives a person the feeling of possessing the heart of the one who praises him, occupying a position of status with him, and him being subjugated for his purposes.

The third is that it gives a person the feeling that the one praising him listens whenever he is praised, thus increasing his status. For this reason, if praise comes from a person who is insightful in respect of

the attributes of perfection, has great status and influence himself, and does this in front of a group of people, the pleasure of praise is multiplied.

The pleasure of the first aspect ceases if the praise comes from other than the people of insight; then it certainly does not make a person feel perfection. The second ceases if it comes from a low-life who has no influence; for possessing hearts is not possible for him. The third ceases if a person is praised in seclusion, not in a group; unless he expects that he may be praised in a group as well.

As for censure, it is certainly loathsome. Love of praise and loathing censure has destroyed most of the creation and led them to ostentation and various types of disobedience.

The treatment for this is for a person to reflect on the first pleasure. If he is praised because of abundant wealth and status, then he should know that it is an imaginary perfection and the cause of real perfection being lost. Hence, it is more appropriate that he be saddened because of it, rather than rejoicing because of it.

If he is praised for an abundance of knowledge and piety, then his joy should be for the existence of these attributes and Allāh's  Knowledge of them—not for someone else's mentioning of them. He should thank Allāh  for them and not thank other than Him. This is if he is truly characterized by them. If he is not characterized as such, then his joy over praise is foolishness. It is like the joy of someone who is praised by another who says: "The fragrance from your bowels is wonderful!" Yet, the one who is praised knows the filth and horrible stench in his bowels. This is the state of the person who rejoices over being praised for piety, asceticism, and knowledge, while he knows that within himself he is devoid of them. As for the second and third pleasure—which is the pleasure of status with the

one who praises and others—its treatment is what we have mentioned in regards to the love of status.

The Seventh Principle
LOVE OF THE WORLD
(HUBB AD-DUNYĀ)

Know that love of the world is the head of every sin. The world is not merely an expression for wealth and status; rather, they are two of the world's fortunes and two of its branches, which are manifold.

Your world is an expression of your state before death, and your afterlife is an expression of your state after death. Everything in which you have fortune is of your world—except for knowledge, awareness, freedom, and whatever remains with you after death. Indeed, these are also delightful to people of insight; however, they are not of the world, even though they are in the world.

These worldly fortunes have a relationship with you, a relationship with whatever the fortune is found in, and a relationship with your actions related to their rectification. So they derive from actual things that are present, your fortune in respect of them, and your effort to rectify them.

As for the actual things, they are the Earth and everything upon it. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾

*Verily, We have made what is on the Earth an adornment for it, so
that We may test who is the best in deed. (18:7)*

What the human being seeks from the Earth is either: the Earth itself for shelter and agriculture; its plants for medicine and nourishment; its minerals for coins, utensils, and tools; its animals for riding and eating; or its people for sex and employment. Allāh ﷻ has gathered all of that in His statement:

﴿زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ﴾

Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire from women and sons. . . (3:14)

As for your fortune from the world, the Noble Qur’ān has used the term ‘caprice’ (*al-hawā*) to express it. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ
بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ﴾

. . .the life of this world is only a game, an entertainment, an adornment, boasting amongst yourselves, and competing to gain wealth and have children. (57:20)

This includes all of the internal destructive characteristics—whether pride, rancour, envy, seeking reputation, ostentation, hypocrisy, boasting, competition, love of the world, or love of praise. These comprise the internal world, and the external world is of actual things.

As for your effort to rectify it, this is the totality of industry and vocations that the creation is preoccupied with. In so being, they have forgotten themselves, their beginning, and their end, due to the complete immersion of their preoccupation with it. What has preoccupied them is their sentimental attachment; for indeed, the

heart's attachment is to the love of this world's fortune, and the body's attachment is to working for its rectification.

This is the reality of the world whose love is the head of every sin. It was only created as a source of provision on the journey to the afterlife. However, the abundance of its distractions and varieties of its desirable things has made fools forget about their journey and their objective. Hence, they fall short in their aspirations on account of it. They are like a pilgrim in the open desert who becomes preoccupied with preparing and feeding his camel, only to be left behind by his party until he misses the Ḥajj and is devoured by the predators of the desert.

[THE WORLD AS A FIELD FOR CULTIVATING THE AFTERLIFE,
FOR THE ONE WHO KNOWS IT]

This blameworthy, destructive world is in its essence a field for cultivating the afterlife, for the one who knows it. He knows that it is one of the rest stops of those travelling to Allāh ﷻ, and a hospice built in the middle of the road in which food, supplies, and travelling accoutrements are prepared. Whoever equips there for his afterlife and limits himself to the necessary amount that we have mentioned in regards to food, clothing, sexual relations, and remaining necessities has spent and cultivated well. In the afterlife he will harvest what he planted. Whoever goes beyond this and is preoccupied with the world's pleasures is destroyed.

The likeness of the creation in regards to the world is the likeness of a people riding a ship that stops at an island. The captain orders them to get off in order to relieve themselves, yet alerts them to the danger of the area and that the ship will set sail quickly. So the

people split up on the island. Some of them relieve themselves immediately, return to the ship, and find a vast, empty place to sit.

Some of them stop to look at the island's flowers, streams, elegant stones, and wondrous plant life, and to listen to birds singing. They return to the boat yet do not find any place to sit except a tight corner. Seashells and rocks, whose beauty astonishes them, enthrall some of them. Their selves will not allow them to leave, except after taking souvenirs. They find only tight space on the ship. The shells and rocks they took increase their weight and discomfort, and they are not able to dispose of them. Since they cannot find a spot, they hold the rocks and shells on their necks and are weighed down by the load.

Some engage in exploring the thickets of plant life. They forget about the ship and are preoccupied with looking at flowers and picking fruit. However, it is a visual enjoyment not devoid of fear from predatory animals or caution from plunging over a cliff and other disasters. When they return to the ship, they do not find it and are left on the shore. Then they are mauled by a predatory animal and torn apart by vermin. This is the picture of the world in relation to its place next to the afterlife. Think deeply about this and extract the parallel aspects within it, if you are an insightful person.

[ON THE WORLD'S ENMITY TOWARD THE AFTERLIFE]

Whoever knows himself, his Lord, the world's adornment, and the afterlife witnesses through the light of insight the world's enmity toward the afterlife. It is decisively unveiled to him that there is no happiness in the afterlife unless a person meets Allāh ﷻ knowing and loving Him. Love is not achieved except through constant remembrance, and knowledge is not achieved except through

constantly seeking and thinking. No one is at leisure to do so unless that person turns away from the material world's distractions. Knowledge and love do not conquer the heart so long as it is not free from loving other than Allāh ﷻ. The heart's being free from other than Allāh is integral to its being busy with loving and knowing Allāh ﷻ. This is inconceivable for anyone other than the one who turns away from the world and is content with an amount of it necessary for the traveller.

If you are among the insightful, then you will have become from among the people of experience and direct witnessing. If you are not from among them, then be from among the people of blind following in regards to faith, and examine Allāh's ﷻ warning to you through the Book and the Sunnah. He ﷻ said:

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا﴾

Whoever desires the worldly life and its adornment, we give them the full share of reward for their deeds in it. . . (11:15)

He ﷻ said:

﴿ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ﴾

That is because they loved the worldly life more than the afterlife. . . (16:107)

He (may His Name be magnified) also said:

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى ۖ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا﴾

As for he who has transgressed and preferred the worldly life. . . (79:37-38)

Perhaps a third of the Qur'ān is about censuring the material world and materialistic people.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The world and whatever is in it is cursed, except for the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ." ²⁴⁰ He ﷺ said: "How astonishing is the one who affirms the everlasting abode yet rushes to the abode of delusion!" ²⁴¹ He ﷺ also said: "The world is merely pleasant greenery. Allāh creates you upon it one generation after another and examines how you act." ²⁴²

He ﷺ said: "Allāh ﷻ has not created a creation more loathsome to him than the material world. He has not looked at it since He created it." ²⁴³ He ﷺ said: "Whoever wakes while his greatest aspiration is the world, Allāh has nothing to do with him. Allāh attaches four traits to his heart: an aspiration that he will never achieve, work that he will never finish, poverty from which he will never be enriched, and hope that he will never fulfill." ²⁴⁴

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ said: "Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: 'O Abu Hurayrah! Shall I not show you the world in its entirety?' I said: 'Yes.' So he took my hand and led me to a garbage dump in which there was people's heads, refuse, rags, and bones. He said: 'O Abu Hurayrah! These heads used to strive for what you strive for and hope for what you hope for. Today they are bones with no skin and shall turn to dust. This refuse is the colour of their food. They acquired it from wherever they acquired it, and then threw it up from their bellies. It became as such and people avoid it. These worn-out rags used to be their personal effects and clothing. They have become as such and the wind throws them around. These bones are the bones of their riding beasts that they were so thrilled by as they rode through the countryside. So, whoever would cry over the world, let him cry!'" ²⁴⁵

He ﷺ said: “A people will come forth on the Day of Resurrection with deeds as massive as the Tihamah Mountains, and it will be commanded that they be thrown in Hell.” The Companions said: “O Messenger of Allāh! Did they pray?” He said: “Yes. They prayed, fasted, and took some time praying at night. However, if anything from the material world was shown to them they jumped for it.”²⁴⁶

‘Īsā ﷺ said: “The world and the afterlife do not go together in a believer’s heart, just as water and fire do not go together in a single container.”²⁴⁷ Our Prophet ﷺ said: “Beware of the world, for it certainly is more enchanting than Hārūt and Mārūt.”²⁴⁸ ‘Īsā ﷺ said: “O disciples! Be content with worldly lowliness and sound religion, just as worldly people are content with lowly religion and worldly security.”²⁴⁹

‘Īsā ﷺ also said to the disciples: “Indeed, eating barley bread with unrefined salt, wearing coarse garments, and sleeping on a rubbish heap is abundant with well-being in this world and the afterlife.”²⁵⁰ It is narrated that the world was unveiled to ‘Īsā ﷺ, and he saw it in the image of an old hag wearing every sort of adornment. He said to her: “How many have you married?” She said: “I cannot count them.” He said: “Do they divorce you or leave you by dying?” She said: “Rather, I killed all of them.” ‘Īsā ﷺ said: “How terrible it is for your remaining husbands! How do they not take heed of what happened to your previous husbands!”

Know that anyone who thinks that he can be enthralled in the world with his body, yet avoid it with his heart, is delusional. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The likeness of a worldly person is the likeness of one who walks in water. Is the one who walks in water able to walk without getting his feet wet?”²⁵¹

‘Alī ﷺ wrote to Salmān al-Fārisī ﷺ: “The likeness of the world is the likeness of a snake—it is soft to the touch yet its venom is

lethal. Turn away from what amazes you therein, because little of it stays with you. Drop what you think is important concerning it, because you are certain that it will depart. Be at your happiest when you are most weary of it; for indeed, every time its owner finds solace and happiness in it, some detestable thing takes it away from him.”²⁵²

Īsā  said: “The likeness of the seeker of the world is the likeness of one who drinks the ocean’s water. The more he drinks, the thirstier he becomes, until it kills him.”²⁵³

Know that whoever finds solace in the world, while he is certain that he will depart from it, is at the pinnacle of foolishness. Rather, the likeness of the world is the likeness of a home the owner of which has prepared and adorned it for receiving guests. Someone enters the home and is offered a golden tray with frankincense and sweet basil to smell and leave for the next person, not to own. However, he is ignorant of the owner’s way of doing things and believes that he has given the tray to him. When the guest’s heart becomes attached to the tray, the owner asks for it to be returned. Thus, the guest is angered and hurt. Whoever knows the owner’s way of doing things enjoys the tray, thanks the owner, and returns it to him with a good and open heart.

Likewise is Allāh’s habit in regards to the world. It is a guest home for travellers—not permanent residents—to make preparations and benefit from it, just as an empty home may be benefited from. They leave it for whoever will come after them with goodness and without their hearts forming an attachment. This is the likeness of the world and whatever Allāh has created in it.

The Eighth Principle

PRIDE (*AL-KIBR*)

Allāh said:

﴿كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ﴾

. . .like this, Allāh seals the heart of every conceited, haughty person.

(40:35)

Allāh ﷻ also said:

﴿فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ﴾

. . .and wretched is the abode of the arrogant (39:72, 40:76)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Allāh says: 'Might is my lower garment. Haughtiness is my upper garment. Whoever contends with me for them, I shall break him.'"²⁵⁴ Allāh's Messenger ﷺ also said: "Whoever has a particle's weight of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise."²⁵⁵ He ﷺ also said: "The haughty and the conceited will be gathered on the Day of Resurrection as pulverized bits which people will trample on. This will be because of their lowliness to Allāh ﷻ."²⁵⁶

He ﷺ once said to Bilāl: "Verily, there is a valley in Hell called Hubhub. Allāh ﷻ will rightfully house it with every haughty person. So beware, O Bilāl, of being from among those who reside there!"²⁵⁷ He ﷺ said: "O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from pride swelling

within me.”²⁵⁸ He ﷺ also said: “Allāh ﷻ will not look at a person who drags his garment out of conceit.”²⁵⁹ Also: “Whoever is arrogant within himself or swaggers conceitedly will meet Allāh ﷻ with His Wrath upon him.”²⁶⁰

He ﷺ said concerning the virtue of humility: “Allāh does not increase a slave’s clemency without increasing his dignity likewise. There is no one who humbles himself for Allāh’s sake except that Allāh ﷻ raises him up.”²⁶¹ He ﷺ also said: “Glad tidings to whoever humbles himself despite not being in a subordinate position.”²⁶² Allāh ﷻ revealed to Mūsā ﷺ: “I only accept the prayer of a person who humbles himself on account of My Magnificence, never self-aggrandizes over My creatures, attaches his heart to fearing Me, spends the day remembering Me, and restrains his self from his desires for My sake.”²⁶³

Our Prophet ﷺ said: “If the slave humbles himself for Allāh, Allāh ﷻ will raise him up to the seventh heaven.”²⁶⁴ He ﷺ also said: “Verily, humility does not increase the slave in anything but elevation. Therefore be humble, and may Allāh ﷻ have mercy on you!”²⁶⁵ Also: “I am pleased by the man who carries a thing in his hand in order to serve his family, as a way of repelling pride from his self.”²⁶⁶

[THE REALITY OF PRIDE]

The reality of pride is that a person sees himself above another in regards to an attribute of perfection, which causes in him an inflated pride and a pleasure at this contemptible belief. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: “I seek refuge with You from the inflated pride of conceit.”²⁶⁷ For this reason, when someone asked permission of

‘Umar to preach to the people after the Dawn Prayer, he said: “No. I fear that you will be puffed up until you reach the Pleiades.”

Furthermore, this inflated pride produces certain outward actions in a person—like sitting high in gatherings, walking in front of others in the street, looking askance at others. He feels irritated if the other person does not initiate the greeting of peace with him, or falls short in supplying his needs or venerating him. Pride leads a person to scoff when he is admonished or taught, while he himself is harsh whenever he admonishes or teaches. He denies the truth when he debates, and looks at the common folk as if he were looking at donkeys.

Pride is so detestable that whoever has a particle’s weight of it in his heart will not enter Paradise, due to the fact that beneath it are three types of immensely filthy traits:

The first of them is that it is a contention with Allāh ﷻ regarding an attribute that is unique to Him; for Haughtiness is His upper garment, as He has said. Mightiness befits no one but Him. In what sense does mightiness suit a lowly slave who has no dominion over his personal affairs, let alone the affairs of others?

The second is that it leads a person to denying the truth and disdaining the creation. The Prophet ﷺ said in a clarification of pride: “The arrogant one is whoever is impudent toward the truth and has contempt for people.”²⁶⁸ Scoffing at the truth closes the door of happiness, and so does having disdain for the creation.

Someone said: “Allāh ﷻ has indeed concealed three things in three things: He concealed His Pleasure in His obedience; so do not make light of anything concerning it, for maybe Allāh’s Pleasure is in it. He concealed His Wrath in His disobedience; so do not make light of anything concerning it—whether minor or major, for maybe the Wrath of Allāh ﷻ is in it. Lastly, He concealed His Protective

Friendship in His slaves; so do not belittle or disdain anyone from among them. Maybe he is a protected friend of Allāh ﷺ.”²⁶⁹

The third is that it comes between a person and all praiseworthy traits. The arrogant person is unable to love for people what he loves for himself, unable to be humble, and unable to abandon scoffing at others or being arrogant or angry. He is unable to contain anger, unable to be gentle when advising, and unable to abandon ostentation.

Overall, there is no blameworthy characteristic that the arrogant person does not by necessity possess; and there is no praiseworthy characteristic that he is not by necessity bereft of.

[TREATING THE FILTHY TRAIT OF PRIDE]

The summative treatment for curbing the filthy trait of pride is for a person to know himself—that he is at first a scattered [sperm] drop; in the end, he is a foul corpse; and between these two he carries filth. He should understand the statement of Allāh ﷻ:

﴿قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ ۚ مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ۚ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ ۚ ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ ۚ ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ﴾

Man is destroyed! How ungrateful he is! From what thing did He create him? From a [sperm] drop He created him and then measured out his destiny. Then He facilitated the way for him. Then He causes him to die and buries him. (80:17–21)

Hence, he should know that he was created from the silence of non-existence, and was nothing—not even mentioned—and there is nothing that is less than nothingness. Thereafter, Allāh created him

from dirt, then a drop of sperm, then a clinging form, then a piece of flesh. He had no hearing and no sight, no life and no power. Allāh created all of that for him, yet he is still deficient in the extreme. Sickness and disease overcome him, and his natural components are in opposition to one another, some of them destroying others. He becomes sick against his will, hungry against his will, thirsty against his will. He wants to know a thing, yet is ignorant of it; he wants to forget a thing, yet remembers it. He dislikes something that benefits him, and desires something that harms him. Not for a moment is he secure from losing his life, his mind, his health, or an organ or limb from his body. Then, finally, he dies and is subjected to punishment and accountability. If he is from the people of Hell, then a pig is better than him. So in what sense does pride befit him, when he is a lowly slave possessed by another and is unable to do anything? Ḥasan al-Baṣrī  said to someone who walked with a swagger: “This is not the walk of someone who has excrement in his guts.”²⁷⁰ How does pride suit the one who has to clean waste off of his body at least twice a day and has to carry it all the time?

[TREATING PRIDE BY CONSIDERING THE OBJECT OF PRIDE]

A detailed discussion of the treatment of pride must be in reference to what pride is taken in, which are four qualities:

The first is knowledge. The Prophet  said: “The sickness of knowledge is conceit.”²⁷¹ He  also said: “Do not be among the high-handed scholars, for your knowledge would not compensate for your ignorance.”²⁷²

It is rare that a scholar is free from the sickness of pride. Indeed, he sees himself as being above people with his knowledge (which is the most honourable virtue according to Allāh ). Sometimes he is

arrogant with religion—regarding himself as superior to others according to Allāh ﷻ; and sometimes he is arrogant concerning the world—regarding his right as an obligation on people, and being taken aback if they do not humble themselves to him. It is more fitting that this type of person be called ignorant. Real knowledge is that through which he knows his Lord and himself, the risk of his life ending in a bad state, and Allāh’s ﷻ proof against him. Real knowledge is to pay close attention to the risk of his life ending in a bad state, and not to see any ignorant person without saying: “Perhaps he disobeyed Allāh ﷻ in ignorance, but I have disobeyed Him with knowledge. Allāh’s ﷻ proof against me is more firmly established.” Abū’d-Dardā’ ﷺ said: “Whoever increases in knowledge, increases in humility.”

Allāh ﷻ said to His Prophet ﷺ:

﴿وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

Be humble with whoever follows you from the believers. (26:215)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “There will be a people who recite the Qur’ān, yet it will not pass their throats. They will say: ‘We have recited the Qur’ān, and who is more well-versed in it than us? Who is more knowledgeable than us?’” Then he turned and said: “These people are from you, O community of believers! These people are fuel for Hell.”²⁷³ The pious predecessors would strongly warn against this, to the point that Ḥudhayfah ﷺ once led some people in prayer; when he closed the prayer he said: “You must either choose an imām other than me or pray individually. I sensed within myself that there was no one among the people better than me.”²⁷⁴

A person should think: how many Muslims looked at ‘Umar —before he converted to Islām—and disdained him? The final deeds of ‘Umar  were what they were. Perhaps that Muslim (who disdained him) apostatised after the conversion of ‘Umar. Thus, the arrogant one was from the people of Hell, and the one who was viewed arrogantly was from the people of Paradise.

There is no scholar for whom it is not conceivable that his life will end in a bad state, and that the ignorant person’s life may end in happiness. How can there be any arrogance while knowing this? The Prophet  said: “A scholar will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown in Hell. His guts will be spilled out and he will rotate around them like donkeys rotate around a hand mill. The people of Hell will gather around him and say: ‘What is with you?’ He will say: ‘I used to command good, yet I did not come with any; and forbid evil, yet I came with it.’”²⁷⁵

What scholar is safe from that? Why does his fear not preoccupy him from being arrogant, when Allāh  has said regarding Bal‘ām ibn Bā‘ūrā’ (one of the greatest [Jewish] scholars) because he clung to his desires:

﴿فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ﴾

His likeness is that of a dog—if you drive it away it will loll out its tongue, and if you leave it alone it will loll out its tongue. (7:176)

He also said to the Jewish scholars:

﴿كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَثْقَارًا﴾

They are like donkeys carrying books. (62:5)

He should examine the reports that are related concerning evil scholars until fear overcomes his pride. Pride remains in spite of this only for the one who is preoccupied with sciences that are not beneficial for the religion—like debate, language, and others—or the one who is preoccupied with knowledge yet is filthy within, so his filth increases because of it.

The second reason for pride is piety and devout worship. The devout worshipper is not devoid of inward pride. The foolishness of some of them has even gone to the point that they regard people's misfortunes and triumphs as being because of their miracle working. Thus, whoever dies or becomes sick, they say about them: "You have already seen what Allāh has done to him." They might say if they are offended: "You will see what will happen when you cross me." These fools do not know that a group of disbelievers assaulted the prophets and did harm to them, yet they were given plenty in this world and vengeance was not taken upon them. Indeed, some may have converted to Islām and attained happiness in this world and the afterlife. So, it is as if they see themselves as superior to the prophets, and those that offend them as more despicable than the disbelievers.

The right thing for a devout worshipper to do when he looks at a scholar is to be humble with him due to his ignorance. If he looks at an open sinner he should say: "Maybe he has an inner trait that covers his outer acts of disobedience; and maybe there is envy, ostentation, or an inner filth for which Allāh ﷻ despises me, and thus will not except my outer deeds." Allāh ﷻ looks at the hearts—not the forms—and among the inner filth of the heart is pride. It has been narrated that a man from the Children of Israel, who was called the profligate of Israel due to his extreme corruption, sat with a devout worshipper of the Children of Israel. The profligate said: "Perhaps Allāh ﷻ will have mercy on me through his blessing." The

devout worshipper said to himself: “How could the likes of this open sinner sit with me?” He said to him: “Get away from me.” So Allāh ﷻ revealed to the prophet of that time: “Go to each of them and tell them to start anew, for I have forgiven the profligate and annulled the deeds of the devout worshipper.”

It is narrated that a man stepped on the neck of a devout worshipper of the Children of Israel while he was prostrating. He said to him: “Get up, for by Allāh, Allāh will not forgive you.” So Allāh revealed to him: “O you who has sworn by me! To the contrary, it is you whom Allāh will not forgive.”²⁷⁶

Hence, the smart ones are very careful about this, and say what ‘Aṭā’ as-Sulamī used to say—despite his extreme piety—whenever there was a strong wind or lightning: “None of this afflicts people except because of me. If ‘Aṭā’ were to die, they would be freed from it.”²⁷⁷ Someone once said on ‘Arafāt: “I would hope for mercy for all of them, were I not here among them.”

Examine the huge difference between someone who is sincere about his deeds and piety, and thus fears for himself; versus someone who grudgingly performs outer deeds that might not be free from ostentation and other ailments—then acts as though he is doing Allāh ﷻ a favour by his action.

The third reason is pride about lineage. Its treatment is that a person examines his lineage; for indeed his father was a scattered sperm-drop, and his grandfather was dirt. There is nothing nastier than a drop of semen and nothing lower than dirt.

Furthermore, the one who boasts of lineage is boasting about the qualities of other people. If his forefathers were to speak, they would surely say: “What’s so special about you in particular? You are nothing but a worm in the urine of the one who has a good quality.” For this reason, it is said:

If you boast about highborn forefathers, you have told the truth;
but what an awful thing they produced!

How can someone be arrogant about having the lineage of wealthy people, when they might be burned to ashes in Hell and would wish to be pigs and dogs just to get out of the plight they are in? How can someone be arrogant about having the lineage of religious people, when they themselves were never arrogant—their honour was through their religiousness, and part of that religiousness was humility? One of them would say: “If only I were a piece of straw,” or: “If only I were a bird.” All of them were preoccupied with fear of the disastrous end that would result from pride—despite their knowledge and their works! So how could someone who is bereft of their qualities be arrogant about having their lineage?

The fourth reason is pride due to wealth, beauty, or having followers. Pride due to these things is ignorance; for indeed, they are not innate qualities—by this, I mean: wealth and having followers. How can someone be arrogant about a quality for which the hand of the thief and the robber is outstretched? How can someone boast about beauty when a month’s fever spoils it and smallpox removes it? Really, if an attractive person were to think about the nasty mess within his body, it would astonish him such that he forgot his superficial adornment. If an attractive person were to neglect taking care of his body through bathing and cleaning for a week, he would become nastier than a corpse—from bad breath, body odour, the stench of waste, and the grossness of dirt, snot, and rheum. In what sense can a rubbish dump boast about its beauty? The human being is in reality a rubbish dump; for truly, he is a source of nastiness and filth.

The Ninth Principle
SELF-ADMIRATION
(AL-'UJB)

Allāh said:

﴿وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ﴾

On the Day of Hunayn, when your great number pleased you (9:25)

He ﷺ said:

﴿وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

While they think that they are doing well. (18:104)

He ﷺ said:

﴿فَلَا تَزْكُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى﴾

Do not claim yourselves to be pure. He is more Knowledgeable of whoever is God-fearing. (53:32)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “There are three destructive characteristics: stinginess that is obeyed, caprice that is followed, and a person’s self-admiration.”²⁷⁸

Ibn Mas‘ūd  said: “Destruction is in two things: despair and self-admiration.” He combined these two because a desperate person does not seek happiness due to his despair, while a person who admires himself does not seek it due to his belief that he has already attained it.

The Prophet  said: “If you did not commit sins, I would fear for you what is greater than that—self-admiration, self-admiration.”²⁷⁹ ‘Ā’ishah  was asked: “When is a man doing bad?” She said: “When he thinks that he is doing well.”

A man looked at Bishr bin Manşūr as he was prolonging the prayer and performing worship well. When he finished, he said: “Do not be deceived by what you have seen from me; for indeed, Iblīs worshiped Allāh  and prayed for thousands of years, then became what he has become.”

[THE REALITY OF SELF-ADMIRATION]

The reality of self-admiration is to magnify the self and its characteristics, which are blessings; and to rely on them—forgetting the Bestower of blessings, and feeling secure about not losing them. If, in addition to this, a person sees himself as having some entitlement or position with Allāh, then this is called conceit. One report says: “Indeed, the prayer of the conceited does not rise above his head.”²⁸⁰

The sign of conceit is that a person is amazed at his supplication being rejected, and at the good condition of the one who annoys him. Self-admiration is the cause of pride. However, pride requires someone else to be arrogant towards, while self-admiration is conceivable individually.

As for the one who sees Allāh's blessing upon him through some deed, knowledge, or anything else; who fears its cessation, and rejoices in Allāh's ﷻ blessing simply because it is from Allāh ﷻ, he is not guilty of self-admiration. Rather, the person who admires himself is someone who feels secure, and forgets to attribute blessings to their Bestower.

[TREATMENT OF SELF-ADMIRATION]

Self-admiration is pure ignorance; therefore its treatment is pure knowledge. If a person admires himself due to strength, wealth, beauty, or some other affair that is not attached to his choice, then it is also ignorance. These things are not from him, so he should admire the One who gave him that thing without him deserving it. He should also reflect on the fact that the loss of that blessing is an imminent threat, as a consequence of the least bit of illness or weakness.

If a person admires his knowledge or deeds and what falls under his choice, then he should reflect on what facilitated those deeds for him—and that they were not facilitated except by a limb, ability, will, and knowledge. All of these things are among Allāh's ﷻ creation. If Allāh created the limb and the ability, subjugated the means, and removed all distractions, then that action happened necessarily. The compelled has no right to admire what occurs from him by necessity, for he is compelled to choose it. He does not do something if he wills, but only if Allāh wills. Whether he wills or does not will is irrelevant, so long as will is a matter created within him. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ﴾

And you do not will unless Allāh wills. (76:30; 81:29)

The key to action is the imposition of will and turning away from all diversions, along with complete physical capacity—all of which is in Allāh’s  Hand. Consider: if the key to the treasury was in the king’s hand and he gave it to you, and you took money from the treasury—would you admire his generosity when he gave you the key without your deserving it, or would you admire your full capacity to take it? What real capacity is there other than being put in position?

[THOSE WHO MAKE A GIFT OF ALLĀH  REASON FOR
DESERVING ANOTHER GIFT]

Among the truly astonishing things is that a rational person admire his knowledge and reason to the extent that he is astonished if Allāh  impoverishes him and enriches someone who is ignorant. He says: “How can Allāh spread blessings over an ignorant person and deny me?” He is answered: How can He provide you with knowledge and reason and deny them to the ignorant person? This is a gift from Him—do you make it a reason for deserving another gift? Rather, if He combined in you both reason and wealth, and denied both of them to the ignorant person altogether, that would be more worthy of astonishment. The rational person’s astonishment at this is just like the astonishment of someone to whom a king has given a horse, while he has given someone else a slave. The former asks: “How could he give a slave to so-and-so when he doesn’t have a horse, and deny me when I own a horse?” He only came to own a horse through the king’s giving, yet he makes his gift a reason for deserving another gift! This is quintessential ignorance!

Instead, the truly rational person is always amazed at Allāh's ﷻ Grace and Generosity, from whence He gave him knowledge and reason, and provided him with the means and capacity to worship without any entitlement from him. He denied that to another, subjected him to that which calls to corruption, and compelled him to it by turning away from him that which calls to good—without any previous crime on his part.

If a person truly witnesses this, then fear will overcome him. He might say: “Allāh has blessed me in this world without any means on my part, and singled me out with it to the exclusion of others. Whoever does the like of this for no reason must be quick to punish—also without any crime or reason. What shall I do if the blessings bestowed upon me are a plot or a gradual misguidance?” This is as Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً﴾

We opened the doors of everything to them until they rejoiced in what they were given; then We took it from them unexpectedly. (6:44)

And as He ﷻ said:

﴿سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

We will gradually misguide them from where they do not know.

(7:182; 68:44)

The Tenth Principle

OSTENTATION (AR-RIYĀ')

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ۖ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ﴾

Woe to those who pray and are heedless of their prayer, those who are ostentatious. . . (107:4–5)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا﴾

We feed you only for the sake of Allāh's Countenance; we do not want any reward or thanks from you. (76:9)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا﴾

Whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him do righteous deeds. . . (18:110)

By 'righteous deeds', He intended sincerity.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, the most dreadful thing I fear for you is the minor association of partners with Allāh (*ash-shirk al-asghar*).” It was asked: “And what is that?” He said: “Ostentation. Allāh ﷻ will say on the Day of Resurrection when He rewards the slaves for their deeds: ‘Go to the people to whom you were

ostentatious, and see if you will find any reward with them.”²⁸¹ He  said in a long ḥadīth: “It will be said to the soldier, the scholar, and the spender when one of them says: ‘I did this and that’, ‘You have lied. You wanted for it to be said that so-and-so is a scholar or brave or generous.’ Then he will be taken to the Fire.”²⁸² He  said: “Seek refuge with Allāh from the Pit of Sorrow.” It was asked: “What is that?” He said: “A valley in Hell (*Jahannum*) that is prepared for people who recite the Qur’ān ostentatiously.”²⁸³

He  said: “Allāh  said: ‘Whoever performs a deed for Me but associates another with Me concerning it, it is for him entirely and I am free of it. I am the Freest of those free from need of partnership’”²⁸⁴ He  said: “Allāh does not accept a deed that has a particle’s weight of ostentation in it.”²⁸⁵ He  said: “Verily, the slightest bit of ostentation is an association of partners with Allāh.”²⁸⁶

‘Īsā  said: “If it is a day that one of you is fasting, then he should put oil on his head and beard and wipe his lips, so that the people do not see that he is fasting. If he gives with his right hand, he should hide it from his left hand; and if he prays, he should lower the cover over his door. Allāh  most certainly divides praise, just as He divides provision.”²⁸⁷

For this reason, ‘Umar  said to a man who would tilt his neck [to lower his head] during prayer: “O you with the neck! Straighten your neck up; for humility is not in the necks, but in the hearts.”

Our Prophet  said: “The ostentatious person will be called by four names on the Day of Resurrection: ‘O ostentatious one! O phony one! O sinner! O loser! Go and take your reward from the one whom you worked for; for there is no reward for you with Us!’”²⁸⁸

Qatādah said: “If a slave is ostentatious, Allāh  says: ‘Look at how my slave is mocking Me.’” Al-Ḥasan said: “I accompanied people

who, whenever some point of wisdom occurred to one of them that would have benefited both himself and his companions had he voiced it, he was prevented from doing so because he did not desire fame.”²⁸⁹

[TYPES OF ACTION IN WHICH OSTENTATION OCCURS]

The reality of ostentation is seeking status in people’s hearts through worship and good deeds. There are six types of actions that are done ostentatiously:

The first one is ostentation in respect of the body: such as showing skinniness and lightness so that one is thought to stay up praying at night and to fast all day; showing sorrow so that one is thought to be extremely earnest regarding religious affairs; showing disheveled hair so that one is thought to be extremely immersed in the religion and has no time to take care of himself; showing chapped lips to suggest that one fasts; and lowering the voice to suggest that one is weak from the severity of struggling.

The second is ostentation through form: such as shaving the moustache, lowering the head while walking, moving calmly, leaving the mark of prostration on the face, and shutting the eyes in order for it to be thought that one is in a state of spiritual ecstasy, unveiling, or deep thought.

The third is ostentation in regards to clothes: like wearing wool or another rough material, shortening a garment up to close to half of the shin, shortening sleeves, and leaving a garment dirty or with holes—in order for it to be thought that one has no time to take care of his clothes; wearing patched clothing and praying on a rug, in order to be considered one of the Sufis (despite being bankrupt concerning the reality of Sufism); wearing a garment with tight

sleeves or a seamless shawl, or widening the sleeves, in order to be thought a scholar; or putting a sheet over the turban and wearing socks, in order for it to be thought that one is an ascetic due to his extreme caution from the dust on the street.

Then there are those who seek status in the hearts of righteous people, so they wear shabby clothes; and if they are burdened with wearing a nice new garment (which is permitted in Revealed Law and was worn by the pious predecessors), they would view it like slaughter, fearing that people would say, “It seemed acceptable to him as asceticism.”

Among them is the one who seeks status with sultans and merchants through expensive patched wool clothes. If he were to wear shabby clothes, they would surely ridicule him; and if he wore upscale clothes, they would not believe he was an ascetic. So he seeks dyed patches, fine clothes, and high quality wool. His clothes are valuable and rare, like the clothes of the rich, yet their color and form are like the clothes of the righteous. If these people were burdened with wearing shabby clothes, it would be like a slaughter for them—due to their fear of falling in the estimation of the rich. If they were burdened with wearing fine material (which is permissible to wear), yet its value was less than the value of the clothes of the rich, it would be extremely difficult for them—due to their fear of diminished status in the hearts of the righteous (who will say: “It seemed acceptable to him as asceticism”).

The fourth is ostentation through statements: such as the ostentation of preachers; using flowery language; and choking or tearing up when relating points of wisdom, ḥadīths, or statements of the pious predecessors. Despite these actions, the ostentatious person is all the while devoid of the realities of truthfulness and sincerity inwardly; rather, it is all so that the speaker may be thought of as

possessing those qualities. Hence, he displays sorrow before an audience, yet disobeys Allāh in private. Another example is claiming to have memorised ḥadīth, or to have met shaykhs, and being quick to judge a ḥadīth as sound or defective, so that one may be thought to possess an abundance of knowledge. Similarly, moving the lips in remembrance, or commanding good and forbidding evil in the presence of people, while the heart is devoid of grief over disobedience; or showing anger over objectionable acts and regret over disobedience, while the heart is devoid of any hurt.

The fifth is ostentation through practice: such as prolonging standing in prayer, bowing and prostrating well, lowering the head, not looking around much, giving charity, fasting, performing the Ḥajj, walking humbly, and closing the eyes. The ostentatious person does these things, while Allāh ﷻ knows of his inner self that if he were alone, he would do none of it. Rather, he would pray lazily, and walk hastily—indeed, he might do that when walking, but if he were to feel someone looking at him, he would return to tranquility, so as to be regarded as possessing humility.

The sixth is ostentation through a person having many students and companions, or frequently mentioning shaykhs, so that he may be thought to have met many of them. This is like someone who loves to be visited by scholars and sultans, so that it might be said that he is among those from whom blessings are sought.

The aforementioned are the main ways in which people are ostentatious within the religion, all of which is unlawful; in fact, they are among the major sins. As for seeking status in the hearts of people through actions that are not acts of worship or religious, this is not prohibited so long as there is no deception, as we have mentioned in regards to seeking status. Worldly people may seek status through abundant wealth and slaves; beautiful, high-end clothes; memorising

poetry; knowledge of medicine, mathematics, grammar, and lexicology; and other deeds and states. This is not prohibited so long as it does not lead to annoying others with arrogance or other blameworthy characteristics. We have elaborated upon the types of ostentation because it is the most dominant blameworthy characteristic of the self. Whoever does not know evil and its places is not able to beware of it, and Allāh knows best.

[LEVELS OF OSTENTATION]

Ostentation is despicable on a number of levels:

The first of them is that which is not through religious or devotional affairs: like someone who wears nice clothes when he goes out (contrary to what he wears when alone), and someone who spends extravagantly to host rich people, so as to be thought extremely generous—not so as to be thought of as pious and righteous. This is not unlawful; for indeed, possession of hearts is like possession of wealth.

Of course, a little bit of it is all right and beneficial; but an abundance of it distracts from the remembrance of Allāh, just like an abundance of wealth. Whenever aspiration is directed toward increased status, and this leads to heedlessness and acts of disobedience, then it becomes forbidden for this reason—not in itself. As for showing the aforementioned qualities in order for people to believe that one is religious and pious, this is prohibited for two reasons:

The first reason is that it is a deception if a person wants people to think that he is sincere and obedient to Allāh ﷻ and loves Him, when this intention makes a person an open sinner and hated by Allāh ﷻ. If a man were to hand over money to a group and make

them imagine that he is being generous to them, when in fact he is handing over a debt, then he has disobeyed because of his deception—even if he never sought to be thought of as righteous—because possession of hearts through deception is unlawful.

The second reason is that if a person seeks Allāh's creation through worshipping Allāh, then he is a mocker. If someone stands before a king as if he is there to serve, yet that is not his aim—his actual aim being the attention of one of the king's slaves or slave-girls—then observe the punishment this mocker deserves for his mockery of the king. It is as if he has sought out the slaves through worship, believing that Allāh's slaves are more able to benefit him or bring good to him than Allāh ﷻ; for the greatness of the slaves in his heart calls him to beautify himself in their presence through worshipping Allāh ﷻ. This is why ostentation is called the minor association of partners with Allāh.

Furthermore, the sin increases with the increase of corruption in the objective and intention. There are ostentatious people who do not seek anything but plain status. Then there are some who seek to lay down deposits or take over endowments and the wealth of orphans in order to embezzle them, which is undoubtedly even filthier. Some are ostentatious in order to get close to women and boys so that he is able to engage in debauchery, or in order to increase his wealth so as to spend it on wine and musical instruments. This is an even greater sin, for he has made worshipping Allāh ﷻ a means to opposing Him. We seek refuge with Allāh from this!

[SUBJECTS OF OSTENTATION]

Just as ostentation becomes worse and its sinfulness more despicable according to its different motivating reasons, it also becomes worse

according to the subject of ostentation and how strongly it is intended. As for the subject of ostentation, this has three levels:

The worst of them is that a person is ostentatious regarding the basis of faith: like the hypocrite who shows that he is a Muslim yet his heart has not submitted; or the atheist; or someone who believes in permitting the forbidden yet shows that he is persistently faithful—when inwardly, faith has been snatched away from him.

The second is ostentation regarding basic acts of worship: like someone who prays or pays zakat in front of people, while Allāh knows what is within him—if he were by himself he would not do these things.

The third (which is the least of them) is when a person is ostentatious regarding supererogatory acts rather than obligations: like someone who does much supererogatory prayer and embellishes the form of the obligatory prayer; or pays zakat with the best of his wealth; or prays the night vigil prayer; or fasts the day of ‘Ashūrā’—while Allāh knows what is within him; if he were by himself he would not do any of these things. This is also unlawful, even if the severity of its punishment does not reach the extent of ostentation regarding the basics.

As for ostentation worsening according to the degree of intention, this could reach the point where a person prays without being ritually clean for the sake of people, or fasts when he would eat if he were by himself.

The intention of worship could also be connected to this, and has three states. The first is that worship is an independent motivation—if he were alone he would do it. However, another person seeing him increases his energy, and his practice is lightened because of him. I hope that this amount of ostentation does not nullify his deeds, and

that his worship is valid and he is rewarded for it; whereas he will be punished for intending ostentation, or his reward diminished.

The second is that the intention to worship is weak, so that if he were alone he would not be independently motivated to worship. This person's worship is invalid, and weak intention to worship does not negate the severity of Allāh's loathing of him.

The third is that the two intentions are equal, so that each one exists as an independent motivation when the person is alone; or that a person is not motivated to do either one of them, but rather both of them together. This has rectified a thing while ruining its like, for one would not normally exchange capital for capital. It might be said that if the two intentions are equal, then one of them is expiation for the other. However, the statement of Allāh ﷻ: "I am the Freest of those free from need of partnership"²⁹⁰, indicates that He will not accept the deed, nor reward it. As for Him punishing a person because of it, this requires examination. The most probable to me—and knowledge is with Allāh ﷻ—is that the person is not free from sin and punishment.

[OSTENTATION CAN BE CLEAR, HIDDEN AND MORE
IMPERCEPTIBLE THAN A CRAWLING ANT]

Know that some ostentation is clear, some of it is hidden, and some of it is more imperceptible than a crawling ant. As for the clear, it is what motivates a person to act; if it were not for that motivation, the person would have no desire to do so. As for the hidden, it is for an act not to be done solely for the sake of some outer motivation, but for an act to become easier and the energy for it to increase—like if someone regularly prays every night, but if he had a guest he would increase his energy.

Something more hidden than this is that a person does not increase his energy; however, if someone were to see him praying at night before he finished or immediately afterwards, he would be happy for it and find some excitement within his self. This indicates that ostentation was concealed in the depths of his heart as fire is concealed under ashes, such that happiness seeped out of him upon the realisation that someone had seen him—although he was unaware of it before this.

Even more hidden than this is that a person is not happy when another sees him; however, he expects the other to initiate the greeting of peace and stand at attention for him, is astounded by someone being rude to him, and shows no toleration or respect in his dealings. This indicates that he feels that he has some status over people because of his deeds; thus, it is as if he expects their respect and reverence due to his worship, despite this being hidden from them. No one is devoid of these hidden ills except the persistently truthful ones. All of it is sin, and the nullification of good deeds is to be feared as a result of it.

Of course, there is no harm in a person feeling joy at another seeing him if his joy is in Allāh ﷻ manifesting the good in him and concealing the bad, when he himself had intended to conceal both of these. Thus, he rejoices in Allāh's ﷻ Benevolence towards him. Likewise, he rejoices because Allāh has given him the good news that wherever He does good towards him in this world, He will also do the same for him in the afterlife. He may also rejoice in the fact that the one who sees him takes him as an example, or obeys Allāh due to being motivated by him. The sign of this is that he also finds joy if that other person sees someone else whom he may hopefully take as an example.

Due to the hidden nature of the doors to ostentation and its severity in overcoming the inner self, those earnest about their religion conceal their worship and struggle against their egos. ‘Ali  said: “Truly, Allāh  will say to the Qur’ān reciters on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Were market prices not discounted for you? Were you not the ones to whom greetings of peace were initiated? Were your needs not fulfilled? You have no reward, for you have already exhausted it.’”

If you desire sincerity, you must struggle earnestly for people to be like dumb animals and children when it comes to you—while worshipping, you should not sense any difference between their presence, their absence, their knowledge of your worship, or their heedlessness of it. You should be satisfied with Allāh’s  Knowledge alone, and seek your reward from Him—for indeed, He does not accept anything but sincerity—so that you do not prevent yourself from His Beneficence when you need Him most.

[JUDGING THE OCCURRENCE OF OSTENTATION]

Perhaps you say: “I am not able to extricate myself from the hidden ostentation that you have described, though I am able to do so regarding obvious ostentation. Is my worship correct despite this?”

Know that ostentation occurs either at the first instance of a deed, during the deed, or after finishing the deed. What occurs with the start of a deed nullifies it and precludes its validity if it was the motivating factor that influenced the act. Instead, the initial undertaking of an act must be sincere.

The deed is only nullified if ostentation is the motivating factor for the action. However, if—for example—there is no ulterior motive until immediately after having begun the action, then I am of the opinion (and knowledge is with Allāh ﷻ) that the basis of the prayer [for example] is correct. Rather, the merit of immediately focusing on Allāh is lost, and the person is disobedient by seeking to be seen; he has nevertheless fulfilled his obligation.

As for ostentation that occurs within prayer, if it nullifies the true motivation for prayer, then it nullifies the prayer. An example of this is that a person brings an item to the prayer and remembers that he forgot some part of it. Had he been alone, he would have cut short his prayer; however, he finishes the prayer out of shyness before people. This person does not fulfill his obligation, because his intention has been discontinued, and thus his motivation for worship is also discontinued.

It may be that a person's intention has not been discontinued, yet his motivation has become obscured and dominated—such as if a group of people attend and his heart is overcome by joy at them seeing him, such that the original motivation for worship becomes obscured. In that case, what is most probable in my opinion is that if he has performed a unit of prayer and his original motivation does not return to him, his prayer is ruined. This is because we extend the obligation of intention at the beginning of the prayer to whatever comes after it on the condition that nothing has occurred which—had it happened at the beginning—would have rendered the prayer invalid.

If his motivation for worship was not obscured, but he merely felt some happiness that did not affect his deed—rather, it affected his beautification of the prayer only—then the most probable likelihood in

my opinion (and Allāh is more Knowledgeable) is that his prayer is not ruined and he has fulfilled his obligation.

As for ostentation that occurs after the prayer—such as mentioning his deed, happiness that people know about it, and desiring to be seen—this does not fall under what has been mentioned. Nevertheless, such a person is disobedient and has committed a sin, and his punishment will be commensurate to his intention and the degree to which he shows off. Whenever he finds an occasion to mention his worship—whether explicitly or implicitly—then it indicates that ostentation was hidden within the core of his ego.

[TREATING OSTENTATION BY EXAMINING ITS MOTIVATING CAUSES]

If you know the reality of ostentation and the abundance of its inroads, then it is upon you to exert yourself in treating it. Its treatment is repelling the motivating causes behind it, which are three: love of praise, fear of censure, and greed.

As for love of praise, it is like the one who presses forward to the front line of battle in order for it to be said that he is brave, or shows his acts of worship in order for it to be said that he is pious. Its treatment is the same as the treatment for love of status, which is for a person to know that it is an imaginary perfection that has no reality to it. The specific treatment with regards to ostentation is for a person to affirm to himself the harm that it contains. Indeed, even sweet-tasting honey would be easy to forgo if one knew that there was poison in it. He should therefore affirm to himself that, on the day when he is most in need of his good deeds, he will be told because of his ostentation: “O sinful one! O misguided one! You mocked Allāh

ﷻ, paid attention to His slaves, loved them, bought their praise with Allāh's ﷻ Censure, and sought their pleasure by angering Him. Was there no one more worthless to you than Allāh ﷻ?"

If there were nothing except this humiliation and embarrassment, it would be sufficient prevention from ostentation. How then could it not be sufficient, when added to it there is punishment and the nullification of worship, and when the scale of a person's bad deeds may preponderate after comparison with the scale of his good deeds—and thus be the cause of his destruction? If you affirm to yourself that the pleasure of people is an end that you will never reach, and that whoever seeks the pleasure of people by angering Allāh ﷻ actually angers them, then how can one abandon the Pleasure of Allāh for something which there is no prospect of attaining?

As for the second motivation, which is fear of censure, one should affirm to himself that people's censure will not harm him if his deed is praiseworthy according to Allāh ﷻ. So why would one subject himself to Allāh's Censure and Loathing out of fear of the creation's censure? It suffices one to know that people would despise him if they knew the intended ostentation within him. Allāh refuses not to expose his secret so that his hypocrisy would be known; thus, the people would loath him as well, after Allāh's ﷻ Loathing. If, on the other hand, he were sincere and turned his heart away from them, looking toward Allāh ﷻ exclusively, then his sincerity to Him would be exposed and they would love him.

As for the motivation of greed, it is repelled through knowing that it is an imaginary matter, whereas missing Allāh's ﷻ Pleasure is complete. It is also repelled through knowing that Allāh ﷻ is the one who subjugates hearts, and that whoever is covetous of the creation is never bereft of degradation, lowliness, and subservience; whereas

whoever turns away from covetousness of the creation, Allāh ﷻ suffices him and subjugates their hearts for him.

If one brings to mind the pleasure of the afterlife at its highest levels and knows that all that will pass him by as a result of ostentation, his heart turns away from the creation, his aspiration is reinforced, the lights of sincerity shine upon him, and Allāh ﷻ aids and enables him.

[TREATING THE SUDDEN OCCURRENCE OF OSTENTATION]

Perhaps you say: “I have affirmed all of this for myself, and my heart is opposed to ostentation; however, maybe an occasion of ostentation will come up and assault me unexpectedly in some acts of worship when the creation sees me. So what is the treatment in the case of this assault of ostentation?”

Know that the foundation of this treatment is that you hide your acts of worship just as you hide your immoral acts, for in this is security. It has been narrated that one of the companions of Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddād censured the world and its people. So he said to him: “You have shown what you should have concealed—do not sit with us anymore.”

Know that hiding worship is only difficult in the beginning. When it becomes normal, one’s nature becomes familiar with the pleasure of intimate conversation with Allāh in private. Whenever there is an assault of an occasion for ostentation, its treatment is that you renew in your heart that which was deeply rooted therein before: the realisation that you are subjecting yourself to the Loathing of Allāh ﷻ, and the inability of people to benefit or harm you—until this produces an aversion to whatever calls to ostentation.

Furthermore, whereas desire calls to responding to ostentation by beautifying deeds and rejoicing in them, aversion calls to repelling and turning away from it—and the latter is more powerful. If your aversion becomes strong enough to prevent you from relying upon ostentation, and you continue in your previous state (neither increasing nor decreasing), without falsely displaying the action or spreading news of it, then you have repelled any sin and are not responsible for any more than that.

As for repelling thoughts and repelling one's nature from inclining to people's acceptance, this is not included in moral responsibility. The most that one is responsible for is to dislike ostentation and to refuse to answer its call.

[DISPLAYING ACTS OF OBEDIENCE AS AN EXAMPLE AND
HIDING THEM OUT OF FEAR OF OSTENTATION]

It is permissible to show acts of obedience in order for people to take them as an example and to encourage them—if one's intention is correct and there is no ulterior desire contained in it. The sign of this is that a person appreciates when the people follow the example of one of his peers (while he himself meets the requirements as a source of encouragement), and informs that a person's reward for acting in secret is like his reward for acting openly—then he does not desire showcasing.

On the other hand, if his inclination is for himself to be the most followed, therein is the call to ostentation; because if he were seeking happiness for people and their salvation, it has already happened through their following of another, and he has missed out on nothing except the opportunity to show himself.

It is likewise permissible to conceal acts of disobedience and sin; however, with the condition that a person's aim is not for it to be believed that he is pious, but rather that he is not a sinner.

There is no harm in a person rejoicing over the concealment of his sins and being upset about their exposure. This is either joy over Allāh's ﷻ concealment of him, or joy over agreeing with Allāh's ﷻ Command—for He ﷻ certainly loves the concealment of acts of disobedience and forbids being open about them. Alternatively, it is due to a dislike of censure and being hurt by it. This is not unlawful, but rather necessitated by human nature. What is prohibited is for a person to rejoice in people's praise of him on account of his worship; for indeed, that is like a payment being taken for worship. A person may also fear being targeted with some badness if his disobedience is known; or he may be ashamed of its manifestation (and shame is not ostentation, although it could be mixed with it).

As for abandoning an act of obedience due to fear of ostentation, there is no justification for it. Al-Fuḍayl said: "It is from ostentation to abandon a good deed due to fear of ostentation. As for performing good deeds for the sake of people, this is associating partners with Allāh."²⁹¹ Rather, a person should act and be sincere, except if the deed relates to the creation—like the judiciary, governance, or preaching. If he knows about himself that after delving into the deed he will be unable to control himself, but will rather incline to the calls of desire, then it is obligatory for him to turn away and run. This is like what many of the pious predecessors did.

As for prayer and charity, a person should not abandon them unless the intention to worship is not present in the first place, but is instead the intention of pure ostentation. In that case, his deed is not valid and he should leave it. As for something that he does habitually—then a group attends and so he fears from himself ostentation—he

should not abandon the deed; rather, he should continue with his worship and strive to repel the motivation of ostentation.

Epilogue

THE MATRIX OF CHARACTER AND PLACES OF DELUSION WITHIN IT

Know that blameworthy characteristics are many; however, their roots go back to what we have mentioned. It is not enough for you to purify yourself from some of them until you are purified of them all. If you have abandoned one that was predominant in you, then that should call you to abandoning the rest, because some of them are tied to others and some blameworthy characteristics are subject to others. No one is saved except he who meets Allāh with a sound heart, and absolute soundness is not attained through eliminating some illnesses; rather, it is only attained through absolute health. Just as beauty does not occur by the beauty of some of the limbs so long as all of the extremities are not beautiful.

Salvation is in good character. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The heaviest thing to be placed on the Scale is good character.”²⁹² He ﷺ said: “I was sent to complete noble character.”²⁹³ He was asked: “What is religion?” He said: “Good character.”²⁹⁴ He said: “Good character is Allāh’s ﷻ Character.”²⁹⁵ He ﷺ also said: “The best of the believers in terms of faith are those with the best character.”²⁹⁶

There are many statements regarding the reality and clarifying the definition of good character. Most people turn their attention toward some of its fruits, but do not fully comprehend all of its details. What will make you privy to its reality is that you know that form and character are two separate expressions. What is intended by form is the outer image, and what is intended by character is the inner

image. This is because the human being is composed of a body that is perceptible to the eye, and from a spirit that is perceptible to insight (not the eye). Each one is a shape—either ugly or beautiful.

The self that is perceived by insight is of greater esteem. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ related it to Himself and related the body to clay. He said:

﴿إِنِّي خَالِقُ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ۖ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي﴾

Verily, I will create a human being from clay. So when I have formed him and blown into him from My Spirit. . . (38:71–72)

He said:

﴿قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي﴾

Say: ‘The spirit is from my Lord’s affair.’ (17:85)

I intend a single meaning here by ‘spirit’ (*ar-rūh*) and ‘self’ (*an-nafs*)—it is the divinely inspired, conscious, perceptive substance of the human being. As He says:

﴿وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۖ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا﴾

By the spirit and what forms it, then inspires it [with consciousness] of its wrongdoing and piety—he who purifies it is successful, and he who lowers it has failed. (91:7–10)

Just as there are pillars to outer beauty—like the eye, nose, mouth, and cheek—and the outer is not described as beautiful so long as all of the features are not beautiful, likewise the inner form has

pillars. All of them must be beautiful in order for character to be good. These inner features are four concepts: the force of knowledge, the force of anger, the force of desire, and the force of balance between the other three forces. If these four pillars are even and work in a balanced conjunction, good character occurs.

As for the force of knowledge, its balance and beauty is to become cognizant of the difference between honesty and lies regarding speech, between truth and falsity regarding beliefs, and between the beautiful and the ugly regarding deeds. If this force is capable of the aforementioned, then the fruit of wisdom is attained from it—which is the head of all virtue. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

Whoever is given wisdom has been given much good; and none remember except those with profound understanding. (2:269)

As for the force of anger, its balance is achieved when it is restrained and released according to what either the Revealed Law or wisdom dictates. The same applies for the force of desire.

As for the force of balance, it lies in controlling the forces of anger and desire through the guidance of religion and reason. Reason assumes the place of the advisor, while the force of balance is power, which assumes the place of the executor who follows the signal of reason. Anger and desire are the things that are executed at reason's signal. They are like the dog and the horse to the hunter.

If some of these are good without the others, then it is like when some parts of the face look good without the others. The term 'beautiful' is not applied to the face except when it is entirely good-looking and well proportioned. Similarly, if these characteristics are

good and proportionate, praiseworthy character in its entirety will emanate from their possessor.

As for the force of anger, its balance is expressed through courage (and Allāh ﷻ loves courage). If it leans toward the excessive side, it is called recklessness, and if it leans toward deficiency it is called cowardice. Generosity, helpfulness, respectability, forbearance, decorum, controlling anger, dignity, and deliberation are the traits that stem from it being balanced. As for when it is excessive—then haughtiness, conceit, vanity, lack of self-control, arrogance, and self-admiration occur because of it. As for its neglect—then cowardice, lowliness, degradation, worthlessness, lack of indignation, little concern for family, and inward pettiness occur because of it.

As for desire, its balance is expressed through chastity, its excess through lasciviousness, and its neglect or weakness through dullness. Selflessness, modesty, patience, tolerance, satisfaction, piety, mutual help, graciousness, and little covetousness come from chastity. Lust, lasciviousness, impudence, wastefulness, stinginess, ostentation, debasement, buffoonery, brownnosing, envy, malice, self-deprecation to the rich, holding the poor in contempt, and other than these come from its excess.

As for the force of reason—then good planning, open-mindedness, keen insight, correct opinion, accurate and in-depth understanding of things, and overriding the ego's faults come from its balance. As for its excess—then filthiness, shrewdness, scheming, and cheating occur because of it. As for its neglect or weakness—then stupidity, foolishness, naiveté, silliness, and gullibility occur because of it.

These are the bonds of character, and the meaning of good character in reference to all of them is the median between excess and neglect (for moderation is the best of everything). Each extreme of the spectrum is censurable; for this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسِطِ﴾

Do not keep your hand chained to your neck, nor spread it out completely (17:29)

He ﷺ said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا﴾

Those who, when they spend, are neither wasteful nor stingy, but stand in between. (25:67)

He ﷺ also said:

﴿أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾

. . .harsh with the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves (48:29)

Whenever any of the aforementioned traits inclines toward excess or neglect, then good character has yet to be perfected.

[RECTIFYING BLAMEWORTHY CHARACTERISTICS THROUGH STRUGGLE]

The way to rectify all of these blameworthy character traits is struggle and practice. The meaning of struggle is that you force contrariness on the dictates of the dominating extreme quality, thus doing the opposite of what it entails. Thus, if stinginess dominates, do not cease to force yourself (through extraneous effort) to spend, and persist in doing so time and time again—until spending becomes easy to you in its appropriate place. If wastefulness dominates, do not cease to force yourself to withhold—until it becomes normal and easy

for you to withhold in its appropriate place. The same goes for the characteristic of arrogance and all the other characteristics. We have already mentioned this in detail in “The Book of Training the Ego” [from *Revival of the Religious Sciences*].

You should know that he who spends by force is not generous, and he who is humble by force and that is hard on his ego is bereft of the characteristic of humility. Rather, character is an expression of a posture of the self from which action comes forth easily without deliberation or force. Force is the way of attaining character, whereby a person does not cease to force himself initially, until he becomes like that naturally and normally. It is understood from this that the stingy person could spend and the generous person could withhold. Therefore, do not look at the action, but rather at the deeply rooted posture from which action arises easily without any affectation.

Know that the differences between people in regards to inner beauty are like the differences between them in regards to outer beauty. Absolute goodness is rarely given. It was indeed given to Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ, to the extent that Allāh ﷻ praised him by saying:

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

You are most certainly upon sublime character. (68:4)

Salvation is not dependent on complete achievement, but rather on the inclination to goodness being greater. Indeed, absolute wretchedness is obviously loathsome, absolute goodness is beloved, and between the two are degrees. So the person close to absolute goodness is happier in the world than the person close to absolute wretchedness. Likewise, happiness in the afterlife differs according to differences of inner beauty.

[WARNING AGAINST DELUSION IN ATTAINING GOOD
CHARACTER]

Know that you might think of yourself as having good character, yet you are bereft of it. So beware of being deluded! You should make someone else be the judge of your character, by asking an insightful friend who does not flatter you. In general, if another person ascribes bad character to you, then it is probable that you are like that; because most character traits are in relation to others, so it is fitting that they appear to them.

Among the areas of delusion in regards to character are that—for example—you get angry and believe that you are angry for Allāh ﷻ. Another example is that you show off during worship and think you are doing so in order to set an example; or that you refrain from eating and seeking material things, or control your anger, yet it pleases you to be known for these things—this is ostentation, which is the motivation for all these forms of delusion. For this reason, the areas of delusion with regard to good character that I have mentioned in “The Book of Delusion” from *The Revival* are many; this short work certainly cannot contain a full description of it.

[THE HEART BEING DEVOID OF BLAMEWORTHY
CHARACTERISTICS, ESPECIALLY LOVE OF THE WORLD]

Your heart should be devoid of these character traits, and you should start in order of importance. Start with the most dominant of these qualities, and break them step by step. I believe that the predominant quality within you is love of the world, and all the other acts of disobedience and blameworthy character traits follow it.

Deliverance from love of the world is not possible for you unless you seek pure seclusion and reflect on the reason for your turning to

the world and your turning away from the afterlife. You will not find a reason for it other than ignorance and heedlessness. Indeed, the most you will live in the world is one hundred years; so suppose that within one hundred years you were given a kingdom that spanned the Earth from East to West. Would you be pleased—while pursuing this—to miss out on a kingdom whose duration has no end, which is the kingdom of the afterlife?

If you are unable to imagine eternity, then imagine that the entire world is filled with grains. Then imagine a bird taking a single grain once every million years. The grain would come to an end, yet nothing of eternity would be lost; for the remainder also has no end—just as it was before.

You see yourself being content with the hardship of travel—whether for trade or seeking leadership—and this consummate hardship is for the sake of something merely supposed. Perhaps you will meet death before it, or perhaps you will not acquire it in full, even if you achieve some success regarding it. However, you are content with that because you consider—for example—a year of hardship to be something small in relation to the rest of your life. Your entire life in relation to eternity is less than a year in relation to your lifespan. Actually, there is no comparison between the two. Therefore reflect on this, so that your ignorance is unveiled from up close.

Perhaps you say: “I only do this because I expect to be forgiven, for Allāh  is certainly Generous and Merciful.” To this I say: Why do you not abandon raising crops, commerce, or seeking wealth, with the expectation of finding a treasure in some ruins? For indeed Allāh is Generous, and nothing of His Dominion would diminish if He were to let you know in a dream that there was a treasure somewhere so that you might take it. If you say: “That would be rare, even if it is

within Allāh's ﷻ Power,” then know that expecting to be forgiven despite ruinous actions and character is like expecting to find a treasure in ruins. In fact, it is even more farfetched and rare. Allāh ﷻ has alerted you to this with His Words:

﴿وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى﴾

Man has nothing except what he strives for. (53:39)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

Shall we make those who believe and do righteous deeds like those who sow corruption on the Earth? (38:28)

You should be averse to seeking wealth, since Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا﴾

There is not a moving creature on the earth except that its provision is upon Allāh. (11:6)

How then can you think of denying His Generosity in this world and not relying upon Him, and furthermore deceiving yourself about His Generosity in the afterlife—when you know that the Lord of the world and the Lord of the afterlife are one?

Perhaps you say: “The end results of worldly affairs have been unveiled to me directly and my heart is at rest with them. As for the matter of the afterlife, I have never witnessed it and I do not find within my heart any real affirmation of it. For this reason, my desire

for abandoning the world has languished. Hence, I take in cash what has been promised on credit, since I do not have confidence in it.”

I say: If you were from among those who possess insight, the matter of the afterlife would have unveiled to you explicitly just as the matter of this world has been unveiled. If you are not from among the possessors of insight, then reflect on their statements; for truly, in regards to the matter of the afterlife people are of four types:

One type affirms Paradise and Hell as the Qur’ān has informed, and you have already heard about the kinds of delight in the former and the penalties of the latter. A second type do not affirm physical pleasure and pain, but rather affirm them as imaginary states—like those that occur in dreams—such that each individual in Paradise or Hell will view it by himself. They claim that the effect on him will be like a real effect, since the pain of a sleeping person is like the pain of a wakeful person, from which he is delivered only by waking up—whereas in the afterlife this is a constant which never subsides.

A third type affirms rational pain and pleasure, claiming that this is greater than the senses. They illustrate this with the example of feeling the pleasure of sovereignty or feeling its loss; for indeed, the loss of sovereignty causes much pain to the one who is overcome by his enemy (who takes his kingdom and denigrates him), despite the fact that an enemy’s victory does not harm the body.

These three types are those who perceive with insight. Among them are the prophets, saints, and theistic philosophers. All of them agree in affirming an eternal happiness and an eternal sorrow. Indeed, happiness is only attained through abandoning the world and turning to Allāh ﷻ. If you were to become sick and were not from among the people of insight concerning medicine, but you saw that premiere physicians have agreed upon a thing, you would not hesitate to follow them.

A fourth type is not from among those who perceive with insight in regards to Divine matters. Rather, they are from the physicians and astronomers, whose observations are limited to the four natures (heat, cold, moisture, and dryness) and how they interact. They are of the opinion that the substance of the spirit is dependent upon these, and do not comprehend the reality of the true godly spirit—that of someone who knows Allāh ﷻ. Instead, they perceive nothing but the physical spirit that is the breath brought to maturity by the beating of the heart and that spreads through the arteries to the entire body, thus sustaining sensory perception and movement. This is the spirit that is also found in dumb animals.

As for that special, human spirit that is ascribed to Allāh ﷻ, in respect of which He said:

﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾

. . .and I have breathed into him from My Spirit (15:29; 38:72)

—they do not comprehend it. They think that death is nonexistence, and that the spirit goes back to the corruptible components of the body. With regards to these people, you are between two matters: either to assert the possibility of them being wrong, or to know decisively the correctness of their statement.

If you assert the possibility of their error, it is incumbent for you to turn away from the world by sheer probability. If you were truly hungry, came upon some food, and set yourself to eat it, then a boy informed you that there was poison in it or that a snake had spewed venom it, you would bear the hunger and leave the food. You would say, “If he is lying, then I won’t miss anything but the pleasure of eating; but if he is telling the truth, then therein is my destruction.” Such a possibility is unassailable.

If only I knew—with the possibility of an eternity in Hell—how a rational person could be so bold as to assail the notion of the afterlife! How could he accept anything but complete certainty in avoiding that possibility? Even the poet ‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī, despite his feeble intellect, said:

The astronomer and the physician both claim that the dead will not be gathered. I say to them:

If your statement is correct, then I’m no loser; but if my statement is correct, then it is your loss.

On the other hand, if you say: “I know for certain that they are truthful—that death is nonexistence, that there is no punishment and no reward, that the prophets and the saints are delusional and deceptive, and that the reality of truth has only been unveiled to the ignorant physician;” and if you claim: “I know this like I know that two is more than one, to the point that no doubt troubles me,” then this indicates the corruption of your make-up, the feebleness of your intellect, and your remoteness from accepting treatment. Notwithstanding all this, however, it is said to you: If you were seeking comfort in the world, then your reason would also compel you to struggle against desire and break it; for indeed, finding comfort in freedom and deliverance from the grip of desires is not in following them. If they were to gain power over you, then they would be completely painful and drive you to bearing every humility and hardship. The only comfortable one in the world is the one who abandons it and has little interest in it. As for its seeker, he does not cease to toil therein.

The one who denies the afterlife would also abandon the world—if he understood even a little—due to its abundant toil, ephemeral nature, and the vileness of those who share in it. So, if you surmise

nothing about the affair of the afterlife, nor have any certainty about the nature of the world upon witnessing its ills, then you are nothing but a deluded imbecile, and you will most definitely come to know of its news after a while. It is said to the likes of you:

﴿ذَرَّهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

Leave them to eat and enjoy themselves and be distracted by false hope, for they will come to know. (15:3)

Part Four

PRAISEWORTHY CHARACTER TRAITS
(*AL-AKHLĀQ AL-MAḤMŪDAH*)
(WHICH ARE ALSO TEN)



The First Principle

REPENTANCE (*AT-TAWBAH*)

Indeed, repentance is the beginning of the road for travellers and the key to happiness for those who desire Allāh. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ﴾

Allāh surely loves the repentant and loves those who purify themselves. (2:222)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا﴾

Repent to Allāh altogether. . . (24:31)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The repentant one is Allāh’s beloved, and the one who repents from a sin is like he who has no sin.”²⁹⁷ He ﷻ said: “Allāh is more happy with His believing slave’s repentance than a man who comes upon a desert wasteland with his food and drink on his riding beast, rests his head and sleeps a little, only to wake up and find that his riding beast has roamed away. He searches for it until hunger and thirst become severe on him (or until Allāh ﷻ wills). He says: ‘I will return to the place where I was and sleep until I die.’ So he lays his head down on his forearm preparing to die, but when he wakes up he finds his riding beast before him along with his food and drink. Allāh is more intensely happy with His believing slave’s repentance than this man with his riding beast.”²⁹⁸

[THE REALITY OF REPENTANCE]

The reality of repentance is returning to Allāh ﷻ from the path of remoteness to the path of nearness; yet it has a pillar, a starting point, and completion. Its starting point is faith, which means the radiation of the light of realisation upon the heart, until it becomes clear to it that sins are a destructive poison. From this, the fire of fear and regret are ignited, and an honest desire for reparation and precaution against sin is put into effect by this fire. While in the act of sin, it is by abandoning it. As for the future, it is by the resolve to leave it off. In regards to the past, it is by making amends to the extent possible, and through this it comes to completion.

[REPENTANCE IS OBLIGATORY FOR EVERYONE]

If you know the reality of repentance, then it is apparent to you that it is obligatory upon everyone, in every state. For this reason Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

Return to Allāh altogether, O believers! (24:31)

He addressed all in the absolute sense.

It is obligatory because it means realising that sins are destructive and is the motivation to abandon them. This is a part of faith. In other words, how could this realisation not be obligatory?

As for its obligation upon everybody, this is because humanity is composed of various attributes: animalistic, predatory, devilish, and lordly. Desire, evil, and wickedness come from his animalistic nature. Anger, envy, enmity, and hatred come from his predatory

nature. Scheming, plotting, and deceiving come from his devilish nature. Pride, dignity, love of praise, and love of power come from his lordly nature. The foundations of all character traits are these four, and they have been firmly molded into the very substance of humanity and one can hardly be free of them. Only by the light of faith, obtained through reason and revelation, may one be saved from the darkness.

The first thing created in the human being is his animal nature; thus, vivacity and desire dominate him in childhood. Then his predatory nature is created; thus, antagonism and competitiveness dominate him. Then his devilish nature is created; thus scheming and deceiving dominate him. His predatory and animalistic natures call him to use his cleverness to plot ways of satisfying his desires and alleviate his anger. Thereafter, the lordly attributes appear; which are pride, pursuing power, and seeking rank. Thereafter, reason is created in him, wherein the light of faith is manifest, placing him among the party of Allāh ﷻ and the forces of the angels; whereas those attributes are from the forces of Satan.

The forces of reason are completed at the age of forty, and its foundation is laid at puberty. As for the remaining forces of Satan, they have already made their way to the heart before puberty and overcome it. The self has become accustomed to them and let itself go in regards to following its desires, until the light of reason appears to fight back and confront Satan, commencing the battle for the heart between them.

If the force of reason and the light of faith are weak, they will not have the strength to upset Satan. Satan's forces will remain intact and be the last standing, just as they were first to descend upon the

heart in the first place—and thus the kingdom of the heart is surrendered to Satan.

This fighting is a necessity in human nature; while the form of a child has no room for it, there is no reason why the form of a father should not accommodate it. You have been told about the state of Ādam (Allāh's blessings be upon him) so that through it you may be made aware of the fact that this was written for him and for all of his children in an eternal mandate that accepts no replacement. Hence, no one is without need of repentance.

[REPENTANCE IS OBLIGATORY IN EVERY STATE]

Repentance is obligatory in every state because the human being—in all of his states—is not devoid of sin on his limbs or in his heart. Neither is he devoid of any blameworthy character trait from which the heart must be purified, for indeed it distances from Allāh; preoccupation with its removal is a kind of repentance, because it is a return from the path of remoteness to the path of nearness.

If a person is free of all of that, then he is not devoid of heedlessness of Allāh ﷻ. That is also the path of remoteness, and returning from it is necessary for him by way of remembrance. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ﴾

Remember your Lord if you forget. (18:24)

If a person is aware all of the time (and how is that conceivable?!), then he is not devoid of adhering to a low station in lieu of the higher stations beyond it; then it is upon him to elevate himself from the lower to what is above it. Whenever he elevates

himself from it, he seeks forgiveness for the station he was at previously; because it is a shortcoming relative to what he has reached—and this process has no end. For this reason, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Indeed, I seek forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ seventy times every day and night."²⁹⁹

All of the above constitutes repentance. However, the repentance of general Muslims is for outer sins; the repentance of the righteous is for blameworthy inner traits; the repentance of those mindful of Allāh is for occasions of doubt; the repentance of the lovers is for heedlessness that makes them forget remembrance; and the repentance of the gnostics is for delaying progress from one station to another beyond it. The stations of nearness to Allāh ﷻ have no end, so the repentance of the gnostic also has no end.

[REPENTANCE IS CERTAINLY ACCEPTED WHEN ALL ITS
CONDITIONS ARE MET]

If all the conditions of repentance are met, it is inevitably accepted—something that is obvious to you if you understand the meaning of acceptance. The meaning of acceptance is that the preparation to receive the manifestation of the lights of knowledge occurs in your heart. Your heart is like a mirror that is covered and thus prevented from producing a clear manifestation by the haze of desire and longing to give in to it; and darkness rises over the heart with every sin. With every good deed a light penetrates the heart, so good deeds polish the soul. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Follow-up a bad deed with a good deed that erases it."³⁰⁰

Repentance is to the heart what soap is to clothes. It inevitably removes filth from it if it is used correctly. Whoever repents only doubts its acceptance because he is not certain that its conditions

were fulfilled—just as someone who takes a remedy, but is not certain about whether it will take effect, because he does not know whether it contained all of the requisite components. If it is conceivable that one may know that the conditions are fulfilled, then it is conceivable that acceptance be known in reference to a specific person; however, doubt in reference to specific people does not cause us any doubt that repentance in itself inevitably leads to acceptance.

[REPENTANCE IS ACHIEVED BY ABANDONING
PERSISTENCE]

The treatment of repentance is to unravel the knot of persistence. Indeed, there is nothing that prevents it except persistence; and nothing causes persistence except heedlessness and desire. This is a disease in the heart, and its treatment is like the treatment of the body's diseases; however, this disease is worse than physical disease for three reasons:

The first of them is that it is a disease in which the afflicted person does not know he is sick—like leprosy on the face of someone who has no mirror. He certainly will not treat it, because he does not know about it; and if someone were to inform him, perhaps he would not believe him.

The second is that people have not witnessed or experienced the end result of this disease. For this reason, you see a person relying upon Allāh's  Pardon, while striving to the utmost to treat physical disease.

The third—which is the chronic disease—is the lack of physicians. Indeed, the physician here is the practising scholar, and the disease of the scholars in this age is a disease that is difficult for

them to treat themselves. This is because the destructive disease is love of material things, and that has overcome the scholars. They are compelled to desist from warning people about the world so that their own disgrace is not exposed. Yet they have been disgraced ever since they made up terms for turning toward the world, being drawn to it and rushing to attain it. Because of this, the disease is widespread; the cure has been cut off; and the physicians are preoccupied with the art of misleading. If only they would not corrupt—since they will not rectify; and would be silent—rather than speaking. Instead, each one has become like a boulder lodged at the bottom of a valley, neither drinking the water nor leaving it for others to drink.

In summary, the decisive statement regarding the treatment of this disease is that you examine the cause of persistence in sin, which stems from five reasons:

The first is that the threatened punishment is not ‘in cash’, so-to-speak, and human nature tends to take lightly whatever does not exist in the present reality. The treatment for this is that you reflect in order to know that what is coming is very close; that the remote is what is *not* coming; and that for everyone, death is closer than the strap of a sandal. How would a person know whether he was in his last days or the last year of his life? Then a person should reflect upon how he exerts himself in travelling (thus placing himself in dangerous situations) out of fear of poverty in the future!

The second reason is that pleasures and desires have an overwhelming grip on a person at present, and he is unable to remove them. The treatment for this is that he should reflect on the fact that if a Christian physician were to mention to him that drinking cold water will harm him and lead to his death—and it is the most pleasurable thing to him—how easily he would leave it!

Know then, that Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ are more truthful than the physician, and an eternity in Hell is more severe than death from an illness. He should affirm to himself that if leaving pleasures over the course of a few days is difficult for him, then how would being forever engulfed in fire and prevented from the upper echelon of Paradise and its delights not be difficult for him?

The third reason is that he procrastinates with repentance day after day. The treatment for this is that he should reflect and know that the gravity of eternal joy and eternal sorrow is not built on ignorance. How does he know that he will remain until he has time to repent? The majority of the screams of Hell's denizens are due to procrastination; because they procrastinated until they were suddenly afflicted with an illness that led to their deaths. How could this not be the case when the only reason a person procrastinates is because he is unable to quell his desires at the present moment?

If a person is waiting for a day when quelling desires is easy for him, then this is a day never created in the first place. Rather, its analogy is the analogy of a person who wants to uproot a tree, but is unable to do so because of his weakness and the strength of the tree's roots; so he delays it until the next year, knowing that the tree's roots become stronger every year, and his strength diminishes every year. This is ignorance at its utmost.

The fourth reason is that a person promises himself generosity and pardon—which is stupidity at its utmost—which Satan has showcased to him in the guise of religion. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The intelligent one is he who subjugates his ego and works for what is after death. The fool is he who follows his ego and desires, and has false expectations about Allāh ﷻ.”³⁰¹

The fifth reason is that a person—and refuge is sought in Allāh—doubts the matter of the afterlife. We have already mentioned the treatment for this in the epilogue of the section on blameworthy character traits.

[SPEAKING OF MINOR SINS]

Repentance from all sins is important and obligatory—repentance from major sins being more important. Persisting upon a minor sin is a major sin also; so there is no such thing as a minor sin with persistence, and no major sin where there is reform and forgiveness is sought.

Continually committing minor sins has a huge effect on blackening the heart. It is like drops of water continuously falling on a rock—no doubt it will eventually lead to a hole, despite the softness of the water and the hardness of the rock. Minor sins accumulate for a number of reasons:

The first of them is that the slave considers them minor and takes them lightly, so that he is not distressed on account of them. Some say that the sin that is not forgiven is the slave's statement: "If only everything I did were like this."

The second reason is happiness that accompanies the minor sin, having a good time because of it, and believing that being able to do it is a blessing. This is to the extent that the sinner will boast by saying: "If only you could have seen how I cursed him," or: "how I shattered his honour," or: "how I tricked him." This has a tremendous effect on blackening the heart.

The third reason is that a person makes light of Allāh's  concealment of him, and believes that it is due to his nobility with Allāh . He does not know that he is loathsome, and that Allāh is

taking His time with the retribution—so that he increases in sin and winds up in the lowest level of Hell.

The fourth reason is that a person openly commits sin or mentions it after having committed it. There is a ḥadīth that states: “All people are pardoned except those who sin openly.”³⁰²

The fifth reason is that the minor sin comes from a scholar who is taken as an example. This is an immense wrong, because it remains after his death. Glad tidings for the one who dies and his sins die with him! “Whoever starts a bad practice carries its sin and the sin of whoever practices it after him until the Day of Resurrection.”³⁰³

It has been narrated that a scholar from the Children of Israel repented of his sins and his innovation, so Allāh ﷻ revealed to the prophet of his time: “Verily, if your sin was just between Me and you, I would forgive you; but what is to be done regarding my slaves whom you have misguided and caused to enter Hell?”³⁰⁴

In summary, nothing motivates repentance except fear that comes from insight and knowledge. We shall therefore mention the virtue of fear, its reality and its treatment.

The Second Principle

FEAR (*AL-KHAWF*)

Allāh ﷻ has gathered for the fearful: guidance, mercy, knowledge, and pleasure—and that suffices you as a blessing. He ﷻ said:

﴿هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ﴾

...guidance and mercy for those who are fearful of their Lord
(7:154)

He said:

﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ﴾

The only ones who truly fear Allāh from among his slaves are those with knowledge. (35:28)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنِ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ﴾

Allāh is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is for whoever fears his Lord. (98:8)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The head of wisdom is fearing Allāh.”³⁰⁵
He said: “Whoever fears Allāh ﷻ, Allāh will make everything fear him. Whoever fears other than Allāh ﷻ, Allāh will make him fear

everything.”³⁰⁶ He ﷺ also said: “Allāh ﷻ said: ‘By My Might and Majesty, I do not join within my slave two fears nor two securities. If he feels secure about Me in the world, I put fear into him on the Day of Resurrection. If he fears Me in the world, I give him security on the Day of Resurrection.’”³⁰⁷

[THE REALITY OF FEAR]

Know that the reality of fear is the heart’s pain due to its expectation of something disliked in the future. That fear could be from frequent sins, or it could be from Allāh ﷻ, through knowledge of His Attributes that inescapably necessitate fear. This is the more perfect and complete, because whoever knows Allāh fears Him necessarily. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ﴾

The only ones who truly fear Allāh from among his slaves are those with knowledge. (35:28)

Allāh ﷻ revealed to Dāwūd ﷺ: “Fear me as you fear a ferocious beast of prey.” For that reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: “I am the most fearful of Allāh ﷻ among you.”³⁰⁸

Know that the one who lands in the claws of a predatory animal does not fear it only if he does not know the predatory animal. Indeed, he who knows that among the attributes of the predatory animal is that it destroys without caring—so if it leaves him, it is not out of compassion and pity for him, since he is too trifling for it to be concerned about him—such a person is inevitably in fear of it. The highest analogy is for Allāh, for He is the Mighty, the Wise; yet whoever knows that if He were to destroy all of humanity from the

very first to the very last, knows that He would not be concerned, nor would it detract anything from His Dominion.

﴿قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا﴾

Say: 'Then who could do anything to stop Allāh if He had willed to destroy the Messiah, Son of Maryam, his mother, and everyone on the Earth altogether?' (5:17)

How many of His slaves has He destroyed in the world and subjected them to every sort of punishment, without being effected by compassion or pity (for that is surely inconceivable for Him)? It is inevitable that He be feared. Thus, knowledge of majesty, might, and independence necessarily evoke reverence; and this is the best and most complete type of fear.

[HOW TO ATTAIN FEAR]

Treatment by fear and its attainment is of two levels:

The first of them is knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, for it entails fear necessarily. Truly, the one who lands in the claws of a predatory animal does not need any treatment in order to fear—if he knows the predatory animal. It is inconceivable that anyone who knows the Majesty and Independence of Allāh ﷻ; that He created Paradise and people to inhabit it; knows that He created Hell and people to inhabit it; that His Word concerning eternal joy and eternal sorrow will be fulfilled for everyone in truth and in justice; that this is inconceivable for other than Him and there is no averting the execution of His eternal Decree; that he himself does not know what

has been predetermined for him, nor what his final deeds will be; and that there is a possibility that he is among those destined for eternal sorrow—it is inconceivable that such a person will feel anything but fear.

As for someone who is unable to understand the reality of knowledge, his treatment is to observe those who fear, to watch their states, or listen to reports about them. Indeed, those of Allāh's creation who are the most fearful of Allāh are the prophets, the saints, the scholars, and people of spiritual insight. Those of the creation who feel most secure, on the other hand, are heedless wealthy people—who pay no heed to what has preceded them, or to the upcoming end, or to knowing Allāh's ﷻ Majesty. This is like a boy who does not fear snakes insofar as he has not observed his father fearing them, running from them, and trembling when he sees them; yet when the boy sees the father in such a state, he imitates him and feels his fear—even if he does not know the reality of snakes. The Prophet ﷺ has said: “Jibrīl ﷺ never once came to me except that he was trembling due to fear of Hell.”³⁰⁹

It is said that when Iblīs manifested what he was to manifest, Jibrīl ﷺ and Mīkā'il ﷺ suddenly started crying. So Allāh ﷻ revealed to them: “Why are you crying?” They said: “O Lord! We have no security from Your Plan.” So Allāh ﷻ said: “Be so—do not feel safe from My Plan, for no one feels safe from Allāh's Plan except disbelieving people.”³¹⁰ It is also said that when Allāh ﷻ created Hell, the hearts of the angels flew from their places. When He created the Children of Ādam, they returned³¹¹.

The humming of Ibrāhīm's ﷺ heart during prayer could be heard from a mile away. Dāwūd ﷺ cried for forty days in

prostration without lifting his head, until grass grew from his tears³¹².

Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq  said to a bird: “If only I were like you, O bird, and not created as a human being!”³¹³ Abū Dharr  said: “I wish I were a tree.”³¹⁴ ‘A’ishah  said: “I wish that I were completely forgotten.”³¹⁵

We have already related the states of the fearful in the ‘Book of Fear and Hope’ from *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. Let him reflect who falls short of the pinnacle of knowledge found in the states of the prophets, the saints, and the gnostics—so that he might know that he is more worthy of being in fear than them. If he reflects on that truly, then fear will overcome him.

[THE SLAVE’S TURNING FROM FEAR TO HOPE]

Fear is a whip that drives the slave to happiness, yet it should not be excessive to the point where it causes despair—for that is blameworthy. Rather, if it predominates, it should be mixed with hope.

Of course, fear should dominate hope so long as the slave is committing sins. As for the obedient person devoted to Allāh , he should be balanced between fear and hope—like ‘Umar  when he said: “If it were proclaimed that all of the creation will enter Paradise except one man, I fear that I would be that man. If it were proclaimed that all of creation will enter Hell except one man, I would hope to be that man.”³¹⁶

As for the one who is close to death, hope and having a good opinion of his Lord should dominate him. The Prophet  said: “Let none of you die except that he thinks well of his Lord.”³¹⁷

Furthermore, hope is different from empty wishing. Truly, the one who does not plant a seed and till the earth, yet looks forward to harvesting, is vainly wishful and deluded—not hopeful. The hopeful is he who plants the seed, tills the earth, and attains every means related to his choice. Thereafter, he remains hopeful that Allāh ﷻ will repel natural disasters and thieves, and empower him to harvest after his crop grows. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

Verily, those who believe and those who migrated and struggled in Allāh's path—these are the ones who hope for Allāh's Mercy; and Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful. (2:218)

In summary, the fruit of hope is encouragement to seek, and the fruit of fear is incitement to flee. Whoever hopes for a thing seeks it, and whoever fears a thing flees from it. The lowest level of fear is what moves one to abandon sins and turn away from the world. Whatever does not move one to that is merely talking to one's self, or passing thoughts that are of no real gravity—like the emotionalism of women that produces no results. Rather, if fear is complete, it results in asceticism. Therefore, we will now mention asceticism and its meaning.

The Third Principle

ASCETICISM (AZ-ZUHD)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ﴾

*Do not turn your eyes to what we have provided them of wives—
adornment of the worldly life—to test them regarding it. The
provision of your Lord is better and more lasting. (20:131)*

He ﷻ also said:

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ
حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَّصِيبٍ﴾

*Whoever wants the harvest of the afterlife, we increase his harvest for
him. Whoever wants the harvest of the world, we give to him from it;
yet he has no share in the afterlife. (42:20)*

Allāh ﷻ said concerning Qārūn:

﴿فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ۝ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيَلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا﴾

He came out to his people in his splendor. Those who desire the worldly life said: 'If only we had what Qārūn has been given! Surely he has great fortune!' Those who were given knowledge said: 'Woe to you! Allāh's reward is better for whoever believes and does righteous deeds.' (28:79–80)

Thus He clarified that asceticism is among the fruits of knowledge.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever wakes up with the world as his aspiration, Allāh scatters his affair, divides his property, places his poverty before his eyes, and does not give him anything from the world except what was written for him. Whoever wakes up with the afterlife as his aspiration, Allāh gathers his aspiration for him, preserves his property, puts his wealth in his heart, and gives him the world despite itself.”³¹⁸

When he ﷺ was asked about Allāh's ﷻ statement:

﴿مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ﴾

Whomever Allāh intends to guide, He opens his breast to Islam;
(6:125)

and about the meaning of ‘opening’, he said: “When light enters the heart, the breast is opened and emptied.” It was asked: “Is there a sign for this?” He ﷺ said: “Yes. Detachment from the Abode of Delusion, turning toward the Abode of Eternity, and preparation for death before it happens.”³¹⁹

He  said: “Be shy of Allāh with rightful shyness.” The Companions said: “We are most certainly shy.” He said: “Yet you build homes in which you do not reside, and store-up food that you do not eat.”³²⁰

He said: “Whoever abstains from material things, Allāh  puts wisdom in his heart, causes him to speak with wisdom, teaches him the sickness of the world and its cure, and removes him from the world safely into the Home of Peace.”³²¹ He said: “The slave does not complete the reality of faith until being unknown is more beloved to him than being known, and a little bit of something is more beloved to him than a lot of it.” He also said: “If Allāh wants good for a slave, He makes him abstain from material things, stokes his interest in the afterlife, and gives him insight into the flaws of his ego.”³²²

He  said: “Abstain from material things—Allāh  will love you. Abstain from what people possess—people will love you.”³²³ He said: “Whoever wants for Allāh  to give him knowledge without formal learning, and guidance without explicit direction, let him abstain from material things.”³²⁴

[THE REALITY OF ASCETICISM, ITS FOUNDATION AND ITS FRUIT]

Asceticism in the world has a reality, a foundation, and a fruit.

As for its reality, it is the self's aversion to the world and its voluntary withdrawal from it, despite the ability to acquire it.

Its foundation is the knowledge and light that shines in the heart until it spreads to the chest; realisation that the afterlife is better and more lasting becomes clear, and that the world in relation to the afterlife is less than a clay pot to a jewel.

Its fruit is contentment with the necessary portion of the world, which is the portion of the rider's provision. Thus, the foundation is the light of realisation, the fruition of which produces a state of withdrawal. Then abstinence from all except the necessary portion of provision for the road appears on the limbs. This necessary provision for the road is shelter, clothing, food, and furnishings.

As for food, it has a length and a width. Its length is relative to time. The shortest level is limiting it to repelling hunger as it happens. Thus, if a person repels it with lunch, he does not keep anything for his dinner. Its intermediate level is for a person to store food for only one month, or up to forty days. Its highest level is for a person to store food for one year. If he goes beyond that, he has exited from all the doors of asceticism—except if he does not have a living and does not ask, like Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭā'ī . He owned twenty dinars that he held onto and sufficed with for twenty years. This does not nullify the station of asceticism or its level in the afterlife, except according to someone who makes reliance upon Allāh a condition of asceticism.

As for its width, the least is half a *ritl*,³²⁵ the medium amount is a *ritl*, and the highest amount is a *mudd*. Anything in excess of this nullifies the station of asceticism.

As for its kind, the least is whatever nourishes, even bran. The medium is barley bread, and the highest is unrefined wheat bread. If it is refined, then this is enjoyment—not asceticism.

As for condiments, the least of them are vinegar, herbs, and salt. The medium is oil; and the highest is meat, eaten once or twice a week. If meat is always eaten, then the person who eats it is not an ascetic. 'Ā'ishah  said: "Forty nights would pass, and not a fire or lamp would be lit in the house of Allāh's Messenger .

³²⁶ It was

said: “Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ was not satiated with wheat bread three days in a row since the time he entered al-Madīnah.”³²⁷

As for clothes, the least is whatever covers the privates and protects from the heat and the cold. The highest is a shirt, pants, and a scarf of rough fabric. It should be the case that if a person were to wash his garment, he would not find another one.

If a person owns two shirts, he is not an ascetic. Abū Bardah said: “‘Ā’ishah ﷺ brought out a matted garment and a rough loincloth. She said: ‘Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ passed away with these on.’”³²⁸

Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ prayed in a garment that had insignia. When he finished, he said: “Looking at this distracted me. Take it and go to Abū Jahm. . .”³²⁹ When the strap of his sandal wore out, it was replaced with a new one. When he finished his prayer, he said: “Give the worn out strap back to me, for I looked at this new one during prayer.”³³⁰

He ﷺ had put on two new sandals whose beauty delighted him. He fell down, prostrated and said: “Their beauty has delighted me, so I have humbled myself to my Lord out of fear that He may despise me.” Then he took them off and gave them to the first poor person he saw.³³¹

Twelve patches were counted on a shirt belonging to ‘Umar ﷺ, some of them from leather³³². ‘Alī ﷺ bought a garment during his caliphate for three dirhams. He cut off its sleeves from the wrists and said: “All praise is due to Allāh Who clothed me with this from His provision of clothes.”³³³

Someone said: “I estimated the value of Sufyān’s garment and sandals to be a dirham and four *dāniqs*.”³³⁴ ‘Alī ﷺ said: “Truly, Allāh ﷻ required the leaders of guidance to be like the people in their lowest material state, so that the rich person might take them as

an example and the poor person would not be disparaged on account of his poverty.”

As for shelter, its lowest is that a person be content with a corner in a masjid or hospice like the People of the Porch (*Ahl aş-Şuffah*). The highest is that a person seeks for himself a private place—that is, an apartment—by either buying or renting, on condition that it is no more spacious than necessary, he does not extend its height, and he does not regard plastering it important. It is mentioned in a ḥadīth: “Truly, whoever raises his building above six cubits, a caller calls him, saying: ‘Where are you going, O most sinful of sinners?’”³³⁵

Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ died having never placed a brick over a brick, or a rod over a rod³³⁶. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ said: “Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ walked by us while we were fixing a hut and said: ‘Indeed, the matter is hastier than that.’”³³⁷

Nūḥ ﷺ took a hut as a house, so it was said to him: “Why not build?” He said: “This is a lot for someone who will die.”³³⁸ The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever builds above what is enough for him will be forced to carry it on the Day of Resurrection.”³³⁹ He ﷺ said: “Every building is harmful to its owner on the Day of Resurrection, except what sheltered from heat or from cold.”

As for the furnishing of a house, it also has various levels. The lowest is the condition of ‘Īsā ibn Maryam ﷺ, as he had nothing with him except a comb and a small jar. When he saw a person combing his hair with his fingers, he threw away the comb; and when he saw another person drinking with his hand, he threw away the small jar.

The medium level is that a person uses the rough type of item for each purpose—and strives to use only one. ‘Umar ﷺ said to ‘Umayr ibn Sa’d (who was the Commander of Homs): “What of the world do you have?” He said: “I have my staff that I lean upon and kill snakes

with if I encounter them; a knapsack that I carry food in; a large bowl that I eat from and wash my hair and clothes in; and a canister that I carry drinking water and water for ablution in. Whatever is beyond this from the world is subordinate to what I have.” So ‘Umar said: “You have spoken the truth.”³⁴⁰

Al-Ḥasan said: “I met seventy of the most virtuous people and not one of them had anything but a single garment, nor did any of them put any cloth between him and the floor.”³⁴¹ Allāh’s Messenger  used to sleep on a leather pillow stuffed with palm fiber³⁴² and a coarse wool blanket.

This is the way of the ascetics in the world. Whoever is prevented from this level let him at least regret missing it, and strive to be closer to it than he is to those who enjoy luxury in the world.

[LEVELS OF ASCETICISM]

Asceticism has various levels:

The first of them is that a person abstains, yet his ego inclines toward the world and he struggles against it. This person is attempting asceticism, but is not an ascetic. Nevertheless, the beginning of asceticism is to attempt asceticism.

The second is that a person’s ego flees from the world and does not incline to it, due to his knowledge that it is impossible to combine between the world and the pleasures of the afterlife. Hence, his ego permits its abandonment, just as the ego of someone who spends permits a dirham to buy a jewel—even if the dirham was beloved to him. This is the ascetic.

The third is that a person's ego does not incline to the world, nor does it flee from it; rather, its existence or nonexistence is the same to him. Wealth is like water to him, and the stores of Allāh ﷻ are like the sea. His heart does not pay attention to it—there is no desire and no aversion. This is the most complete, because the one who hates a thing is preoccupied with it—just as the one who loves it. For this reason, some people censured the world in the presence of Rābi'ah al-'Adawīyyah, so she said: "If it were not for its status in your hearts, you would not have censured it."

One hundred thousand dirhams were taken to 'Ā'ishah ﷺ and she was not averse to it. Rather, she distributed it throughout her day. Her servant said to her: "If only you had bought some meat with a dirham so that you might eat something." 'Ā'ishah said: "If you had reminded me, I would have done so."³⁴³

This is true richness, and it is the most complete form of asceticism; however, it is a place of probable delusion for fools. Every deluded person feels within himself that his heart has no attachment to the world. The sign of there being no attachment is that a person does not perceive the difference between all of his wealth being stolen or the wealth of someone else being stolen. As long as he perceives the difference, he is preoccupied with it.

[THE PERFECTION OF ASCETICISM]

The perfection of asceticism—which is asceticism within asceticism—is through not esteeming it or seeing it as a position of status. Indeed, whoever abandons the world and believes that he has left something of value, has actually magnified the world. The world according to those who possess insight is nothing. An insightful person is like someone who is prevented from entering the king's palace by a guard

dog, so he throws a piece of bread to preoccupy the dog with it, enters the palace, and sits on the king's throne. Indeed, Satan is a dog at Allāh's ﷻ gate, and the entire world is less than a piece of bread relative to the kingdom of the afterlife. The piece of bread is related to a worldly kingdom because both will cease to exist; however, it is inconceivable that the afterlife come to an end like the world, for it has no end.

[LEVELS OF ASCETICISM IN LIGHT OF ITS MOTIVATION]

Asceticism in light of the motivation for it has three levels:

The first of them is when its motivation is fear of Hell; this is the asceticism of the fearful.

The second—which is higher than the aforementioned—is that its motivation is longing for the pleasures of the afterlife; this is the asceticism of those who hope. Worship out of hope is better than worship out of fear, because hope entails love.

The third—which is the highest of them—is when the motivation for it is to rise above turning to what is besides the Truth, as a way of sanctifying the self from it and looking down on whatever is besides Allāh ﷻ. This is the asceticism of the gnostics; it is true asceticism. Anything less than this is a transaction, because it involves the person forgoing something now in order to be compensated for it many times over later on.

[LEVELS OF ASCETICISM IN LIGHT OF WHAT IS ABSTAINED FROM]

Asceticism in light of what is abstained from is of various levels. Its perfection is asceticism in regards to all that is besides Allāh ﷻ in the world and the afterlife. Less than this is asceticism in the world particularly, without the afterlife. This includes everything that is an immediate fortune and enjoyment in the world—whether wealth, status, or comfort.

Beneath the aforementioned is that a person abstains from wealth but not status, or in regards to some things but not others. This is weak, because status is more pleasurable and more desirable than wealth, so abstaining from it is more important.

[ON THE VIRTUE OF THE POOR AND THE TRANSMITTED
EVIDENCE FOR IT]

Asceticism is to abstain from the world voluntarily, while being able to have it. As for the world being inaccessible to you, despite your desire for it, that is poverty—not asceticism. Nevertheless, the poor person has some superiority over the rich person, due to him being forcefully prevented from enjoying the world. This is better than someone who is capable of having the world and enjoying it to the extent that he becomes accustomed to it, finds repose in it, and his heart has no aversion to it. Thus, pain and regret are great at death, and the entire world is like his paradise. For the poor person—on the other hand—the world is like a prison, for he desires deliverance from its agonies. Poverty is among the causes of happiness. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Truly, Allāh ﷻ restricts His believing slave from the world out of love for him, as one of you restricts a sick loved one from food and drink.”³⁴⁴ He also said: “The poor of my community will enter Paradise 500 years before the rich.”³⁴⁵ He also said: “The best of this community are its poor.”³⁴⁶ He said: “If you see a poor

person coming, then say: ‘Welcome to the emblem of the righteous!’ If you see a rich person coming, then say: ‘A sin whose punishment has been expedited.’”³⁴⁷

Mūsā  said: “O Lord! Who are your loved ones among the creation, so that I may love them for your sake?” Allāh said: “Every poor person.”

Know that the poor person, if he is content with what has been given to him and not extremely vigilant about seeking wealth, then his level is close to the level of an ascetic. The Prophet  said: “Glad tidings to whoever is guided to Islām, and whose livelihood is meager yet he is content with it.”³⁴⁸ He  said: “The poor people who are patient are the honoured guests of Allāh .³⁴⁹ He  said: “The most beloved of Allāh’s slaves is the poor person who is content.”³⁵⁰

Allāh  revealed to Ismā‘īl : “Seek me out among the broken-hearted.” He said: “Who are they?” Allāh said: “The poor people who are truthful.”

In summation, the reward of the poor person is only increased with satisfaction and patience. Contentment and patience with poverty is the starting point of asceticism; these stations are not completed except through patience, which we will therefore mention.

The Fourth Principle

PATIENCE (*AṢ-ṢABR*)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

Be patient. Allāh is surely with the patient. (8:46)

He gathered for the patient affairs that He did not gather for other than them. He ﷻ said:

﴿أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ﴾

Those are the ones whom their Lord's blessings and mercy is upon.

Those are the guided ones. (2:157)

He ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

We will give those who were patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do. (16:96)

He ﷻ said:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا﴾

*When they were patient, we made leaders among them who guided by
Our Command. (32:24)*

He ﷺ also said:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُوفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

Indeed, the patient are given their reward without account. (39:10)

Allāh ﷻ mentioned patience in the Qur'ān in close to seventy places.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Patience is half of faith.”³⁵¹ He said: “From the least of what you have been given is certainty and the resolve of patience. Whoever is given a substantial portion from these two will not be concerned for what he has missed of night prayer vigils and daytime fasting.”³⁵² He also said: “Patience is a treasure from the treasures of Paradise.”

He ﷺ was once asked about faith; he said: “It is patience.”³⁵³ ‘Īsā عليه السلام said: “Indeed, you will only get ahold of what you love by patience with what you detest.”³⁵⁴

[PATIENCE IS PECULIAR TO HUMANS]

The reality of patience is the firmness of religious motivation in the face of desire’s motivation. Patience is from the special properties of the human being, who is composed of angelic and animalistic faculties—the animal is only overcome by desire’s calls. The angels are not overcome by desire; rather, they are entirely devoted to yearning to see the beauty of the Divine Presence and delighting at the degree of closeness to it. They declare Allāh’s Glory throughout the night and the day without tiring, and have nothing calling them to desires; so patience is inconceivable for an angel, but not for an

animal. However, the human being is under the authority of two aggressive forces. One of them is from the party of Allāh and His angels; it is reason and its motivations. The second is from the forces of Satan; it is desire and whatever calls to it.

Religious and rational motivations appear after puberty, as a person is motivated to think about the final outcome of things and begins to fight the forces of Satan. If religious motivation is established in the face of desire's motivation to the extent that it overcomes it, then the station of patience has been attained; for patience is inconceivable except in a case wherein there is contrariness and conflict between two motivations. This is like patience with taking a nasty medicine—for reason calls to it, while desire precludes it. Whoever is overcome by his desire will not take it; while whoever's reason overcomes his desire will be patient with its bitterness in order to attain healing.

The pillar of faith is completed with patience, which is why Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Patience is half of faith."³⁵⁵ Faith applies to knowledge and practice together, and all actions—from both ends of the spectrum regarding restraint and pursuit, purification and adornment—are only completed by patience. This is because all actions of faith are contrary to the motivation of desire; thus, faith is only completed through the establishment of religious motivation in the face of desire. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Fasting is half of patience"—because patience is sometimes in the face of desire's call, and sometimes in the face of anger's call, and fasting is a form of breaking desire's call.

[THE LEVELS OF PATIENCE]

Patience has three levels according to its weakness or strength. The highest of these is that a person subdues desire's call entirely, until its power to contest no longer remains. One reaches this level by constantly being patient and prolonged struggle. This is the quality of those about whom it is said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾

Indeed, those who say 'Our Lord is Allāh,' then are upright. . .

(46:13)

They are the ones who are called:

﴿يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۖ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً﴾

O restful soul! Return to your Lord—pleasing and pleased. (89:27–

28)

The lowest level is that desire's call is strong, the contention of religious motivation falls off, desire overcomes, and the heart surrenders to Satan's forces. This is the quality of those about whom it is said:

﴿وَلَكِنَّ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾

But, My statement will be realised—I will fill Hell with jinn and people altogether. (32:13)

It has two signs: The first of them is that a person says: "I really want to repent, but it is extremely difficult for me, so I have no aspiration to do so." This person is one in despair, and he is destroyed.

The second is that a person has no desire to repent. Rather, he says: “Allāh is Merciful, Generous, and does not need my repentance—the expanse of Paradise will not be tightened for me, nor will His all-encompassing Forgiveness.” This poor individual’s mind has become a prisoner to his desire, so he does not use it except to come up with loopholes for satisfying his desire. His mind has become like a Muslim prisoner of disbelievers; they use him to raise pigs, guard wine, and to carry it to their houses on his neck and back. Just think: what would be the state of a slave who takes the greatest of the king’s children and surrenders him to the vilest of his enemies, so that he may enslave and use him for some demeaning task? In light of this state, what would the heedless one completely enthralled in sin be like to Allāh ﷻ?

The intermediate level is that a person does avoid making war upon his desire; however, the conflict has its ups and downs—sometimes he has the upper hand, and sometimes he takes a loss. This person is from among those who struggle—mixing righteous actions with others that are bad. Its sign is that a person abandons those desires that are weak, yet is unable to refrain from what is stronger. At times he may overcome it, but not at others. At all times he is deeply remorseful about his inability, and acts aggressively in order to strive and oppose himself. Perhaps Allāh will turn to these people. This is the greatest struggle, and so long as a person is mindful of Allāh and believes in the good of the afterlife, then Allāh will facilitate ease for him.

In summary, a human being who does not resist his desire with the force of his reason is less than a dumb animal, despite having been endowed with reason while the dumb animal has been precluded from it. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ ۖ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا﴾

They are nothing but cattle; rather, they are more astray. (25:44)

[THE NEED FOR PATIENCE IN ALL STATES]

Know that the need for patience is general for all states, because everything the slave encounters in this life is of only two categories: it either agrees with his desire, or opposes it. If it agrees with his desire—like health and security, wealth and status, and many kinfolk—then how in need of patience with it he is! For if he does not control himself, he will exceed the bounds and let loose regarding luxury and following his desires, thus forgetting where he came from and his final destination. For this reason, the Companions  said: “We were tested with the trial of hardship and were patient; and we were tested with the trial of ease and were not patient.”³⁵⁶ That is why it is said that every believer is patient with tribulation, but only the perpetually truthful one is patient with wellbeing.

The meaning of patience with it is that a person does not depend upon it. He knows that it is all a trust under his care that must soon be returned; he does not become immersed in heedlessness and luxury; and he gives thanks for his blessings in the right manner. This is a subject whose explanation would be lengthy.

The second category is whatever opposes desire, and that comprises four types: The first is acts of obedience. The ego is averse to some of these due to pure laziness—like the prayer; others due to stinginess—like zakat; and others due to both of these—like Ḥajj and jihād. Patience with obedience is an extremely difficult matter, and the obedient one needs patience in three states.

The first is during the first part of worship: by correcting sincerity and having patience with the tarnishes of ostentation, Satan's machinations, and the machinations of the ego and its delusions. The second is during the deed, so as not to slack on properly performing it with its requirements and recommended aspects—all of which is conditional upon etiquette, presence of heart, and absence of whisperings. The third is after finishing, which is that a person is patient regarding his remembrance of Allāh—not raising his voice with it to show off ostentatiously for the sake of reputation. All of the aforementioned are among the acts of patience that are difficult upon the ego.

The second type is acts of disobedience. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The fighter is he who fights his desire, and the emigrant is he who emigrates from evil."³⁵⁷ Having patience with acts of disobedience is more difficult, especially with the act of disobedience that has become a very familiar habit; for two forces are at odds with religious motivation—the force of desire and the force of habit. If easiness and little burden are added to this, then none can be patient with it except for the perpetually truthful. This is like the disobedience of the tongue, for indeed it is simple and easy—like backbiting, lying, arguing, and praising one's self. To combat this, a person needs to have the most extreme form of patience.

The third type is that which is not connected to the slave's choice; however, he has a choice in repelling it or rectifying it—like the one who is affected by an undesirable thing coming from someone else, by either his hand or his tongue. Having patience with this by forgoing retribution is sometimes obligatory and sometimes recommended. Some of the Companions رضي الله عنهم said: "We did not consider a man's faith to be true faith unless he was patient when harmed."

Allāh ﷻ said, informing us of the statement of the prophets ﷺ:

﴿وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ مَا آذَيْتُمُونَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ﴾

We will indeed be patient with the harm you have done to us. And let those who rely in truth rely upon Allāh. (14:12)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَدَعِ أَذَاهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ﴾

Leave [repaying] their harm and rely upon Allāh. (33:48)

He ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ۖ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ﴾

Indeed, We know that your chest is strained by what they say. So glorify your Lord with praise and be among those who prostrate. (15:97–98)

The fourth type is whatever is not by choice from start to finish—like the death of loved ones, loss of wealth, sickness, losing a limb, and all other kinds of tribulation. Having patience with these is from the loftiest of stations. Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ said: “Patience in the Qur’ān is upon three stations: patience with fulfilling requirements, which has three hundred degrees; patience with Allāh’s ﷻ prohibitions, which has six hundred degrees; and patience with tribulation when it first befalls, which has seven hundred degrees.”

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Allāh ﷻ said: ‘If I try my slave with a tribulation of sickness and he is patient and does not complain to his visitors, I will replace his flesh with a flesh better than it, and his blood with blood better than it. If I cause him to recover, I cause him to recover and he has no sins. If I cause him to die, it is unto My Mercy.’”³⁵⁸ He ﷺ said, informing us from Allāh ﷻ: “If I direct to a slave among my slaves an affliction in his body, wealth, or children, and he faces it with beautiful patience, on the Day of Resurrection I will be Shy about placing his deeds on a scale or opening up his record.”³⁵⁹ He ﷺ said: “Patiently waiting for relief is an act of worship.”³⁶⁰ He also said: “Among the affairs that entail magnifying Allāh ﷻ and knowing His Right is that you do not complain about your pain and do not mention your affliction.”³⁶¹

Thus, you know that you are not free of need for patience in all of your states. Through this, it is apparent that patience is a pillar of faith. Faith’s other pillar that relates to actions is gratitude. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Faith is divided into two: half is patience, and half is gratitude.”³⁶² This statement is understood by considering actions as faith and referring to them as such.

The Fifth Principle

GRATITUDE
(ASH-SHUKR)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ﴾

And few of my slaves are the truly grateful. (34:13)

And:

﴿لِّإِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ﴾

If you give thanks I will surely increase you. (14:7)

And:

﴿وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ﴾

Thank me and do not be ungrateful. (2:152)

And:

﴿وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾

And Allāh will reward the thankful. (3:144)

And:

﴿مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنْتُمْ﴾

What would Allāh do with your punishment if you are thankful and believe? (4:147)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The one who eats and is thankful is equal with Allāh to the one who fasts and is patient.”³⁶³ Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ used to cry when praying at night, so ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said: “What makes you cry, when Allāh has forgiven for you what has preceded and come after of your shortcomings?” He said: “Shall I not be a thankful slave?”³⁶⁴

He said: “It will be said on the Day of Resurrection, ‘All those who gave praise abundantly stand;’ so a group will stand, a banner will be raised for them, and they will enter Paradise.” It was asked, “Who are those who praise abundantly?” He replied: “Those who thank Allāh in every condition.”³⁶⁵ He also said: “Praise is the Upper Garment of the Merciful.”

[THE REALITY OF GRATITUDE AND THAT IT CONSISTS OF
KNOWLEDGE, STATE AND ACTION]

Know that gratitude is from among the high stations, and that it is higher than patience, fear, asceticism, and all of the stations that were mentioned previously—because they are not sought in and of themselves but rather are desired for something else. Patience is desired in order to overcome whim; fear is a whip that drives the fearful to desired praiseworthy stations; and asceticism is a flight from relationships that preoccupy from Allāh ﷻ. As for gratitude, it is a goal in and of itself. For this reason, it does not cease in Paradise—where there is no repentance, no fear, no patience, and no asceticism. Gratitude is forever in Paradise; hence, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

The last of their prayer will be, ‘All praise is for Allāh Lord of the Worlds.’ (10:10)

You know this by knowing the reality of gratitude, and that it consists of knowledge, state, and action. As for knowledge, it is the foundation; it produces state, and state produces action—they are three pillars.

First is knowledge of the blessing and the One who gives the blessing, along with knowledge that all blessings are from Allāh ﷻ, the sole Bestower of all of them, to whom all means are subject and subordinate. This realisation underpins sanctification (*taqdis*) and unification (*tawḥīd*); for indeed, they are a part of it. The first level is in realising faith and sanctification. Thereafter, if you know a sanctified entity, and you know that there is no sanctified thing except One, this is to unify. If you know that everything in the world exists through that One, and all is a blessing from Him specifically—that is praise. He ﷻ alluded to this order by saying: “Whoever says ‘Glory to Allāh’ (*Subḥān Allāh*), he has ten good deeds. Whoever says, ‘There is no god but Allāh’ (*Lā illāha illa’llāh*), he has twenty good deeds. Whoever says, ‘All praise is for Allāh’ (*Al-ḥamd li’llāh*), he has thirty good deeds.”³⁶⁶ This is because sanctifying and unifying are a part of praise. To praise is to sanctify, unify, and more; and these degrees are commensurate to this realisation.

As for moving the tongue, its virtue depends on it arising from knowledge or its renewal of a belief in the heart. Indeed, the mouth is a tool for removing heedlessness and erasing its effect.

Know that if you believe that other than Allāh has some part in the blessing that has reached you, then your praise is not valid, and

your realisation and your gratitude are not complete. You are like one to whom a king grants something, but he thinks that the concern of the vizier had a part in the king's giving—his having it sent to him, or its facilitation. All of that is to associate a partner in the giving of the blessing and to divide your joy for the blessing between the two of them.

If you saw that the gift that reached you had the king's signature, then that would not detract from your gratitude—because you know that the pen is subordinate to him and that it by itself has no part in the blessing. Hence, your heart does not turn to rejoicing for the pen and thanking it. Likewise, it does not turn to the treasurer or the manager, since you know that they are subordinate and bound to give after the command. By themselves, they have no part in the blessing.

He whose insight has been opened is like this. He knows that the sun, the moon, and the stars are subordinate to the Command of Allāh ﷻ—like the pen, the paper, and the ink are for signing. Likewise, he knows that the hearts of the creation are the treasures of Allāh ﷻ, the keys to which are in Allāh's Hand ﷻ. He opens them by exerting upon them the needs of the treasure keepers, such that one believes—for example—that his best interest lies in spending, and with that he cannot leave spending. Thus, he is compelled to choose, owing to the needs of choice that are exerted upon him. One surely does not give you anything except for his own interest—whether to gain some reward in the world to come, earn some acclaim or mention here and now, or other than that. So long as he knows that there is no benefit for him in benefiting you, he will not give to you. It is not he, then, who is the one bestowing blessings upon you—because he is working for himself. The only one who bestows blessings is He who subordinated him by exerting these needs over

him, and settled in his conscious the idea that his interest depends on paying and giving.

If you know this, then you are a unifier (*muwaḥḥid*), and gratitude is conceivable from you. Indeed, this realisation is the very meaning of gratitude. Mūsā  said in his supplications: “My God! You created Ādam with Your Hand, and acted, and acted. How did he thank you?” Allāh said: “He knew that that was from me, and that realisation was gratitude.”³⁶⁷

The second pillar is the state invested through knowledge, which is happiness due to the Bestower of blessings, along with an attitude of subservience and reverence. Whoever is sent a horse by a king, it is conceivable that he rejoices over it from three aspects: because he benefits from the horse; because he infers from it that the king is concerned about his affairs, and that he will give him something greater; or because the horse will be a mount for him so that he may travel to the king and serve him.

The first has nothing to do with gratitude, for it is happiness for the blessing and not for the giver of the blessing. The second is included in gratitude; however, it is weak in relation to the third.

Perfect gratitude is for joy to be over what Allāh  has opened up from His blessings—not over the blessing for the sake of it being a blessing. Rather, it should be for the sake that it is a means to Allāh, for through His blessings righteous deeds are completed. The sign of this is that a person is not happy with any blessing that distracts him from the remembrance of Allāh , rather, he is sad about it, but rejoices over the preoccupation with the world and its excess from which Allāh  has turned him away. This is the most perfect gratitude. Whoever cannot do this, he must do the second. As for the first, it is happiness over the blessing—not the giver of blessings, which has nothing to do with gratitude.

The third pillar is deeds, which is that a person uses his blessings for those things that are beloved to Him, not to disobey Him. No one does this except someone who knows Allāh's ﷻ Wisdom in the whole of His creation and why He created everything. An explanation of this would take too long, and we have already mentioned it in a portion of *The Revival*.

In summary, it is to know—for example—that his eye is a blessing from Him; so gratitude for it is by using it to read the book of Allāh ﷻ and scholarly books, to look at the heavens and the Earth in order to take lessons from them and venerate their Creator, and by covering every fault that he sees from the Muslims.

It is to use one's ear to listen to remembrance and what is of benefit in regards to the afterlife, and to turn away from listening to vulgar language and prattle. It is to use the tongue for the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and to praise Him by showing gratitude to Him without complaining. Whoever is asked about his condition and complains is disobedient, because he has complained about the King of kings to a lowly slave who is incapable of doing anything. But if he praises Him, he is obedient.

As for the heart's gratitude, it is by using it in contemplation, remembrance and realisation, having a good opinion of the creation, and having good intentions. The same applies to the arm, the leg, and all other body parts, as well as wealth, and countless other things besides these.

[THOSE WHO ARE INCAPABLE OF PERFECT GRATITUDE]

Know that the only one for whom perfect gratitude is possible is he whose heart Allāh has to Islām and thus is upon light from his Lord. He sees the wisdom, the secret, and what is beloved to Allāh in

everything. As for a person to whom this has not been unveiled, he must follow the Sunnah and the limits of Sacred Law; for within them are the secrets of gratitude.

He should know that if he were to look at an unrelated woman for example, he has been ungrateful for the blessing of the eye, the blessing of the sun, and every blessing without which looking would not be possible. Indeed, vision is incomplete without the eye and sunlight, and the sun is incomplete without the heavens. Thus, it is as if he is ungrateful for the blessings of Allāh ﷻ in the heavens and the Earth. Apply this to every act of disobedience, for they are only made possible by causes that require the existence of the heavens and the Earth in their entirety. One can delve very deeply into this, and we have alluded to it in ‘The Book of Gratitude’ from *The Revival*.

One example will suffice you here. Allāh ﷻ created dirhams and dinars to be a standard in all situations through which value is standardised. If it were not for them, transactions would be difficult; for the way to buy clothes with saffron, or animals with food, is unknown—because there is no appropriate relationship between them. They only share in the essence of value. The gauge for measuring their marketability is gold and silver. Whoever hoards them is like someone who imprisons a Muslim ruler until his rulings are obstructed. Whoever takes a utensil is like someone who uses a Muslim ruler for weaving or farming (which anyone is able to do) until his rule is obstructed, which is worse than imprisoning him.

Whoever invests them and makes them the goal of his commerce, by exchanging between the good and the bad, is like someone who distracts the ruler from ruling and takes him as a personal servant to gather firewood, sweep, and prepare meals. All of this is oppression and altering the rule of Allāh ﷻ regarding His creation and slaves, and animosity toward Allāh ﷻ concerning what He has favoured.

Whoever does not have these secrets unveiled to him through the light of insight knows the letter of the Law without its meaning. It is said to him:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۖ يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَٰذَا مَا كَنْزْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ﴾

Those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend them in Allāh's path, give them the news of a painful punishment. On the day it will be heated in the fire of Hell—their foreheads, sides, and backs will be branded with it [and it will be said]: 'This is what you hoarded for yourselves; now taste what you used to hoard!' (9:34–35)

It is also said to him: “Whoever drinks from a container of gold or silver, it is if he has gulped the fire of *Jahannam* in his belly.”³⁶⁸ It is also said:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ
الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ﴾

Those who consume interest will not stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one whom Satan has touched with hysteria stands. (2:275)

Righteous people stop at the limits (*ḥudūd*) and do not know their secrets; whereas, when the gnostics look at the secrets within themselves and witness the truth of Sacred Law, light is increased manifold. The blindness of ignorant people prevents them from stopping at the limits and discovering the secrets altogether. They are

not like fearful slaves, nor like noble freemen. They are the ones about whom it is said:

﴿وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾

But My Statement has been realised—I will fill Hell with jinn and people altogether. . . (32:13)

Allāh ﷻ also said:

﴿أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَى﴾

Is he who knows that what has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth like he who is blind? (13:19)

He said:

﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى ۚ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ۚ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى﴾

Whoever turns away from My remembrance will have a hard life, and we will raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. He will say: ‘My Lord! Why have you raised me up blind when I used to see?’ He will say: ‘My signs came to you like this but you forgot them. Likewise, you are forgotten today.’ (20:124–126)

Allāh's signs are His Wisdom in His creation, and they have been mentioned to the creation on the tongues of the prophets ﷺ, just as they have been detailed from first to last in the summation of Sacred Law. There is not a single one of the limits of Sacred Law but that it has a secret, a special property, and wisdom. Whoever knows it knows it, and whoever is ignorant of it denies it. The full explanation of this would be long, so seek it from 'The Book of Gratitude'.

Complete gratitude is inconceivable except from someone who stands for Allāh ﷻ Alone, sincerely and without any ulterior desire for other than Him. We shall therefore mention sincerity and truthfulness.

The Sixth Principle

SINCERITY (*AL-IKHLĀṢ*) AND TRUTHFULNESS (*AṢ-ṢIDQ*)

Know that sincerity is a reality, a foundation, and perfection. These are three pillars. Its foundation is intention, for sincerity is within it. Its reality is negating any corruption of intention, and its perfection is truthfulness.

The first pillar is intention. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ﴾

Do not turn away those who invoke their Lord in the morning and the evening desiring His Countenance. (6:52)

The meaning of intention is to want Allāh's ﷻ Countenance.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Actions are only by intentions. . ." ³⁶⁹ He said: "Truly, the angels lift up a page of a slave's deeds and Allāh ﷻ says: 'Throw it away, for surely he did not desire my Countenance. Write for him such and such.' So the angels say: 'He did not do any of these things.' So Allāh ﷻ says: 'He certainly intended, he certainly intended.'" ³⁷⁰

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "People are four types: There is a man to whom Allāh gave knowledge and wealth, and who uses his wealth according to his knowledge, such that another man says: 'If only Allāh had given me what He has given him, I would have done as he has done'—the two of them are equal in reward. There is a further man to whom Allāh gave wealth but not knowledge, and who spends

foolishly out of his ignorance, such that another man says: ‘If Allāh ﷻ had given me what He has given him, I would have done as he has done’—both of them are equal in sin.”³⁷¹ He also said: “Whoever embarks on a military expedition yet intends nothing but material gain, he shall have what he intended.”³⁷²

It has been narrated that a man from the Children of Israel passed by some sand dunes during a drought. He said to himself: “If this sand was food, I would divide it between the people.” So Allāh ﷻ revealed to their prophet: “Say to him: ‘Indeed, Allāh ﷻ has accepted your charity, appreciated your good intention, and given you the reward of what you would have given in charity, had it been food.’”

The Prophet ﷺ said: “If two Muslims confront one another with their swords, both the killer and the killed are in the Fire.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allāh! One is a killer, but what about the killed?” He said: “He intended to kill his companion.”³⁷³ He also said: “Whoever marries a woman for a dowry but does not intend on giving it, he is a fornicator. Whoever takes a loan but does not intend on repaying it, he is a thief.”³⁷⁴

[THE REALITY OF INTENTION]

The reality of intention is the motivating willpower that emerges from knowledge. To clarify, this means that no action is correct without ability, will, and knowledge. Knowledge provokes will, and will is the motivation for ability. Ability is the servant of will through the movement of the limbs.

An example of this is that Allāh created within you the desire for food; but it could be dormant, as if it were sleeping. If your sight lands on some food, knowledge of the food occurs. The desire for food is thus awakened, so you stretch out your hand to it. You do so

only through an ability that is within you, which is obedient to the signaling of desire. Desire is awakened through the attainment of knowledge, which in turn is gained from sensory observation.

Just as He created within you a desire for things that are present, He also created within you an inclination toward delayed gratification. This inclination is stimulated by the signal of knowledge attained from reason. Ability also serves this inclination through the movement of limbs.

Intention is an expression of the decisive, motivating inclination of ability. The one who aspires to something could have an inclination toward wealth as his motivation. This is his intention. Alternatively, his motivation could be an inclination toward reward in the afterlife. This is his intention. Thus, intention is an expression of motivating will; sincerity of intention means the purity of a person's motivation from adulteration.

[THE INTENDED MEANING OF ACTION IS ITS EFFECT UPON
THE HEART]

If a deed occurs through the motivation of intention, then the completion of worship is through both the intention and the deed. Intention is one of the two parts of worship; however it is the best of the two parts, because deeds done through the limbs are only intended for the effect they have on the heart—so that it may incline to the good, flee from the bad, and thus be free for the reflection and remembrance that lead a person to fellowship with and knowledge of Allāh, which are the two causes of happiness in the afterlife.

For example, the purpose of placing the forehead on the ground is not merely placing the forehead on the ground; rather, it is the heart's humility—but the heart is affected by the actions of the limbs. The purpose of zakat is not giving up possessions; rather, it is removing the vile quality of stinginess, which is by cutting off the heart's relationship with wealth. The purpose of slaughtering is not the meat or the blood, but rather making the heart feel reverence for the religious symbols of Allāh ﷻ.

Intention is an expression of the heart's inclination to good, enabling it to attain its purpose. It is better than physical acts that are only intended to channel the act's effect to its desired place, which is the heart. For this reason, all the acts of the heart have some effect, even without the limbs. On the other hand, the action of the limb without presence of heart is worthless and has no effect. Whenever someone seeks treatment for the stomach, whatever medicine reaches the stomach is undoubtedly more beneficial than some ointment rubbed over the stomach for its effect. Likewise, if the effect of the ointment did not penetrate the stomach, it would be futile. With this realisation, the secret of the Prophet's ﷺ statement is known: "The believer's intention is better than his actions."³⁷⁵

[THE ABILITY TO INTEND MANY PURPOSES BY ONE DEED]

If you know the virtue of intention and that it opens up the opportunity for attaining one's purpose and has an effect on it, then strive to increase intention in all of your deeds until you intend by one deed many purposes. If your aspiration is true, you will be directed to the path of your guidance. One example will suffice you. Entering the mosque and sitting in it is a single act of worship, yet it is possible for you to intend by it eight things:

The first of them is that you believe that it is Allāh's ﷻ house, and that the one who enters it is Allāh's visitor—so you intend that. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever sits in a mosque has visited Allāh ﷻ . It is only right that the Host honours his guest."³⁷⁶

The second of them is the intention of vigilance, due to Allāh's ﷻ statement:

﴿وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا﴾

...endure and be vigilant. (3:200)

It is said that it means waiting for the next prayer after praying.

The third of them is staying in the mosque. This means withholding hearing, sight, and the body parts from normal movement; indeed, it is a form of abstinence. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "The monasticism of my community is sitting in the mosques."

The fourth of them is seclusion and repelling all preoccupation for the sake of quietly contemplating the afterlife and how to prepare for it.

The fifth of them is freeing one's self for remembrance of Allāh, listening to it, or allowing someone else to listen, according to the Prophet's ﷺ statement: "Whoever goes to the mosque early remembering Allāh ﷻ or reminding of Him, he is like the fighter in Allāh's ﷻ path."³⁷⁷

The sixth of them is that you intend to disseminate knowledge as a way of alerting someone who performs the prayer poorly, prohibiting an evil, or commanding to a good; so that virtuous deeds are facilitated because of it and the one taught shares in the goodness.

The seventh of them is that you abandon sins out of shyness before Allāh ﷻ by confining yourself to His house until you are too shy to perpetrate a sin.

The eighth of them is that you gain a brother in Allāh; for surely that is a prize and treasure for the abode of the afterlife, and the mosque is the hub for religious people who love for and in Allāh.

Regard all of your actions in this fashion, for by the meeting of these intentions, actions are purified and become comparable to the actions of those brought near. In the same way, the opposite renders them comparable to the actions of devils. An example of this is someone who intends to sit in the mosque and converse about meaningless things, joke about people's honour, sit with the adherents of amusement and games, look at any woman or young boy who passes by, argue with his peers for the sake of pride and being seen in order to sway the hearts of those listening to him talk, or other intentions in the same vein.

Likewise, a person should not be heedless about having a good intention in regards to permissible things. It is mentioned in a report: "Indeed, the slave will be questioned about everything on the Day of Resurrection; even about the kohl on his eye, the fig crumbs on his fingers, and him touching his brother's garment."³⁷⁸

An example of intention in regards to permissible things is that whoever puts on scent for Friday, it is possible for him to intend enjoyment of its pleasant smell, boasting by showing how expensive it is, or adorning himself for women and corrupt people. Yet it is conceivable that he intends to follow the Sunnah, venerating Allāh's ﷻ house, honouring Friday, repelling annoyance from someone else by repelling body odour, enabling them to relax through a pleasant scent, or closing the door of backbiting if they were to have smelled a foul odor coming from him. There is an allusion to these two types in

the Prophet's  statement: "Whoever puts on scent for Allāh, he will come forth on the Day of Resurrection and his scent will be more pleasant than the scent of musk. Whoever puts on scent for other than Allāh, he will come forth on the Day of Resurrection and his scent will be more foul than a corpse."³⁷⁹

[INTENTION DOES NOT COME UNDER CHOICE]

Know that intention does not come under choice, so you should not be deluded and say with your tongue and your heart, "I intended such-and-such by sitting in the mosque," and think that you have intended. You know from what I have mentioned previously that intention is the motivation without which the existence of deeds would be inconceivable.

An affected intention is like a person saying: "I intended to love and venerate so-and-so," or: "I intended to be thirsty, or hungry, or satiated." Each one of these is motivated by an element of necessity that is effected by its causes—for their occurrence is inconceivable without their causes. Thus, a person saying that he intended them without them coming into effect is him merely talking to himself—it is not intention. How can the one who has sex due to an overwhelming desire for it say that he intended to have sex for the sake of having children and to increase their number as a source of pride?

On the contrary, you will not be successful in provoking these intentions from your heart unless your faith is strong and your knowledge of the lowliness of immediate fortune in this world compared to the magnitude of reward in the afterlife is complete. Once this predominates in you, it necessarily awakens within you a desire for everything that is a means to a reward in the afterlife. If it

does not motivate, then you have no intention. For a similar reason, the pious predecessors would stop performing some good deeds, to the extent that it has been narrated that Muḥammad ibn Sirīn did not pray at the funeral of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and said: “The correct intention is not present with me.”

It was said to Ṭāwūs: “Pray for us.” So he said: “Not until I find the intention.”³⁸⁰ Someone said: “I have been searching for the intention to visit a sick man for a month, and the intention is still not correct for me.”

Whoever knows the reality of intention, and knows that it is the spirit of action, does not tire himself with an action that has no spirit. This is verified by the fact that the permissible could become better than worship if intention is present therein. Hence, whoever has an intention to gain strength for worship through eating and drinking, and is not motivated to fast at that time, then eating is more appropriate for him.

Whoever gets bored with worship and knows that sleeping will reenergise him, sleeping is better for him. Indeed, if he knows—for example—that lightening up for a moment with jokes or permissible conversation will increase his energy, then that is better for him than praying while bored. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Truly, Allāh does not get bored until you get bored.”³⁸¹

Abū’d-Dardā’ said: “Indeed, I relax through some amusement so that it may be a support for me upon the truth.” ‘Alī  said: “Let the heart rest; for indeed, if it is forced, it will be blinded.”³⁸² These minutiae are regarded as a burden by superficial jurists—just as an unskilled physician regards treating a feverish person by giving him meat to eat as burdensome; whereas an expert would order it, so that the strength of the sick person returns until he is able to take the proper medicine thereafter.

The second pillar is regarding sincerity of intention. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ﴾

They were not commanded except to worship Allāh, making the religion purely for him. (98:5)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِلَّا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ﴾

Indeed, the pure religion is for Allāh. (39:3)

And:

﴿إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ﴾

Except those who repent, rectify, hold on to Allāh, and make their religion purely for Allāh. (4:146)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Allāh ﷻ said: ‘Sincerity is a secret from My Secret. I have placed it in the heart of whomever I love among my slaves.’”³⁸³ He ﷺ said to Mu‘ādh: “Make your actions sincere, and a small amount will suffice you.”³⁸⁴ He ﷺ said: “There is no slave who makes his actions sincere for forty days except that springs of wisdom flow from his heart to his tongue.”³⁸⁵

[THE REALITY OF SINCERITY AND WHAT ERASES IT]

The reality of sincerity is to have one pure motivation. Its opposite is to make partnership, which is that a person combines two motivations (regarding everything for which it is inconceivable that

something else mix with it). If the motivation is free from any adulteration, it is called pure.

You already know that intention is the motivating agent. Someone who only acts for the sake of ostentation is sincere, and someone who only acts for Allāh is sincere; however, the name is used specifically for one end of the spectrum according to custom (in the same way that ‘deviation’ (*ilḥād*) means an inclination, but has come to denote specifically an inclination toward falsehood).

We have already mentioned how sincerity is erased through the blemishes of ostentation; however, it may be removed by other means. Indeed, the fasting person may intend along with worship to benefit health-wise through fasting. The person who frees a slave may intend to free himself from having to maintain the slave or deal with his bad character. The pilgrim may undertake the Ḥajj in order to benefit from travel, avoid the hardship of looking after family, flee from the harm of enemies, or escape the weariness of staying with his wife. A student may study in order to facilitate earning a living, or to be secure from oppression through the status of knowledge. Likewise, a person may write a page to improve his handwriting; make pilgrimage walking in order to lighten the burden of renting a riding beast; make ablution to get clean or cool off; bathe to freshen up; stay in a mosque to lighten the burden of renting a place; fast to lighten the burden of cooking or buying food; give charity in order to avoid being bothered by beggars; or visit a sick person so that he may be visited when he is sick.

These interests could be selfless, yet they could still cause hidden adulteration of worship. If any of these self-interests occurs in an action, sincerity is gone. Avoiding it is extremely difficult, which is why some say that a moment of sincerity contains eternal salvation; however, it is hard to obtain. Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī said: “Glad tidings to whoever takes one correct step, by which he intends nothing but Allāh ﷻ.” It was well known that al-Karkhī used to beat himself and say: “O self! Be sincere and be delivered.”

[THE LEVELS OF ADULTERATION OF SINCERITY]

Know that the mixing of these adulterations is on various levels. They could overwhelm, they could be obscure, or they could be equal to the intent of worship. They do not eradicate the basis of reward concerning permissible things. So long as there is an inkling of desire for Allāh’s ﷻ Countenance, then a person has a reward commensurate to it; but there is no reward for the rest.

If it is regarding worship, then one is commanded to be sincere for Allāh ﷻ. If the adulteration is dominant, the worship is invalid. If it is equal or subordinate, sincerity is invalid. But, does the validity of worship and attainment of its foundation depend on the nullification of all adulteration? This is open to debate, as we have indicated in the section on ostentation³⁸⁶. You may also seek a more in-depth study in our book: *The Revival*.

The third pillar is truthfulness, which is the perfection of sincerity. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿رَجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ﴾

Men who were truthful about what they promised to Allāh. . .

(33:23)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Indeed, a man will be truthful and strive for truthfulness until he is written as a perpetually truthful person with Allāh.”³⁸⁷ Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا﴾

Mention Ibrāhīm in the Book. Indeed, he was perpetually truthful, a prophet. (19:41)

It is enough of a blessing that through truthfulness, the levels of the perpetually truthful are reached.

Know that truthfulness has six ranks. Whoever reaches the level of perfection in all of them deserves the title of truthfulness. The first of them is truthfulness in word and in all states concerning the past, future, and present. For this reason, truthfulness has two perfections:

The first of them is caution regarding false impressions also, for although that is—in itself—truthful, it contains an element of contradiction of the truth. What is to be avoided concerning lying is making what is contrary to the truth be understood as truth, and for the heart to take on a crooked, phony image that matches the tongue’s lie. If the heart leans away from correctness and toward crookedness, the truth will not manifest to a person correctly, until even his dreams will not be truthful. False impressions do not fall into this area of what to be cautious of, because they are truthful in themselves; however, they fall into a second thing to be avoided, which is obscuring meaning. This should not be done except for a correct purpose.

Its second perfection is that a person be careful regarding truthfulness in his statements to Allāh ﷻ. If he says: “I turn my face to He Who originated the heavens and the Earth. . .” yet in his heart

there is something besides Allāh ﷻ at that moment, then he is a liar. If he says: ﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ﴾ (*It is You we worship*), yet he is a slave to the world, to his ego, or to someone else, then then he will not be able to affirm this statement on the Day of Resurrection. For this reason, ʿĪsā ﷺ said: “O little slaves of the world!”³⁸⁸ Our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: “Wretched is the slave of the dirham and the dinar.”³⁸⁹

The second truthfulness is in intention, meaning that the motivation to good is purified within it. If there is some adulteration in it, then truthfulness has not been achieved. It is said that this is ‘sour’ truthfulness; truthfulness is sweet if it is pure, so the issue goes back to the essence of sincerity.

The third truthfulness is in resolve. Indeed, a slave may resolve to give charity if he is provided wealth, or to be just if he is provided authority. Sometimes his resolve could be weak and indecisive; sometimes it could be conclusive and strong without any hesitation. A strong decision is called true resolve, just like ‘Umar ﷺ found within himself when he said: “Truly, for me to be brought out and have my head cut off is more beloved to me than to take command over a people among whom is Abū Bakr ﷺ.” The degrees of the resolve of the perpetually truthful differ in strength. The highest of them is for a person to be content with being beheaded rather than not realising his resolution.

The fourth truthfulness is in the fulfilling of a resolution. Indeed, the self could follow through at first, but it could languish after some fulfillment without complete realisation. This is because resolving to do something is easy, but the real difficult is in actualising the fulfillment. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿رَجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ﴾

Men who were truthful about what they promised to Allāh (33:23)

He also said:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهَ لَئِنْ آتَانَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ﴾

among them is he who promised Allāh, ‘if He gives to us from His Bounty, we will surely give in charity’ (9:75)

to His statement:

﴿فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا
اللَّهُ مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ﴾

He will put hypocrisy in their hearts until the day they meet Him for their breaking their promise to Allāh and for lying. (9:77)

The fifth truthfulness is in deeds, such that a person does not indicate anything about his inner self unless his inner self is attributed with it. This means that what is kept secret and what is made known are the same; thus, someone who walks calmly indicates—based on this principle—that he is dignified internally.

If he is not like that internally, but his heart has turned to making people imagine that he is dignified inwardly, then this is ostentation. If his heart has not turned to people but is heedless, then this is not ostentation; however, he has missed out on truthfulness. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: “O Allāh! Make my inner secret better than what is open about me, and make what is open about me righteous.”³⁹⁰ ‘Abd al-Wāḥid said: “If Ḥasan al-Baṣrī commanded a

thing, he used to be the person to do it the most. If he forbade a thing, he was the person to leave it the most. I never once saw someone whose private self matched his public self more than him.”

The sixth truthfulness—which is the loftiest of the doors of truthfulness—is in the stations of the religion: such as fear and hope, love and contentment, reliance, and others. Indeed, these stations have first steps to which their name is applied, and they have realities and ultimate realisations. Thus, it is said: “this is true fear,” or “that is true fame.” That is why Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ﴾

The believers are only those who believe in Allāh and His Messenger then do not doubt, and strive in Allāh’s path with their wealth and their persons. Those are the truthful. (49:15)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ﴾

Rather, righteousness is someone who believes in Allāh and the Last Day. . . (2:177)

These are the degrees of truthfulness. Whoever realises all of them, he is one of the perpetually truthful. Whoever attains only some of them, his rank is commensurate to his truthfulness. Included in the overall understanding of truthfulness is the heart’s realisation that Allāh is the Provider, and thus relying on Him. We will therefore mention this.

The Seventh Principle

RELIANCE
(*AT-TAWAKKUL*)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ﴾

Let those who rely, rely upon Allāh. (14:12)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

Rely upon Allāh if you are believers. (5:23)

He ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

Allāh surely loves those who rely upon Him. (3:159)

He ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ﴾

Allāh is Sufficient for whoever relies upon Him. (65:3)

He said:

﴿أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ﴾

Is not Allāh enough for His slave? (39:36)

He ﷺ also said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ﴾

Those whom you worship beside Allāh surely do not possess any provision for you, so seek your provision from Allāh. (29:17)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “If you were to rely upon Allāh with the reliance He truly deserves, He would assuredly provide for you—just as He provides for the birds: they start the day with empty stomachs, yet return full in the evening.”³⁹¹ He said: “Whoever cuts himself off from all except Allāh, Allāh ﷻ supplies his every need and provides for him from whence he did not expect. Whoever cuts himself off from all except the world, Allāh leaves him to it.”³⁹²

Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ used to say whenever his family was impoverished: “Stand up to pray.” He used to say: “This is what my Lord commanded me with:

﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ
رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى﴾

*Command your family to pray and be steadfast therein. We do not ask you for provision; we provide for you. In the end, the best outcome is for [those who have] fear of Allāh. (20:132)*³⁹³

[THE REALITY OF RELIANCE]

The reality of reliance is an expression of a state that emerges from affirmation of Divine Oneness (*tawḥīd*), and its effect appears on deeds. It has three pillars: knowledge, state, and deeds.

The first pillar is knowledge, and it is the foundation. By it, I mean knowledge of Divine Oneness, for only someone who sees no actor besides Allāh relies on Him. The perfection of this knowledge is contained in your statement: “There is nothing worthy of worship except Allāh, Alone without partner. All dominion belongs to him and all praise, and He is Powerful over everything.” Within this statement is faith in Divine Oneness, the perfection of His Power and Generosity, and the Wisdoms for which He deserves all praise.

Whoever says this truthfully and sincerely has completed his affirmation of Divine Oneness, and the foundation through which the state of reliance emerges is established in his heart. By ‘truthfulness’, I mean that the purport of the statement becomes an inextricable quality of his person and predominant over his heart, so that there is no room for supposing anything else.

[THE FOUR LAYERS OF DECLARING DIVINE ONENESS]

This declaring of Divine Oneness has two cores, two shells, and four layers; like an almond with a core, extract as the core of its core, and the outer shell as the shell of its shell. The outer shell is the statement of the tongue by itself, which is the faith of the hypocrites. The second is decisive belief in the heart, which is the level of the generality of creation and the theologians; for they are not distinguished from laypeople except by the knowledge of responding

to and refuting the confusion of innovators in regards to these beliefs.

The third—which is the core—is when the reality of declaring this Divine Oneness and its true secret is exposed to a person through the light of Allāh ﷻ. This means that he sees many things yet knows that they all emanate from a single Actor according to an order. This means that he realises the chain of causes, how they are sequenced, and the connection of the beginning of the chain to the Causer of Causes. The person of this station is nevertheless still in separation, because he sees actions, their abundance, and their connection to the Actor.

The fourth—which is the core of the core—is that a person does not see anything in existence except One, and knows that what is existent in reality is One, and that the plurality in it is only in reference to whoever's awareness is divided. [The latter] is like someone who—for example—sees from a person his leg, then his arm, then his face, then his head, and thus is overcome by his plurality. Yet, if he were to see a person all at once, each individual part would not occur to him; rather, he would perceive them all as a single thing. The same goes for someone who declares Divine Oneness: seeing the sky, the earth, and the rest of existence does not divide his awareness; rather, he sees all under the rule of a single thing.

This subject has some depth, and unveiling it would necessitate a lengthy discussion. Therefore seek it in 'The Book of Divine Oneness' from the books of *The Revival*, so that you may ponder some of its indications. Obliteration in Divine Oneness only happens with this declaration of Divine Oneness—which is that a person becomes immersed in the One Truth, until his heart does not turn to other

than Him; nor does it turn to his consciousness, for his consciousness (insofar as it is his consciousness) is other than Allāh. Even if the meaning of otherness is not realised by him in the moment, it may be realised through another perspective and by considering another aspect.

[ALL ACTIONS ARE RELATED TO THE CAUSE OF CAUSES]

The reality of reliance only requires that declaring Divine Oneness be actualised. It does not require obliteration in declaring Oneness of the Essence. Rather, it is permissible for the one who relies to see plurality, causes, and effects. However, he should witness the connection of the chain to its Ultimate Cause.

I believe this is obvious to you in regards to whatever does not fall under the choice of human beings. Indeed, if you see the rain as a cause for plant growth, then you know that the rain is subjected to the means of the clouds, and the clouds are subjected to the means of wind and vapor from the oceans. Likewise, the oceans are bodies that are inevitably subjected to whatever ends at the First Cause, even if you do not know the number of means—there is no harm in that.

What is not obvious to you is human actions. Indeed, you say: “Whoever feeds me, he definitely feeds me by choice. If he wills, he gives; if he wills, he withholds. How could I not see him as a doer?”

In turning your attention to the doer in this way, you are like an ant: it sees the black line over the white page that occurs when the pen is moved, and ascribes that to the pen. Its eye is small and weak, so it does not look unto the finger; nor from it to the hand; nor from it to the ability to move that the hand possesses; nor from it to the will that the ability is employed for; nor from it to the knowledge

that the movement of will depends on; nor from it to the possessor of ability, knowledge, and will. Likewise, you ascribe the actions of the slaves to their will, knowledge, and ability. Your gaze does not fall upon the pen by which knowledge is recorded on the slates of hearts; nor from it to the Fingers that the hearts of the slaves are between; nor from them to the Hand by which Ādam's clay was fermented; nor from it to the Power by which the hand was moved to ferment Ādam's clay; nor from it to the All Powerful from Whom you began and to Whom you will return. This is because you do not know the meaning of the Prophet's ﷺ statement: "Truly, Allāh created Ādam upon His Image;"³⁹⁴ nor the meaning of His ﷺ statement: "I fermented Ādam's clay with My Hand;"³⁹⁵ nor the meaning of His ﷺ statement:

﴿الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۖ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ﴾

Who taught with the pen; taught humanity what it did not know.

(96:4–5)

Indeed, you do not know a pen except one made from reed; nor a hand or fingers except those made from flesh and bone; nor an image except one of colours and forms. If that were unveiled to you, you would know that you are not the one who throws when you throw; rather, Allāh throws, when he places over you the decisive need and knowledge that directs you to certainty that your salvation is in throwing—for example. Then the ability that is unique to your make-up is set in motion as a servant to your will; and will has been made a servant to knowledge by subjugation and compulsion—you have already come to the realisation that you are compelled to

choose. Thus, you do that, if you will. However, you only will if Allāh wills, whether you want to or not.

Within this is a secret that moves between the principle of coercion and choice, and can give a false impression of a contradiction between Divine Oneness and moral responsibility. We have already explained this in ‘The Book of Divine Oneness and Reliance’ and ‘The Book of Gratitude’ from *The Revival*, so seek it there if you are qualified to understand it.

[WHAT SHOULD ACCOMPANY BELIEF IN THE DIVINE
ONENESS OF ACTION IN ORDER TO EFFECT RELIANCE]

Faith in the Divine Oneness of Action and Essence is not sufficient to effect reliance unless it is accompanied by faith in Mercy, Generosity, and Wisdom. Through this, occurs trust in the Truly Reliable (*al-Wakīl*). This means that you decisively believe—or it is revealed to you through insight—that if Allāh ﷻ were to have created everybody with the intellect of the most intelligent among them (or better yet, with the most perfect state of intelligence conceivable), and then He added to that a plethora of knowledge and wisdom; revealed to them the end result of things; made them privy to the secrets of the spiritual dimension, subtleties of wisdom, intricacies of good and bad; then commanded them to order the physical world and its spiritual dimensions, they would not be able to order it any better than it already is. Nor would it be possible for them to add to it, or take away from it, the wing of a mosquito; nor would they ever succeed in sanctioning the prevention of any sickness, fault, or deficiency; nor could they change Allāh’s ﷻ distribution of provisions, lifespans, power, inability, obedience, or disobedience. Rather, they would see all of the aforementioned as

pure justice without any wrong therein, pure truth without any flaw, and complete uprightness without any shortcoming or exaggeration. Indeed, every time they saw a deficiency, they would see that some other perfection greater than it is connected with it; whatever they thought harmful, they would see that behind it is some greater benefit that is only attained through it. They would know decisively that Allāh ﷻ is Wise, Generous, and Merciful. From the outset, He has never been stingy with the creation, nor has He withheld anything concerning their rectification.

Now, this is another ocean of realisation. The secret of predetermination sets its waves in motion—a secret that those given unveilings have been barred from mentioning; that most are confused about; that is only comprehended by people of knowledge; and the ultimate meaning of which is perceived only by those firmly rooted in knowledge. The portion of understanding available to the general people is that they believe that everything that happens to them was never going to miss them; whatever missed them was never going to happen to them; and whatever happens was bound to occur by the Decree of Eternal Will. There is no revoking of His Judgment, and no repealing of His Decree; rather, everything—whether minor or major—is written, and its fruition is according to an awaited, well-known measure:

﴿وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ﴾

Our Command is but one, occurring like the glance of an eye.

(54:50)

The second pillar is the actual state of reliance. This means that you leave your affairs to Allāh ﷻ, your heart trusts in Him, your mind is at rest with resignation to Him, and you do not turn to other than Allāh in the first place. Thus, your likeness is that of someone who entrusts to represent him before a judge one whom he knows is the most sympathetic of people towards him, the most capable of exposing falsehood, the most knowledgeable of him, and the most protective of him. Indeed, such a person will sit quietly in his home with his heart at rest, not thinking about the loopholes of litigation, and not seeking the aid of any of the people—due to his knowledge that the one whom he entrusted is sufficient to preserve his interest, and that no one can stand against him.

Whoever realises that provision, life, creation, and all affairs are in Allāh's ﷻ Hand; that He Alone is in control and has no partner; that His Generosity, Wisdom, and Mercy have no end; and that no one else's mercy or generosity is equal, his heart necessarily relies upon Him and his sight is cut off from other than Him. If it is not cut off, then this is only because of two matters:

The first of them is weakness of certainty about what we have mentioned. Weakness of certainty is only due to some doubt that has gotten to him, or certainty not overcoming his heart. Indeed, death is certain—there is no doubt in it. However, if it does not overcome the heart, then it is like doubt in which there is no certainty.

The second matter is when the heart is naturally frightful and weak. Cowardice and boldness are two natural dispositions. Cowardice necessitates the self being obedient to whims for which there is no doubt as to their falsity—to the extent that a person could be afraid of sleeping with a corpse in a bed or house, despite knowing that Allāh ﷻ will not revive it, and that His Power over it

is like His Power to turn a staff in one's hand into a snake (yet he does not fear that). Furthermore, a person might liken honey to bodily excretion and thus find difficulty eating it, despite knowing that this is a false resemblance. This is due to personal weakness and obeying whims. Just as no person is completely devoid of this—even if only a very little—it is equally not farfetched that certainty in Divine Oneness may come to fruition such that no doubt comes to mind in respect of it. Yet and still, the heart is alarmed into relying upon means.

[THE LEVELS OF RELIANCE]

If you realise that reliance is an expression of a condition of the heart concerning confidence in the True Disposer of Affairs and refraining from looking toward other than Him, then know that within it is three degrees:

The first of them is what we have mentioned: it is comparable to having confidence in someone entrusted with litigation, once convinced of his perfect guidance, ability, and sympathy.

The second—which is stronger than the first—is comparable to the state of the little boy in terms of his confidence in his mother and his running to her about anything that happens to him. This is due to his confidence in her sympathy and care. However, he is unaware of his reliance because it does not occur to him through thought or deliberation, even if it is not devoid of some form of comprehension. As for reliance upon the one entrusted for litigation, it is through deliberate thought and examination.

The third—which is the highest—is that a person be in Allāh's  Hands like a corpse in the hand of the one washing it, not like a little boy. Indeed, the little boy cries for his mother and clings to her

hand. Furthermore, this little boy knows that if he does not cry, his mother will seek him out; and if he does not cling to her, she will carry him; and if he does not ask for milk, she will initiate nursing him. Thus, this person in reference to Allāh ﷻ has no choice, due to his knowledge that he is the subject of predetermination (*qadr*). No outlet remains for him except to wait for what takes place with him. This station precludes supplication and request, whereas supplication is not precluded in the second or first stations.

Planning is precluded in the last station and in the second station as well, except—and only—concerning whatever relates to the Entrusted. Regarding the first station, planning is precluded in relation to other than Him, but not if it is done according to the way the Entrusted has designed for a person, laid out for him, and commanded him to take.

The third pillar is in regards to deeds. Ignorant people might think that abandoning earning, abandoning medical treatment, and surrendering to destructive forces is a condition of reliance. This is incorrect, because Sacred Law prohibits it. The Sacred Law has praised reliance and encouraged it, so how could it include the forbidden?

The reality is that a slave's efforts should not exceed four things: acquiring a benefit that is currently absent, preserving one that is present, repelling harm so that it does not occur, or removing harm so that it is eliminated.

The first of these—acquiring benefits—has three kinds of means; they are either: decisive, clearly probable, or unlikely. As for the decisive, an example of it is that a person’s hand does not reach for food, despite the person being hungry. He says: “This is effort, and I am one who relies.” Another example is that he wants a child, yet does not sleep with his wife; or wants to farm, yet does not plant any seeds. This is ignorance, because Allāh’s ﷻ Sunnah [i.e. Way] does not change, and He has taught you that the connection of these effects to those means are part of this Sunnah—for which you will find no substitute.

Reliance within this decisive means is by two things: The first of them is knowing that the hand, the food, the seed, the ability to take, and everything else are from Allāh’s ﷻ Power. The second is not relying upon them in your heart, but rather relying upon their Creator. How could one rely upon the hand when it might be partially paralysed at that moment, or the food when it might be destroyed? This is the realisation of your statement: “There is no power or force except through Allāh.” The power is movement, and the force is ability. If this is your state, then you are relying upon Allāh even as you exert effort.

As for the probable means, it is like someone keeping provision in a remote environment or while travelling. Abandoning it is not a condition of reliance; rather, it is the way of the predecessors. Instead, reliance is upon Allāh’s ﷻ Bounty in repelling thieves, sustaining provision and life, and the ability to acquire.

As for the unlikely means, it is like closely studying the loopholes of a livelihood and extrapolating the delicate affairs within it. This is the fruit of avarice, and it could lead to taking doubtful wealth. All of this contravenes reliance. The proof of it is that the Prophet ﷺ

described those who rely as neither cauterising nor using incantations³⁹⁶. He did not describe them as not residing in towns and not earning a living. A person's relation to means does not resemble any relation to incantations and cauterising; thus, abandoning these two is among the conditions of reliance.

The second kind of planning with regard to means is saving. If someone who practises reliance inherits wealth and saves it for a year or more, his reliance is nullified; whereas if he contents himself with his daily sustenance and parts with the remainder, then his reliance is complete. According to Sahl at-Tustarī, if he saves for forty days, his reliance is nullified and he does not attain the praiseworthy station that is promised to those who practise reliance. According to al-Khawwāṣ, on the other hand, it is not nullified.

The scholars agree that saving in excess of forty days nullifies reliance, except if a person is a breadwinner—who has the right to save for his family's annual sustenance. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ did this for his dependents; but for himself, he did not save even for his lunch and dinner³⁹⁷. There is no doubt that vain hope contravenes reliance.

Whenever the period of saving decreases, the level of reliance is higher; however, Allāh's ﷺ Sunnah is for provision to be renewed with the renewal of the year. Therefore, saving for more than a year is the height of weakness, and has nothing to do with reliance.

As for accumulating dishes and furniture, that is permissible, because Allāh's ﷺ Sunnah is that they are not renewed in the same way as provision; also, they are needed at all times—not like winter clothing, which is not needed in the summer, so that accumulating it is contrary to reliance. The Prophet ﷺ said regarding a poor man who had been buried: "Indeed, he will be raised on the Day of

Resurrection and his face will be like the full moon. If it were not for one characteristic, it would have been like the shining sun—when the winter came, he stored his summer garment for the next summer.”³⁹⁸

The third kind involves pursuing the causes of repelling harm—like fleeing from a predatory animal, a leaning wall, or a violent current of water, and fighting illness with medicine. This kind also has degrees, so extrapolate them by drawing analogy with what we have mentioned. We have explained this in *The Revival* in ‘The Book of Reliance’.

[THE RULING ON ABANDONING SAVING]

Know that saving is praiseworthy for anyone whose certainty is dominant and whose heart is strong. As for the weak person whose heart is confused, and who would not be at leisure to worship if he did not save, it is better for him to leave the path of those who practise reliance in order not to force himself to do what he cannot bear. For him, its corruptive capacity is greater than its reformative capacity. Each person should be treated according to his condition and strength.

For some people, their strength has reached a point such that they can travel in remote areas without provision. This is for the person who can be patient with lack of food for a week and content himself with eating weeds. Indeed, this will not normally be required of him in a remote area.

As for the weak person, if he does this, he is disobedient for placing himself in destruction. Likewise, if the strong person confines himself in a mountain cave that has no weeds and no passers-by, then this is also prohibited—because he has opposed

Allāh's ﷻ Sunnah concerning His creation. This is permissible for him in remote areas only, because Allāh's Sunnah is that remote areas are never void of weeds, and people might pass by him. Thus, if he is strong, his destruction would be very rare, so he would not be disobedient by doing so. He may travel to remote areas, relying upon Allāh's ﷻ subtle Handiwork, without limiting his attention to clear, obvious causes³⁹⁹.

The Eighth Principle

LOVE (AL-MAḤABBAH)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ﴾

He loves them and they love Him. (5:54)

And:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ﴾

Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your family, wealth that you have acquired, commerce for which you fear loss, or homes which you are pleased with are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger . . .' (9:24)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “None of you believes until Allāh and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anything besides them.”⁴⁰⁰ He also said: “Love Allāh for all that He provides for you, and love me for the love of Allāh ﷻ.”⁴⁰¹ Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ said: “Whoever has tasted pure love of Allāh ﷻ, it prevents him from seeking material things and isolates him from all humankind.” Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ﷺ said: “Whoever knows Allāh ﷻ loves Him, and whoever

knows [the reality of] material things abstains from them. The believer is not preoccupied with amusement and thereby heedless; when he reflects, he is saddened.”⁴⁰²

[THOSE WHO DENY LOVING ALLĀH]

Know that the majority of theologians have denied that loving Allāh is real and have interpreted it figuratively. They say that it means nothing except to comply with His Commands. Otherwise, how can we love what nothing is like, is like nothing, and does not compare to our nature in any respect? It is only conceivable for us to love something of our kind. These theologians are deprived due to their ignorance of the reality of these affairs. We have removed the cover from this in ‘The Book of Love’ from *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, so read it in order to gather therefrom secrets which other books are bereft of, or suffice with the allusions and implications found in this abridged work.

[THE MEANING OF SOMETHING BEING BELOVED]

Know that every pleasurable thing is beloved. The meaning of its being beloved is the self’s predilection for it. If that predilection is strong, it is called passion. The meaning of a thing being hated is the self’s repulsion of it because it is unpleasant. If that hatred is strong, it is called abhorrence.

Know that those things which you perceive with your senses and all of your feelings are either agreeable and in accordance with your desire (which is pleasant), contrary and discordant (which is unpleasant), or neither agreeable nor contrary (for which there is neither displeasure nor pleasure). Every pleasant thing is beloved,

and the self that finds pleasure in any given thing inclines to it without choice.

Know that pleasure is a consequence of perception, and that perception is of two types: external and internal. As for external perception, it is through the five senses. The pleasure of the eye is in beholding beautiful forms; the pleasure of the ear is in hearing a melodious voice; the pleasure of taste and smell is in tasting or smelling an agreeable flavor or aroma; and the pleasure of the body as a whole is in a soft touch. The self loves all of these things; that is, it inclines toward them.

As for internal perception, it is a subtlety found in the heart. Sometimes it is called intellect; sometimes it is called light; and other times it is called the sixth sense. Regardless, do not pay too much attention to mere expressions. The Prophet ﷺ once said: “Three things from your world have been made beloved to me—scent, women, and the coolness of my eye, which is prayer.”⁴⁰³ You know that smell, touch, and eyesight all have their share in the pleasures of scent and women. But the five senses have no share in the prayer; rather, it is for that sixth sense which is found in the heart. The one without a heart does not perceive it; and truly, Allāh comes between a person and his heart.

Whoever finds pleasure through the five senses alone is a dumb beast, for dumb beasts also find pleasure through them. It is his discriminating internal vision that makes the human being special. Thus, the pleasure of external vision is in beholding forms of external beauty, and the pleasure of internal vision is in beholding forms of internal beauty.

Perhaps you would say: “What is the meaning of beautiful internal forms?” So I say: Of what concern is it to me that you do not sense within yourself a love for the prophets, scholars, and Companions; or do not perceive within yourself a difference between a just, knowledgeable, brave, and generous King who cares for the people, versus an ignorant, stingy, callous, and harsh tyrant? Of what concern is it to me that if you are told about the truthfulness of Abū Bakr, the political savvy of ‘Umar, the liberality of ‘Uthmān, and the courage of ‘Alī  you do not find within yourself an attraction to, comfort with, and predilection for them and for anyone described with traits of perfection—whether a prophet, truthful person, or scholar?

How can you deny this when there are people who will sacrifice themselves for the scholars of their schools and are driven by their love of them to exert in spending their wealth, and exert their own selves in defending them to an extent beyond passion? You know that your love of them is not for their external forms, for you have never seen them. If you were to have seen them, then perhaps you would not have considered them handsome. If you were to have considered them handsome, yet somehow their external forms became disfigured—leaving only their internal, abstract characteristics—you would still love them!

If you were to examine what it is about them that you love, you would find (after extensive detail not suited for this book) that your love of them boils down to three qualities: knowledge, ability, and transcendence over faults. As for knowledge: it is such as their knowledge of Allāh, His angels, His books, His messengers, the wonders of the spiritual realm, and the intricacies of the Laws revealed to each of His prophets. As for ability: it is such as their ability to restrain themselves by breaking their desires and adhering to the straight path, and their ability to provide wise council and

direct people to the truth. As for transcendence: it is such as the soundness of their inner selves from the faults of ignorance, stinginess, envy, and filthy morals. To combine the perfections of knowledge and ability with good character is the meaning of internal beauty. This is the internal form that a dumb beast (and whoever is in a similar condition of having only external vision) cannot perceive.

If you love these types for their qualities and are aware that the Prophet ﷺ comprised more of these traits than them, then your love of him should necessarily be greater. Now, turn your attention from the Prophet to the Creator of the Prophet and the One who sent him; the One who, by sending him, showed His Grace to all creation. By doing this, you will know that sending the prophets is to be counted among acts of goodness.

Then compare the ability, knowledge, and purity of the prophets to Allāh's ﷻ Knowledge, Ability, and Holiness. You will realise that none besides the One, the Truth, is holy; any other than Him is not free from faults or deficiencies. Rather, being a slave is the greatest kind of deficiency. What perfection does one without self-sufficiency have? One without any authority over life or death, time or provision? What knowledge does one who cannot fully comprehend his condition in sickness or in health have? One who does not know the details of his internal organs or how they truly function? Not to mention the unseen realms of the heavens and the Earth!

Compare that to an eternal Omniscience that engulfs everything in existence and every piece of information; a Knowledge that has no end and from which not an atom's weight in the heavens or the Earth can escape. Compare that to the Power of the Creator of the heavens and the Earth; to whom the existence, perpetuity, or absence of anything present cannot exceed the reach of His Power. Compare a person's transcending faults to Allāh's Holiness, and know that there

is no holiness, no power, and no knowledge except for the One, the Truth. The only ability that those beside Him have is the ability He gives to them.

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ﴾

They do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He wills. (2:255)

﴿وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

The knowledge you have been given is only a little. (17:85)

Now consider: is it possible for you to deny that these qualities are beloved, or to deny that the One characterized by perfect Majesty is Allāh ﷻ? How can you deny loving Him after this?

[THE INCLINATION OF HUMAN INSIGHT TO THE BESTOWER
ﷻ]

If your insight is limited to the perception of Majesty and Perfection, a predilection to follow it, joy because of and passion for it—then do not deprive yourself from inclining to the Most Excellent Bestower of Blessings upon you. Do not be less than a dog (for even a dog loves its owner who treats it well)!

Think deeply about this world—is there anyone who has done you good other than Allāh ﷻ? Do you have any good fortune, any pleasure, find comfort in anything, or hold on to any blessing except that Allāh is its Creator, Originator, Sustainer, and the Creator of your desire for it and your taking pleasure in it?

Reflect on your limbs and organs and Allāh's  subtle Craftsmanship of them for you—it will certainly make you love Him for the good He has done for you; and yet, you would be from the generality of creation if you were not able to love Him for His Beauty and Majesty—as the angels do. Abide by the statement of the Prophet : “Love Allāh for all that He provides for you, and love me for the love of Allāh.”⁴⁰⁴

At this level you would be like a bad slave—loving and working for a charge or some provision. No doubt your love would increase and decrease with the increase or decrease of goodness done to you, and that is extremely weak. Rather, the perfect lover is the one who loves Allāh  for His Majesty, Beauty, and praiseworthy Attributes for which it is inconceivable that He has any associates regarding them. For this reason, Allāh revealed to Dāwūd : “Verily, the most beloved of the beloved to Me is he who worships Me not to receive a favor, but to give Lordship its due.” It is said in the Psalms: “Who is more wrong than he who worships Me for Paradise or Hell? If I had not created a paradise or a hell, would I still not be worthy of obedience and worship?” ‘Īsā  once came across a group of worshippers who had become emaciated. He said: “What has caused you to lose so much weight?” They replied: “We fear Hell, and hope for Paradise.” So he said: “You fear and hope for mere creations?” He came across some other people like the first group. They said to him: “We worship out of love for Him and to venerate His Majesty.” He said: “You are Allāh's  true friends with whom I was commanded to stand.”

[THE Gnostic DOES NOT LOVE OTHER THAN ALLĀH]

The gnostic does not love anyone but Allāh ﷻ. If he loves other than Him, then he loves him for the sake of Allāh; for a lover may love the slave or relatives of his beloved, or his country, his clothes, his handiwork or craft, or anything that is from him or relates to him for any reason. Everything in existence is the work and making of Allāh ﷻ, and all creatures are the slaves of Allāh ﷻ. So if he loves the Messenger, he loves him because he is the messenger of his Beloved. If he loves the Companions, it is because they were beloved to His Messenger, loved Him, were His slaves, and persisted in obeying Him.

If he loves food, then it is because it strengthens the vehicle through which he reaches his Beloved—i.e. the body. If he loves material things, then it is because they are his provision on the journey to his Beloved. If he loves to gaze upon flowers and rivers, lights and beautiful forms, then it is because they are the making of his Beloved, signify His Beauty and Majesty, and are reminders of those praiseworthy Attributes that are beloved in and of themselves.

If he loves the one who does him good or the teacher who teaches him the religious sciences, then he loves him because he serves as a means between him and his Beloved by communicating His Knowledge and Wisdom to him. He knows that his teacher is the one whom Allāh foreordained to teach and to guide him, and to spend on him with his wealth. He also knows that had this teacher and guide not been made subject to a chain of needs and interests that motivated him to guide and support him, he would not have done so.

The greatest of all creation when it comes to doing us good is the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. His creation and mission were a gracious gift from Allāh, as He said:

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ﴾

Surely Allāh has bestowed a blessing upon the believers by sending them a Messenger from among themselves. (3:164)

And:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ﴾

He is the One who sent to the unlettered people a messenger from among them—he recites His Verses to them, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom. (62:2)

A messenger is nothing more than a slave—employed, sent, and responsible for conveying the message without any choice on his part. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾

Indeed, you do not guide whom you love; rather, Allāh guides whomever He wills. (28:56)

Reflect upon the Chapter of Victory (*Sūrah an-Naṣr*) and Allāh's ﷻ statement:

﴿وَرَأَيْتِ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ۖ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا﴾

. . .and you see the people entering the Religion of Allāh in droves; so glorify your Lord with praise and seek His Forgiveness—verily He has always accepted repentance. (110:3)

Here, He has placed the Prophet ﷺ in the position of an observer and said: when you see Allāh's slaves entering the religion of Allāh, then praise Him and not yourself (which is the meaning of glorifying his Lord with praise); and if your heart turns to your own self and your own efforts, then seek His Forgiveness, so that He may accept your repentance—and know that you have nothing to do with the matter of guiding people.

It is from this perspective that 'Umar رضي الله عنه responded to a letter from Khālīd ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه, written after the victory at Yamāmah, in which Khālīd stated: "From Khālīd, the Unsheathed Sword of Allāh upon the idolaters, to Abū Bakr, the Commander of the Believers. . ." 'Umar commented: "When Allāh granted victory to the Muslims, Khālīd saw that as a reason for giving himself the moniker of 'The Unsheathed Sword of Allāh upon the idolaters'. However, if he had paid due attention to the truth as it is, he would have known that this victory was not because of his sword. Rather, there is a divine secret in Allāh's ﷻ willing the victory of Islām; thus, He granted victory to it with a single gesture of His Power. It was by putting fear into the heart of a disbeliever whereby he was vanquished; then another disbeliever looked at him and was also vanquished; until that became their general state. Khālīd and those like him believed that they were the ones who raised the word of Islām with their mettle and the sharpness of their swords." 'Umar رضي الله عنه (and those saints and truthful ones like him) was cognizant of the reality of his condition, and knew that Khālīd was in need of seeking forgiveness and glorifying his Lord with praise when he saw that victory—just as Allāh's Messenger ﷺ was commanded to do.

So, there is nothing that compels one to love except two things: the first is the good that is done to you. The other is Majesty and Beauty, along with perfect Generosity, Wisdom, Knowledge, Ability,

and Transcendence above faults and deficiencies. There is no good done except that it is from Allāh; there is no majesty, no beauty, and no transcendence except for Allāh. Everything good in the world is from the goodness of his generosity—He pours it upon His slaves with a single gesture of His Power, creating it in the heart of the one who does good. Everything in the world—from shining images to beautiful forms perceived by the eye, by hearing, or by smell—is an effect from the effects of His Power, and a sparkle from the light of His Presence, a mere glimpse at the significance of His Beauty and Majesty. If only I knew how one who knows all of this by way of direct witnessing and decisive evidence could ever conceive of turning to and loving anyone other than Allāh ﷻ!

[THE GNOSTIC'S PLEASURE IS IN AWARENESS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE]

Know that every eye's pleasure is looking. The gnostic's pleasure in the material world is in awareness of the Beauty of the Divine Presence. It is greater than every conceivable pleasure in the world beside it. That is because pleasure is commensurate to the degree of desire, and strength of desire is commensurate to the degree of harmony and agreement with the object of desire.

Just as the most agreeable thing to the body is nutrients, the most agreeable thing to the heart is knowledge. Knowledge is the nutrient of the heart. By heart, I mean the godly soul concerning which Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي﴾

Say: 'The soul is from my Lord's affair. (17:85)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾

. . .and I have blown into him from My Spirit (15:29; 38:72)

Thus, he ascribed it to Himself.

Animals do not have this soul, nor does the human being who is in an animal-like condition. Rather, it is peculiar to the prophets and the saints. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا
الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا﴾

In this way, We inspire you with a spirit from our affair. You did not know the Book, or faith; however, We made it a light with which We guide whomever We will among Our slaves. (42:52)

Knowledge is the most agreeable thing to this soul, for the most agreeable thing for anything is that which is especially for it. A nice voice does not agree with sight, because it is not especially for it. The special property of the human soul is knowledge of reality; and the more honourable the object of knowledge is, the more delightful the knowledge of it is. There is nothing more honourable than Allāh ﷻ, nor anything more majestic. Knowledge of Him is knowledge of His Attributes and His Essence; and the wonders of His creation and dominion are the most delightful things to the heart, because the desire for them is the most intense of desires. For this reason it is created last, after all the other desires, and every desire that comes later is stronger than the desire preceding it.

The first desire created is the desire for food, followed by the desire for sex—for which a man will abandon his desire for food to

obtain, and compared to which he will consider good food as paltry. Then the desire for leadership, status, and dominance is created, compared to which a person will consider both sex and food as paltry. Finally, the desire for knowledge is created, which overwhelms all of existence, so that a person considers status and leadership paltry. It is the last and the strongest of worldly desires.

Just as a little boy denies the desire for sex and is astonished by someone who bears the burden of marriage for its sake—yet when he reaches the age of desiring sex he is eager for it; and just as he denies the desire for status and leadership, and cares not whether he loses them in fulfilling his sexual desire; likewise, the lover of status and leadership denies the pleasure of knowledge—for its desire has yet to be created in him.

A person's covetousness for status and leadership could lead to the sickness of his heart, to the point where he does not accept the desire to know Allāh ﷻ in the first place—just as the temperament of a sick person is corrupted so that he has no desire for nourishment, and so he dies; or his nature is reversed so that he desires to eat clay and other destructive, harmful things which are the precursors of death.

A person who is sick in his heart is like this. It could reach the extent that he denies knowledge and despises it, its people, and those who seek it—not comprehending anything but the pleasures of leadership, food, and sex. This is the spiritually dead person who cannot accept treatment. Allāh ﷻ said about his like:

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا
وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا﴾

Verily, We have put covers over their hearts so they do not understand it, and deafness in their ears. If you call them to guidance, they will never be guided. (18:57)

He ﷻ also said about them:

﴿أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

[They are] dead, not living, and have no sense that they will be resurrected. (16:21)

[LOOKING UPON THE ALLĀH'S ﷻ COUNTENANCE IN THE
ABODE OF THE AFTERLIFE]

This knowledge, even if its pleasure is immense, is nothing compared to the pleasure of looking at Allāh's Noble Countenance in the Abode of the Afterlife. This is inconceivable in this world, due to a secret the unveiling of which is impossible now.

You should not understand from 'looking' what is understood from it by the masses and some of the theologians—so that they need to regard it as having a direction or position. That is the looking of one who has been bogged-down by inadequate intelligence amidst the seen world, so that he does not go beyond sensory objects that are perceived by dumb animals.

Rather, you should understand that the image and wonderful form of the Divine Presence—in its Splendour, Might, Majesty, and Glory—is imprinted in the heart of the gnostic; just as—for example—the image of the sensory world is imprinted in your brain. So, it is as if you are looking at it even if you close your eyes. If you open your eyes, you find that the visible image is like the imaginary image was before you opened your eyes. It does not differ with it in any way,

except that sensory vision is of the utmost clarity relative to the imagination. Likewise, you should know that there is perception beyond the imagination or the senses, which also has two opposite degrees of clarity. The second relative to the first is like sensory vision relative to the imagination; thus, the second is the pinnacle of unveiling. That is why it is called ‘witnessing’ or ‘seeing’. Seeing is not called seeing because it is with the eye; for if it were created in the forehead, it would still be seeing. Rather, it is called this because it is the pinnacle of unveiling.

Further more, just as closing the eye is a covering for the pinnacle of unveiling in regards to visible objects, the mire of desires and the distractions of its dark matrix are a covering for the pinnacle of witnessing. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿لَنْ تَرَانِي﴾

You will not see Me (7:143)

And:

﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ﴾

Vision does not perceive Him. (6:103)

If this covering is lifted after death, knowledge itself is turned into witnessing, and for each person will be commensurate to the degree of his knowledge. For this reason the pleasure of Allāh’s ﷻ saints in looking is greater than the pleasure of others; and for this, Allāh ﷻ will manifest Himself to Abū Bakr in a special way, and manifest Himself to the rest of the people in a general way⁴⁰⁵. Likewise, only the gnostics see Him, for knowledge is the seed of looking; rather, it is what is turned into witnessing—just as imagination is turned into

sensory vision. That is why it does not necessitate position or direction. The secret of this would take too long to explain here, so seek it from ‘The Book of Love’ from *The Revival*.

[THE PLEASURE OF SEEING IS GREATER THAN THE
PLEASURE OF KNOWING]

If you had a love interest whom you saw from behind a thin covering early in the morning when the sunshine was dim and your passion weak, and at a time when there were scorpions and hornets all around stinging you, it is obvious that your pleasure in watching your lover would be weak.

But if the sun shone brightly, the thin covering was lifted, the scorpions and hornets went away from you, and you were overcome with extreme passion—there would be no comparison between the immense pleasure at that time and what came before. Likewise, understand that there is no comparison between the pleasure of looking and the pleasure of knowing. The pleasure of looking is greater by far.

The thin covering is your physical form. The scorpions are worldly distractions, afflictions, and desires. The onslaught of passion is the severity of one’s desire for cutting off whatever weakens or spoils it. The emergent sunshine is the heart’s eye being prepared for bearing complete manifestation—for in this life it cannot bear it, just as the bat’s vision cannot bear the light of the sun.

[WEAKNESS AND OBSCURITY IN KNOWLEDGE OF ALLĀH ﷻ]

The only reason desire to know Allāh ﷻ is weakened is due to the congestion of the other desires; and the only reason knowledge of

Allāh ﷻ is obscured—despite its obviousness—is due to the intense manifestation of other desires.

An example of this is that you know that the most obvious of all things are sensory objects—among them are visible things, and among visible things is the light through which all things appear. If the sun was permanently in the sky and never set, and there were no shadows, you would not know the existence of light. You would be looking at colors and know nothing but red, black, and white. As for light, it is only perceived with the setting of the sun, or if there is something to block it through which a shadow occurs. Then you perceive—contrary to the states between darkness and brightness—that light is another thing, through which colors are subjected and become visible.

If you imagine that the existence of Allāh ﷻ were concealed, or that the light of His Power were covered by some things, you would perceive from the difference between the light and darkness what would inevitably lead you to knowledge of Him. However, because all created entities are the same in bearing witness to the Oneness of their Creator—without any degree of difference—the affair is obscure, due to the intensity of its manifestation. If, on the other hand, you imagine the light of His Power being cut-off from the heavens and the Earth, they would be demolished and erased, and you would immediately perceive from the degree of difference what would inevitably lead you to the knowledge of Him and His power.

This example we have mentioned contains a number of secrets, yet within it are places subject to misconception. Strive to understand it so that you may pause at its secrets and not be confused by its potential misconceptions. From among the potential misconceptions is the error of the one who says that Allāh is in every place. Anyone who ascribes a place or direction to Him has slipped and gone astray,

and taken the extent of his sight back to thinking in terms of bestial sense. He has not yet gone beyond physical objects and what relates to them. The first level of faith is to move beyond them—through this a person becomes truly human, to say nothing of becoming a believer.

[SOME OF THE SIGNS OF LOVE]

Know that love for Allāh has many signs, which it would take quite a long time to list. From among its signs is putting Allāh's ﷻ Command before the whims of the ego, protecting one's self through piety, and paying close attention to the limits set by Sacred Law.

Among its signs is longing to meet Allāh, and not having any aversion toward death unless one longs for additional knowledge. Indeed, the pleasure of witnessing is commensurate to the completion of knowledge, for it is the seed of witnessing; thus, witnessing inevitably differs according to the degree of knowledge.

Among its signs is contentment with Divine Decree and what Allāh ﷻ has predetermined. We will therefore mention the meaning of contentment, so that a person is not deluded by the passing thoughts that occur to himself, thinking that they are the reality of having love for Allāh ﷻ; for indeed, that is something very powerful.

The Ninth Principle

CONTENTMENT WITH DIVINE DECREE (AR-RIDĀ' BI'L-QADR)

Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ﴾

*Allāh is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. (5:119;
9:100; 58:22; 98:8)*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “If Allāh loves a slave, He tries him. If he is patient, He draws him near; and if he is content, He chooses him.”⁴⁰⁶ He ﷺ said: “Worship Allāh ﷻ with contentment. If you cannot, then there is much good in patience with what you dislike.”⁴⁰⁷

He ﷺ said to a small group: “What are you?” They said: “Believers.” He said: “What is the sign of your faith?” They said: “We are patient with tribulation, grateful for ease, and content with Divine Decree.” He said: “By the Lord of the Ka‘bah, you are believers.”⁴⁰⁸ In one narration he is reported to have said: “You are wise and knowledgeable, almost like prophets on account of your understanding.”⁴⁰⁹

From what Allāh ﷻ revealed to Dāwūd عليه السلام is: “What is with my saints worrying about the world? Verily, worry removes the sweetness of conversing with me from their hearts. My love for my saints is that they are spiritual and not distressed.”⁴¹⁰

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Allāh ﷻ said: ‘I am Allāh. There is nothing worthy of worship except me. Whoever is not patient with My trial, is not grateful for My blessings, and not content with My Decree, then let him seek a Lord besides Me.’”⁴¹¹

He ﷻ said: “Allāh ﷻ said: ‘I created good and created people for it. I created bad and created people for it. Glad tidings to whomever I created for good and facilitated good at his hands. Woe to whomever I created for bad and facilitated bad at his hands; and woe to whoever says ‘why?’ or ‘how?’”⁴¹²

Allāh ﷻ revealed to Dāwūd ﷺ: “O Dāwūd! You want and I want, and only what I want is to be. If you submit to what I want, I will suffice you with what you want. If you do not submit to what I want, I will tire you with what you want; then there will not be anything except what I want.”⁴¹³

[THE SIGN OF LOVE IS CONTENTMENT DURING TRIBULATION]

A group has denied contentment and said that it is not conceivable in regards to what conflicts with desire, and that only patience is conceivable. They came to this conclusion due to denying love, whereas we affirm it.

The sign of love is contentment during tribulation and with whatever conflicts with one’s nature and desire. This is conceivable from three aspects:

The first of them is that beholding love and love’s extreme depth fills a person with wonder to the point that he does not feel pain. This is witnessed in regards to love of created things and the dominance of desire and anger. It is such that the angry person is injured, yet he does not feel the wound at that moment. Similarly,

the obsessed person's foot is pricked by a thorn, yet he does not feel it; however, if his obsession subsides and he attains his desire, the pain worsens.

If you can picture a slight pain being numbed with a little bit of love, you can conceive of much pain being numbed with strong, far-reaching love. Indeed, both love and pain are subject to increase and severity.

This may be conceivable in regards to passionate love that derives from an inclination toward a form made-up of flesh and blood, and filled with nastiness and filth; and insofar as you perceive with an external eye that is dominated by error—such that you may see something big as small, something far as near, and something ugly as beautiful. But how then is it not conceivable in regards to seeing the beauty of the Divine Presence and Eternal Majesty, whose end or deficiency is inconceivable; and insofar that it is perceived by the inner vision that—according to its people—is more true and clearer than outer vision?

On this basis, Junayd  said: “I said to Sarī as-Saqatī , ‘Does the lover experience the pain of tribulation?’ He said, ‘No.’ I said, ‘Even if he were struck by the sword?’ He said: ‘No, even if he were struck by the sword seventy blows.’” Someone once said: “I loved everything due to love of Him—to the extent that if He loved Hell, I would love to enter Hell.” ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz  said: “No joy remains for me except what is in those things that Allāh  has determined.”⁴¹⁴ Once, a Sufi lost his small child for three days. It was said to him: “If only you asked Allāh to return him to you.” So he said: “My objection to what He has decreed would be harder on me than my child's disappearance.”⁴¹⁵

The second aspect of contentment is that a person feels pain and naturally dislikes it, yet is content with it in his mind and faith due to his knowledge of the immensity of the reward for enduring tribulation. In the same way, the sick person is content with the pain of bloodletting or taking medicine—due to his knowledge that it is the cause of healing—to the extent that he rejoices at the one who directs him to the medicine, even if it is disgusting. Likewise, the merchant is content with the hardship of travel, despite its being contrary to his nature. The likes of this is also witnessed in regards to the ephemeral matters of the world; so how can it be denied in regards to eternal happiness?

It is narrated that a woman fell so violently that one of her nails came off, but she laughed. She was asked: “Do you not feel agonising pain?” She said: “Indeed, the pleasure of its reward removed the bitterness of pain from my heart.” Thus, for whoever is certain that the reward of tribulation is greater than whatever is hard for him to endure, it is not farfetched that he will be content with it.

The third aspect is that a person believes that Allāh ﷻ has a subtle wisdom—or better yet, subtle wisdoms—behind every wondrous thing. This removes from his heart any objection through asking why or how, such that he does not wonder at whatever happens in the world by way of what the ignorant person might regard as obfuscation, confusion, and deviation from what is right. This person knows that his wondering resembles that of Mūsā ﷺ about al-Khidr ﷺ when he damaged the orphans’ boat, killed the young boy, and rebuilt the wall, as mentioned in *Sūrat al-Kahf*. When al-Khidr revealed the secret of what he had been made privy to, the wonder of Mūsā subsided. His wonder was based on what had been hidden from him of these secrets, and thus are Allāh’s ﷻ Actions.

An example is what is related about a man among those who are content. He used to say about whatever afflicted him: “The best is in what Allāh ﷻ has determined.” He was in the remote desert with his family, and had nothing but a donkey to carry his tent, a dog to guard them, and a rooster to wake them up. A fox came and took the rooster, so his family was saddened. He said, “It’s all good.” A wolf came and killed the donkey, so his family was saddened. He said, “It’s all good.” Then the dog was afflicted and died, so he said, “It’s all good.” His family was amazed at this, until one day they awoke and everyone around them had been captured, and their children enslaved. Their locations were known because of the rooster’s voice, others because of the dog’s barking, and others because of the donkey’s braying. He said: “Now you have seen that the best is in what Allāh ﷻ has determined. If Allāh ﷻ had not destroyed our animals, those marauders would have destroyed us.”

It is narrated that a prophet used to worship in a mountain that was close to a well. A cavalryman passed by and drank from it, and accidentally left behind a bag containing a thousand dinars. Later on, another man came and took the bag. Thereafter, a poor man came carrying a load of firewood on his back. He took a drink and stretched out to relax. The cavalryman returned to search for the bag but did not find it; so he grabbed the poor man, demanding the bag and beating him. He did not find the bag on him so he killed him. The prophet said: “My God! This person did not take the bag; it was that other wrongdoer! You inflicted that unjust cavalryman on the poor man so that he killed him!” So Allāh revealed to him: “Concern yourself with your worship. Knowledge of the secrets of My Dominion is none of your business. Indeed, that poor man murdered the father of the cavalryman, so I put the latter in a position to exact retribution. Indeed, the father of the cavalryman stole a thousand

dinars from the man who took the bag, so I returned it to him through what the other left.”

Whoever is certain about the likes of these secrets does not wonder at Allāh’s ﷻ Actions, but at his own ignorance. He does not say: ‘Why?’ or: ‘How?’ He is pleased with whatever Allāh has planned in His Dominion.

There is a fourth aspect that is derived from pure knowledge of Generosity and Wisdom, and how the appropriate causes are ordered to fit the effects. This requires knowledge of the primary decree (*al-qadā’ al-awwal*), which is like the blink of an eye; and knowledge of predetermination (*al-qadr*), which is the cause of the details of the decree being manifested, and which ensures that they are ordered in the best and most complete way—such that it is not possible for them to be better or more complete. If details of the decree were stored-up, it would be stinginess—not generosity, or inability that conflicts with omnipotence. Behind all of this is knowledge of the secret of predetermination. Whoever is certain of that, his conscious does not contain anything but contentment with everything that comes from Allāh (Exalted is He). The explanation of this would be long, and there is no way to shorten it, so we will move past it.

[HOW TO COMBINE CONTENTMENT WITH ALLĀH’S
DECREE AND HATRED OF THE PEOPLE OF DISBELIEF AND
DISOBEDIENCE]

Perhaps you say: “How do I combine between contentment with Allāh’s ﷻ Decree and hatred of the people of disbelief and disobedience, since I have been legally obliged to practise it, and yet that is Allāh’s ﷻ Will for them?”

Know that a group of feeble-minded people have thought that abandoning the commanding of good is a part of contentment with Divine Decree and have called it 'good character'. This is pure ignorance. Rather, it is upon you to be pleased and to dislike together. Contentment and dislike are opposites if they are applied to a single thing from a single perspective. However, there is no conflict if you kill your enemy who is also your enemy's enemy. You are pleased insofar as he is your enemy, yet dislike it insofar as he is your enemy's enemy. Likewise, acts of disobedience have two perspectives.

They have a Divine perspective, insofar as acts of disobedience are Allāh's Decree and Will; so from this perspective a person is content. Another perspective is toward the disobedient person insofar as the act is his attribute, his earning, and a sign that he is an object of loathing to Allāh ﷻ. From this perspective, a person dislikes.

Allāh ﷻ has obligated you to hate those whom He hates for opposing His Command, so it is upon you to fulfill whatever He has obligated you to do and comply with it. Imagine that your beloved said to you: "I want to test your love. Beat my slave and wear him out until he curses me. Whoever hates him, it is he who loves me; and whoever loves him is my enemy." It is possible for you to hate his slave if he curses him, while knowing that it is he who forced him to curse, and that was his will for him. So you say: "As for his action in regards to cursing, I am pleased with it insofar as it is your plan for your slave, and your will for whoever you desire to push away. As for his cursing, then insofar as it is his attribute and the sign of his enmity, I hate it because I love you; therefore I inevitably hate anyone who bears the sign of enmity to you." This is a delicate matter that the weak slip over and are thus incoherent.

[THE MEANING OF CONTENTMENT WITH ALLĀH'S
DECREE]

Likewise, you should not think that the meaning of contentment with Divine Decree is abandoning supplication, abandoning medical treatment, or leaving the arrow that is shot at you to hit you while you have the ability to block it with a shield. Rather, Allāh  has obligated you to supplicate in order to thereby extract from you heart pure remembrance, humility, and softness—so that you are prepared to receive subtle insights and spiritual illumination.

Amid contentment with His Decree is that a person seeks means to what he loves through pursuing whatever He made a means to it. It also involves abandoning the causes of opposition to his Beloved and conflict with His Pleasure. Thus, it is not from contentment that a thirsty person refrains from extending his hand to cold water, claiming that he is pleased with thirst which is Allāh's  Decree. To the contrary, it is from Allāh's  Decree and His Love that thirst is relieved with water. Nor is that which entails transgressing the bounds of Sacred Law or leaving-off concern for Allāh's  Sunnah in the first place from contentment with Divine Decree. To the contrary, its meaning is to abandon all opposition to Allāh  outwardly and inwardly, while exerting the utmost effort to connect one's self with Allāh's  beloved slaves, through keeping His Commands and desisting from His Prohibitions.

The Tenth Principle
REMEMBERING DEATH
(*DHIKR AL-MAWT*)

Know that the nine stations we have mentioned are not on a single level. Rather, some of them are sought after in and of themselves—like love and contentment, for indeed both of them are at the highest level—and some of them are sought after for something else—like repentance, asceticism, fear, and patience. Repentance is returning from the path of remoteness to face the path of nearness. Asceticism is abandoning all that distracts from closeness to Allāh; fear is a whip that drives the slave to abandoning all distractions; and patience is a struggle with those desires that cut one off from the path of nearness.

None of that is sought in itself; rather, what is sought after is nearness—and that is through knowledge and love—for it is sought after in itself, not for something else. Nearness is not completely attained except by cutting off love of anything other than Allāh ﷻ from the heart. It requires fear, patience, and abstinence for that reason.

Among the most immensely beneficial affairs is remembering death. For this reason we have come to it here, and revelation has emphasized the reward for remembering it. Through it, love of the world is spoiled and the heart's attachment to it is cut off. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ﴾

Say: 'Verily, the death that you are fleeing from will most certainly meet you.' (62:8)

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Frequently remember the destroyer of pleasures."⁴¹⁶ He ﷺ said: "Whoever hates to meet Allāh, Allāh hates to meet him."⁴¹⁷ 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said: "O Allāh's Messenger! Will anyone be resurrected with the martyrs?" He said: "Yes—whoever remembers death twenty times in the day and the night."

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ walked passed a gathering in which people were laughing loudly. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Mix your gathering with remembrance of the spoiler of pleasures." It was asked: "What is that?" He said: "Death."⁴¹⁸

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "If the animals knew about death what the son of Ādam knows, you would not have eaten a fat animal from among them."⁴¹⁹ He ﷺ said: "Death suffices as an admonisher."⁴²⁰ He ﷺ said: "I have left two admonishers among you: one of them is silent; one of them speaks. The silent one is death; the one that speaks is the Qur'ān."

Once, a man was mentioned in his ﷺ presence and spoken well of. So he said: "How was your companion's remembrance of death?" They said: "We hardly heard him mention death." He said: "Then your companion is certainly not well."⁴²¹ Once, a man from the Helpers said: "O Allāh's Messenger! Who is the smartest of people and the noblest of people?" So he said: "The one who remembers death the most and the one most earnest in preparing for it—these are the smartest people; they have gone with the honour of the world and nobility of the afterlife."⁴²²

[THE BENEFITS OF REMEMBERING DEATH AND THE WAY TO
THINK ABOUT IT]

Know that death is immense and terrifying, and what comes after it is even greater than it. There is a huge benefit in remembering it; for indeed, it spoils the world and makes it loathsome to the heart, and loathing it is the head of every good deed—just as loving it is surely the head of every sin.

The gnostic has two benefits in remembering it. The first of them is aversion to the world. The other is longing for the afterlife; for indeed, the lover inevitably yearns. The meaning of yearning in regards to sensory things is to fulfill the imagination through rising to direct witnessing. Indeed, the object of yearning is inevitably perceived in the imagination, yet absent from sight. The states of the afterlife and its luxuries, and the beauty of the Divine Presence are all perceived by the gnostic, who knows them as if he is looking through a thin curtain just before the sun rises, when the light is weak. He yearns for its fulfillment through manifestation and direct witnessing, and knows that this is not to be except at death. Hence, he does not dislike death, because he does not dislike meeting Allāh ﷻ. There is no reason for the any of the creation to turn to the world, except little reflection on death.

The path to thinking about it requires that a person empties his heart of every thought beside it, sits in seclusion, and pursues remembering death earnestly in his heart. He should first reflect on his friends and peers that have passed, remembering them one by one; remembering their ambitions, their hopes, and their reliance upon status and wealth. Then he should remember their final moments at death, and their sorrow over a lifetime lost and squandered.

Then he should reflect on their bodies and how they disintegrate into dust; how they turn into corpses that the worms eat. Then he should turn to himself, and know that he is like one among them—his

hopes are like their hopes, and his final moment will be like their final moments. Then he should look at his body parts and how they grow weak; at his eye and how the worm will eat it; and at his tongue and how it tears and becomes a piece of dead flesh in his mouth.

If you do this, the world is spoiled to you and you are happy, for the happy one is he who is admonished by the example of another. For this reason, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "O people! We carry on as if death in the world were written for other than us; as if its reality were required of other than us; and as if those whom we have bid farewell unto death are travellers returning to us shortly. We prepare their bodies for burial and consume what they bequeath as if we will live eternally after them. We have forgotten every admonition and feel secure from every calamity. Good news to he whose fault preoccupies him from the faults of the people."⁴²³

[VAIN HOPES ARE THE BASIS OF HEEDLESSNESS OF DEATH]

The basis of heedlessness of death is vain hopes, and this is the essence of ignorance. This is why Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar : "When you wake up in the morning, do not talk to yourself about the evening. When you retire in the evening, do not talk to yourself about the morning. Exploit your life for your death and your health for your sickness; for indeed, O 'Abd Allāh, you do not know what you will be called tomorrow."⁴²⁴ He  also said: "The most frightening thing I fear for my community is two traits: following desires and vain hopes."⁴²⁵

Usāmah  rented a product for two months for one hundred dinars. So the Prophet  said: "Are you not amazed at this Usāmah who rented something for two months? Indeed Usāmah has a vain hope. By He in whose Hand is my soul! I have not blinked my eyes

without thinking that my eyelids would not meet until Allāh ﷻ had grasped my spirit; nor have I raised my head without thinking that I would lower it and be grasped; nor have I eaten a piece of food without thinking that I would swallow it and die from choking.” Then he said: “O Children of Ādam! If you use your reason, then prepare yourselves for death. By He in whose Hand is my soul, what you are promised is certainly coming, and you cannot stop it.”⁴²⁶

He ﷻ also said: “The first portion of this community was saved by certainty and abstinence. The latter portion of the community will be destroyed by stinginess and vain hope.”⁴²⁷ He ﷻ said: “Would all of you love to enter Paradise?” The Companions replied: “Yes!” He said: “Desist from your vain hopes, consider your lifespans right before you, and be shy in before Allāh with the shyness He deserves.”⁴²⁸

[THE PERFECT Gnostic HAS NO NEED OF REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH]

Know that the perfect gnostic who is infatuated with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ is in no need of remembering death. Rather, his state is annihilation in Divine Oneness. He pays no attention to the past, the future, or any state insofar as it is a state. Instead, he is a child of the moment, meaning that he is like one with the object of his remembrance. I am not saying that he is one with the Essence, so do not be fooled and mistaken or think badly about what I intend.

Likewise, fear and hope depart from him, because they are two whips that drive the slave to the state that the gnostic is already experiencing. How could he remember death when remembrance of death is only desired in order to cut off his heart’s relationship with

whatever leaves him at death? The gnostic has already died in relation to the world, and in relation to everything that departs from him at death. Indeed, he has also risen beyond and transcended attention to the afterlife, not to speak of the world. Whatever is besides Allāh ﷻ has been spoiled for him. Nothing of death remains to him but for the veil to be lifted, in order for him to increase in clarity, not certainty. This is the meaning of ‘Alī’s ﷺ statement: “If the veil was lifted, it would not increase me in certainty.”

Someone looking at another through a covering surely does not increase in certainty; but rather, only in clarity. In any case, the person whose heart turns to the world is the one who needs to remember death, in order to know that he will depart the world and thus should not settle his aspiration in it. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Truly, the Holy Spirit put the thought on my heart: love whomever you love; for indeed, you will leave him. Live however you will; for indeed, you are dying. Do whatever you want; for indeed, you will be recompensed for it.”⁴²⁹

[KNOWLEDGE OF THE REALITY OF THE SPIRIT (AR-RŪḤ)]

Perhaps you desire to know the reality of death and what it truly is. You will never know this as long as you do not know the reality of life. In turn, you will not know the reality of life as long as you do not know the reality of the spirit—which is your consciousness and reality, and is nevertheless the most hidden thing from you.

You should not aspire to know your Lord before you know your self. By ‘your self’, I mean: your spirit that is the special characteristic of humanity and attributed to Allāh ﷻ in His statement:

﴿قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي﴾

Say: 'The spirit is from my Lord's affair.' (17:85)

And:

﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾

...and We have breathed into him from Our Spirit. (15:29; 38:72)

This is other than the subtle, physical consciousness that wields the powers of sensory perception and movement; that which emerges from the heart and spreads to the entire body through the main arteries; and through which the light of physical vision emanates upon the eye, the light of hearing upon the ear, and all other physical abilities and senses. This occurs just as light from a lamp emanates upon the walls of a house if it is circulated around its sides. The aforementioned spirit is shared by animals, and is put out at death. It is merely a vapour that developed with the composition of the body's materials. If the composition is taken apart, it is nullified—like the light emanating from the lamp when the lamp is extinguished due to its oil burning out or it being blown out. When an animal is no longer nourished and sustained, this spirit is destroyed, because its sustenance is like the oil of a lamp; hence, killing it is like blowing out a lamp.

This is the spirit whose structure and strength is dealt with by study of medicine. It is not suited to bear knowledge and trust. Rather, the bearer of trust is the unique spirit of humankind. What we mean by 'trust' is bearing the burden of moral responsibility by being subjected to the grave matter of reward and punishment as a consequence of obedience and disobedience.

This spirit neither dies nor ceases to exist. Rather, it remains after death—either in comfort and happiness, or torment and sorrow. It is the seat of knowledge. Dust does not consume the seat of faith and

knowledge at all, as tradition has spoken of and spiritual insight has born witness to.

Sacred Law does not permit mentioning a true exposition of its qualities, for no one is capable of bearing it except those firmly grounded in knowledge. How could it be mentioned when it has such incredible features in respect of Allāh ﷻ as to be over the heads of most of the creation? Do not aspire to have a full exposition of its reality, but wait for a more easily understood intimation of its qualities after death.

[THE SPIRIT DOES NOT CEASE TO EXIST, NOR DOES IT DIE]

This spirit does not cease to exist, nor does it die. Rather, it only changes states and places after death. It rises from one place to another. The grave with respect to it is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell. It has no relation to the body other than using it and taking advantage of the initial stages of realisation via the net of senses. The body is its instrument, its vessel, and its net. If the instrument, the vehicle, and the net cease to work, that does not necessitate the nullification of the controller.

Of course, if the net is ceases to work after finishing the hunt, then its nullification is a prize—its owner is freed from carrying its weight. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Death is the believer’s gift.”⁴³⁰

On the other hand, if the net ceases to work before the hunt, the sorrow and regret over it is great. For this reason, the one who slacked concerning his religion will say:

﴿رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ۖ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ﴾

*O my Lord, return me to the world so that I may do righteous deeds
concerning what I left behind. (23:99–100)*

If he was accustomed to the net, loved it, and his heart was attached to it because of its excellent form or whatever relates to it, he will have two kinds of punishment: the first is sorrow over missing the hunt that is of no avail without the body's net; the second is the wearing-out of the net while the heart is attached and accustomed to it. This is an initial step in knowing the punishment of the grave. If you study it thoroughly, you will undoubtedly come to realise it.

[DEATH IS ABSOLUTE DETERIORATION OF ALL THE LIMBS
THROUGH A CESSATION OF THEIR FUNCTIONS]

Perhaps you desire to know the technique of thorough examination that leads to realisation. Know that this book cannot bear its explanation, so be content with an easy-to-understand example.

Know that the meaning of death is the deterioration of the body. You know that the deterioration of the arm is its failure to obey you despite your presence, due to the neutralizing of the power through which it was used. Understand that death is absolute deterioration in all of the limbs and organs through the cessation of their functions. Thus, death deprives you of your arms, your legs, your eyes, and all your other senses while you remain—meaning your reality through which you are you; for indeed, you are now the person who you were in childhood, though perhaps nothing remains of you from that physical form. To the contrary, all of it has changed, and its replacement has emerged through sustenance; yet you are you, and your current body is other than that child's body.

If you had a dear loved one whom you needed your senses to appreciate, then the torment of departing from your beloved would

be great. The entire world is dearly beloved, and it cannot be experienced except through the senses. For the passionate lover, there is no difference between being veiled from seeing his beloved, and his eyes being gouged out, or being taken away from the beloved and carried to a place where he cannot see him. Ultimately, his pain is from not being able to see. Whoever loves his family, his wealth, his property, his vehicle, his servant girl, and his clothes, he is hurt by their departure—irrespective of whether these things are lost, or he is deprived of them by being carried to another place, or a barrier is put between them.

Death deprives you of these things and places a barrier between you and them, so your torment is commensurate to your passion for them. Death opens the connection between you and Allāh ﷻ, and cuts off those distracting, confusing physical senses. Thus, your pleasure in meeting Allāh ﷻ is commensurate to your love of Him and how accustomed you are to His remembrance. For the sake of this, He has alerted you. He ﷻ said, as is related in a ḥadīth: “I am your inevitable end, so cling to the inevitable.”⁴³¹

The most concise verse on the pleasures of Paradise is:

﴿لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ﴾

Therein they have whatever they please. (16:31; 25:16)

The most concise verse on the torment of the afterlife is His ﷻ statement:

﴿وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ﴾

They are prevented from what they desire. (34:54)

There is no pleasure except with desire, provided the object of desire is attained. Likewise there is no pain except with desire, when the object of desire is gone.

You should not be deceived now and say: “If this is the reason for the punishment of the grave, then I am safe from it; for there is no relationship between me and the enjoyments of the world.” Indeed, you do not perceive the punishment’s reality until you leave the world and exit from it entirely. How many men have sold a slave girl believing that there was no relationship between him and her, but when the buyer took her their hearts were preoccupied with the fire of separation and burned severely. Perhaps one would throw himself in water or fire in order to kill himself and be rid of the pain.

This is how your state is in the grave concerning everything that it relates to from the world. For this reason, the Chosen One ﷺ said: “Love whatever you love; for indeed, you will leave it.”⁴³²

Beyond this is an even greater torment: the regret of being veiled from closeness to Allāh ﷻ and looking at His Noble Countenance. With death, the immensity of what passed a person by is revealed, even if its immense measure is not obvious to you before death, because death is a cause of unveiling what was never unveiled before—just as sleep is a cause for the unveiling of the unseen through a simile or otherwise. Sleep is the brother of death; however, it is of a much lesser degree.

These two torments are increased upon every deceased person for whom other than Allāh ﷻ was more beloved to him than Allāh ﷻ, and whose closeness to other than Allāh ﷻ was more than his closeness to Allāh. They are both necessary, if you truly know the spirit, its lasting after death, its relationships, and what is naturally incompatible or compatible with it.

[THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT DEATH IS NONEXISTENCE]

Perhaps you say: “The well-known opinion according to the scholars is that the human being is annihilated with death and then returned, and that the punishment of the grave is with fire, scorpions, and snakes; and what you have mentioned is contrary to this.”

Know that whoever says that the meaning of death is nonexistence is veiled from the lowlands of blind following and the heights of spiritual insight altogether. As for his veiling from the peak of spiritual insight, he does not perceive what he does not see. As for his veiling from blind following, you will know it by reciting Qur’ānic verses and ḥadīths. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ۖ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

Do not think that those who were killed in the way of Allāh are dead.

To the contrary, they are alive with their Lord and provided for, overjoyed by what Allāh has given them from His Bounty. (3:169–

170)

This is in reference to the eternally joyful.

As for the eternally sorrowful, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ called them on the Day of Badr when they were killed. He said: “O so-and-so, O so-and-so!”—mentioning each one of their leaders—“I have found what my Lord promised me to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?” It was said: “O Messenger of Allāh! Do you call out to dead people?” So he said: “By Him in whose Hand is my soul, you do not hear my speech any better than them; however, they are incapable of responding.”⁴³³

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Death is resurrection. Whoever dies, his resurrection has been established."⁴³⁴ He meant by this the minor resurrection. If you desire more information, then seek it from 'The Book of Patience' from *The Revival*. The ḥadīths signifying the perpetuation of the souls of the dead and their feeling of what occurs in this world are also many.

As for your statement: "The well-known opinion concerning the punishment of the grave is pain by way of fire, scorpions, and snakes." This is correct—it is like that; however, I feel you are incapable of understanding it or comprehending its secret and reality. Nevertheless, I call your attention to an example of it as a way of sparking your interest in knowing realities and working earnestly to prepare for the matter of the afterlife. Indeed, it is great news that you turn away from. The Prophet ﷺ said: "In his grave, the believer is in a plush garden, and it has been spread out for him seventy cubits. His face is illumined until it is like the full moon. Do you know what the verse: ﴿إِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا﴾ (*indeed he will have a hard life* [20:124]) was revealed about?" The Companions said: "Allāh and His Messenger know best." He said: "The punishment of the disbeliever in his grave. Ninety nine vipers are put over him. Do you know what the vipers are? Ninety nine serpents—each one has nine heads. They strike him, bite him, and spew venom into his body until the day people are resurrected."⁴³⁵

Look at this ḥadīth and know that this is a truth clearer than physical vision from the perspective of those people of spiritual insight who have gleaned it. The ignorant person denies it. He says: "I look into my grave and do not see that at all." The ignorant person should know that this viper is not external to the essence of the deceased person. What I mean is the essence of his spirit, not the essence of his body; for indeed, the spirit is that which feels pain or

pleasure. In fact, before his death, the viper was established deep within him; however, he was never able to sense its bite, due to a numbness that was inside of him through the dominance of his desires. He therefore feels its bite after death.

Realise that this viper is composed of his qualities, and the number of its heads is commensurate to the number of his blameworthy traits and desire for worldly pleasure. The origin of this viper is love of the world, and heads branch off from it according to whatever branches off from love of the world—whether envy, hatred, ostentation, pride, scheming, cheating, love of status and wealth, animosity, or malice. The basis of this is known through spiritual insight. As a consequence, the heads that bite are many.

As for limiting their number to ninety nine, it is understood only through the light of prophethood. This viper is set up in the depths of a disbeliever's heart, not merely due to the ignorance of his disbelief, but rather due to what disbelief invites to—as Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ﴾

That is because they preferred the life of the world over the afterlife.

(16:107)

He ﷻ also said:

﴿أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا﴾

You exhausted all your good in your worldly life and enjoyed it there.

(46:20)

If this viper were external to the essence of the deceased person—as you believe—it would be easier; for it is conceivable that the viper

would go away from him or he away from it. No—to the contrary, it is settled in the depths of his heart, and bites him with a force greater than what you understand of the viper’s bite. It is essentially his qualities that were with him during his life—just as the viper that bites the heart of the passionate lover when he sells his slave girl is essentially the passion that was lodged in his heart as molt is lodged in rock. However, he is unaware of it, so what used to be the reason for his pleasure becomes the cause of his pain. This is the secret of the Prophet’s ﷺ statement: “It is only your deeds returned to you.”⁴³⁶ Likewise, Allāh’s ﷻ statement:

﴿يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَعُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾

A day when every soul will find whatever it did of good present and whatever it did of bad—he will wish that between them were a great distance. Allāh warns you about Himself, and Allāh is Merciful to the slaves. (3:30)

Moreover, the secret of His ﷻ statement:

﴿كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ﴾

No! If you only knew with certain knowledge—you will surely see hell. (102:5–6)

Meaning: the hell within him. Therefore, seek to have certain knowledge of it and see it—before you perceive it with the eye of certainty.

Moreover, it is the secret of His ﷻ statement:

﴿يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ﴾

They urge you to hasten the punishment; and indeed, Hell surrounds the disbelievers. (29:54)

He did not say it ‘will surround’ them, but that it ‘surrounds’ them. There is also His statement:

﴿إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا﴾

Indeed, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose canopy has surrounded them. (18:29)

He did not say ‘surrounds’ them. This is the meaning of the statement of someone who says that Paradise and Hell are both created. Allāh has made his tongue speak with the truth, although perhaps he has yet to fully understand the secret of what he says.

If you likewise have not understood some of the meanings of the Qur’ān, then you have no portion of the Qur’ān except its husk—just as the dumb animal has no portion of wheat except its husk (which is straw). The Qur’ān is sustenance for all of creation, despite its different types. Their nourishment by it is commensurate to the degree of each. In every food crop there is pulp, bran, and straw. The donkey’s desire for straw is stronger than it is for bread made of seeds. You yourself have a strong desire not to part from the level of a dumb animal, or rising to the level of human beings (better yet: the angelic level). Before you can achieve that, you must let your mind wander in the pastures of the Qur’ān; for within them is provision for you and your livestock.

[THE REALITY OF THE VIPER THAT TAKES SHAPE IN THE GRAVE]

You may say: “Does this viper take a form which may be witnessed in a manner that resembles visual perception, or is it pure agony in a person’s essence—like when the passionate lover is prevented from his dear beloved?”

I say: No. Rather, it takes a form to the extent that a person witnesses it; however, it is a spiritual form. Thus, someone who is still in the visible world could not perceive it if he were to look in his grave; for indeed, it is of the spiritual realm.

Of course, the passionate lover may also sleep and his condition takes on form to him in his sleep; then perhaps he sees a snake biting at the depths of his heart. This is because in sleep he is slightly removed from the visible world, so the reality of things takes on form to him, in a manner that signifies the reality and unveils the spiritual realm to him. Death is sharper than sleep in regards to unveiling, because it suppresses the leanings of sensory perception and imagination more powerfully, and is more far-reaching in stripping the spirit of this world’s cover. For this reason, the form taken is complete, realised, and permanent. It is a sleep from which a person does not awaken until the Day of Resurrection, and it is said to him:

﴿لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ﴾

You had been heedless concerning this, so we removed the covering from you; thus your vision today is keen. (50:22)

Know that if the wakeful person next to the sleeper does not see the snake that is biting the sleeper, this does not preclude the existence of the snake in reference to him or the occurrence of pain to him. The dead person’s state in the grave is like this.

[WHAT THE AUTHOR MENTIONS ABOUT THE TORMENT OF
THE GRAVE]

Perhaps you say: “You have innovated a statement that is contrary to the well-known opinion and rejected by the overwhelming majority of scholars; for you have claimed that the kinds of otherworldly punishment are perceived by the light of insight and witnessing, in a manner that exceeds the bounds of blind-following revealed knowledge. Is it possible—if this is the case—for you to enumerate the types of punishment and their details?”

Know that I do not deny my difference with the overwhelming majority of scholars. How can the sojourner’s disagreement with the overwhelming majority of people be denied, when the overwhelming majority are settled in what is their country of birth and first stopping place, and the number of them who have travelled amounts to single figures?

Know that a country is the body’s stopping place and site of its physical manifestation. On the other hand, the human spirit’s stopping places are the dimensions of perception. Sensory objects are the first stop; mental images are the second stop; and abstractions are the third stop.

As long as the human being is at the first stop, he is a caterpillar and a moth. The moth of the fire has nothing but sensory perception. If he had mental imagery and the capacity to memorise the image after sensing it, he would not flutter around the fire time after time despite being burnt by it once. Indeed, if the bird (and all other animals) is hurt in a place by being struck, it runs from it and never returns; because it has reached the second stop, which is memorising mental images after they are removed from sensory perception.

As long as the human being is at the second stop, he is a deficient beast, whose only distinction is to beware of a thing by which it was hurt once. If a thing does not hurt it, it does not know that it should be treated with caution.

As long as he is at the third stop—which is abstraction—he is a complete animal; like a horse, for example. It is cautious about the lion if it sees it for the first time; even if it has never been hurt by it. Its caution is not dependent on being hurt by it once. Rather, the sheep sees the wolf once and takes precaution concerning it; yet it sees the camel and the cow—who are both larger in form and appear more frightening—and does not take precaution from them, for harming the sheep is not in their natures.

Up to this point, these stopping places are shared by animals. Hereafter, the human being rises to the world of humanity, and thus perceives things that are not included in sensory perception, imagination, or abstraction; he is cautious of future affairs, and his caution is not limited to the immediate—like the sheep’s caution concerning what he sees in the wolf’s state. From here, a person moves on to the reality of humanity. Its reality is the spirit that is ascribed to Allāh ﷻ in His statement:

﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾

. . .and I have blown into him from My Spirit (15:29; 38:72)

In that world, the gate of the spiritual realm opens to him, so he witnesses souls stripped of the clothing of confusion and the covering of forms. That world has no end.

As for the worlds of sensory objects, mental images, and abstractions, they do have an end, because they are in conjunction with bodies and connected to them—and it is inconceivable that

bodies have no end. The imaginary simile of traversing this world is walking on water, and then rising from it to walking on air. For this reason, when it was said to Allāh's Messenger ﷺ: "Truly, 'Īsā ﷺ walked on water," he said: "Yes. If you were to increase in certainty, you would walk on air."⁴³⁷

As for hesitating about sensory objects, it is like walking on the ground. Between it and water is a world that takes its course like a boat. Therein, various levels of devils are produced, so that the human being passes the world of animals and reaches the world of the devils. From there, he travels to the world of the angels, where he could stop and settle. The explanation of this would be lengthy.

All of these worlds are stopping points of guidance; however, the guidance that is ascribed to Allāh ﷻ is found in the fourth world, which is the world of spirits. This is the meaning of His ﷻ statement:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ﴾

Say: 'Verily guidance is Allāh's Guidance.' (3:73)

The place, spot, and stop for every human being in terms of its highness or lowness is according to the measure of his perception. This is the meaning of 'Alī's ﷺ statement: "People are the children of what they do well." Thus, the human being is between being a worm, donkey, horse, or devil; then he passes that and becomes an angel.

The angels have levels. Among them are the earthly and the heavenly, those brought near—who rise above turning to the sky or the Earth, and those whose attention is limited to the beauty of the Divine Presence and specifically to observing the Countenance. They are forever in the Eternal Abode, for the object of their attention is the Eternal Countenance. For everything beside this, oblivion is its final destination. By this, I mean the sky, the Earth, and whatever relates to them of sensory objects, mental images, and abstractions. This is the meaning of His ﷻ statement:

﴿كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ۖ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ﴾

Everything upon it perishes, yet your Lord's Countenance—possessor of Majesty and Nobility—remains. (55:26–27)

These worlds are the stopping places in a human being's journey, so that he may rise from the low levels of animals to the heights of the angels' level, and then rise from their level to the level of the passionate lover among them—those who are constantly observing the beauty of the Divine Countenance, glorifying it, and proclaiming its perfection night and day without tiring.

Now look at the human's vileness and honour, the remoteness of his ascent up higher paths, and the sinking of his level to what is beneath him. Every human being is reduced to the lowest of low, and those who believe and do righteous deeds rise from it. They have a reward that never ends, which is observing the beauty of the Divine Countenance. Through this, the meaning of His ﷻ statement is understood:

﴿إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ
يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا﴾

*Verily, We offered the trust to the heavens, the Earth and the
mountains; but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it.
Humanity carried it. Indeed, humanity has always been prone to
wrongdoing and woefully ignorant. (33:72)*

The meaning of ‘the trust’ is subjection to responsibility and risk; there is no risk for the inhabitants of the Earth—the animals—because they have no possibility of rising to the third stopping place. Likewise, there is no risk for the angels, because they have no fear of sinking to the lows of the animal world.

Look at the human and the wonders of his worlds—how he rises to the highest heaven, and falls to the measly Earth, bearing this grave risk that none in existence bears but him!

O pitiful one! How do you threaten me with punishment, and seek to frighten me for overstepping the overwhelming majority of scholars and disagreeing with the well-known opinion when that is my joy and happiness? Indeed, that which they hate about me is what my heart desires! So turn the page of nonsense, and do not cause any disturbance with your clamouring after this.

[TYPES OF PUNISHMENT IN THE AFTERLIFE]

As for you asking me about the details of the punishment of the grave and its types, then do not aspire for detail; for that invites to boredom and verbosity. Be satisfied with a mention of its types, for it has become apparent to me in a manner clearer than physical vision that the types of punishment in the grave are three (i.e. the spiritual

among them): the ordeal of desired things, the humiliation of ignominy, and regret over the passing of beloved things.

These are three types of spiritual fire that are launched consecutively upon the spirit of someone who preferred the worldly life, ending with him being forced to endure physical fire. Indeed, that is at the end of the affair. Now then, pay attention to the explanation of these types.

The first type is the ordeal of being separated from desired things. Its metaphor, taken from the sensory world and world of mental images, is the viper. Revelation described it and numbered its heads, which are according to the number of desires and base attributes of the person. It bites the depths of the heart with a painful bite, even when the body is detached from it. Imagine a king in this world of yours—dominant over the entire Earth, capable of enjoying all pleasures and delighting in them, infatuated with beautiful faces and preoccupied with them, loving authority, forcing people to obey, and being obeyed by them. Imagine that his enemy overcame him in a moment of heedlessness, enslaved him, and publicly used him to take care of dogs. This enemy proceeds to enjoy his luxuries and take pleasure with his wife and concubines, freely makes use of his stored-up wealth and divvies it up between the former king's enemies and decriers. Now look—do you see a viper upon his heart with many heads, biting the depths of the heart, despite his body being detached from it? He wishes that if only his body were tried with diseases and agonies so that he might be rid of it.

Imagine this; for perhaps through it you will catch some slight whiff of the Crusher, which is Allāh's blazing fire that ascends over the hearts and has been prepared for the person who hoarded and counted wealth, believing that his wealth would make him live forever.

Know that every dead person's torment is commensurate to this viper's heads. In turn, the number of its heads is according to the number of desired things. For this reason, whoever is poorer and enjoys the world less, his torment in the afterlife is easier for him. Whoever has no relationship with the world in the first place, has no torment on account of it at all.

The second type is the humiliation of ignominy. Imagine a vile, low-life man—poor and incapable—whom a king draws near; he raises him, strengthens him, gives to him, appoints him as a viceroy to his kingdom, and enables him to enter into his harem and troves. The king does all of this relying upon the man's trustworthiness. When his luxury increases, however, he transgresses and oppresses. He begins to embezzle from the king's troves and makes lewd sexual advances to his wife, daughters, and concubines. During all of this, he makes a show of trustworthiness to the king and believes that the latter is unaware of his betrayal. In the midst of his outlandish violations and betrayal, he notices a peephole and sees that the king is watching him through it. He knows now that the king has been watching him daily; however, he has been keeping a low profile and allowing him to carry on until he increased in filth and vileness—thereby increasing how much he deserved to be punished, so that all kinds of torment would descend upon him in the afterlife.

Now, look at how his heart burns with the fire of humiliation and ignominy, while his body is detached from it. Look at how he wishes for his body to be tormented with every sort of punishment—just to subdue his humiliation!

Like this, you engage in deeds in this world that are desirable and pleasurable to you. These deeds have filthy and repugnant spiritual realities, yet you are ignorant of them—believing in their goodness. In the afterlife, their realities are revealed to you in their grotesque

forms; thus, you are humiliated and exposed in such a manner that you would prefer physical pain instead.

If you say: “How are their spiritual realities revealed to me?” then know that you will not understand except through similes. Among these—for example—is that a muezzin calls to prayer in Ramaḍān before dawn. Thereafter, he sees in his sleep a seal on his hand, by which he seals men’s mouths and women’s private parts. So Ibn Sīrīn [who was known for dream interpretation] says to him: “You saw this because of your calling to prayer before dawn.”

Now consider that when he was slightly removed from the physical, sensory world, the spirit of his deed was revealed to him. However, due to him still being in the world of mental images—because the sleeper’s imagination does not cease with sleep—imagination veiled him with an imagined form; namely, the seal and the object of sealing. Nevertheless, this is a form more indicative of the spirit of the deed than the actual call to prayer, because the world of sleep is closer to the world of the afterlife; hence, confusion within it is slightly weaker, although it still is not devoid of confusion. That is why it requires interpretation.

If a person were to say to that muezzin: “Do you not feel shy about sealing men’s mouths and women’s private parts?” he would surely say: “I seek refuge in Allāh from doing that! To be brought forth for execution is preferable to me than to do so.” He loathes it because he is ignorant of it—despite the fact that he did it—because his spirit falls short of perceiving the spiritual reality of things.

Likewise, if you were to eat some tasty meat, thinking that it was poultry, then somebody said to you: “Do you not feel shy about eating the corpse of your dead brother so-and-so?” you would surely say: “I seek refuge in Allāh from doing that! To die hungry is easier for me than that.” Then you looked and saw that it was the corpse of

your dead brother that had been cooked and served to you, yet obscured to you. Look at how you would be humiliated and exposed by it, although your body was detached from it! This is how the backbiter will see himself in the afterlife, because the spirit of backbiting is tearing apart the honour of brothers and making fun of it. In the world of the afterlife the spiritual realities of things are revealed.

Likewise, imagine if you threw a stone at a wall, and then somebody said to you: “Do you not feel shy about doing that? The stone could ricochet off the wall, land in your house, hit your children in the eyes and blind all of them.” You would say: “I seek refuge in Allāh from doing that!” Imagine that person then said: “Enter your house.” So you entered your house and found that the matter was as he had said. Look at how you would be exposed and your heart would burn with regret over your deed. You thought it was insignificant, but it was tremendous to Allāh!

This is the spirit of envy for your brother. Indeed, you envy him yet do not harm him; rather, it is reversed on you—by destroying your religion and transferring to his record your good deeds, which are the coolness of your eye because they are the reason for your eternal happiness. They are greater than a child’s eye. If this spiritual reality were revealed to you, look at how you would burn with the fire of ignominy—although your body was detached from it!

The Qur’ān frequently speaks about spiritual realities. For this reason Allāh ﷻ said about backbiting:

﴿أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا﴾

Would one of you like to eat the corpse of his dead brother? (49:12)

And He said about envy:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾

O people! Indeed, your oppression is only to yourselves. (10:23)

The examples of the call to prayer, backbiting, and envy are enough for you. Apply these examples to every action that Sacred Law has forbidden you from committing. This prohibition is due the repugnance of the action's spiritual reality. The apparent goodness is to outer vision, yet its inner is repugnant to the inner vision illumined from the lamp of Allāh's  Lamp. Revelation expressed this when it said: "On the Day of Resurrection the world will be shown in the form of an old cyanotic hag. Her qualities are such-and-such and such-and-such. No one will see her without saying: 'I seek refuge with Allāh from her.' Then it will be said, 'This is your world that you were so deeply concerned about.' Hence, people will find within themselves humiliation and disgrace over which they would prefer Hellfire."⁴³⁸

If you want to understand how this disgrace occurs, then listen to the story of a man from the sons of kings, who married the most beautiful woman from the daughters of kings. He drank on his wedding night and became drunk; as a result, he mistakenly went to the wrong door, exited from the house and got lost. He saw the light of a torch, and so made his way for it thinking that it was from his room. Upon entering the place, he saw a group sleeping, so he cried out to them but no one answered. Assuming they were asleep, he searched for the bride. He saw a woman sleeping in new clothes, thought she was the bride and lay next to her. He began kissing her and holding her, put her tongue in his mouth and sucked her saliva—enjoying all of this intensely in his drunkenness. He rubbed the moisture coming off her body, thinking that it was perfume she had

kept for him. When he awoke in the morning—sober—he realised that he was in a Zoroastrian mausoleum, and that the sleepers were dead. He had been enjoying an old hag who had recently died and was covered with embalming fluid and a new shroud. In his mouth and nose were the moisture of her saliva and mucus, and on his body was the excrement of her bottom. He was now covered from head to toe in her filth. He then began to think about how he had been on top of her and how he had swallowed her saliva. His heart was assaulted by humiliation so severe that he wished Allāh would cause the Earth to swallow him, so that he might forget what had occurred. However, the memory of it did not cease to recur—he could not forget it at all. Rather, he felt as if his repugnant deed were present before him, and wished that between him and it was a vast expanse. Although his body was detached from agony, he was in constant torment, due to nausea and vomiting whenever he recalled this disgrace. It grieved him to think that anyone would become aware of it and thereby multiply his humiliation. Then suddenly, he found himself with his father, whose entire entourage had come seeking him and seen all of his disgrace.

This is the state of whoever takes pleasure in the world. Its spiritual reality is revealed to him like this in the afterlife. This is the meaning of Allāh's ﷻ statement:

﴿وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ﴾

Whatever is in the breast is brought forward. (100:10)

This means that its true substance is shown—i.e. its spiritual reality. Likewise, it is the meaning of His ﷻ statement:

﴿يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ﴾

The day when secrets are exposed (86:9)

This means that the secrets of deeds and their spiritual realities—whether repugnant or beautiful—are revealed.

Just as the most delicious food turns to nasty, stinking excrement, likewise are the most enjoyable worldly pleasures. Their true substance and secret in the afterlife is even more repugnant and disgraceful. For this reason, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ likened the world to food—its ultimate end is excrement⁴³⁹.

The third type is regret over the passing of beloved things. Imagine that you have entered into some darkness with a group of your companions. In this darkness there is a stone whose color is not visible. Imagine that your companions said: "Carry whatever you are able to from this, for perhaps it will benefit us when we get out of the darkness." You would say: "What will I do with it? Should I carry its load and exhaust myself, when I do not know the ultimate end of this situation? This is nothing but great ignorance. The rational person surely does not abandon actual comfort for what he expects is potentially advantageous yet is not certain!"

So your companions each take whatever he is able to take, but you turn away—considering them ignorant fools—and ridicule them because they wager a potentiality beyond the heavy burden. On the way out, you are cracking jokes and laughing at them; but when they get past the darkness, they look and see that the stones are gems—each one equaling a thousand dinars. They proceed to sell them, and through them attain status and luxury and become landowners. They take you and use you to look after their animals, and give you every day a paltry amount of leftover food. Now, how well do you see the burning of regret's fire in your heart, even though your body is detached from it? How much you will say:

﴿يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ﴾

O, what pity for what I forsook with Allāh! (39:56)

And: “If only we could return and do other than what we did!” You will say to your companions: “Give us some of what was given to you.” They will reply: “This is prohibited for you. Did you not ridicule us and laugh at us? Today we ridicule you just like you used to ridicule us.”

Your heart does not cease to be torn from regret. Regret does not benefit you, but you console yourself and say: “Death will relieve me from all of this.”

Know that the state of the one who forsakes acts of obedience will be revealed to him like this in the afterlife. However, there is no hope for the relief of death. Rather, it is a perpetual, everlasting regret, the pain of which is multiplied every day—even though the body is detached from it. This is expressed in Allāh’s ﷻ statement:

﴿أَفِيضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

‘Give us some water or some of what Allāh has provided you with!’

They will reply: ‘Allāh has prohibited it for the disbelievers.’ (7:50)

This is because the people of gnosis and obedience are given from the lights of the beauty of the Divine Countenance such pleasure that worldly luxury cannot be compared with it in the first place; rather, it exceeds it beyond measure. The two bear no relation, apart from sharing a common name. The last person to exit from Hell is given the like of the world ten times over, as is reported in the ḥadīth⁴⁴⁰.

This does not mean a multiplication of size and area, but a multiplication of spiritual substance—just as the jewel is several times more valuable than the horse; not because of its weight or size, but because of the essence of wealth, making its value that of ten horses.

Know that the prohibition of these pleasures and giving them to disbelievers is not in the same category as a man prohibiting his slave from pleasure out of anger or choice—such that it could conceivably be changed. Rather, it is like Allāh’s ﷻ prohibiting white from being black in the state of whiteness, or hot from being cold in the state of heat. Change is not conceivable in this regard.

An example of this is that an old, decrepit, ignorant man, who is naturally stupid and has never experienced scholarship or learned a language, says to an immaculate scholar: “Pour upon my heart some of your most intricate knowledge.” So the scholar says to him: “Indeed, Allāh ﷻ has prohibited it from ignorant people.”

The meaning of this is that preparation to receive it is only acquired through natural intelligence and substantial experience studying the subject, after having learnt the nomenclature, Arabic, and many other things. If the preparation is null and void, then it is impossible to give—just as it is impossible for heat to be made cold while the cold remains. So do not think that Allāh ﷻ is Angry with you and thus punishes you as retribution, then fool yourself with hope for forgiveness and say: “Why does He punish me when my disobedience does not harm Him?” Rather, punishment is a consequence of disobedience like death is a consequence of poison.

Know that this regret is everlasting, because its starting point is the opposition of two qualities whose opposition never ceases. For example, someone who ties a rope about his neck or his foot only feels pain due to the opposition of two qualities—not due to the form of the rope and its attachment. His natural tendency is to fall to the

ground, yet the force of the rope prevents this natural tendency from taking effect; thus, these two opposing forces produce pain for him.

Likewise is the human spirit, which is naturally of the Divine, spiritual world. By its nature, it has an affinity and longing for the sublime world, the spiritual world, and to be in the highest company. However, the fetters and chains of desire pull it to the lowest of the low—that is, worldly desires. They constitute an ephemeral quality that overcomes the natural quality and prevents it from achieving its mission. Pain is produced from between them. Fire also causes pain due to opposition; for indeed, what is agreeable to the body is that its constituent parts stay together, and fire opposes this constitution by separating between the parts. If you had never seen fire, and were told that a light, airy thing will hurt you if it touches your body, you would scoff at it and say: “How can a thing with no solidity hurt through touch?”

Know that mutual opposition is painful, whether the reason is external or internal. The scorpion’s poison in any body part hurts—due to its extreme coldness that is contrary to the body’s heat. So, do not think that all pains come from the outside.

If you say: “The scorpion bit from the outside,” then know that the pain of the tooth and the pain of the eye are no less than it. The only reason for them is the flow of internal fluid that is contrary to the composition of the eye and the tooth. Yet, this is no easier to bear than the bite of the snake or the scorpion.

Know also that the mutual opposition of qualities upon the heart hurts the heart with a pain that is no less than what hurts the tooth or the eye. An example is in the weakest of qualities: If you ask a stingy yet ostentatious person to give publicly in front of people by whom he wishes to be known for his generosity, then his heart will hurt due to the mutual opposition of the two qualities. Stinginess dictates that

he does not give, yet love of status dictates that he should give. His heart is torn between these two qualities like a person who is split in two by a saw.

This is the simile of regretting what has passed. Its immensity is commensurate to whatever is revealed of the majesty of what was missed. You will not really know it in this world, but rather in the world of revelation. Alas, this is tremendous news that you turn away from.

Know that these three types have an order:

The first type encountered by the tormented dead person is the ordeal of being separated from desired things. This is the viper of loving the world. For this reason, it is related to the grave. Nevertheless, it comes beforehand, because the majority of things in the dead person's heart at the time of death are what he leaves behind in terms of status, wealth, position and luxury when he departs from the world. Thereafter, they have their repulsive spiritual realities exposed to him. This occurs with the complete engulfment of death and the remoteness of the familiar veiling of worldly qualities (the more assiduous a person's preparation for death is, the more accepting he is of these revelations). Here is where the humiliation of ignominy is poured upon him. Hence, it is related to the Resurrection, because it is a middle ground between the grave and the Permanent Abode. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ﴾

A day when Allāh will not humiliate the Prophet and those who believed with him (66:8)

That is, the Day of Resurrection.

As for regret over the passing of beloved things, it is the last to overcome a person at the Permanent Abode—in Hell. Therein he will say:

﴿أَفِيضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

Give us some water or some of what Allāh has provided you with!

(7:50)

This is because remoteness from the familiarity of the world may lighten the torment of being torn from it, and prolonged acquaintance with this revelation may entail the end of ignominy's disgrace; for the form of torment-by-disgrace is at the first strike of ignominy. Thereafter, disgrace and ignominy become somewhat customary. Then, with the languishing of disgrace and ignominy, comes regret over the passing of beloved things; for the magnitude of what has been missed becomes manifest. Finally, regret over the missed opportunity remains, and it is likely that it has no end.

You know all of this decisively if you know yourself, and know that you will not die; rather, your eyes will be blinded, your ears will be dispossessed of hearing, and your body parts will decompose.

As for the reality by which you are you, it does not perish with death at all—only its state changes. Everything you knew from before, including your inner perception and your desires, stays with you. You are hurt only by departing from what you love, being disgraced by the appearance of what is revealed in this state, and by your regret over missing something the magnitude of which is known only after death—not before. All of these are precursors to the actual physical punishment, which is also true. Its promise is well-known, as it has come in the Qur'ānic verses and ḥadīths.

Suffice yourself with this amount of exhortation for now; for indeed, the last several pages of speaking on this subject just about went over the limit for a book like this. True, fools and ignorant people will inevitably require further motivation; however, they are too base-minded to be heeded. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْ مَن تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ﴾

Turn away from those who ignore our signs and want nothing but the worldly life. That is the extent of their knowledge. (53:29–30)

So we will stop with this, thus completing *The Forty Principles* and *Jewels of the Qur’ān*. Whoever seeks more than this should seek it from ‘The Book of Remembering Death’ from *The Revival*; for the overwhelming objective of this book is to suggest and incite a desire for the careful study mentioned therein. Through it, the secrets of the religious sciences are revealed, and no one flees from seeking that except someone infatuated with the world, who seeks from the sciences only what he can use as a net to catch worldly things or a tool for acquiring the prohibited. The sciences of that book are not suitable for him at all. Allāh is Sufficient for us, and the Best to order our affairs. O Allāh! Bless our Master Muḥammad, his Companions, and those who follow their excellent ways until the Day of Recompense. Amen!

Epilogue

CHALLENGING THE EGO (MUNĀZARAT AN-NAFS)

Know that we have alerted you and aroused your interest, so if you turn away from listening or listen with only the outer layer of your heart—just as you would listen to formal speech—then you are filthy and have lost. You have not wronged anyone but yourself.

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا﴾

Who is more wrong than he who is reminded of his Lord's signs, then turns away from them and forgets what his hands have put forward?

Indeed, we have put covers over their hearts so they do not understand it, and there is deafness in their ears. Even if you call them to guidance, never will they ever be guided. (18:57)

If, on the other hand, you listen as the intelligent, keenly insightful person listens, and reflect as someone with a receptive heart reflects, or as someone who listens and watches intently—then you have stepped out of everything that would obstruct you from traversing the Straight Path, and nothing obstructs you but the love of the world and heedlessness to Allāh ﷻ and the Last Day.

Strive to clear your heart everyday for a moment after the dawn prayer, which is during a time of clarity for the mind. Reflect on your

affair and look into your beginning and your end. Take account of yourself and say to it: “I am a travelling merchant. My profit is eternal joy and meeting Allāh ﷻ. My loss is eternal sorrow and being veiled from Allāh ﷻ. My capital is my lifespan, and every breath I breathe is a treasure among treasures and a jewel among jewels; for through it eternal joy is attained, and what treasure is greater than this?

“When life ends, commerce is cut off and despair occurs. This day is a new day—through it, Allāh ﷻ has given me time. If He were to cause me to die, I would desire that He return me to the world so that I might do righteous deeds.

“O self! Regard yourself as having died and come back to the world for one more day. Strive on this one day and look at yourself; for if you are not given time for tomorrow, then you will have exhausted the profit of this day and will not regret it. If you are given time, then start again tomorrow just as before. Do not trick yourself with empty hopes of forgiveness; for that belief is certainly a liar, and regret is of no benefit.

“Then, suppose that you were forgiven. Have you still not squandered the reward of the righteous—which is enough to cause regret and remorse?”

If your ego says: “What should I do, and how should I strive?” You say: “Abandon whatever will separate from you at death and adhere to the inevitable—Allāh, the Mighty King—and seek closeness to Him through His remembrance.”

If it says: “How can I leave the world while its attachments have become firmly established in my heart?” You say: “Turn to cutting off worldly attachments from inside your heart, as we have taught you in the ten principles of destructive traits. Scrutinise the predominant

attachments: love of wealth or status, envy or enmity, the desire of the belly or the private parts, or other destructive traits.

“There is nothing you can do but reflect on the world’s ills which destroy you. This will motivate you for the struggle against it and opposing its dictates, and then you will have been delivered from it. May Allāh support you with His Enablement and Aid!”

Then you say: “Suppose that you were sick for a period in your life (and your lifetime is a period in which you seek protection) and a doctor whom you believe to be truthful has informed you that the pleasures of food harm you, and bad-tasting medicines benefit you. Would you not, due to the doctor’s statement, be patient with the bitterness of medicine out of your desire for healing? Would you not be patient with the difficulties of long travel out of your desire for rest in your home? You are a traveller, and your home is the afterlife. The traveller does not rest, but bears the difficulties; for if he stops for rest, he will be stopped on the path and destroyed.”

Also say: “O self! What is it that you seek from the world? If you seek wealth and find it (and beware!), then there could be a group of Jews who are wealthier than you. If you seek status and attain it (and beware!), then there are uncouth Turks and fools from among the Kurds who will conquer you, and their status will be greater than your status.

“If you do not comprehend the ills of the world and the severity of their punishment and tribulation in the afterlife, will you not then rise above them on account of the lowliness of those who partake in them? Do you not know that if you turned away from the world and turned to the afterlife, you would be one in a million for which no peer in the countries of the world exists?

“If you seek the world, then Jews and fools have beaten you to it—so to hell with a world that you were beaten to by an ass! Think

deeply, O self! Examine yourself, for no one else will examine you.”

Do not stop debating your ego like this until it conforms to you in traversing Allāh’s  Straight Path. This debate is more important to you—if you are rational—than debating the Ḥanafīs, the Mu‘tazilah, and others⁴⁴¹. Why do you agitate and argue with them when their differences do not harm you, nor their mistakes or the mistakes of others. They do not accept that your opinion is correct; neither would you accept that their opinion was correct—even if its correctness were clearer than the sun. You engage in this while your most fierce adversary is right in front of you, yet you do not dispute or debate with him. Rather, you help him with what he demands from you concerning false inner desires. Thus, through intricate reasoning you derive loopholes for satisfying your desires. Is this anything other than the very essence of being turned upside down and inside out?

Have you ever seen a man notice a snake or scorpion under his garment set to destroy him, while he takes a fan to shoo away flies from around someone else’s face? Would someone who does this not deserve humiliation?

Know that this is your state when you busy yourself with debating others while turning away from debating yourself. In this display, the spirit of your deeds will be revealed to you on the day when secrets will be made known—just as I called your attention to the way that unveilings of the afterlife are indicated by the secrets of deeds and their spirit. So long as you do not debate your ego for an extended period, you shall never be left alone to converse with, remember, and turn to your Lord.

Furthermore, your way of dealing with the ego if it differs with you should be to punish it with what deters it—and know that it is like a dog: it will not be trained except by being struck. If you want to learn the technique for debating it, watching over it, taking it to

account, and punishing it, then seek this from ‘The Book of Taking to Account and Watching Over’⁴⁴²; for indeed, it is not possible to cover it in this book. May Allāh ﷻ enable you and us to obey Him through His Grace and the breadth of His Generosity. He is most certainly Powerful over whatever He wills, and Able to answer our prayers. May Allāh bless and give peace to our master, Muḥammad, and all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

1 At-Tirmidhī (3253); Ibn Mājah (48).

2 Al-Bukhārī (143); Ibn Ḥibbān (7055); al-Ḥākim (534/3); and others.

3 Al-Kashāf (419/2).

4 At-Tirmidhī (2133); and Abū Yaʿlā in his *Musnad* (6045).

5 Abū Naʿīm, *Al-Ḥilyah* (21/3).

6 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (512/42), from the words of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib



7 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shuʿab* (2550); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (3795).

8 Al-Ḥākim (160/2); An-Nasāʾī (61/7) and in *Al-Kubrā* (8836); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (78/7). The wording ‘Three things’ does not occur in any of the narrations, as stated by al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar . Adding it distorts the meaning, since prayer is not a worldly matter. See: *Talkhiṣ al-Ḥabir* (116/3) and *Al-Maqāṣid al-Ḥasanah* (p. 180).

9 Al-Bukhārī (141); Muslim (1434); Ibn Ḥibbān (983); Abū Dāwūd (2161); at-Tirmidhī (1092); and others.

10 In the ḥadīth of ʿUbādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit  he says: ‘The Messenger of Allāh  said, “. . .and if he does not complete its bowing or its prostration, or the recitation in it. . . it [i.e. the Prayer] says: *May Allāh neglect you as you neglected me*. Then it is brought up to heaven with darkness upon it and the gates of heaven are locked before it; then it is wrapped like a threadbare garment and the one who performed it is struck in the face with it.’” It is narrated by al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shuʿab* (2871); aṭ-Ṭayālīsī, in his *Musnad*, p. 80; aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad ash-Shāmiyīn* (427), and also in *Al-Awsaṭ* (3119) from the ḥadīth of Anas ibn Mālīk .

11 This is in the Opening Supplication (*Duʿāʾ al-Istiftāḥ*) during the prayer, as in the ḥadīth of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib : that when the Messenger of Allāh  rose to pray. . . he would say, “I turn my face to the One Who has created the heavens and the Earth, as a sincere believer (*ḥanīf*), and I am not one of the polytheists (*mushrikūn*). . .” It is narrated by Muslim (771); Ibn Khuzaymah (462); Ibn Ḥibbān (1771); Abū Dāwūd (760); at-Tirmidhī (3421); and others.

12 As in the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah : that the Messenger of Allāh  said, “Our Lord , Who knows best, says to the angels: *Look at my slave’s prayer—whether he completed it or failed to complete it. If it is complete. . . it will be recorded for him as complete; and if part of it has been omitted. . .* He says: *See whether my slave has performed any voluntary [prayers]. If he has performed voluntary prayers. . .* He says: *Complete for my slave his obligatory prayers from his voluntary ones. . .*” It is narrated by al-Ḥākim (262/1); Abū Dāwūd (864); at-Tirmidhī (413); an-Nasā’ī, *Al-Kubrā* (322); and others.

13 Aḥmad (535/32).

14 Ad-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (80); al-Ḥākim (414/1); Abū Dāwūd (1678); at-Tirmidhī (3675); and others.

15 Al-Ḥākim (568/3); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (3168); Al-Quḍā’ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (99); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (3212); at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (261/8) and *Al-Awsaṭ* (3474).

16 Al-Bukhārī (660); Muslim (1031); Ibn Khuzaymah (358); Ibn Ḥibbān (4486); at-Tirmidhī (2391); and others.

17 Muslim (1072); Ibn Khuzaymah (2342); Abū Dāwūd (2985); an-Nasā’ī (105/5) and in *Al-Kubrā* (2401); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (31/7).

18 Muslim (1015); at-Tirmidhī (2989); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2759); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (346/3) and *ash-Shu‘ab* (1118); and others.

19 Ibn Khuzaymah (2443); Ibn Ḥibbān (3347); al-Ḥākim (416/1); an-Nasā’ī (59/5) and *Al-Kubrā* (2318); and al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (181/4).

20 Ibn Ḥibbān (554); al-Ḥākim (128/4); Abū Dāwūd (4832); at-Tirmidhī (2395); and ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2101).

21 Ibn Ḥibbān (616); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (10460); Aḥmad (55/3); Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (1332); and Al-Quḍā’ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (713).

22 Muslim (1151/164); Ibn Khuzaymah (1897); Ibn Ḥibbān (4316); Mālik (310/1); an-Nasā’ī (162/4) and in *Al-Kubrā* (2532); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (304/4).

23 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4992); Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (1423).

24 Al-Bukhārī (2038); and Muslim (2174)—without the words: “so tighten the paths of Satan with hunger”. Imām az-Zabīdī  said in *Al-Ittiḥāf*: “This addition came occurred as an interpretation of the ḥadīth by one of its narrators; then the person who narrated from him attached it to the ḥadīth.”

25 An-Nasā'ī (129/4) and in *Al-Kubrā* (2428); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (3329); Aḥmad (312/4); 'Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaḥ* (176/4); and others. The chain of transmission is in al-Bukhārī (3277) and Muslim (1079).

26 Al-Bukhārī (1979); Muslim (1159); Ibn Ḥibbān (6226); and Abū Dāwūd (2427).

27 Al-Bukhārī (4765); Muslim (1159); Ibn Khuzaymah (2108); at-Tirmidhī (770); an-Nasā'ī (217/4) and in *Al-Kubrā* (2724).

28 All the transcripts have: لعبد الله بن عمر [i.e. they do not specify whether it is 'Amr or 'Umar]. The correction is from the sources.

29 Al-Bukhārī (1976); Muslim (1159); Ibn Ḥibbān (352); and Abū Dāwūd (2427); an-Nasā'ī (211/4) and in *Al-Kubrā* (2713); and others.

30 Muslim (1162); Ibn Khuzaymah (2151); Ibn Ḥibbān (3582); aḍ-Ḍiyā', *Al-Mukhtārah* (448); al-Ḥākim (435/1); and others.

31 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (1197).

32 Ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (1826); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (334/4); and ar-Rūyānī in his *Musnad* (1246). Something similar is narrated by at-Tirmidhī (812) and al-Bayhaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab* (3692).

33 Al-Bukhārī (8); Muslim (16); Ibn Khuzaymah (308); Ibn Ḥibbān (158); at-Tirmidhī (2609); and others.

34 In the ḥadīth of 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn  he said: "O Messenger of Allāh, permit me to be castrated." He  told him: "O, 'Uthmān, Allāh has replaced monasticism for us with the True and Merciful Religion (*al-Ḥanaḥīyah as-Samḥah*) and magnification of every honourable thing; so if you are from us. . .do as we do." It is narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Kabīr* (62/6).

35 Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārikh Baghdād* (218/14); and Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārikh Dimashq* (45/38).

36 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (1865); Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1284).

37 Ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (3353); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (2443); Aḥmad (151/4); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (172/6).

38 Imām al-'Irāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (273/1): "It is narrated by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb from the narration of Sa'īd ibn Sulaym, as a 'hurried' (*mursal*) ḥadīth. Aṭ-Ṭabarānī also cites [in *Al-Kabīr* (198/10)] the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd: 'The Qur'ān is a mediating intercessor.' Muslim [804] cites the ḥadīth of Abū

Umāmah: ‘Recite the Qur’ān, for it comes on the Day of Resurrection as an intercessor for its companions.’”

39 Al-‘Uqaylī, *Aḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (1214/4); at-Tirmidhī (narrated something similar) (2926); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (3399); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (1860).

40 Al-Bayhaqī narrated something similar in *Al-Kubrā* (54/2) and *Ash-Shu‘ab* (1971). Ibn Abī Shaybah narrated it with the same wording in his *Muṣannaf* (187/7) as a statement of Muḥammad ibn Ka‘b al-Quraḏī.

41 Tamām ar-Rāzī narrated it in *Al-Fawā’id* (301) as an ‘elevated’ (*marfū‘*) ḥadīth.

42 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (371/17). Al-Bayhaqī also cited it in *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id* (388/9).

43 Ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (305); Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Hilyah* (77/1); and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (510/42).

44 Imām al-‘Irāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (282/1): “It was narrated by Abū Dharr al-Harawī in his *Mu‘jam*, as a ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah, with a weak (*ḍa‘īf*) chain of transmission (*isnād*).”

45 Al-Ḥākim (241/1); an-Nasā’ī (177/2) and in *Al-Kubrā* (1084); Ibn Mājah (1350); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (13/3); and Aḥmad (149/5).

46 Aḥmad narrated something similar (353/3); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (446/8).

47 Imām al-‘Irāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (99/1): “It is cited in a similar form by Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as a ḥadīth of Ibn Mas‘ūd.”

48 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5402); Ibn ‘Adī, *Al-Kāmil fī’ḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (76/3); Ibn Abī Shaybah, narrated it as a ‘stopped’ (*mawqūf*) ḥadīth of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr  in his *Muṣannaf* (72/7); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (1116). Imām al-‘Irāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (295/1): “We have narrated it in *Al-Aṣl* as a ḥadīth of Anas with a weak chain of transmission. It is well known as the statement of Ibn ‘Amr, as Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr narrated it in *At-Tamhīd* [59/6].” Imām az-Zabīdī  said in *Al-Ittiḥāf* (6/5): “Ibn Shāhīn narrated it from Ibn ‘Amr, as a ‘raised’ (*marfū‘*) ḥadīth, in *At-Targhīb fī’dh-Dhikr*.

49 Al-Ḥākim (496/1); at-Tirmidhī (3377); Ibn Mājah (3790); Aḥmad (195/5); and others.

50 Al-Ḥākim (495/1); at-Tirmidhī (3596); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (504); and Aḥmad (323/2). The chain of transmission is in Muslim (2656).

51 Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (72/7); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (157/20); [al-Ḥākim,] *Al-Mustadrak* (494/1), with its chain of transmission; and at-Tirmidhī (3509).

52 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (552); Ibn ‘Adī, *Al-Kāmil fi’l-Ḍu‘afā’* (399/6); and mentioned by al-Haythamī, *Majma‘ az-Zawā‘id* (84/10).

53 Al-Ḥākim narrated it in *Al-Mustadrak* (506/1) from Abū Umāmah , from the Prophet , who said: “Truly, Allāh’s greatest Name is in three chapters of the Qur’ān: in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, *Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān* and *Ṭā Hā*.” [Al-Ḥākim said:] “I searched for them and found *Āyat al-Kursī* in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*:

﴿اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ﴾ Allāh, there is no god but Him, the Living the Self-subsistent. (2:255)

In *Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān*:

﴿الـ — اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ﴾ Alif, lām, mīm. Allāh, there is no god but Him, the Living the Self-subsistent. (3:1–2)

And in *Sūrah Ṭā Hā*:

﴿وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ﴾ And [all] faces will be humbled before Living the Self-subsistent. (20:111)”

54 Muslim (486); Ibn Khuzaymah (671); Ibn Ḥibbān (1932); al-Ḥākim (306/1); Abū Dāwūd (879); and others.

55 Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (128/6); Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (121); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (74/10) and *Al-Awsaṭ* (8605).

56 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (466); Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (131/8); Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (70/10); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (1014). All of these are with the wording: “Whoever is devoted to Allāh for forty days. . .”

57 Imām al-‘Irāqī  said in *Al-Mugnī* (89/2): “I have not come across any chain of transmission for it. Abū Maṣṣūr ad-Daylamī has narrated in *Musnad al-Firdaws* [5853] a ḥadīth of Ibn Mas‘ūd: ‘Whoever eats a mouthful of the prohibited, prayer will not be accepted from him for forty nights. . .’ It is a ‘denounced’ (*munkar*) ḥadīth.”

58 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5707); Aḥmad (98/2); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5911).

59 Ibn Khuzaymah (2348); Ibn Ḥibbān (722); al-Ḥākim (13/2); at-Tirmidhī (2518); and others.

60 Al- Ḥākim (319/4); at-Tirmidhī (2451); Ibn Mājah (4215); and al-Bayhaqī in *Al-Kubrā* (335/5) and in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5361).

61 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (152/8).

62 Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah*; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (64/28); al-Bayhaqī, *Az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (919).

63 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (731); Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (325); ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (304/11); and at-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Awsaṭ* (5448).

64 That is, descended from Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib .

65 Al-Bayhaqī narrated it in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (6892) as a statement of Ibn Mas‘ūd . Imām Aḥmad cited an alternative narration from Ibn Mas‘ūd in *Al-War‘*, p. 43, with the wording: “rancour of the heart”.

66 Ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2575); Aḥmad (228/4); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (1586).

67 Ibn Khuzaymah (786); Ibn Ḥibbān (2185); al-Ḥākim (620/1); Abū Dāwūd (650); and others.

68 Muslim (2670); Abū Dāwūd (4608); Aḥmad (386/1); and others.

69 Imām an-Nawawī  said in *Al-Majmū‘* (325/1): “Regarding his [i.e. the author of *Al-Muhadhdhab*] statement: ‘The Prophet  performed ablution from the satchel of an idolatress’, it is part of a long ḥadīth narrated by al-Bukhārī [344] and Muslim [682] in their *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections as one of the narrations of ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn .

He then cited its text, including: “At the end of all this, he gave the one who was in a state of major ritual impurity a vessel of water and said, ‘Pour it over yourself.’” Imām an-Nawawī then noted: “It does not explicitly mention that the Prophet  performed ablution from it; however, it appears that he  did so, because there was a lot of water. Even if he did not perform ablution. . . he gave the man in a state of major impurity the means to perform the major ritual ablution (*ightisāl*).” All the narrations mention that it was the satchel of an idolater [rather than an idolatress]; perhaps the established version is correct, but Allāh knows best.

70 Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (32/1); and ash-Shāfi‘ī, *Al-Umm* (28).

71 Al-Bukhārī (1493) and Muslim (10/1504) narrated it from ‘Ā’ishah  who said: “The Prophet  brought some meat. I said, ‘That is what was given to Barīrah as charity.’ He said, ‘For her it is charity; for us it is a present.’”

72 He  accepted the gifts of Khosrau and Caesar, as mentioned in at-Tirmidhī (576) and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad (96/1).

73 Al-Ḥākim (16/2); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (321/10); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaḥ* (230/5).

74 This is well known, as in the story of Abū Shu‘ayb al-Anṣārī in al-Bukhārī (1975) and Muslim (2036).

75 As in the ḥadīth that is cited with wording and references on p. 163.

76 Al-Bukhārī (10); Muslim (41); Ibn Ḥibbān (180); al-Ḥākim (10/1); Abū Dāwūd (2481); and others.

77 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7045); Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (3315); Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1306); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Kabīr* (86/10) and *Al-Wasaṭ* (5537).

78 It is narrated from the words of the Prophet  to ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir  by ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (8307); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7723); and Aḥmad (158/4).

79 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (4738); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (122/4). Its chain of transmission is in Muslim (1844) and Ibn Ḥibbān (5961).

80 Al-Ḥākim (62/1); Abū Dāwūd (4943); at-Tirmidhī (1919); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (10480).

81 Abū Dāwūd (4843); al-Bayhaqī in *Al-Kubrā* (163/8) and *Ash-Shi‘ab* (10480); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (6732).

82 At-Tirmidhī (2022); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shi‘ab* (10485); Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (802); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (8447).

83 Ibn Ḥibbān (470); at-Tirmidhī (2488); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shi‘ab* (7774); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (8447).

84 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shi‘ab* (7697); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (574); and Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1083).

85 Al-Bukhārī (2692); Muslim (2605); Ibn Ḥibbān (470); at-Tirmidhī (1938); and others.

86 Ibn Ḥibbān (5092); Abū Dāwūd (4919); at-Tirmidhī (2509); and others.

87 Al-Bukhārī (6056); Muslim (105); Ibn Ḥibbān (5765); Abū Dāwūd (4871); and others.

88 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shi‘ab* (10681), from the words of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad .

89 Al-Bukhārī (6065); Muslim (2559); Ibn Ḥibbān (5669); Abū Dāwūd (3460); Ibn Mājah (2199); and others.

90 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (747).

91 As-Suyūṭī mentioned it in *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr* (218/3).

92 Al-Ḥākim (292/4); Ibn Mājah (3712); and al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (168/8).

93 ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* (885); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Kabīr* (288/17) and *Al-Awsaṭ* (1503).

94 Ibn Ḥibbān (5763); Abū Dāwūd (4880); at-Tirmidhī (2032); and others.

95 Imām al-‘Ajlūnī  said in *Kashf al-Khafā’* (44/1): “It is narrated by al-Kharā’iṭī in *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, with the wording: ‘Whoever places himself in a place of accusation should not blame anyone who thinks badly of him.’”

96 Al-Bukhārī (2039); Muslim (2174); and Aḥmad (156/3).

97 Abū Dāwūd (5132); and an-Nasā’ī (78/5) and *Al-Kubrā* (2349). The chain of transmission is in al-Bukhārī (1432) and Muslim (2627).

98 Al-Ḥākim (269/4).

99 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī narrated something similar in *Al-Awsaṭ* (7668).

100 Abū Dāwūd (4884); al-Bayhaqī in *Al-Kubrā* (167/8) and in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7226); and Aḥmad (30/4).

101 Al-Bukhārī (6054); Muslim (2591); aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārāh* (2640); Abū Dāwūd (4792); and others.

102 Al-Ḥākim (50/2); ad-Dāraquṭnī (28/3); and al-Bayhaqī in *Al-Kubrā* (242/10) and in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (3221).

103 Hannād , *Az-Zuhd* (1247) and ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (320), from the words of ‘Alī .

104 Al-Ḥākim narrated something similar (313/3); at-Tirmidhī (1780); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5770).

105 Al-Ḥākim (343/3); at-Tirmidhī (2352); Ibn Mājah (4126); and others.

106 Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Hilyah* (364/2).

107 Al-Ḥākim (343/3); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (4639); and Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1266).

- 108 Aḥmad (151/4); and at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (303/17).
- 109 Ibn Ḥibbān (5764); al-Ḥākim (166/4); at-Ṭayālīsī in his *Musnad*, p. 147; and Aḥmad (440/2).
- 110 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (9113); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (2336).
- 111 Ibn Ḥibbān (443); aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (894); al-Ḥākim (157/4); and Abū Dāwūd (1694). Its chain of transmission is in al-Bukhārī (5989) and Muslim (2555).
- 112 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (3168); Al-Quḍā’ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (100); and at-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Kabīr* (261/9) and *Al-Awsaṭ* (947). Its chain of transmission is in al-Bukhārī (2067) and Muslim (2557).
- 113 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (5660); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (3260).
- 114 Aḍ-Ḍiyā’ narrated something similar in *Al-Mukhtārah* (1855); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7451); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (2760).
- 115 It is narrated by al-Bukhārī (5971) and Muslim (2548) from Abū Hurayrah  who said: “A man came to the Messenger of Allāh  and said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, who is most worthy of my good companionship?’ He  replied, ‘Your mother.’ The man asked, ‘Then who?’ He replied, ‘Your mother.’ The man asked, ‘Then who?’ He replied, ‘Your mother.’ The man asked, ‘Then who?’ He replied, ‘Then your father.’
- 116 Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (177/6); Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr in his *Sunan* (293); al-Bukhārī narrated something similar (2587); and Muslim (1623).
- 117 Its wording is from a number of ḥadīth texts (*mutūn*). It is narrated by Muslim (3014); Ibn Ḥibbān (6605); aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (806); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (36/8); and ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaḥ* (440/9).
- 118 Al-Bukhārī (2557); Muslim (1663); Abū Dāwūd (3846); at-Tirmidhī (1853); and others.
- 119 Abū Dāwūd (5164); at-Tirmidhī (1949); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (10/8); and Aḥmad (111/2); and others.
- 120 Ibn Ḥibbān (4177); at-Tirmidhī (3895); Ibn Mājah (1977); and others.
- 121 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī narrated something similar in *Al-Awsaṭ* (6357), and Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq* (37/4).
- 122 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (518); al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (420/3); and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *At-Tamhīd* (434/17).

123 Muslim (2566); Ibn Ḥibbān (574); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2799); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* 232/10; and others.

124 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (445/47).

125 Al-Ḥākim (170/4) narrated something similar; Ibn Ḥibbān (573); Abū Dāwūd (3527); and others.

126 Ad-Daylamī narrated something similar in *Musnad al-Firdaws* (2011).

127 Aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārāh* (58); Abū Dāwūd (4338); at-Tirmidhī (2168); Ibn Mājah (4005); and others.

128 Abū Nu‘aym narrated it in *Al-Ḥilayah* (379/6) from the words of Sufyān ath-Thawrī . Al-Bayhaqī narrated it as a ‘raised’ (*marfū‘*) ḥadīth in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7198), as did al-Quḍā‘ī in *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (465): “Whoever commands good, let his command be good.”

129 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5032); Aḥmad (256/5); and at-Ṭabarānī in *Musnad ash-Shāmiyīn* (1066) and in *Al-Kabīr* (162/8).

130 Aḥmad, *Az-Zuhd* (1457).

131 At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (6624); Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (432/36). Al-Bayhaqī narrated it in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7163) as a ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah , as did ad-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6526).

132 A dry measure approximately equivalent to 1015.6 kg or 1335.51 litres.

133 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (8172); al-Kanānī also cited it in *Tanzīh ash-Sharī‘ah* (216/2).

134 Al-Ḥākim (409/4); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (340/9); ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (29/11); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (549/5).

135 Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (340/9); ar-Rūyānī in his *Musnad* (1288); at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (215/20); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5534).

136 Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (4918); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5534).

137 Muslim (2099); Ibn Khuzaymah (98); Ibn Ḥibbān (5459); Abū Dāwūd (4137); and others.

138 Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (455); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (1320); and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (382/7).

139 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5536).

140 Muslim (223); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (679); and Aḥmad (342/5).

141 Ibn Ḥibbān (674); al-Ḥākim (331/4); at-Tirmidhī (2380); Ibn Mājah (3349); and others.

142 See p. 53.

143 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (339).

144 At-Tirmidhī (2347); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (1394); and Aḥmad (254/5).

145 Al-Mundhirī cited it in *At-Targhib wa’t-Tarhib* (71/3), as did adh-Dhahabī in *Mizān al-Itidāl* (335/3).

146 Ibn ‘Asākir mentioned it in *Tārīkh Dimashq* (282/6).

147 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5281); Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (318/7); Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (366/27); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (758).

148 Al-Bukhārī (6474); Ibn Ḥibbān (5701); al-Ḥākim (358/4); at-Tirmidhī (2408); and others.

149 Ibn Ḥibbān (476); al-Ḥākim (324/4); at-Tirmidhī (2004); Ibn Mājah (4246); and others.

150 Al-Ḥākim (412); at-Tirmidhī (2616); Ibn Mājah (3973); and others.

151 At-Tirmidhī (2501); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2755); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (4629); and Aḥmad (159/2).

152 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (4584); ash-Shāshī in his *Musnad* (602); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (197/10).

153 Al-Bukhārī (6018); Muslim (47); Ibn Ḥibbān (506); al-Ḥākim (286/4); Abū Dāwūd (5154) and others.

154 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (372); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (6537); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (74/3).

155 Aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (2232); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (10342); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (4017).

156 Al-Bukhārī (6094); Muslim (2607); Ibn Ḥibbān (272); Abū Dāwūd (4989); and others.

157 Al-Ḥākim (46/1); Abū Dāwūd (4990); at-Tirmidhī (2315); an-Nasā‘ī, *Al-Kubrā* (11061); and others.

158 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (241/27).

159 Al-Bukhārī (2654); Muslim (87); and at-Tirmidhī (1901).

160 Aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (1062); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (197/10); Aḥmad (252/5); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (711).

- 161 Abū Dāwūd (4991); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (198/10); and Aḥmad (447/3).
- 162 Abū Dāwūd (4921); an-Nasā'ī, *Al-Kubrā* (8588); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (197/10); and Aḥmad (404/6).
- 163 Ibn Khallikān mentioned it about Ibrāhīm an-Nakhḥā'ī in *Wafayāt al-A'yān* (25/1).
- 164 A man came to Ibrāhīm an-Nakhḥā'ī and said: "I said something about a man and it reached him, so how should I apologise to him?" He said, "Say: 'By Allāh, truly Allāh knows whatever I said/that I did not say (*mā qultu*) from that.'" See: *Siyar A'lām an-Nubulā'* (529/4).
- 165 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (357/5); and at-Tirmidhī, *Ash-Shamā'il* (240).
- 166 Aḍ-Ḍiyā', *Al-Mukhtārah* (1899); Abū Dāwūd (4998); at-Tirmidhī (1991); and others.
- 167 Imām al-ʿIrāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (129/3): It was cited by az-Zubayr ibn al-Bakkār in *Kitāb al-Fukāhah wa'l-Mizāh*. It is also narrated differently by Ibn Abī Dunyā, as a ḥadīth of ʿUbaydah ibn Saḥm al-Fihri.
- 168 Ibn Mājah (3298); Aḥmad (453/6); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (26/23).
- 169 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (6315); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (6585); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4320).
- 170 Aḍ-Ḍiyā', *Al-Mukhtārah* (2286); Abū Dāwūd (4878); and Aḥmad (224/3).
- 171 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (6308); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (39/20).
- 172 Aḥmad (206/6); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (6304). The chain of transmission is in Abū Dāwūd (4875) and at-Tirmidhī (2502).
- 173 Al-Khaṭīb narrated something similar in *Tārīkh Baghdād* (221/8). Al-Haythamī also cited something similar in *Majma' az-Zawā'id* (94/8) and attributed it to aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Kabīr* and *Al-Awsaṭ*.
- 174 Al-Bukhārī (5364); Muslim (1714); Ibn Ḥibbān (4255); Abū Dāwūd (3532); and others.
- 175 Ibn Abī'd-Dunyā, *Aṣ-Ṣamt wa Ādāb al-Lisān* (234).
- 176 Ibn Abī Sharīf collated these six with regard to whom backbiting is permissible in his words [in *Al-Kāmil*]:

Six cases in which detraction is not backbiting:

when complaining against injustice, greeting by name, and warning;
of an opener sinner, asking a muftī, and seeking to remove an evil.

- 177 Abū Dāwūd (4800); at-Tirmidhī (1993); Ibn Mājah (51); and others.
- 178 Ibn Ḥibbān (5716); Aḥmad (402/2); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (237/9).
- 179 At-Tirmidhī (1995); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (8073); and al-Bukhārī, *Adab al-Mufrad* (394).
- 180 At-Tirmidhī (1990); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (248/10); Aḥmad (240/2); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (299/12).
- 181 Ibn Ḥibbān (4691); Abū Dāwūd (2578); an-Nasā‘ī, *Al-Kubrā* (8893); Ibn Mājah (1979); and others.
- 182 Mentioned previously, p. 125.
- 183 Al-Bukhārī (6129); Muslim (2150); Ibn Ḥibbān (109); Abū Dāwūd (4969); and others.
- 184 Al-Ḥākim (399/3); Ibn Mājah (3443); and al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (344/9).
- 185 Al-Bukhārī (6061); Muslim (3000); Ibn Ḥibbān (5767); an-Nasā‘ī, *Al-Kubrā* (9997); and others.
- 186 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (4543); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (1336).
- 187 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (8986); and Ibn Abī’d-Dunyā, *Aṣ-Ṣamt wa-Ādāb al-Lisān* (600).
- 188 Mentioned recently.
- 189 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (126/30); and Ibn ‘Adī, *Al-Kāmil fī’ḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (201/4).
- 190 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5127); and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (114/44). Al-Ḥākim (85/3) and at-Tirmidhī (3686) narrated: “If there were a prophet after me, it would have been ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.”
- 191 Muslim (3002); Ibn Ḥibbān (5770); Abū Dāwūd (4804); at-Tirmidhī (2393); and others.
- 192 Ibn Abī’d-Dunyā, *Aṣ-Ṣamt wa-Ādāb al-Lisān* (598).
- 193 Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (761); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (4534).
- 194 Al-Bukhārī (6114); Muslim (6209); Mālik (906/2); and an-Nasā‘ī, *Al-Kubrā* (10154).
- 195 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7941); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4315).
- 196 Al-Bayhaqī narrated its meaning in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7978), and Ibn ‘Adī in *Al-Kāmil fī’ḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (51/6). Al-Haythamī cited it in *Majma‘ az-Zawā‘id* (74/8), attributing it to Imām al-Bazzār.

197 Something similar was narrated by Ibn Ḥibbān (296); Aḥmad (175/2); and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Al-Muhtadd* (251/7).

198 Al-Bukhārī (6116); Ibn Ḥibbān (5690); al-Ḥākim (615/3); at-Tirmidhī (2020); and others.

199 As in the ḥadīth of Abī Dharr  who said: “The Messenger of Allāh  said to us, “If one of you becomes angry whilst standing, he should sit down until the anger abates. If it does not, he should lie down.” Narrated by Ibn Ḥibbān (5688); Abū Dāwūd (4782); and Aḥmad (152/5).

200 Abū Dāwūd (4784); Aḥmad (226/4); and at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (167/17).

201 Al-Ḥākim (505/4); at-Tirmidhī (2191); and Aḥmad (19/3).

202 At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (6269); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (732); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (289/8).

203 At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (346/12) and *Al-Awsaṭ* (6023). Abū Dāwūd (4777) and at-Tirmidhī (2021) narrated something similar.

204 Aḥmad (327/1).

205 Abū Dāwūd (4903); Ibn Mājah (4210); Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (3656); and Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1048).

206 At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (228/3); and Abū Bakr ash-Shaybānī, *Al-Āḥād wa’l-Mathānī* (1962).

207 Ad-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārāh* (889); at-Tirmidhī (2510); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (232/10); and Aḥmad (164/1).

208 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (6213); and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (131/61), from that which was revealed to Mūsā .

209 Muslim (2578); Ibn Ḥibbān (5176); an-Nasā‘ī, *Al-Kubrā* (170/9); and Aḥmad (302/2).

210 Al-Bayhaqī narrated something similar in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (10376); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (3543); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (92/7).

211 Cited previously on p. 81.

212 Ibn Ḥibbān (325); Abū Dāwūd (2511); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (170/9); and Aḥmad (302/2).

213 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (627).

214 At-Tirmidhī (1961) narrated something similar; ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (3546); and Ibn ‘Adī narrated it with the same wording in *Al-Kāmil fī’l-*

Du‘afā’ (178/3).

215 At-Tirmidhī (1962); at-Ṭayālīsī in his *Musnad*, p. 293; and ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* (996).

216 Ibn Ḥibbān (710); al-Ḥākim (322/4); at-Tirmidhī (2328); and others.

217 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (363); and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (191/55).

218 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4580); Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (359/3); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (634).

219 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (9992); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (1111).

220 Al-Bukhārī (2887); Ibn Mājah (4136); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (159/9); and at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (2616).

221 Ibn Ḥibbān (3210); Aḥmad (197/4); and al-Bukhārī, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (399).

222 Al-Ḥākim (312/4); and ad-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6794), from Ṭāriq ibn Ashyam , who said: “The Messenger of Allāh  said, ‘Happy is the worldly abode of the one who increases from it for his afterlife, such that his Lord  is Pleased with him. . .’”

223 Al-Ḥākim (312/4); at-Tirmidhī (1780); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (5770).

224 Al-Bukhārī (6460); Muslim (1055); Ibn Ḥibbān (6343); at-Tirmidhī (2361); and others.

225 Cited previously (p. 142).

226 Al-Bayhaqī narrated it in *Ash-Shu‘ab* (10019) as a ‘hurried’ *mursal* ḥadīth from al-Ḥasan .

227 [See p. 218.]

228 Cited previously (p. 142).

229 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (427/47).

230 Cited previously (p. 94).

231 Imām az-Zabīdī  said in *Al-Ittiḥāf* (144/8): “Abū Nu‘aym also narrated in *Al-Ḥilyah*: ‘Love of wealth grows hypocrisy in the heart as water grows vegetation.’”

232 Ibn Ḥibbān (3228); ad-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (1323); al-Ḥākim (420/3); at-Tirmidhī (2376); and others.

233 Muslim (2622); Ibn Ḥibbān (6483); aḍ-Ḍiyā', *Al-Mukhtārah* (1595); al-Ḥākim (291/3); at-Tirmidhī (3854); and others.

234 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10004). It was also cited by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* (447/3).

235 Ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (540); Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (259/7); al-Bayhaqī, *Az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (303); and Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād in his additions to Ibn al-Mubārak's *Kitāb az-Zuhd* (48).

236 Ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (552); al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Jāmi'* (934); Ibn Sa'd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* (168/7); and Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād in his additions to Ibn al-Mubārak's *Kitāb az-Zuhd* (50).

237 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (6/3). It was also cited by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* (448/3).

238 A verse by al-Mutanabbī. See: Al-'Ukbarī (224/3).

239 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (8040); and al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (244/2).

240 At-Tirmidhī (2322); Ibn Mājah (4112); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad ash-Shāmiyyīn* (163).

241 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (595); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10056); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (133/8).

242 Muslim (2742); al-Ḥākim (505/4); at-Tirmidhī (2191); and others.

243 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10018).

244 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5818).

245 Imām az-Zabīdī  said in *Al-Ittiḥāf* (84/8): "The author of *Al-Qūt* narrated something similar as a 'hurried' (*mursal*) ḥadīth from al-Ḥasan."

246 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (8875).

247 Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (430/47).

248 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10022). Adh-Dhahabī also cited it in *Mizān al-Itidāl* (522/4).

249 Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (441/47); and al-Bayhaqī, *Az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (989).

250 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (61/4).

251 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10099).

252 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10142).

253 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (430/47).

254 Muslim (2620); Ibn Ḥibbān (328); Abū Dāwūd (4090); and Ibn Mājah (4174).

255 Muslim (91); Ibn Ḥibbān (224); al-Ḥākim (416/3); Abū Dāwūd (4091); at-Tirmidhī (1998); and others.

256 Ibn ‘Adī, *Al-Kāmil fī’ḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (298/2); at-Tirmidhī (2492) narrated something similar; and Aḥmad (179/2).

257 Al-Ḥākim (596/4); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2858); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (7249).

258 Ibn Ḥibbān (1779) and Abū Dāwūd (764) narrated it from Ibn Jubayr ibn Mu‘im, from his father , who said: “I saw the Messenger of Allāh  say, when he began the prayer: ‘O Allāh, truly, I seek refuge with You from Satan; from his suffocation, his inflated pride and his poetry.’”

259 Al-Bukhārī (5783); Muslim (2085); Ibn Ḥibbān (5681); Abū Dāwūd (4085); and others.

260 Al-Ḥākim (60/1); Aḥmad (118/2); and al-Bukhārī, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (549).

261 Muslim (2588); Ibn Ḥibbān (3248); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (1718); and others.

262 Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (182/4); Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (615); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad ash-Shāmiyyin* (912).

263 Al-Bukhārī, *At-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* (1981); Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (18/4); and Ibn ‘Adī, *Al-Kāmil fī’ḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (421/2).

264 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (7792); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6121).

265 Ar-Rabī‘ in his *Musnad* (885).

266 Ibn Abī’d-Dunyā, *At-Tawāḍu‘ wa’l-Khumūl* (96).

267 Cited previously (p. 164).

268 Ibn Ḥibbān (5467); al-Ḥākim (181/4); Muslim narrated something similar (91); and Abū Dāwūd (4092).

269 Al-Bayhaqī, *Az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (759), from the words of Dhū’n-Nūn al-Miṣrī 

270 Ibn Abī’d-Dunyā, *At-Tawāḍu‘ wa’l-Khumūl* (241), from the words of Ṭāwūs 

271 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (73); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (68/3), from 'Alī  that the Prophet  said: "The sickness of knowledge is forgetfulness, and the sickness of beauty is conceit."

272 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (238); and Ibn 'Adī, *Al-Kāmil fi'd-Ḍu'afā'* (336/4).

273 Al-Bazzār in his *Musnad* (1323); Abū Ya'lā in his *Musnad* (6698); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (6238).

274 Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (127/3); 'Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (489/1); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (445/1).

275 Al-Bukhārī (3267) and Muslim (2989).

276 'Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (183/11); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (158/9); and Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (205/4).

277 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (221/6).

278 Cited previously (p. 81).

279 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1447); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5126); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (6868).

280 Imām al-'Irāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (371/3): "I have found no chain of transmission for this." Imām az-Zabīdī  said: "This is the case; it has no chain of transmission as a raised (*marfū'*) ḥadīth. Rather, it is from the words of one of the monks of Banū Isrā'īl." The ḥadīth of the monk was narrated by Abū Nu'aym in *Al-Ḥilyah* (28/4); Hannād in *Az-Zuhd* (459); and Aḥmad in *Az-Zuhd* (502).

281 Aḥmad (428/5); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (253/4); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (6412).

282 Muslim (1905); al-Ḥākim (107/1); at-Tirmidhī (2382); an-Nasā'ī, *Al-Kubrā* (4330); and others.

283 At-Tirmidhī (2383); Ibn Mājah (256); and aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (3114).

284 Muslim (2958); Ibn Mājah (4202); and Aḥmad (435/2).

285 Imām az-Zabīdī  said in *Al-Ittiḥāf* (263/8): "This is from the words of Yūsuf ibn Asbāṭ." Abū Nu'aym cited the ḥadīth of Yūsuf ibn Asbāṭ  in *Al-Ḥilyah* (240/8).

286 Al-Ḥākim (270/3); Ibn Mājah (3989); and Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1298).

287 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (6498); ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (313/4); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (300/8).

288 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6619); and ar-Rabī‘ ibn Ḥabīb in his *Musnad* (986).

289 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (138).

290 In the sacred (*qudsī*) ḥadīth (mentioned previously, p. 177).

291 Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (90/8).

292 Ibn Ḥibbān (481); Abū Dāwūd (4799); at-Tirmidhī (2002); and Aḥmad (442/6).

293 Al-Ḥākim (613/2); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (191/10); and Aḥmad (381/2).

294 Imām al-‘Irāqī  attributed it in *Al-Mughnī* (50/3) to Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī in the book: *Ta‘zīm Qadr aṣ-Ṣalāh*, narrated as a *mursal* ḥadīth by Abū ‘l-‘Alā’ ibn ash-Shukhayr.

295 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (2714); at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (8340); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (175/2).

296 Ibn Ḥibbān (479); aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārah* (2210); al-Ḥākim (3/1); Abū Dāwūd (4682); and others.

297 It was narrated including the last part by Ibn Mājah (4250); Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (108); and at-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (150/10). It was narrated by Aḥmad (80/10); Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (483); and ad-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws* (570) from ‘Alī  who said: “Truly, Allāh loves the believing slave who is tempted but repents often.”

298 Al-Bukhārī (6308); Muslim (2744); Ibn Ḥibbān (618); and at-Tirmidhī (2498).

299 Al-Bukhārī (6307); Muslim (2702); Ibn Ḥibbān (931); Abū Dāwūd (1515); and others.

300 Al-Ḥākim ((54/1); at-Tirmidhī (1987); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2033); and Aḥmad (153/3).

301 Al-Ḥākim (57/1); at-Tirmidhī (2459); Ibn Mājah (4260); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (369/3); and others.

302 It is narrated by al-Bukhārī (6069); Muslim (2990); and others, with the wording: “All my community. . .”

303 Muslim (1017); Ibn Khuzaymah (2477); Ibn Ḥibbān (3308); an-Nasā'ī (75/5); and others.

304 Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (251/8).

305 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (3258); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (730).

306 Al-Qudā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (429); and ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5539).

307 Ibn Ḥibbān (640); al-Bayhaqī *Ash-Shu'ab* (759); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (157).

308 Something similar is narrated by al-Bukhārī (5063); Muslim (2356); and Ibn Ḥibbān (9).

309 Abū'sh-Shaykh narrated something similar in *Al-ʿAzamah* (789/2).

310 Abū'sh-Shaykh, *Al-ʿazamah* (814/3).

311 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (5/4).

312 Hannād , *Az-Zuhd* (454).

313 Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (144/8); and Hannād , *Az-Zuhd* (449).

314 Al-Ḥākim (579/4); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (183/8).

315 Al-Bukhārī (4754); Ibn Ḥibbān (7108); and al-Ḥākim (8/4).

316 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (53/1).

317 Muslim (2877); Ibn Ḥibbān (636); Abū Dāwūd (3113); Ibn Mājah (4167); and others.

318 Ibn Ḥibbān (680); at-Tirmidhī (2465); Ibn Mājah (4105); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (235); and others.

319 Al-Ḥākim (311/4); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10068); and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (126/8).

320 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (172/25); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10078).

321 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6215); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10049); and ar-Rabī' in his *Musnad* (1000).

322 Something similar was narrated by ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6215); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10053).

323 Al-Ḥākim (331/4); Ibn Mājah (4102); and Al-Qudā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (643).

324 Something similar was narrated by al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10098); and Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (312/6).

- 325 A *ritl* is approximately equivalent to 398.034 grams or 455 grams.
- 326 Al-Ḥākim (126/4).
- 327 Al-Bukhārī (5416); and Muslim (2970).
- 328 Al-Bukhārī (5818); Muslim (2080); Ibn Ḥibbān (6623); al-Ḥākim (608/2); and others.
- 329 Al-Bukhārī (752); Muslim (556); Ibn Khuzaymah (928); Ibn Ḥibbān (2337); and others.
- 330 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (964).
- 331 Imām al-ʿIrāqī  attributed it in *Al-Mughnī* (164/1) to Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khafīf in *Sharaf al-Fuqarāʾ*, from the words of ʿĀʾishah .
- 332 Abū Nuʿaym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (52/1); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (964).
- 333 Aḥmad (157/1); Abū Yaʿlā in his *Musnad* (295); and ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* (96).
- 334 Ibn al-Juʿd in his *Musnad* (1765); and al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (162/9).
- 335 Abū Nuʿaym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (75/3).
- 336 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (3265).
- 337 Ibn Ḥibbān (2997); Abū Dāwūd (5235); at-Tirmidhī (2335); Ibn Mājah (4160); and others.
- 338 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shuʿab* (10266); and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (280/62).
- 339 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (151/10).
- 340 Abū Nuʿaym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (247/1); and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (489/46).
- 341 Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (259/8); and Abū Nuʿaym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (146/2).
- 342 Al-Bukhārī (4913); Muslim (2082); Ibn Ḥibbān (4187); Abū Dāwūd (4146); and others.
- 343 Al-Mundhirī, *At-Targhīb waʾt-Tarhīb* (64/4).
- 344 Al-Ḥākim (208/4); at-Tirmidhī (2036); Aḥmad (427/5).
- 345 Ibn Ḥibbān (676); at-Tirmidhī (2353); Ibn Mājah (4122); and Aḥmad (451/2).
- 346 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (2921).
- 347 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4469).

348 Muslim (1054); Ibn Hibbān (705); al-Ḥākim (34/1); at-Tirmidhī (2349); and others.

349 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4993); and Ibn ‘Adī, *Al-Kāmil fī’ḍ-Ḍu‘afā’* (378/6).

350 It is narrated by Ibn Mājah (4121), from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn  who said: “The Messenger of Allāh  said, ‘Truly, Allāh loves His poor believing slave who is abstinent and the father of children.’”

351 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (158); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (9265) and *Az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (384).

352 Imām az-Zabīdī  said in *Al-Ittiḥāf* (409–410/1): “The author of *Al-Qūt* cited it, saying: ‘We narrated in the ḥadīth of Abū Umāmah from the Messenger of Allāh : “From the least of what you have been given.”’ He then cited it when explaining the station of patience, saying: ‘Shahr ibn Ḥawshab al-Ash‘arī narrated from Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī, from the Prophet  who said: “From the least. . .”’

353 Aḥmad (385/4); ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* (300); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (1854).

354 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (462/47); al-Bayhaqī, *Az-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (384).

355 Cited recently.

356 Aḍ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārāh* (921), from the words of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf .

357 Ibn Hibbān (4862); al-Ḥākim (10/1); and Aḥmad (21/6).

358 Al-Ḥākim (348/1); Mālik (940/2); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Kubrā* (375/3) and *Ash-Shu‘ab* (9473).

359 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1462); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4459).

360 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (46); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (9531); and its chain of transmission is in at-Tirmidhī (3571).

361 Imām al-‘Irāqī  said in *Al-Mughnī* (73/4): “I did not find it as a ‘raised’ (*marfū‘*) ḥadīth; rather, Ibn Abī’ḍ-Dunyā narrated it in *Al-Maraḍ wa’l-Kafārāt* [p. 175], narrated by Sufyān from one of the jurists, who said: ‘It is from patience that you do not talk about your affliction or your pain, and do not claim purity for yourself.’”

362 Al-Qudā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (159); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (378); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (9264).

363 Ibn Khuzaymah (1898); Ibn Ḥibbān (315); al-Ḥākim (422/1); at-Tirmidhī (2486); and others.

364 Al-Bukhārī (4837); Muslim (2820); Ibn Khuzaymah (1182); Ibn Ḥibbān (311); at-Tirmidhī (412); and others.

365 Something similar was narrated by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* (1581); and Abū Nu'aym in *Al-Ḥilyah* (62/6).

366 Al-Ḥākim (512/1); and Aḥmad (302/2). However, their narration regarding glorification is: "Whoever says, 'Glory to Allāh,' he has twenty good deeds."

367 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (4113).

368 Al-Bukhārī (5634); Muslim (2065); Ibn Ḥibbān (5342); Mālik (924/2); and others.

369 Al-Bukhārī (1); Muslim (1907); Ibn Khuzaymah (142); Ibn Ḥibbān (388); Abū Dāwūd (2201); and others.

370 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (313/2).

371 At-Tirmidhī (2325); Ibn Mājah (4228); and Aḥmad (230/4).

372 Ibn Ḥibbān (4638); al-Ḥākim (109/2); an-Nasā'ī (24/6) and in *Al-Kubrā* (4331); ad-Dārimī in his *Sunan* (2460); and others.

373 Al-Bukhārī (31); Muslim (2888); Ibn Ḥibbān (5981); Abū Dāwūd (4268); and others.

374 Ibn Mājah (2410); Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr in his *Sunan* (659); and Aḥmad (332/4).

375 Al-Qudā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (148); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (185/6).

376 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (253/6).

377 It is narrated by Aḥmad from Abū Hurayrah , from the Messenger of Allāh  who said: "Whoever enters this mosque of ours in order to learn something good or to teach it, he is like a fighter in the way of Allāh. Anyone who enters it for another purpose is like a person who looks at something that is not his."

378 Ibn Abī Ḥātim in his *Tafsīr* (3040/9); and Abū Nu'aym (who cites the first part), *Al-Ḥilyah* (31/10).

- 379 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (319/4).
- 380 Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (142/7).
- 381 Al-Bukhārī (1151); Muslim (782); Ibn Khuzaymah (1626); Ibn Ḥibbān (353); Abū Dāwūd (1368); and others.
- 382 Something similar was narrated by al-Khaṭīb in *Al-Jamī‘* (1389); and as-Sam‘ānī in *Adab al-Imlā’ wa’l-Istimlā’* (p. 68).
- 383 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4513); al-Qushayrī, *Ar-Risālah* (p. 162).
- 384 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (1772).
- 385 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (466); ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5767); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (189/5).
- 386 See p. 176.
- 387 Al-Bukhārī (6094); Muslim (2607); Ibn Ḥibbān (272); al-Ḥākim (127/1); Abū Dāwūd (4989); and others.
- 388 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (64/68); and Aḥmad, *Az-Zuhd* (468).
- 389 Mentioned previously (p. 142).
- 390 At-Tirmidhī (3586); Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Muṣannaf* (134/7); and Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (53/1).
- 391 Ibn Ḥibbān (730); al-Ḥākim (318/4); aḏ-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Mukhtārāh* (227); at-Tirmidhī (2344); and others.
- 392 Al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (493); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (3383); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (1044).
- 393 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf* (49/3); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (890); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (2822).
- 394 Al-Bukhārī (6227); Muslim (2841); Ibn Ḥibbān (6162); and Aḥmad (315/2). See the explanation of this ḥadīth, and the scholars’ difference of opinion regarding what the pronoun relates to in His Words: “His Image”, in *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* (183/5) and (3/11); and in an-Nawawī’s *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (165–66/16).
- 395 It is narrated as a ‘stopped’ (*mawqūf*) ḥadīth by Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (264/8); Abū’sh-Shaykh, *Al-‘Aṣamah* (1546/5); and Ibn Sa‘d, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* (27/1).
- 396 Al-Bukhārī (5705); Muslim (218); Ibn Ḥibbān (726); al-Ḥākim (415/4); at-Tirmidhī (2446); and others.
- 397 Al-Bukhārī (2904); Muslim (1757); Ibn Ḥibbān (6357); Abū Dāwūd (2963); and others.

398 Imām az-Zabīdī  attributed it, in *Al-Ittiḥāf*, to the author of *Al-Qūt*, with his chain of transmission to Shahr ibn Ḥūshab, from Abū Umāmah .

399 The author  did not explain the fourth kind of striving on the part of the slave, which is: removing harm so that it is eliminated. Therefore, see his explanation of it in *The Revival* (283/4).

400 Al-Bukhārī (6941); Muslim (43); Ibn Ḥibbān (237); and others—with the wording: “There are three things that anyone who has them finds the sweetness of faith: that Allāh and His Messenger. . .”

401 Al-Ḥākim (149/3); at-Tirmidhī (3789); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (404).

402 Aḥmad, *Az-Zuhd* (1595).

403 Cited and commented on previously (p. 43).

404 Cited previously (p. 265).

405 It is narrated by al-Ḥākim (78/3) and Abū Nu‘aym, in *Al-Ḥilyah* (11/5), from Jābir  in the ḥadīth about the delegation of ‘Abd al-Qays, which includes: “Allāh will manifest to His slaves in the afterlife in a general way, and He will manifest to Abū Bakr in a special way.” See also what Ibn al-Jawzī said in *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* (225–228/1), and al-Kinānī in *Tanzīh ash-Sharī‘ah* (371–372/1).

406 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (971).

407 Something similar is narrated by al-Ḥākim (541/3); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (9528).

408 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsaṭ* (9423).

409 Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (192/10).

410 Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (79/10) (abridged).

411 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (320/22).

412 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (134/12); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-I‘tiqād* (p. 145).

413 Al-Ḥākim at-Tirmidhī cited something similar in *Nawādir al-Uṣūl* (1981).

414 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (225).

415 This is the way it is in the manuscript, with the addition: ‘And they sang to that effect:

Let the lover burn with hurt from his beloved

For every pain from the loved one is pleasure.

Thus the wolf, when he pursues his flock of sheep,

Suffers their dust to be thrown in his eyes

The verses are by Aḥmad ibn Naṣr ibn Abī Salamah al-Kātib. See: *Al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* (211/8).

416 Ibn Ḥibbān (2992); al-Ḥākim (321/4); aḍ-Ḍiyā', *Al-Mukhtārāh* (1701); at-Tirmidhī (2307); and others.

417 Al-Bukhārī (6507); Muslim (2683); Ibn Ḥibbān (3009); at-Tirmidhī (1066); and others.

418 Imām al-'Irāqī  attributed it in *Al-Mughni* (450/4) to Ibn Abī'd-Dunyā in *Al-Mawt*, as a 'hurried' (*mursal*) ḥadīth.

419 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1434); and al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10073).

420 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (1410).

421 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (185/6); Aḥmad, *Az-Zuhd* (2337); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (265).

422 The first part of it is narrated by al-Ḥākim (540/4); and Ibn Mājah (4259). Aṭ-Ṭabarānī narrated it with the same wording in *Al-Kabīr* (318/12) and *Al-Awsaṭ* (6484).

423 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (614); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10079); Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (202/3); and Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārikh Dimashq* (240/54).

424 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (312/1) as a 'raised' (*marfū'*) ḥadīth. Al-Bukhārī (6416) and at-Tirmidhī (2333) narrated it from the words of Ibn 'Umar .

425 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10132); and Ibn 'Adī, *Al-Kāmil fī'd-Ḍu'afā'* (185/5).

426 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad ash-Shāmiyīn* (1505); al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu'ab* (10080); and Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (91/6).

427 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (6853).

428 Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah* (185/8); and Ibn al-Mubārak, *Az-Zuhd* (317).

429 Al-Ḥākim (325/4); aṭ-Ṭayālīsī in his *Musnad* (p. 242); and Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (746).

430 Al-Ḥākim (319/4); 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* (347); and Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad ash-Shihāb* (150).

431 Cited previously (p. 153).

432 Cited in full (p. 291–292).

433 Al-Bukhārī (3976); Muslim (2873); Ibn Ḥibbān (6498); al-Ḥākim (224/4); and others.

434 Ad-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (1117).

435 Ibn Ḥibbān (3122); and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (6644).

436 Muslim (2577), from Abū Dharr , from what the Prophet  narrated from Allāh  that He said: “. . . They are only your actions that I enumerate for you and then recompense you for them.”

437 Muḥammad ibn Naṣr, *Ta‘zīm Qadr aṣ-Ṣalāh* (802).

438 Al-Bayhaqī, *Ash-Shu‘ab* (10189), from the words of Ibn ‘Abbās .

439 Aḥmad (452/3); aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* (299/8), from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Sufyān al-Kilābī , that the Messenger of Allāh  said to him: “O Ḍaḥḥāk, what is your food?” He replied: “Meat and milk, O Messenger of Allāh.” He  said: “Then what does it become?” He replied: “What you know it does.” He  said: “Indeed, Allāh  has cited that which is excreted by the son of Ādam as a parable of this world.”

440 Al-Bukhārī (6571); Muslim (186); Ibn Ḥibbān (7431); and others.

441 This was in the author’s time. . .

442 From the books of *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (393/4).

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THE FORTY PRINCIPLES OF THE RELIGION is a comprehensive distillation of Imām al-Ghazālī's magnum opus, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), in which he explores the spiritual depth of virtually every aspect of Islām. This condensed work presents Imām al-Ghazālī's profound insights regarding man's lifelong struggle to draw closer to Allāh in a simple framework, providing the reader with a step-by-step tried and proven method for spiritual development. The result is an essential guide to improving one's relationship with both the Creator and the creation and a perfect introduction to Imām al-Ghazālī's other great works.

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The Proof of Islām Imām Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1111)—jurist, legal theorist, logician, theologian, and mystic—was a master of both the outer and inner sciences of the Sharī'ah who is regarded by many as the greatest Muslim thinker to have lived after the Pious Predecessors. Credited with dealing the deathblow to Aristotelian philosophy in the Muslim world and bringing authentic Islamic spirituality into the mainstream, his life and thought were extremely influential in shaping the spiritual values and practices of medieval society and are no less relevant today.



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