

RANKS OF THE FEARFUL

Shaykh al-Islām Muwaffaq al-Dīn
Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620 AH)

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Shaykh al-Islām Muwaffaq al-Dīn
Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī al-Hanbalī (d. 620 AH)

RANKS of the FEARFUL

being a translation of his *‘Al-Khawf Ḥaqīqatīhi wa Bayān
Darajatīhi’*



Allāh said,

“So fear them not, and fear Me alone,
if you are believers.”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 175]

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by Shaykh al-Islām Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn
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FORWARD

With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

Like many Arabic words, it is not possible to directly translate *al-Khawf* into English, without losing the depth of its meaning, significance and various connotations. It generally denotes fear or anticipation of fear or a loss - and it is a quality that every Muslim needs in conditioning his heart and intellect upon, in order to recognise Allāh's greatness and to maintain the inviolability of His prohibitions.

Allāh, the Most High, has praised those who possess the attribute of an acute sense of fear saying,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

“And such (are the believers) who are humbled by the fear of their Lord...”

[*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 57]

And He said:

فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

“So fear them not, and fear Me alone, if you are believers”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 175]

Al-Khawf is Allāh’s whip with which He rectifies the condition of those fleeing from Him in heedlessness. The extent of one’s fear of Allāh is proportional to one’s knowledg. The more one knows and understand it, the higher his consciousness of the reality of this life will be. As the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “I am the most knowledgeable of Allāh among you, and most intense in His *khashyah*.”¹

Allāh said about those who understand the reality of fear and those who do not,

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ

“And warn therewith (the Qur’an) those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord...”

[*al-An‘ām* (6): 51]

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾

“Nay! But they fear not the Hereafter (from Allāh’s Punishment).”

[*al-Muddaththir* (74): 53]

¹ *Khashyah* is more specific than *khawf* because it is a quality that is particular to the people knowledgeable of Allāh.

Allāh said, “It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allāh.” [*Fāṭir* (35): 28] - As a result *khashyah* is associated with knowledge.

When fear of Allāh is established in the hearts, it decimates sources of desire and attachment to *dunya*. It is a light that navigates a person through sin and temptation, and when this fear is removed, it leads them astray - for surely fear is being vigilant from committing sins of all types. Thus the true and praiseworthy fear is that which prevents a person from transgressing the prohibitions of Allāh. Yet when fear exceeds this boundary, it may bring hopelessness and despair, which is also blameworthy - therefore fear is not the end in itself, but a means towards a successful end.

Before you is a translation of a book elucidating some profound insights into the topic of *al-Khawf*, its reality and merits, types and levels and cures that bring about fear. It also discusses causes that lead to a bad ending for people on this earth and gives poignant examples from the lives of the fearful ones from among the Angels, Prophets and our Salaf.

The author, Shaykh al-Islām Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāmah was from the leading scholars of the sixth century *hijrī*. An ascetic who was known for his vast knowledge, the Imām of al-Ḥanābilah and author of many authoritative treatises of Ḥanbalī jurisprudence.

THE AUTHOR

Imām Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī

His Name and Lineage

He is Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad, 'Abd-Allāh Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qudāmah Ibn Miqdām Ibn Naṣr Ibn 'Abd-Allāh al-Maqdisī al-Jammā'īlī, and later became al-Dimashqī.

His Birth

He was born in Sha'ban in the year 541 AH. in the village of Jammā'īl, Jabal Nāblus, which is in present day Palestine.

His Early life and Travels

He moved to Damascus with his family when he was ten years old, where he memorized the Qur'an. Then he memorised '*Mukhtaṣar al-Khiraqī*' -on the *Fiqh* of Imām Aḥmad. Later in life he wrote an explanation of it in 9 volumes, called '*al-Mughnī*'.

He travelled to Baghdād with his maternal cousin, al-Hāfiz ‘Abd al-Ghanī in the year 561 H. In Baghdād they learnt and heard from many of the scholars.

He studied jurisprudence (*fiqh*) until he surpassed his peers and became notably successful. Thus he mastered the knowledge of the *madhhab* (school of jurisprudence) and its principles.

His Piety and his Asceticism (*zuhd*)

He was pious, ascetic and dignified, as well as possessing wisdom and tolerance. His time was preoccupied with knowledge and action. He would counter disputes with his strength of evidences, and not become angry or enraged, while his opponents would shout and display discourtesy.

His Teachers

He had the honour to learn directly from numerous scholars and exegetes. The following list includes the names of some of his teachers:

- Taqī al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdu’l-Ghanī al-Maqdisī (d. 612 AH)
- His father Aḥmad ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (491-558H),
- His elder brother Abū ‘Umar Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (528-607H),
- Shaikh ‘Abdu’l-Qādir al-Jīlānī (471-561H),
- Abū’l-Faṭḥ Naṣr ibn Fityān ibn Matr Ibnul-Mannī (501-583),
- Abū’l-Faṭḥ Ibnul-Battī (477-564H),
- Fakhrun-Nisā’, Shuhdah-the daughter of the *Muḥaddith* Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraj al-Dīnawarī -(480-574H).
- And many more

His Students

Some of the names of scholars and people of knowledge who received knowledge from him are:

- al-Bahā ul- Maqdisī (d. 624H) who wrote '*al-'Uddah Sharḥ al-'Umdah*'.
- Diyā ud-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 643H)
- The son of his brother: Shamsuddīn ibn Qudāmah (d. 682H)
- Al-Hāfiẓ Zakī al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Mundhirī (d. 656 AH)
- Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 665 AH).
- And many more

Statements from the Learned about him

Ibn Taymiyyah said: 'After al-Awzā'ī no one entered Shām having more '*Fiqh*' knowledge and understanding of the Religion than al-Muwaffaq.'

Abū 'Amr Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ said: 'I did not see anyone like the shaykh Muwaffaq.'

Al-Mundhirī said: 'He was *al-Faqīh* al-Imām, he narrated (*aḥādīth*) in Damascus, he issued *fatāwā* and taught. He wrote books in *fiqh* and other subjects, in detailed and summarised form.'

Al-Dhahabī said: 'He was one of the eminent Imāms and an author of many books.'

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī said: 'The *faqīh*, the ascetic, the Imām, *Shaikhul-Islām*. The singularly exceptional scholar.'

Ibn Kathīr said: '*Shaikhul-Islām*, Imām, an outstanding scholar. There was not in his time, indeed even for a long time before him, anyone having greater knowledge of *Fiqh* than him.'

Ibn al-Najjār describes him as: 'The Imām of the Ḥanabilah in Damascus Masjid, he was a trustworthy, noble figure, extremely generous, of a clean character, a cautious worshipper, follower of the methodology of the *Salaf*, emitting light (of knowledge and piety) and respectful. One may benefit from his sighting before even hearing his speech!'

He was easy and mild-mannered, humble, and he had love for the poor. He was fine in manners, generous and giving, whoever saw him then it was as if he had seen one of the Companions; and it was as if light came from his face. He was plentiful in worship.

His Works

In *Fiqh*:

- *al-Mughnī* (9 volumes), *al-Kāfī* (2 volumes), *al-'Uddah*, *al-'Umdah* and *al-Muqna'*.

In *'Aqīdah*:

- *Luma'at al-'Itiqād*, *Al-Qadar*, *Dhamm al-Ta'wīl*.

In *Usūl al-Fiqh*:

- *Rawdat al-Nadhr*

In *Raqā'iq* and *Zuhd*:

- *Al-Riqqah wa'l-Bukā*, *Kitābut-Tawwābīn*

In Ḥadīth

- *Mukhtaṣar al-'Ilal al-Ḥadīth li'l-Khalāl.*

And much more

His writings number over forty, with some of them remaining as manuscripts. We ask Allāh to enable them to be published.

His Death

Al-Ḥabbāl said, 'He passed away on the 15th of Sha'bān, in the year 389AH and some poets composed poems in his memory.'

His funeral which had a huge attendance was held the next day and he was buried on the hill of Qāsiyūn.

His Biography

For an in-depth biography of Ibn Qudāmah, please refer to the following sources:

- *Al-Takmilah fī Wafi'āt al-Naqlah* by al-Mundhirī (3/107)
- *Al-'Ibr fī Khabar min Ghabr* by al-Dhahabī (5/79-80)
- *Siyar A'lām Al-Nubalāh* by al-Dhahabī (22/160-173)
- *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah* by Ibn Kathīr (13/99-101)
- *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* by Ibn Rajab (2/133-149)
- *Shadharāt Al-Dhahab* by Ibn al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī (5/88-92)
- *Mu'jam al-Baladān* by Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī (2/159)
- *Fawāt al-Wafi'āt* by Ibn Shākir al-Kaṭṭabī (2/158-159)
- *Al-Mughnī* - verifiers introduction (1/6-37).

CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of Fear

All Praises are for Allāh, the Lord of the universe. The *Ilāh* of the first and the last (of people), the Sustainer of the Heavens and Earth, the Most Merciful for this world and the next. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh, who is without any partner. And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His Slave and Messenger.

The Reality of Fear

Know that fear is a pain and burning in the heart caused by the anticipation of receiving harm in the future. The example of it is like a person who has committed a crime against a king, and then fell into his hands. So he would fear being killed, while considering the possibility that he may be pardoned. But the pain in his heart would be according to:

1. The level of his knowledge of the cause that would lead to his execution
2. The enormity of his crime
3. Its impact upon the king

The weaker these causes are, the less he would fear. It may also be that fear be caused by other than a crime. It could be based on (knowing) the attributes of the one who is feared, his majesty and greatness. One may learn that if Allāh were to destroy the heavens and earth, He would not have concern, and nothing could stop Him from that. Thus a person's fear is according to his realisation of his own faults, and the greatness of Allāh and His freedom from any need, and that He is not asked about what He does.

The most fearful of people is the one who is most knowledgeable of himself and his Lord, and this is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I am the most knowledgeable of you regarding Allāh, and the one who fears Him the most among you."¹

And Allāh, the Most High, has said,

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allāh"

[*Fāṭir* (35): 28].

And if one's knowledge is complete, the effect of the fear would become apparent. These effects would show on the heart, and then they would show on the body, such as one losing weight, the changing of one's colour (of skin), crying and being overwhelmed. This fear could even lead to death, or it could reach the brain and effect one's mind.

As for its effect on the limbs, then it is by them staying away

¹ Bukhārī, #4776 and Muslim, #1401.

from sins, performing worship, good deeds, as a way of making up for the past and preparing for the future.

Some have said, 'Whoever is afraid will set out (travel) at night (i.e. he will hasten to perform good deeds). '

Another said, 'The fearful person is not the one who cries, rather he is the one who leaves what he has the ability to do (of sins). '

From the benefits of fear is that it controls the desires and lessens the pleasures. Therefore a person will hate a sin that he used to love, just as a person who desires honey would hate it if he knew there was some poison in it. Thus, desires are burned by fear, and the limbs are restricted (by this fear), and the heart becomes humble and submits. Arrogance, hatred, and jealousy leave him. His main focus and worry becomes his fear, and looking at the seriousness of his destination. He has no time for anything else, and no concern except to take himself to account and watch his deeds. He is stingy with each breath and each moment, and he accounts for every one of his thoughts, footsteps, or words. His situation is like that of one who fell into the claws of a predatory animal, and he does not know if it will become heedless of him so he can escape, or if it will attack him and devour him. Such a person would have no other concern but that - so the strength of a person's monitoring and taking account of himself would be according to his level of fear. While the level of fear would be according to his knowledge of the greatness of Allāh and His Attributes, and his own personal faults, and (knowing) what lies ahead of him of dangers and horrors.

The lowest level of fear that shows its effect upon a person's action is what prevents from performing forbidden deeds. If he

stays away from what could lead to something forbidden, it is called *Warā'*.²

In addition, if he busies himself with this over the (temporal) luxuries of this life, than this is known as *Ṣidq* (i.e. truthfulness to oneself and the Creator).³

² *Warā'*: pious caution, scrupulousness. A mannerism through which the heart is purified of all that would sully it and has been excellently summarised in the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ), "From the excellence of ones Islām is his leaving that which does not concern him." It is to leave all that causes one doubt, all that does not concern him, to continuously bring oneself to account and to devote oneself to Allāh. Some of the Salaf said, 'None attains the reality of *taqwā* until he leaves that which is harmless for fear of falling into that which is harmful.'

³ *Ṣidq*: truthfulness, the conformity of the inner to the outer such that the deeds and statements of the person do not belie his beliefs and vice-versa. *Ṣidq* is the foundation of faith and results in peace of mind. Lying is the foundation of hypocrisy and results in doubt and suspicion, and this is why the two can never co-exist without being at odds with each other. al-Junayd was asked as to whether *ṣidq* and *ikhlāṣ* were the same or different and he replied, 'They are different, *ṣidq* is the root and *ikhlāṣ* is the branch. *Ṣidq* is the foundation of everything and *ikhlāṣ* only comes into play once one commences an action. Actions are only acceptable when they combine both.' The one who has true *ṣidq* will be free of self-conceit.

CHAPTER TWO

The Divisions of Fear

Know that fear is like the whip of Allāh by which He drives his slaves to persist upon knowledge and good deeds, so that they can achieve closeness to Allāh, the Most High, by them.

Fear can be extreme, moderate or lacking. The praiseworthy kind of fear is the moderate path, and it is like a whip that drives the cattle - for it is of benefit to cattle to be hit with a whip sometimes, but it is harmful to go to extremes in hitting them.

Likewise, it is not praiseworthy to be deficient in fear, such as a person who remembers only when he hears a verse (of the Qur'ān) or some other major reason that causes him to cry and when that cause is absent from his senses, he immediately becomes heedless again. This is a deficient fear that does not have much benefit. It is like a weak cane that hits a strong animal such that it does not hurt it or drive it to the intended place. This is the kind of fear that most people possess, except for the knowledgeable and scholars, and I mean by that, the scholars of Allāh and His verses. And as for the ones who merely have the appearance of knowledge, then they are the farthest of people from fear.

In regards to the first type, which is to go to extremes regarding fear, then the example of this is a person who surpasses the level of moderation until he reaches the level of hopelessness and despair. This is also blameworthy because it stops a person from performing deeds. It could also lead to illness, depression or death, which is also blameworthy. So everything that is ordered for a purpose, then what is praiseworthy is what leads to that purpose (being fulfilled). As for what is surpassed or falls short of, that is considered blameworthy.

The benefits of fear are (instilling) alertness, carefulness, *taqwa*, struggling, contemplation, remembrance, worship, and all of the other causes that bring one closer to Allāh. All of this invigorates life, along with healthiness of the body and soundness of mind. If it negatively affects one's life, body, or sanity, it then becomes blameworthy.

If it is asked, 'What about those who have died out of fear?' The answer is that one reaches (death in that state) by dying in that state, a level that he would not have reached if he died without any fear. But if he lived longer and reached the higher levels of righteousness, he would have been even better because the best state of happiness is for a person to live a long life in obedience to Allāh. Thus everything that negates one's life, mind, or health is considered a deficiency and loss.

CHAPTER THREE

The Levels of the Fearful Ones

Know that there are different levels of those who fear. Some of them are consumed by the fear of death before repenting. While others fear being misled and deceived by the blessings they are given. Others fear that they will go astray from the Straight Path, or they fear a bad end to their life, but a higher level than that is to fear living an evil life, for the ending is only a result of how one lived his life. Allāh raises whomever He Wills, and lowers whomever He Wills, and He is not asked about what He does.

Allāh has said, "Those are in Paradise, and it does not matter to me, and those are in the Hellfire, and it does not matter to me."¹

From the kinds of people who fear is the one who fears the stupor and severity of death, or the one who fears the questions of Munkar and Nakīr in the grave², or the punishment of the

¹ Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, #92 and he declared it authentic. Ibn Āsākir, *Tarikh Dimishq*, #21909 and Ibn Ṣa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 7/135. Authenticated by al-Ḥaythamī in *Majma al-Zawā'id*, 7/189 and al-Ḥakamī in *Mā'arij al-Qulūb*, 3/932.

² Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāh 'anhu*) reports that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

grave, or the enormity of standing in front of Allāh. Others fear being strictly taken to account on the Day of Judgment, or crossing the *al-Ṣirāt* (bridge) over the Fire³, or they fear the Hellfire and its horrors, or being denied Paradise, or being blocked from Allāh. All of these are dreadful things and reasons to fear.

The highest level of them is to fear a barrier being placed between them and Allāh and this is the fear of those who have true knowledge (and spend their lives eliminating the causes that lead to it). The prior reasons mentioned describe the fear possessed by the ascetics and devout worshippers.

=

“When the deceased (or ‘one of you’) is put in the grave, two black angels having blue eyes come to him. One of them is called al-Munkar and the other al-Nakīr and they will say...” Reported by Tirmidhī

It was declared ḥasan by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘*.

³ Allāh, the Most High, says: “*There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is, with your Lord, a decree which must be accomplished. But We shall save those who used to fear Allāh and were dutiful to Him and We shall leave the wrongdoers therein, (humbled) to their knees.*” [Maryam (19):71-72]

There occurs in a long ḥadīth reported by Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (*radīy Allāh ‘anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “....Then the bridge will be laid over Hell-Fire and intercession allowed and they will say, ‘O Allāh! Grant us safety, grant us safety.’” It was said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! What is the bridge?’ He replied, “That which is extremely slippery. Upon it are hooks, claws and barbs like the thorns of Najd called al-Sa’dān. So the believers will pass like the blink of an eye, like the lightning, like the wind, like the birds and like fast horses and camels. Some will be saved, some will be lacerated then set free and some will be thrown into the Fire....” Reported by Muslim

CHAPTER FOUR

Virtue of Fear and Hope: Which is Superior?

The virtue of anything is (measured) according to how much it helps to achieve happiness, which is in essence, meeting Allāh and being close to Him. Therefore everything that assists towards that goal is a virtue. Allāh said,

وَلِمَن خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ ۖ

“For the one who fears the standing before his Lord are two gardens”

[*al-Raḥmān* (55): 46]

and He said,

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ۖ

“Allāh is Pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for the one who fears his Lord”

[*al Bayyinah* (98): 8]

In the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ), he said, “If the skin of the

slave shivers from the fear of Allāh, his sins fall off, just as the leaves fall off a dry tree.”¹ In another ḥadīth: “Allāh will not be angry with one who has (the least bit of) fear.”²

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Allāh said, ‘By my Honour and Majesty, I will not combine two fears upon my slave, nor will I combine two securities. If he feels safe from me in this life, I will make him fear on the Day of Judgment. And if he fears me in this life, I will give him safety on the Day of Judgment.’”³

Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāh ‘anhumā*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Two eyes will never be touched by the fire: an eye that cried from the fear of Allāh, and eye that stayed up at night as a guard in the Path of Allāh.”⁴

Know that a person asking, ‘Which is better? Fear or hope?’ is like a person asking, ‘Which is better? Bread or water?’ The answer is that bread is better for a hungry person, and water is better for a thirsty person. If the desires are combined, then he should look at which desire is stronger, and if they are the same then they are equal in

¹ Al-Bayhāqī and al-Tabarānī as mentioned by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Irāqī in *Takhrīj al-Iḥyā’*, 4/9136.

It was declared ḍa‘īf by al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-Ḍa‘īfah*, #2342.

² Ibn al-Jawzī recorded it in his book *Al-Mawdu‘āt*, 3/163 [this is a collection of fabricated ḥadīth].

³ Ibn Ḥibbān, 639, and Bayhāqī.

It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, #2666. He commented that the chain was in *mursal* form, and then mentioned other supporting routes.

⁴ Tirmidhī, #1639.

It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’* #4113.

benefit.

Fear and hope are two medicines for the heart, so their virtue is according to the sickness in an individual. If one's heart is filled with feeling safe from the plan of Allāh, then fear is better for him, and likewise if a person is consumed with sins. As for the person who feels strong despair and despondence, then hope is better.

It could be said that fear is generally better, just as bread is better than specific medicines. This is because bread treats hunger, while medicines treat only certain illnesses, and the '*illness*' of hunger is more common, so the need for bread is greater. In this regard, fear is better because sins and heedlessness are more common among people than despair.

If we look at it in levels however, then the level of hope is better than that of fear - for hope is taken from Allāh's Mercy, while fear is taken from His Anger.

As for the righteous person, then the best case is for him to be equal in both hope and fear. This is why is it said, 'If the hope and fear of a believer were weighed, they would be equal.'

Some from the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors) used to say, 'If it was called out that everyone will enter Paradise except for one person, I would have feared that I was that one person. While if it were called out that everyone will enter the Hellfire except for one person, I would have hoped to be that one person.' This should be the case particular to the pious believer.

If it is said, 'How can hope and fear be equal in the heart of the

believer, while he is upon *taqwā*? His hope should be stronger in this case. ’

The answer is that the believer is unsure about the correctness of his actions. His example is like that of a person who planted a seed in a strange land and he has not tried this kind of seed before. The seed is *īmān* (faith), the conditions of its correctness are very specific, and the land is the heart, and his hidden faults are from hypocrisy, and thunderstorms are the stupor of death, for it is at the time of death that beliefs are shaken. All of this is a cause of fear for a person, so how can a believer not fear?

For ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīy Allāh ‘anhu*) asked Hudhayfah (*radīy Allāh ‘anhu*): ‘Am I from the hypocrites?’ He only feared that his affair was unclear to him, and that his faults were hidden from his own self. Therefore the praiseworthy fear is the kind that produces action and moves the heart away from the love of this worldly life.

As for when death approaches, then hope is better for such a person. This is because fear is like a whip that drives a person to (good) action, but at this time (of death) there are no actions to be done. Yet the dying person does not benefit anything from his fear except tearing his heart apart, but hope would strengthen his heart on the other hand, and cause him to love his Lord more. And one should not leave this life except while loving Allāh, and loving to meet Him, and having good thoughts about Him.

Sulaymān al-Taymī said at his death to those around him, ‘Tell me about that which brings optimism, so that I may meet Allāh while having the best thoughts about Him.’

CHAPTER FIVE

The Treatment Leading to Fear

This is acquired in two ways. One of them is higher than the other, and an example of it that of a small child in a house, and an animal or snake entered it. The lone child may not be scared of it, and he might even reach his hand out to take the snake and play with it, but if his father was with him, and he ran away from it and feared it, the child would also run and fear it - out of imitation of his father. Here the fear of the father is based on knowledge, and the fear of the child is not from knowledge, rather it is only imitation.

If you realise this, then know that fear of Allāh is of two levels:

1. The first is the fear of His Punishment, and this is the fear of most people. It is the result of belief in Paradise and the Hellfire, and the fact that they are the reward for good deeds and sins. This fear weakens according to the weakness of belief, or because of gross heedlessness.

Heedlessness is removed by remembrance and contemplation of the punishment in the Hereafter. Fear increases by looking at those righteous people who have fear and sitting with them, or by

listening to their stories.

2. The second level is the fear of Allāh Himself, and it is the fear possessed by the knowledgeable scholars. Allāh said,

وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ

“And Allāh warns you against Himself”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 30]

The Attributes of Allāh necessitate glorifying and fearing Him, so the knowledgeable people fear being far from Him, or that a barrier be placed between them and Allāh.

Dhun-Nūn said, ‘The fear of the Hellfire compared to the fear of parting (from Allāh) is like a drop in the ocean.’

Most people have a portion of this kind of fear, but merely due to the imitation of others. It is similar to the fear of the child from a snake out of imitation of his father and this is why it weakens - for beliefs that are based on imitation are usually weak. Fear only strengthens by constantly seeing what causes it, and persistently doing what it necessitates, such as increasing in good deeds and staying away from sins. If the slave rises to a higher level of knowledge about Allāh, then he will have no choice but to fear Him. He will not need a cure to bring the fear of Allāh in his heart; rather it will be a given at this level.

As for the one below this level [of knowledge about Allāh], then he must treat himself by listening to stories and narrations, and reading about the righteous fearful people and their sayings. When one compares the knowledge and status of the righteous people to that of the foolish people who feel safe, he will then

realise that they should be taken as an example, for they are from the Prophets, scholars, and friends of Allāh.

In Muslim, 'Ā'ishah (*radīy Allāh 'anhā*) reported, "The Prophet (ﷺ) was called to the funeral of a boy from the Anṣār. I said: 'Glad tidings to him, O Messenger of Allāh! (He is) a bird from the birds of Paradise, he never knew evil or performed it.' The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Or something other than that, O 'Ā'ishah? Allāh has created people for Paradise; He created them for it while they were in the loins of their fathers. And Allāh has created people for the Hellfire, He created them for it while they were in the loins of their fathers."

From the most amazing statements that outwardly give hope, but in reality is truly a strong cause of fear are Allāh's Words:

وَاِنِّى لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدٰى ﴿٨٢﴾

"But indeed, I am the Perpetual Forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues upon guidance"

[*Ta Ha* (20): 82],

for He stipulated these four conditions for forgiveness, and it is difficult to perfect them.

Another cause of fear is His statement:

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لِفِيْ خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

"By *al-'Asr*. Indeed mankind is in loss."

He then mentioned four conditions that are the cause of salva-

tion from this loss:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٢﴾

“Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience”

[*al-'Asr* (103): 1-3]

Allāh also said:

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًى وَلَٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ
مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

“And if We had Willed, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me will come into effect (that) ‘I will surely fill Hell with jinn and people all together’”

[*al-Sajdah* (33): 13].

It is known that if everything was not based on decree, then everyone would hope they could be safe from this threat, but since this Word of Allāh has come into effect since before creation, it is not possible to change - rather we have no option but to accept it. Were it not that Allāh had been kind to those who know Him and made their hearts stronger with hope, then their hearts would have been burned by the fire of fear.

Abū'l-Dardā' (*radīy Allāh 'anhu*) said, ‘No one feels safe that their *imān* (belief) will not be taken away when they die, except that it is taken away from them.’

When Sufyan al-Thawrī was close to death he began to cry, so a man said to him, ‘O Abū ‘Abdillāh, I think you must have (accumulated) many sins.’ Sufyan picked up some dirt and said, ‘By Allāh, my sins mean as much to me as this. Rather, I fear that I will have my *īmān* (faith) taken away before I die.’

Sahl said, ‘The seeker of Allāh fears that he will be tested with sins, but the knowledgeable person about Allāh fears that he will be tested with *kufr* (disbelief).’

It was narrated that a Prophet (ﷺ) complained to Allāh about hunger and poverty, so Allāh revealed to him: “My slave, are you not satisfied that I have protected your heart from disbelieving in Me, so you ask of Me for this worldly life?” [In response] he took some dirt and put it on his head, saying: “Rather I am satisfied, so protect me from disbelief.”¹

If this is the level of fear of those who have knowledge of [the consequences] an evil end, despite their strong belief, then how can a person with weak faith not fear?

¹ Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386 AH) in his *Qūṭ al-Qulūb*, p. 380.

Ibn Qudāmah also recorded it in his *Minhāj al-Qāsidin*, 4/69.

CHAPTER SIX

An Evil End to One's Life

An evil end has its causes that occur before death, such as innovation, hypocrisy, pride, and other blameworthy characteristics. This is why the *Salaf* had a strong fear of hypocrisy.

Some of them said, 'If I knew that I was free of hypocrisy, this would be more beloved to me than the whole world.' They did not intend by that the hypocrisy of belief, rather they intended the hypocrisy of actions, as was narrated in the authentic ḥadīth: "The sign of a hypocrite is in three things: If he speaks he lies, and if he promises he does not fulfill it, and if he is entrusted he betrays his trust."¹

An evil end has two levels, and the first one is greater; that the heart is to overcome with doubt (or denial of Islām) when the agony of death comes - and we seek Allāh's refuge from that. This would be a cause for eternal torment.

The second is less severe, and it is that a person becomes angry with the Decree of Allāh, or he is unjust in writing his will before

¹ Bukhārī, #33 and Muslim, #59.

his death, or he dies while persisting upon sin.

It was narrated that *Shayṭān* never tries harder against humans than at the moments before death. He says to his helpers: ‘Take care of this one, for if you miss him today you will never catch him.’

It was also narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say in *du‘ā*:

« أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ يَتَخَبَّطَنِي الشَّيْطَانُ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ »

“I seek refuge in You that *Shayṭān* strikes² (and influences) me at the time of death.”³

Al-Khaṭṭābī said: ‘And that refers to [*Shayṭān*] taking control over mankind at this time (of death), so he misguides him and prevents him from repentance. Or he prevents him from correcting an oppression that he committed. Or he makes him despair from the Mercy of Allāh and to hate death, so he is not pleased with

² *Yatakhabbatani* is a word that has a number of profound meanings including: to strike, clash and jolt with the aim of throwing off-balance. Essentially it denotes influencing negatively and actively causing confusion.

³ Abū Dāwūd, #1552 and al-Nasaʿī, #5546-8 and others.

It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd*, see also, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘* #1282.

Al-Khaṭṭāb said, “His seeking refuge in the ‘floundering of *Shayṭān* at death’, that is if *Shayṭān* seizes him when he leaves this world, preventing him from repenting or hinders him from mending his affairs, leaving an injustice or he makes him despair from the mercy of Allāh or makes him hate death or be sorry for this life, so he becomes discontented with Allāh’s decree in dissolution, going to the hereafter, so one has a bad end and he meets his Lord while he is discontented with Him. It was narrated that the *Shayṭān* is never tougher on a man then at the time of his death and he tells his assistants: ‘Take this person! if you miss him today you will never catch him again.’ We seek refuge in Allāh from his evil, we ask him to bless our death and to have a good end.”

the Decree of Allāh, the Almighty.'

There is no way to enumerate all of the reasons that cause of an evil death in detail, but it is possible to indicate some of the major reasons.

As for death while denying or doubting one's *īmān*, then the cause of this is *bid'ah*. This means for a person to have an incorrect belief regarding Allāh, His Attributes, or His actions. He holds this belief either out of imitation of others, or due to his own incorrect reasoning; so when the veil is lifted at the time of death, he realises the falseness of his belief [due to innovation], so he thinks that everything he believed likewise has no basis. But whoever has a belief regarding Allāh and His Attributes that is generally upon the way of the *Salaf* [i.e. the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and those who followed them], without searching deeply regarding that, then he is far from this danger, if Allāh Wills.

As for a bad ending upon sins, then the cause of this is weakness of faith, which causes a person to commit many sins. Sins extinguish the light of faith, and if one's faith is weakened, then the love of Allāh is also weakened. When the stupor of death comes, this weakness increases because he knows that he will leave this world soon. And the true cause of this bad end is the love of this life and feeling comfortable in it, along with weakness of faith that causes a weakness in his love of Allāh. So whoever finds in his heart a strong love for Allāh, then this will overcome his love of this life, and he is further removed from this danger. He dies upon the love of Allāh and he will come as a good slave that is yearning to meet his Master. It is known how much joy he will feel merely by coming to Him, let alone what he deserves of being honoured after that.

As for a person who dies possessing thoughts of criticism regarding the Decree of Allāh, or he is persistently disobeying Him, then such a person will come to Allāh like a person who is forced to return to Him, and it is obvious what he deserves of punishment.

The person who seeks the path of safety stays away from the causes of destruction, for the thought of being misled or misguided from the Straight Path is something that rankles the heart of a fearful person.

It was narrated in Bukhārī and Muslim in the ḥadīth of Saḥl ibn Ṣa'd that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "Verily a man performs the deeds of a person of the Hellfire, while he is (truly) from the people of Paradise. And verily a man performs the deeds of a person of Paradise, while he is (truly) from the people of the Hellfire."⁴

It was also narrated: "When the soul of a slave is raised to the sky the angels say (in amazement): '*Subḥān Allāh!* This slave was saved from *Shayṭān*, how did he attain success?'"⁵

If the meaning of an evil ending becomes known to you, then beware of its causes and prepare to defend against it. Beware of procrastination in preparation, for this life is short and every breath could be your last. A person will also die upon the way he lived his life, and he will be resurrected upon what he died upon.

Know that you will not be able to prepare except if you are

⁴ Bukhārī, #2742, #3966 and Muslim, #112.

⁵ Ibn al-Jawzī recorded it in his *Talbis Iblis*, 1/45 (p. 299).

satisfied with the necessities only, and you leave off seeking what is unnecessary for you. We will mention to you some of the stories of the fearful people that we hope will be a cause in removing some of the hardness of your heart. For you know that the Prophets (ﷺ) and righteous people were more intelligent than you, so think about how severely they feared and perhaps you will prepare for yourself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

From the Stories of the Fearful Ones

The Intensity of Fear of the Angels (peace be upon them)

Allāh said regarding their description:

يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

“They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.”

[*al-Nahl* (16): 50]

It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Verily, Allāh has angels who tremble out of fear of Him..”¹

It has reached us that from the carriers of the Throne are [angels] whose tears flow like rivers, so if [one] raises his head he

¹ Ibn Abī Dunya (d. 281 AH), *al-Ruqāt al-Buqā*, #104; Al-Bayhāqī, *Shu‘b al-Īmān*, #878; Al-Khaṭīb, *Tarīkh al-Baghdād*, #4178 and Ibn Baṭṭah, *al-Ibānah al-Kubrā*, #1196. Its chain is authenticated by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* (8/297) and al-Ḥakamī in *Mā‘arij al-Qulūb* (2/671).

It was declared ḍa‘īf by al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-Ḍa‘īfah*, #1988.

says, “Glory be to You, You are not feared as You deserve to be feared.” Allāh will say, “But those who swear oaths by My Name are liars [and] do not know this.”²

Jābir (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “On the night when I was raised up to the Heavens, I saw Jibrīl (*‘alayhis-salām*) as if he was like a worn-out (water skin) from the fear of Allāh.”³

It has also reached us that Jibrīl came to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was crying. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Why are you crying?” He responded, “My eyes have not been dry from tears since Allāh created the Hellfire, out of fear that I will disobey Him and He will throw me into it.”⁴

Yazīd al-Raqqashī said, ‘Allāh has Angels around the Throne, their eyes cry tears as if they are rivers until the Day of Judgment. They sway as if the wind is moving them from the fear of Allāh. So Allāh will say to them, ‘O my Angels, why do you fear when you are close to me?’ They respond: ‘O Lord, if the people of the earth saw your Glory and Majesty as we have seen, they would not eat or drink, nor would they be comfortable in their beds, and they would run to the deserts making sounds as if they were cows.’

² Ibn Abī Dunya, *al-Ruqāt al-Buqā*, #408.

³ Ṭabarānī, *Mu‘jam al-Awsat*, 5/64.

It was declared ḥasan by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘* #5864.

⁴ Al-Bayhāqī, *Shu‘b al-Īmān*, 1/521; Suyūṭī in *Jāmi‘ al-Kabir* and as found in *Kanz al-Ummal*, 3/145 (#5896).

It was declared mawḍū‘ by al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-Ḍa‘ifah*, ##6497.

Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir said, ‘When the Hellfire was created the hearts of the Angels flew from their place, and when He created Ādam they returned as they were.’

It was narrated that when Iblīs first revealed himself, Jibrīl and Mikā’īl began to cry. Allāh asked them, ‘What is this crying?’ They said, ‘Our Lord, we do not feel safe from Your plan.’ So Allāh, the Most High, said, ‘You should remain this way.’

The Intensity of Fear of the Prophets (peace be upon them)

Wahb said, ‘Ādam (*‘alayhis-salām*) cried over Paradise for three hundred years, and he did not raise his head to the sky after he committed his sin.’

Wuhayb ibn al-Ward said, ‘When Allāh reprimanded Nūḥ (*‘alayhis-salām*) regarding his son and said,

إِنِّي أَعْظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“I admonish you, lest you be one of the ignorant”
[Hūd (11): 46],

He cried for three hundred years, until there were marks under his eyes as if they were channels from the tears.

Abū’l-Dardā (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said, ‘When Ibrāhīm (*‘alayhis-salām*) stood up to pray, a wheezing sound from his chest could be heard from far away from the fear of Allāh.’

Mujāhid said, ‘When Dāwūd (*‘alayhis-salām*) made his mistake, he fell down in prostration to Allāh for forty days. His tears wa-

tered the ground until plants grew from them and covered his head. He then cried out, 'My Lord! The forehead has become sore, and the tears have dried, but Dāwūd (*'alayhis-salām*) has not yet been forgiven.' So it was called out, 'Are you hungry so you will be fed, or sick so you will be cured, or oppressed so you will be assisted?' At this he cried out a loud cry that withered all the plants that had grown, and at this time he was forgiven.'

It was also said that the people used to visit Dāwūd (*'alayhis-salām*) thinking that he was sick, but he had nothing wrong with him except his extreme fear of Allāh.

[Prophet] 'Īsā (*'alayhis-salām*) used to have blood drip from his skin if death was mentioned. While Yaḥyā ibn Zakarīyyah (*'alayhuma-salām*) cried until his teeth showed through his cheeks, so his mother covered the openings.

The Intensity of Fear of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)

'Ā'ishah (*radīy-Allāh 'anhā*) narrated, 'I never saw the Prophet (ﷺ) laughing so much that I saw the back chamber of his mouth, he only used to smile. If he saw some clouds or wind it would be visible on his face. I asked him, 'O Messenger of Allāh, when the people see clouds they become happy out of hope that it will rain, but when you see them I can tell the dislike on your face!' He (ﷺ) said, "O 'Ā'ishah, what guarantee do I have that it is not a punishment? There were a people that were punished with a wind, and a people saw the punishment and said,

قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُمْطِرُنَا

“This is a cloud bringing us rain!”

[*al-Aḥqaf* (46): 24]”⁵

When the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed, there was a wheezing sound from his crying like (a sound from) boiling kettle.⁶

The Intensity of Fear of the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them)

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) used to grab his tongue and say, ‘This is what has gotten me into danger.’ He used to say, ‘I wish I was just a plant that was picked and then eaten.’ Ṭalḥah [Ibn ‘Ubaiddullāh], Abū’l-Dardā, and Abū Dhar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) also made similar statements.

‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) used to hear a verse from the Qur’an, so he would become ill and the people would visit him for days. He took a stalk of hay from the ground and said, ‘I wish I was only this piece of hay. I wish that I was nothing. I wish my mother never gave birth to me.’ He had two black lines on his face from his tears.

‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said, ‘I wish that when I die I would not be resurrected.’

⁵ Bukhārī, #4551 and Muslim, #899

⁶ Abū Dāwūd, #904; al-Nasa’ī, 3/13 and Ibn Mājah, #665.

It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Nawāwī in ‘*Khulāṣāt al-Aḥkām*’, 1/497 and al-Albānī in his checking of al-Nasa’ī, #1213 and ‘*Mukhtaṣar al-Shamā’i*’, #276.

Ibn Rajab said in his ‘*Fath al-Bārī*’, 4/245: ‘Its chain is upon the condition of Muslim.’

Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn al-Jarrāh (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, 'I wish I was only a sheep so my family would slaughter me and eat my meat.'

'Imrān ibn Ḥusayn (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, 'I wish I was only sand that was thrown about in the wind.'

Hudhayfah (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, 'I wish a person would take care of my wealth, and I would close my door upon myself, and no one would enter upon me until I meet Allāh.'

There were two lines on the face of Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*) from his tears, as if they were shoestrings.

'Ā'ishah (*radīy Allāh 'anha*) said, 'I wish I was a thing that was forgotten and out of sight.'

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, 'I saw the companions of Muḥammad and I do not see anyone like them today. They used to wake up unkempt and dusty, on their foreheads were dark marks of prostration. They had spent the night in prostration and standing in prayer, reading the Book of Allāh, alternating between their foreheads and feet. When the morning came and they remembered Allāh, they would sway like a tree in the wind, and they would cry until their clothes became wet. By Allāh, it was as if they had spent the night in heedlessness and play.'

The Intensity of Fear of the Successors (may Allāh have mercy upon them)

Ḥārim ibn Ḥayyān said, 'I wish I was a plant that was eaten by a camel and then came out as dung, so I would not face the accounting on the Day of Judgment. I fear the great calamity!'

When 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn would perform ablution he would turn yellow, so he would be asked what was wrong. He would say: 'Do you know in front of Whom I will stand (in prayer)?'

Muḥammad ibn Wāsi' would cry most of the night and almost never get tired.

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz would remember death and then shudder as a bird does. He would then cry until his beard became wet. He cried one night so the people in his house also cried, and when their tears stopped Fāṭimah said, 'May my father be sacrificed for you, O leader of the Believers, what made you cry?' He said, 'I remembered when the people would be divided after being in front of Allāh, one group in Paradise and one group in the Hellfire!' Then he gasped and passed out.

When Al-Mansūr wanted to go to Jerusalem he stayed at the place of a monk that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz had also stayed at. He said, 'Tell me about the most amazing thing you saw from 'Umar.' He said, 'He spent the night on the roof of my room and it is made from marble. I saw water coming from the drain, so I climbed up to look. I found him prostrating, and his tears were coming down the drain.'

It was narrated that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al 'Azīz and Fath al-Mawṣilī cried blood.

Ibrāhīm ibn 'Īsā al-Yashkurī said, 'I entered upon a man in Bahrain who had isolated himself from the people and stayed busy by himself. I mentioned some affairs of the next life, and I mentioned death. He then began to gasp until he passed away.'

Mismā' said, 'I saw 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd when he was giving a reminder, and four people died that day in his gathering.'

Yazīd ibn Murshid would cry much and say: 'By Allāh, if my Lord Said He would imprison me in the bathhouse, I would have the right to constantly cry. So how about if He threatened to imprison me in the Hellfire if I disobey Him?'

Al-Sarī al-Saqatī said, 'I look at my nose everyday out of fear that my face has turned black.'

So these are the fears of the Angels, Prophets, scholars, and righteous ones, and we have more reason to be afraid than them. But fear is not due to having many sins; rather it is from having a pure heart and knowledge of Allāh. We have only felt safe because of our ignorance and hardness of our hearts. For the pure heart is moved by the slightest cause of fear, while the hard heart is not affected by the strongest of reminders.

Some of the Salaf said, 'I said to a monk, 'Advise me.' He replied, 'If you can always remain in the state where a person who is surrounded by predatory animals, so he is afraid and careful never to let his guard down so they attack him; then do so.' I said, 'Advise me more.' He said, 'A small amount of water is sufficient for a

thirsty person.”

What this monk said referring to a man surrounded by predators is truly the state of the believer. For whoever looks deeply inside himself with the light of true vision, will see that he is filled with these predatory attributes, such as anger, hatred, jealousy, arrogance, amazement with oneself, and showing off. All of them will attack him if he is not careful and lets his guard down. He cannot see them in this life, but when the veil is lifted and he is placed in the grave he will literally see them as snakes and scorpions that will bite and sting him, while they were his only true attributes and characteristics in this life. So whoever wishes to conquer these predators and kill them before his death, then he should take this opportunity now. Otherwise, he should prepare for these predators to sting the deepest part of his heart, let alone their sting of his outward skin.

And our last call is that all Praises are due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds.

APPENDIX ONE

Disturber of the Hearts

The Secrets of the *Barzakh* [the period between a Person's Death and his resurrection on the Day of Resurrection]

It was narrated that al-Barā' Āzib said: "We went out with the Prophet (ﷺ) to a burial of a man from the Anṣār until we arrived at the grave, and he still had not been placed in the slot of the grave. Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sat down and we sat around him. You would have thought that birds were upon our heads from our silence, and in the hand of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was a stick which he was poking the ground with. Then he started looking at the sky and looking at the earth. Then he said to us; 'Ask Allah for refuge from the torment of the grave' he repeated this command two or three times. Then he said; "Verily, the believing servant, when leaving this life and journeying to the hereafter angels will descend upon him, their faces will be white as if they were suns, they will have with them a shroud from the shroud of Paradise, and an embalmment from the embalmments of heaven. Then, they will sit within eyeshot of him. Then the angel of death will come and sit at his head and will say; 'O you

virtuous soul; come out to a forgiveness and a pleasure from your Lord'. Then it comes out easily like a drop of water from the mouth of a water skin, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they take it and put it in that shroud with that perfume, and there comes from it a fragrance like the finest musk on the face of the earth. Then they shall ascend with it, and they shall not pass with it by any group of angels but they will say; 'What is this good and sweet-smelling soul? Then they shall say to them [he is] 'such' the son of 'such' choosing the best of the names he used to be called in this life. Until they reach the lowest sky, then they shall ask permission to enter, and they shall be granted entry, until they end at the seventh heaven sky, then Allāh, exalted and high, shall say; 'write the book of my servant in *'illiyīn* in the seventh heaven, and the shall be said; then Allāh says: "Record the book of My slave in *'Illiyūn* in the seventh heaven, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again." Then two [severe] angels shall come and [terrify him and] sit him up next to them and shall ask him; 'Who is your Lord?' He shall reply; 'My Lord is Allāh'. Then they shall ask him; 'What is your religion?' He shall answer them; 'My religion is Islām'. Then they shall ask him; 'Who is this man who was sent among you?' He will reply; 'He is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)'. Then they shall ask him; 'What have you done?' He shall reply; 'I read the book of Allāh, then I believed in it and accepted it'. Then a caller will call from the sky; 'My slave has spoken the truth, so spread out for him from the heaven, and clothe him from the heaven, and open a door for him from the heaven [within his grave]', so it's goodness and its smell will come unto him, then his grave will be expanded for him as far as he can see. Then a man will come to him. His face will be handsome, and his clothes will be handsome, and his smell will be sweet. Then he shall say unto him: I bring you

glade tidings of that which will make you happy . He shall reply: 'I am your good deeds'. Then he shall say: 'My Lord bring the hour so that I might return to my family and my wealth' He (ﷺ) said; 'And the disbelieving [transgressor/wicked] servant, if he is leaving this life and journeying to the hereafter then angels will descend upon him, their faces will be black, they have with them a coarse woolen fabric [sackcloth][made of fire]. Then they will sit within eyeshot of him. Then the angel of death will come and sit at his head and will say; 'O you wicked soul; come out to a anger from your Lord and a fury [from Him]'. So it will be distributed [spread out] throughout his body, then it will be ripped away as a skewer/spit is ripped out of damp cotton [and in its way out it will tear and cut the nerves and blood vessels], not leaving it in his hand for longer than a blink of an eye until they have placed it in that sackcloth. And there will emanate from it a stench like that of the most evil smelling corpse on the face of the earth. Then they shall ascend with it, and they shall not pass with it by a group of angels but they will say: 'What is this wicked soul? Then they shall say to them [he is] 'such' the son of 'such' choosing the most hated of the names he used to be called in this life. Until they reach the lowest heaven [sky], then they shall ask permission to enter, and they shall not be granted entry. Then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited;

لَا تُفْتَحُ لَهُمْ
أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ

“For them the gates of heaven will not be opened, and they will not enter Paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle.”

[*al-A'raf* (7): 40]

Then Allāh, exalted and high, shall say: "Record the book of My slave in *Sijjīn* in the lowest earth, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again." So his soul is cast down.' Then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited the verse:

وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ

"And whoever assigns partners to Allāh, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place."

[*Hajj* (22) :31]

Then his soul will be returned into his body. Then two angels shall come and [terrify him and] sit him up and shall ask him; 'Who is your Lord?' He shall reply; 'Huh? Huh [this is an expression of sorrow], I don't know.' Then they shall ask him; 'What is your religion?' He shall answer them; 'Huh? Huh?, I don't know.' Then they shall ask him; 'Who is this man who was sent among you?' He will reply; 'Huh? Huh?, I don't know' Then a caller will call from the sky; 'My slave has spoken falsely, so spread out for him from the hell fire, and open a door for him from the hell fire [within his grave]', so its heat and hot wind will come unto him, then his grave will be contracted upon him until his limbs are caught up among one another. Then a man will come to him. His face will be ugly, and his clothes will be ugly, and his smell will be vile, who says, "Receive the bad news, this is the day that you were promised." He says, "Who are you? Your face is a face which brings disastrous news." He says, "I am your evil deeds." He says, "O Lord, do not let the Hour come, do not let the Hour come."¹

¹ Sunan Abū Dāwūd (4753), *Musnad* Aḥmad (4/287)

In another narration reported from the way of Yūnus ibn Khabāb that al-Barā' 'Āzib said: "We went out with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) for the funeral of a man...[therein he added]: Then an angels who cannot see nor speak nor hear comes with a hammer in his hand; with which he can hit a mountain and turn it into dust, and is appointed [to punish him]. The angel hits him one hit so hard he becomes dust [due to the extreme strength of the hit] then Allāh restore him to his original state then the angel hits him again so he screams out a scream that everyone hears it except humans and Jinn"² Al-Barā' added: "Then a gate of Hell is opened for him and his grave is paved with furniture from Fire."

Al-Barā' 'Āzib related: "While we were with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), he noticed a group of people so he asked: "what are they gathered for?" We replied: "They are digging a grave [i.e. to burry someone]. Upon hearing this, the Prophet rushed and headed to the grave. When he reached it he went down on his knees so I stood in front of him so that I see what he does. He was there crying so much until his tears wet the dust then he looked at us and said: "O my brothers, prepare yourself for such a day [i.e. when you are dead]."³

'Abdullāh ibn Buraydah narrated from his father that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) came out his house one day and called three times in loud voice: "O people, do you know what the example of you and me is? They said: Allāh and His Messengers know best. He said: The example of you and me is like a group of people dreading the attack of their enemy so they send a man investigating the matter so the man noticed the enemy

² Ibid

³ *Musnad Ahmad* (4/294), *Sunan Ibn Majah* (4195)

[approaching].”⁴

The Anxiety and Solitude of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmir ibn Rabi‘ah related: “I saw ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb picking up a straw from the ground then said: ‘I wish I was this straw, I wish I was not created, I wish my mother never delivered me, I wish I was nothing, I wish I was totally forgotten.’”⁵

Al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib related: “I used to be a neighbour of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and I have never seen a better person than him; he spent his nights praying, and spent his days fasting and fulfilling the needs of people. When he passed away I invoked Allāh to show him to me in my dream. Afterward, I saw him in my dream as if he is coming from the market of the Madīnah so I greeted him and he greeted me back. Then I asked him: ‘How are you?’ He replied: ‘I am well.’ I said: ‘What did you find [after death]?’ He said: ‘I have just finished from being judged, and my throne [i.e. position as a ruler] almost dropped me off except that I found a Merciful Lord.’”⁶

Zaid ibn Aslam also narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he saw his father in his dream so he asked him: “when did you pass away? Umar replied: “That was twelve years ago and I have just now

⁴ *Musnad Ahmad* (5/348)

⁵ *Al-Zuhd* of Ibn al-Mubārak (235)

⁶ *Al-Manāmāt* of Ibn Abi al-Dunyā (22)

finished being questioned.”⁷

Depiction of the Punishment of Hell

Swayd ibn Ghaflah related: “When Allāh wants to neglect the people of Hellfire, He allocates each one of them a coffin made of Fire, then shuts these coffins with locks made of Fire. Every time their nerves sense feels the pain, it includes a metal pin of fire. Then each coffin is placed inside another coffin made of fire then shut down with locks made of fire and Allāh kindles fire in between them. Then again He places each coffin inside another coffin made of fire then shuts them down with locks made of fire then He kindles fire in between them. So each person believes that no one suffers a worse punishment than what he suffers or undergoes.”⁸

Depiction from the Lives of the Righteous Predecessors

‘Abdul Raḥmān ibn Mahdi related: “Sufyān died at my place. When he was on his deathbed and the agonies of death became severe, he started to cry. One man said to him: ‘O Abū ‘Abdullāh, is this because you have, seemingly, committed too many sins?!’ Sufyān then picked up something from the floor and said: ‘By Allāh, my sins are less important to me than what I have picked from the floor. But I fear that Allāh might take away my *Īmān* from me right before I die.’”⁹

⁷ *Hilyah al-Awliyā’* (134)

⁸ *Hilyah al-Awliyā’* (4/176)

⁹ *Hilyah al-Awliyā’* (5/100-101)

Ibn Abjar related: "When Sufyān was dying he said to me: 'O Ibn Abjar, I am as you can see, so look after those who visit me.' I then brought him a group of people amongst them was Ḥammād ibn Salamah who stood right next to his head. Sufyān then exhaled, upon which Ḥammād said: 'Glad Tidings is to you, for you overcome what you feared and soon you will meet an Oft-Forgiving Lord.' Sufyān said: 'O Abū Salamah, do you think Allāh will forgive a person like me?' He replied: 'Indeed, by the One Who there is no deity worthy of worship except Him.'" After hearing this, Sufyān appeared less stressed and eased."¹⁰

Ibrāhīm ibn 'Īsā al-Yashkarī said: "I have never met a person with more lasting sadness than al-Ḥasan. Every time I see him, I would think a calamity has just befallen him"¹¹

Yazid ibn Ḥawshab said: "I have not seen a person more fearful than al-Ḥasan and 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz. [Their extreme state of fear from Allāh would give you the impression] that Hell was only created for both of them."¹²

Qāsim al-Khawwās narrated that Muḥammad ibn Wasi' said to a man: "What made you cry is the pre-knowledge of Allāh, Exalted is He, about you."¹³

'Amārah ibn Zhādhān related: Kahmas ibn al-Ḥasan said to me: "I committed a sin for which I have been crying in regret for forty

¹⁰ *Hilyah al-Awliyā'* (7/12)

¹¹ *Hilyah al-Awliyā'* (6/251)

¹² *Al-Zuhd* of Imām Aḥmad (316)

¹³ *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'* (6/121)

years.” I asked: ‘What was it?’ He said: ‘A friend of mine visited me once so I bought for him a fish (to serve it to him). After he ate I stood up and took a piece of mud from the wall of my neighbour so he can use to wash his hand. This sin [taking the piece of mud without asking the permission of my neighbour] is what I have been crying about for forty years.”¹⁴

He remains under the Dust until the Day of Judgement

‘Abdul Wāḥid ibn Zaid related: Khabīb, a.k.a Abū Muḥammad, panicked when he was dying so he started saying in Persian, ‘I want to take a journey that I have never been on before, I want to take a path that I never walked on before, I want to visit my Master and my Lord Who I have never seen ever. I want to witness horrors of which I have never seen anything like them. I want to remain under dust until the Day of Judgement then stand before Allāh. I fear He then will say to me: ‘O Khabīb, show me one *Tasbih* you have uttered in the last sixty years that the Satan could not overpower you in even part of it’. ‘What should I say then?’ ‘Abdul Wāḥid said: ‘This is a slave of Allāh who worshipped Allāh for sixty years devoting all his life for Allāh alone and never involved himself in the worldly affairs, so what will be our state [in comparison to him]? I truly seek the aid of Allāh!!”¹⁵

‘Abdul Khāliq al-‘Abdī related: “‘Utbah al-Ghulam used to have a house in which he would worship Allāh. When he intended to travel to Sham, he boarded up the house and said to his people: ‘Do not open it until the news of my death reaches you’. When he

¹⁴ *Hilyah al-Awliyā’* (6/211)

¹⁵ *Hilyah al-Awliyā’* (6/152)

died and they opened it, they found in it a dug grave and metal chains [i.e. he used to worship Allāh while reminding himself of the horrors of the hereafter and the darkness of the grave].”¹⁶

Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubaid narrated: “We entered upon an [old] woman residing in a party of the city of Basra known as ‘Afirah. Some people said to her: ‘Invoke Allāh for us.’ She said: ‘If sinners were ordered to be silent, your old woman (referring to herself) would have never talked, but a good doer is asking a wrong doer to invoke Allāh! I ask Allāh to make you eat from the food of Paradise and I ask Him to make death always in our minds.’”

The Grief Of The Day Of Judgment Brings Forth Tears In This Worldly Life

Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah said: “Whenever Umayyah al-Shamī used to pray, he would cry and weep until his weeping becomes loud and his tears run onto the stones on the floor. The ruler of that area sent him a message saying: ‘You are ruining the *Ṣalāh* of others with your excessive crying and loudness of your weeping.’ Upon hearing this he started to cry and said: ‘Having the grief of the Day of Judgement gave me copious tears so they make me comfortable sometimes.’”¹⁷

Horrors of the Day of Judgement

Abū’l-‘Āliyah related: Ubay ibn Ka‘b said: “While people are busy in their markets the light of sun disappears and the moun-

¹⁶ *Hilyah al-Awliyā’* (6/237)

¹⁷ *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwāh* (4/222)

tains disintegrate. The earth becomes disturbed and starts to shake, and the cattle, birds and beasts start mixing with each other [in a state of extreme confusion and disorder]. The Jinn say to mankind: 'We shall bring you the news of what is happening'. They head to the sea and when they arrive they find it as an intense, blazing fire. Then while witnessing this scene, the earth rends from first layer downward to the seventh layer, and then heaven rend from first layer upward until it reaches the seventh layer. Then a wind blows and take away their souls."¹⁸

Muḥammad ibn al-Furāt related: "I heard Muḥārib ibn Duthār saying: 'On the Day of Judgement, birds will move their tales in disturbance and throw out what they have in their gizzards, though birds cannot reach what they seek, due to the horrors they witness on that day.'"¹⁹

Ibrāhīm al-Harbī narrated: "Mus'ab told me that his father said: 'There was a well-known righteous man from the people of Madīnah. When he was on his deathbed he started panicking. So people asked him: 'Do you panic over death despite of the much righteous deeds you have performed?' He said: 'Why should not I panic!! By Allāh, if the ruler of Madīna sends me a messenger (a one of his servants), I would panic. So how should I feel when I receive the Messenger of the Lord of all worlds (i.e. angel of death)?!'"²⁰

¹⁸ *Tafsīr al-Ṭabārī: Sūrah al-Takwīr, Ayah 1.*

¹⁹ *Al-Aḥwāl* by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (37)

²⁰ *Al-Muḥtadīrīn* by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (211)

The Conversation Between The Dead

Muḥammad ibn Jā'far related: I heard Muḥammad ibn Sabīḥ saying: "I was informed that when a person is placed in his grave [and he has sinned so] he is punished or encountered by what he detest in there, the dead from the neighbouring graves say to him: 'O you whose brothers and neighbours passed away, while you were left behind in the world! Did not you learn a lesson from us [when we died but you stayed alive]? Have you not thought about notion of us preceding you in death? Did not you notice that our deeds ended by our death, yet you were still given time [i.e. to perform more deeds?]' So why did not you take advantage of what we have neglected?' Then the earth calls him saying: 'O you who was befooled with the appearance of this worldly life! Why did not you learn a lesson from those who were befooled with this worldly life then they were removed and buried underneath?'"²¹

Al-Ḥākam ibn Sinān narrated that 'Amr ibn Dīnār said: "There was a man from the residents of Madīnah whose sister passed away so he buried her. However, after he buried her, he remembered that he left his moneybag back inside the grave while he was digging it. He returned with a friend of his and they dug up the grave and took his bag. He then said to his friend, 'Move away for a second so I can check on my sister.' So he lifted up part of the cover that was laid on top and found the grave on fire. So he restored the grave to its original state and returned home. He then asked his mother: 'Tell me how my sister was [religiously] during her life?' She said: 'Your sister used to delay praying the *Ṣalāh*, and prays without a *wūḍu*, as far as I remember, and at nights when everyone was asleep she used to go to the doors of our neigh-

²¹ cf. Ibn Rajab in *Aḥwāl al-Qabūr* (p.26) and *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (4/482)

bours spying on them then spreading their secrets in public.”²²

The Horrors of the Grave

Hudhayfah related: “We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) at a funeral and when we arrived at the grave [in which the deceased was to be buried] he sat down on its edge and looked repeatedly in it then said: “The believer shall be squeezed in the grave; a squeeze from which his bones will be broken, while the grave of a disbeliever shall be filled with fire.”²³

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “When a funeral is ready and the men carry the deceased on their necks (shoulders), if it was pious then it will say, ‘Present me quickly’, and if it was not pious, then it will say, ‘Woe to it (me), where are they taking it (me)?’ And its voice is heard by everything except mankind and were they to hear it they would fall unconscious.”²⁴

A Portrayal from the Punishment of the Grave

Samurah ibn Jundub narrated: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to us: ‘Last night, two angels came to me, and woke me up and said, ‘Let’s go!’ I set out with them, and we came across a man who was lying down, with another man standing over him, holding a big rock. He threw the rock at the man’s head, smash-

²² *Al-Wara’* by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (84) and *al-Mizān* (1/571).

²³ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (5/407)

²⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2/108, 124)

ing it. The rock rolled away, and the one who had thrown it followed it, and picked it up. By the time he came back to the man, his head had been restored to its former state. Then he (the one who had thrown the rock) did the same as he had done before. I said to my two companions, '*Subhān Allāh!* Who are these two persons?' They said, 'Move on!' So we went on, and came to a man who was lying flat on his back, with another man standing over him, holding an iron hook. He put the hook in the man's mouth and tore off that side of his face to the back (of his neck), and he tore his nose and his eye from front to back in a similar manner. Then he turned to the other side of the man's face and did likewise. No sooner had he finished the second side but the first side was restored to its former state, then he went back and did the same thing again. I said to my two companions, 'Who are these two persons?' They said, 'Move on!' So we went on, and came to something like a *tannūr* (a kind of oven, lined with clay, usually used for baking bread). We looked into it and saw naked men and women. A flame of fire was reaching them from underneath, and when it reached them, they cried out loudly. I asked them, 'Who are these?' They said to me, 'Move on!' So we went on and came to a river. In the river there was a man swimming, and on the bank there was a man who had gathered many stones. Whilst the swimmer was swimming, the man who had gathered the stones approached him. The swimmer opened his mouth and the man on the bank threw a stone into it, then the swimmer carried on swimming. Each time he came back, he opened his mouth again, and the man on the bank threw another stone into his mouth. They said to me: The first man you came across, whose head was being smashed with the rock, is the man who studies the Qur'ān then he neither recites it nor acts upon it, and he goes to sleep, neglecting the obligatory prayers. The man you came across whose mouth, nose and ears were being torn from front to

back, is the man who goes out of his house in the morning and tells a lie that is so serious that it spreads all over the world. The naked men and women whom you saw in a structure that resembled an oven are the adulterers and adulteresses. The man you saw swimming in the river with rocks being thrown into his mouth is the one who consumed *ribā* (usury).”²⁵

Sahl ibn Sa’d narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “A man may do the deeds of [the people of] Paradise, or so it may seem to the people, although he is one of the people of Hell, and a man may do the deeds of [the people of] Hell, or so it may seem to the people, although he is one of the people of Paradise. [The determining factor of] deeds depends on what the last of them will be.”²⁶

The Condition Of Sun On The Day Of Judgement

Abū Umāmah narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “On the Day of Judgement, the sun will draw near [to the people] until it is a mile or two away from them. Its heat will be increased to such a level from which insects will boil similar to how [liquids] boil in a pot. People will be submersed in sweat based upon the amount of their wrongdoings. From among them there will be those whose sweat will come up to their two heels. From among them there will be those whose sweat will come up to their two knees. From among them there will be those whose sweat will come up to their groins. From among them there will

²⁵ Its origin is found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (9/1566). See also *Musnad Aḥmad* (19716)

²⁶ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (5/169) and Muslim (112)

be those who will be bridled in sweat.”²⁷

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “How can I rejoice when the Angel assigned to blow in the Horn has put the Horn in his mouth (prepared to blow in it) and lowered his forehead attentively [waiting to] hear the command [of Allāh] so he blows into it.” The companions said: ‘What should we say?’ He said: ‘Say: Allāh (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us) and upon Him we fully rely.’”²⁸

Ibn ‘Umar related: The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “[Intoxicating] Alcohol has been cursed from ten aspects; its essence is cursed, the one who drinks it, the one who pours it for others, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who makes it, the one who it is made for, the one who carries it, the one who it is carried to and the one who consumes the money from its sale.”²⁹

The First Three Persons Admit into Hell

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The first people who will be judged on the Day of Resurrection will be (three). (The first one will be) a man who dies a martyr. He will be called and (Allāh) will show him the bounties He bestowed upon him (in worldly life). He will recognise them and then He (Allāh) will ask him, ‘How did you act concerning them?’ He will

²⁷ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (5/254)

²⁸ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (3/7, 73) - (4/374)

²⁹ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/25)

say, 'I fought in Your Cause until I died a martyr.' He (Allāh) will say, 'You have lied. You fought so that it might be said you were a brave man; and such was said of you.' Then it will be ordered that he be dragged on his face and thrown into Hell-fire. (The second one will be) a man who acquired knowledge, taught it (to others), and studied the Qur'ān. He will be called and (Allāh) will show him the bounties He bestowed upon him. He will recognise them and then He will ask him, 'How did you act concerning them?' He will say, 'I acquired knowledge and taught it (to others) and recited the Qur'ān for You.' He (Allāh) will say, 'You have lied. You acquired knowledge so that you might be called a knowledgeable man and you read the Qur'ān so that you might be called a reciter, and such was said of you.' Then it will be ordered that he be dragged on his face and thrown into Hell-fire. (The third of the three people will be) a man whom Allāh granted all kinds of wealth and property. He will be called and (Allāh) will show him the bounties He bestowed upon him. He will recognise them and then He will ask him, 'How did you act concerning them?' He will say, 'I left no way in which You like property to be spent without doing so for You.' He (Allāh) will say, 'You have lied. You did all that so that it might be said you were a generous man, and such was said of you.' Then it will be ordered that he be dragged on his face and thrown into Hell-fire."³⁰

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever wronged his brother with regard to his honor or any other matter, should seek his forgiveness today, before there are no longer any dinars, or dirham; and if he has any righteous deeds, they will be taken from him, in accordance with the wrong he did; and if he has no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his counterpart will

³⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1905) and Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/223)

be taken and added to his burden.”³¹

Keep Remembering the Destructor of Desires

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Remember the destructor of desires (i.e. Death).”³²

Abū Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever wrongfully takes even a span of the hand from a land, Allāh will order him to dig it down to the seventh earth, and then He will fence it on the Day of Judgement until He judges between people.”³³

Ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever wrongfully takes away a land, will sink into the seventh earth on the Day of Judgement.”³⁴

Abū Hurairah related: I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying: “A person may utter a word that he thinks harmless, but it results in his falling in Hellfire [the depth of] seventy years [in travel]”.³⁵

³¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (3/138) and al-Ḥibbān (9/227).

³² Sunan al-Tirmidhī (2409), Sunan al-Nisā’ī (4/4), Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/292-293), al-Ḥibbān (4/282-283) and al-Ḥākim (4/321)

³³ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/181), Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2453), (3195) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1612)

³⁴ Sunan al-Tirmidhī (2409), Sunan al-Nisā’ī (4/4), Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/292-293), al-Ḥibbān (4/282-283) and al-Ḥākim (4/321)

³⁵ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/334), Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/125) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2988)

Worldly Fire compared to the fire of Hell

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “This fire of yours which burns the son of Adam (in this world) is one seventieth of the heat of the Hell. They said: ‘We swear by Allāh, our fire is quite enough.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ‘It is sixty nine times more and each part of it is like the heat of your fire.’”³⁶

‘Adī ibn Hātim related: The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “Allāh, Exalted is He, shall speak to every one of you without [the need for] an interpreter. When you look to your right side you will find only the deeds you have done [in this worldly life]. When you look to the left side you will only find the deeds you have done [in this worldly life]. When you look in front of you there will be Hell so save yourself from Hell-fire even by giving half a date-fruit in charity.”³⁷

The Resurrection of People on the Day of Judgement

‘Ā’ishah related: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “You will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement naked, uncircumcised and bare foot.” ‘Ā’ishah asked the Prophet (ﷺ): “would men and women look at each other?” he said: “O ‘Ā’ishah, the situation is too difficult to look at each other.”³⁸

³⁶ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/313), (2/467), Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/147) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2988)

³⁷ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (4/256, 377), Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (7/198), (8/185, 202) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1016)

³⁸ Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (6/53), Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/36) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2759)

Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) commented on the *ayah*,

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

“The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

[*al-Mutaffifin* 83: 6]

saying: “People will have their sweat reach the level of their ears then.”³⁹

Abū Hurayrah related: “When the *ayah*

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴿٢١٤﴾

“And warn, [O Muḥammad (ﷺ)], your closest kindred.”

[*al-Shu'arā'* 26: 214]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “O people of Quraish - or something with the same meaning - ransom yourselves from Allāh for I cannot avail you at all against Allāh. O 'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib I cannot avail you at all against Allāh. O Fāṭima bint Muḥammad ask me whatever you like, but I cannot avail you at all against Allāh.”⁴⁰

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “The Hell-fire of Hell complained to its Lord saying: O Lord! My parts are eating (destroying) one another. So Allāh allowed it to take two breaths, one in the winter and the other in the summer. The breath in the summer is at the time when you feel the sever-

³⁹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/138) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2862)

⁴⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (4/7), (6/140) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (206)

est heat and the breath in the winter is at the time when you feel the severest cold.”⁴¹

The Least of Punishment In Hell

Al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: The most lightly punished person in Hell will have two sandals and laces of fire because of which his brain will boil like a cauldron.”⁴²

Shaqīq ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Hell will be brought forth that Day by means of seventy thousand ropes, each rope will be held by seventy thousand angels.”⁴³

‘Ā’ishah related: Two old ladies from among the Jewish ladies entered upon me and said, “The dead are punished in their graves,” but I thought they were telling a lie and did not believe them in the beginning. When they went away and the Prophet (ﷺ) entered upon me, I said, “O Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ)! Two old ladies...” and told him the whole incident. He said, “They told the truth; the dead are really punished, to the extent that all the animals hear (the sound resulting from) their punishment.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (1/142) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (617)

⁴² Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (4/271), Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/144) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (213)

⁴³ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2842) and al-Hākim (4/595)

⁴⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (8/98) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (586)

The Severity Of the Punishment of the Grave and Its Squeeze

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet (ﷺ) went down the grave of Sa'd and stayed down there for while. After he went out of it he was asked: O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), what has kept you down there? He said: Sa'd was squeezed in the grave so I asked Allāh to release him from that squeeze."⁴⁵

In another report Ibn 'Abbās related that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "By in Whose Hands is my soul, I heard his groaning and witnessed how his bones were displaced (because of that squeeze)."⁴⁶

Anas ibn Mālik reported: when Zaynab the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away as she was sick most of the times during her life, the Prophet (ﷺ) followed her funeral and when he reached her grave [in which she will be buried]. His face became yellow when he went down her grave then suddenly his face looked happy. We asked him about that so he said: I recalled how weak my daughter is and the severity of the punishment of the grave so I came. Then I was informed that she has now been eased, even though she was squeezed once from which she screamed in pain. Her scream was heard by everyone from the east to the west."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Al-Ḥākim (3/206), Ibn Sa'd (3/430) and Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (3/327, 36, 377)

⁴⁶ Al-Ṭabarānī (10827), (12975) in *al-Kabīr*

⁴⁷ This narration declared incorrect and unauthentic by al-Suyūṭī and Ibn al-Jawzī. See: *al-'Ilal al-Mutanabhiya* (2/908) and *al-La'ali al-Masno'ah* (2/434)

Abū Dharr related: The Prophet (ﷺ) said to me: “People will come in three groups on the Day of Judgement; a group who will be fed, clothed and riding, and a group will be walking and jogging, and a group who will be dragged on their faces by the angels.”^{48, 49}

⁴⁸ *Musnad Aḥmad* (5/164), *Sunan al-Nisā’ī* (4/116) and *al-Ḥākim* (2/367).

⁴⁹ Taken from ‘*Disturber of the Hearts*’, published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, UK 2012.

APPENDIX TWO

Averting Excessive Fear and Cautiousness of Death

Fear and cautiousness occur in matters related to the future. A resolute person is he who prepares for what he fears before it befalls him, and avoids excessive fear of what must inevitably befall him, because (in this case) his fear does not benefit him. Indeed the fear of Allāh was so intensified in the hearts of many righteous people that they asked Allāh to decrease it. The reason behind asking Allāh such is that fear is like a lash; if a camel is lashed continuously it will worry, but the lash should be used when it is lazy in order to motivate it.

It was narrated that Sufyān al-Thawrī told a young man who was sitting with him, "Do you want to fear Allāh truly and rightfully?" The young man said, "Yes." Sufyān said, "You are a fool! If you fear Him truly you would not be able to fulfill the obligatory acts!"¹

¹ Sufyān al-Thawrī: ibn Sa'īd ibn Masrūq, Abū 'Abdullāh al-Thawrī, one of the great *Imāms* and worshippers of this nation. He was titled 'The Leader of Believers in Ḥadīth' and was well versed in *tafsīr*. He was the teacher of Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik amongst others and died in the year 161H.

Section One: Excessive Fear

A person of sound mind should not fear illness excessively, because it must inevitably befall him some time during his life and fearing what is inevitable is merely an increase in harm. As for fearing death and thinking about it, it is something that is hard to do but what eases it, is knowing that death is inevitable so caution does not benefit the person in anyway rather it increases one's cautiousness. Every time a person imagines the intensity of death, he experiences it emotionally, this is why he should not picture death in his mind, he will only die once, not multiple times, and avoiding thinking about it will ease it.

A person should also know that Allāh is able to make it easier, if He Wills, and that what is after death is more disturbing than death itself, because death is a bridge that takes us to our eternal dwelling. However, one should frequently think about death to work towards it, not just for the sake of imagination.

If the thought of leaving this life saddens the heart, then the cure is to know that this world is not a dwelling of satisfaction, rather its pleasure and satisfaction is in departing it, therefore this is not something that one should compete to possess. Thus, a wise person is saddened by leaving this life only because of the righteous deeds he will miss performing, and that is why the righteous predecessors used to be saddened by death as well. When Mu'adh ibn Jabal was on his death bed, he said, "O Allāh! You know that I did not love this world and living long in it for the beauty of flowing rivers or for planting trees. Rather for fasting hot days, forbearing in acts of worship for hours and joining scholars in circles of Your remembrance."

Section Two: Curing the Whispers

When death befalls someone, he should know that it is an hour of serious suffering because it is a moment of severe pain, when he is leaving all objects of love, his loved ones, add to all that the horror of the throes of death and fear of where his wealth will go. Then *Shayṭān* comes and attempts to have the slave [of Allāh] become discontent with his Lord, he tells him, ‘Look at you! What made you die? Is it painful? You are leaving your wife, your children and you will be laid under the ground!’ So he might cause him to become discontent with his Lord, hating Allāh’s decree, making him say things that include any kind of objection, or he might make him unjust in his will, giving some of the inheritors preference over others, so on and so forth. In this case, we need to cure the whispers of *Shayṭān* and cure the self.

Abū Dāwūd reported from Abū al-Yusr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhū*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

« أعوذ بك أن يتخبطني الشيطان عند الموت »

“I seek refuge in You that *Shayṭān* flounders me at death.”²

² Reported by Abū Dāwūd #1552-1553, al-Nasa’ī [8/283] through the chain of Afla’ Mawlā (emancipated slave) of Abū Ayyūb from Abū al-Yusr that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray, “O Allāh! I seek refuge in you from dying under abolishment, not being deliberate, I seek refuge in you from drowning, from burning and from senility, I seek refuge in you that *Shayṭān* flounders me at death, I seek refuge in you that I die while escaping from fighting for Your sake and I seek refuge in you from dying because of a sting.”

Al-Khaṭṭāb said, “His seeking refuge in the ‘floundering of *Shayṭān* at death’, that is if *Shayṭān* seizes him when he leaves this world, preventing him from repenting or hinders him from mending his affairs, leaving an injustice or he makes him despair from the mercy of Allāh or makes him hate death or be

In that minute *Shayṭān* tells his assistants, “If you miss him now [i.e. you do not succeed to lead him astray before he dies], you will never catch him again [i.e. you will never be able to deviate him at any other time].” As for the cure for these trials we should first mention that whoever is mindful of Allāh while in good health, Allāh will protect him when he is ill, and whoever observes Allāh in his thoughts, Allāh will protect him when he moves his bodily parts.

Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, “Be mindful of Allāh and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him before you. Know Him while in prosperity, He will know you in distress.”³

You have known the story of Prophet Yūnus - when he had previous righteous deeds that enabled his release him from the trial he suffered. Allāh, May He be exalted, said,

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ،

كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ لَلَيْتَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

“Had he not been of them who glorify Allāh, He would

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sorry for this life, so he becomes discontented with Allāh’s decree in dissolution, going to the hereafter, so one has a bad end and he meets his Lord while he is discontented with Him. It was narrated that the *Shayṭān* is never tougher on a man as in death and he tells his assistants: “Take this person! if you miss him today you will never catch him again.” We seek refuge in Allāh from his evil, we ask him to bless our death and to have a good end.”

³ Reported by al-Tirmidhī #2516, al-Tirmidhī said it is a good authentic ḥadīth. Also reported by Aḥmad [1/307-308] and al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ub al-Īmān* and *al-Asma’ wa’l-Ṣifāt* p.76. See *al-Durar al-Manthūr* [1/66] and *Tafsir ibn-Kathir* [7/91].

have indeed remained inside its belly (of the fish) till the Day of Resurrection.”

[*al-Ṣaffāt* 37: 143-144]

Due to the fact that Pharaoh had no righteous deeds, he did not find anything that he could attach to at the time of trial, and so it was said to him,

﴿الْأَنزَلْنَاكَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ﴾

“Now (you believed) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the evildoers and corrupters.”

[*Yūnus* 10: 91]

‘Abdul Ṣamad, the ascetic, said on his death bed, “O my Master! For this minute I have kept You [i.e. I preserved Your Mercy so You bestow it upon me at this moment]. Whoever was negligent when in good health will be neglected when sick.”

It was narrated that one of the companions saw an old man begging so he said, “This man was negligent regarding Allāh’s orders when he was young, therefore Allāh neglected him when he became old.”

The cure for this disease is to encourage the self, to tell it that it is simply a fraction of time that will pass and after it will come the complete rest as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “No anguish will befall your father after this day.”⁴

Abū Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh prayed to Allāh when he was on his death bed and said, “Should I not lay my hope in Him and I have fasted eighty months of Ramaḍān for Him!”

⁴ Reported by Ibn-Mājah #1629.

Appendix Two: Averting Excessive Fear and Cautiousness of Death

Al-Mu'tamir ibn Sulaymān said, "My father told me, 'O son! Read for me the ḥadīth in which state the concessions of Allāh! So that I meet Allāh while I expect the best from Him.'"

Therefore a believer should remove fear and steer the camel as a cameleer of the desert said:

Its cameleer gave it glad tidings and said
tomorrow you will see the acacias and the mountains

It was reported that Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said (that Allāh said), "I am just as My servant thinks I am."⁵

It was also reported that Jābir (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say three days before his death, "None of you should die except while expecting the best from Allāh."⁶

Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said, "Fear is better than hope. However when death befalls, hope becomes better."

I say, that is true because as I have clarified fear is a lash that urges on a lazy person. If a camel is tired then we should use lenience. If one asks what of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz's fear at death, then the answer is, that his fear was a result of his sense of responsibility for his people and the demands of his innate nature over not fulfilling the rights of others. He used to say: "Truly I fear this leadership!" though he used to cling to the statements of men, therefore, when Ibn 'Abbās told him: "Receive the glad tidings, O Chief of Believers! You were assigned the leadership,

⁵ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

⁶ Reported by Muslim

and you were fair in it and you died as a martyr!" He told him, "O Ibn 'Abbās! Will you testify that before Allāh?"⁷

Section Three: Increase in Anguish

If a sick person increases in anguish, then he should count that as a reward for our righteous predecessors used to like the intensity of the agonies of a sick person because it expiates sins. It was narrated that Ibrāhīm said, "They used to like to be overstrained at death." It was also narrated that 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz said, "I would not like that throes of death be eased for me, because they are the last thing that expiates [the sins] of a Muslim."

Section Four: Repentance

A sick person should repent, as long as he is sane, so that he meets Allāh pure from all sins. He should also write his will, put his trust in Allāh, Exalted and Glorified is He, to look after his spouse and children. For He supports and protects the righteous.

⁷ Ibn 'Abbās, may Allāh be pleased with them, said this to Amir-ul-Mu'minīn 'Umar ibn ul-Khaṭṭāb when he was stabbed. Aḥmad reported it in his *Musnad* 1:46, and al-Bayhaqī in *Ithbāt 'Athab al-Qabr* through the chain of Dāwūd Ibn Abū Hind from 'Āmir from ibn 'Abbās he said, "I dropped in on 'Umar Ibnul-Khaṭṭāb when he was stabbed. So I said 'Receive the glad tidings, O Amir-ul-Mu'minīn! You converted to Islām when people disbelieved, you fought with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) when others let him down and he (ﷺ) died while he was pleased with you. People did not differ in your *khilāfah* and you died as a martyr." So he said, "Repeat what you have said!" So I repeated it. He said, "By Allāh, the only true God, if I had all what is on earth of gold and silver I would have sacrificed it from the horror of the Day of Judgement."

Section Five: Being Optimistic

If *Shayṭān* bothers a dying person and reminds him of withering away, then he should know that withering happens to the ship after the traveler leaves it. He should also know that the Sharīʿah has stated that a believer is going to live in everlasting delight after death. So whoever possesses true belief should not be sad, because the destination is a good one and whoever does not possess true belief should be sad over not possessing it.

It was reported that Kaʿb (*radīy Allāhu ʿanhu*) narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, “The soul of a Muslim is like a bird that hangs on the trees of paradise, until Allāh returns it to the Muslim’s body.”⁸

The purpose of this chapter is to show that fear of death should be moderate, so that it does not exhaust the body, causing harm, one should fear what is to come after death and work towards it.⁹

⁸ Reported by al-Bukhārī in *at-Tarikh al-Kabir* [5/306], al-Ḥumaidī #873, and al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabir* [19:64].

⁹ Taken from *‘Disciplining the Soul’*, published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, Birmingham, UK 2012.

INDEX OF ARABIC WORDS

- BARZAKH: barrier, isthmus, A barrier that is erected between the deceased and this life preventing him from returning and a generic reference to the life that commences after death.
- BID'AH: innovation, that which is newly introduced into the religion of Allāh.
- KUFR: denial, rejection, hiding, technically referring to disbelief. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).
- SALAF: predecessors. Technically used to refer to the best generations of Muslims, the first three generation: the *Ṣaḥābah*, the *Tābi'ūn* and the *Tab' Tābi'ūn* due to the ḥadīth, 'The best of people are my generation, then the one that follows, then the one that follows.'
- SHIRK: association, technically referring to directing a right that is due to Allāh Alone to another object of creation, either completely or partially. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).
- TĀBI'ŪN: The generation following that of the Companions.
- TAB' TĀBI'ŪN: The generation following that of the *Tābi'ūn*.
- TAWHĪD: unification, monotheism, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh. It is to believe that Allāh Alone is the creator, nourisher, and sustainer of the worlds; it is to believe that Allāh Alone deserves to be worshipped; and it is to believe that He has unique and perfect Names and Attributes that far transcend anything that one can imagine.