

Explanation of the

CONCISE ADVICES

of Shaykh-ul-Islām

İBN TAYMİYYAH

by Shaykh Sulaymān ar-Ruḥaylī

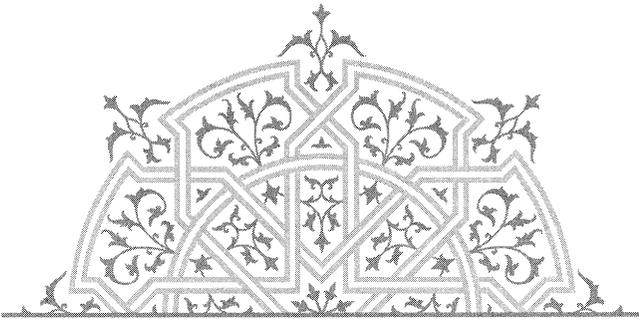


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Transliteration Table

Consonants

ء	ا	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	‘	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels

Short	اَ	a	اِ	i	اُ	u
Long	آ	ā	يِ	ī	وِ	ū
Diphthongs	اَيِ	ay	اَوِ	aw		

Glyphs

ﷺ *Ṣallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* (May Allāh’s praise & salutations be upon him)

ﷺ *‘Alayhis-salām* (Peace be upon him)

ﷺ *Tabarāka wa-ta‘ālā* (Blessed and Exalted be He)

ﷻ *Radīyallāhu ‘anhū* (May Allāh be pleased with him)

ﷻ *Radīyallāhu ‘anhūm* (May Allāh be pleased with them)

ﷻ *Radīyallāhu ‘anhā* (May Allāh be pleased with her)

ﷻ *Raḥimahullāh* (May Allāh have mercy on him)

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Introduction by Shaykh Sulaymān ar-Ruḥaylī



All praises belong to Allāh, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects. He honored us with the religion of Islām, completed for us the religion, and perfected His favor upon us. He clarified for us the permissible and the impermissible.

I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh alone, without partners. He is the true object of worship for eternity. And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger, the Prophet and Imām sent as a mercy for the creation. Those who adhere to his Sunnah are rightly guided and upright, while those who turn away from his religion will be flung into gloom and darkness. Whoever introduces into his religion that which is not from it, it will be rejected and he will incur a sin. May the most perfect salutations and peace from Allāh be upon the Prophet, and may Allāh be pleased with his wonderful family and noble Companions.

As to what follows:

Before you is the explanation of *The Concise Advices*—concise in size yet large in content.

I remind myself and my brothers of an affair that many students of knowledge are heedless of; thus, the benefit of knowledge is

minimized while boasting of knowledge has increased, and differing and splitting has become widespread. This tremendous affair is: We study knowledge to benefit ourselves first and foremost. The Salaf would study to rectify themselves. They knew that their own souls were the intended purpose and reason for learning.

Imām Aḥmad رحمته الله said, “I did not study one letter for the people.”

Thus, one from among the Salaf would study to rectify himself, then the benefit would spread to others from amongst the people.

Our topic of discussion is *The Concise Advices* by Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله. This advice was given when the explorer, the scholar, Abul-Qāsim as-Sabtī al-Maqdisī, asked Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله about four matters:

1) He asked him to advise him concerning that which would benefit him in his religion and his worldly life.

2) He asked him to direct him to a comprehensive book—such that he would not need any other book—surrounding the subject of knowledge of *ḥadīth*, in particular, and the sciences of the legislation, in general.

3) He asked him to direct him towards the best actions after the obligatory acts of worship.

4) He asked him to direct him to the most profitable earnings.

Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah responded to him and began with the first affair: advice for that which will rectify the religion and the worldly life. He explained a general issue: The affair that will rectify the religion of the person and their worldly life is adhering to what is found in the Book and the Sunnah.

Then he gave him specific advice, and it is the advice that the Prophet ﷺ gave to Mu’ādh رضي الله عنه; whoever adheres to this advice will rectify his religion and his worldly life. The Prophet ﷺ said to Mu’ādh رضي الله عنه when he sent him to Yemen:

يَا مُعَاذَ اللَّهِ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ
بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ.

O Mu'adh, have *taqwā* of Allāh wherever you are; follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it. And behave towards the people with good manners.¹

The summary of this advice, O Muslim, is to act according to what Allāh has commanded while avoiding what Allāh has prohibited. This is the meaning of “have *taqwā* of Allāh wherever you are.” And if your foot slips (i.e., you make a mistake), be diligent in erasing the consequences of that sin. This is the meaning of “follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it.” And interact with the people with noble manners. This is the meaning of “behave towards the people with good manners.”

There is no doubt that whoever lives his life upon this will live with a happy heart, comfort of the soul, and ease of mind upon the Straight Path.

Then Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله explained why this is the most beneficial advice for the Muslim in his religion and worldly affairs, from a number of angles:

1) This was from the final advice given by the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'adh رضي الله عنه to Yemen, and that was shortly before the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

2) This advice is needed by each and every person, regardless of their high status. There is no one who does not need this advice. If there was anyone who did not need this advice due to their status, then Mu'adh would not have needed this advice.

3) This advice is comprehensive in collecting good because the Prophet ﷺ gave this advice to Mu'adh, a person who held a high position with him. And it is known that you give advice that comprises all good to the person you love.

¹ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhi* 1987

4) It is a combination of the explanation of Allāh's advice and the Prophet's advice ﷺ. Thus, he combined two good things: the explanation of the advice given by Allāh, and the advice of the Prophet ﷺ.

Then Ibn Taymiyyah explained that it comprises all good. And he explained how the slave is between two rights in this world: the rights of Allāh and the rights of Allāh's slaves. It is required for man to fulfill these rights, but due to man's weakness, it is inevitable that he will make mistakes concerning the rights of Allāh and the rights of Allāh's slaves. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Have *taqwā* of Allāh wherever you are." This means to do what you are commanded and avoid what you are prohibited from, to the best of your ability. And when you make a mistake, follow it up with a good deed, which will erase it (the mistake).

Then Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله explained that sins have an effect on the people in this life and the next. And Allāh, from His mercy, has made a way for His slave to remove the consequences of these sins. The scholars have mentioned 10 ways to remove sins. In this advice, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله mentioned four ways, because these four ways occur in this world.

These four ways are:

- 1) Repentance
- 2) Seeking forgiveness
- 3) Righteous actions
- 4) The calamity that befalls the believer

It is necessary for people to give importance to these advices. The intelligent person listens to the advice, hoping to benefit from it. In most cases, those who give advice are those who possess a high status and vast wisdom; they place in it concise words with comprehensive meanings. So how much more so if the wisdom is from a cultivating scholar upon the way of the Salaf, known for his vast knowledge,

known for supporting “Allāh said, His Messenger ﷺ said,” and known for showing patience with the trials that befell him due to this?! He was also known for his good manners with the people, his mercy towards the creation, and the immense benefit he brought them in the affairs of their religion and worldly life. His biography is the greatest proof of this; and this man is Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله.

How great is our need for the likes of this advice during this time when those who feign knowledge have increased, the hardness of the hearts has increased, and *fitnah* has increased!

These advices are described as “concise or small advices” to distinguish them from his work *Major Advices*, with the difference being the size of the works. *The Concise Advices* was placed in *The Collection of Fatāwā* on 13 pages in volume 10, while *Major Advices* was placed on 70 pages in volume 10.

These advices became well known during the life of Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله, as he would read them to some of his students.

Abul-Qāsim as-Sabtī's Question to Ibn Taymiyyah



EXPLANATION

The questioner, Abul-Qāsim as-Sabtī: His name was al-Qāsim bin Yūsuf as-Sabtī, from the people of Maghrib. He is described as a noble scholar of *ḥadīth* and an explorer. He would write benefits from the scholars during his travels. This great advice opens with the statement of Abul-Qāsim رحمته الله.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Abul-Qāsim said:

This question is from Abul-Qāsim al-Maghribī. If you could be so kind, our *sayyid*, Shaykh, the legist, Imām, the Eminent, the scholar, from the remainder of the Salaf and leader for those who came after them, the pioneer, the well-rounded, eloquent speaker...

EXPLANATION

“*Sayyid*” means the one possessing nobility and high rank. And Allāh is the complete, great Sayyid. This term can also be applied to humans according to what is befitting. Muḥammad ﷺ is the *sayyid* of the children of Ādam.¹ The Prophet ﷺ described some of

¹ “I will be the *sayyid* of the sons of Ādam on the Day of Resurrection, and the first one

the Companions with the term *sayyid*. He said concerning Sa'd bin Mu'adh رضي الله عنه:

قُومُوا إِلَى سَيِّدِكُمْ.

Stand to receive your *sayyid*.²

And he said concerning Sa'd bin Mu'adh رضي الله عنه:

اسْمَعُوا إِلَى مَا يَقُولُ سَيِّدُكُمْ.

Listen to what your chief (*sayyid*) says.³

Likewise, it is correct to say "Sayyid Muḥammad"; but the term *sayyid* should not be added in front of the Prophet's name ﷺ for the remembrance during the prayer for the Ṣalātul-Ibrāhīmiyyah⁴ because it is not permissible to add anything to the narrations, as these statements of remembrance are governed by the Book and the Sunnah.

His statement "the peerless": Meaning, due to his vast and great amount of knowledge; it was as though he developed it due to the few during his time who gave importance to knowledge based upon the narrations. If something is strange during a particular era, it is called an innovation, even if it has been affirmed that it was previously practiced. An example of this is the statement of 'Umar رضي الله عنه when he gathered the people for Tarāwīḥ prayer during Ramaḍān. He said:

نعمت البدعة هذه.

What a good innovation this is.⁵

for whom the grave will be opened, and the first to intercede, and the first whose intercession will be accepted." (Narrated by Muslim [4223]).

² *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 5215

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 1498

⁴ **Translator's note:** This is the saying: "O Allāh, send prayers upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, and send blessings upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, as You sent prayers and blessings upon Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory."

⁵ *Muwaṭṭa' Mālik*

This is because the people had abandoned it, although the Prophet ﷺ led the people in congregation in Tarāwīḥ during Ramaḍān for two or three nights; then [the Prophet] abandoned it, fearing it would be made obligatory upon the *ummah*.⁶ When ‘Umar رضي الله عنه became the ruler, he united the people behind one *imām* (to pray Tarāwīḥ); thus, it was as though he introduced it since the people were not acting on it.

He said “the well-rounded”: This refers to the one able to speak about all matters. By this statement, he intends the person highly skilled in various aspects of knowledge—the person who speaks about all matters of knowledge with precision. Abul-Qāsim رحمته الله spoke the truth, as Ibn Taymiyyah was an ocean in the fields of knowledge. When he spoke concerning matters of knowledge, he excelled over others. In fact, one of Ibn Taymiyyah’s distinguishing traits was that he would present the arguments of others—even if they were from those who opposed him—stronger than they could present their own arguments; this was due to his vast knowledge and fairness. May Allāh have mercy upon him.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Abul-Qāsim said:

...the most knowledgeable of those I encountered in the lands of the East and the West, Taqī ad-Dīn Abul-‘Abbās Aḥmad bin Taymiyyah.

EXPLANATION

Allāhu Akbar! Abul-Qāsim, the noble scholar, describes Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله with these great qualities for which he became famous during that era, even though—at the time of the letter—he had not exceeded the age of 36. This letter was read to Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله in 697 AH, and it is known that Ibn Taymiyyah was born in 661 AH. This is from the blessing of the knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah upon the understanding of the pious predecessors. Since his youth, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله was

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 924

known for his passion for transmitting the narrations of the Salaf. And whoever coincides with this knowledge will be from the most knowledgeable people concerning the truth and the most merciful towards the creation.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Abul-Qāsim said:

Advise me with that which will benefit me in my religion and worldly life, and guide me to a book I can rely on for the science of *ḥadīth* and the other legislative sciences. Notify me of the most virtuous righteous actions after the obligations, and explain to me the most profitable earnings. All of this is intended to be summarized. May Allāh the Exalted preserve you. May the peace of al-Karīm be upon you, and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

EXPLANATION

Abul-Qāsim رحمته الله requested that Shaykh-ul-Islām advise him with these advices, and he asked that the advice be concise. This was so it would be easy to remember, retain, and implement. This was the practice of the Salaf—they were diligent upon implementing knowledge, not [merely] amassing knowledge.

Look, O student of knowledge, at this blessed question and how it was a source for abundant blessings, which we hope will be bestowed upon Abul-Qāsim each time it is read, explained, or acted on until the Day of Judgment. Thus, be diligent—may Allāh grant you success—[in ensuring] that your gathering with the scholars is a cause for good. And beware of causing the speech of the scholars to appear as a source of evil and *fitnah* based upon your speech—not from the direction of the scholar, but rather only based upon your action.

THE FIRST ADVICE

Advice to Benefit in the Religion & Worldly Life



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām—the ocean of knowledge—Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him and be pleased with him) said:

All praises belong to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.

EXPLANATION

Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله was known for generosity, especially in giving knowledge, and this is evident in his answer, as he made the answer simple. He mentioned the evidence, he answered that which was problematic, and he gave the questioner additional benefit that he hadn't asked about. Likewise, it is from his generosity in the field of knowledge that no one requested a book from him except that he gave it to him, even if he needed it. He would say, "How can I refuse him when he has asked me for knowledge?"

His answer to this question was upon his methodology of generosity with knowledge, in addition to keeping to the request of the questioner by giving a concise answer.

He began his answer with the praise of Allāh the Exalted, following the example of the Noble Qur'an, for surely it begins with:

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

All praises belong to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.

[Sūrah al-Fātiḥah 1:2]

Then he proceeds to the advice. Advice according to the scholars is concise speech with a lot of good, which contains commands and prohibitions.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

As for advice, then I do not know of any advice more beneficial than the advice of Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, for the one who comprehends it and follows it.

EXPLANATION

Allāhu Akbar! This is adherence to the Book and the Sunnah, and all good is contained therein—the first and the last, the obvious and the hidden. Thus, whoever wants good for himself, his family, and his community, then it is upon him to be diligent in spreading what is contained in the Book and the Sunnah upon the understanding of the pious predecessors, and cultivating the people upon that.

There is nothing more beneficial for the people than the advice of their Lord, the Exalted, and the advice of His Messenger ﷺ, for the one who understands the advice with an understanding that will have an impact on his soul; thus, he acts upon it. When listening to a good benefit, the heart must be attentive, the person must pay attention well, and they must have truthful resolve. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ
وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴾

Verily, therein is indeed a reminder for him who has

a heart or gives ear while he is heedful.

[Sūrah Qāf 50:37]

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَائِدًا:

Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ﴾

And verily, We have instructed the People of the Book before you, and to you (O Muslims), that you (all) fear Allāh.

[Sūrah an-Nisā' 4:131]

EXPLANATION

This is the advice of Allāh to the earlier and later generations. This verse proves that the prophets all agreed upon instructing the people with fear of Allāh.

Allāh commanded the believers with this in His statement:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ﴾

O you who have believed, fear Allāh...

[Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:278]

And He commanded the best of mankind with this in His statement:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ﴾

O Prophet, fear Allāh...

[Sūrah al-Aḥzāb 33:1]

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

The Prophet ﷺ advised Mu'adh upon sending him to Yemen by saying:

يَا مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَتَقِيَ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ.

O Mu'adh, fear Allāh wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out, and treat people in a kind manner.¹

EXPLANATION

The Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'adh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to Yemen shortly before his (the Prophet's) death. Thus, this was from the final advices of the Prophet ﷺ. This *ḥadīth* has been collected by Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhī, and at-Ṭabarānī; and the scholars differ concerning its chain of narration, with the most correct statement being that it is *ḥasan* by way of other narrations.² It is one of the narrations accepted by the scholars of this *ummah*. It has been clarified, by al-Bayhaqī in *The Branches of Faith* and by Ibn 'Abdil-Barr in *At-Tamhīd*, that this was the advice upon sending him to Yemen.

The Salaf would give great importance to this great advice. Shu'bah said to al-Ḥākīm, "Advise me." Al-Ḥākīm replied, "I advise you with the advice the Prophet ﷺ gave to Mu'adh:

أَتَقِيَ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ.

"Fear Allāh wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out, and treat people in a kind manner."³

¹ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 1987

² Shaykh al-Albānī declared it *ḥasan* in *Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (1373).

³ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 1987

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Mu'adh ﷺ was held in high esteem by the Prophet ﷺ, and he said to him:

يَا مُعَاذُ وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأُحِبُّكَ .

O Mu'adh, by Allāh, verily I love you.⁴

He used to let Mu'adh ride behind him. And it was narrated that he was the most knowledgeable of this *ummah* concerning the permissible and the impermissible. Likewise, he will be gathered (on the Day of Resurrection) one step ahead of the scholars. One of his virtues is that the Prophet ﷺ sent him to Yemen to convey the message from him, as a caller, jurist, *mufīi*, and judge for the people of Yemen. And he used to liken him to Ibrāhīm ﷺ, and Ibrāhīm was a leader of mankind. Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ used to say, "Mu'adh was an *ummah* (a leader), obedient to Allāh, and he was not one of the pagans," likening him to Ibrāhīm ﷺ. Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ gave him this advice.

EXPLANATION

This statement clarifies the importance, great status, and lofty position of this advice, from two angles:

1) This advice is needed by everyone, young and old, male and female, scholars and laymen. There is no one who does not need this advice, regardless of their high status or great virtue. If anyone would have not needed this advice, then it would have been Mu'adh who would have not needed this advice. But he needed this advice, so the Prophet ﷺ gave him this advice. In reality, the more a person's status rises, the more he is in need of this advice; but the more the status of a Muslim rises, the greater his effect becomes upon the *ummah*, and the Shayṭān is more diligent in trying to lead him astray.

2) The Prophet ﷺ loved him, and he swore by this, affirming

⁴ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 1522

it. And it is known that the more the advisor loves a person, the greater his concern is for giving concise words of good in his advice to the one he loves.

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله explained the status of Mu'adh رضي الله عنه in a number of affairs:

- The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم loved him, and he swore by Allāh to this fact in order to affirm it. He said:

يَا مُعَاذُ وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأُحِبُّكَ .

O Mu'adh, by Allāh, verily I love you.⁵

- The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would allow him to ride behind him, as has been collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. He would ride behind the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم on his donkey, and this is proof of his status with him.

- He was the jurist of this *ummah*, so he was the most knowledgeable of the permissible and impermissible. It has been narrated from Anas bin Mālik that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

أَرْحَمُ أُمَّتِي بِأُمَّتِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَأَشَدُّهُمْ فِي أَمْرِ اللَّهِ عُمَرُ وَأَصْدَقُهُمْ حَيَاءً
عُثْمَانُ وَأَفْرُؤُهُمْ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ أَبِي بَنُ كَعْبٍ وَأَفْرُضُهُمْ زَيْدُ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ
وَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِالْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَمِينًا وَإِنَّ أَمِينَ
هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ .

The most merciful of my nation to my nation is Abū Bakr, and the most stern of them concerning the command of Allāh is 'Umar, and the most truly modest of them is 'Uthmān bin 'Affān. The best reciter (of the Qur'ān) among them is Ubayy bin Ka'b, the most knowledgeable of them concerning (the laws of) inheritance is Zayd bin Thābit, and the most knowledgeable of them concerning the lawful and the unlawful is Mu'adh bin Jabal. Truly, every nation has a trustworthy one, and the trustworthy one of this nation is Abū

⁵ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 1522

‘Ubaydah bin al-Jarrāh.⁶

- He will be gathered standing in front of the scholars by a footstep, as has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarānī. Many of the scholars have said that this narration is *mursal*.⁷ Shaykh al-Albānī said that this narration is *mursal* and authentic.

Some say that this means Mu’ādh will be one footstep in front of the scholars, while some say that it means he will have a status above them, or [he will be] a degree above them. Some say it means [he will be] the length of an arrow in front of them, while some say it means he will be standing in front of them as far as the eye can see. This indicates that Mu’ādh will have preference over the scholars ﷺ.

- The Prophet ﷺ sent Mu’ādh to Yemen as a teacher and judge, as has been collected in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim*.

- The Prophet ﷺ likened him to Ibrāhīm, the Friend of Allāh ﷺ. This has been mentioned in some copies of *Advices*. But this is problematic, because there is no narration wherein the Prophet ﷺ likens him to Ibrāhīm ﷺ. There is no narration with an authentic or weak chain of narration that mentions this. Allāh knows best; perhaps the statement “He used to liken him to Ibrāhīm ﷺ” is alluding to what is mentioned in some copies of *Advices*, which states: “They used to liken him to Ibrāhīm ﷺ.” This is supported by what comes after this statement: “Ibn Mas’ūd ﷺ used to say, ‘Mu’ādh was an *ummah* (a leader), obedient to Allāh, and he was not one of the pagans,’ likening him to Ibrāhīm ﷺ.”

Masrūq said that ‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd recited the verse:

﴿ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا ﴾

⁶ *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 3790

⁷ **Translator’s note:** A *ḥadīth* is called *mursal* if the one who narrated it from the Prophet ﷺ is from those who came after the Companions rather than a Companion. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādādī ﷺ said, “*Mursal* refers to a report whose chain of transmission is interrupted, meaning that among its narrators is one who did not hear it from the one whose name precedes his. But in most cases, what is described as *mursal* is that which was narrated by the Ṭābi’in from the Prophet ﷺ.” (*Al-Kifāyah*).

Verily, Ibrāhīm was an *ummah* obedient to Allāh.

[Sūrah an-Naḥl 16:120]

Then he said, “Mu’ādh was an *ummah* obedient.” They said, “O Abū ‘Abdir-Raḥmān:

﴿ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا ﴾

“Verily, Ibrāhīm was an *ummah* obedient to Allāh.”

[Sūrah an-Naḥl 16:120]

‘Abdullāh replied, “Do you all know what the meaning of *ummah* is? This means the one who teaches the people good, and obedient is the one who obeys Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ.”⁸

And Masrūq said that ‘Abdullāh (bin Mas’ūd) recited the verse:

﴿ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴾

**Verily, Ibrāhīm was an *ummah* obedient to Allāh,
and he was not from the pagans.**

[Sūrah an-Naḥl 16:120]

A man said, “He forgot: ‘Verily, Ibrāhīm was an *ummah*.’” ‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd replied, “Who forgot? Verily, we used to liken him to Ibrāhīm.” Then the man asked about the meaning of *ummah*. ‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd said, “[This means] the teacher of good.” The man asked him about the meaning of “obedient.” He said, “[It means] obedient to Allāh and His Messenger.”

Farwah bin Nawfal said, “Ibn Mas’ūd said, ‘Verily, Mu’ādh was an *ummah* obedient to Allāh.’ I said to myself, ‘Abū ‘Abdir-Raḥmān has made a mistake. He should have said, “Verily, Ibrāhīm was an *ummah*.’” He replied, ‘Do you know the meaning of *ummah* and the meaning of obedient?’ I said, ‘Allāh and His Messenger know best.’ He replied, ‘The one who teaches the people good, and obeys Allāh

⁸ *Al-Mu’jam al-Kabir* by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (59/10, #9943).

and His Messenger.’”

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Thus, this makes it known that it is concise and comprehensive. It is like that for the one who understands it.

EXPLANATION

This is the other standpoint in explaining the status of this advice: it is concise for the foundations of beneficial good which will be explained.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

It is an explanation for the Quranic advice.

EXPLANATION

This is another standpoint showing the status of this advice. This advice combines two noble affairs:

- 1) It is an explanation of the advice of Allāh the Exalted for His slaves in the Qur'ān, as previously mentioned.
- 2) It is the text of the advice of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

The result is that this advice is extremely lofty, because everyone needs it. It is advice given to a loved one. It is comprehensive and concise. It is the explanation of the advice of Allāh the Exalted and the advice of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. This causes the person to yearn to hear it and it incites him to give concern to acting according to it.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

Regarding its conciseness, that is because each person has two rights due upon him: his right towards Allāh and his right towards Allāh's slaves.

EXPLANATION

Each person has two rights upon them: the rights of Allāh and the rights due to Allāh's slaves. Those who uphold this are those who fulfill the trust to whom it is due, and give the rights to whom they are due. The Prophet ﷺ said:

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَهُمْ أَجْرَانِ: رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ آمَنَ بِنَبِيِّهِ وَأَمَنَ بِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَالْعَبْدُ الْمَمْلُوكُ إِذَا آدَى حَقَّ اللَّهِ وَحَقَّ مَوَالِيهِ، وَرَجُلٌ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ أَمَةٌ فَأَدَّبَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبَهَا وَعَلَّمَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمَهَا ثُمَّ أَعْتَقَهَا فَتَزَوَّجَهَا فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ.

There are three who will be given a double reward: a man from among the People of the Book who believed in his prophet and then believed in Muhammad ﷺ; a slave who fulfills his duty towards Allāh and towards his master; and a man who had a slave woman whom he fed well and taught well, then he set her free and married her—he will have a double reward.⁹

Allāh's right upon His slaves is that they worship Him and do not associate any partners with Him, as comes in the *hadith* of Mu'adh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim*.

The rights of Allāh's slaves are those rights which Allāh has placed between the people, such as the rights of the parents, relatives, scholars, and leaders.

⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 97; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 154

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

It is inevitable that he will fall short sometimes regarding those rights, either by failing to do something he is commanded to do or by doing something he is forbidden to do.

EXPLANATION

The people are commanded to fulfill the rights of Allāh. But it is inevitable that one will fall short due to weakness, forgetfulness, or sins, because man is deficient. Or [he will fall short] due to deficiency in learning; thus, he will be ignorant of some of the rights of Allāh or some of the rights of the creation.

This deficiency will either be in leaving off a command or falling into a prohibition. Abandoning a command may be by leaving off an obligation; thus, the person will deserve a punishment. It can also be due to abandoning a recommended act of worship; thus, the person will be deficient in receiving a complete reward. The deficiency could be by falling into a prohibition; thus, the sin will deserve a punishment. It could also be due to falling into a hated matter; thus, the person will decrease his reward.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Fear Allāh wherever you may be.” This advice is concise. His statement “wherever you may be” shows the need for *taqwā* of Allāh in open and secret.

EXPLANATION

This means: be diligent upon fulfilling the commands as much as you are able, hoping for the reward from Allāh, and upon avoiding the prohibitions, fearing the punishment of Allāh. This is *taqwā* of Allāh. It means to obey Allāh upon light from Allāh, hoping for the reward of Allāh, while abandoning disobeying Allāh upon light

from Allāh, fearing the punishment of Allāh.

The statement of the Prophet ﷺ “wherever you may be” clarifies the person’s need to fear Allāh in secret and in the open. He needs fear of Allāh in the open to actualize sincerity and repel showing off, and he needs fear of Allāh in secret when he is all alone and no one sees him. At this time, his soul may become weak, and the plot of the Shayṭān will be difficult upon him. Thus, he needs *taqwā* to repel this. It is inevitable that whoever is heedless of *taqwā* will be hit in his most vulnerable spot, in the open or in secret. In the open, he will be afflicted with showing off, and in secret, he will be afflicted with violating the prohibitions of Allāh while he is alone. Thus, the person needs *taqwā* of Allāh in secret and in the open because he knows that all the affairs belong to Allāh and no secret is hidden from Him.

Removing the Evil Consequences of Sins



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Then he said, “And follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it.”

EXPLANATION

This means: Fear Allāh, O slaves of Allāh, and be diligent in fulfilling the rights due upon you; and if you backslide and fall into error, don't despair from the mercy of Allāh and give in to the Shayṭān. Do not say, “Good has left me.” Don't descend into the path of sin based upon that mistake; rather, rush to erase that sin by doing a good deed. The Prophet ﷺ said “follow”—this indicates rushing so that another sin does not follow it. One sin strengthens another sin. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً نُّكِتَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ، فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ سُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ، وَإِنْ عَادَ زِيدَ فِيهَا حَتَّى تَعْلُوَ قَلْبُهُ، وَهُوَ الرَّانُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ: كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ.

If a person commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. If he stops, seeks forgiveness, and repents, his heart is cleansed; but if he

goes back to it, [the black spot] increases until it covers his entire heart. This is the covering that Allāh mentions: “Nay! But on their hearts is the *rān* (covering of sins) which they used to earn.”¹

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

When the sick patient digests something harmful, the doctor will order him with that which will restore his health.

EXPLANATION

Performing a good deed after a sin is like the sick person taking medicine after the intake of something harmful. And there is no doubt that the sick person will hurry to take the medicine to remove the harm. He will not delay. Likewise, when the person enters upon his soul that which will harm it concerning the greatest matter he possesses—his religion—then it is necessary to rush to remove the harm by performing a good deed that will erase the sin.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

Sin is something inevitable for man.

EXPLANATION

This statement is a great cure for the soul. The person doesn't become lackadaisical regarding sins just because they are inevitable; rather, he is commanded to avoid sins, but if he errs, then he rushes to perform a good deed which will erase this sin. Likewise, he is not heedless concerning himself. He does not say, “I am from the righteous; I don't fear that I will commit sins.” On the contrary, he understands with certainty that sins are an inevitable matter, so he always observes himself and prevents himself from falling into sins

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3257; *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 4234. The verse is from Sūrah al-Muṭaffifin (83:14).

before it occurs. And he removes the traces of sin from his soul when it occurs. This is indicated by the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ، وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ.

All the sons of Ādam are sinners, and the best of the sinners are those who repent.²

The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ حَظَّهُ مِنَ الرِّئَا أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ لَا مَحَالَةَ فَرِنَا
الْعَيْنَيْنِ النَّظْرُ وَرِنَا اللِّسَانِ الْمَنْطِقُ وَالنَّفْسُ تَمَنَّى وَتَشْتَهِي وَالْفَرْجُ يُصَدِّقُ
ذَلِكَ وَيُكَذِّبُ.

Allāh has decreed for the children of Ādam a share in fornication; it is unavoidable. The fornication of the eyes is looking; the fornication of the tongue is speaking; the soul desires and has a passion; and the private part confirms or falsifies it.³

An-Nawawī explained this in a chapter entitled: “It has been decreed upon the son of Ādam his portion of fornication and other sins.”

The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا وَلَهُ ذَنْبٌ يَعْتَادُهُ الْفَيْئَةَ بَعْدَ الْفَيْئَةِ، أَوْ ذَنْبٌ هُوَ مُقِيمٌ
عَلَيْهِ لَا يُفَارِقُهُ حَتَّى يُفَارِقَ الدُّنْيَا، إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ خُلِقَ مُفْتَنًا تَوَّابًا نَسِيًّا إِذَا
ذُكِّرَ ذَكَرَ.

There is no believing slave except that he has a sin which he returns to from time to time, or a sin which he practices and does not leave until he leaves this world. Verily, the believer was created tested, repentant, and forgetful. When he is reminded, he remembers.⁴

² Sunan Ibn Mājah 2451

³ Sunan Abī Dāwūd 2152

⁴ Shaykh al-Albānī. *As-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* 2276.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

The intelligent person is the one who continues to perform righteous actions which will wipe away sins.

EXPLANATION

This is the intelligent, resolute person. Sins increase the intelligent person in nearness to Allāh, because if the intelligent person sins, he turns to Allāh with an abundance of good deeds. Consequently, this draws him closer to Allāh. The person who follows sins with good deeds earns two benefits:

- 1) The good deeds wipe away the sins and remove the consequences of the sins.
- 2) He receives the reward for the good deeds he performed.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

The statement: “And follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it.” In this *ḥadīth*, he mentioned “evil deed” first even though it is the object of the sentence, because the intent is removing the sin, not performing the good deed. This is like his statement concerning the Bedouin who urinated in the *masjid*:

صُبُّوا عَلَيْهِ ذُنُوبًا مِنْ مَاءٍ.

Pour over it a pail of water.⁵

EXPLANATION

In the *ḥadīth* “And follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it,” the phrase “evil deed” is the object of the sentence which the action of the verb falls upon, even though the phrase

⁵ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 380

“evil deed” appears in the sentence before the phrase “good deed.” This is like pouring water over filth: the filth occurred first and then the water was poured over it. It would appear that the proper order would be to say “follow up with a good deed after a sin” because it is a good deed that is following the sin; but what appears in the *ḥadīth* is “follow up an evil deed with a good deed.” “Evil deed” was mentioned first, going against the normal order for a purpose and benefit. The benefit is to clarify that the intent of doing the good deed here is wiping away the evil deed. And the intent that follows this is the intent of receiving the reward for the good deed. Performing a good deed after a sin has two intents: a primary intent and a subsequent intent. The primary intent is to wipe away the consequences of the evil deed, while the subsequent intent is to receive the reward for the good deed.

The statement of the Prophet ﷺ “follow up an evil deed with a good deed” is similar to his statement concerning the Bedouin who urinated in a section of the *masjid*: “Pour over it a pail of water.” He did not say, “Pour a pail of water over it,” because the intent was not the water itself—the intent was only to remove the filth by pouring the water over it.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

It is appropriate for the good deed to be from the same category as the sin; this is more effective in erasing the sin.

EXPLANATION

When Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned that Allāh has made the good deed an eraser for sins, he mentioned that it is befitting that the good deed be from the same category as the sin the person committed. If the sin was a statement, then the good deed should be a statement. If the sin was an action, then the good deed should be an action, and so forth and so on. This is more effective in erasing the sin. The good deed removes the sin whether it is from the same category as the sin or not, but if you find a great good deed from the same category as

the sin, it will be more effective in removing the sin.

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said:

إِنَّ رَجُلًا، أَصَابَ مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ قُبْلَةً، فَأَتَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لَهُ فَأَنْزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ {وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذَّاكِرِينَ} فقال الرجل: ألي هذا؟ قال: لجميع أمتي كلهم.

A man kissed a woman (who was not his wife), so he came to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and informed him about it. Then the verse was sent down: “And establish the prayer, at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds. That is a reminder (an advice) for the mindful.” The man said, “Is this just for me?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “This is for my *ummah*, all of them.”⁶

Anas bin Mālik رضي الله عنه said:

كُنْتُ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَجَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ حَدًّا فَأَقِمْهُ عَلَيَّ. قَالَ وَلَمْ يَسْأَلْهُ عَنْهُ. قَالَ وَحَضَرَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَصَلَّى مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا قَضَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الصَّلَاةَ قَامَ إِلَيْهِ الرَّجُلُ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ حَدًّا، فَأَقِمْ فِيَّ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ: “أَلَيْسَ قَدْ صَلَّيْتَ مَعَنَا. قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ: “فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ غَفَرَ لَكَ ذَنْبَكَ. أَوْ قَالَ حَدَّكَ.

While I was with the Prophet ﷺ, a man came and said, “O Messenger of Allāh! I have committed a legally punishable sin; please inflict the legal punishment on me.” The Prophet ﷺ did not ask him what he had done. Then the time for the prayer became due and the man offered prayer along with the Prophet ﷺ, and when the Prophet ﷺ had finished his prayer, the man again got up and said, “O Messenger of Allāh! I have committed a legally punishable sin;

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 526. The verse is from Sūrah Hūd (11:114).

please inflict the punishment on me according to Allāh's laws." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Haven't you prayed with us?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allāh has forgiven your sin." Or he said, "...your legally punishable sin."⁷

In another narration collected in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Abū Umāmah رضي الله عنه said:

بَيْنَمَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَنَحْنُ فُعُودٌ مَعَهُ إِذْ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ حَدًّا فَأَقِمْهُ عَلَيَّ. فَسَكَتَ عَنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ أَعَادَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ حَدًّا فَأَقِمْهُ عَلَيَّ. فَسَكَتَ عَنْهُ وَأَقِيمَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَبُو أُمَامَةَ فَاتَّبَعَ الرَّجُلُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ انْصَرَفَ وَاتَّبَعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْظَرُ مَا يَرُدُّ عَلَى الرَّجُلِ فَلَحِقَ الرَّجُلُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ حَدًّا فَأَقِمْهُ عَلَيَّ—قَالَ أَبُو أُمَامَةَ—فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَرَأَيْتَ حِينَ خَرَجْتَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ أَلَيْسَ قَدْ تَوَضَّأْتَ فَأَحْسَنْتَ الوُضُوءَ. قَالَ بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ ثُمَّ شَهِدْتَ الصَّلَاةَ مَعَنَا. فَقَالَ نَعَمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ غَفَرَ لَكَ حَدَّكَ—أَوْ قَالَ—ذَنْبِكَ.

“While we were sitting in the *masjid* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, a man came and said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, I have committed a legally punishable offense, so impose it upon me.’ The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ kept silent. The man repeated himself and said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, I have committed a legally punishable offense, so impose it upon me.’ He (the Prophet) kept silent, and it was at this time that the *iqāmah* for prayer was pronounced.” Abū Umāmah said, “The man followed the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when he left, so I followed the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to see how he would respond to the man. The man caught up with the Messenger

⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6823

of Allāh ﷺ and said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, I have committed a legally punishable offense, so impose it upon me.’ The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, ‘Didn’t you see that as you got out of the house, you performed ablution perfectly?’ He said, ‘Of course, O Messenger of Allāh.’ [The Prophet] said to him, ‘Then you observed prayer along with us.’ The man said, ‘Yes, O Messenger of Allāh.’ Thereupon, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to him, ‘Verily, Allāh has forgiven you for the punishable offense,’ or he said ‘for your sin.’⁸

Based upon this noble principle, if sins are followed by good deeds, it is hoped that they will erase the consequences of the sins. The greater the good deed, the more effective it is in erasing the sin. If it is easy to perform a good deed from the same category as the sin, then that is more complete.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

The consequences of sin may be erased by several things.

EXPLANATION

From the great kindness Allāh has shown this *ummah* is that He has made it such that one good deed is multiplied 10 times up to 700 times. And He has made it such that one sin only counts as one sin. In addition to this, there are things which remove sins.

When the person sins, these sins have an effect. The consequences of sins in this world and the Hereafter are removed by various means. The scholars have mentioned ten means; here, Ibn Taymiyyah mentions four of these means. These four means occur in this world. Three of these means are mentioned together because they are from the actions of the person. These means are repentance, seeking forgiveness, and righteous actions. The fourth means was mentioned separately from the first three because it is not an action of the person—it is a calamity the person is afflicted with. Here, the

⁸ *Sahih Muslim* 2765

Shaykh رحمته الله did not mention the purifying removers of sin that occur in the grave, on the Day of Judgment, and after those Muslims who deserve to enter the Hellfire enter the Hellfire. These matters which remove sins are particular to the Muslims, and those who associate partners with Allāh are not included except after they repent, because repentance removes all sins, even polytheism.

The 1st Means to Remove the Effects of Sins: Repentance



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

One of these means to remove the consequences of sin is repentance.

EXPLANATION

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله began with repentance because it is the most general means to remove sins. It removes all sins. The means of repentance (*tawbah*) is to return to Allāh the Exalted from committing sins by abandoning the sin, having regret for committing the sin, and having a strong resolve to never return to the sin.

Repentance is from the reasons for the removal of sins. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ
يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴾

Say to those who have disbelieved: If they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven. But if they return, then the examples of those (punished)

before them have already preceded (as a warning).

[Sūrah al-Anfāl 8:38]

And the Exalted said:

﴿ فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

But whosoever repents after his crime and does righteous good deeds, then verily, Allāh will pardon him. Verily, Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[Sūrah al-Mā'idah 5:39]

And the Exalted said:

﴿ وَإِنِّي لَعَفَّارٌ لِمَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى ﴾

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

[Sūrah Tā-Hā 20:82]

And the Exalted said:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ
الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ
أَثَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾ يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ مُهَانًا
﴿٦٩﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ
اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَمَنْ
تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٧١﴾ ﴾

And those who invoke not any other god along with Allāh, nor kill such life as Allāh has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse, and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. The torment will be doubled for him on the Day of

Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace, except those who repent and believe (in Islamic monotheism) and do righteous deeds; for those, Allāh will change their sins into good deeds, and Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And whosoever repents and does righteous good deeds, then verily, he repents towards Allāh with true repentance.

[*Sūrah al-Furqān* 25:68-71]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيءُ النَّهَارِ وَيَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِالنَّهَارِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيءُ اللَّيْلِ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا.

Verily, Allāh the Exalted spreads out His Hand at night to accept the repentance of those who did wrong during the day, and He spreads out His Hand during the day to accept the repentance of those who did wrong during the night. (This will continue) until the sun rises from the west.¹

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ.

The one who repents from sin is like the one who has no sin.²

Repentance will not benefit the person unless it meets the conditions of repentance. There are five conditions for repentance if the sin was a violation of Allāh's rights.

THE FIRST CONDITION

Sincerity to Allāh the Exalted, such that the motivating factor pushing the person to abandon the sin is fear of Allāh the Exalted.

When a person repents, he either repents due to fear of Allāh or due

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2759

² *Sunan Ibn Mājah*; declared *ḥasan* by Shaykh al-Albānī.

to fear of the people. If he repents due to fear of Allāh, then this is a beneficial repentance which removes the effects of the sin. If he repents fearing the people, then he has stopped committing the sin at that present time, but the consequences of the sin from past days are not removed.

For example: A person fornicates—and refuge is sought with Allāh from this evil action. He fornicates once, twice, three times, and then the fear of Allāh in his heart becomes great, so he repents. This repentance removes the past sin as though he never committed this sin, and he is safe from the sin in the present time because he abandoned the sin.

Another person fornicates; he fornicates once, twice, three times, and then he fears being exposed. He fears that being exposed will jeopardize his position and status amongst the people, so he abandons the sin. This person is safe from the sin at the current moment because he abandoned the sin, but the effects of the sin he committed in the past remain with him. Thus, pay attention to the issue of sincerity.

THE SECOND CONDITION

The person must abandon the sin. The person who continues to commit the sin is not truthful in his repentance. He says he repented from the sin, but remaining upon the sin prevents his repentance as it relates to the consequences of the sin.

THE THIRD CONDITION

The person should regret the past, so he regrets having fallen into the sin. From the signs of regret is that he hates to return to the sin after Allāh has saved him from it, just as he hates to be thrown into the fire. The person did not (truly) repent if, when he is reminded about the sin, he says, “Those days were wonderful!” This person is not regretful for having sinned.

THE FOURTH CONDITION

The person should have a strong resolve to never return to the sin.

Take note: The scholars did not say that the person does not return to the sin; rather, they said he has a strong resolve to not return to the sin. If his resolve is truthful, then he has repented. If he returns to the sin after that, then he needs to repent anew, and returning to the sin does not diminish his previous repentance.

THE FIFTH CONDITION

The repentance must occur before the time for repentance ends; this time is general and specific:

- As for the general time, the person must repent before the sun rises from the west. When the sun rises from the west, the door of repentance is closed.
- As for the specific time, this is when the individual begins to choke on his soul—meaning, Allāh will accept a person's repentance as long as it is before their soul reaches their throat.

There is a subtle matter here which the scholars differ over: Does “the soul reaching the throat” mean the time when the soul is about to exit the body, or does it mean when the person has lost all hope for living?

The consequence of this matter is important. Is the repentance accepted from a person with a terminal illness, when it is known that in most cases people die from this disease? For example: The people stricken with cancer, especially certain types of cancer, or the person stricken with AIDS, and they know they have this disease—is their repentance accepted? A person oppresses his brothers and then he finds out he has terminal cancer, so he repents—is his repentance accepted?

This matter is based upon what we have previously mentioned, which is: What is the meaning of “the soul reaching the throat”? Does it mean the time when the soul is actually leaving the body, or does it mean when the person has lost hope for living?

Those who say that it means when the soul is actually leaving the

body say that the repentance of this person is accepted because he is not choking on his soul yet. Others say that it means when the person loses hope of surviving, so the repentance of this person is not accepted.

What is apparent—and Allāh knows best—is that this means when the person is actually choking on the soul, when his soul is leaving his body and he knows he is about to die right now. This is because choking on the soul is a sign of imminent death. This is the intent. Thus, as long as the person is not in the throngs of death, his repentance is accepted. When he begins to choke on his soul such that he knows his soul is not going to return to his body after this, then his repentance will not be accepted.

These five conditions apply if the sin was between the person and Allāh. If the sin was against the slaves of Allāh, there are six conditions for repentance: the five previously mentioned conditions and an additional condition. This condition is to return the right to its owner if the right was something tangible, or to receive a pardon from the oppressed person if the right was tangible or abstract.

An example of this: A person seizes a piece of land unlawfully—the repentance for this is to return the land to its rightful owner. Or if a person steals some wealth, the repentance is to return the wealth to its rightful owner.

Likewise, the person can seek a pardon from the oppressed individual if the right was tangible. For example: A person steals a tangible object and it becomes damaged or ruined, or he used the product such that it no longer remains. He goes to the owner and says, “Pardon me.” If the owner says, “I pardon you,” then this is sufficient.

If the right was abstract—as in the case of the person who insults someone, backbites a Muslim, or lies on a Muslim—then it is a must that the oppressed person pardon him (for the repentance to be valid).

There is a subtle matter concerning the abstract rights. The scholars

have mentioned that the abstract sins which are connected to the rights of the people are from one of two scenarios:

1) The oppressed person knows he has been violated. The person knows so-and-so has insulted him, or he knows this person was backbiting him or lied on him. In this case, it is a must that the person seek a pardon from the one they harmed and spend what is needed to receive a pardon.

2) The oppressed person does not know he has been violated. He does not know so-and-so lied on him, or so-and-so was backbiting him or slandering him. In this case, the scholars say that if the person who committed the sin knows that if he informs the person he oppressed about the sin, it will not cause *fitnah* (strife, dissension, or conflict), then he should seek a pardon from the person.

But if he fears that by seeking a pardon from the person and thus informing him that he oppressed him, *fitnah* or discord will result, then he does not inform him or seek his pardon. In this case, he should strive hard in supplicating for the one he oppressed, and mention him with good just as he previously mentioned him with evil, and this will be sufficient *inshāAllāh*.

The 2nd Means to Remove the Effects of Sins: Seeking Forgiveness Without Repentance



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

The second means to remove the consequence of sins is seeking forgiveness without repentance. Surely, Allāh the Exalted may forgive the person, answering his supplication, even if he does not repent. If he combines repentance and seeking forgiveness, then this is more complete.

EXPLANATION

Seeking forgiveness means to request forgiveness, because in the Arabic language the letters *alif*, *sīn*, and *tā* (است) indicate a request. Thus, the meaning is “seeking forgiveness from Allāh.”

Forgiveness from Allāh means for Allāh to conceal the sin of the person and to remove the sin’s consequence from him.

When you say “I seek Allāh’s forgiveness” (*astaghfirullāh*, اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ), this means: “I ask You, O Lord, to conceal my sin and to remove its consequences from me.”

The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ فِي الْيَوْمِ مِائَةَ مَرَّةٍ.

Verily, I seek Allāh's forgiveness 100 times a day.¹

The Prophet ﷺ said that Allāh the Exalted said:

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا
فَأَسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَعْفِرْ لَكُمْ.

O My slaves, you sin night and day and I forgive all sins, so seek My forgiveness. I will forgive you.²

The point of reference here is that seeking forgiveness is mentioned in the text alone, without repentance. Thus, we have two issues here.

THE FIRST ISSUE

Is there a difference between seeking forgiveness and repentance, or do they mean the same thing?

Answer: There is a difference between the two. This is from a number of angles:

1) The time for repentance has an expiration, whereas the time for seeking forgiveness does not elapse or expire. For this reason, forgiveness is sought for the deceased after their soul has left their body; they have died and been buried. But no one can repent for the deceased. Thus, repentance does not continue after the soul leaves the body.

2) Repentance can only come from the sinner, whereas seeking forgiveness can come from the sinner and other than him. Therefore, a person can seek forgiveness on behalf of another, while no one can repent on behalf of another person. No one can repent on behalf of the children or their parents, but they can seek forgiveness on their behalf. And the angels seek forgiveness for humans. This shows that

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2577*

there is a difference between repentance and seeking forgiveness.

THE SECOND ISSUE

Will seeking forgiveness benefit the person without repentance?

Some scholars say that seeking forgiveness is the path to repentance, and it will not benefit the person if they continue to commit the sin. This is because the path is of no benefit if it does not lead to the destination.

Some scholars say that seeking forgiveness benefits the person, even without repentance. Their proof is that seeking forgiveness appears alone in the text without repentance [being mentioned]. It appearing alone shows that it benefits in and of itself.

Where does the benefit appear in discussing this matter? The benefit appears for the person who committed a sin, continued upon it, and sought forgiveness. For example: A person smokes, and smoking cigarettes is a sin. There is almost consensus among the scholars today that smoking is impermissible. A person smokes, and when he finishes smoking, he says, "I seek Allāh's forgiveness," but he is sure that he will smoke again in an hour or two. So he is persistent upon this sin. In this case, he seeks forgiveness but he does not repent.

If we say that seeking forgiveness is of no benefit without repentance, then him seeking forgiveness is a waste and it will not benefit him. If we say that seeking forgiveness benefits the person even without repentance, then his seeking forgiveness will benefit him.

Investigating the statements of the scholars concerning this issue indicates that seeking forgiveness will fall into one of two situations:

- 1) When someone other than the sinner seeks forgiveness for the sinner. For example: The angels seek forgiveness for the one who sits in the prayer area and does not invalidate his purification. They say, "O Allāh, forgive him; O Allāh, have mercy upon him."³

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 477

Another example is the child seeking forgiveness on behalf of their parents. This will benefit the person without repentance. The proof of this is that the living are requested to seek forgiveness on behalf of the deceased, and it is known that the deceased cannot repent.

When an-Najāshī died, the Prophet ﷺ announced his death to his Companions on the same day he died, and he said:

اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ.

Seek forgiveness for your brother.⁴

And he had already died.

And the Prophet used to stand at the graves and say:

اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ وَسَلُّوا لَهُ التَّثْبِيتَ، فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ يُسْأَلُ.

Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for him to be steadfast, because he is now being questioned.⁵

This was said after the people had passed away, so it was not thought that they could possibly repent. And from another angle, it is legislatively prescribed to seek forgiveness, and as long as it is legislatively prescribed, then it must be beneficial. This is a principle. Allāh did not instruct with anything except that it is beneficial, for surely, Allāh does not command us with something in order to make things difficult for us. He only commands us with matters that will benefit us in this life and the Hereafter.

2) The sinner seeking forgiveness for himself. The correct viewpoint is that the sinner will benefit from seeking forgiveness with the condition that it is brought about due to fear of Allāh. It originates from truthful fear of Allāh the Exalted. Thus, the person finds himself between two conditions: the condition of fearing Allāh and the condition of weakness toward his desires. Consequently, when he reflects upon fear of Allāh, he seeks forgiveness, but when

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3880

⁵ *Bulūgh al-Marām* 581

his desires get the better of him, he sins. This person will benefit from seeking forgiveness.

As for seeking forgiveness with the tongue, which did not originate from fear of Allāh, then this method of seeking forgiveness is false and invalid. The person who says with his tongue “I seek Allāh’s forgiveness” while there is no awareness in his heart of the sin he committed or fear of the punishment, then he is untruthful in seeking forgiveness and it will not benefit him.

Thus, we say that the middle position from the statements of the scholars concerning seeking forgiveness without repentance is that seeking forgiveness will benefit the person if it originates from fear of Allāh the Exalted. But if he only seeks forgiveness with his tongue, without his heart being cognizant, then this will not benefit the person. For this reason, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “Surely, Allāh the Exalted may forgive the person, answering his supplication, even if he does not repent.”

His statement: “If he combines repentance and seeking forgiveness, this is more complete.” When the person combines seeking forgiveness and repentance, this is complete, as Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

And those who, when they have committed immorality or wronged themselves with evil, they remember Allāh and ask forgiveness for their sins; and none can forgive sins except Allāh. And they do not persist in the wrong they have done, while they know.

[Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān 3:135]

Here, He combined the mention of seeking forgiveness and repentance. As for seeking forgiveness, He said, “...they remember Allāh and ask forgiveness for their sins.” As for repentance, He said, “And they do not persist in the wrong they have done.” Thus, the sinner

combines seeking forgiveness and repentance.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

I swear by Allāh, surely, I seek forgiveness from Allāh and repent to Him in one day more than 70 times.⁶

This is proof that combining repentance and seeking forgiveness is more complete for the person if he sins.

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6307

The 3rd Means to Remove the Effects of Sins: Righteous Actions



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته اللہ علیہ said:

The third means to remove the consequences of sins is righteous deeds which expiate sins.

EXPLANATION

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it.” Righteous actions are an eraser. Some of the scholars call righteous actions purifiers, meaning: by way of righteous actions, the person purifies himself from sins.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته اللہ علیہ said:

Like the expiation prescribed for one who has intercourse during the day in Ramaḍān, or the one who divorces his wife by *ḡihār*¹, or the one who commits some actions which are forbidden during Ḥajj or who fails to fulfill some of its obligations, or the one who hunts

¹ **Translator’s note:** A man divorcing his wife by saying to her, “You are to me like my mother’s back.”

during Ḥajj.

EXPLANATION

The prescribed expiation is the specified expiation which is the consequence of an action. Whenever the action occurs, the expiation becomes mandatory. These expiations are ways to remove sins or shortcomings. It is hoped that the expiation will remove the consequences necessitated by the sin. Some scholars say that the expiation does not completely remove the sin's consequence unless it is accompanied by repentance.

The correct statement from the scholars is that the expiation is a deterrent before the sin occurs, while it is restoration after the sin occurs. The expiation deters the people from committing the sin, but if the people commit the sin, then the expiation repairs the errors they committed.

Shaykh-ul-Islām said, “Like the expiation prescribed for one who has sexual intercourse during the day in Ramaḍān.” Sexual intercourse during the daylight hours of Ramaḍān is a major evil and a sin. If the person has sexual intercourse during the daylight hours of Ramaḍān, then the mandatory expiation for this is freeing a slave; if he does not have a slave to free, he must fast two consecutive months; if he is not able to do so, he must feed 60 poor people. If he does this, it will remove the evil consequences of the sin. And he still must make up this day of fasting. The most correct statement from the scholars concerning this matter is that it is obligatory upon him to make up this day of fasting and perform the expiation.

What are the effects of the expiation? The effect of the expiation is that it is a deterrent before the sin is committed. When the person knows that having sexual intercourse during the daylight hours of Ramaḍān will result in this major expiation, it will prevent him from having sexual intercourse during those hours.

The scholars have mentioned a noble, valuable principle: When the natural impediment is weak, the legislative impediment is stronger. And when the desire to commit an act is strong, the deterrent to

commit the act is stronger.

It is known that when a person is fasting, he is prohibited from having sexual relations; the enticements and temptations become strong and the soul is weak, if you want to speak truthfully about the matter. You will find a man during Ramaḍān who does not go near his wife the entire night, but when he starts fasting, the Shayṭān comes to him and the temptations come to him, and he falls into the impermissible.

From the strange questions I have been asked is when a man in his 70s said to me, “O Shaykh, by Allāh, for 10 years I have not gone close to my wife. And this year during Ramaḍān, while I was fasting, I had sexual relations with her!” This is because Iblīs is diligent in causing man to fall into this. Because of this, there is a difficult expiation as a deterrent for man to keep him from falling into this sin.

After the person has committed the sin, the expiation is in place to remove the consequences of the sin, but as for the day in which he had sexual relations while fasting, this day of fasting must be made up.

Shaykh-ul-Islām said, “...or the one who divorces his wife by telling her she is like his mother’s back.” The expiation for this is likewise freeing a slave, fasting two consecutive months if he cannot free a slave, or feeding 60 poor people if he cannot fast two consecutive months.

Shaykh-ul-Islām said, “...or the one who commits some actions which are forbidden during Ḥajj.” Why did he say “some” and not “the one who commits actions which are forbidden during Ḥajj”? This is because there are some forbidden acts during Ḥajj which do not carry a penalty or expiation. For example, marriage: there is no penalty for marrying while performing Ḥajj. For this reason, he said “some actions which are forbidden.” The penalty for the person who shaves his head while in a state of *ihrām*, or the one who removes some of his hair while in *ihrām*, is that they have the choice to either

sacrifice an animal, feed 60 poor people, or fast three days.

Shaykh-ul-Islām said, “...or who fails to fulfill some of its obligations.” Meaning: Likewise, the one who abandons some obligations of Ḥajj should offer expiation, because the person who leaves off some obligations of Ḥajj must offer a sacrifice.

There is a subtle issue of jurisprudence here: Does the sacrifice offered by the person who leaves off some of the obligations of Ḥajj take the place of those obligations, or is the sacrifice to remove the effect of leaving off some obligations? Is this affair from the trivial matters of knowledge? No; rather, this has a great effect on the rulings of Ḥajj.

If we say that the sacrifice takes the place of the obligation, then we have to say that whoever is unable to perform the obligation of Ḥajj must offer a sacrifice. For example: If a person enters the hospital, bedridden and unable to leave—they can take him to ‘Arafah by car, but he is unable to spend the night at Muzdalifah and he can’t spend the night at Minā. As far as stoning the *jamarāt*, he can entrust this to someone else to stone on his behalf, but no one can spend the night in Minā on his behalf. So is it obligatory for him to offer a sacrifice?

If we say that the sacrifice takes the place of the missed obligations, then we say that yes, this is obligatory upon him, because the one who is unable to perform the obligations who has something to take its place must do the action that will take its place. For example: If someone is unable to perform *wuḍū’*, is purification waived from him? No; rather, he performs *tayammum*².

If we say that the sacrifice is to remove the effects of the person missing some obligations of Ḥajj, then we say that a sacrifice is not obligatory upon him. It is not obligatory upon the person who is unable to perform some obligations of Ḥajj to offer a sacrifice, because there is no sin upon him and the obligation is waived from

² **Translator’s note:** *Tayammum* is to perform purification using the soil of the earth. Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymīn رحمته الله said, “The way in which *tayammum* is done is by striking clean earth with the hands once, then wiping the entire face with them, then wiping the hands with one another.” (*Majmū’ al-Fatāwā* 11/155).

him.

That which seems to be correct—and Allāh knows best—is that the sacrifice erases the shortcomings and it does not take the place of the obligations. Therefore, it is not obligatory upon the person who is unable to perform some obligations of Ḥajj. But if the person unable to perform some of the obligations offers a sacrifice out of caution and to remove himself from the scholarly difference of opinion, then this is something good.

Shaykh-ul-Islām said, “...and the one who hunts during Ḥajj.” The expiation for the person who intentionally hunts during Ḥajj is that he must offer an animal equivalent to the one he killed.

If a questioner asked, “What are the prescribed expiations?” We say: They are specific expiations that result from a specific action. From one angle, they are regulated and not unrestricted, and from the other angle, they are the result of a specific action.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

These expiations are of four types: offering a sacrifice, freeing a slave, giving in charity, and fasting.

EXPLANATION

The sacrifice mentioned here is not the same sacrifice offered by those performing Ḥajj.

As for the charity: does this include *zakāh*³? No, it does not. Why? Because we are speaking about expiation, and expiation involves charity which is separate from *zakāh*.

Some of those who explain *The Concise Advices* err by saying that this charity includes *zakāh* and optional charity. We say: The intent here

³ **Translator’s note:** Meaning: the act of giving charity with the intention of performing the third pillar of Islām, following the rules and regulations of *zakāh*.

is not *zakāh* or optional charity—the intent here is charity which became obligatory due to a specific action, such as feeding 60 poor people for the person who shaves his head while in a state of *ihrām*.

Similarly, the fasting mentioned as expiation does not include the obligatory fast of Ramaḍān and it does not include the optional fast like the fast on Mondays and Thursdays. The intent is that Allāh has obligated the person who does specific actions to fast as expiation for those actions. For example, the person who has sexual intercourse during the daylight hours of Ramaḍān must fast for two consecutive months.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Regarding the kinds of expiation that are unrestricted, as Ḥudhayfah said to ‘Umar: “The *fitnah* faced by a man because of his family, wealth, and children may be expiated by prayer, fasting, charity, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.”

EXPLANATION

The “unrestricted expiation” here means righteous actions. Righteous actions are expiation for sins. As we have mentioned, righteous actions are called “purifiers.” The *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās mentioned the dispute of the angels who sit on lofty stations. It is a tremendous *ḥadīth*. The Prophet ﷺ said that Allāh spoke to him in a dream and said:

يَا مُحَمَّدُ هَلْ تَدْرِي فِيْمَ يَخْتَصِمُ الْمَلَأُ الْأَعْلَى . قَالَ فِي الْكَفَّارَاتِ ،
وَالْكَفَّارَاتُ الْمُكْتُ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالْمَشْيِ عَلَى الْأَقْدَامِ
إِلَى الْجَمَاعَاتِ وَإِسْبَاطِ الْوُضُوءِ فِي الْمَكَارِهِ وَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ عَاشَ بِخَيْرٍ
وَمَاتَ بِخَيْرٍ وَكَانَ مِنْ خَطِيئَتِهِ كَيَوْمٍ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ .

O Muḥammad, do you know what the chiefs on high are disputing about? They dispute about the things which expiate sins. Things that expiate sins are: staying in the *masjid* after the prayers, walking on

foot to the congregational prayers, and performing *wudū'* properly when it is difficult to do so. Whoever does these things will live upon good and he will die a good death, and he will be as free from sin as on the day his mother bore him.⁴

What are the chiefs on high disputing about? They dispute about the things which expiate sins. This *ḥadīth* explains those actions which expiate sins. He said, "...staying in the *masjid* after the prayers"; this expiates sins. "Walking to the congregational prayers"; this expiates sins. "Performing *wudū'* properly when it is difficult to do so"; this expiates sins. "Whoever does these things will live upon good"; this means those who perform these good deeds.

How much good has passed us by? Who from amongst us is diligent in remaining in the *masjid*? *SubḥānAllāh!* When the *imām* says the *salām* to exit the prayer, it is as though the people were sitting on hot coals. The good one is the person who at least remains sitting until he remembers Allāh, and even he will rush in his remembrance and then walk away! Of course, sometimes a person will have some business to attend to, so he must leave. But for most of us today, it has become such that we do not sit in the *masjid* except on rare occasions. Remaining in the *masjid* is from the righteous actions. The person who remains in the *masjid* is promised that he will live upon good, and it is also from the reasons for having a good ending because the Prophet ﷺ said, "...and he will die a good death."

Likewise: "walking on foot to the congregational prayers, and performing *wudū'* properly when it is difficult to do so." The proof that righteous deeds expiate sins is that the text of this *ḥadīth* calls righteous actions "the expiation of sins."

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, "Ḥudhayfah said to 'Umar, 'The *fitnah* faced by a man because of his family, wealth, and children may be expiated by prayer, fasting, charity, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.' In another narration, he mentioned '...the *fitnah* faced by a man from himself, his children, and his neighbor.'"

⁴ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 3157; authenticated by al-Albānī.

The *fitnah* faced by a man because of his family, wealth, and children. What is the *fitnah* of a man concerning his family, wealth, and children? The scholars said it is what he is exposed to by entertaining them, or the minor sins he does for them.

The scholars have said that a man may be tested “in” his children, he may be tested “by” his children, or he may be tested “from” his children.

- He may be tested by his children, so he plays with them and he may miss some of his obligations because of them. How many people never ever took a picture until he had children, and now he carries around a picture of his child on his phone! There are good people who have refused to take a picture since they have known the truth, except those pictures which are a necessity. But once he has children, he photographs his children. He has been tested by his children.

- He may be tested in his children by his children being upon an evil path or having bad manners. And refuge is sought with Allāh.

- He may be tested from his children by the child calling the parent to evil. How many men were upon guidance, the Sunnah, and the blessed Salafi methodology which sweetens life, and he actualized uprightness, but when he has a child, his child keeps at him until he distorts the parent and turns him away from it!

As for a man being tested by his neighbor, as appears in the other narration, the scholars said that this is what occurs due to envy, or from infringing on their rights, like with the driveway for example. This is the *fitnah* of a man regarding his neighbor. Righteous actions expiate these *fitan*—actions such as prayer, fasting, enjoining the good, and forbidding the evil.

The scholars have agreed that righteous actions expiate the minor sins, but do righteous actions expiate the major sins?

We will give an illustration so you will know the implications of this matter. Does the Muslim pray or not? He prays. The greatest

righteous action after *tawhīd* is the prayer. So if we say that righteous actions expiate the major sins unrestrictedly, will there remain upon the Muslim any sin? No sin would remain, because at the very least a Muslim prays—not meaning that this is the least action in terms of value, but meaning that this is the action the Muslim never abandons. Thus, if we say that righteous actions expiate major sins unrestrictedly, then each time the Muslim prays, it would wipe away his past sins; and on the Day of Judgment, no Muslim would enter the Hellfire because their sins would have been expiated. And this is not going to happen.

The scholars differ concerning this matter: Are sins expiated through righteous actions or is repentance necessary? That which is correct based upon the proof is that major sins require repentance. The Prophet ﷺ said:

الصَّلَاةُ الْخَمْسُ وَالْجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ كَفَّارَاتٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ مَا لَمْ تُعْشَرَ الْكِبَائِرُ.

The five daily prayers, and Jumu'ah prayer to Jumu'ah prayer, is expiation for what comes in between them as long as major sins have not been committed.⁵

But if the expiation doesn't counteract the small sins, then they lessen the major sins. For example: If a person has minor sins, then he performs *wudū'* so his minor sins are erased, then he prays while not having any minor sins—it is hoped that these deeds will lessen his major sins. These deeds will not completely remove his major sins, but it is hoped that they will lessen them.

What if these good deeds don't counteract the major sins? In this case, the expiation will be turned into extra good deeds. This is because Allāh's judgment is fair and just. For example: A Muslim performs *wudū'*. First, if he has small sins, this *wudū'* will erase his small sins; then, if he does not have any small sins, Allāh the Exalted will lessen his major sins. If he does not have any major sins, the expiation will become extra good deeds in accordance with the

⁵ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhi* 214

reward for performing *wudū'*.

The righteous deeds could be strengthened such that the effect they have increases, so they remove the major sin. This is not due to the type of good deed it is; rather, it's due to its strength. It becomes strong either due to the certainty of the heart or the benefit that reaches others. It can become strong until it erases the major sin. This could occur when the deeds are placed on the scales, or by him being forgiven.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيُخَلِّصُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي عَلَى رُءُوسِ الْخَلَائِقِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيَنْشُرُ عَلَيْهِ تِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ سَجَلًا كُلُّ سَجَلٍ مِثْلُ مَدِّ الْبَصْرِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَتَنْكِرُ مِنْ هَذَا شَيْئًا أَظَلَمَكَ كَتَبْتِي الْحَافِظُونَ فَيَقُولُ لَا يَا رَبِّ فَيَقُولُ أَفَلَاكَ عُذْرٌ فَيَقُولُ لَا يَا رَبِّ فَيَقُولُ بَلَى إِنَّ لَكَ عِنْدَنَا حَسَنَةً فَإِنَّهُ لَا ظُلْمَ عَلَيْكَ الْيَوْمَ فَتُخْرَجُ بِطَاقَةٍ فِيهَا أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَيَقُولُ احْضِرْ وَزَنِّكَ فَيَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ مَا هَذِهِ الْبِطَاقَةُ مَعَ هَذِهِ السَّجَلَاتِ فَقَالَ إِنَّكَ لَا تَظْلَمُ قَالَ فَتُوضَعُ السَّجَلَاتُ فِي كَفِّهِ وَالْبِطَاقَةُ فِي كَفِّهِ فَطَاشَتْ السَّجَلَاتُ وَثَقُلَتْ الْبِطَاقَةُ فَلَا يَثْقُلُ مَعَ اسْمِ اللَّهِ شَيْءٌ.

Allāh will bring forth a man belonging to my *ummah* before all creation on the Day of Judgment and will spread 99 scrolls [containing the record of his bad deeds] for him, each scroll extending as far as the eye can see. Then He will say, "Do you object to anything in this? Have my scribes who keep note wronged you?" He will say, "No, my Lord." He will ask him, "Do you have any excuse?" He will say, "No, my Lord." Allāh will say, "On the contrary, you have with Us a good deed, and you will not be wronged this day." A card will then be brought out, on which are the words "I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger." Allāh will say, "Bring your balance." The man will say, "O Lord, what is a card in comparison to these scrolls?" And He will reply, "You will not be wronged." The scrolls will then be put on one side of the balance

and the card on the other, and the scrolls will become light and the card heavy. Nothing can compare in weight to the name of Allāh.⁶

Does this apply to every Muslim who says “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh”? Will all Muslims have their scale of good deeds outweigh their scale of bad deeds? If this were the case, no Muslim would enter the Hellfire. Thus, this was specific to his saying “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh,” due to the strong certainty he said it with and the greatness of his actions which actualized the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh.” But this trait might not be found in some other Muslims, so it will not affect the balance of their scale in this manner.

Similar to this is the prostitute from the Children of Israel who fornicated as an occupation. After she drank some water, she noticed a dog eating soil due to severe thirst. So she had mercy upon the dog and went down the well and poured the dog some water, so Allāh forgave her.⁷

Will every fornicator who pours water for a dog be forgiven? The answer: No. This woman was forgiven for this action due to the mercy and gentleness in a righteous heart.

Some people may perform Ḥajj and be forgiven for all their sins, either by pairing repentance with Ḥajj or having diligence in performing his Ḥajj with a sincere heart and truthful intention. Someone else may return from Ḥajj with his sins lessened, if he was of a lesser degree than the previously mentioned person.

Therefore, we say: The premise is that righteous deeds do not expiate major sins; rather, they must be accompanied with repentance. But righteous deeds may lessen major sins. And the good deeds could strengthen due to the certainty of heart or the great benefit it brings others, so the deed increases until it removes major sins.

⁶ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 6699; *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 2639. Classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albānī.

⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3467

This is the meaning of what Shaykh-ul-Islām mentioned.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

This is indicated by the Qur'an and the authentic narrations which speak of expiation by way of the five daily prayers, Jumu'ah, fasting, Hajj, and all the actions concerning which it is said, "Whoever says such-and-such or does such-and-such, he will be forgiven," or "his previous sins will be forgiven." There are many such reports in the books of Sunan, especially those books which have been written concerning virtuous deeds.

EXPLANATION

An example of this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

الصَّلَوَاتُ الْخَمْسُ وَالْجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ كَفَّارَاتٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ مَا لَمْ تُغَشَّ
الْكَبَائِرُ.

The five daily prayers, and Jumu'ah prayer to Jumu'ah prayer, is expiation for what comes in between them as long as major sins have not been committed.⁸

Some of these actions are daily expiation, like the five daily prayers. Some are weekly expiation, like the weekly Friday prayers, while some are yearly expiation, like the fasting of Ramaḍān. Thus, be mindful, O Muslims, of Allāh's favor upon you. Allāh has made for you a category of actions which expiate the sins daily, weekly, and yearly.

There are some expiations for the entire past. The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

Whoever fasts during the month of Ramaḍān out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allāh's rewards, all his past sins will be forgiv-

⁸ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhi* 214

en.⁹

And his statement:

مَنْ حَجَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتَ، فَلَمْ يَرْفُثْ وَلَمْ يَفْسُقْ، رَجَعَ كَمَا وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ.

Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any obscenity or commit any evil will go back (as free of) sin as on the day his mother bore him.¹⁰

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "... all the actions concerning which it is said, "Whoever says such-and-such..." Like the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

إِذَا قَالَ أَحَدُكُمْ آمِينَ. وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ آمِينَ. فَوَافَقَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

When one of you says "Āmīn" and the angels say "Āmīn", if they synchronize with one another, the person will be forgiven for his previous sins.¹¹

This is referring to when the person says "Āmīn" during the prayer, then the angels likewise say "Āmīn," and if these two synchronize then the person will be forgiven for their previous sins.

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا قَالَ الْإِمَامُ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ فَقُولُوا اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ وَافَقَ قَوْلُهُ قَوْلَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

When the imām says, "Allāh responds to him who praised Him," say: "O Allāh, our Lord, to You be the praise," because if what anyone says synchronizes with what the angels say, he will be forgiven his past sins.¹²

⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 38

¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1819

¹¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 410

¹² *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 848

Pay attention to this, O slave of Allāh. Be conscious of this while you are performing this action. Some people don't give these noble actions their due right. When the *imām* says, "Nor of those who went astray" (وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ), then say "*Āmīn*" while you are conscious of this great statement, hoping for Allāh's virtue and hoping He allows your saying to synchronize with that of the angels.

And when the *imām* says, "Allāh responds to him who praised Him," say: "O Allāh, our Lord, to You be the praise" while you are cognizant of what you are saying, hoping that Allāh will allow your statement to synchronize with the saying of the angels; because the one whose saying synchronizes with that of the angels will be forgiven of their previous sins.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "...or does such-and-such, his previous sins will be forgiven." Like the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

Whoever fasts during the month of Ramaḍān out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allāh's rewards, all his past sins will be forgiven.¹³

And his statement ﷺ:

مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

Whoever stands in prayer during the Night of Decree having faith and seeking the reward, he will be forgiven for his previous sins.¹⁴

And his statement ﷺ:

مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ نَحْوَ وُضُوئِي هَذَا ثُمَّ قَامَ فَرَكَعَ رَكَعَتَيْنِ لَا يُحَدِّثُ فِيهِمَا نَفْسَهُ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

Whoever performs *wuḍū'* like my *wuḍū'*, then prays two *raka'āt* without letting his thoughts wander, his previous sins will be forgiven.

¹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 38

¹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2024

en.¹⁵

Who attempts this? Who from amongst us attempts to perfect his *wudū'*, and stands in prayer without allowing his thoughts to wander during the two units of prayer? The meaning of this is that he does not allow his thoughts to wander concerning matters of the worldly life, but instead he focuses on his prayer from beginning to end. Who from amongst us has tried to do this noble act of worship? Only a few people do this. Allāh's help is sought. Even during our obligatory prayers, it has become such that we do not try to focus during our prayer. The worldly thoughts only come to him during prayer. Perhaps a person will not think about a particular matter until the *imām* says "*Allāhu Akbar.*" When the *imām* says "*Allāhu Akbar,*" the world opens up on him. This is a deficiency and negligence.

It is necessary that we focus in our prayers with humility. O you who are burdened with sins—and that is all of us—be diligent in perfecting your *wudū'*, then stand and pray two *raka'āt* of prayer. Turn to Allāh and don't allow your thoughts to wander, and you will receive this promise mentioned by the one who is trusted and believed ﷺ: "his previous sins will be forgiven."

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "There are many such reports in the books of Sunan, especially those books which have been written concerning virtuous deeds."

The scholars of *ḥadīth* have compiled books concerning virtuous deeds. Some of these books are about this subject alone, while other books have this subject included in the books of the Sunan. There are numerous *ahādīth* about this subject. This subject is of great benefit to the believer because virtuous deeds increase reward and remove sins. We have previously mentioned that all humans sin, so our need for this subject is great. The believer must be diligent in knowing the righteous deeds which are mentioned as expiation for sins.

¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 226

There are many simple things from sayings and actions which connect to the person being forgiven for their sins. For example, the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ أَكَلَ طَعَامًا ثُمَّ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنِي هَذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَنْ لَبَسَ ثَوْبًا فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَسَانِي هَذَا الثَّوْبَ وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

Whoever eats food and then says, “All praises belong to Allāh, the One who fed me and provided it for me without any power or might from me,” will be forgiven for his previous sins. And whoever puts on a (new) garment and says, “All praises belong to Allāh, the One who clothed me with this garment and provided it for me without any power or might from me,” will be forgiven for his previous sins.¹⁶

Included in this is seeking forgiveness after the completion of the prayer. It has been narrated by Miḥjan bin al-Adra’:

دَخَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمَسْجِدَ فَإِذَا هُوَ بِرَجُلٍ قَدْ قَضَى صَلَاتَهُ وَهُوَ يَتَشَهَّدُ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ يَا اللَّهُ الْأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ أَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي ذُنُوبِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ. قَالَ فَقَالَ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ. ثَلَاثًا.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ entered the *masjid* and saw a man who had finished his prayer (meaning he was at the end of his prayer) and was reciting the *tashabbud*, saying (meaning, after reciting the *tashabbud* he began to supplicate with this *du’ā*): “O Allāh, I ask you, O Allāh, the One, aṣ-Ṣamad, the One Who did not beget, nor was He begotten, and there is none comparable unto Him, that you may forgive me my sins; you are Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.” He (the Prophet ﷺ) said, “He has been forgiven” (repeating this

¹⁶ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 4023; declared authentic by al-Albānī.

three times).¹⁷

Included in this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ قَالَ حِينَ يَسْمَعُ الْمُؤَذِّنَ وَأَنَا أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ رَضِيْتُ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولًا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا غُفِرَ لَهُ .

Whoever says upon hearing the *mu'adh'dhin*: “And I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh alone, without partners, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger. I am pleased with Allāh as Lord, with Muḥammad as a Messenger, and with Islām as a religion,” then he will be forgiven for his previous sins.¹⁸

Included in this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ غَسَلَ مُسْلِمًا فَكَتَمَ عَلَيْهِ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ أَرْبَعِينَ مَرَّةً .

Whoever washes a (deceased) Muslim and conceals him, Allāh will forgive him 40 times.¹⁹

The meaning of “and conceals him” is that the person who washes him does not disclose the defects he sees upon the deceased; thus, he will be forgiven 40 times.

Included in this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُذْنِبُ ذَنْبًا فَيُحْسِنُ الطُّهُورَ ثُمَّ يَقُومُ فَيُصَلِّي رَكَعَتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ إِلَّا غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ .

There is no slave who commits a sin, then perfects his purification (*wuḍū*), then stands and prays two units of prayer, then seeks Allāh's forgiveness, except that Allāh will forgive him.²⁰

¹⁷ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 985; declared authentic by al-Albānī.

¹⁸ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 525

¹⁹ Collected by al-Ḥākim (354/1)

²⁰ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 1521

Included in this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ هَكَذَا ثُمَّ خَرَجَ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ لَا يَنْهَزُهُ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةُ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا خَلَا مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

Whoever performs *wudu'* like this (meaning, he perfects his *wudu'*) then goes to the *masjid* while nothing urged him to do so except the prayer, he will be forgiven for what has occurred from sins.²¹

Look at how some people belittle prayer in congregation today, either by saying that the scholars differ over this matter, or by believing that they are not in need of it. Therefore, they miss out on this great virtue connected with praying in congregation.

Included in this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ تَعَارَّ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي اسْتَجِيبْ.

Whoever awakens during the night and says, “There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone, with no partner or associate. To Him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs the praise, and He is able to do all things. All praise belongs to Allāh, Allāh is free from imperfection, there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh and Allāh is the Greatest. There is no power and no strength except with Allāh,” then he supplicates by saying, “O my Lord, forgive me,” he will be forgiven.²²

The point of knowing this is to know that when the person performs righteous actions, it is a reason to be forgiven of sins. And these are from the first category he mentioned.

Then comes the second category, which is all righteous actions even if they are not specifically connected to the forgiveness of sins. The

²¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 232

²² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1154

righteous actions wiping away sins are not limited to the narrations mentioning “the person who says this or does that will be forgiven”; rather, it is more general than that. This is based upon the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: “Follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it.” Therefore, if someone follows an evil deed with a good deed, it will erase the sin.

Someone might say: If this is the case, then what is the benefit of specifying these particular actions as a cause for forgiveness if other good deeds share the quality of acting as a cause for forgiveness? We say: The purpose is to bring attention and clarify that forgiveness by these actions is greater than forgiveness by way of other actions.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمه الله said:

Know! Paying attention to this is from the things man is in greatest need of. When a person reaches the age of puberty—especially in these times and during times of weakness which resemble the time of pre-Islamic ignorance in some ways—the person who grows up among knowledgeable and religious people may be stained by matters of pre-Islamic ignorance in a number of ways, so how about other than him?

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “Know!” This is a practice of the scholars. If they precede a sentence with the word “know,” this indicates the magnitude of what will be mentioned after it. This is an alert to the status of what will be stated afterward.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “Know! Paying attention to this...” The phrase “this” refers back to the three previously mentioned affairs: repentance, seeking forgiveness without repentance, and righteous actions. Thus, the believer showing concern in striving upon erasing his sins, repenting, and seeking forgiveness, is from his greatest needs.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “When a person reaches the age of puberty...” Why did he say “when he reaches the age of puberty”? This is because no sins are written against him before the age of puberty. The Prophet ﷺ said:

رُفِعَ الْقَلَمُ عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ عَنِ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ وَعَنِ الْمُتَبَتَّلِ حَتَّى يَبْرَأَ وَعَنِ الصَّبِيِّ حَتَّى يَكْبُرَ.

The pen is lifted from three: the sleeping person until he awakes, the insane person until he is restored to reason, and a young child until he reaches puberty.²³

Once the person reaches puberty, they are accountable for these actions.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “When a person reaches the age of puberty—especially in these times...” He means people in general during his era.

He said, “...especially in these times and during times of weakness.” The intent of “weakness” here is time periods that affect the people. This is because time could pass by the people in which their religion becomes weak. This is found in some countries. You find in some lands that a time passes in which the people are lethargic, so their religious practice becomes severely weak; and then a time of enthusiasm comes. The reason for this is knowledge and ignorance. When the people of knowledge are energetic, and knowledge of the Book and Sunnah is spread, the people become energetic towards good. But if the people of knowledge are lethargic in spreading knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah and they leave this job to others, then what will spread in reality is ignorance which the people think is knowledge. An example of this are the sayings of remembrance circulated by the *Ṣūfis* and *Dervish* which have not been narrated in the Book or the Sunnah. This weakens the religion in the souls of the people.

²³ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 4398

There is a principle: Innovation extinguishes the Sunnah in the hearts of the people. No one attaches himself to an innovation except that the equivalent love for a Sunnah dies in his heart. Consequently, the people will become weak in their religion because they are implementing what they believe to be the religion, but it is not the religion. And they will abandon the correct religion; rather, they will reject it. So when someone comes to them with “Allāh the Exalted said, His Messenger ﷺ said,” and it opposes the innovation they are upon, they will reject it. And perhaps they will say to you, “You are a Wahhābī!” Some people may even go so far as to say, “This is a Wahhābī verse!” If the Qur’ān goes against their practices, they will describe it by saying it’s a Wahhābī Qur’ān, even though it is the very same Qur’ān they recite.

This brings to mind a matter which needs attention: It is necessary for us to give concern to disseminating knowledge from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in our lands. The students of knowledge must strive hard in this area while the common folk must strive hard in acquiring the audio cassettes of knowledge from the firmly grounded, nurturing scholars—those who are known for *tawhīd* and Sunnah. Play these audio cassettes in the home. Allow the buzzing from the remembrance of Allāh the Exalted to replace the humming of music and those sounds which attract the Shayṭān to the home.

If we desire strength for our society and elevation and nobility in this world, and happiness, contentment of the heart, and loftiness in the Hereafter, then we must implement this.

It’s unfortunate, O blessed Muslim, that we find some Muslims crying over the condition of weakness and humiliation the Muslims are in today, so they turn to politics while leaving that which they should be giving importance to as the real cause of this weakness. The real cause is the distance from spreading authentic knowledge founded upon the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. This issue must be given attention; for this reason, he said “during times of weakness,” meaning those times the religion becomes weak.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "...which resemble the time of pre-Islamic ignorance in some ways." Pay attention: he did not say the society is that of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance; rather, he said "which resemble the time of pre-Islamic ignorance in some ways." The meaning of this is that this is from much of the worldly life opening up and the numerous tribulations, such that it resembles the days of pre-Islamic ignorance from this angle; likewise from the standpoint of the increase in sins and transgressions. This was widespread during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and amongst the Jews and Christians.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "...the person who grows up among knowledgeable and religious people"—in this society in which the religion has become weak—"may be stained by matters of pre-Islamic ignorance in a number of ways." So how about the person who is raised away from knowledge! Surely, he is more likely to be stained by the affairs of the days of pre-Islamic ignorance.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Collected in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* is the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa'īd رضي الله عنه. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَذُو الْقُدَّةِ بِالْقُدَّةِ، حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا جِحْرَ ضَبٍّ دَخَلْتُمُوهُ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ؟ قَالَ: فَمَنْ؟

"You will follow the path of those who came before you step by step, so that even if they entered the hole of a lizard, you would enter it too." They said, "O Messenger of Allāh, do you mean the Jews and Christians?" He said, "Who else?"²⁴

EXPLANATION

The statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم: "You will follow the path of those who came before you"; this means that you will follow the ways of

²⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3456

الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بَخَلَّوْا فِيهِمْ وَخُسِفَتْ لَهُمْ أَصْوَاحُكُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا ﴿

They had enjoyed their portion awhile, so enjoy your portion awhile as those before you enjoyed their portion awhile; and you indulged in play and pastime as they indulged in play and pastime.

[*Sūrah at-Tawbah* 9:69]

And there are further corroborating reports in the authentic and *hasan* narrations.

EXPLANATION

This verse was concerning the hypocrites, those who mocked the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Those who said, “We have not seen anyone more cowardly than those reciters.” So this verse was sent down about them. “So enjoy your portion”; here, “portion” refers to the portion from the religion and the worldly life, meaning: enjoy your worldly life due to the portion of religion and worldly life you have. “As those before you enjoyed their portion awhile, and you indulged in play and pastime as they indulged in play and pastime”; play and pastime refers to falsehood and insulting the prophets and messengers.

Although this verse was sent down concerning the hypocrites, it is applied in general. And there are those from this *ummah* who resemble the people from previous nations.

Some resemble the previous nations by abandoning knowledge. This is a resemblance to the Christians, who abandoned knowledge and thus went astray.

Some resemble the previous nations by abandoning worship despite having knowledge. This is a resemblance to the Jews; thus, the anger of Allāh is upon them.

Some scholars have mentioned that the statement of Allāh the Exalted “so enjoy your portion awhile” refers to desires; meaning, they resembled the nations of old in following desires and sins,

while the statement “and you indulged in play and pastime as they indulged in play and pastime” refers to the religion, and this is the action of the innovators.

The sinners from the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ resemble the people of pre-Islamic ignorance in committing sins due to desires, while the innovators from the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ resemble the previous nations by performing acts of worship without knowledge.

Imitating the disbelievers in religious matters is not permissible, and imitating the disbelievers in worldly matters specific to them is not permissible.

Doing an action that the disbelievers do because the people are in need of it is not imitating the disbelievers. For example: We drive cars, and the car was perhaps invented by the disbelievers. This is not imitating them. Therefore, it is not necessary for us to ride camels and abandon cars, as some of the extremists of our era believe. They allege that driving cars is imitation of the disbelievers.

Other examples can be found in some of the devices that make things easy, like the glasses and calculators present in our society. These are used due to the people’s need for them, and that which is done due to need is not considered imitation.

I have seen some youth deliberately driving through the traffic sign’s red light. They deliberately drive through the red light and consider this to be an act of worship; why? They say, “We are opposing the Jews and Christians, because this traffic light is taken from the Jews and Christians!” This is blatant ignorance. The scholars have agreed that this does not fall under imitation because the people use this out of necessity, and this traffic light is not specific to the non-Muslim or the Muslim.

Likewise, the clothing which is generally shared between Muslims and non-Muslims—using this clothing is not considered imitation. But if the clothes are particular to the disbelievers such that if the person is seen wearing them, someone would say, “He is wearing the clothing of the disbelievers”—such as the yarmulke of the Jews

or the waistband of the Christians—then it is not permissible to imitate them in wearing this type of clothing.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

This issue may specifically affect those who claim to be religiously committed, as more than one of the Salaf, including Ibn ‘Uyaynah, has stated.

EXPLANATION

Those who ascribe themselves to having knowledge fall into this. Some of those who ascribe themselves to knowledge imitate the Jews or the Christians. If they are deficient in their knowledge, they resemble the Christians, and if they do not act according to their knowledge, they resemble the Jews. As Sufyān bin ‘Uyaynah said: “Those among our scholars who become corrupt have a resemblance to the Jews, while those among our worshipers who become corrupt have a resemblance to the Christians.” This is because the corruption of the Christians came from the standpoint of worship while the corruption of the Jews came from the standpoint of knowledge; they had knowledge but did not act according to it. The Christians worshiped without knowledge.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Many of the characteristics of the Jews are things from which some of those who claim to be knowledgeable are suffering, and many of the characteristics of the Christians are things from which some of those who claim to be religiously committed are suffering, as is clear to those who understand the religion of Islām with which Allāh sent Muḥammad ﷺ, who then try to understand people in light of this.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...as is clear to everyone who understands the religion of Islām with which Allāh sent Muḥammad ﷺ, who then try to understand people in light of this." *Allāhu Akbar!* This principle is extremely important. Applying rulings to specific people is not a job everyone is qualified for, nor is every ruling applied to each and every person. This matter is not done recklessly; rather, it must be based upon clear insight and upon the principles extracted from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, and applied by the people of knowledge and understanding.

Many people today are careless in this matter. You will find one of them, and it is extremely easy to fix his tongue to say, "So-and-so is a disbeliever!" He applies an unrestricted principle to a specific person.

Concerning this matter, the people are on two extremes and a middle course:

1) One group rushes to apply unrestricted rulings to a specific person, even if the person applying this ruling does not have knowledge and understanding of the religion, and even if he is not qualified to do so.

2) The other group is extreme in separating the unrestricted ruling and the ruling of specific individuals, to the extent that one will almost never find them applying a ruling to a specific person.

Both of these are incorrect.

The correct position is the position of Ahlus-Sunnah: separating the unrestricted ruling and applying the ruling to a specific person. There are some rulings which may be applied unrestrictedly, as the evidence shows this. For example: We find that many of the Salaf said, "Whoever says that the Qur'ān is created is a disbeliever." The intent here is not to say that a specific person is a disbeliever; rather, this is only an unrestricted quality.

But if they go to a specific person who says that the Qur'ān is

created, they do not rush to declare him a disbeliever; rather, they look into the matter with knowledge and understanding. If all the conditions (for this person to be considered a disbeliever) are present and all the preventers (which would prevent this person from being considered a disbeliever) are removed, then the people of knowledge give this ruling. And not everyone is qualified to give such a ruling.

When the people became heedless of this, the *fitnah* of declaring Muslims to be disbelievers spread among the youth. It has become such that some of the youth rush to declare Muslims to be disbelievers; rather, they even declared the firmly grounded scholars to be disbelievers—those scholars who have spent their lives in knowledge, *tawhīd*, and the Sunnah!

We have seen young men—16, 18, and 20 years old—declaring the general populace of Muslims to be disbelievers. One of them said to me, “Do you see those millions of people performing Ḥajj?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “I don’t view any of them to be Muslim; they are all disbelievers!”

When I said to one of the youth, “Shaykh Bin Bāz رحمته الله said this; Shaykh ‘Uthaymīn رحمته الله said that,” he responded by saying: “No one is more of a disbeliever than him (Shaykh Bin Bāz) except him (Shaykh ‘Uthaymīn)!” And they were young; one of them had not graduated from high school yet. But people raised them to apply these principles with such boldness. Then, when the barrier broke between the youth and those who raised them, the youth knew no boundaries. This is the condition of those who declare the Muslims to be disbelievers while they are unqualified to do so—they don’t stop at the prescribed limits. They continue to be hard and extreme in the religion until they begin to doubt their own Islām.

One of them said to me, “I take *ghusl*²⁶ for Fajr prayer and then I accept Islām. And I take *ghusl* for Maghrib prayer and then I accept Islām.” And it has been mentioned in the famous story that a man said, “I don’t know of any Muslims on the face of the earth except for me, my wife, and a man in India!”

²⁶ **Translator’s note:** *Ghusl* is the ablution for major impurity.

Recklessness in this area has given birth to a dangerous dogma. Therefore, it is obligatory for the teachers and students of knowledge to cultivate their students upon the correct Islamic position in this matter. These rulings must not be applied haphazardly. Passing judgment upon a specific individual can only be done with understanding of the religion, and then with understanding of the conditions and the things which prevent a ruling from being applied to a particular person. And then the person giving the ruling must be qualified so that this affair will not turn into confusion and chaos.

For this reason, Ibn Taymiyyah said this great beneficial statement: “As is clear.” He did not say, “It is clear to everyone.” He said, “As is clear to those who understand the religion of Islām with which Allāh sent Muḥammad ﷺ.” He understands Islām upon its reality, not a false claim.

He said, “...who then try to understand people in light of this.” This is a matter which must be given attention. It is incumbent upon us to cultivate ourselves, our brothers, and those around us upon four matters which contain a great deal of good:

- 1) Emotion
- 2) Intellect
- 3) Knowledge
- 4) Justice

Rational emotion is required, while being emotionless does not bring about any good. It is not befitting for the cultivator—whether the father or teacher—to remove emotion from the heart of the one they are cultivating; rather, it is upon him to nurture him upon goodness.

Intellect is what man has been favored with, so nurturing the intellect and preserving it is required.

The scholars have said that emotion means to recognize the current situation and respond to the moment, while intellect means to

understand the end result of that response. Whoever is able to combine emotion and intellect will obtain a good result in their affair.

For example: If a man enters and finds his wife insulting his mother; this is a horrible affair. If he finds his wife insulting his mother, the emotion he has for his mother will call him to divorce his wife in defense of his mother. But if he thinks the matter through with his intellect and his emotion, he will say, "I will discipline her but I will not break her," because if you divorce her, this will result in other problems.

When this understanding was lost, divorce increased among the people, because many of the husbands today act according to emotions and respond to the moment, and they neglect their intellect. Today, a man will divorce his wife for not washing his shirt or not brewing his tea! This is because, in most situations, the people neglect their intellects and act according to emotion.

The third affair is knowledge. Knowledge is a lamp which lights the path through the darkness for the intellect and emotions. Thus, if the person combines rational emotion, intellect, and knowledge, he will live upon true light and goodness.

Next, the person must have justice, so he deals with the people justly whether they are relatives, strangers, loved ones, or those he hates. Consequently, he will live upon good, teach the people good, and adhere to the Sunnah without extremism or negligence. We must understand this matter and be diligent upon it.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

If this is the case, then the one whose heart Allāh opens to Islām will be following light from his Lord; for he was dead, then Allāh gave him life and gave him light by which to walk among mankind. So he will inevitably notice the characteristics of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and the path of the two nations with whom Allāh is angry

and who have gone astray, namely the Jews and Christians, and he will see that he may also be afflicted with some of that.

EXPLANATION

The intent of these great descriptions is not that he will merely find some of this within himself. The meaning of this is that, during times of *fitnah*, the person examines himself so he may rid himself of the traces of *fitnah*. When the matter of resembling the Jews and Christians or the pre-Islamic days of ignorance spreads amongst the people, the individual conducts a self-evaluation upon knowledge and insight. If he finds that he has been afflicted with some of this filth, then he cleanses his soul from it, abandons it, and frees himself from it. Ibn Taymiyyah's statement "...and he will see that he may also be afflicted with some of that" means that if he finds he has been afflicted, he must strive to rid himself of it.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

The most beneficial thing that both the select few and the commoners may know is that which will cleanse their souls of these predicaments, and that is following bad deeds with good deeds.

EXPLANATION

We have established, O slave of Allāh, that it is unavoidable that you will make mistakes. It is inevitable that you will sin. And the paths and roads to sin are numerous; included in this is imitating the Jews and Christians. Thus, it is a must to know that the most beneficial thing for you is knowing how to remove the consequences of these sins from yourself and how to remove the consequences of these sins from society. This is required from the select few—meaning, the scholars, students of knowledge, and the commoners (i.e., the common everyday person). It is inevitable that the people will fall into some of these predicaments. Thus, if he is aware of what will remove its effects, he follows up his sin with what will remove its effect; thus, it will be removed by the permission of Allāh the

Exalted.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām rahimahullāh said:

Good deeds are those which Allāh has encouraged on the tongue of the final Prophet, whether they are actions, manners, or characteristics.

EXPLANATION

When Shaykh-ul-Islām mentioned that good deeds are erasers which wipe away the effects of sins, he went back to explain what good deeds are. He said, “Good deeds are those which Allāh has encouraged on the tongue of the final Prophet ﷺ, whether they are actions, manners, or characteristics.” “Encouraged” here means that He incited these good deeds. It does not mean that these good deeds are only recommended; rather, He incited us to perform these good deeds and adhere to them.

Good deeds are not known based upon desires and innovation; rather, they are known by following the Sunnah; they are known by way of the Book and the Sunnah. Good deeds are every command we are told to do, either in the Book of Allāh or in the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

As for performing acts of worship which are not found in the Book or the Sunnah, then these are not good deeds; rather, this is innovation, and innovations do not remove the effects of sins—innovation is one of the greatest sins.

It is known that the greatest sin is major polytheism (*shirk*), then minor polytheism, then innovation; and then the sins which are not innovation are categorized in order. Consequently, if someone does an act of worship not found in the Book or the Sunnah, then he is not performing a good deed—he is committing a sin which needs to be removed.

Innovation is more beloved to Iblīs than sins, because a person does not sin seeking to get closer to Allāh. He sins while knowing he is in error, but his desires have gotten the better of him. Therefore, he is close to repenting. As for innovation, the person performs it as religion, so he is far from repenting. How can he repent from religion?! For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَجَبَ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ كُلِّ صَاحِبِ بَدْعَةٍ حَتَّى يَدْعَهَا.

Verily, Allāh blocks the repentance of every innovator until he abandons his innovation.²⁷

The good deeds which remove sins are those good deeds which Allāh told us to do in His Book or upon the tongue of His Messenger ﷺ. Some of these good deeds are connected to statements (like the saying of remembrance) or actions (like the prayer or manners), as will be explained *inshāAllāh*. The meaning of “characteristics” is what the person adorns himself with, and this is a type of manners, such as deliberation, forbearance, and the like. These are considered good deeds.

²⁷ Collected by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (281/4); declared authentic by al-Albānī.

The 4th Means to Remove the Effects of Sins: Calamities



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Among the things that remove the consequences of sin are disasters or calamities which expiate sin; these include all kinds of anxiety, grief, or harm regarding wealth, honor, one's body, and so on, but these are not brought about by a person's own actions.

EXPLANATION

This is the fourth matter which removes the effects of sins. Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned four matters: repentance, seeking forgiveness without repenting, righteous actions, and this is the fourth matter—the calamities which befall the believer.

If someone says: Why did Shaykh-ul-Islām mention the previous three matters first? We say: Because these three are from the actions of the person, and he is required to implement this. He is required to repent, he is required to seek forgiveness, and he is required to increase in performing righteous actions.

This fourth reason is not from the actions of the person. The person being afflicted with influenza is not from his own actions, nor is it

prescribed for someone to seek being afflicted. No one should seek a calamity, even if they hope that the calamity will remove their sins. It is not prescribed for the believer to say, for example, “O Allāh, I ask You for a calamity of fever” because he knows fever removes sins.¹ It’s not prescribed for the Muslim to say, “O Allāh, I ask You for the calamity of blindness” because he knows that the Muslim who is afflicted with blindness and endures it with patience will enter Paradise. It is not prescribed for the believer to say, “O Allāh, I ask You to take the soul of my child” because he knows that if one of his children dies before puberty, he will intercede for his parents, and because he knows that if his child dies and he praises Allāh and says, “Verily, from Allāh we come and to Him we return,” a house will be built for the parents in Paradise (although this narration contains some weakness). It is not permissible or prescribed to pray for a calamity; but if it occurs, the Muslim must be patient upon the calamity.

The scholars have mentioned that when a calamity befalls someone, he must be patient, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ .

How amazing is the affair of the believer! His affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him.²

There are matters which will assist the person in being patient if he envisions them.

THE FIRST MATTER

If he understands that the One who has tested him is his Lord, and

¹ The Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not curse it, for it erases sin as fire removes filth from iron.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2575).

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2999

he is a slave. The One who tested him is Allāh, while the one tested is a slave of Allāh. And the slave is beneath the command of his master.

THE SECOND MATTER

If he understands that the One Who has tested him—Allāh—will not be questioned about what He does, while the slaves will be questioned.

THE THIRD MATTER

He brings to mind that Allāh, the One who tested him, will not be questioned about what He does due to His complete wisdom, for surely, He does not do anything without wisdom. Thus, envision that the One who has tested you has only tested you with wisdom, and it is not fruitless or for amusement. Allāh did not do anything and will not do anything without wisdom.

THE FOURTH MATTER

He should envision that this calamity which befalls the believer will either awake him from heedlessness, expiate his sins, or elevate him in levels. These are the three wisdoms for a calamity. It will awake him from heedlessness: the believer may live in heedlessness because the worldly life may distract him and weaken his religion. Therefore, a calamity will befall him and remind him, so he will remember what he is upon and return to Allāh. How many people were far away from righteous actions and then one of their children died, so they returned to their religion and drawing close to Allāh the Exalted! How many people were heedless, drowning in sin, then they were tested with sickness so they were awakened and returned to Allāh the Exalted!

Calamities may also expiate sins or elevate the person in levels. It comes in a narration:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَرَادَ بَعْدَ مَنْزِلَةٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، ثُمَّ لَمْ يَبْلُغْهَا بِعَمَلِهِ، قَالَ لِمَلَائِكَتِهِ:

صَبُّوا عَلَيْهِ الْبَلَاءَ صَبًّا، ثُمَّ صَبَّرَهُ عَلَيْهِ.

If Allāh wants for His slave a level in Paradise, but his actions don't grant him this level, He says to the angels, "Pour upon him a calamity, then make him patient with it."³

Thus, this calamity will elevate him to a position in Paradise to which his actions could not take him.

THE FIFTH MATTER

He brings to mind a great matter: the One who has tested him is the One who has favored him. If a calamity befalls you, look towards Allāh's favor upon you. If Allāh tests you with a sickness in your body, then surely, despite your illness, He has blessed you in your body in many other ways. Thus, the One who tested you is the One who has also favored you with countless blessings. This will assist the Muslim in being patient with calamities that befall him. If a calamity befalls him and he is patient, he will attain a tremendous position.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله explained calamities. He said, "These include all kinds of anxiety, grief, or harm regarding wealth, honor, one's body, and so on, but these are not brought about by a person's own actions." The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا أَذًى وَلَا غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ.

Nothing befalls a Muslim of fatigue, sickness, worry, sorrow, harm, or grief, or even a thorn that pricks him, except that Allāh expiates his sins by them.⁴

This *ḥadīth* shows that calamity expiates sin, and it gives examples of various harms.

The calamities are those things that happen to the Muslim which

³ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 3090; declared authentic by al-Albānī.

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5641; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2572

he hates. This is a general guideline: everything that happens to the person which he hates. Even if someone who brings a lot of harm with him visits you while you hate him, this is considered a calamity. If you are patient with him and deal with him in the prescribed manner, this will allow you to obtain a lofty position.

Worry (الهم) is a form of sadness which most often occurs when the person anticipates an impending harm; thus, he begins to worry.

Sorrow (الْحُزْنَ) affects the heart due to some hated thing which has already occurred. When something the person hates happens to him, his heart is afflicted with sorrow.

Fatigue (النَّصَب) is exhaustion.

Harm (الْوَصْب) refers to continuous pain. Some people are afflicted with an unremitting pain; it does not debilitate him, but it causes him pain. Some people say, "I have a continuous headache." This is harm—it is a continuous pain.

Thus, all of these are calamities and all of these expiate sins. When the person is afflicted with worry, surely it expiates some of his sins. When the person is afflicted with sadness, surely it expiates some of his sins.

If the person is harmed in his wealth, thus he loses some of his wealth, then surely it expiates some of his sins. If the person is harmed concerning his honor—meaning, his honor is attacked—then this expiates some of his sins. If the person is physically harmed or anything else that he hates occurs to him, then this expiates some of his sins.

Then Ibn Taymiyyah said after this: "...but these are not brought about by a person's own actions." This means that it is not sought after by the person, because this is not from his own actions; it is not requested from him.

Some of the scholars mention a conundrum from Islamic jurisprudence: What is the reward which is not prescribed for the person

to seek? The answer: The reward which results from a calamity. It is not prescribed for anyone to seek this type of reward, but if a calamity happens and he is patient, then he should know that there is a reward in it and it expiates sins.

With this, Shaykh-ul-Islām completes his explanation of the first two statements from this great advice:

1) “Fear Allāh wherever you may be”; this is by obeying Allāh’s command and avoiding His prohibitions, and being diligent upon this.

2) “Follow up a sin with a good deed and it will erase it.” O slave of Allāh, know that—despite your diligence in obeying the commands and avoiding the prohibitions—you will fall into sin. Thus, when you fall into sin, rush to follow that sin with a good deed or with that which will expiate the sin, and this will remove the effect of the sin.

Then Ibn Taymiyyah explained the last sentence in this great advice: “...and treat people in a kind manner.”

Treat the People with Kindness



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

When he (the Prophet ﷺ) had made these two statements, which are the rights of Allāh in regard to doing righteous deeds and rectifying bad deeds, he then said, “And treat people in a kind manner.” This is the right of the people.

EXPLANATION

His statement: “When he had made these two statements which are the rights of Allāh in regard to doing righteous deeds”—this is from the statement of the Prophet ﷺ “Fear Allāh wherever you may be.” His statement “and rectifying bad deeds”—this is from the statement of the Prophet ﷺ “and follow up a sin with a good deed.” Then he said, “And treat the people in a kind manner.”

It has been previously mentioned that the person has two rights upon him in this world: the rights of Allāh and the rights of the creation.

Some of the scholars have mentioned a great beneficial statement concerning this: The religion is comprised of truthfulness with the rights of Allāh the Exalted and good manners with the creation. The affair which comprises the religion—all of it is to have a truthful

heart with Allāh, be upon *tawhīd*, be a worshiper, be humble before your Lord the Exalted, and have good manners with the creation of Allāh. If you combine these two matters, you have encompassed the religion. This is the meaning of the statement of the scholars: “The religion is comprised of truthfulness with the rights of Allāh the Exalted and good manners with the creation.”

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “This is the right of the people”; meaning, good manners towards the people is a right the people have. The scholars say, “Good manners are a test for the people, and they clarify their nature and disposition.” How many individuals strive hard in worship but are incapable of good manners! This is the meaning of the statement, “Good manners are a test for the people; they uncover their reality and clarify their nature and disposition.”

Having good manners means combining the virtuous acts while avoiding the despicable acts. It is an attribute of the best of people and the righteous. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr رضي الله عنه said:

لَمْ يَكُنِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَاحِشًا وَلَا مُتَفَحِّشًا، وَكَانَ يَقُولُ:
خَيْرُكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا.

The Prophet ﷺ was neither foul-mouthed nor obscene. He used to say, “The best of you is the one who has the best character.”¹

The Prophet ﷺ bore witness to this virtue for the Muslim. He said, “The best of you is the one who has the best character.” Thus, whoever desires a portion of the testimony of this virtue from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, let him strive to perfect his character.

The Prophet ﷺ said an amazing statement which encourages those who truthfully love the Prophet ﷺ, and there is no believer except that he loves the Prophet ﷺ. He said:

إِنَّ مِنْ أَحَبِّكُمْ إِلَيَّ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا.

The most beloved to me amongst you is the one who has the best

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3559

character and manners.²

The Prophet ﷺ loves the believers, and those who perfect their character are more beloved to the Prophet ﷺ.

For this reason, some of the people of knowledge have said: “Whoever excels over you in character will excel over you in religious commitment.” This means that whoever excels over you in character while being upon the religion will excel you in the religion, because character is from piety which is loved by the Prophet ﷺ. Thus, the more you improve your character, the more beloved you are to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said:

الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ.

Righteousness is good character.³

It is known that this form (in the Arabic language) necessitates restriction. “Righteousness is good character.” It is as though the Prophet ﷺ restricted righteousness to good character. The scholars have mentioned that this is because righteousness has the meaning of relationship, compassion, good companionship, and obedience; good character comprises all of this.

The speech of Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله concerning this will be mentioned *inshāAllāh*.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيُدْرِكُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ.

Surely, the believer will attain by way of his good character the degree of one who fasts and stands in prayer.⁴

The statement of the Prophet ﷺ: “Surely, the believer...” proves that good character only benefits the believer. Thus, good character must

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3759, 3760

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2553

⁴ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 4798

be accompanied with belief.

His statement ﷺ: "...will attain by way of his good character the degree of one who fasts and stands in prayer"; "the one who fasts" means the person who fasts continuously, and "the one who stands in prayer" means the person who prays continuously. This proves the virtue of good character.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْمِيزَانِ أَثْقَلُ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ .

There is nothing heavier on the scale than good character.⁵

I will take a brief look into a knowledge-based issue here. We find numerous narrations like this. Someone may say, "Isn't the obligatory prayer heavy on the scale? Aren't the pillars of Islām heavy on the scale? Isn't *tawhīd* heavy on the scale?" But the Prophet ﷺ said, "There is nothing heavier on the scale than good character."

We say: Of course—surely, the prayer is heavy on the scale; surely, *tawhīd* is heavy. These narrations do not prevent more than one deed from sharing a virtue. Mentioning one deed with praise does not prevent a deed not mentioned from sharing the same praise. This is similar to the virtue among the prophets; it does not necessitate deficiency of other prophets. For this reason, the scholars say that it is not permissible to favor a prophet in order to belittle another prophet.

When the Prophet ﷺ said, "There is nothing heavier on the scale than good character," it does not mean that there is nothing as heavy as good character; rather, there are other actions which share this virtue. This particular virtue was mentioned like this to incite the people towards good character, not to exclude other actions from sharing this virtue.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

⁵ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 4799

أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بَيْتٍ فِي رِبْضِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا وَبَيْتٍ فِي وَسْطِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْكُذْبَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَارِحًا وَبَيْتٍ فِي أَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ حَسَّنَ خُلُقَهُ.

I am a guarantor for a house on the outskirts of Paradise for a man who avoids argumentation even if he's in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he's joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good.⁶

This means that he is a guarantor for a house in the outer portions of Paradise for the person who avoids argumentation. Argumentation is a conversation between two parties in which each party wants their opinion to prevail; they don't want the truth to prevail. Thus, when the conversation escalates such that each person wants their opinion to prevail instead of the truth, this is argumentation. The Prophet ﷺ guaranteed a home on the outskirts of Paradise for the one who abandons this. This is because it is difficult to restrain the soul if the argument intensifies and it becomes apparent that each person is trying to prevail. For this reason, this virtue is mentioned so that the person will refrain.

He guaranteed a home in the middle of Paradise for the person who abandons lying even if he is joking. And he guaranteed a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good.

Thus, good character along with faith will draw you close to the level of the prophets and allies of Allāh, which is the upper part of Paradise. This is proof of the virtue of good character.

أَرْبَعٌ إِذَا مَا كُنَّ فِيكَ فَلَا عَلَيْكَ، مَا فَاتَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا: حِفْظُ الْأَمَانَةِ، وَصِدْقُ الْحَدِيثِ، وَحُسْنُ خَلِيقَةٍ، وَعِفَّةُ طُعْمَةٍ.

If you have these four things, you will not be harmed by what you missed from this world: preserving the trust, being truthful speech,

⁶ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 4800

having good character, and having pure food.⁷

If you have these four things, you will not be harmed by what you missed from this world.

You are poor? You missed out on this world? You don't have the luxuries that the people have? If you have these four things, you will not be harmed by what you missed from the worldly life, because you are truly rich.

What are these four things which are equivalent to the world?

1) Truthful speech: This means that the person always strives to be truthful.

2) Preserving the trust: This includes all types of trust, the trust of the religion and the trust of what the people entrust with you.

3) Good manners.

4) Pure food: This is to ensure that your food is *ḥalāl*.

If you actualize these four things, then by Allāh, you are rich, because these four things are equivalent to the world according to the testimony of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Four things—if you have them, you will not be harmed by what you miss from this world. And how great is this *ḥadīth*!

Also, when the Prophet ﷺ was asked what the best thing a person can be given is, he said, “Good character.”⁸

The Prophet ﷺ advised us with two important matters which few people adhere to. He said:

عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ وَطُولِ الصَّمْتِ .

It's upon you to have good manners and long silence.

⁷ Collected by al-Hākim (3/314).

⁸ Collected by al-Hākim (1/209).

This means adhere to good manners and long silence. Some of the scholars have said: From good manners of a person is for him to remain silent upon his companion yearning for his speech.

When some people sit down with you, you yearn for them to be quiet. And when others sit down with you, you yearn for them to speak. The Prophet ﷺ said:

عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ وَطُولِ الصَّمْتِ، فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا عَمِلَ
الْخَلَائِقُ بِمِثْلِهِمَا.

It's upon you to have good manners and long silence, because I swear by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, the creation does not struggle with anything like these two.⁹

The meaning of his statement “I swear by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, the creation does not struggle with anything like these two” is that acting upon these two is difficult because people love to talk, so it is difficult upon them to remain silent for long periods of time. And good manners require patience, endurance, and a struggle against the soul, so only a few can remain patient upon this.

Praiseworthy manners are manners the person can remain diligent upon throughout different situations. Good manners are most often revealed when flattery leaves. A person may flatter strangers, so he beautifies his character for them. But when this leaves, his true character is exposed.

True character is likewise exposed during travel—the comfort is gone and the hardship overtakes the situation, so those who cry are exposed from those who pretend to cry.

Character is exposed in the home with the family. You find out who really has good manners and who doesn't. We have said this many times before. Some of us perfect our character when we leave the home; even if someone harms another, you will find him smiling, saying, “*Jazāk Allāhu khayran* (may Allāh reward you with good),

⁹ Collected by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (7/140).

may Allāh pardon you!” But when he enters his home, he changes completely. When he enters the home, he becomes someone who curses, insults, slanders, and beats. He becomes angry for the slightest reason. He beats his family for the slightest reason. He knows no limits. In reality, he needs to examine himself, because good manners are manners the person can adorn himself with throughout different situations.

Defining Good Character



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Good manners with the people comprises maintaining contact with those who cut you off by greeting them with *salām*, honoring them, making *du'ā'* for them, seeking forgiveness for them, praising them, and visiting them. It is giving knowledge, benefits, and money to one who has deprived you. It is forgiving one who has wronged you regarding blood, wealth, or honor. Some of these matters are obligatory and some are recommended.

EXPLANATION

There is a *ḥadīth* which narrates a statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

أَلَا أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى خَيْرِ أَخْلَاقٍ أَهْلَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ؟ أَنْ تَصِلَ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ،
وَتُعْطِيَ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ، وَتَعْفُوَ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ.

Shall I not direct you to the best character of the people of this world and the next? Maintain contact with those who cut you off, give to those who withhold from you, and pardon those who wrong you.¹

This narration has been collected by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and 'Abdur-

¹ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 28/653

Razzāq, but the chain of narration is weak.

I mentioned this narration because what is apparent to me—and Allāh knows best—is that Ibn Taymiyyah based his statement upon this, because what he mentioned is contained in this narration.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “Good manners with the people comprises maintaining contact with those who cut you off.” Maintaining contact with the people is from the greatest and best of manners. At the head of this and the noblest of this is keeping contact with the parents. This is for the person to keep contact with his parents through the various means of communication, as much as he is able. Next in line is maintaining the ties of kinship with the relatives in accordance to their closeness with you. Next is maintaining contact with the scholars and your neighbors. The greatest form of contact is connecting with those who cut you off. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لَيْسَ الْوَاصِلُ بِالْمُكَافِي، وَلَكِنَّ الْوَاصِلُ الَّذِي إِذَا قَطَعَتْ رَحْمُهُ وَصَلَهَا.

The one who maintains a relationship with his relatives is not the one who does so because they maintain a relationship with him; rather, the one who truly upholds those ties of kinship is the one who does so even if they break off the relationship.²

The person who maintains the ties of kinship as compensation does not truly maintain the ties of kinship. If the people maintain a relationship with him, he does so in return. If his paternal uncle keeps contact with him, he keeps contact with his uncle, but if his uncle cuts him off, he cuts off his uncle. This is not the one who truly maintains the ties of kinship. The one who truly maintains the ties of kinship is the one who does so even when the people cut him off. When the people turn their back on him, he turns towards them, diligently maintaining contact. This is the person with good manners.

The scholars have said that the people are of three types as it relates to keeping the ties of kinship: The one who maintains the ties, the

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5645

one who maintains the ties out of compensation, and the one who cuts the ties of kinship.

- The one who maintains the ties of kinship: He gives the benefit before he receives. He goes to them first to keep the ties, whether they maintain ties with him or cut him off.

- The one who maintains ties out of compensation: He does not give more than he receives. For example: If my cousin visits me once a month, I will visit him once a month. If he doesn't visit me, I will not visit him. This is the one who maintains ties out of compensation.

- The one who cuts the ties of kinship: This is the person who receives benefit but does not return benefit. His relatives keep the ties with him, but due to his pride or something else, he boycotts them and does not keep the ties of kinship. He may have a position of knowledge or a worldly position, so he becomes proud and haughty over his relatives. He deems them not being worthy of visiting, and they are not worthy of visiting him, so he cuts them off! As the saying goes, this is the calamity of this age.

Today, a group of students of knowledge may all live in one town but they don't visit each other. We are speaking about students of knowledge, not the commoners. Students of knowledge who live in one town, yet they might be strangers, even though they need one another. Perhaps this one came to the town with his family, but he does not have any relatives there, and the other student came to the city with his family, but his relatives don't live there; and yet they don't visit each other!

Now people live in the same province—they live there two years, three years, four years—and they don't know their neighbor's name. I didn't say they don't visit their neighbors; rather, they don't even know their neighbor's name! If you go to his town and ask, "Does so-and-so live here?" He will say, "I don't know, by Allāh," even though the person in question lives in the same town. Where are the manners? Where is the good etiquette? Where is maintaining the ties, which is from the greatest aspects of good character?

The basis is that the people should keep the ties unless there are reasons to disconnect them. These reasons must be examined, because some people say as an argument, “I did not cut him off for personal reasons, but there are other reasons.”

But what are these reasons? These reasons are either religious or worldly. If the reasons are worldly, it will only be one of two situations:

1) This reason occurred due to an action from the person being boycotted. For example: The person you boycott insults you or harms you. In this situation, Allāh has made for you a brief break of three days, and the best one is the person who abandons the boycott.

لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثِ لَيَالٍ يَلْتَقِيَانِ، فَيُعْرَضُ هَذَا، وَيُعْرَضُ هَذَا، وَخَيْرُهُمَا الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ بِالسَّلَامِ.

It is not permissible for a Muslim to shun his brother for more than three nights. When they meet, this one turns away (from that one) and that one turns away (from this one), and the best of them is the one who greets his brother first.³

Allāh has given you three days to flush out what is in your soul; and there is no good in the person who does not flush out what is in his soul after three days, because the Prophet ﷺ placed the goodness in the person who initiates the *salām*.

2) If the reason did not occur from the person being cut off, then you don't have the right to cut off those who maintain the ties with you.

The reason may be religious, meaning there is a religiously legislated reason for you to boycott him. This is the affair of *hijrah* (boycotting). The issue of boycotting is a noble, legislated affair which must be put in its proper place. The basis for the Muslim is that he rushes to rectify and advise before he boycotts.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2560; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6077

Today, we find some students of knowledge who boycott their brothers while their brothers don't know why they are being boycotted. Perhaps if the brother knew and the truth was clarified to him, he would abandon his error. Thus, this is wrong in principle. The Muslim starts with clarification, advice, and rectification. If the person does not benefit from this, then he moves on to the legislated boycotting.

There is no limit to the boycotting which is due to a religious reason. It is not limited to three days or other than that; rather, the person is boycotted as long as the reason for the boycott remains.

The blameworthy breaking of ties is only when this is the intent; meaning, if breaking the ties is not the intent, but you don't encounter him for a month, then this is not blameworthy. It is only blameworthy if the intent is to break the ties.

From good manners is having a cheerful face, extending good, and repelling harm.

Having a cheerful face for the believers is to give charity with a smile.

تَبَسُّمُكَ فِي وَجْهِ أَخِيكَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ.

Smiling in the face of your brother is a charity for you.⁴

When Imām Aḥmad was asked about good manners, he said, "Don't get angry and don't hate." These are two hot embers in the heart which burn the good within a person and blind him: hatred and anger. Anger blinds the one who becomes angry from good, and hatred of a Muslim drives the one who hates to cause evil. This is why, when Imām Aḥmad was asked about good character, he mentioned these two matters: Don't become angry and don't hate.

Although this is easy to say, it is difficult to do. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ.

⁴ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 1956

The strong man is not the good wrestler; rather, the strong man is he who controls himself when he is angry.⁵

This is the one who shows how strong he is because he can control himself when he is angry. When someone becomes angry, the first person he harms is himself, because he may say something he will be embarrassed about tomorrow. He may say something or do something that, if shown to him an hour later, would make him feel ashamed. Thus, after harming himself, he harms others.

Some of the scholars described good character as the person having a lot of shyness, little harm, a lot of good, truthful speech, speaking only a little, a lot of action, few sins, little in the way of extravagance, kindness and maintaining the ties, dignity and patience, content and gratitude, forbearance and gentleness, chastity and compassion; he is not one who curses or insults, carries tales or backbites, nor is he hasty or hateful, stingy or envious; he is cheerful and courteous, he loves for the sake of Allāh, he is pleased for the sake of Allāh, and he hates for the sake of Allāh.

This speech is taken from the attributes of the Prophet ﷺ. If we ponder over these words, we will find that this is the summary of the good attributes the Prophet ﷺ has been described with.

Some of the Salaf said that good manners are found in three traits: Avoiding the impermissible, seeking the *ḥalāl*, and being generous with the family. This statement has been attributed to Imām Mālik رحمته الله.

Some of the Salaf said, “Smiling is for the person a snare to capture love.” When the person smiles, he captivates the people and they love him.

Some of the Salaf said, “Kindness is something easy: a smiling face and soft speech.” This is from the general traits of good manners.

Likewise from the general traits of good character and pure, noble

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2709; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6114

attributes found in the believer is diligence in benefiting the Muslims; this is at the head of good character. At the head of this benefit is diligence in benefiting the believers with knowledge of the Sunnah, and spreading *tawhīd*. This is from the greatest benefits.

Likewise, benefiting the people includes benefiting them in their worldly life. The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَحَبُّ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ، وَأَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: سُرُورٌ تَدْخِلُهُ عَلَى مُسْلِمٍ، أَوْ تَكْشِفُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً، أَوْ تَقْضِي عَنْهُ دَيْنًا، أَوْ تَطْرُدُ عَنْهُ جُوعًا، وَلَآنَ أَمْشِي مَعَ أَخٍ لِي فِي حَاجَةٍ، أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَعْتَكِفَ فِي هَذَا الْمَسْجِدِ شَهْرًا، وَمَنْ كَفَّ غَضَبَهُ سَتَرَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ كَظَمَ غَيْظَهُ وَلَوْ شَاءَ أَنْ يُمِضِيَهُ أَمْضَاهُ؛ مَلَأَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ رِجَاءً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ مَشَى مَعَ أَخِيهِ فِي حَاجَةٍ حَتَّى تَنْتَهِيَ لَهُ؛ أَثَبَّتَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لَهُ قَدَمَهُ يَوْمَ تَزُولُ الْأَقْدَامُ، وَإِنَّ سَوْءَ الْخُلُقِ لِيُفْسِدَ الْعَمَلَ كَمَا يُفْسِدُ الْخَلُّ الْعَسَلَ.

The most beloved of people to Allāh is the one who brings the most benefit, and the most beloved of deeds to Allāh the Exalted is making a Muslim happy, or relieving him of hardship, or paying off his debt, or warding off his hunger. Going with my Muslim brother to meet his need is dearer to me than observing *i'tikāf* in this *masjid* for a month. Whoever restrains his anger, Allāh will conceal his faults, and whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allāh will fill his heart with contentment on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever goes with his brother to fulfill his need until he fulfills it for him, Allāh will make his feet firm on the day the feet will slip. And verily, bad character corrupts actions just as vinegar corrupts honey.⁶

Look at these concise statements. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The most beloved of people to Allāh is the one who brings the most benefit, and the most beloved of deeds to Allāh the Exalted is making a Muslim happy.” This is from good manners. If you find someone in need, and you find him stressed, or you know that he has been

⁶ Collected by at-Ṭabarānī (12/347); see also *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* 6518.

afflicted with a calamity, then go visit him with the intention of speaking to him until you can bring happiness to his heart. If you do this, you are performing a great act of worship. This is from the greatest acts of worship, even if you speak to him about worldly matters. If you go to him and bring happiness to his heart by speaking to him about the worldly matters you see in your land and the interesting things you see, and things that will make him happy, then you are doing one of the most beloved acts of worship to Allāh the Exalted.

He said, "...or relieving him of hardship, or paying off his debt, or warding off his hunger." If you see a hungry Muslim, and you draw close to Allāh by filling his stomach, then you have performed one of the most beloved actions to Allāh. So what if this person is your neighbor with a hungry child? Checking on your brothers and your neighbors without causing them sadness is a great affair. By Allāh, I was surprised to find that one of our students—and he has a family—has a refrigerator without a door in his home. Due to his poverty, he is not able to buy a refrigerator.

One of us might know that his neighbor—for example—received his salary from the university, but then he was in a car accident so he repaired his car. We can be reasonably sure that he spent most of his money repairing his car, so for the remainder of the month he will only have a small amount of money left. Perhaps he will only eat one meal a day. If you are aware of this and you prepare food for his household and present it to your brother, look first at the great effect this will have upon the heart of your brother, then look at the fact that this is from the most beloved acts of worship to Allāh the Exalted.

If each of us would look after our brothers and neighbors around us and try to keep them from hunger and share wealth with them from time to time, then by Allāh, this is one of the most beloved actions to Allāh, and the greatest means to draw near to Allāh the Exalted.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "For me to go with my Muslim brother to meet his need is dearer to me than observing *i'tikāf* in this *masjid* for a

month.” If someone performs *i'tikāf* for one month in the *masjid* of the Prophet ﷺ, what will he do? He will pray the five daily prayers for one month in the *masjid* of the Prophet ﷺ, and one prayer in his *masjid* is better than 1,000 prayers. Likewise, he will draw close to Allāh with other acts of worship connected to the worship of *i'tikāf*. The Prophet ﷺ said, “For me to go with my Muslim brother to meet his need is dearer to me than observing *i'tikāf* in this *masjid*”—meaning, the Prophet’s *masjid*—“for a month.”

He ﷺ said, “Whoever restrains their anger”—meaning, he does not allow his anger to reach the people; rather, he restrains it, so—“Allāh will conceal their faults.”

He ﷺ said, “...and whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allāh will fill his heart with contentment on the Day of Resurrection”; he will be safe and pleased when he meets Allāh the Exalted.

He ﷺ said, “Whoever goes with his brother to fulfill his need until he fulfills it for him, Allāh will make his feet firm on the day the feet will slip.” This is referring to the bridge over the Hellfire. Allāh will make his feet firm on the bridge.

He ﷺ said, “And verily, bad character corrupts actions just as vinegar corrupts honey.” Evil character corrupts everything for the person; it harms those around him and it harms his actions. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Verily, bad character corrupts actions just as vinegar corrupts honey.” This is a tremendous issue which all of us must give attention to.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “Good manners with the people comprises maintaining contact with those who cut you off by greeting them with *salām*, honoring them, making *du'ā'* for them...” *Subhān Allāh!* They boycott you and you pray for them? Yes; this is good manners.

He said, “...seeking forgiveness for him, praising him...” How difficult is this! Someone boycotts you and makes his boycott of you open and apparent, but when you sit in a gathering and someone wants to speak against this person, you say, “Fear Allāh; he is not

like that.” It is not from good manners to say, “Yes, this is apparent” if someone begins to backbite anyone. It would be as though you are saying, “Say more about him; say more.” The person with good character will instead praise the individual.

I saw one of our scholars with a remarkable position. A man came to him and said, “So-and-so said you are not strong in the science of *ḥadīth*.” A student of some of the scholars relayed this speech. He responded, “May Allāh forgive him; he is stronger than I am in this field. I am not only weak in the science of *ḥadīth*; rather, I am weak in the other fields of knowledge as well. I am in severe need of increasing my knowledge!” Thus, the man was dumbfounded. He was not able to say anything. He thought he was going to open up some history (as they say), and the Shaykh would mention negative things about the person who criticized him. And in reality, the Shaykh is strong in *ḥadīth*, but he said, “I am not only weak in the science of *ḥadīth*; rather, I am weak in the other fields of knowledge as well. I am in severe need of increasing my knowledge!”

The scholar is the one who sees that he needs to increase his knowledge. The scholars have said, “The true scholar: Each time he increases his knowledge, he understands his ignorance; as for the pitiful person, each time he learns anything, he puffs up as though he is Shaykh-ul-Islām.” If he learns one letter or two words, he believes that no one is comparable to him. This never occurs with the scholar; this only happens to those who are deceived by themselves and fall into a great deal of evil.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “It is giving knowledge, benefits, and money to one who has deprived you. It is forgiving one who has wronged you regarding blood, wealth, or honor.” What is greater than pardon is making him feel safe. You pardon him and you make him feel safe—this is what it means to restrain your anger. And what is greater than this is treating him kindly. You pardon him, make him feel safe, and treat him kindly.

It has been mentioned about one of the Salaf that he was told that an individual was speaking ill of him. So he sent his worker to bring

the person a basket of fruit, which was rare during that time, and he wrote a letter saying: "O my brother, it has reached me that you said such-and-such about me, and Allāh knows that it's not true. May Allāh pardon you and forgive your mistake. And know that your status in my heart today is greater than it was yesterday." Who is able to do this?! Our Salaf were the most wonderful examples of good manners.

Imām Aḥmad was firm during the trial of those who said that the Qur'ān is created, to the extent that he was from the few people who openly said that the Qur'ān is the speech of Allāh the Exalted and not created. The rulers persecuted him, beat him, and whipped him. He was beaten until his skin was wounded, and then they poured salt into his wounds. They tugged and yanked him to separate his joints. The ruler would come during the night, place his chair, and sit while Imām Aḥmad was moaning in pain. The ruler said, "O Aḥmad, say one word to me so I can unfasten your chains myself." He responded, "No, not until you bring me a verse from the Book of Allāh." When the morning entered, the executioners came and the ruler said, "Beat him harder, may Allāh cut your hand." This went on until Allāh gave relief to Imām Aḥmad; this occurred when the leader died.

These events were mentioned to Imām Aḥmad. They said to him, "You were tested for the religion while you were upon the truth; you were beaten and you went through such-and-such." And even after the trial was over, Imām Aḥmad continued to suffer from his injuries with pain in his joints. After the ruler died and Imām Aḥmad was relieved of this trial, the people mentioned everything he went through. Imām Aḥmad responded with an amazing statement. He said, "What will you benefit if Allāh punishes your Muslim brother because of you?"

Look at the hearts! These individuals had pure hearts. He said this about the people who punished him and beat him. He said, "What will you benefit if Allāh punishes your Muslim brother because of you?"

Ibn Taymiyyah, whose book we are reading now, was put to test for the religion because he openly displayed the Sunnah and he spoke with proofs and evidences. Some of the scholars gathered against him, and one of the Mālikī judges sentenced him to prison in al-Qala'ah Prison⁷. Allāh willed that the affair of the ruler would change, so Ibn Taymiyyah was released from prison. Upon his release from prison, he was consulted about the judge who imprisoned him. He said, "My advice is that he should not be arrested, and I advise that he should keep his position." This is because, as it relates to rulings and the methodology by which he ruled, he was a scholar. Thus, when Ibn Taymiyyah was released from prison—and he knew he was wrongfully imprisoned—he was consulted about the judge who imprisoned him. He advised that this judge should not be imprisoned, and he interceded for him to retain his position. This was the character of our Salaf that we must learn from.

Today, if a student of knowledge makes an error concerning his brother, the entire world will war against him! Thus, it is upon us to look at our station as it relates to good character. Do we have good character? Good character is not just a phrase which is said; good character is action which distinguishes the virtuous people, men or women. And as we mentioned in the beginning, good character is a test for the people. Therefore, test yourself with good character—what is your position as it relates to good character? And then improve yourself.

Some people say that they are not able to improve their character because it is in their nature to have their behavior!! This is incorrect, because good character can be something the individual was created upon, as in the case of Ashajj.⁸ Thus, Allāh creates some people with these good qualities and they are praised for having these qualities, while others have to acquire these good qualities. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّمَا الْجِلْمُ بِالتَّحْلُمِ.

⁷ **Translator's note:** Al-Qala'ah Prison was a prison in ancient Egypt.

⁸ The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to Ashajj, of the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays, "You possess two qualities which are loved by Allāh: insight and deliberateness." (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 17)

Forbearance comes from making oneself forbearing.⁹

Thus, people are able to obtain this. Even if they don't have good character, they are able to acquire it, and this will result in a great reward; but they must strive hard against their souls in this area.

From the things mentioned in the biography of Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله is that he had enemies from the scholars—those considered to be scholars. They antagonized him, harmed him, and spoke against him. One day, he was sitting with his companions when one of his students came to him and said, “So-and-so has died!” He thought he was giving him glad tidings, and he thought Ibn Taymiyyah would be happy with this news. He responded by saying, “There is no might or power except with Allāh. Verily, from Allāh we come and to Him we return. O Allāh, forgive him.” Then he immediately stood and went to the family of the man and gave his condolences. And he said to them, “I will be in his place for you,” meaning that he would take care of their needs and look after them. These are the manners of the scholars, the manners of the virtuous people. How beautiful is it for someone to have good character among the people!

ORIGINAL TEXT

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said:

In regard to the “exalted standard of character” with which Allāh described Muḥammad ﷺ, this is the religion which includes all that Allāh has enjoined. This was stated by Mujāhid and others. And it is the interpretation of the Qur'ān, as 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said: “His character was the Qur'ān.” The essence of his character was that he hastened to do what Allāh loves with a willing spirit and an open heart.

EXPLANATION

His statement: “In regard to the ‘exalted standard of character’ with which Allāh described Muḥammad ﷺ”; this is referring to the state-

⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* 2328

ment of Allāh the Exalted:

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

And verily, you (O Muḥammad) are on an exalted standard of character.

[Sūrah al-Qalam 68:4]

He said that the “exalted standard of character” is the religion, which includes all that Allāh has enjoined.

Exalted standard of character means to single out Allāh alone with monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and to establish His rights by implementing His commands and avoiding His prohibitions.

Aṭ-Ṭabarī said, “The statement ‘And verily, you (O Muḥammad) are on an exalted standard of character’ means that his manners and etiquette were tremendous. These were the manners of the Qur’ān which Allāh refined him with. And it is Islām and the legislation.”

It has been narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, and Qatādah رضي الله عنه that the exalted character is the exalted religion. For this reason, Ibn al-Qayyim said, “All of the religion is character.” This is the general meaning of “character.” It entails everything found in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “And it is the interpretation (*ta’wīl*) of the Qur’ān as ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said: ‘His character was the Qur’ān.’” This means acting by the Qur’ān, because the word *ta’wīl* (interpretation) of the Qur’ān also means acting according to the Qur’ān, as ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said about the Prophet ﷺ:

كان يتأول القرآن .

He used to act according to the Qur’ān.¹⁰

This means that he used to follow the command of the Qur’ān in glorifying Allāh the Exalted. Sa’d bin Hishām asked our mother

¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 784; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 484

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها a question. He said:

يَا أُمَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ؛ أَنْبِئِنِي عَنْ خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟
قَالَتْ: أَلَسْتَ تَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ؟ قُلْتُ: بَلَى!! قَالَتْ: فَإِنَّ خُلُقَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ الْقُرْآنَ.

“O Mother of the Believers, tell me about the character of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.” She said, “Do you not read the Qur’ān?” I said, “Of course!” She said, “The character of the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ was the Qur’ān.”¹¹

Thus, the character of the Prophet ﷺ was the Qur’ān. This is the general meaning of “character”: that which comprises everything brought by the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.

With this, we conclude the explanation of the *ḥadīth* of Mu’ādh رضي الله عنه, which is concise advice.

¹¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 746

Taqwā (Fear) of Allāh the Exalted



EXPLANATION

Next, Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah began to explain that the *ḥadīth* of Mu'ādh was an explanation for the advice of Allāh the Exalted.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

All of this is contained in the advice of Allāh and it is the statement of *taqwā* of Allāh. This is a comprehensive statement which contains everything Allāh has commanded, whether it is obligatory or recommended, and avoiding everything He has prohibited, whether it is impermissible or disliked. This combines the rights of Allāh and the rights of Allāh's slaves.

EXPLANATION

It has been mentioned previously that the instruction of Allāh the Exalted to the early and later generations—to every nation given a Book—was the command to have *taqwā* of Allāh.

﴿لَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ﴾

And We have instructed those who were given the scripture before you and yourselves to have *taqwā* of Allāh.

[*Sūrah an-Nisā'* 4:131]

The scholars have mentioned that the command of having *taqwā* of Allāh was given to all the messengers. Here, Ibn Taymiyyah intends to clarify that the advice the Prophet ﷺ gave to Mu'adh explains the command of our Lord, which is *taqwā* of Allāh. He said, "All of this is contained in the advice of Allāh," meaning: it is the explanation of Allāh's command.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...it is the statement of *taqwā* of Allāh. This is a comprehensive statement which contains everything Allāh has commanded, whether it is obligatory or recommended, and avoiding everything He has prohibited, whether it is impermissible or disliked." This is the reality of *taqwā*. When the believer hears the status of the command to have *taqwā*, he knows that Allāh has given this command to the early and later generations, and it is the advice of the prophets of Allāh and the advice of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when his Companions said to him, "It is as though this is a farewell sermon, so advise us." He said, "I advise you to have *taqwā* of Allāh." He knows that this statement is comprised of few words with a great meaning; beneath its flag is all the good in the worldly life and the next life, because there is no good for the people in this life or the next except due to *taqwā* of Allāh the Exalted. If the believer knows this and ponders over the fruits of *taqwā*, and his heart desires to be from those that have *taqwā*, then it is necessary for him to learn the meaning of *taqwā*.

THE REALITY OF TAQWĀ

The scholars have said about *taqwā*: It is to work in the obedience of Allāh, upon a light from Allāh, while hoping for the reward of Allāh; and to abandon disobeying Allāh, upon a light from Allāh, while fearing the punishment of Allāh.

Their statement "to work in the obedience of Allāh" means to obey the commands of Allāh.

“Upon a light from Allāh”—This means working according to proofs and evidence, not working according to innovation and newly invented matters. Thus, you stop at “Allāh said, His Messenger ﷺ said.” Submit your soul to what appears in the Book and the Sunnah.

“Hoping for the reward of Allāh”—This is sincerity. Thus, your intention for obeying Allāh the Exalted is to receive His reward.

“And to abandon disobeying Allāh”—Thus, you avoid what Allāh has prohibited you from. Also, this is done “upon a light from Allāh.” This must be in accordance with the evidence and proof, not from the angle of extremism or prohibiting what Allāh has allowed; rather, it must be in accordance with the proofs and evidences.

“Fearing the punishment of Allāh”—This is sincerity. When you avoid what Allāh has prohibited you from, you only do so because you want Allāh to be pleased with you for not disobeying Him. Therefore, you fear the punishment of Allāh if you disobey Him, meaning: if you engage in those things which are prohibited.

Some of the scholars have said that the reality of *taqwā* is that you live in this world like a blind man who needs a guide as he walks through a land of thorns. Thus, you do not make a move except with a command from Allāh. You act when you are commanded to act, and you leave off action when you are commanded to leave off action. Thus, you are like a blind man who is guided by “Allāh said, His Messenger ﷺ said.” Your vision is what appears in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

And it is to live in this world like the person walking in a land of thorns. You can never be absentminded. You are always watching where you step. You fear that you will be harmed by the thorns. This is how you should be in this world during the times of trials and tribulations. You must navigate like a person in a land of thorns.

It was said:

*Leave off sinning, the minor sins and the major sins;
this is taqwā.*

*And act like a person walking over thorns, cautious
about what he sees.*

*Do not belittle small sins, because surely, the mountain
is made up of pebbles.*

Beware, O slave of Allāh, of saying, “This is a minor sin.”

إِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ .

Beware of minor sins.¹

Why is this? This is because the sins which the person views as minor will pile up until they cover his heart.

If you want to have true *taqwā*, then leave off sinning—the minor sins and the major sins. Why is this? This is because you should not look at the sin; rather, you should look towards the One you are disobeying and know that He sees and hears you. This is the reality of *taqwā*.

When we look, we will find that this explains the *ḥadīth* of Mu’adh:

“Fear Allāh wherever you may be”—Meaning: obey His commands and avoid His prohibitions.

“Follow up a sin with a good deed and it will erase it”—This means: when you sin, follow that sin by doing a good deed which will erase it.

“And interact with the people with good manners”—Allāh has prescribed that we interact with the people with good manners, as was previously mentioned. This is the reality of *taqwā*.

For this reason, Ibn Taymiyyah said, “This combines the rights of Allāh and the rights of Allāh’s slaves.” Here, it is as though the questioner asked Ibn Taymiyyah: If the rights of Allāh and the rights of Allāh’s slaves are both contained in *taqwā* of Allāh, then why did

¹ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 2/223

the Prophet ﷺ say, “Fear Allāh wherever you may be, and follow up a sin with a good deed which will erase it, and interact with the people with good manners”? Why didn’t the Prophet ﷺ just say, “Fear Allāh wherever you may be”? And he used to speak with concise words. So the statement of Ibn Taymiyyah was the answer to this: “This combines the rights of Allāh and the rights of Allāh’s slaves.”

Guarding the Tongue & Private Parts is From *Taqwā*



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته اللہ علیہ said:

But sometimes, by “*taqwā*,” He means fearing the punishment which makes one refrain from forbidden things, as was explained in the *ḥadīth* of Mu’adh. Similarly, in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ, which was narrated and classed as authentic by at-Tirmidhī: “It was said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, which thing most commonly causes people to enter Paradise?’ He said, ‘*Taqwā* (fear) of Allāh and good manners.’ It was said, ‘And which thing most commonly causes people to enter the Hellfire?’ He said, ‘The two openings: the mouth and the private parts.’”¹

EXPLANATION

If *taqwā* is mentioned alone, then it comprises all of the religion. If we are commanded with *taqwā*—by itself—then it entails all of Islām. If it is mentioned along with other commands, then it entails the religion, and the mention of the other command is to show its high status and importance. Mentioning something separate from its whole denotes its importance. Allāh the Exalted said:

¹ *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 2004

﴿ تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا ﴾

The angels and the Spirit descend therein.

[*Sūrah al-Qadr* 97:4]

The Spirit is Jibrīl عليه السلام, and he is from the angels, but he is mentioned separately out of honor.

Sometimes, *taqwā* is mentioned along with a prohibition or a command. Here, the intent of *taqwā* is to protect yourself from Allāh's punishment. It is as though it is being said, "Protect yourself from Allāh's punishment by obeying His commands."

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "But sometimes, He means..." meaning: sometimes our Lord means.

"But sometimes, by '*taqwā*,' He means fearing the punishment which makes one refrain from forbidden things, as was explained in the *ḥadīth* of Mu'ādh." Thus, this command has come to entail obeying the commands, avoiding the prohibitions, rectifying what is corrupted, and interacting with the people with good manners, to repel any bad thoughts.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Similarly, in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, which was narrated and classed as authentic by at-Tirmidhī: 'It was said, "O Messenger of Allāh, which thing most commonly causes people to enter Paradise?"'"

What a great question this is! Every believer desires to enter Paradise, so it is necessary to ask about the path that leads to it.

The Prophet ﷺ responded, "*Taqwā* (fear) of Allāh and good manners." He mentioned *taqwā* and good manners. Thus, good manners are mentioned separately here, even though it is part of the whole, because good manners are a part of *taqwā*. This is to show the great status of good manners. *Taqwā* of Allāh also means that the person must protect himself from the punishment of Allāh by obeying His commands, and having good manners is included in this.

“It was said, ‘And which thing most commonly causes people to enter the Hellfire?’ He said, ‘The two openings: the mouth and the private parts.’” This *ḥadīth* was declared *ḥasan* by the Imām of our generation, Shaykh al-Albānī.

Due to the danger of the mouth and the private parts, the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ يَضْمَنْ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لِحْيَيْهِ وَمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ أَضْمَنْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ.

Whoever can guarantee for me what is between his jaws and his legs, I guarantee for him Paradise.²

“Whoever can guarantee for me what is between his jaws”—This refers to the tongue.

Desires are from the greatest tribulations upon man in this world if he does not purify and rectify himself. Allāh created desires within us, so desire is installed in us and we have not been prohibited from expressing our desires, but we have been prohibited from exceeding the bounds when doing so. Therefore, He has provided us with instructions for our desires and given us a noble way to express them. This noble way is marriage. By way of marriage, the desires are governed, and the person lives a blessed life. Those who exceed the bounds regarding their desires live their lives in recklessness. The greatest tribulation upon both the man and the woman is the desire of the tongue and the desire of the private parts.

As for the desire of the tongue, it is the most dangerous tribulation upon the man and the woman due to the ease in which it is utilized. It is easy for someone to use their tongue in the impermissible. He may lie, backbite, and carry tales. It is very easy for someone to fall into this. For this reason, it is extremely dangerous; it doesn’t require any tools or supplies.

And from the most dangerous desires upon the man and the woman is the desire of the private parts, from the standpoint of the effect it has.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6474

Some of the scholars have said, “The person will continue to be shy from Allāh until he fornicates.” This means that, whatever sin someone may commit, he will still have some aspect of shyness. He continues to be shy from Allāh until he fornicates. If he fornicates, he shatters shyness from his heart; thus, he will rush to fulfill the rest of his desires.

This is the subtlety of our beloved ﷺ mentioning these two matters together—the desire of the tongue and the desire of the private parts—due to the dangers of these two affairs. Each one of them is more dangerous than the other from a certain standpoint. The tongue is more dangerous because of the ease of using it. The private parts are more dangerous because of the evil which results from them. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said:

وَهَلْ يَكُتَبُ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا حَصَائِدُ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ.

Are people thrown onto their faces in Hell for anything other than the harvest of their tongues?³

It is easy to fall into sin by way of the tongue, and this will be a reason for many people being thrown upon their faces in the Hellfire, because many will take this matter lightly.

Some of the scholars said, “Every sin is usually hidden by the sinner, except for the sins of the tongue—this sin is committed in front of the people.”

For the most part, people conceal their sins, except the sins of the tongue; these sins are committed in the presence of others. He goes to someone and backbites and lies. Perhaps he will even go to a group of noble people and tell 100 lies in their gathering. Thus, the tongue is very dangerous.

³ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 3973

Complete Character is a Reflection of Complete Faith



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

In the *ṣaḥīḥ*, it is narrated from ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar ﷺ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا.

The most complete believer in faith is the one who is best in character.¹

So he connected perfection of faith to good character. And it is well known that faith—all of it—is *taqwā* of Allāh.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “In the *ṣaḥīḥ*”; here, I will mention a benefit for the students of knowledge. The phrase “the *ṣaḥīḥ*,” when mentioned by the scholars, either means *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* collectively, or it means one or the other, or it means an authentic *ḥadīth* which is not limited to either of those two books. I mention this because some students of knowledge don’t pay attention to this,

¹ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 4682

so they apply the *ḥadīth* terminology of the earlier generations to our terminology today. For example: A verifier of *ḥadīth* has a book in which the *shaykh* says “in the *ṣaḥīḥ*,” and the verifier will say, “I did not find it in the *ṣaḥīḥ*.” And he intends by “the *ṣaḥīḥ*” *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Or he will say, “The *shaykh* erred here; this *ḥadīth* is not found in the *ṣaḥīḥ*.” Or he will attempt to bring a *ḥadīth* other than what the *shaykh* mentioned, which is close to that narration. This is an incorrect understanding of the *shaykh’s* intent.

Ibn Taymiyyah says here “in the *ṣaḥīḥ*,” and he does not intend *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “In the *ṣaḥīḥ*, it is narrated from ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “The most complete believer in faith is the one who is best in character.”” This *ḥadīth* has been narrated and authenticated by al-Ḥākim and Abū Dāwūd, and he was silent about its grading. At-Tirmidhī collected it and said it is *ḥasan*, Ibn Taymiyyah said it is authentic, and al-Albānī said it is authentic.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا.

The most complete believer in faith is the one who is best in character.²

This proves that actions are a part of faith, whether they are the actions of statements or actions of the limbs; and surely, good character is a part of faith. This good character may be statements or actions.

Likewise, this proves that faith increases and decreases, because whatever increases also decreases. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The most complete believer in faith.” This is a refutation of two groups—both of them believe that faith is one component and not broken up into parts.

² *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 4682

1) One group says, "Faith is one component—if part of it goes, all of it goes." Therefore, they believe that if someone lies or fornicates, his faith leaves him.

2) A contrasting group said, "Faith is one component—if part of it is firm, all of it is firm." These are the Murji'ah, those who believe that all of the believers are equal in faith, and they believe that actions are separate and independent of faith.

The Murji'ah themselves are of various factions. One faction believes that actions are not connected to faith at all; these are the extreme Murji'ah. Another faction believes that actions are a recommended part of faith, but not a part of faith. Their statement "a recommended part of faith" means that they believe actions are the reason for faith while not being a part of faith. This faction is from the scholars of the Murji'ah.

Ahlu-Sunnah is upon that which is proven by the proofs and evidences; included in these evidences is this narration. Action is a part of faith, and faith increases and decreases. Whoever claims faith and does not perform action with knowledge according to their ability, then he is not truly a believer according to the legislation and according to Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "So he connected perfection of faith to good character. And it is well known that faith—all of it—is *taqwā* of Allāh." The intent is that *taqwā* of Allāh comprises all of the religion. It includes good character and repentance; and these are mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of Mu'adh, and it is all contained in the advice from our Lord to have *taqwā* of Him.

Sincerity Towards Allāh



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَئِدُ:

The details of the foundation of *taqwā* and its branches cannot be discussed here because it comprises all of the religion. The source of goodness and its foundation is sincere worship to the Lord, worshipping Him alone and seeking help from Him alone. As He said in His statement:

﴿ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴾

You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.

[*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* 1:5]

And His statement:

﴿ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ﴾

So worship Him and put your trust in Him.

[*Sūrah Hūd* 11:123]

And His statement:

﴿ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴾

In Him I trust and unto Him I repent.

[Sūrah Hūd 11:88]

And His statement:

﴿ فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ﴾

So seek your provision from Allāh (alone), and worship Him (alone), and be grateful to Him.

[Sūrah al-'Ankabūt 29:17]

EXPLANATION

Due to the vast knowledge of Ibn Taymiyyah in explaining this speech, he said, "The details of the foundation of *taqwā* and its branches cannot be discussed here"; meaning, it is not possible to explain all of the religion in this setting.

He said, "This is because it comprises all of the religion. The source of goodness and its foundation is sincere worship to the Lord." The principle point of *taqwā* is the *tawhīd* of Allāh the Exalted and performing all acts of worship sincerely for Him, seeking help from Him, and placing our trust in Him.

Tawhīd is to make all of your actions sincerely for Allāh the Exalted. The most precious, noble, valuable thing the Muslim possesses is *tawhīd* of the Lord of all that exists. The greatest thing which Allāh has obligated upon His slaves is *tawhīd*. *Tawhīd* is the key to good. Good will not open for the one who seeks it without a key. It will only open for the person of *tawhīd*. The key to good is *tawhīd* of the Lord of all that exists. *Tawhīd* must precede all actions, and it is the condition for actions being accepted, and it is the most important of all important matters. It is the greatest obligation upon society, and there is no true safety for mankind except with *tawhīd*.

﴿ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ
الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴾

It is those who believe (in the oneness of Allāh and

worship none but Him alone) and mix not their belief with oppression, for them (only), there is security and they are the guided.

[Sūrah al-An'ām 6:82]

“Those who believe (in the oneness of Allāh and worship none but Him alone) and mix not their belief with oppression”; this means that they do not mix their faith in Allāh with polytheism (*shirk*), because polytheism is the greatest form of oppression. Safety is restricted to those who fit this description: “for them (only), there is security and they are the guided.”

Tawhīd is the purpose for which we were created:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

And I did not create the *jinn* and mankind except to worship Me.

[Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt 51:56]

Tawhīd is the reason all the messengers were sent:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا
الطَّاغُوتَ ﴾

And verily, We have sent among every *ummah* (nation) a messenger (proclaiming): “Worship Allāh (alone), and avoid all false deities.”

[Sūrah an-Nahl 16:36]

Those who attach their hearts to Allāh have contentment and happy, blessed lives, while those who attach their hearts to other than Allāh will be put to trial and live in humiliation.

By Allāh, the One besides Whom there is no other god worthy of worship—nothing is neglected from *tawhīd* except that something will be missing from strength and might, and the deeper the neglect, the more humiliation there is.

We have seen those who ascribe themselves to Islām in some of the Muslim countries humbling themselves to those who have less piety than they themselves have. This is because they think that these individuals are allies of Allāh, and they believe that being an ally to Allāh can be inherited. So you find them saying, “This is Shaykh, the son of Shaykh, the son of Shaykh,” even if this person has no signs of piety on him.

By Allāh, we have seen some Muslims go to a person—and the least we can say about this person they go to is that they need to be advised to practice the religion—if they enter a room where this person they deem to be a *shaykh* is sitting, they crawl on their hands and knees until they reach him. They never cover their heads in front of him. We have seen men and women, when passing by someone the people call *shaykh*, fall on the ground.

I remember when I was in high school and my father used to vend on the side of the *masjid* during the days of Ḥajj, and I was sitting with him. A woman from such-and-such place walked by, and then a man passed by her. She fell down on her knees, hitting the ground with force, so I was surprised! I said, “*SubhānAllāh!* Why did she do that?!” But when we visited their country, we knew why she did it: the man who passed by was a *shaykh* whom they bow down and kneel to.

One of the most shocking things I have seen, which still shocks me to this day, is that I saw a man in a room who the people said was an ally of Allāh. Men had brought their women wearing makeup and perfume to this man. They all stood in a line, and the woman would enter upon the *shaykh* by herself so he could “bless” her. Allāh knows best what kind of “blessing” this was!

When a person loses *tawhīd*, he loses strength, might, and nobility, and he humiliates himself to the people.

It was mentioned that a person from France, who was from the well-known people of that land, read about Islām and accepted it. He then traveled to some countries in Africa and found some people

there worshipping their *shuyūkh*, seeking nearness to them instead of Allāh. He said, “Christianity is better than this, because at least we worship a messenger while they worship people, some of whom don’t even deserve any honor!” So he wanted to apostate from Islām; then he met a man who advised him. The man said to him, “Do you want Islām?” He replied, “Yes.” The man said, “Go to Ḥajj, and after Ḥajj, be resolute.” So he went to Ḥajj and *subhānAllāh!* From the remarkable things is that, during Ḥajj, the people’s hearts are soft and they display *tawhīd*; even those who have lots of deviancy with them display *tawhīd*, except for those whose hearts have been blotted out. And refuge is sought with Allāh. So when he arrived for Ḥajj, he saw the people repeating the *talbiyah*¹ of Ḥajj, he saw *tawhīd*, he saw worship, he saw strength. He said, “This is the Islām which I read about.” Thus, Allāh made him firm by way of the advice given by this man, by the virtue of Allāh the Exalted.

Therefore, the most precious thing we can hold onto is *tawhīd*, and the highest thing we can call to is *tawhīd*. We don’t find anything in our religion clearer than *tawhīd*. But you will be amazed that some of the slaves of Allāh—who love Allāh and love the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ—abandon the statement of Allāh and the statement of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ!

If you go to one of them and say, “O my brother, why do you do such-and-such? Our Lord says this, our Messenger ﷺ says this.” He will respond by saying, “The *shaykh* said this”! *SubhānAllāh!* Shall we abandon the clear speech of Allāh and the clear speech of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ for the speech of one of the people?!

Imām ash-Shāfi’i رحمه الله said, “The people have agreed that whoever has a Sunnah presented to him does not have the right to abandon it for the statement of someone else, regardless of who they may be.”

How can anyone do this when the clarity in the Book of Allāh and

¹ **Translator’s note:** The *talbiyah* is the saying during Ḥajj: “Here I am, O Allāh, here I am at Your service. Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, here I am at Your service. Verily all praise and blessings are Yours, and all sovereignty; You have no partner.” Narrated by Muslim.

the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh is the clearest anything can possibly be?!

Once, I met an individual from a Muslim country; unfortunately, this individual was giving the sermon for Jumu'ah. The speech he was saying during Jumu'ah was a call toward polytheism, and he was using various narrations as evidence. I said to him, "O my brother, this speech you say opposes the speech of Allāh when He said such-and-such; and likewise, it opposes the speech of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when he said such-and-such." He responded by saying, "Did you hear the *ḥadīth* we mentioned?" I said, "This *ḥadīth* is fabricated, and the scholars of *ḥadīth* have agreed upon this." He responded, "So what? It's beneficial in order to soften the hearts of the people." I said, "*SubḥānAllāh!* You turn the people away from *tawḥīd* toward polytheism with a fabricated *ḥadīth* and you say, 'So what? It softens the hearts of the people!'"

Thus, the greatest matter deserving our attention is rectifying *tawḥīd*. By Allāh, no one can live with his heart at ease, happy and pleased with his Lord, except by actualizing the *tawḥīd* of the Lord of all that exists. For this reason, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, "The source of goodness and its foundation is sincere worship to the Lord; worshiping Him alone and seeking help from Him alone." As He said in His statement:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.

[Sūrah al-Fātiḥah 1:5]

This verse is clear proof that worship is the exclusive right of Allāh alone. "You (alone) we worship."

A question may be asked here: Why did Allāh the Exalted say, "You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help," even though seeking help is an act of worship? The scholars said the reason is that the majority of errors concerning *tawḥīd* are found in those who seek help and relief from other than Allāh. Thus, it is mentioned

independently here for extra caution. “You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.”

The scholars say: If a person is diligent upon *tawḥīd* from the standpoint of seeking help and supplication, then he will be diligent in the other aspects of *tawḥīd* as well, because the greatest trial for the people concerning *tawḥīd* is them seeking help from other than Allāh and supplicating to other than Allāh.

Some of the people deviate in regard to seeking help, so they seek help from those deemed to be allies of Allāh, or they seek help from the *jinn*, fortune-tellers, or soothsayers. The same occurs regarding supplication. This is the reason for this extra caution.

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EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned the statement of Allāh the Exalted:

﴿ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ﴾

So worship Him and put your trust in Him.

[Sūrah Hūd 11:123]

The scholars mention a great benefit here. They said, “Actualizing *tawhīd* can only occur by attaching the heart to Allāh.” When the person attaches his heart to Allāh, he will actualize *tawhīd*. Reliance upon Allāh requires attaching the heart to Allāh. Even when the person implements the means, he attaches his heart to Allāh and relies upon Allāh. For this reason, Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ﴾

So worship Him and put your trust in Him.

[Sūrah Hūd 11:123]

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned the statement of Allāh the Exalted:

﴿ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴾

In Him I trust and unto Him I repent.

[*Sūrah Hūd 11:88*]

The scholars said, “Whoever attaches his heart to Allāh will return to Allāh.” Thus, the foundation of good is for the slave to attach his heart to his Lord.

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned the statement of Allāh the Exalted:

﴿ فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ﴾

So seek your provision from Allāh (alone), and worship Him (alone), and be grateful to Him.

[*Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt 29:17*]

Many people may seek their provision from other than Allāh. They ask the righteous people for provision. Some people go to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ and ask the Prophet ﷺ for provision, and they associate partners with Allāh. And refuge is sought with Allāh!

From the strangest things I have seen in a Muslim country is that I saw people praying, being diligent upon the prayer, and they filled the *masjid* we prayed in. But we found in many of their homes idols made from rocks which they turned to for provision. They alleged that it was a reason for much of their provision. They sought to draw near to the idols, even though they testified that nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh!

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Thus, the slave does not attach his heart to the creation or attach his heart to benefiting from them or performing actions for their sake. He focuses all of his concern towards his Lord, the Exalted. He does this by adhering to supplicating to Him for all his needs, including his poverty, his wants, his fears, and other than that, and striving to do all that He loves.

EXPLANATION

InshāAllāh, comments on the subject of *du'ā* will come in the section about the best deeds. This is the core of what appears in the advice of the Prophet ﷺ to Ibn 'Abbās ؓ when he said:

يَا غُلَامُ! إِنِّي أُعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ: احْفَظْ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظْكَ، احْفَظْ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ، إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَّمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ، وَإِنْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَّمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ؛ رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ، وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ.

O young boy, I shall teach you some words: Preserve (the religion of) Allāh and He will preserve you. Preserve (the religion of) Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask of Allāh, and if you seek help, then seek help from Allāh. Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you except in something that Allāh has decreed for you, and if they were to gather together to harm you with something, they would not harm you except in something that Allāh has decreed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.¹

The Prophet ﷺ said, “O young boy, I shall teach you some words.” This means “some beneficial words.”

“Preserve (the religion of) Allāh and He will preserve you”—The scholars have mentioned that “preserving Allāh” means preserving the religion of Allāh. If you preserve the religion of Allāh, He will preserve you.

“Preserve (the religion of) Allāh and you will find Him in front of you”—Preserve the religion of Allāh during prosperity and adversity, and you will find Him in front of you. Thus, it has been narrated that the person who desires that his supplications be answered during times of adversity should increase his supplications during times of prosperity and ease.

¹ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 2516

“If you ask, then ask of Allāh”—This is a restriction.

“And if you seek help, then seek help from Allāh”—Why is this? This is because [of the following].

“Know that if the nations...”—This does not mean just one man, or one righteous man—this means the entire nation, including its prophet, the righteous people, and every individual.

“...if the nations were to gather together to benefit you with something...”—His statement “something” denotes that this could even mean something small.

“...they would not benefit you except in something that Allāh has decreed for you, and if they were to gather together to harm you with something, they would not harm you except in something that Allāh has decreed for you.” If you are certain about this, how can you attach your heart to anyone other than Allāh?! If Allāh desires to touch you with some harm, then no one can remove it except Him. And if Allāh wants to give you good, then no one can repel it except Him. So how can you attach your heart to other than Him?! How can you turn to other than Allāh the Exalted?!

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Whoever understands this cannot perceive the good which will result from that.

EXPLANATION

His statement: “Whoever understands this”—“this” refers to what was mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of Mu’adh and the explanation given by Ibn Taymiyyah based upon the proofs and evidences. Whoever understands it and acts according to it will never perceive that any good comes to him except by way of Allāh. This includes safety, happiness, contentment, and a good life.

﴿ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ
الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴾

It is those who believe (in the oneness of Allāh and worship none but Him alone) and mix not their belief with oppression; for them (only) there is security and they are the guided.

[Sūrah al-An'ām 6:82]

Allāh restricted safety to those mentioned in this verse.

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ
حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً ﴾

Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer, verily, to him We will give a good life.

[Sūrah an-Naḥl 16:97]

Thus, it has been narrated in a *ḥadīth* that the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا هَمَّهُ فَفَرَّقَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرَهُ وَجَعَلَ فَرْقَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَأْتِهِ
مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا كُتِبَ لَهُ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ الْآخِرَةُ نِيَّتَهُ جَمَعَ اللَّهُ لَهُ أَمْرَهُ وَجَعَلَ
غِنَاهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ.

Whoever is focused only on this world, Allāh will confound his affairs and place his poverty right before his eyes, and nothing will come to him of this world except that which has been decreed for him. Whoever is focused on the Hereafter, Allāh will settle his affairs for him and place his richness in his heart, and the world will come to him in spite of itself.²

Whoever makes the worldly life their focal point and attaches their heart to other than Allāh, Allāh will confound their affairs, so their heart will not be at ease; rather, their heart will be scattered. How

² *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 2465

can someone be happy when their heart is scattered?! By Allāh, even if he possesses the entire world, he will not be happy if his heart is not at ease.

“And place his poverty right before his eyes”—The scholars say that this means he will be punished by his wealth. What will a person see when poverty is placed before his eyes? He will not see anything except poverty. He will view himself as poor even if his treasure chests are filled. Thus, he will rush to gather wealth and stress himself in collecting wealth, but his efforts will not benefit him, due to his fear. Despite his efforts, the only portion of this life that will reach him is what Allāh has decreed for him. Nothing will be increased or decreased. The provision is similar to the lifespan: it is written. It is written for every individual while they are in the womb of their mother. The provision is written there and it will not increase or decrease.

The scholars mention a story of a man who wanted to drink from a well. His foot slipped and he fell into the well. Some people came by and heard his moans, so they pulled him out of the well. They gave him some milk and he drank it. One of the people said to him, “How did you fall?” He stood in the spot from which he fell and said, “I stood here.” Upon saying this, he fell into the well again and died.

This man had some provision remaining for him, which was the milk. He exited the well and drank the milk. And he had some of his lifespan remaining. Then he fell from the same spot he initially fell from, and he died. Thus, no one can decrease his provision nor can anyone increase his provision, regardless of his proficiency and expertise. But we put forth the means to obtain provision while not relying upon the means.

“Whoever is focused on the Hereafter”—meaning, he attaches his heart to his Lord—“Allāh will settle his affairs for him.” Thus, his heart will be at ease. He will not run around this world, right and left. Some of the righteous people have said, “Perhaps a rich person will not be able to sleep, while perhaps a poor person will fall asleep

before he reaches his bed.” This affair returns to the affair of the heart.

“Allāh will settle his affairs for him and place his richness in his heart.” Whatever provision he is given, he will say, “All praises belong to Allāh, I have good.” If he is given what suffices him, he will say, “All praises belong to Allāh; I am not in need of anyone.” If he is given more than what he needs, he will say, “All praises belong to Allāh,” and he will feel like he is rich.

The world will come to him in spite of itself. He is not prevented from the provisions that Allāh has decreed for him; they will come to him.

I swear by the One besides Whom there is no other deity worthy of worship: no one will increase their provision by sinning, and they will not be prevented from their provision due to obedience. The merchant who remains in his shop while the call to prayer is given, continuing to sell, will not increase his provision. The merchant who closes his shop upon hearing the call to prayer and goes to establish the prayer will not decrease his provision at all; rather, he will receive a great deal of blessings.

This is something the people must understand, and this understanding must be disseminated. Obedience and worship upon *tawhīd* and excellence is the foundation to all good, the foundation of happiness, the foundation of contentment, the foundation of increasing provision, and the foundation of blessings. Abandoning *tawhīd* is the foundation of evil. This must be made clear to the people.

With this, Ibn Taymiyyah completes the first matter, which is his advice for what will rectify the religion and the worldly affairs.

How beautiful is it for us to always look towards this affair and weigh our situation by it! Have *taqwā* of Allāh wherever you are, and follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase [the evil deed]. And behave towards the people with good manners.

Next, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته will explain the great matter of determin-

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ing the best actions after the obligations. What is the principle that allows us to determine which actions are best?

10 Things That Expiate Sins



EXPLANATION

Before we move on to the next advice, I will mention the remaining affairs which expiate sins, because we previously mentioned that there are 10 things which expiate sins. Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned four of these matters, and I did not mention the remaining matters because I did not want to interrupt the speech of Ibn Taymiyyah. Since we have completed his first advice, we will mention the remaining six matters that expiate sins.

As we have previously mentioned, Ibn Taymiyyah and other scholars have stated that sins are expiated by 10 matters. As long as the person remains in this world, he is subject to sin and errors. It is from the mercy of Allāh the Exalted upon this *ummah*, which He showed mercy to by sending Muḥammad bin ‘Abdillāh ﷺ, that Allāh will not take us to account for the whispers of our souls as long as we do not speak or act upon them. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي مَا حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا، مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ أَوْ تَتَكَلَّمْ.

Allāh has pardoned my *ummah* for the evil thoughts of their souls, as long as such thoughts are not put into action or uttered.¹

And it is from the mercy of Allāh upon this *ummah* that the person

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5269

who intends to sin and inclines toward the sin but does not commit the sin due to fear of Allāh, will have a good deed written for him. If he abandons the sin for other than fear of Allāh, then nothing is written for him or against him.

From the mercy of Allāh upon this *ummah* is that when a person commits a sin, only one sin is written against him and it is not increased.

Despite this mercy and virtue from Allāh, He has made for His slaves things that will erase and expiate their sins. Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned four of these matters in his advice; we shall mention the remaining matters along with commentary.

There are 10 matters which expiate sins:

THE FIRST EXPIATOR OF SIN

Repentance.

The Muslims have agreed upon this. Repentance will bring about forgiveness, even if the person committed polytheism (*shirk*). Whoever repents from polytheism (*shirk*), their repentance will be accepted by Allāh. Allāh has commanded all the believers to repent:

﴿ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

And turn to Allāh in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.

[Sūrah an-Nūr 24:31]

THE SECOND EXPIATOR OF SIN

Seeking forgiveness without repenting.

This is when the slave fears Allāh, so he seeks His forgiveness from his sins even if he continues to commit the sin, as we have previously explained. The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَذْنَبَ عَبْدٌ ذَنْبًا، فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي. فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: أَذْنَبَ عَبْدِي ذَنْبًا، فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا، يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ، وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ. ثُمَّ عَادَ فَأَذْنَبَ، فَقَالَ: أَيُّ رَبِّ، اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي، فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: عَبْدِي أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا. فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ، وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ. ثُمَّ عَادَ فَأَذْنَبَ، فَقَالَ: أَيُّ رَبِّ، اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي: فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: أَذْنَبَ عَبْدِي ذَنْبًا، فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا، يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ، وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ. اعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ، فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكَ.

A slave [of Allāh] committed a sin and said, “O Allāh, forgive me my sin.” And He ﷻ said, “My servant has committed a sin and knows that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them.” Then the person sinned again and said, “O Lord, forgive me my sin.” And He ﷻ said, “My servant has committed a sin and knows that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them.” Then he sinned again and said, “O Lord, forgive me my sin.” And He ﷻ said, “My servant has committed a sin and knows that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them. Do what you wish, for I have forgiven you.”²

His statement “Do what you wish” means [do as you wish] as long as the person is truthful in seeking forgiveness and he does so fearing Allāh.

THE THIRD EXPIATOR OF SIN

Righteous actions.

The scholars refer to these good deeds as erasers.

﴿ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ﴾

Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds.

[Sūrah Hūd 11:114]

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2758

وَأَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا.

Follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will erase it.³

THE FOURTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

Calamities and tribulations which befall the believer in this world.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا يَزَالُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْمُؤْمِنِ وَالْمُؤْمِنَةِ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَمَالِهِ حَتَّى يَلْقَى اللَّهَ وَمَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ.

Trials will not cease afflicting the believing man and the believing woman in their selves, children, and wealth until they meet Allāh without having any sin.⁴

These four matters have already been mentioned. And we have stated that repentance washes away all sins. The other three only benefit the person of *tawhīd* (the Muslim), while the person of polytheism (the non-Muslim) will not benefit from these three. This is because the other sins are not forgiven until the person repents from associating partners with Allāh.

THE FIFTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

Intercession from those who intercede.

This intercession refers to interceding on behalf of the sinners so that Allāh will pardon them. Intercession is of various categories. The only intercession we are speaking of here is the intercession on behalf of the sinners so that Allāh will pardon them.

This intercession can occur before the sinner enters the Hellfire, and it can occur after they enter the Hellfire. Our Lord—from His generosity, kindness, virtue, and mercy—will grant permission

³ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 1987

⁴ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 2399

to whomever He wills from His slaves to intercede for those He is pleased with from His slaves.

﴿ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ﴾

Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission?

[Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:255]

﴿ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى ﴾

And they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased.

[Sūrah al-Anbiyā' 21:28]

﴿ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا ﴾

On that day, no intercession shall avail, except the one for whom the Most Beneficent (Allāh) has given permission and whose word is acceptable to Him.

[Sūrah Tā-Hā 20:109]

The intercession which will bring about benefit is the intercession by the permission of Allāh the Exalted, along with Him being pleased with the one interceding and the one being interceded for. Any intercession other than this is of no benefit.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي .

My intercession is for the people of major sins from my ummah.⁵

The Prophet ﷺ said:

لِلشَّهِيدِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ سِتُّ حِصَالٍ يُغْفَرُ لَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ دَفْعَةٍ وَيَرَى مَقْعَدَهُ مِنْ

⁵ Sunan Abi Dāwūd 4739

الْجَنَّةِ وَيُجَارُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَيَأْمَنُ مِنَ الْفَزَعِ الْأَكْبَرِ وَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ تَاجُ الْوَقَارِ الْيَاقُوتَةُ مِنْهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا وَيُزَوَّجُ اثْنَتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ زَوْجَةً مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ وَيُشَفَّعُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنْ أَقَارِبِهِ.

There are six special things with Allāh for the martyr: he is forgiven with the first flow of blood (he suffers); he is shown his place in Paradise; he is protected from punishment in the grave, secured from the greatest terror; the crown of dignity is placed upon his head, and its gems are better than the world and what is in it; he is married to 72 wives from *al-hūr al-‘īn*; and he may intercede for 70 of his relatives.⁶

The martyr is the one who dies upon the battlefield in a legislated *jihād*—the one who meets all of the conditions and does not fall into any of the matters which prohibit martyrdom. Martyrdom is a result of *jihād*, but some people have an incorrect view of this. They say that if a man goes to fight against the non-Muslim—even if this “*jihād*” does not meet the proper requirements and there are things present which prevent him from being a martyr when he is killed—he shall be forgiven. This is incorrect. The Prophet ﷺ gave this promise to the one who meets the conditions and does not have anything which would prevent him from becoming a martyr.

The point of reference here is that the martyr can intercede for 70 of his family members.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

لَيَدْخُلَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعَةِ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَكْثَرُ مِنْ بَنِي تَمِيمٍ. قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ سِوَاكَ قَالَ سِوَايَ.

“More than (the members of the tribe of) Banū Tamīm will enter Paradise through the intercession of a man from amongst my nation.” They said, “O Messenger of Allāh, someone other than

⁶ *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 1663

you?” He said, “Someone other than me.”⁷

Banū Tamīm is an Arab tribe known for their large number. Those mentioned in this narration who are interceded for will be those who deserve to enter the Hellfire based upon their actions, but this man will intercede for them, so Allāh will forgive them and they will enter Paradise.

They said, “O Messenger of Allāh, someone other than you?” It is as though they were asking, “Are you this man who will intercede on their behalf, O Messenger of Allāh, or is it another man?” He informed them that it is another man from this *ummah*.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

يقال للرجل: «يا فلان، قم فاشفع» فيقوم الرجل فيشفع للقبيلة ولأهل البيت وللرجل وللرجلين على قدر عمله.

It will be said to a man (on the Day of Judgment), “O so-and-so, stand and intercede.” The man will stand and intercede for a tribe, for a household, and for a man and two men, according to his deeds.⁸

The Prophet ﷺ spoke about the believers who will pass over the bridge placed over the Hellfire. He said:

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ نَجَوْا فِي إِخْوَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِخْوَانُنَا كَانُوا يُصَلُّونَ مَعَنَا وَيُصُومُونَ مَعَنَا وَيَعْمَلُونَ مَعَنَا فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى اذْهَبُوا فَمَنْ وَجَدْتُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ دِينَارٍ مِنْ إِيمَانٍ فَأَخْرِجُوهُ وَيُحَرِّمُ اللَّهُ صُورَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ فَيَأْتُونَهُمْ وَبَعْضُهُمْ قَدْ غَابَ فِي النَّارِ إِلَى قَدَمِهِ وَإِلَى أَنْصَافِ سَاقِيهِ فَيُخْرِجُونَ مَنْ عَرَفُوا ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ فَيَقُولُ اذْهَبُوا فَمَنْ وَجَدْتُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ نِصْفِ دِينَارٍ فَأَخْرِجُوهُ فَيُخْرِجُونَ مَنْ عَرَفُوا ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ فَيَقُولُ اذْهَبُوا فَمَنْ وَجَدْتُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ إِيمَانٍ فَأَخْرِجُوهُ فَيُخْرِجُونَ مَنْ عَرَفُوا قَالَ

⁷ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 25/189

⁸ Collected by Ibn Khuzaymah (2/744).

أَبُو سَعِيدٍ فَإِنْ لَمْ تُصَدِّقُونِي فَأَقْرُؤُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يُضَاعِفْهَا.

When they see that they have been saved, they will say concerning their brothers, “O Allāh! (Save) our brothers, (for they) used to pray with us, fast with us, and also do good deeds with us.” Allāh will say, “Go and take out (of Hell) anyone in whose heart you find faith equal to the weight of one (gold) *dīnār*.” Allāh will forbid the Fire from burning the faces of those sinners. They will go to them and find some of them in Hellfire up to their feet, and some up to the middle of their legs. So they will take out those whom they recognize and then they will return, and Allāh will say (to them), “Go and take out (of Hell) anyone in whose heart you find faith equal to the weight of half a *dīnār*.” They will take out whomever they recognize and then they will return, and then Allāh will say, “Go and take out (of Hell) anyone in whose heart you find faith equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant),” so they will take out all those whom they recognize. Abū Sa’īd said, “If you do not believe me, read, if you wish: ‘Surely, Allāh wrongs not even of the weight of an atom (or a small ant), but if there is any good (done), He doubles it.’”⁹

When a group of the believers cross the bridge laid over the middle of the Hellfire and they have not fallen into the Fire, they will remember their brothers who have fallen into the Hellfire and did not cross over the bridge. Thus, they will intercede on their behalf. They will say, “O Allāh! (Save) our brothers, (for they) used to pray with us, fast with us, and also do good deeds with us.”

This is from the blessings for the people who regularly connected themselves to the righteous people from Ahlus-Sunnah known for *tawhīd*. It is hoped that they will have a great deal of good in this life and the Hereafter.

If the person falls into sin but is diligent in connecting himself to the righteous, he is diligent in associating with the people of *tawhīd*, the people of Ahlus-Sunnah—because he will not be miserable due

⁹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī in “The Book of *Tawhīd*” (7440).

to sitting with them—then it is hoped that by mixing with them, his heart will become soft and he will abandon sin. And if he dies upon sins, it is hoped that they will intercede on his behalf.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

فَيَشْفَعُ النَّبِيُّونَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ .

The prophets, angels, and believers will intercede.¹⁰

And he said:

أَنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَأْتِي تَشْفَعُ، وَيَشْفَعُ الرَّسُلُ .

Surely, the angels on the Day of Judgment will come to intercede, and the messengers will intercede.¹¹

This intercession will come from the angels, the prophets, and the righteous people, and it will be on behalf of the sinners who deserve to enter the Hellfire due to their sins. They will intercede on their behalf so that they will not enter the Hellfire, or they (the sinners) will enter the Hellfire and [the intercessors] will intercede so that they can be removed from it.

THE SIXTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

The mercy of Allāh and His pardon.

The mercy of Allāh is vast; His mercy encompasses everything. Allāh pardons sins (in the Hereafter) which are not *shirk*.

﴿ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴾

And He pardons much.

[Sūrah ash-Shūrā 42:30]

It is proven that Allāh the Exalted will pardon some of His believing, sinful slaves on the Day of Judgment without any reason or action

¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 183

¹¹ *Sunan an-Nasā'i* 730

from the sinners themselves. A Muslim may commit a sin and not implement an action to erase that sin, but Allāh will pardon him due to His mercy, and due to his virtue in this life and on the Day of Judgment.

This is such that Allāh will draw near to a believer on the Day of Judgment and place a screen that covers him from the creation. He will say to him, “Do you recognize this sin?” The believer will reply, “Yes, my Lord.” Allāh will make him confess all of his sins until he believes that he is destroyed. Then Allāh the Exalted will say to him:

إِنِّي سَتَرْتُ عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ.

I screened them (your sins) for you in the world, and today I forgive them for you.¹²

ويجاء يوم القيامة بأناس يأتون بذنوب أمثال الجبال يُغْفَرُ لَهُمْ.

On the Day of Judgment, a group of people will be brought forward with sins the equivalent of mountains and they will be pardoned.¹³

A man from the believers, a person of *tawhīd*, will be brought forth on the Day of Judgment. It will be said:

اعْرِضُوا عَلَيْهِ صِعَارَ ذُنُوبِهِ وَيُحَبِّأُ عَنْهُ كِبَارَهَا، فَيَقَالُ لَهُ: عَمِلْتَ يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، كَذَا، وَهُوَ مُقَرَّرٌ، لَا يُنْكِرُ، وَهُوَ مُشْفِقٌ مِنْ كِبَارِهَا.

Present to him his minor sins and conceal from him his major sins. Thus, it will be said to him, “On this day, you did such-and-such, and this and that.” And he will affirm that and he will not deny it. And he will be afraid lest his major sins be presented.

His minor actions will be presented to him, his minor sins. It will be said to him, “On this day, you did such-and-such, and this and that.” And he will affirm that and he will not deny these sins. But his heart will be terrified that his major sins will be mentioned, full of fear from his major sins.

¹² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6070

¹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2767

فَيَقَالُ: أَعْطُوهُ مَكَانَ كُلِّ سَيِّئَةٍ عَمِلَهَا حَسَنَةً.

It will be said, “Give him a good deed in place of every sin he did.”

Allāh will pardon his sins and honor him by replacing them with good deeds.

فَيَقُولُ: إِنَّ لِي ذُنُوبًا مَا أَرَاهَا.

Thus, he will say, “Verily, I have sins which I do not see!”

After he had been terrified that his major sins would be mentioned, he began to hope that they would be mentioned so they could be replaced with good deeds.

So when the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that:

ضَحِكَ حَتَّى بَدَتْ نَوَاجِذُهُ.

He smiled until his molar teeth became visible.

This was due to the situation of this man. He was terrified, petrified, frightened that his major sins would be mentioned. But when he saw the generosity of Allāh, he desired them, so he started to look for them. He said, “Verily, I have sins which I do not see.” Meaning: the major sins which were concealed from him. He said this so that his major sins could be exchanged for good deeds. So the Prophet ﷺ smiled about that until his molar teeth became visible.¹⁴

Our Lord, the Most Generous, will continue to show mercy to His slaves in this world and on the Day of Judgment until no one who says from his heart, “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh,” will remain in the Hellfire. The believing slave continues to hope for Allāh’s pardon and forgiveness.

Let the believer who broadcasts his sins beware: There is great misfortune and an evil outlook for broadcasting sins, and it is possible that Allāh will not pardon them.

¹⁴ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 35/313; declared authentic by al-Albānī.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي مُعَافَى إِلَّا الْمُجَاهِرِينَ، وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْمَجَانَةِ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ الرَّجُلُ بِاللَّيْلِ عَمَلًا، ثُمَّ يُصْبِحُ وَقَدْ سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ، فَيَقُولُ يَا فُلَانُ عَمِلْتَ الْبَارِحَةَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، وَقَدْ بَاتَ يَسْتُرُهُ رَبُّهُ وَيُصْبِحُ يَكْشِفُ سِتْرَ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ.

All of my *ummah* will be forgiven, except those who broadcast or disclose their sins. An example of such disclosure is that a person commits a sin at night, and when the morning arrives, Allāh has screened him, but he says, “O so-and-so, I did such-and-such evil last night.” Even though he spent the night screened by his Lord, he removes the screen of Allāh from himself in the morning.¹⁵

He said, “All of my *ummah* will be forgiven”; this includes the sinners, except those who broadcast or disclose their sins. Everyone who commits sins in front of the people falls into this category. This also includes those who sin in private and then inform the people of their sins.

A questioner may ask, “How do we reconcile between this and the *ḥadīth* of Thawbān?” In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَأَعْلَمَنَّ أَقْوَامًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَأْتُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِحَسَنَاتٍ أَمْثَالِ جِبَالِ تِهَامَةَ بِيضًا فَيَجْعَلُهَا اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا. قَالَ ثَوْبَانُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صِفْهُمْ لَنَا جَلْهِمْ لَنَا أَنْ لَا نَكُونَ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَا نَعْلَمُ. قَالَ: أَمَا إِنَّهُمْ إِخْوَانِكُمْ وَمِنْ جِلْدَتِكُمْ وَيَأْخُذُونَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ كَمَا تَأْخُذُونَ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ أَقْوَامٌ إِذَا خَلَوْا بِمَحَارِمِ اللَّهِ انْتَهَكُوهَا.

“I certainly know people of my *ummah* who will come on the Day of Resurrection with good deeds like the mountains of Tihāmah, but Allāh will make them like scattered dust.” Thawbān said, “O Messenger of Allāh, describe them to us and tell us more, so that we will not become of them unknowingly.” He said, “They are your brothers and from your race, worshipping at night as you do, but

¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6069

they will be people who transgress the sacred limits of Allāh when they are alone.”¹⁶

It would appear as though there is a contradiction here, because the Prophet ﷺ said, “All of my *ummah* will be forgiven, except those who broadcast or disclose their sins.” Thus, it would appear from this narration that the person who conceals his sins will be pardoned. However, in the narration of Thawbān, the Prophet ﷺ said, “...they will be people who transgress the sacred limits of Allāh when they are alone.” What is apparent from this narration is that the person who sins when he is alone will be punished with this great punishment.

This appears to be a contradiction! So how do we reconcile between these two narrations? They can be reconciled from a number of angles:

1) The *ḥadīth* of Thawbān is about a people who display for the people obedience, humility, and worship in order to show off and be mentioned with good, while they only remember Allāh rarely. And when they are alone, they violate the sacred limits of Allāh. They are the hypocrites or close to being hypocrites. This is why their good deeds shall become scattered dust. Evil deeds which are less than disbelief and apostasy do not invalidate good deeds, although these sins could take away from the person’s good deeds due to a dispute with others; thus, they may take his good deeds and he may take their sins (if he oppressed them). But as for sins being a reason for good deeds being invalidated—this has not been narrated in the text.

So this agrees with the *ḥadīth*. These people violate the limits of Allāh when they are secluded, while they display obedience in front of the people. Thus, they appear to have good deeds from what is apparent to the people. But with Allāh, these deeds are scattered dust.

As for the *ḥadīth* “All of my *ummah* will be pardoned, except those who broadcast or disclose their sins,” those mentioned in

¹⁶ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 4245

this narration who conceal their sins are the Muslims—people of *tawhīd*—who worship Allāh and fear Allāh, but they fall into sins and then they conceal their sins.

2) Some scholars have said about the *ḥadīth* of Thawbān—“they will be people who transgress the sacred limits of Allāh when they are alone”—that these are people who avoid sin in front of the people due to their shyness in front of the people, while they are not shy in front of Allāh. When they are alone, they commit sins because they are not shy in front of Allāh. They abandon sins in front of the people, not because they are shy of Allāh or because they fear Allāh, but only because they are shy of the people. For this reason, when the people are no longer around, they sin without hesitation, because they do not feel shy in front of Allāh; they only feel shy in front of the people.

As for the *ḥadīth* “All of my *ummah* will be pardoned, except those who broadcast or disclose their sins,” those mentioned in this narration who conceal their sins do so out shyness in front of Allāh and shyness in front of the people. They conceal their sins while their hearts contain fear of Allāh and shyness from the people, but their weakness overtakes them so they fall into sin, which they then conceal. It is hoped that Allāh the Exalted will pardon them.

3) The statement of the Prophet ﷺ: “...they will be people who transgress the sacred limits of Allāh when they are alone”—this refers to those people who betray the trust. An example of this is the man who fornicates with his neighbor’s wife—the man who fornicates with his neighbor’s wife has committed one of the gravest sins, and thus will receive one of the gravest punishments. This is because his neighbor trusted him to not betray him regarding his family, and he did not suspect betrayal from him. But when the neighbor leaves, the man violates this sacredness and fornicates with his wife. And refuge is sought with Allāh.

Another example is the person who is entrusted with the children of the Muslims. The Muslim children are brought to him, and he violates the sacred limits of Allāh regarding them. This can occur by

him teaching them things that contradict the laws of Islām, such as teaching them *takfir* or terrorism, or teaching them to be a sword in the chest of the country's residents. This can also occur if he violates their honor. Those who do this have fallen into major, grave sins.

The meaning of “their good deeds becoming like scattered dust particles” is that their sins will outweigh their good deeds, and this will be the reason for them being punished in the Hellfire with a severe punishment.

It is upon the slave who hopes for the mercy of Allāh to magnify the fear of Allāh within his heart and be diligent in distancing himself from sin. And if he is tested with sin, he strives to abandon it and he conceals it. He does not broadcast or disclose his sins, and he is not reckless in violating the sacred limits of Allāh the Exalted.

THE SEVENTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

Du'ā' from the believers.

The *du'ā'* of the believer for another believer benefits in two ways. When the believer seeks forgiveness for his believing brother behind his back, the angels say, “*Āmīn*, and for you the same.”¹⁷

The angels say “*Āmīn*” to his supplication and they supplicate for him. So if you, O slave of Allāh, sit on your rug in the middle of the night and supplicate to Allāh and seek forgiveness for yourself, your neighbor, and your brothers—those you know have sins—by saying, “O Allāh, forgive my neighbor so-and-so,” then the angels say, “*Āmīn*, and for you the same.”

The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ اسْتَعْفَرَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ حَسَنَةً.

Whoever seeks forgiveness for the believing men and believing women, Allāh will write for him a good deed for every believing

¹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2732

man and believing woman.¹⁸

Whoever seeks forgiveness for the believing men and women in general—so he says, “O Allāh, forgive the believing men and the believing women”—Allāh will write for him a good deed for every believing man and believing woman.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ مَيِّتٍ يُصَلِّي عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ مِائَةَ كُلُّهُمْ يَشْفَعُونَ لَهُ إِلَّا شَفَعُوا فِيهِ .

There is no deceased person for whom a group of 100 Muslims offer the funeral prayer, all of them interceding for him, except that their intercession for him will be accepted.¹⁹

Interceding for him means supplicating for him.

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَمُوتُ، فَيَقُومُ عَلَى جَنَازَتِهِ أَرْبَعُونَ رَجُلًا لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا، إِلَّا شَفَعَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيهِ .

There is no Muslim man who dies, for whom 40 men who do not associate anything in worship with Allāh stand and pray, except that Allāh will accept their intercession for him.²⁰

These are examples of the supplication of the believers benefiting the believers.

Here, it could be said to us: The Prophet ﷺ mentioned a group of 100 Muslims praying over the deceased, and in the other *ḥadīth*, he mentioned a group of 40 praying over the deceased; both of these narrations are authentic, so how do we reconcile between the two narrations?

¹⁸ Collected by at-Ṭabarānī (3/234).

¹⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 947

²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 948

1) Some scholars say that this is Allāh lessening the burden upon the *ummah*, meaning: initially, Allāh placed this virtue for 100 Muslims praying over the deceased, and then He lessened the burden upon the *ummah* by placing this same virtue in 40 Muslims praying over the deceased.

2) Some scholars say that 40 is the lesser number to complete this virtue, while 100 or more increases this virtue; meaning, the least number of Muslims that can pray over the deceased to obtain this virtue for him is 40, while it is more complete if 100 or more Muslims pray over him.

3) Some scholars say that the difference pertains to those who are praying over the deceased. Thus, if those offering the Janāzah prayer are people of pure *tawhīd*, with none of them committing minor *shirk* or hidden *shirk*—rather, their *tawhīd* is pure and safe from all forms of *shirk*, including minor and hidden *shirk*—then 40 of them will suffice for interceding on behalf of the deceased. This is based upon the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: “...who do not associate anything in worship with Allāh.”

The other narration mentioning 100 Muslims interceding for the deceased is if those offering the Janāzah prayer are Muslims but there are those amongst them who commit minor *shirk* or hidden *shirk*; meaning, some of them swear by other than Allāh by saying, “I swear by the Prophet, I swear by my mother’s life, I swear by the Ka’bah,” and the like. Swearing by other than Allāh is minor *shirk*. The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ حَلَفَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ أَوْ أَشْرَكَ.

Whoever swears by other than Allāh, he has committed disbelief or *shirk*.²¹

Likewise, this applies if there are those among them who show off—they are Muslims, but they have with them some aspects of *shirk*. This is minor *shirk*, so it does not invalidate *tawhīd*, but it

²¹ *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 1535

decreases it. If Muslims who fall into minor *shirk* pray the Janāzah prayer over the deceased and their number reaches 100 or more, their intercession will be accepted. In this case, the numbers in these two narrations pertain to the attributes of the Muslims offering the Janāzah prayer.

The point here is that the *du'ā'* of the believers benefits the believing sinners. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ﴾

And seek forgiveness for your sins, and for the believing men and believing women.

[*Sūrah Muḥammad* 47:19]

If the supplication of the believer was of no benefit to the sinning believers, then Allāh would not have commanded it.

One of the greatest affairs that brings benefit is the *du'ā'* the child makes for their parents, especially the righteous child. It appears in an authentic narration that a person will reach a high level in Paradise and he will say, “How is all of this for me?” He will know that he is not deserving of this high level. It will be said to him, “This is due to your child seeking forgiveness for you.”²²

The righteous child will continue to seek forgiveness for his parents until his parents are forgiven, and then their levels in Paradise will be elevated.

THE EIGHTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

Righteous actions performed for the deceased.

Righteous actions erase evil deeds—as we have previously mentioned—so if the particular action performed can be done for the deceased, then it is hoped that it will erase sins of the deceased.

Righteous actions performed for the deceased: Some of these actions

²² *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 16/265

can be performed on behalf of the deceased in general, such as charity, Ḥajj, ‘Umrah, and fasting. These actions can be performed on behalf of the deceased and they will benefit him. And there are narrations which prove this.

It is known that charity extinguishes sins. Thus, if charity is given on behalf of the deceased, it is hoped that the reward of this charity will extinguish the sins of the deceased.

It is known that Ḥajj expiates sins, so if Ḥajj is performed on behalf of the deceased, it is hoped that he will have the reward of this Ḥajj and its effects, which is the expiation of sins.

Performing ‘Umrah back-to-back expiates the sins which occur between them. Thus, if ‘Umrah is performed on behalf of the deceased, it is hoped that it will expiate his sins.

Fasting is a shield and it expiates sins. Thus, if someone fasts on behalf of the deceased—for an obligatory fast he missed—then it is hoped it will expiate his sins.

مَنْ مَاتَ وَعَلَيْهِ صِيَامٌ صَامَ عَنْهُ وَلِيُّهُ.

Whoever dies while having fast days to make up, one of his heirs should fast on his behalf.²³

Some of the scholars from the earlier and later generations hold the viewpoint that this affair is from the matters of the unseen, so that which benefits and reaches the deceased must be limited to what is mentioned in the text. In my view—and Allāh knows best—this is the correct stance from the statements of the scholars. This is because there is no proof from the Prophet’s statement ﷺ, his actions, or any narrations from the Companions proving that the reward from actions reaches the deceased.

Therefore, what is apparent to me is that this should be limited to what appears in the text, which is: he uses the actions he performs as a means for his supplication for the deceased being answered. He

²³ *Sahīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1952

supplicates, “O Allāh, verily, I ask You with this prayer of mine to forgive my father with forgiveness from You, and have mercy upon him.” Or he says, “O Allāh, verily, I ask You by way of my recitation of Sūrah al-Baqarah to forgive my father and have mercy upon him.”

Drawing near to Allāh by mentioning righteous actions in your supplication is from the legislated ways of drawing near to Allāh.

THE NINTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

That which occurs in the grave of the believer, such as the squeezing, trial, and terror of the grave.

When the people are placed in their graves, they will be squeezed, and no one will be saved from it. If anyone were to be spared from the squeezing of the grave, then Sa’d bin Mu’ādh would have been spared from the squeezing of the grave.

إِنَّ لِلْقَبْرِ ضَغْطَةً وَلَوْ كَانَ أَحَدٌ نَاجِيًا مِنْهَا نَجَا مِنْهَا سَعْدُ بْنُ مُعَاذٍ.

Verily, there is squeezing in the grave, and if anyone were to be saved from it, then Sa’d bin Mu’ādh would have been saved from it.²⁴

The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّكُمْ تُفْتَنُونَ فِي قُبُورِكُمْ.

Verily, you will be put to trial in your graves.²⁵

When the righteous person is placed in his grave, he will sit, not frightened or preoccupied. It will be said to him, “Who is your Lord?” He will say, “My Lord is Allāh.” It will be said to him, “What is your religion?” He will say, “My religion is Islām.” It will be said to him, “What do you say about the man who was sent amongst you?” He will say, “He is Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. He came to us by way of Allāh and we believed in him.” It will be said to him, “Did you see Allāh?” He will say, “It’s not befitting for anyone to see Allāh” (meaning, in this world). A caller will call out from

²⁴ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 40/327

²⁵ *Sunan an-Nasā’i* 2065

the heavens: “My slave has spoken the truth. Spread out for him a bed from Paradise, and dress him from the garments of Paradise, and expand his grave as far as his eye can see.” The fragrance from Paradise will enter upon him.

When the unrighteous person is placed in his grave, two severe angels will come to him. They will chide and scold him. He will sit in his grave terrified and preoccupied. It will be said to him, “Who is your Lord?” He will respond, “Ah, ah, I don’t know!” It will be said to him, “What do you say about the man who was sent amongst you?” And he will not be able to recall his name. They will say to him, “His name is Muḥammad!” He will respond, “Ah, ah, I don’t know. I heard the people saying something, so I said it.” A caller will call from the heavens: “Verily, My slave has lied. Spread out for him a bed from the Hellfire and clothe him from the clothing of the Hellfire. His grave will squeeze him until his ribs interlock.” The heat and fiery wind will come to him in his grave.²⁶

This is the trial of the grave and the terror which will occur, along with the trial of those who are put to trial in their graves.

I did not come across any specific evidence, from the Book or the Sunnah, proving that this is a reason for the expiation of sins. But what is apparent—and Allāh knows best—is that which was mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah and other scholars, from the standpoint of attaching something which has a priority. This is because there is proof that hardships which afflict the believer in this life expiate his sins, and the hardships in the grave are much more severe, so it is more befitting that these hardships should expiate sins. And Allāh knows best about the reality of these matters.

THE TENTH EXPIATOR OF SIN

The terrors, stress, and hardships on the Day of Judgment.

The Day of Judgment will be a severe day with a great deal of hardships. The people will be resurrected barefoot, naked, and

²⁶ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 4753

uncircumcised, on one open plain. Upon hearing this, our mother 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said:

يا رسول الله الرجال والنساء جميعاً ينظر بعضهم إلى بعض؟

O Messenger of Allāh, the men and the women together, looking at one another?

She asked this due to her shyness رضي الله عنها; our mother, the wife of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in this world—he died while he was pleased with her. He sought permission from his other wives to allow him to spend his last days in her home, and they granted him permission. She will also be his wife in Paradise. No one loves her ('Ā'ishah) except for a believer, and no one hates her who has an atom's weight of faith in his heart. No believer would ever insult her, slander her, or criticize her religious commitment, let alone declare her to be a disbeliever. She is the Truthful, the daughter of the Truthful, a blessed woman, the daughter of a blessed man. She said:

يا رسول الله الرجال والنساء جميعاً ينظر بعضهم إلى بعض؟

O Messenger of Allāh, the men and the women together, looking at one another?

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

الأمْرُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ أَنْ يُهْمَهُمْ ذَلِكَ.

The situation will be too hard for them to pay attention to that.²⁷

The situation on that day will be too severe for anyone to look at anyone else.

﴿يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ﴾

The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling.

[Sūrah al-Ḥajj 22:2]

²⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6527

The nursing mother, who could never neglect her nursing baby—on the Day of Judgment, she will forget about her nursing child. Every pregnant woman will drop her load out of fear and panic. The people will appear as though they are intoxicated, staggering about; they will not be intoxicated, but the punishment of Allāh will be severe. The people will be seen staggering about due to terror and fear. The sun will be brought close to the heads of the people, the distance of a mile. For some of the people, sweat will reach their ankles; for some of them, sweat will reach their knees; for some of them, sweat will reach their chests; while for some of them, sweat will reach their mouths. This will continue until Allāh gives relief to His creation.

This relief will come when Muḥammad bin ‘Abdillāh ﷺ intercedes with the great intercession upon the Praiseworthy Station. He will prostrate before Allāh, humbling himself, praising Allāh, and glorifying his Lord. Allāh will give him words of praise to say, until he is granted permission to intercede. Thus, he will intercede for the judgment to begin.

Ibn Taymiyyah and other scholars hold the viewpoint that the terrors of the Day of Judgment and the stress and hardships that come with it will erase sins. Included in this is crossing the bridge over the Hellfire, such that the last of them will cross the bridge crawling. The scholars have said that crossing the bridge will expiate sins, and the sins will determine how fast the person crosses the bridge.

These are the expiators of sins, and just like I said about the ninth reason, I say about the tenth reason: I don’t know of any specific evidence that this reason expiates sins. But perhaps this has the same deductive reason as the ninth reason—meaning, if the hardships of this world expiate sins, then it is more likely that the hardships of the Hereafter expiate sins. And Allāh knows the reality of this affair.

These are the types of expiators of sins. When the believer hears this, his hopes expand and his hope in Allāh magnifies. At the same time, his fear of Allāh intensifies and he fears that he will be from the most miserable of Allāh’s creation other than the non-Muslims. So

he fears that he will not be forgiven.

When the believer hears this, he hopes for forgiveness and mercy while he fears that he will be expelled from this vast mercy. Thus, he is not bold enough to violate the sacred limits of Allāh; rather, he exalts these limits and stays far away from violating them. And if he falls into sin, he returns to Allāh.

The successful person is the one who utilizes fear before he falls into sin, and he uses hope after falling into sin. The loser is the person whose hope leads him to violate the sacred limits of Allāh, and then he falls into despair after sinning.

The believer who sins while hoping for mercy is like the one who drinks poison hoping for the antidote after drinking it. No person with intellect would drink poison, swallow it, and then say, "I will drink the antidote now," because he could die before the antidote takes effect.

You don't know when you are going to die. You could die while sinning! And the person will be raised on the Day of Judgment in the manner in which he died. Those who die while proclaiming the call for Ḥajj shall be raised to life doing the same. Those who die praying shall be raised to life praying; those who die giving *da'wah* shall be raised doing such. And those who die fornicating shall be raised to life in this evil condition; whoever dies lying shall be raised to life upon this evil condition. Those who die backbiting shall be raised to life backbiting. Those who die drunk shall be raised to life upon this evil condition.

For this reason, some Salaf mentioned to their students while warning them: "Whoever can guarantee that he will live until tomorrow, I will give him permission to sin." Meaning: "Whoever amongst you can stand up and say, 'I guarantee I will live until tomorrow,' then I will give him permission to commit every sin, but who can guarantee that?!" By Allāh, someone will be strong, able, and healthy, then suddenly he will fall down dead!! How many healthy people have died without any illness and how many sick people have lived a long

life?!

Some people become sick, so others visit them. They believe that the sick individual will die and they will pray the Janāzah prayer over him, but the one who visits him dies before the sick person, so they give him the news of his death. Death is enough as a reminder. Thus, if someone has a whisper from his soul to sin and the Shayṭān gives him hope that he will be forgiven—the Shayṭān says to him, “*MāshāAllāh*, you have a lot of good deeds; you are better than others. Other people do a lot of sins, but this is a small sin”—he belittles the sin so the person will fall into it. If this whisper comes to a weak soul along with the Shayṭān, then the person must remind himself that his lifespan is for an appointed term and he does not know when his death will occur. Perhaps this sin will be the last thing he does. So how can he live a life of obedience to Allāh, then expose his soul to dying upon disobedience?!

The believer is not bold in committing sins because he knows sins have calamities and misfortune, just as they have expiators. So perhaps the misfortune will come first and his heart will be covered, and after that he will not accept the truth or reject evil.

The believer is not bold toward sinning and violating the sacred limits of Allāh, but if weakness overcomes him and he falls into sin, he does not say, “There is no good in me at all; I have gone far from Allāh, how can I pray at night after I have fornicated?” And refuge is sought with Allāh. He does not say, “How can I give charity after I have lied?” The believer does not despair from the mercy of Allāh; rather, he hopes for forgiveness. He believes Allāh’s promises and implements that which will expiate his sins. And he asks Allāh to forgive him with His vast mercy.

THE SECOND ADVICE



The Best Actions



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

As for what you asked concerning the best actions after the obligatory acts of worship, then this differs according to the ability of the person and what is appropriate for their time. Thus, it is not possible to give a comprehensive answer detailed for every individual.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, addressing Abul-Qāsim as-Sabtī, “As for what you asked concerning the best actions after the obligatory acts of worship...” The best acts of worship are the obligations which Allāh the Exalted has made mandatory upon His slaves. Therefore, the best act you can do to draw close to your Lord, O Muslim, is establishing the obligations. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said [that Allāh said]:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيْتَهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأُعِيذَنَّهُ، وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ تَرَدُّدِي عَنْ نَفْسِ

المؤمن، يكره الموت وأنا أكره مساءته.

Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My slave does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My slave continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory acts so that I shall love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about [seizing] the soul of My faithful slave; he hates death and I hate hurting him.¹

The point of reference from the statement of Allāh the Exalted narrated from the Prophet ﷺ is His statement: “My slave does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him.” Therefore, the most beloved acts of worship to Allāh are the obligations. It is not permissible for someone to distract himself with the supererogatory acts of worship and thus neglect the obligatory acts of worship; rather, the obligatory acts of worship are given precedence. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا أُقِيمَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَلَا صَلَاةَ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةَ.

When the *iqāmah* for prayer is given, there is no prayer except the prescribed prayer.²

Consequently, it is not permissible for anyone to busy himself with the optional prayer after the *iqāmah* for the obligatory prayer has been called. This proves the general principle that it is not permissible to give precedence to the optional acts of worship over the obligatory acts of worship. If the individual is presented with the choice to perform an obligatory act of worship or an optional act of worship, it is obligatory upon him to perform the obligatory act of worship.

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6502

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 710

For example: If a person owes a debt and he does not have the money to repay it, and he has two opportunities presented to him: he has an opportunity to work to earn money to pay the debt, or busy himself with seeking recommended knowledge, and he is not able to do both. It becomes obligatory upon him to work to earn money and pay his debt. Likewise, he must give precedence to earning money to spend upon his obligatory acts over the recommended acts of worship.

The scholars mention a great statement: Whoever gives precedence to the obligations over the optional deeds is excused, and whoever gives precedence to the optional deeds over the obligations is deceived.

The person who enters the *masjid* when the *iqāmah* to start the prayer has been called—so he is not able to pray the optional Sunnah prayer that comes before the obligatory prayer—should enter the obligatory prayer, and he is excused. As for the person who enters the *masjid* after the *iqāmah* for the obligatory prayer has been called, and he begins to pray the optional prayer and does not enter the obligatory prayer with the *imām*, then he has been deceived.

The scholars mention: The Shayṭān may encourage someone to pray the night prayer, and the night prayer is the best of the optional prayers. But the Shayṭān will encourage him to pray the night prayer if he knows this will cause him to sleep and miss the Fajr prayer in the morning. This is because the Shayṭān knows that abandoning an obligation is a sin deserving of punishment, while leaving a recommended act is not a sin; rather, the person only misses the reward. Thus, the Shayṭān strives to busy you with the optional acts of worship so you will miss the obligatory acts of worship. So the individual must always pay attention to this affair regarding his obligations; these are the most important affairs, followed by the recommended acts.

It is best for the people to increase their optional acts of worship as much as they are able, because this will be heavy upon the scales and beloved to the Most Merciful. Likewise, these acts will restore

the deficiencies that occur in the obligatory acts. When the person performs an obligatory act of worship and it contains deficiencies, these deficiencies will be fixed by performing similar optional acts of worship. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ فَإِنْ صَلَحَتْ فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ وَأَنْجَحَ وَإِنْ فَسَدَتْ فَقَدْ خَابَ وَخَسِرَ، فَإِنْ انْتَقَصَ مِنْ فَرِيضَتِهِ شَيْءٌ قَالَ الرَّبُّ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: انظُرُوا هَلْ لِعَبْدِي مِنْ تَطَوُّعٍ فَيُكَمَّلَ بِهَا مَا انْتَقَصَ مِنَ الْفَرِيضَةِ؟ ثُمَّ يَكُونُ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ.

The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection from his actions will be his prayer. If it is correct, he will succeed and be saved. If it is corrupt, he will fail and lose. If his obligatory prayer is deficient in anything, the Lord the Exalted will say, “Look to see if My slave has any optional prayers by which to complete his obligatory prayers.” Then the rest of his deeds will be reckoned in a similar manner.³

Look, O slave of Allāh, at this great *hadīth*: “The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection from his actions will be his prayer.” The first action judged will be the prayer because it is the highest and most precious of all the obligations. The prayer is the first action after *tawhīd*. Our Lord the Exalted will say to the angels—and He knows better than them—“Look at the prayer of My slave; is it complete or deficient?” If it is complete, it will be written down as complete. If anything from the prayer is deficient, Allāh will tell the angels to see if the person has any supererogatory prayers; did he pray any Sunnah prayers? Did he pray any night prayers? If he has some supererogatory prayers, then Allāh the Exalted will tell the angels to complete his prayer by way of the supererogatory prayers. Then the rest of his deeds will be reckoned in a similar manner.

For this reason, the scholars say that it is befitting for the individual to perform optional acts of worship for each kind of obligatory

³ *Sunan an-Nasāʾi* 466

act of worship. For example: It is recommended to pray optional prayers, like the Sunnah prayers connected to the five daily prayers. And it is recommended to fast optional fasts, like fasting Mondays, Thursdays, and three days from each month. It is recommended to pay optional *zakāh*, like *ṣadaqah*. It is recommended to perform optional Ḥajj once or more after completing the obligatory Ḥajj. This is understood from this *ḥadīth*. The purpose of this is, if there is deficiency in the obligatory acts of worship, the optional acts of worship can complete them.

The scholars mention that it is not befitting for the individual to only perform one type of righteous action; rather, he should perform as many as he is able. Thus, he will have supererogatory prayers, fasting, charity, and other good deeds.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “This differs according to the ability of the person and what is appropriate for their time. Thus, it is not possible to give a comprehensive answer detailed for every individual.” Meaning: If someone wants to select the deeds which have preference over other deeds from the optional acts of worship, it will take a lot of time because this varies from person to person.

There is no doubt that righteous actions vary. The Prophet ﷺ was asked in a number of *ahādīth* about which deed was best, and he affirmed the question and responded, and this is proof that the deeds vary and they are not all at the same level.

Knowing the most virtuous deeds is from the most beneficial matters the person can know. For this reason, the scholars have said, “The intelligent person is not the one who knows the good from the bad; rather, the intelligent person is the one who knows the best good from two possible goods, and the worst evil from two possible evils.” This does not negate intellect for the person who only knows good from evil, because this person has intellect, but the person who knows the best of the good and the worst of the evil is of a higher intellect. Why is this? This is so he can put the best deed first; and the one who knows the worst of the evil can do the lesser evil if necessary while avoiding the greater evil. This is one of the most

important affairs for the believer.

For example: If a believer wants to go pray in the *masjid*, and a Muslim in front of him gets hit by a car and the driver of the car flees. There are two good deeds here. The first good deed: Go catch the prayer in congregation and pray with the Muslims. The second good deed: Save the life of this Muslim. If he does not know which deed is best, he may leave this Muslim to die with the argument that prayer is a great act of worship which takes precedence. But if he is aware of which deed is best, then he knows that occupying himself with saving this Muslim is better than praying in congregation; rather, it is better than praying during the fixed time of the prayer, because he is able to make up the prayer.

How To Determine Which Deeds Are Best



Therefore, this question asked by Abul-Qāsim as-Sabtī رحمته الله is extremely important. Ibn Taymiyyah said that this varies from person to person, but the scale or criterion in knowing which deeds are best returns back to five affairs.

THE FIRST CRITERION

The persistence of the Prophet ﷺ upon the action or his inciting others upon this action.

If we find the Prophet ﷺ steadfast upon a particular act of worship, then we know it is the best type of worship. If we find the Prophet ﷺ inciting others to perform this act of worship, then we know it is the best type of worship.

An example of this is the night prayer. The night prayer is the best supererogatory prayer because the Prophet ﷺ was steadfast upon it in every situation, whether he was a resident or a traveler, healthy or sick. Likewise, he incited others to pray the night prayer. He said:

وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الْفَرِيضَةِ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ .

And the best prayer after the obligatory prayer is the night prayer.¹

¹ *Sahih Muslim* 1163

So the first criterion to know which deeds are best is to look at how steadfast the Prophet ﷺ was upon a particular action and how he incited others to do it.

THE SECOND CRITERION

The ability of the person to remain consistent upon the action.

The acts of worship the person can be consistent upon are better than the other acts of worship, even if the other acts of worship are better in their essence. The lesser acts you are consistent upon are better for you than the greater acts you are not consistent upon.

For example: An individual says that he wants to pray a portion during the night and remain diligent upon it, so he asks, "How many *raka'at* should I pray?" We say to him: Look to see what you can pray consistently. If you can consistently pray three *raka'at*, then three *raka'at* is better for you than eleven *raka'at*. If you can consistently pray five *raka'at*, then five *raka'at* is better for you than eleven *raka'at*, even though eleven *raka'at* is better in its essence. What is the proof for this criterion? The proof is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

The most beloved deeds to Allāh are those deeds which are done continuously, even if they are small.²

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said:

وَكَانَ آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا عَمِلُوا عَمَلًا أَتَبَتُوهُ.

It was the habit of the household of Muḥammad ﷺ that whenever they did an act, they did it continuously.³

Therefore, the most beloved deeds to Allāh after the obligatory acts of worship are those deeds done continuously, even if they are small. But if the person selects a small number of *raka'at* to pray at night,

² *Sahih Muslim* 783

³ *Sahih Muslim* 782

then there is nothing preventing him from praying more when he feels energetic. If someone has a habit of praying five *raka'āt* for the night prayer, but one night he feels energetic enough to pray eleven *raka'āt* that night, then it is better if he prays eleven *raka'āt* that night. This issue is extremely important.

If you wanted to look at the best fast for you and you asked me, "What is the best fast for me? Should I fast Mondays and Thursdays or should I fast three days from every month? I am not able to do both of them." I would respond by asking you: What are you able to be consistent upon? Are you able to fast three days from every month? And these three days don't have to be consecutive. Or are you able to fast Monday and Thursday? If you can consistently fast three days every month, and Monday and Thursday, but you cannot do both, then I say you should fast Monday and Thursday, because this will equal more days, and the Prophet ﷺ used to fast Mondays and Thursdays. If you say that you can consistently fast three days from each month but you cannot consistently fast Mondays and Thursdays, then I say you should fast three days from every month.

This criterion is tremendous, and many people are heedless of it, especially when they have enthusiasm towards good deeds. Some people may be upon sin, and when they repent, they are enthusiastic to do good, so they look for the highest number of good deeds they can do, but they are not able to maintain this, so they stop! Thus, this issue requires attention when selecting the best deeds.

THE THIRD CRITERION

The action which is most suitable for that time.

There are some deeds which are time sensitive, so performing these actions during their appropriate times is best.

For example: Repeating after the *mu'adh'dhin* during the *adhān* is the best supererogatory act of worship to do at that time. It is better than standing up to pray while the *adhān* is being called. It is better than reciting the Qur'ān, and better than sending salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ, because this act of worship is limited to a specific

time.

And from another angle, the person should choose supererogatory acts of worship that best suit their time, because this is more suitable to allow him to focus his heart on the worship.

If someone asked us, “When is the best time for me to recite the Qur’ān?” We would say: The best time varies, but what is the best time for you? What time are you unoccupied and free of distractions? If you say that the best time for you is after Fajr, then we say, in that case, the best time for you is after Fajr. If the best time for you is the last part of the night, then we say that the best time for you is the last part of the night. Why is this? This is because this will allow you to focus your heart so you can turn to this action with your heart. The virtue of the action is only based upon the focus of the heart during this action.

Thus, you find the people praying in one *masjid*, but the reward each one receives varies greatly, even though they are performing the same act of worship and praying behind one *imām*. But their hearts differ. This person’s heart is focused on the prayer from beginning to end. Another person prays with an attentive heart for half of his prayer, while another person is focused for a fifth of his prayer.

Therefore, the third criterion entails two matters:

1) The appropriate time for the action; if the action is time sensitive, then it is best to perform this action during this time. If the Prophet ﷺ is mentioned, then it is best to send salutations upon him at this time, and this is better than saying “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh” at this time, even though the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh” is better than sending salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ (in essence). But when the Prophet ﷺ is mentioned, then sending salutations upon him is a time-sensitive act of worship, so it is best at this particular time.

2) The most suitable time for the individual. The person should select a time when he is free to perform this act of worship so that his heart is unoccupied.

THE FOURTH CRITERION

The effect the action has upon the heart.

Righteous actions have a good effect upon the hearts; the effect of these actions is tremendous, and it varies from person to person.

It is known that the prayer prevents immorality and evil⁴. Thus, when someone prays, it is a must that his prayer prevents him from some lewdness. The scholars have said about this, “No one offers the prayer correctly except that it prevents him from immorality, but the people vary as it relates to the effect it has upon them.”

The prayer prevents some people from immorality while they are praying, so their prayer detains them from committing immorality and evil. So while he is praying, his prayer is preventing him from doing evil. And this happens to everyone who prays.

The prayer prevents some people from immorality right before the prayer and right after the prayer, while he still feels he is in the prayer. But before this and after this, he falls into sin. The prayer prevents some people from sinning unrestrictedly. And this is based upon the effect the prayer has on the heart.

I give these examples to explain the statement of the scholars that righteous deeds have a good effect upon the heart and the people vary concerning this.

Likewise, the people differ as it relates to the type of good deeds which affect their hearts. Some people’s hearts are affected by supererogatory prayers; some people’s hearts are affected by a lot of supplication; some people’s hearts are affected by reciting the Qur’ān themselves; and some people’s hearts are affected by hearing someone else recite the Qur’ān. Each action is best for that particular individual, respectively. Thus, the person selects the supererogatory deeds which affect his heart the most.

⁴ **Translator’s note:** This is based upon the verse: “Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing” (Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt 29:45).

If someone asks, “What is the best deed to perform during the last part of the night? Is it better to recite the Qur’ān or to make *du’ā’*?” We say: We have to look to see which will have the most effect upon your heart. If reciting the Qur’ān will have the most effect upon your heart, and it will soften your heart and grant you humility such that you cry to Allāh, then recitation is better for you. But if *du’ā’* will soften your heart and give you humility, then *du’ā’* is better for you. Or if listening to someone else recite the Qur’ān will soften your heart and give you humility, then listening to the recitation of the Qur’ān is better for you. This is when the individual has several choices and wants to select the best deed for himself.

THE FIFTH CRITERION

Ability and inability.

The act of worship you are able to do is best for you, while the act of worship you are incapable of doing is not best for you, even if it is better in its origin. The scholars say about this: If you know that a person performs a righteous action which he has the ability to do, and he is not able to do a greater action, then do not instruct him to do the greater action, because the best action as it relates to him is the action he is able to do.

Don’t say to the person who can fast three days from every month but is not able to fast more than this, “It is better for you to fast every other day.” There are two reasons for this:

1) From the standpoint of the legislation, the deed the person has the ability to do is better for him. And this is from the mercy of Allāh, because if he does what he is able to do, Allāh will write a reward for him for the deed he is able to do and a reward for what he is incapable of doing, if he is truthful with his intention.

2) If you instruct him to do the greater action, he will stop doing the action he is able to do, and he will still be unable to implement the action he is incapable of doing.

For example: If you say to him, “Your fasting three days a month

is good, but it is better to fast every other day,” and you incite him upon this by saying, “There are some slaves of Allāh who fast every other day and they are surpassing you to Paradise!” Then he will stop fasting three days a month, but he won’t be able to perform the greater deed of fasting every other day. This is from the great understanding of the scholars.

The fifth criterion in determining the best supererogatory deed is ability and inability, such that you know that the deeds you are able to do are better for you than those you are incapable of doing, even if the deed you cannot do is better in its origin.

These are the five scales used to determine the best supererogatory deeds:

1) Those deeds the Prophet ﷺ was persistent upon and incited others to do.

2) The ability of the person to remain consistent upon the action, even if the action is small. The most beloved actions to the Prophet ﷺ were those actions one could be constant upon.

3) The most suitable action during the appropriate time, and this has two matters connected to it: the time of the action and the time of the person doing the action.

4) The effect the action has upon the heart of the person performing the action, because good deeds affect the hearts of the people differently. Thus, the good deed which has the greater effect upon the person’s heart is best for them.

5) The ability or inability to perform the action. The action you have the ability to do is better than the action you are not able to do. It is the same if you don’t have the ability to do this action at the current time or during a later date. This inability could be a physical impediment which prevents the person from performing this deed. This impediment may result from the individual or it may be the result of outside sources. It could likewise be an intangible impediment, such that he is not inclined or motivated towards this

action, so he views that he is incapable of doing it.

These are the scales or criterion for each individual to know what supererogatory acts of worship are best for them. When the person is aware of this, he will know which deeds are best for him as an individual—*inshāAllāh*—even if a scholar is able to say that this deed is better for everyone, due to the different circumstances we mentioned.

The Three Best Supererogatory Acts of Worship in General



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

But that which is similar to a consensus by those who have knowledge of Allāh and His commands, is that adhering to the remembrance of Allāh constantly is from the best actions the slave can busy himself with, in general.

EXPLANATION

The words of the pious predecessors which are similar to a consensus from them, even if it is not a consensus—and I do not know of any difference of opinion amongst them concerning this matter—is that the best actions after the obligatory acts of worship compulsory upon every individual are three:

- 1) *Jihād* in the path of Allāh
- 2) Knowledge
- 3) Remembrance of Allāh

JIHĀD IN THE PATH OF ALLĀH

A man came to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and said:

دُلِّي عَلَى عَمَلٍ يَعْدِلُ الْجِهَادَ قَالَ: لَا أَحِدُهُ هَلْ تَسْتَطِيعُ إِذَا خَرَجَ
الْمُجَاهِدُ تَدْخُلُ مَسْجِدًا فَتَقُومُ لَا تَفْتَرُ وَتَصُومُ لَا تَفْطِرُ. قَالَ: مَنْ يَسْتَطِيعُ
ذَلِكَ.

“Direct me to an action that is equal to *jihād*.” He said, “I cannot. When the *mujāhid* goes out, can you enter the *masjid* and stand in prayer and never rest, and fast and never break your fast?” The man said, “Who can do that?”¹

The statement of the Prophet ﷺ, “I cannot,” means “I cannot direct you to an act of worship other than the obligatory acts of worship which is equal to *jihād*.”

This *ḥadīth* proves that *jihād* is from the greatest acts of worship after the obligatory acts of worship. It has been mentioned by some of the Salaf that Imām Aḥmad رحمته الله said, “There is no action better than *jihād*, except the rights of Islām.” This means “the obligations of Islām.”

KNOWLEDGE

The Prophet ﷺ said:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَدْنَاكُمْ.

The virtue of the scholar over the worshiper is like my virtue over the least of you.²

The virtue of the scholar over the worshiper: The scholar is the person with a great amount of knowledge while the worshiper is the person with a lot of worship without knowledge. His statement “is like my virtue over the least of you” means the least of the Companions or

¹ *Sunan an-Nasā’ī* 3128

² *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 2685

the least of the *ummah*. There is no doubt that the virtue of the Prophet ﷺ over the greatest of the Companions is tremendous, so how about his virtue over the least of the Companions?! This is the virtue of the scholars.

You will be extremely surprised to find that some people who ascribe themselves to virtue and claim to have knowledge diminish and insult the well-known firmly grounded scholars. They diminish the virtue of the scholars, even though the Prophet ﷺ mentioned the virtue of the scholars.

From the things which amazed me is the advice given to me from my scholars. One of them said to me, “O Sulaymān, don’t be pleased with yourself being lower than an animal!” I said, “How is that?” He said, “Beware of belittling the well-rooted scholars known for the Sunnah and *tawhīd*; rather, always mention their virtue and seek forgiveness for them. Surely, the Prophet ﷺ said:

وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْحَيَاتَانُ فِي الْمَاءِ.

“And as for the scholar, then forgiveness is sought for him by everyone in the heavens and everyone upon the earth, even the fish in the water.”³

As for the virtue of knowledge, the Prophet ﷺ said:

فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ فَضْلِ الْعِبَادَةِ.

The virtue of knowledge is better than the virtue of worship.⁴

This proves that increasing in knowledge is better than increasing in worship.

Sufyān ath-Thawrī رحمه الله said, “There is no action more virtuous than seeking knowledge for the person with the correct intention.”

³ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 3641

⁴ Collected by al-Hākim (1/93).

REMEMBRANCE OF ALLĀH

There are texts mentioning its virtue. Mu'ādh bin Jabal رضي الله عنه said, "It is more beloved to me to remember Allāh from the beginning of Fajr until the sun rises than that I should ride in the path of Allāh from the beginning of Fajr until the sun rises."⁵ Here, we have mentioned to you a text from the Salaf giving preference to one of the three.

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned that the best deeds are the prayer, *jihād*, and knowledge according to the consensus of the *ummah*. Thus, the obligatory prayer is the best of the obligatory acts of worship, then knowledge and *jihād*.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته الله mentioned the levels of these actions:

- 1) He said the highest level is remembrance of Allāh along with *jihād*. This combines remembrance of Allāh and *jihād*, so this is the most virtuous level.
- 2) The second level is remembrance of Allāh without *jihād*.
- 3) The third level is *jihād* without the remembrance of Allāh.

The remembrance of Allāh is given precedence over *jihād* because *jihād* is a means to establish the remembrance of Allāh. *Jihād* is only established to establish the remembrance of Allāh. So the goal takes precedence over the means. Based upon this, we can say that the greatest action which is a means to achieve a goal is *jihād*, and the greatest action which is the actual goal is remembrance of Allāh.

The goal is better than the means; for this reason, many of the scholars from the earlier and later generations are of the view that remembrance of Allāh is the greatest supererogatory action.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "But that which is similar to a consensus"—This means that the number of scholars who have this viewpoint is so large, it is as though it is a consensus amongst them.

⁵ Collected by Ibn Abī Shaybah (30071).

We have mentioned that the best actions after the obligatory acts of worship which are compulsory upon every individual—and this is similar to a consensus from the scholars, even if it is not a consensus—are three: *jihād* in the path of Allāh, knowledge, and remembrance of Allāh. And Ibn Taymiyyah counts knowledge and remembrance of Allāh as one, so this makes it two actions: remembrance of Allāh and *jihād*.

His view is that remembrance of Allāh is more virtuous than *jihād*; for this reason, he said, "...that which is similar to a consensus." Why did he say "similar to a consensus" and not "there is a consensus in this issue"? The reason is that some of the Salaf gave precedence to *jihād*, but most of the scholars give precedence to the remembrance of Allāh.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "But that which is similar to a consensus by those who have knowledge of Allāh and His commands." Those who have knowledge of Allāh are those who fear Him and are in awe of Him, and they understand His religion, so they know the permissible and impermissible.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "Adhering to the remembrance of Allāh constantly is from the best actions the slave can busy himself with, in general." The slave adhering to the remembrance of Allāh and constantly moving his tongue with the remembrance of Allāh is from the best acts by which the slave can draw close to Allāh after the obligatory acts of worship, according to most of the Salaf. This is based upon the statement of Allāh the Exalted:

﴿وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾

And surely, the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest.

[*Sūrah al-'Ankabūt* 29:45]

It has been said concerning the meaning of this: Allāh mentioning the slave is greater than their mention of Him, for surely no one mentions Allāh in a gathering except that Allāh mentions them in a greater gathering, and no one mentions Allāh within himself except that Allāh mentions him within Himself. Consequently, Allāh

mentioning the slave is greater than their mention of Him.

So how can anyone get tired of mentioning Allāh?! How can anyone get tired of mentioning Allāh while you know that Allāh mentions you when you mention Allāh?! What will this do to the heart that merely contemplates this?! Every time you mention Allāh, He mentions you!

Some of the scholars have said that the statement “And surely, the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest” means that the remembrance of Allāh is greater than everything—meaning, after the obligatory acts of worship. And nothing prevents both statements from being correct. This is a difference in category, not a contradiction. Allāh mentioning the slave is greater than the slave mentioning Allāh, and the slave remembering Allāh is greater than every act of worship except the obligations.

It was said to Salmān ؓ, “What action is best?” He said, “Don’t you recite the Qur’ān?”

﴿وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾

“And surely, the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest.”⁶

[Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt 29:45]

Nothing is better than the remembrance of Allāh.

Moving the tongue with remembrance of Allāh, along with the involvement of the heart while being cognizant of Allāh’s greatness, is from the greatest acts of worship by which the slave can draw near to Allāh, after the obligatory acts of worship. At the same time, it is from the effortless acts of worship. While you are sitting, what prevents you from saying, “*SubhānAllāh, al-ḥamdulillāh*, nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh, *Allāhu Akbar*, Allāh is free from imperfection and to Him belongs the praise!” What prevents you from doing this? There is nothing that comes between you and saying these statements of remembrance. It does not require you to

⁶ Collected by at-Ṭabarī (18/410).

stand; it does not require you to perform *wuḍū'*. It doesn't require anything. It is from the easiest forms of worship. If we reflect upon this, the mercy of Allāh upon this *ummah* will become clear. No one is destroyed with Allāh except one who is truly destroyed.

As for the sins, He forgives them and He has provided things which expiate and erase them. He has provided obligatory and supererogatory acts of worship. As for the supererogatory acts of worship, He has made the best of it the easiest for the slave. There is nothing worthy of worship except Allāh; how great is Allāh's mercy upon this *ummah*!

Those Who Remember Allāh Much



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

This is proven by the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, which has been collected by Muslim. The Messenger of Allāh said:

سَبَقَ الْمُفْرِدُونَ. قَالُوا وَمَا الْمُفْرِدُونَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ الذَّاكِرُونَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
وَالذَّاكِرَاتُ.

“The *mufridūn* have gone ahead.” They said, “O Messenger of Allāh, who are the *mufridūn*?” He said, “Those men and women who remember Allāh much.”¹

EXPLANATION

This *ḥadīth* is in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The *mufridūn* have gone ahead.” Some of the scholars have said that the *mufridūn* are those whose peers have gone while they have remained. And it is the tendency of the people to refine and rectify themselves if their peers pass away. Each time a peer passes away, they fear death and they fear Allāh the Exalted. With this meaning, the Prophet ﷺ was saying that remembrance refines the soul just as the death of a peer refines the soul.

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2676

It has also been said that the *mufriḍūn* are those who stop their activities to worship Allāh. So the meaning here is those men and women who remember Allāh much. They are those they isolate themselves from the people due to remembering Allāh much. So you will find them only speaking with the people a little, and they are busy with the remembrance of Allāh the Exalted.

“The *mufriḍūn* have gone ahead.” They said, “O Messenger of Allāh, who are the *mufriḍūn*?” They were asking, “Who do you intend by the *mufriḍūn*?” He said, “Those men and women who remember Allāh much.” This is proof of the virtue of remembering Allāh the Exalted, and with the remembrance of Allāh, the person will surpass others. O slave of Allāh, in this world you are in a race—some are surpassing and some are being surpassed. The greatest thing to help you surpass is to increase your remembrance of Allāh the Exalted.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَئِدٌ said:

And what has been collected by Abū Dāwūd from Abud-Dardā' رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

أَلَا أُتَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرِ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَزْكَاهَا عِنْدَ مَلِيكِكُمْ وَأَرْفَعَهَا فِي دَرَجَاتِكُمْ
وَحَيْرٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِعْطَاءِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْوَرِقِ وَمِنْ أَنْ تَلْقَوْا عَدُوَّكُمْ فَتَضْرِبُوا
أَعْنَاقَهُمْ وَيَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَكُمْ؟ قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ.

“Shall I not tell you of the best of your deeds and that which is most pure in the sight of your Master, that which raises you more in status and is better for you than giving gold and silver (in charity), and better than meeting your enemy and striking their necks and them striking your necks?” They said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allāh.” He said, “Remembering Allāh.”²

EXPLANATION

He ﷺ said, “Shall I not tell you of the best of your deeds and that

² *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 3377

which is most pure in the sight of your Master”—Meaning, with your Lord.

“That which raises you more in status and is better for you than giving gold and silver (in charity)” —Meaning, this is better than you spending in the cause of Allāh. And this means the supererogatory spending, not the obligatory spending.

“And better than meeting your enemy and striking their necks and them striking your necks?” They said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allāh.” He said, “Remembering Allāh.” This is evidence that remembrance of Allāh is the best of the supererogatory acts of worship.

So one may say that this *ḥadīth* proves that remembrance of Allāh is the best deed, unrestrictedly. We say: The *ḥadīth* we previously mentioned proves that the best deeds are the obligatory acts of worship, so this *ḥadīth* is referring to the supererogatory acts of worship.

So one may say that some remembrance of Allāh is recommended, while remembrance of Allāh (in general) is obligatory. We say: The remembrance of Allāh is not the best of the obligatory acts of worship. The best obligatory act of worship is the prayer. The best supererogatory act of worship is remembrance of Allāh.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

There is a great deal of Quranic evidence and demonstrative, visual evidence and information to support this.

EXPLANATION

This means that there is evidence from the Book and the Sunnah, because the proof from the Qur'ān includes proof from the Book and the Sunnah, since the Qur'ān commands us to follow the Sunnah. For this reason, when some of the Salaf mentioned an affair and it was said to them that this affair is not found in the Qur'ān, they

responded by saying, “On the contrary, it is surely in the Qur’ān:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمُ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ﴾

“And whatsoever the Messenger (Muḥammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).”

[Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr 59:7]

It is as though he is saying, “I am telling you that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said this, and our Lord said, ‘And whatsoever the Messenger (Muḥammad) gives you, take it.’” This means we must take and accept the statements of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

Therefore, the Sunnah is like the Qur’ān. The Prophet ﷺ said:

ألا إني أتيت القرآن ومثله معه.

Verily, I have been given the Qur’ān and something similar to it.³

Thus, if we say “Quranic evidence,” then according to the scholars, this includes the verses of the Qur’ān and the *ahādīth*. And if we say “Quranic evidence and information,” then the “information” refers to the Sunnah.

In his statement “There is a great deal of Quranic evidence and demonstrative, visual evidence and information to support this,” perhaps he means the Sunnah with the phrase “information.”

Demonstrative evidence is what the scholars refer to as the feeling a person finds within himself—that which he sees with his eyes and feels within himself that proves the virtue of remembrance of Allāh.

In summary, the virtue of remembrance of Allāh is proven by four matters:

- 1) The statements of Allāh.
- 2) The statement of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

³ Sunan Abī Dāwūd 4604

3) The effects of the remembrance of Allāh which the person sees with his eyes, as the person sees the real effects the remembrance of Allāh has upon him.

4) What we feel in our hearts from the remembrance of Allāh.

All of this proves the virtue of the remembrance of Allāh. This is the meaning of the statement of Ibn Taymiyyah. The Quranic evidence is the verse from the Qur'ān. The demonstrative evidence is what the people of faith find in their hearts. The visual evidence is the effects of the remembrance of Allāh which the person sees with his eyes. And the information is the Sunnah.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

The least that a person should do is adhere to the remembrance which has been narrated from the teacher of good and the leader of the pious رحمته الله.

EXPLANATION

In order for the individual to be from those men and women who remember Allāh much, the least they must say are those statements of remembrance narrated from the Prophet ﷺ, the one who taught us good. And the good is attributed to the one who taught it.

It is known that the remembrance taught by the Prophet ﷺ is great and noble, so why did Ibn Taymiyyah say “the least”? Why did he describe it as “the least a person can do”?

The intent behind the statement “the least” is not to diminish the status of the remembrance; rather, this is to clarify that these statements are the least a person can say to be considered among those who remember Allāh much. This is because remembrance of Allāh is more general than just remembrance of the tongue; it includes remembrance of the tongue and remembrance of the heart, and the actions connected to the tongue like teaching, enjoining good,

and forbidding evil. So the most complete remembrance is for the individual to adhere to all of this, while the least a person can do to be considered among those who remember Allāh much is preserve the statements of remembrance narrated by the Prophet ﷺ.

The teacher of good is the Prophet ﷺ. It has been authenticated that Allāh, the angels, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, the fish in the sea, and even the ants in their holes send salutations upon the person who teaches good to the people. There are numerous teachers, and if we want to know the criterion to know what the teachers are teaching the people, then if what he teaches agrees with the teaching of the Prophet ﷺ, then he is a teacher of good. And if what he is teaching contradicts the teaching of the Prophet ﷺ, then he is a teacher of evil.

Ibn Taymiyyah said “the leader of the pious.” He is the Imām of the pious and their chief. No one precedes him, not in his advice, his struggle, or his worship.

I swear by Allāh, the One besides Whom there is no other deity worthy of worship: If you see someone advising you with other than what appears in the Sunnah, then know for sure that he is not advising you with good, because no one precedes the Prophet ﷺ in advice. The only advice is the advice given by the Prophet ﷺ.

No one precedes him in his efforts in worship; for this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said:

أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَتَّقَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَخْشَاكُمْ لَهُ.

By Allāh, verily, I am the most fearful of Allāh from amongst you, and I am the most in awe of Him.⁴

No one surpassed him in worship, remembrance of Allāh, or anything else. Whoever adheres to his Sunnah ﷺ, then he is upright and he knows the Straight Path.

This can be seen in the narration of the three men who came to ask

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 1108

about the worship of the Prophet ﷺ.

جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَهْطٍ إِلَى بُيُوتِ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوهَا فَقَالُوا وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ. قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ أَمَا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أُصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا. وَقَالَ آخَرُ أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ. وَقَالَ آخَرُ أَنَا أَعْتَزِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوِّجُ أَبَدًا. فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأَخْشَاكُمُ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمُ لَهُ، لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ وَأَتَزَوِّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ asking how the Prophet ﷺ worshiped, and when they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, “Where are we from the Prophet ﷺ, as his past and future sins have been forgiven?” Then one of them said, “I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever.” The other said, “I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast.” The third said, “I will keep away from women and never marry.” Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ came to them and said, “Are you the people who said such-and-such? By Allāh, I am more submissive to Allāh and more afraid of Him than you, yet I fast and break my fast, I sleep, and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my Sunnah is not from me.”⁵

The statements of remembrance from the Prophet ﷺ are of two types: restricted and unrestricted. Restricted means that it is connected to a particular time or reason. Unrestricted means that it is not connected to anything.

Ibn Taymiyyah began with the remembrance which is restricted to particular times.

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5063

Remembrance Connected to Particular Times or Reasons



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Such as the remembrance recited at certain times, at the beginning and end of the day, when going to bed and waking up from sleep, and after the prescribed prayers.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “Such as the remembrance recited at certain times, at the beginning and end of the day...” These statements of remembrance are numerous, and they are called the supplications of the morning and evening. It is from the Sunnah for the Muslim to be diligent upon memorizing them and adhering to them.

Here is something I want to bring attention to: It is not a condition that these must be memorized all at one time, and it is not a condition that they must all be recited. Rather, the individual memorizes what is within his capability. For example, he memorizes one of the supplications of the morning and one from the evening. Once he has firmly memorized this supplication, he moves on to another supplication.

Why am I mentioning this? Because some people say, “I am not able to memorize the morning and evening supplications.” We say: It is not a condition to memorize all of them; rather, you memorize them little by little.

An example of this is reciting Āyatul-Kursī. If the individual recites Āyatul-Kursī during the morning or evening, then he has recited his morning and evening supplications.¹

Likewise, there is the saying of “Allāh is free from imperfection and to Him belongs the praise” (*SubḥānAllāhi wa bi-ḥamdihī*) 100 times in the morning and the evening. This is also from the supplications of the morning and evening.²

As for the times of the supplications, the morning and the evening:

- The time of the morning is differed upon. What is most correct is that it begins with the entrance of Fajr until the rising of the sun, and extends until the time of Duḥā.
- The time of the evening begins before ‘Aṣr until the setting of the sun, and extends a little after Maghrib.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “...when going to bed”—This means when the person desires to sleep, so, for example, he recites Āyatul-Kursī³ and Sūrah al-Kāfirūn.⁴

Also, before going to sleep, he says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَصَعْتُ جَنْبِي اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي وَأَخْسِئْ شَيْطَانِي وَفُكِّ رَهَانِي وَاجْعَلْنِي فِي النَّدِيِّ الْأَعْلَى .

In the name of Allāh, I have lain down on my side. O Allāh, forgive me for my sins, drive away my devil, release me from my liability,

¹ Collected by at-Ṭabarānī (1/201).

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2692

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2311

⁴ *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 3403

and gather me in the highest assembly.⁵

And he says:

بِاسْمِكَ نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا.

In Your name, I die and live.⁶

As mentioned before, it is not a condition to say all of them; rather, he can memorize them one at a time and remain diligent upon them, then increase upon them. He should not abandon the small amount before he is unable to do the large amount.

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said, "...and waking up from sleep."

Upon waking up, he would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ.

All praises belong to Allāh, the One who brought us to life after causing us to die, and to Him is the return.⁷

All of this has been affirmed from the Prophet ﷺ.

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said, "...and after the prescribed prayers"—These are the supplications said after the five daily prayers, such as saying, "I seek Allāh's forgiveness" (three times) and saying:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ، وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ، تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.

O Allāh, You are the One Who is free from all defects and deficiencies, and from You is all peace; blessed are You, O possessor of majesty and honor.⁸

And there are other supplications recited after the five daily prayers.

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al Jāmi'* 4649; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 5054

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7395

⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2425

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 591

Here, I will mention a benefit mentioned by some scholars. Every supplication in the Sunnah restricted to after the prayer is within the prayer—meaning, this supplication is found in the actual prayer. And every remembrance which is restricted follows the prayer—meaning, it is said after the prayer.

If we investigate the situation of the Prophet ﷺ, we find that his supplications were said within the prayer, and it has not been authenticated that he supplicated after the prayer. And we find that the remembrance of the Prophet ﷺ was said after the completion of the prayer.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمه الله said:

And the remembrance to be recited on certain occasions, such as what is said when eating and drinking; for garments; when having intercourse; when entering the home, *masjid*, and bathroom, and when leaving them; when it rains, when thunder is heard, and so on. Books have been compiled on this topic called *Actions of the Day and Night*.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “And the remembrance to be recited on certain occasions, such as what is said when eating and drinking.”

These are the sayings of remembrance restricted to a particular situation, like saying “In the name of Allāh” at the time of eating. It has not been narrated that at the time of eating one should say, “In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.” Rather, the only remembrance said is “In the name of Allāh.” This is the remembrance at the time of eating.

Upon finishing the food, the person says:

اللَّهُمَّ أَطْعَمْتَ وَأَسْقَيْتَ وَأَغْنَيْتَ وَأَقْنَيْتَ وَهَدَيْتَ وَأَحْيَيْتَ فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ

عَلَى مَا أُعْطِيتَ .

O Allāh, You have fed, given drink, enriched, given contentment, guided, and given life, so to You is the praise for what You have given.⁹

Drinking is similar to eating—the person should say, “In the name of Allāh.”

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...and for garments.” Upon donning a new garment, the person should say:

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، أَنْتَ كَسَوْتَنِيهِ، أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهِ، وَخَيْرِ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ،
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ، وَشَرِّ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ .

O Allāh, to You is the praise; You have dressed me in it. I ask You for the good of it and the good for which it was made, and I seek refuge with You from the evil of it and the evil for which it was made.¹⁰

When undressing, the person should say, “In the name of Allāh”; that screens the person from the eyes of the *jinn* and devils.¹¹

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...when having intercourse.” At the time of intimacy, the person says:

اللَّهُمَّ، جَنِّبْنِي الشَّيْطَانَ، وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا .

O Allāh, keep the Shayṭān away from us and keep the Shayṭān away from what You bestow upon us.¹²

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...when entering the home.” There are *aḥādīth* mentioning supplications said at the time of entering the home which some of the scholars have declared as weak, and some scholars have declared as *ḥasan*.

⁹ *Sunan an-Nasā’i* 6871

¹⁰ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 4020

¹¹ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 297

¹² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2073

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...[entering] the *masjid*." Upon entering the *masjid*, the person sends salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ. He says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ.

In the name of Allāh, and may the salutations and *salām* be upon the Messenger of Allāh. O Allāh, forgive me of my sins and open for me the doors of Your mercy.¹³

Upon leaving the *masjid*, he says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ.

In the name of Allāh, and may the salutations and *salām* be upon the Messenger of Allāh. O Allāh, forgive me of my sins and open for me the doors of Your virtue.

The scholars have mentioned that when the person enters the *masjid*, he is entering a place of worship, so it is appropriate to ask for mercy. As it comes in the *ḥadīth*:

لَنْ يُدْخَلَ أَحَدًا عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ، قَالُوا: وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: لَا، وَلَا أَنَا، إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ بِفَضْلٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ.

"None of you will enter Paradise by virtue of his deeds alone." They said, "Not even you, O Messenger of Allāh?" He said, "No, not even me, unless Allāh encompasses me with His virtue and mercy."¹⁴

When he exits the *masjid*, he is seeking provision, so he asks Allāh for His virtue. All of this has been narrated from the Prophet ﷺ with an authentic chain of narration.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...[entering] the bathroom." Upon entering the bathroom, the person says:

¹³ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 632

¹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 573

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ .

O Allāh, I seek refuge in Allāh from the male and female devils.¹⁵

When exiting the bathroom, say:

عُفْرَانَكَ .

I seek Your forgiveness.¹⁶

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...when it rains." When it rains, the person says:

اللَّهُمَّ صَيِّبًا هَنِيئًا .

O Allāh! Send a beneficial downpour.¹⁷

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...when thunder is heard." Upon hearing thunder, say:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي يُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ .

Glory be to the One whom the thunder glorifies and praises, as do the angels because of awe of Him.¹⁸

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Books have been compiled on this topic called *Actions of the Day and Night*"—Meaning, the books called *Actions of the Day and Night* by an-Nasā'ī, Ibn as-Sunnī, and others.

¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 142

¹⁶ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 30

¹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1032

¹⁸ Collected by Imām Mālik in *Al-Muwattaʿa* (26).

Unrestricted Statements of Remembrance



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Then one should persist in remembering Allāh in general, the best of which is “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh.”

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “Then one should persist in remembering Allāh in general”—This is the unrestricted remembrance which is not restricted to a particular time or reason. The most virtuous remembrance without exception is the recitation of the Qur’ān.

Reciting the speech of Allāh is the best remembrance. The Prophet ﷺ would constantly recite the Qur’ān. The best remembrance the slave can do is reciting the words of his Lord. Next [in virtue] is what Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned here.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...the best of which is ‘Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh’”—Meaning, the best remembrance after the recitation of the Qur’ān is the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh.” The Prophet ﷺ said:

وخير ما قلت أنا والنبیون من قبلي: لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، له

الملك، وله الحمد، وهو على كل شيء قدير.

The best that I and the prophets before me said is “*Lā ilāha ill-Allāh waḥdahu la sharīka lah, lahul-mulku wa lahul-ḥamdu wa Huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr*” (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone, with no partner or associate; His is the dominion, to Him be praise, and He has power over all things).¹

This virtue is due to the statement of *tawḥīd* found within these words. In this great statement is the affirmation that worship is the exclusive right of Allāh alone, and it negates worship for everyone and everything other than Allāh. This is the reason for the great virtue of this statement.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

The best remembrance is “*Lā ilāha ill-Allāh*” (Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh).²

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمه الله said:

There may be some situations where certain kinds of *dhikr* are preferable, such as saying, “*SubḥānAllāh wal-ḥamdulillāh wallāhu Akbar wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*” (Allāh is free from imperfections, all praises belong to Allāh, Allāh is the Greatest, and there is no might or power except with Allāh).

EXPLANATION

As it relates to unrestricted remembrance, the best is the recitation of the Qur’ān, then the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh.” It is very easy for the individual to say “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh” in the

¹ *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 3585

² *Jāmi’ at-Tirmidhī* 3383

prescribed manner, not in a manner of innovation.

There is a principle mentioned by the scholars: That which is superior and that which is inferior may vary according to the varying reasons and circumstances. This means that what is superior may sometimes become inferior, and what is inferior may sometimes become superior. The scholars mention that something which is inferior can become superior due to a benefit that results from it. This result may benefit the person himself or others.

The statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh” is greater than the statement “Allāh is free from imperfections” (*SubhānAllāh*), but an individual could find himself in a situation where saying “*SubhānAllāh*” is greater. An example is when the person is descending to a lower place. In this case, the statement “*SubhānAllāh*” is greater than the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh” due to the circumstance.

Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah’s statement “There may be some situations where certain kinds of *dhikr* are preferable” means that these statements may be more beneficial due to the circumstance, so they become preferable. These statements (Allāh is free from imperfections, all praises belong to Allāh, Allāh is the Greatest, and there is no might or power except with Allāh) being of a lesser status than the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh” does not mean they do not have a great virtue; on the contrary, the virtue of these statements is tremendous. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لأن أقول: سبحان الله، والحمد لله، ولا إله إلا الله، والله أكبر أحب إلي مما طلعت عليه الشمس.

“That I should say, ‘*SubhānAllāh, wal-ḥamdulillāh, wa lā ilāha ill-Allāh, wallāhu Akbar*’ (Allāh is free from imperfections, praise be to Allāh, there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest), is more beloved to me than all that the sun rises upon.”³

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2695

As previously mentioned, it is best if various acts or statements of good are combined, as the Prophet ﷺ combined these statements into one statement. But sometimes it is better to say a virtuous statement alone, as in the case when the person is descending and says, “*SubhānAllāh.*”

Ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “...*wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh* (and there is no might or power except with Allāh).”

This statement is tremendous, although it is lesser than the statement “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh.” Abū Mūsā رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, “The Prophet ﷺ said to me:

أَلَا أَذْكَكَ عَلَى كَلِمَةٍ مِنْ كُنُوزِ الْجَنَّةِ. فَقُلْتُ بَلَى. فَقَالَ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

“**‘Shall I not direct you to words from the treasures of Paradise?’ I said, ‘Of course.’ He said, ‘There is no might or power except with Allāh.’**”⁴

The meaning of “There is no might or power except with Allāh” is that no one can change or alter their situation without the help of Allāh. And there is no might or ability to do this except with the help of Allāh the Exalted. This is the statement of most of the scholars.

Some scholars say that the meaning of the statement “There is no might or power except with Allāh” is that no one has the ability to adhere to obedience or leave disobedience except with the help of Allāh the Exalted. No one can change their situation without the help of Allāh.

For example: Upon leaving the home, is it better to say, “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh,” or is it better to say, “There is no might or power except with Allāh”? It is better to say, “There is no might or power except with Allāh,” as it is included in the remembrance said when leaving the home. The Prophet ﷺ said:

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2704

إِذَا خَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فَقَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ. قَالَ يُقَالُ حِينَئِذٍ هُدَيْتَ وَكُفِّيتَ وَوُقِيتَ فَتَتَّحَى لَهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ.

When a man goes out of his house and says, “In the name of Allāh, I trust in Allāh; there is no might and no power but in Allāh,” the following will be said to him at that time: “You are guided, defended, and protected.” The devils will go far from him.⁵

Likewise, the statement “There is no might or power except Allāh” is said when the caller to prayer says, “Rush to the prayer.” Upon hearing the caller to prayer say, “Rush to the prayer,” if one person says, “There is no might or power except with Allāh” and another person says, “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh,” then the first person’s statement is better because it is better to say “There is no might or power except with Allāh” at that moment.

This matter may sometimes be based upon the condition of the individual’s heart. A calamity may befall a person that causes him to have weakness in his religion, so he is in need of saying “There is no might or power except with Allāh” in order to strengthen himself. Thus, in this case, saying that will be better due to the need.

⁵ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 5095

Other Forms of Remembrance of Allāh



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله *said:*

Moreover, one should realize that everything that the tongue utters or the heart imagines which may bring one closer to Allāh—such as seeking knowledge or teaching, enjoying what is good and forbidding what is evil—is a kind of remembrance of Allāh.

EXPLANATION

This is what we alluded to earlier. Remembrance of Allāh the Exalted is not limited to the remembrance said with the tongue, which is most commonly known as remembrance; rather, included in remembrance is everything connected to the tongue that draws one closer to Allāh the Exalted, including teaching knowledge and studying, enjoying the good and forbidding the evil. All of this is remembrance of Allāh.

When you teach, you are remembering Allāh. When you study knowledge, you are remembering Allāh. When you enjoin good and forbid evil, you are remembering Allāh.

This is complete remembrance. The person must be diligent in using his tongue to draw close to Allāh by what is legislated, whether it is in teaching, enjoying the good and forbidding evil, or from the

known statements of remembrance.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Hence, the one who occupies himself in the pursuit of beneficial knowledge after performing the obligatory duties, or who sits in a gathering in order to learn or teach that which Allāh and His Messenger have called *fiqh* or “understanding,” is also doing something that is one of the best forms of remembering Allāh.

EXPLANATION

This is based upon the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ:

فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ فَضْلِ الْعِبَادَةِ.

The virtue of knowledge is better than the virtue of worship.¹

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَذْنَاكُمْ.

The virtue of the scholar over the worshiper is like my virtue over the least of you.²

And in another narration, he said:

وَفَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ.

The superiority of the learned man over the devout worshiper is like that of the full moon over the rest of the stars.³

The best supererogatory act of worship is remembrance of Allāh, and the best remembrance of Allāh—according to many scholars—is teaching and learning knowledge.

¹ Collected by al-Ḥākim (1/93).

² *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhi* 2685

³ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 3641

It has been mentioned by Abū Hurayrah and Abū Dharr that both of them said, “Teaching and seeking knowledge is more beloved to us than a thousand *raka’āt* of supererogatory prayers.”

Sufyān ath-Thawrī رضي الله عنه said, “There is no action more virtuous than seeking knowledge for the person with the correct intention.”

Wakī’ رضي الله عنه said, “If it were not that *ahādīth* were better to me than *tasbīh*, I would not have narrated *ahādīth*.”

Bishr bin al-Hārith رضي الله عنه said, “I do not know of any action on the face of the earth greater than seeking knowledge and *ḥadīth* for the person who fears Allāh and purifies his intention.”

Thus, seeking knowledge is the best supererogatory act, according to many of the scholars. For example: If someone says he has to choose between saying the remembrance of the morning or attending a lesson after Fajr prayer, which one should he give preference to? According to many of the scholars, he should give preference to the lesson because seeking knowledge is better, although it should not be said that these two oppose each other unless you cannot do both of them. If you can do both, then this is better. But if one has to make a choice, many scholars say it is better to choose knowledge.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رضي الله عنه said:

If you think about it, you will not find much difference of opinion among the earliest generation concerning what is the best of deeds.

EXPLANATION

As it relates to the difference of opinion among the Salaf, it is sometimes related to the situation. For example: Some scholars say that the best action is humility, and in reality, this is based upon the situation—if the individual requires humility. Sometimes the difference is about two things which are similar. Those who say knowledge is best and those who say remembrance is best do not differ in reality

because knowledge is remembrance. And those who say *jihād* is best intend *jihād* along with remembrance. Thus, in reality, there is not much differing among the Salaf [regarding this issue].

Istikhārah (Decision) Prayer



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله *said:*

Whenever a person is confused, he should pray Istikhārah as prescribed in the legislation, for the one who prays to Allāh asking Him for what is best will not have any regrets. He should do that a lot and make a lot of *du'ā'*, for that is the key to all goodness.

EXPLANATION

How great is this statement! Someone may be confused concerning the matters of his worldly life, or be conflicted concerning affairs of his religion. As for the affairs of the worldly life, he may have to decide if he should marry a specific woman or not, if he should get married now or wait, if he should buy a car or not. He may also have decisions to make concerning his religion.

Of course, no one will say, “I have to pray Istikhārah prayer to decide if I should pray in the *masjid* or at home,” as it relates to which one is better for him in its origin. But a calamity could occur which causes him to pray Istikhārah to decide in this matter. For example: He may reside in a country that arrests those who pray Fajr in the *masjid*, so he may be incarcerated for a number of days or longer [if he prays in the *masjid*]. Thus, he may leave the home and not find

any police that arrest him, or he may leave the home and find police who harm him. In this case, he prays the Istikhārah prayer to decide what is best for him to do in this situation. In this case, it would be permissible for him to pray in the home if he is almost certain that if he goes to the *masjid*, he will face severe harm like imprisonment for a number of days, and he will not be able to pray in the *masjid* for these days he is imprisoned! In this case, it is permissible for him to pray in his home, and this is not problematic at all. But if he is not sure if someone will arrest him or not, then he prays Istikhārah prayer. Similarly, if he wants to decide between two virtuous actions, then he prays Istikhārah prayer.

Ibn Taymiyyah mentions that the virtuous actions may differ according to the situation of the individual and time, so if he is unsure about which action to perform, he should pray Istikhārah prayer and seek the best of the affair.

As for the obligatory acts themselves and the prohibited acts themselves, then Istikhārah prayer is not made concerning them. No one can say, "I will pray Istikhārah prayer to decide if I should allow my beard to grow or not." There is no Istikhārah prayer for this matter, because there is no choice given for the commands of Allāh. The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَعْفُوا اللَّحَى .

Let your beards grow.¹

And he said:

وَفَرُّوا اللَّحَى .

Allow your beards to grow.²

And he said:

وَأَرْحُوا اللَّحَى .

¹ *Sunan an-Nasā'i* 5226

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5892

And grow your beards.³

For example: If someone's wife says to him, "Shave your beard," while the Prophet ﷺ commanded us to grow our beards, so the husband says, "I will pray Istikhārah prayer to see if I should obey the Messenger of Allāh or my wife"?! In this case, the person does not pray Istikhārah prayer because the matter is clear; Istikhārah prayer is only prayed when trying to decide between two unclear matters.

The Prophet ﷺ used to teach his Companions the Istikhārah prayer just as he would teach them chapters from the Qur'ān. He said:

إِذَا هُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ ثُمَّ لِيَقُلِ اللَّهُمَّ
 إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ،
 فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ
 تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي - أَوْ قَالَ عَاجِلِ
 أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ - فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ
 أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي - أَوْ قَالَ فِي عَاجِلِ
 أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ - فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ، وَاقْدُرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ
 أَرْضِنِي بِهِ - قَالَ وَيُسَمَّى حَاجَتَهُ.

"If any of you thinks of doing an affair, he should offer a two *raka'āt* prayer other than the compulsory ones and then say: O Allāh! I ask guidance from Your knowledge, and power from Your might, and I ask for Your great blessings. You are capable and I am not; You know and I do not, and You know the unseen. O Allāh! If You know that this affair is good for my religion, my subsistence, and my Hereafter"—or he said, "if it is better for my present and later needs"—"then ordain it for me and make it easy for me to get, then bless me in it; and if You know that this affair is harmful to me in my religion, subsistence, and Hereafter"—or he said, "if it is worse for my present and later needs"—"then keep it away from me and let

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 260

me be away from it. And ordain for me whatever is good for me and make me satisfied with it.” The Prophet ﷺ added that the person should mention his need.⁴

From what is apparent from this *ḥadīth*, the supplication of Istikhārah should be said after the prayer. Some scholars say that the supplication is said during the prayer because of the principle that supplication said during the prayer is better than supplication said after the prayer. But the text here is clear in the wording: “and then say” denotes order. Allāh knows best—the supplication for Istikhārah should be said after the completion of the prayer.

The scholars have mentioned that after the person prays Istikhārah prayer, his decision will become clear by way of a number of affairs:

- The affair will be made easy for him—it will become easy after it had been difficult. The hardships will be removed and the affair will be made easy. This is proof that this affair is better for him.

- His heart will become open towards an affair. For example: If someone is trying to decide between two matters, then he prays Istikhārah prayer and his heart becomes inclined toward one of the affairs and not the other. This is a sign that this affair is better for him.

- The person may also see a righteous dream which clarifies that this affair is better for him, but it is not a requirement that he sees a dream. Some people say to us, “I prayed Istikhārah 100 times, but I did not see a dream!” It is not required that one see a dream—the matter could become clear through other means, as we mentioned.

- For example [from these other means]: If you are wavering concerning marrying a woman due to your lack of wealth, so you pray Istikhārah, and the next morning someone calls you and says, “If you get married, I will pay your dowry for you.” This is a sign that this affair is better for you because it has been made easy for you.

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1166

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “He should do that a lot, and make a lot of *du’ā’*.” Meaning, he should seek to know the best of his affairs with Istikhārah and not become bored with it. And the intent of this is not that he allows the whispers to influence him such that he repeats the Istikhārah prayer several times for one issue. The intent is that he continues to pray Istikhārah for all his affairs and does not abandon it; rather, each time he has a need, he prays Istikhārah. This is from the etiquette of the righteous, and whoever seeks good from his Lord will never regret.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, “...for that is the key to all goodness.” When the individual has doubts about his affairs, he should increase his supplications, for surely they are the key to all good. No doubt, there is no good except with the help of Allāh, so the slave supplicates to his Lord the Exalted and asks for His help, guidance to the good, and firmness upon good.

The Virtue of *Du'ā'*



The status of *du'ā'* is great. *Du'ā'* is worship; Allāh has made it worship. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴾

And your Lord said, “Invoke Me, I will respond to your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn My worship will surely enter Hell in humiliation!”

[*Sūrah Ghāfir* 40:60]

And the Exalted said:

﴿ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ
الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ
يُرْشَدُونَ ﴾

And when My slaves ask you (O Muḥammad) concerning Me, then I am indeed near. I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be rightly guided.

[*Sūrah al-Baqarah* 2:186]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

الدعاء هُوَ العبادة.
Du'ā' is worship.¹

The Prophet ﷺ said:

لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَكْرَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ.

There is nothing nobler to Allāh the Glorified than *du'ā'*.²

Du'ā' has a great status with Allāh the Exalted and with the believers. For this reason, the person must make a great deal of *du'ā'* and not become bored with it. And if a matter becomes doubtful to you, ask Allāh to guide you to the truth:

اللهم اهدني لما اختلف فيه من الحق بإذنك.

O Allāh, guide me to the truth concerning what the people differ in, by Your permission.³

There was a man who opposed the Sunnah. He was spoken to about this and the evidence was explained clearly to him, but he rejected it. He was told to say, “O Allāh, guide me to the truth concerning what the people differ in, by Your permission,” but he refused to say it! And refuge is sought with Allāh. This is obedience to the Shayṭān, because the Shayṭān never wants people to know the good.

If someone is confused about his affairs, he must ask Allāh to clarify them for him. And if he is confused concerning two matters, he

¹ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 1479

² *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 3829; authenticated by al-Albānī.

³ **Translator's note:** This is taken from the narration of Abū Salmān bin 'Abdir-Raḥmān bin 'Awf, who said, “I asked 'Ā'ishah, ‘By what words did the Prophet ﷺ used to begin his prayer when he stood up at night?’ She said, ‘When he stood up at night, he began his prayer by saying: O Allāh, Lord of Jibrīl, Mikā'il, and Isrāfīl, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen; You are the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and You will judge between Your slaves concerning that wherein they differ. Guide me to the truth of that wherein they differed, by Your leave, for You guide whomsoever You will to the Straight Path.’” (*Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 767)

must ask Allāh to clarify the best of the two matters for him.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

He should not be hasty and say, “I prayed but I did not get an answer.”

EXPLANATION

Du'ā' is worship; as such, it is not befitting for the slave to become bored of worship. *Du'ā'*, as the scholars have mentioned, requires patience. The Muslim must constantly supplicate and not become bored, because *du'ā'* is not merely asking for something; rather, *du'ā'* is worship. You worship Allāh with your *du'ā'*, so how can you become bored of worshipping Allāh?! It is worship which contains a request, and the response to the request has been promised so long as the person does not become hasty. Allāh has perfect wisdom. Perhaps Allāh desires to elevate your status and increase your good deeds by way of your *du'ā'*, so He delays the response. Therefore, by increasing your supplication, you combine two virtues: increasing your reward and [receiving] the answer to your *du'ā'*. So do not become hasty.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

يُسْتَجَابُ لِأَحَدِكُمْ مَا لَمْ يَعْجَلْ فَيَقُولُ قَدْ دَعَوْتُ فَلَا أَوْ فَلَمْ يُسْتَجَبْ لِي.

The supplication of every one of you is granted if he does not grow impatient and say, “I supplicated but it was not granted.”⁴

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2735

Preferred Times for *Du'ā'*



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

He should seek out the times of special virtue, such as the end of the night, at the end of the prescribed prayers, at the time of the *adhān*, when rain is falling, and so on.

EXPLANATION

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* and from the reasons for it being accepted is diligence upon supplicating at virtuous times. Allāh is generous, and it is hoped that the supplication will be answered during any time, but there are times when the hope is greater and the expectation is increased for the *du'ā'* to be answered.

One of these times is the last part of the night, because it has been narrated that our Lord the Exalted descends to the lower heavens during the last third of the night, and He says:

مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ.

Who supplicates Me so that I may answer him? Who asks Me so that I may give to him? Who asks Me forgiveness so that I may forgive him?¹

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 758a

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...at the end of the prescribed prayers." "*Du'ā'* at the end of the prescribed prayers" means making it during the last part of the prayer. This is proven by the action of the Prophet ﷺ: he would supplicate during the last part of his prayers, and he ordered us to supplicate in the last part of our prayers.

قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ الدُّعَاءِ أَسْمَعُ؟ قَالَ: جَوْفَ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، وَدُبُرِ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْمَكْتُوبَاتِ.

It was said, "O Messenger of Allāh, what *du'ā'* (supplication) is most likely to be heard (and responded to)?" He said, "(That which is offered) in the last part of the night and at the end of the prescribed prayers."²

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...at the time of the *adhān*, [and] when rain is falling." The Prophet ﷺ said:

ثِنْتَانِ لَا تُرَدَّانِ، أَوْ قَلَّمَا تُرَدَّانِ: الدُّعَاءُ عِنْدَ النَّدَاءِ، وَعِنْدَ الْبَأْسِ حِينَ يُلْحَمُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا.

Two (supplications) are not rejected, or they are seldom rejected: *du'ā'* at the time of the call to prayer, and *du'ā'* at the time of fighting when the people are engaged in close battle with each other.³

There is an addition to this narration found in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* which adds "and during the time of rainfall," but al-Albānī declared this addition to be weak from the chain of Abū Dāwūd, and *ḥasan* from other chains of narration.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'*, Shaykh al-Albānī mentioned the wording:

ثنتان ما تردان: الدعاء عند النداء ووقت المطر.

Two (supplications) are not rejected: *du'ā'* at the time of the call to prayer, and at the time of rainfall.

² *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 3499

³ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 2540

Shaykh al-Albānī said that this narration is *ḥasan*.⁴

Therefore, the time of rainfall is one of those times in which it is hoped that *du'ā'* will be answered.

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* 3078

Etiquettes of *Du'ā'*



EXPLANATION

There are additional etiquettes for those who desire their *du'ā'* to be answered. Some of these etiquettes are connected to the condition of the individual, such as being diligent in supplicating during times of ease. Surely, increasing *du'ā'* at times of ease gives hope that *du'ā'* will be answered during times of severity. The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَسْتَجِيبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَ الشَّدَائِدِ وَالْكَرْبِ فَلْيُكْثِرِ الدُّعَاءَ فِي الرَّخَاءِ.

Whoever would like Allāh to respond to him during hardship and grief, then let him supplicate plentifully during times of ease.¹

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is diligence in using concise words. Concise words are those statements that gather the most important good while leaving everything else.

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَسْتَحِبُّ الْجَوَامِعَ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ وَيَدَعُ مَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ liked comprehensive supplications (or supplications with very few words but comprehensive meanings),

¹ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhi* 3382

and he discarded others.²

The Prophet ﷺ said to our mother 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها:

عليك بالكوامل والجوامع.

Adhere to the complete, comprehensive (du'ā').³

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said:

يا عائشة؛ عليك بجَمَلِ الدعاءِ وجوامِعِهِ. فلما انصرفت قلت: يا رسول الله وما جمل الدعاءِ وجوامِعِهِ؟ قال قولي: (اللهم إني أسألك من الخير كله، عاجله وآجله، ما علمت منه وما لم أعلم، وأعوذ بك من الشر كله، عاجله وآجله، ما علمت منه وما لم أعلم. وأسألك الجنة وما قرب إليها من قول أو عمل، وأعوذ بك من النار وما قرب إليها من قول أو عمل، وأسألك مما سألك به محمد، وأعوذ بك مما تعوذ منه محمد، وما قضيت لي من قضاء فاجعل عاقبته رشداً.

“O 'Ā'ishah, adhere to general and comprehensive *du'ā'*.” When I had finished, I said, “O Messenger of Allāh, what is general and comprehensive *du'ā'*?” He said, “Say: O Allāh, I ask You for some of the good in totality, presently and in the future, that which I know and that which I do not know; I seek refuge in You from all evil, presently and in the future, that which I know and that which I do not know. I ask you for Paradise and the words and deeds that will bring me closer to it, and I seek refuge in You from Hell and from the words and deeds that would bring me closer to it. I ask You for that which Muḥammad asked You for, and I seek refuge in You from that which Muḥammad sought refuge from; whatever You decreed for me, make its consequences good.”⁴

Look at these concise statements. We mentioned this *ḥadīth* to show

² *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 1482

³ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* 25138

⁴ Collected by al-Bukhārī in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (639), and classed as authentic by al-Al-bānī.

the meaning of “concise statements.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Say: O Allāh, I ask You for some of the good in totality.” He did not tell her to say, “O Allāh, I ask You for the good, all in totality,” because all good will never be given to one person. The Arabic word *min* (من— from) means “some” in this context.

“I ask You for some of the good in totality, presently and in the future”—Presently means the worldly affairs, and “in the future” means the affairs of the next life.

“That which I know and that which I do not know”—This request encompasses all good suitable for the seeker, that which he knows and that which he doesn’t. If the intent was to ask for all good, he would have said, “I ask you for all the good.”

“I seek refuge in You from all evil, presently and in the future”—In this statement, he is seeking refuge from all evil, because the individual requests safety and security from everything evil.

“I ask you for Paradise and the words and deeds that will bring me closer to it, and I seek refuge in You from Hell and from the words and deeds that would bring me closer to it. I ask You for that which Muḥammad asked You for, and I seek refuge in You from that which Muḥammad sought refuge from; whatever You decreed for me, make its consequences good.”

From the concise supplications is saying:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ.

O Allāh, I ask You for well-being.⁵

Well-being includes safety from all evil, in this life and the Hereafter.

⁵ **Translator’s note:** Ibn ‘Umar said, “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ did not leave off saying the following words in the morning and evening: ‘O Allāh, I ask you for well-being in this world and the next. O Allāh, I ask you for forgiveness and well-being in my religion, in this world, in my family, and in my property. O Allāh, veil my faults and calm my fears. O Allāh, give me protection in front of me and behind me, on my right and my left, and above me. I seek refuge by Your might from being overwhelmed from below me.’” (*Al-Adab al-Mufrad*; declared authentic by al-Albānī.)

For this reason, the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ, al-'Abbās ﷺ, said:

قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عَلَّمْنِي شَيْئًا أَسْأَلُهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ . قَالَ سَلِ اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ .

I said, “O Messenger of Allāh, teach me something that I may ask Allāh the Exalted for.” He said, “Ask Allāh for well-being in this world and in the Hereafter.”⁶

Therefore, it is from the etiquette of *du'ā'* to utilize concise words; as for detailing *du'ā'*, this is from exceeding the bounds in *du'ā'*.

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is beginning the *du'ā'* with praise of Allāh and sending salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَفْضَلُ الدُّعَاءِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ .

The best of remembrance is saying “Nothing has the right to be worshiped except Allāh,” and the best of supplication is “All praises belong to Allāh.”⁷

If you include praise of Allāh in your *du'ā'*, then you have made your *du'ā'* the best *du'ā'* and combined the two types of *du'ā'*.

'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ مَوْقُوفٌ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَصْعَدُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ حَتَّى تَصَلِّيَ عَلَى نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ .

Verily, *du'ā'* is suspended between the heavens and the earth. Nothing of it ascends until you send salutations upon your Prophet ﷺ.⁸

⁶ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 3514

⁷ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 3800

⁸ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 486; authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī.

Saying “*InshāAllāh*” After *Du’ā*’



EXPLANATION

From the etiquettes of *du’ā*’ is having resolve and not connecting your *du’ā*’ with the will of Allāh. Do not say, “O Allāh, forgive me if You will; O Allāh, have mercy upon so-and-so if You will.”

If someone supplicates for you, do not say “*InshāAllāh*”; rather, say “*Āmīn*.” If someone says to you, “May Allāh reward you with good,” then say “*Āmīn*.” If someone says, “May Allāh forgive you,” then say “*Āmīn*.” The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا دَعَا أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَعِزِّمْ فِي الدُّعَاءِ وَلَا يَقُلِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ شِئْتَ فَأَعْطِنِي فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا مُسْتَكْرَهَ لَهُ.

When one of you supplicates, he should supplicate with resolve in his *du’ā*’ and he should not say, “O Allāh, bestow upon me if You will,” for there is none to coerce Allāh.¹

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2678

Exceeding the Bounds in *Du'ā'*



EXPLANATION

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is not exceeding the bounds in *du'ā'*.

The most evil way of exceeding the bounds of supplication is for the slave to attach his heart to other than Allāh the Exalted, so he associates partners with Allāh in his heart. He supplicates to Allāh and he supplicates to other than Allāh. This is major *shirk*. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

And verily, the *masājid* belong to Allāh, so do not call upon anyone other than Allāh.

[*Sūrah al-Jinn* 72:18]

From exceeding the bounds in *du'ā'* is innovation in *du'ā'*, such that someone supplicates with an appearance or method which is innovated, or the wording of his *du'ā'* is innovated.

From exceeding the bounds in *du'ā'* is what some of the *imāms* do in detailing their supplications. One of them will say in his *du'ā'*, “O Allāh, I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave, and I seek refuge with You from its worms; I seek refuge with You from such-and-such.” Then he mentions Paradise and says, “O Allāh, I ask

You for Paradise and what it contains.” And then he mentions what is in Paradise. This is exceeding the bounds in *du’ā’*. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ فِي هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ قَوْمٌ يَعْتَدُونَ فِي الطُّهُورِ وَالِدُّعَاءِ.

There will surely be in this *ummah* a people who will exceed the bounds in purification and *du’ā’*.¹

A son of Sa’d bin Abi Waqqāṣ said:

سَمِعَنِي أَبِي، وَأَنَا أَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ، إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَنَعِيمَهَا وَبَهْجَتَهَا وَكَذَا وَكَذَا وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَسَلْسَلِهَا وَأَغْلَالِهَا وَكَذَا وَكَذَا فَقَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ سَيَكُونُ قَوْمٌ يَعْتَدُونَ فِي الدُّعَاءِ. فَإِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنْهُمْ إِنْ أُعْطِيتَ الْجَنَّةَ أُعْطِيتَهَا وَمَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ أُعْذِتَ مِنَ النَّارِ أُعْذِتَ مِنْهَا وَمَا فِيهَا مِنَ الشَّرِّ.

My father heard me say, “O Allāh, I ask You for Paradise, its blessings, its pleasure, and such-and-such, and such-and-such; I seek refuge in You from Hellfire, from its chains, from its collars, and from such-and-such, and from such-and-such.” He said, “O my dear son, I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say, ‘There will be people who will exaggerate in supplication.’ You should not be one of them. If you are granted Paradise, you will be granted everything good therein; if you are protected from Hellfire, you will be protected from everything evil therein.”²

And it has been narrated that ‘Abdullāh bin Mughaffal heard his son say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْقَصْرَ الْأَبْيَضَ عَن يَمِينِ الْجَنَّةِ، إِذَا دَخَلْتَهَا. فَقَالَ أَيْ بُنَيَّ سَلِ اللَّهَ الْجَنَّةَ وَعُذْ بِهِ مِنَ النَّارِ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ . يَقُولُ سَيَكُونُ قَوْمٌ يَعْتَدُونَ فِي الدُّعَاءِ.

¹ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 96

² *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 1480

“O Allāh, I ask You for a white palace on the right-hand side of Paradise when I enter it.” He said, “O my son, ask Allāh for Paradise and seek refuge with Him from Hell, for I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say, ‘There will be people who will transgress in supplication.’”³

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is not overburdening oneself in selecting words and phrases for *du'ā'*. When some people supplicate, they burden themselves with trying to find words that rhyme. This is not from the etiquette of *du'ā'*, but there is no problem if the beginning words agree if the person does not overburden himself in doing such, as this has been narrated in the *du'ā'* of the Prophet ﷺ.

That which sounds pleasant without exceeding the bounds is okay, but rhyming such that the person overburdens himself to bring a word at the end that rhymes with the *du'ā'* is not from the etiquette of *du'ā'*.

Our mother ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ said:

واجتنِبِ السَّجْعَ فِي الدَّعَاءِ؛ فَإِنِّي عَهِدْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَصْحَابَهُ يَكْرَهُونَ ذَلِكَ.

Avoid rhyming in *du'ā'*, for surely, I observed the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions hating that.⁴

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is repeating the *du'ā'* three times. It appears in the narration concerning the *du'ā'* of the Prophet ﷺ:

كَانَ إِذَا دَعَا دَعَا ثَلَاثًا.

When he would supplicate, he would say the *du'ā'* three times.⁵

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is being diligent in consuming the permissible (*ḥalāl*) food, drink, and clothing. Be diligent that your earnings and spending are permissible. [It’s narrated from] the

³ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* 3864

⁴ Collected by Ibn Ḥibbān (978).

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 1794

Prophet ﷺ:

ذكر الرجل يطيل السفر أشعث أغبر يمد يديه إلى السماء يا رب يا رب
و مطعمه حرام و مشربه حرام و غذي بالحرام فأنى يستجاب لذلك .

He mentioned a man who traveled on a long journey and was disheveled and covered with dust; he stretches forth his hands to the heaven, (saying), “O Lord, O Lord,” but his food is *ḥarām*, his drink is *ḥarām*, and all his nourishment is *ḥarām*, so how can his *du’ā’* be accepted?⁶

This man had several reasons why his supplication should be accepted: he was a traveler, disheveled, and dusty, and he raised his hands, but there were things preventing his *du’ā’* from being accepted. His food was impermissible, his drink was impermissible, and his clothes were impermissible, so how could his *du’ā’* be answered?!

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 1015

Raising Hands in *Du'ā'*



EXPLANATION

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is raising the hands in *du'ā'*, based upon the previously mentioned *ḥadīth*, and based upon the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى حَيِّي كَرِيمٌ يَسْتَحْيِي مَنْ عَبْدِهِ إِذَا رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ إِلَيْهِ
أَنْ يَرُدَّهُمَا صِفْرًا.

Your Lord ﷻ is Kind and Most Generous, and He is too kind to let His slave bring his hands back empty if he raises them to Him.¹

The scholars have mentioned that raising the hands has three situations:

1) The time when raising the hands is an innovation and not legislated. Any time the Prophet ﷺ supplicated and did not raise his hands, then raising the hands in this situation is an innovation. For example: He did not raise his hands during the sermon for other than seeking rain. So if someone raises his hands during these times, it's an innovation because the Prophet ﷺ did not raise his hands during these circumstances.

Another example is the *du'ā'* during *tawāf* around the Ka'bah.

¹ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 1320; classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albānī.

Raising the hands in *du'ā'* while performing *tawāf* around the Ka'bah is an innovation. Likewise, raising the hands in *du'ā'* when walking between Şafā and Marwah is an innovation, because the Prophet ﷺ supplicated during these circumstances but he did not raise his hands.

2) The time when raising the hands is a Sunnah, even being a reason for the *du'ā'* being answered. This is every time when the Prophet ﷺ raised his hands in *du'ā'*. For example: When the person ascends Şafā and Marwah, and the supplication after stoning the small and middle *jamarāt*, and the supplication during the sermon when seeking rain. Raising the hands during these times is Sunnah.

3) The time when raising the hands is recommended as a reason for the *du'ā'* to be answered. This is every time when it has not been narrated how the Prophet ﷺ made *du'ā'* during that time. An example of this is the *du'ā'* between the *adhān* and the *iqāmah*. The Prophet ﷺ explained that the *du'ā'* between the *adhān* and the *iqāmah* is not rejected,² but it has not been narrated to us how the Prophet ﷺ supplicated at this time, so raising the hands here is recommended.

² *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 521

Supplicate With an Attentive Heart



EXPLANATION

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is supplicating with certainty that you will be answered and doing so with an attentive heart. The Prophet ﷺ said:

ادْعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْتُمْ مُوقِنُونَ بِالْإِجَابَةِ، وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ دُعَاءَ مَنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لَاهٍ.

Supplicate to Allāh while you are certain of a response, and know that Allāh does not answer *du'ā'* from a distracted heart.¹

Some unfortunate people say, “Make *du'ā'*, my brother; if it does not help you, it won't hurt you!” This is an incorrect statement regarding *du'ā'*. We are certain that if we supplicate in the prescribed manner, it will bring benefit. The *du'ā'* will be answered either by us receiving what we requested, by good being stored away for us, or by some evil being removed from our path.

From the etiquettes of *du'ā'* is focusing with your heart. Some people make *du'ā'*, then they get involved in a conversation and return to the *du'ā'*, then they go back to the conversation then back to the *du'ā'* while their heart has no focus!

¹ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 3479

The lack of focus from the heart is the calamity of our current time, even during the prayer. Our prayer has become such that most of the time we pray, our heart is not focused. How many of us can say that during his daily prayers, from the time he said *takbīr* with the *imām* until the prayer was over, he had total focus in his prayer? One of us says *takbīr*, and then we go off into the world or begin daydreaming until the *imām* completes the prayer with the *salām*. We have a great deal of whispers and deficiencies in our prayer; rather, some of us don't know if we prayed four *raka'āt* with the *imām* or just one *rak'ah*! Some of us are merely tools following the voice of the *imām*. If the *imām* says "*Allāhu Akbar*," he sits. If the *imām* errs and says "*Allāhu Akbar*" when rising from *rukū'*, the person will sit. This is because he is not aware of being in the prayer; he is only following the voice of the *imām*.

In reality, this is a great defect which requires our attention; we need to access our situation with our Lord. Why are our hearts not focused upon worship as is required? This must be treated.

The same applies to the statements of remembrance: many people do not focus their hearts while remembering Allāh. You will hear one of us sounding like a whistle as we remember Allāh, saying, "I seek Allāh's forgiveness, I seek Allāh's forgiveness," but it is as though we have not uttered a word.

Even as we supplicate asking Allāh for our needs, one of us may supplicate while not being aware of what he asked for. Or someone may supplicate as he performs *tawāf* just to pass the time, while he is not focused.

This needs treatment, and it requires patience. Paradise is expensive. It is not obtained with the lowest efforts. Paradise is obtained by the virtue of Allāh and His mercy, and by the reasons which allow the person to receive His virtue and mercy. And it is obtained by turning to Allāh, striving, having patience, and persevering.

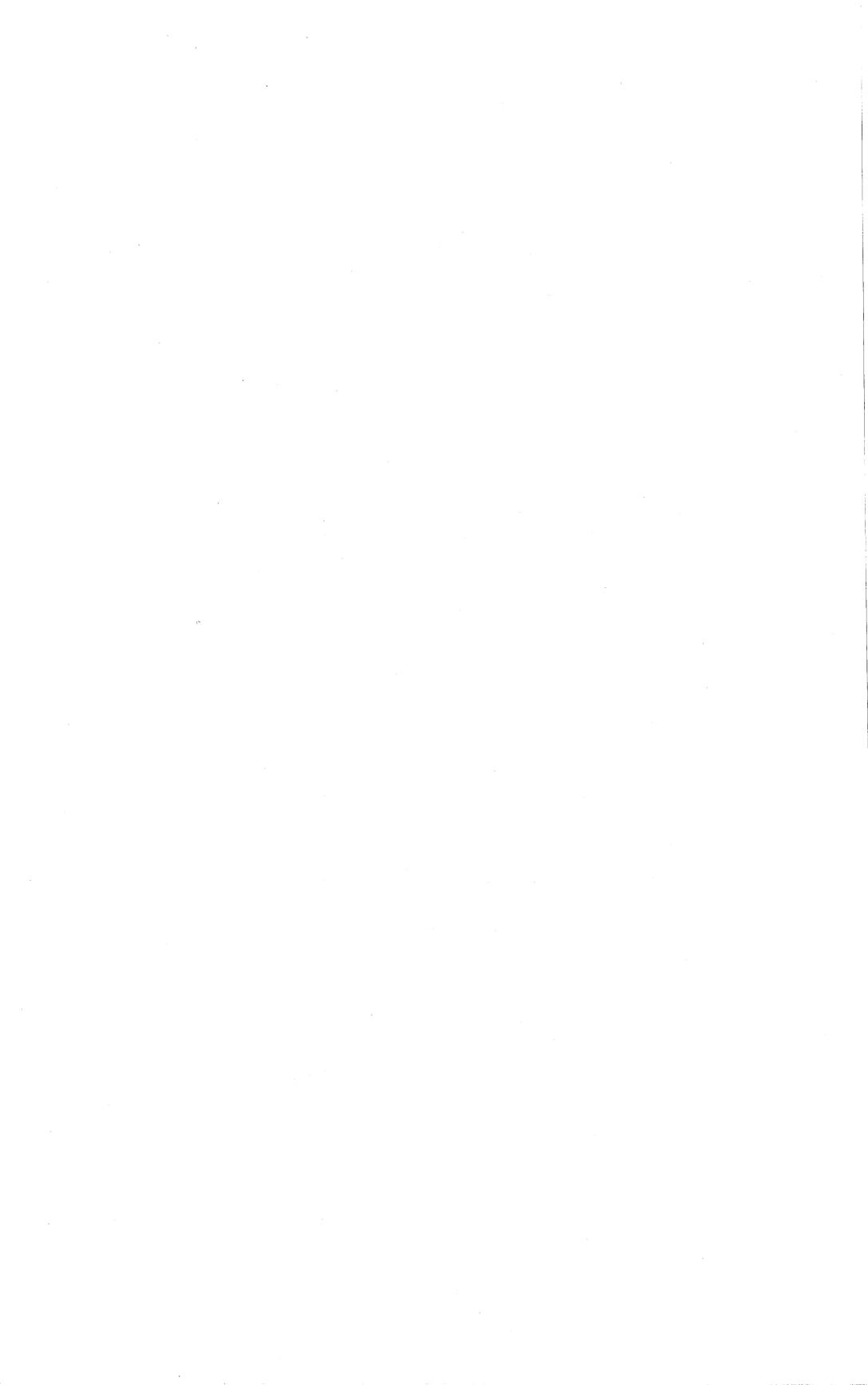
We must strive against our souls. When the *imām* says "*Allāhu Akbar*," we must focus and remain patient upon this. The same

applies to remembrance and *du'ā'*.

These are some of the etiquettes of *du'ā'*. It is hoped that the answer to the *du'ā'* of whoever adheres to them is near. Allāh is near to His slaves; He responds to those who call upon Him.



THE THIRD ADVICE



Seeking Provision



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته اللہ علیہ said:

As for the most profitable earnings: Trust and rely upon Allāh, have confidence that He is sufficient for you, and have a good thought about Him.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...the most profitable earnings"—Meaning, the most virtuous and best earnings for provision; this is from one standpoint. The other standpoint is how it was earned; the third standpoint is its blessings; and the fourth standpoint is contentment with it.

The person needs to know these affairs regarding provision; he needs to know the most virtuous and best earnings. He needs to know the legislated means of obtaining provisions, what brings about blessings in the provision, and what will give him contentment with his earnings. Provisions will not cause happiness unless they were earned by permissible means and Allāh blesses them, and the person is content with them. Whoever is prevented from one of these three has been prevented from goodness in his provision.

The believer who is given success is diligent upon knowing the

best earnings, the means to obtain them, the causes for them being blessed, how Allāh will bless them, and how he can be content with them. This is the question Abul-Qāsim as-Sabtī asked Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allāh have mercy upon both of them.

For this reason, you find Ibn Taymiyyah beginning the speech about the most profitable earnings with something that surprises us. The question is about earnings and what is the most profitable, and Ibn Taymiyyah says, “Trust and rely upon Allāh, have confidence that He is sufficient for you, and have a good thought about Him.” These are the reasons for good earnings. Place your trust in Allāh the Exalted.

Trust in Allāh means turning your affairs over to Allāh and relying upon Him. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ﴾

And whosoever puts his trust in Allāh, then He will suffice him.

[Sūrah at-Ṭalāq 65:3]

Whoever puts his trust in Allāh and surrenders his affairs to Allāh, then Allāh will protect all of his affairs.

﴿ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴾

Say: “Sufficient for me is Allāh; in Him those who trust must put their trust.”

[Sūrah az-Zumar 39:38]

Say: Allāh suffices me from needing anyone other than Him. To Him I entrust all of my affairs. Allāh is sufficient. In His Hand is the harm and the benefit, and this is not in the hand of anyone other than Him.

If the person combines seeking provision, fearing Allāh, and placing their trust in Him, then he will obtain good.

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ

﴿ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ﴾

And whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine.

[Sūrah at-Ṭalāq 65:2-3]

The one who places his trust in Allāh puts forward the means while entrusting his affair to Allāh and relying upon his Lord. He knows that the means are only from the mercy of Allāh upon His slaves, and all the affairs lie in the Hand of Allāh. If Allāh wants, He will allow the means to be successful, and if He wants, He will cause the means to fail.

The scholars mention some of the wisdom behind magic affecting the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ was affected with magic concerning his worldly affairs; as for his religion, magic did not affect this in any way at all. The Prophet ﷺ was diligent in reciting the remembrance of Allāh, so the wisdom was to show the slaves that all the affairs are in the Hand of Allāh, and Allāh only provided the means as a mercy upon His slaves. Thus, you implement the means but do not connect yourself to the means. Only place your trust in Allāh. “And whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).” He will make a way out for him from every difficulty in this life and the Hereafter. “And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine.” Provision will come to him from means he did not perceive. He will be blessed in it and content.

Therefore, the one who seeks provisions must combine fear of Allāh, trust in Him, and confidence that He is sufficient; meaning, the Muslim surrenders his affairs to Allāh the Exalted when seeking provisions. He has confidence in Allāh and he relies upon Allāh.

﴿ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ ﴾

Is not Allāh sufficient for His slave?

[Sūrah az-Zumar 39:36]

Allāh the Exalted is sufficient for His slaves to remove evil and bring about good.

Some people say, "I'm going to the store and I am confident in myself and my abilities!" Some say, "The problem is with me; I don't have any wealth. Otherwise, I am confident in my abilities to collect earnings." This is wrong. The successful person is the one who has confidence in Allāh; he puts forth the means and does not hesitate in his affairs once he puts forth the correct efforts.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, "Trust and rely upon Allāh, have confidence that He is sufficient for you, and have a good thought about Him." When the individual embarks upon an endeavor, seeking provisions, his heart should be filled with good thoughts about Allāh the Exalted, that Allāh is the Provider and Most Generous. Therefore, whoever places his trust in Allāh, surrenders his affairs to Allāh, is confident He is sufficient, has a good thought about Allāh, supplicates a lot, and obeys Allāh much, then his provisions will come easily. And Allāh will bless him in them.

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

And whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine.

[Sūrah at-Ṭalāq 65:2-3]

Some people enter business and say, "I will try, but I know my bad fortune." He enters the business with a defeatist mentality, believing he will fail. He says, "I will try it anyway, but I know my bad fortune." We say: This is incorrect. The successful one is the person who enters his affairs working to seek provision, while his heart is filled with a good thought about Allāh.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

قَالَ اللَّهُ أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي .

Allāh said, “I am to My slave as he thinks of Me.”¹

And in the narration found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا دَعَانِي .

Verily, Allāh says, “I am to My slave as he thinks of Me, and I am with him when he calls upon Me.”²

There is a strong handhold between having a good thought about Allāh and *du'ā'*. This is the person who has a good thought about Allāh and supplicates to Allāh. If you desire seeking provision to be easy, then it is upon you to fortify yourself with fear of Allāh, trust in Him, confidence that He is sufficient, having a good thought about Him, and supplicating a great deal. These are the keys to success in seeking provision. This is what Ibn Taymiyyah explained here.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَئِدٌ سَئِدٌ :

For this reason, it is upon the person who is concerned with the affair of provision to seek shelter with Allāh and supplicate to Him.

EXPLANATION

This is what was previously explained. The Muslim must have a good thought about Allāh if he wants provision. He must trust in Him, have confidence that He will suffice him, put forth fear of Allāh, make a lot of *du'ā'*, and increase his obedience to Allāh. Obedience is a reason for obtaining provision. The one who seeks provision can increase his provision through obedience. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الْكَافِرَ إِذَا عَمِلَ حَسَنَةً أُطْعِمَ بِهَا طُعْمَةً مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَمَّا الْمُؤْمِنُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَدْخِرُ لَهُ حَسَنَاتِهِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُعْقِبُهُ رِزْقًا فِي الدُّنْيَا عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ .

If the non-Muslim does a good deed, he is fed because of it in this

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7505

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2675

world. As for the believer, Allāh stores up his good deeds for him in the Hereafter and grants him provision in accordance with his obedience in this world.³

The disbeliever is provided for in this world due to his good deeds. As for the believer, Allāh stores his good deeds for the Hereafter—meaning, his good deeds are not wasted like those of the disbeliever. And the believer is also provided for due to his good deeds. Consequently, obedience to Allāh is a reason for obtaining provision.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Jābir رضي الله عنه said:

بَعَثَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَنَحْنُ ثَلَاثُمِائَةَ رَاكِبٍ وَأَمِيرُنَا أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ نَزَّصُدُ عَيْرًا لِثَرْيَشٍ فَأَقَمْنَا بِالسَّاحِلِ نِصْفَ شَهْرٍ فَأَصَابَنَا جُوعٌ شَدِيدٌ حَتَّى أَكَلْنَا الْخَبْطَ فَسُمِّيَ جَيْشُ الْخَبْطِ فَالْقَى لَنَا الْبَحْرُ دَابَّةً يُقَالُ لَهَا الْعَنْبَرُ فَأَكَلْنَا مِنْهَا نِصْفَ شَهْرٍ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ sent us on an expedition. We were 300 riders, and our chief (leader) was ‘Ubaydah bin al-Jarrāḥ. We were on the lookout for a caravan of the Quraysh. So we stayed on the coast for half a month, and we were so afflicted by extreme hunger that we had to eat leaves. That is why it was called “the Detachment of the Leaves.” The ocean cast out for us an animal called a sperm whale; we ate that for half of the month.⁴

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

As Allāh the Exalted said in what has been narrated from His Prophet ﷺ:

يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ فَاسْتَطْعَمُونِي أُطْعِمْكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ فَاسْتَكْسُونِي أَكْسِكُمْ.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2808

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 1935

O My slaves, all of you are hungry except those whom I feed, so ask Me for food and I will feed you. O My slaves, all of you are naked except those whom I clothe, so ask Me to clothe you and I will clothe you.⁵

This *ḥadīth* from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* is concerning the slave asking his Lord for his needs—meaning, he relies on Allāh to the extent that he suffices with asking Allāh the Exalted instead of asking the creation, even when it is permissible to ask the creation. This is good reliance upon Allāh the Exalted.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

And at-Tirmidhī narrated from Anas رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

ليسأل أحدكم ربه حاجته كلها، حتى شسع نعله إذا انقطع؛ فإنه إن لم
يسّره لم يتيسر.

Let each one of you ask his Lord for all of his needs, even if the strap on his sandal breaks—for if Allāh does not make it easy for him to fix it, it will not be easy.

Allāh the Exalted says in His Book:

﴿وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

And ask Allāh of His bounty.

[*Sūrah an-Nisā'* 4:32]

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Let each one of you ask his Lord for all of his needs”—This also applies to the worldly needs. “Even if the strap on his sandal breaks, for if Allāh does not make it easy for him to fix it, it will not be easy.” The addition to this narration: “for

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2577

if Allāh does not make it easy for him to fix it, it will not be easy,” is not the statement of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ; rather, it is a statement from our mother ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “Allāh the Exalted says in His Book:

﴿وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

“And ask Allāh of His bounty.”

[Sūrah an-Nisā' 4:32]

The scholars have two statements concerning the meaning of “bounty” in this verse:

- 1) This bounty is the obedience to Allāh; thus, the person is asking Allāh for obedience (meaning, help upon obedience).
- 2) The meaning of “bounty” is provision.

And there is nothing preventing both meanings from being correct. “And ask Allāh of His bounty,” meaning: ask Allāh for obedience and help upon it, and ask Allāh for provision. This is what the scholars call “the difference of diversity.”⁶

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رضي الله عنه said:

Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh, and remember Allāh often so that you may succeed.

[Sūrah al-Jumu'ah 62:10]

⁶ **Translator's note:** “The difference of diversity” is the difference that has to do with variations of meanings, not conflicting opinions.

Although this refers to Jumu'ah (Friday prayers), the meaning applies to all the prayers.

EXPLANATION

The meaning of “seek from the bounty of Allāh” is seeking permissible provisions from Allāh. This is based upon one explanation of this verse.

For this reason, the great understanding of Imām al-Bukhārī—and he is from the major scholars of this *ummah*—is apparent in his explanation of a chapter he entitled “Going out in trade.” He explained the statement of Allāh the Exalted: “...disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh.” He understood this verse to mean giving permission to go out and travel for business; and this was from his knowledge.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “Although this refers to Jumu'ah (Friday prayers), the meaning applies to all the prayers.” Meaning, the ruling for this applies to all prayers.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

For this reason—and Allāh knows best—the Prophet ﷺ told us to say when entering the *masjid*, “O Allāh, open for me the gates of Your mercy,” and to say when leaving the *masjid*, “O Allāh, I ask You of Your bounty.”⁷

EXPLANATION

When the person enters the *masjid*, he enters worship, which he hopes will be a reason for the mercy of Allāh and thus enter him into Paradise. This is because no one will enter Paradise based upon their actions, as stated in the *ḥadīth*:

لَنْ يُدْخَلَ أَحَدًا عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ، قَالُوا: وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: لَا، وَلَا

⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 713

أَنَا، إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَعَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ بِفَضْلِ وَرَحْمَةٍ.

“None of you will enter Paradise by virtue of his deeds alone.” They said, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allāh?” He said, “No, not even me, unless Allāh encompasses me with His virtue and mercy.”⁸

When the person enters the *masjid*, he enters to worship Allāh, hoping for His mercy; consequently, it is appropriate to ask for mercy. When he leaves the *masjid*, he leaves for worldly purposes and seeking provision, so it is appropriate to ask from Allāh’s bounty.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

And Ibrāhīm, the Close Friend of Allāh عليه السلام, said:

﴿فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ﴾

“So seek your provision from Allāh, and worship Him, and be grateful to Him.”

[*Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt* 29:17]

This is a command, and a command demands a response. So seeking the help of Allāh and turning to Him regarding the matter of provision and other matters is an important principle.

EXPLANATION

This matter is obligatory. It is obligatory for the people to seek Allāh’s aid in all of their affairs and disassociate themselves from their own ability in all of their affairs. It is not permissible for someone to believe for the blink of an eye that he has the ability to obtain good for himself without the help of Allāh the Exalted. This is the meaning of his statement “and a command demands a response.” It is obligatory for the people to seek the aid of Allāh in all their affairs while believing that all good is in the Hand of Allāh. And no one can obtain good except by the permission and command of Allāh

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 573

the Exalted.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَئِدٌ said:

Then one should seek to earn money with generosity, so that Allāh may bless it for him; one should not take it with avarice and panic.

EXPLANATION

It is a must to earn money with generosity, because the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْمَالَ خَضِرَةٌ حُلْوَةٌ مَنْ أَخَذَهُ بِسَخَاوَةٍ نَفْسٍ بُورِكَ لَهُ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ بِإِشْرَافِ النَّفْسِ لَمْ يُبَارَكْ لَهُ فِيهِ وَكَانَ كَالَّذِي يَأْكُلُ وَلَا يَشْبَعُ.

This wealth is attractive and sweet. Whoever takes it without being greedy, it will be blessed for him, and whoever takes it with avarice, it will not be blessed for him. He is like one who eats and is not satisfied.⁹

Whoever acquires wealth through permissible means and is honest in his pursuit will be blessed in his wealth. Whoever acquires wealth with greed, even utilizing deception, will not be blessed in his wealth.

From the reasons for having blessings removed from one's wealth is a person being deceptive or dishonest, or utilizing impermissible means.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَئِدٌ said:

Rather, wealth should be like the toilet: one needs it, but it does not hold any special place in one's heart. Striving to earn money should be like striving to fix the toilet.

⁹ *Sunan an-Nasā'i* 2602

EXPLANATION

Look at this statement by Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله. This means that the person must be moderate in seeking the worldly life. The least level of moderation in this matter is not allowing it to distract you from the obligatory righteous actions.

We heard about some of our brothers who would work as merchants and combine all five prayers, or four of them. They combine Zuhr, 'Aṣr, Maghrib, and 'Ishā' before they go to sleep, especially some of our brothers in Europe. This is because movement is constant and negligence causes missed opportunities, so they are distracted from praying during the proper times. And no doubt, this is not permissible.

The least level of moderation in this matter is not allowing it to distract you from the obligatory righteous actions. Thus, he makes his pursuit of the worldly life like that of a man who enters the outhouse (toilet) to relieve himself. When someone enters the toilet to relieve himself, he does not remain there longer than necessary; rather, as soon as he relieves himself, he exits. This is how the individual should conduct himself in his pursuit of the worldly life.

When someone builds an outhouse, he is not concerned with placing anything extra therein; his only concern is making sure it works, and he will not stay there longer than needed. This is how we must be concerning our provision: we should not go beyond what is needed and we should not continue seeking provision beyond what is required.

It has also been mentioned that Ibn Taymiyyah said, "He should make it (pursuit of the worldly life) like a donkey: he rides it only as needed." The basis of this is that the person [normally] rides a camel, horse, or a stallion, and he only rides a donkey if needed. People don't enjoy riding donkeys; they only ride them out of necessity. When the need is over, they get off the donkey. Ibn Taymiyyah said that this is how the Muslim should pursue the worldly life. He should be moderate in his pursuit; it should have the status of the outhouse, and the status of riding a donkey.

The common people have a saying similar to the speech of Ibn Taymiyyah. They say, “O Allāh, place my wealth in my pocket, not in my heart.” [Meaning] don’t place it in my heart such that it distracts me from my religion. Provide me with what is sufficient but will not distract me.

The least level of moderation in this matter is not allowing it to distract you from the obligatory righteous actions. Rather, the person is diligent upon performing his Islamic obligations. The most complete level of moderation in this matter is not becoming busy with seeking provision you do not need.

The Correct View of the *Dunyā*



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

According to a *ḥadīth* connected to the Prophet ﷺ, which was narrated by at-Tirmidhī and others:

من أصبح والدنيا أكبر همّه؛ شتت الله عليه شمله، وفرق عليه ضيعته، ولم يأت من الدنيا إلا ما كتبت له، ومن أصبح والآخرة أكبر همّه؛ جمع الله عليه شمله، وجعل غناه في قلبه، وأتته الدنيا وهي راغمة.

Whoever wakes up having this world as his main concern, Allāh the Exalted will make him feel a sense of panic and loss, and he will get nothing of this world except that which was already decreed for him. But whoever gets up and is mostly concerned about the Hereafter, Allāh will cause him to feel focused and content and will give him a feeling of being independent, and worldly gains will come to him willingly or unwillingly.

EXPLANATION

This is a tremendous *ḥadīth*. The wording collected by at-Tirmidhī is:

من كانت الآخرة همّه: جعل الله غناه في قلبه وجمع له شمله، وأتته

الدنيا وهي راغمة، ومن كانت الدنيا همّة: جعل الله فقره بين عينيه، وفرّق عليه شَمَلَه، ولم يأتِه من الدنيا إلا ما قُدِّر له.

Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal, Allāh makes his heart rich and organizes his affairs, and the world comes to him whether it wants to or not. And whoever makes the world his goal, Allāh will put his poverty right before his eyes and disorganize his affairs, and the world does not come to him, except what has been decreed for him.

Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal and intention—as it comes in some narrations—Allāh will suffice him and place richness in his heart. He will be content with whatever provision comes to him; he will be happy with it. He will say, “All praises belong to Allāh; He has provided me with a great deal of good.” He does not look at what is in the hands of others. This is because looking at what others have is from the greatest causes of grief and sadness.

Some people have cars which take them to the *masjid* safe and sound, but when a better car passes by them, they slap their car with their hands and say, “Look at those cars!” The car passes by while the grief remains in his heart.

Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal, Allāh will place richness in his heart, so he is content with whatever he receives. He will believe that he has been granted a lot of good. His affairs will be organized, so his heart will not be scattered. Thus, he will be able to sleep just by placing a bed down.

“And the world comes to him whether it wants to or not”—Whatever is written for man will come to him, whether he is righteous or not. But the righteous person will be happy with what comes to him and he will submit in front of Allāh.

“And whoever makes the world his goal”—He seeks it; this is his purpose and it is at the forefront for him. Allāh will place poverty right before his eyes. This contrasts with those who make the Hereafter their goal. When the Hereafter is his goal, Allāh will place

richness in his heart, but when the worldly life is his goal, Allāh will place poverty in front of his eyes. Each time he looks, he will only see poverty, so he will not be content with what he is provided with. He will look at what is not in his hand, so he will not be able to enjoy what is in his hand. This is the epitome of misery—for someone to have something, but he can't enjoy it, so he seeks something he can't have.

“And disorganize his affairs”—Worry will increase in his heart. When he wants to sleep, he will not be able to sleep.

One of the rulers said to his son, “O my dear son, I am old now and I want to step down from my position and pass it to you.” The son was intelligent; he knew he was being tested. He said, “May Allāh grant you enjoyment, O father. There is no good in a leadership position. If you abandon it, I never want it.” Some time went by and his father called him and said, “What caused you to say what you said?” The father was intelligent; he knew that his son knew he was being tested. The son replied, “I see that when you lie down to sleep, you light the lamp and request your servant to oil your back, then you continue thinking about your leadership until Fajr begins. So I knew that whoever does this would never leave this.” Meaning, when I saw this diligence from you, I knew you would never abandon your position, because your heart is connected to it. The people sleep while you order your servant to rub your back with oil, so you are able to stay awake thinking about your position.

Some people have a lot of wealth and can't sleep. He stresses over what he has and the provision Allāh has given him. Those who make the Hereafter their goal, Allāh will give them two things: this world and the Hereafter.

Our statement does not mean that affluence is absolutely blameworthy and that the rich are always like this. Our statement pertains to those who single out the worldly life and do not turn towards the Hereafter. Otherwise, there are many wealthy people who take care of students of knowledge, give a great deal of charity, and spend in the cause of *da'wah*. I know a wealthy man who spends in one sitting

what equals to 100 million dollars in the cause of Allāh—in just one sitting. He donated land in the heart of the capital for *da'wah* in the cause of Allāh, the value of which was 100 million dollars. Thus, you find people who are like this.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

One of the Salaf said, “You are in need of this world, but you are in greater need of your share of the Hereafter. If you start with your share of the Hereafter, then your share of this world will automatically come with it.”

EXPLANATION

This has been narrated from Mu'ādh bin Jabal ؓ, the noble Companion, and he is the one intended by “one of the Salaf” here. He said to a man, “I advise you with two matters—if you protect them, you will be protected. You cannot manage without your portion of this world, and you are in more need of your portion of the Hereafter. Thus, give preference to your portion of the Hereafter over your portion of this world; then your share of this world will automatically come with it. It will come to you wherever you are.”¹

Mu'ādh advised him with this great advice by saying, “You cannot manage without your portion of this world.” What is known as “Dervish”² is not prescribed in Islām. Islām came with life in this world and the Hereafter. It made the life of this world a path to life in the Hereafter. Islām does not command anyone to neglect the worldly life in totality or to live in extreme poverty and abandon seeking provision and his portion of this world. Likewise, Islām does not allow the person to put his hand anywhere in this world he pleases, (as some of the ignorant say) that the *ḥalāl* is whatever descends in my pocket. Thus, he gives preference to this world over

¹ Collected by Ibn Abī Shaybah (3465).

² **Translator's note:** A Dervish is one who belongs to a Ṣūfī order known for its extreme poverty and austerity.

the next.

The Muslim does not ignore this world, but when he looks at this world, he looks at the Hereafter first. If the affair of this world does not contradict rectifying the affairs of the Hereafter and it does not corrupt his heart, he proceeds with it. If it opposes rectifying the affairs of the Hereafter, then he puts the affairs of the Hereafter before the affairs of this world. This is how the Salaf were ﷺ.

This is why Mu'ādh رضي الله عنه said, "You are in more need of your portion of the Hereafter. Thus, give preference to your portion of the Hereafter over your portion of this world."

The question here is: If you give preference to your portion of the Hereafter over your portion of this world, will this harm your portion in this world?

The answer: No; rather, whoever works according to Allāh's commands, his worldly life and Hereafter will be rectified. For this reason, he said, "Then your share of this world will automatically come with it." If you turn to Allāh, your worldly affairs will be rectified.

You will be amazed that if you look at the speech of some people who ascribe themselves to knowledge, claim to desire rectification, and claim to be callers to rectification, you will find that they are looking toward the life of this world and they are not concerned about the Hereafter. Some argue today that the rule of democracy is better than the rule of the *shari'ah* without the consent of the people, and that the aspiration to lead people to a decent life can only come about by rectifying the affairs of this world, even though the affairs of the world which they call to do not rectify it. Experience and evidence prove this.

Nothing improves the condition of the world except what comes in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. It is obligatory upon those who call to improving the worldly life to call to returning to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. This is by calling the people to adhering to the founda-

tions of the Islamic legislation which the Salaf of this *ummah* were upon. In this lies rectification for the Muslims, and strength and improvement for their worldly affairs.

Dā'wah to individuals should be a call to rectify the homes by establishing the religion of Allāh the Exalted. If this is rectified, then we believe that Allāh the Exalted will rectify the affairs of the country.

But it is a clear mistake to leave the people upon error and not call them to *tawhīd*, the Sunnah, prayer, and piety, while claiming to call them to rectification.

Therefore, it is upon all the Muslims collectively to pay attention to this principle: All good lies in turning to the King of all good, and He is our Lord the Exalted.

The Purpose of Creation



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾ ﴾

And I did not create the *jinn* and mankind except to worship Me. I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Verily, Allāh is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong.

[*Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt* 51:56-58]

Allāh the Exalted created the *jinn* and mankind to worship Him, and He provided them with desire and free will. He informed them that the purpose of their creation was only to worship Him, and their purpose for existing in this world is to worship Allāh the Exalted. So if they worship Allāh, He will provide for them, feed them, and safeguard them from fear. This is what can be understood from this verse, because He said:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِّن رِّزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

And I did not create the *jinn* and mankind except to worship Me. I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me.

[Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt 51:56-57]

Allāh does not want from us that we should provide for Him or for any of His servants. We are not able to produce provisions; the One who produces provision is Allāh, while we request it from Him. Then Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴾

Verily, Allāh is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong.

[Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt 51:58]

Therefore, O slaves of Allāh, if you worship Allāh, you will be provided for by the Provider, the Owner of Power, the Most Strong.

This is a great principle of faith: Provision and good in this world is actualized by the worship of Allāh the Exalted.

The Best Trade



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

Regarding specifying a particular means of earning a living, whether it be in industry, business, construction, farming, or other than that—this varies from one person to another.

EXPLANATION

The origin of all earnings is that they are permissible, except if there is proof that they are impermissible. The origin of buying and selling is permissible unless there is proof that it is impermissible. The principle is that it is permissible for people to buy and sell what they like, how they like, except for what the Islamic legislation prohibits, such as selling by throwing a stone, uncertain transactions, or usury.¹

The best earnings are what the person earns with his hands. The Prophet ﷺ said:

ما أكل أحدٌ طعامًا قط خَيْرًا من أن يأكل من عمل يده، وإن نبيَّ الله داودَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام كان يأكل من عمل يده.

¹ **Translator's note:** "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade transactions determined by throwing a stone and transactions which involved some uncertainty." (Narrated by Muslim).

No one has ever eaten better food than the one who eats from what his own hands have earned. The prophet of Allāh Dāwūd ؑ used to eat from what he earned with his own hands.²

No one ever eats food purer or better than the food he eats from the earning of his hand. As for Prophet Dāwūd ؑ: Allāh made iron soft for him, so he would construct whatever he wanted for the people. He would work with his hands and earn his living with his hands. Therefore, the best earning is what is earned by the hands.

Notice that Ibn Taymiyyah said, “Regarding specifying a particular means of earning a living, whether it be in industry, business, construction, farming...” These are all jobs done with the hands.

As for giving preference to a specific job of the hand over another, this has not been narrated in the text. It varies according to the situation of the people and their qualifications. Allāh has given each one their ability. As the scholars say: “Each person understands himself, and everyone knows what he is precise in from the good actions.”

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ؑ said:

I do not know of any general ruling, but if there is a direction that a person wants to take, then let him seek the guidance of Allāh and pray Istikhārah as taught by the teacher of all good ؑ, for there is such great blessing in this that it cannot be comprehended; then, he should be content with whatever is made easy for him, unless it is something objectionable on Islamic grounds.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...but if there is a direction that a person wants to take”—Meaning, in regard to his profession.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...then let him seek the guidance of Allāh”—The Salaf said that the person should seek Allāh’s guidance in his

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1966

worldly affairs. If he wants to embark upon a worldly affair, he should pray the Istikhārah prayer to seek Allāh's guidance in the matter.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...then whatever is made easy for him"—Meaning, from the actions after praying Istikhārah; then he proceeds with this action, unless it is apparent that it contains some matters prohibited by the laws of Islām. If something permissible is made easy for someone, it is not befitting to oppose it unless it is for something better. Otherwise, he should accept the provision of Allāh and not oppose it. This is the intent of what was mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah in this third advice.

THE FOURTH ADVICE



Beneficial Books of Knowledge



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

As for what you can rely upon from the books of knowledge, this is a broad topic. It also varies according to the development of the people in that land. Certain knowledge, paths, and methodologies of knowledge may be easy in certain lands while they are not easy in other lands.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “As for what you can rely upon from the books of knowledge”—Meaning, Islamic knowledge.

“This is a broad topic”—This is due to the numerous books containing Islamic knowledge from the scholars of Islām. And it varies.

The scholars said: Selecting books is a skill which must be given concern and care. It is not befitting for the individual to read books any way he chooses; rather, he must select books that are appropriate for the knowledge he desires to learn.

This affair has guidelines; from those guidelines are the following matters:

- 1) The praise of the scholars for the book
- 2) The author's reliability
- 3) The service of the book
- 4) The benefit the student receives from the book.

THE FIRST AFFAIR

The student of knowledge must look at the praise of the scholars for the book because the scholars have expertise regarding books.

THE SECOND AFFAIR

The soundness of the author must be investigated, regardless of the subject matter. No one authors a book except that he serves what is in his heart. You will even find matters of *'aqīdah* in books of grammar. For this reason, when the Mu'tazilah authored grammar books, they filled their books with the beliefs of the Mu'tazilah.

The book *Al-Khaṣā'is* by Ibn al-Jinnī—a book relied upon in the field of grammar—is filled with examples which affirm the *'aqīdah* of the Mu'tazilah. It is filled with phrases that affirm the *'aqīdah* of the Mu'tazilah. So beware of saying, "This is a book covering the field of such-and-such; it has no connection to *'aqīdah*!" *'Aqīdah* is tied and connected to the individual, and no author writes anything except that he aids his *'aqīdah*. This must be known.

THE THIRD AFFAIR

The usefulness and practicality of the book, such that the scholars have explained it. Likewise, a book from which it is possible, upon its completion, to move on to a higher book, like those books which are in a series; this is extremely important.

THE FOURTH AFFAIR

The amount of benefit the student will receive from the book; this is

what Ibn Taymiyyah is alluding to in his statement “Certain knowledge, paths, and methodologies of knowledge may be easy in certain lands while they are not easy in other lands.” This is connected to the methodology and the path of knowledge.

For example: If I wanted to select a text for jurisprudence, then we look into the first three affairs mentioned. We say that the student of knowledge can select, for example, *Zād al-Mustaḥṣin* because the scholars have praised it, the author is sound, and it is very functional and practical. When the student completes it, he can move on to *Sharḥ Zād al-Mustaḥṣin* by Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Fawzān, so he will understand this book very well. Then he moves on to a gem in jurisprudence, *Sharḥ al-Mumtā*, by the scholar of jurisprudence, Imām Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ bin ‘Uthaymīn. This way, he will know the stronger viewpoint regarding the affairs of jurisprudence. Then he moves on to *Al-Mughnī* by Ibn Qudāmah, and he delves as deeply into the affair of jurisprudence as he likes.

But it is also necessary to look at the benefit that will reach others. If you are in a land where the *fiqh* of Abū Ḥanīfah is widespread, then it is best to select a text containing the *fiqh* of Abū Ḥanīfah, because if you do so in this particular land, the people will trust your knowledge; you bring them a book they trust and terminology they trust and are familiar with. When the people trust the foundation of your knowledge, then you are able to bring the good to them, if Allāh wills. This will open the opportunity for you to bring the evidence of the jurisprudence and the Sunnah.

If you are in a land where the Mālikī methodology is spread, then it is best to select texts on Mālikī jurisprudence, and the same applies to the Shāfi’ī methodology.

It is from the most beneficial affairs to read the texts to those who are firm in the texts and able to explain the books to you. Then you read the books again with critical analyses of the book, and then move on to the books that come after it. And all the fields of knowledge are studied in a similar fashion.

But all consideration must be given to the advice of Ibn Taymiyyah when he advised with the following advice.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

All good is combined in seeking the help of Allāh the Exalted in receiving the knowledge left as an inheritance from the Prophet ﷺ. This is what deserves to be called knowledge; as for other than that: if it is knowledge, it is not beneficial, or it is not knowledge even if it is called such. If it is beneficial knowledge, it must be from the inheritance of Muḥammad ﷺ. Nothing can take its place, and nothing is better than it. And the purpose must be to understand the intent of the Messenger ﷺ in his commands, prohibitions, and the rest of his speech. When your heart is certain that this is the intent of His Messenger ﷺ, then do not turn away from it, whether it is connected to his rights, the rights of Allāh, or the rights of the people, if you have the ability to do so.

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “All good is combined”—meaning, for the student of knowledge—“in seeking the help of Allāh.” The first sign of success is that the student of knowledge disassociates himself from any of his own might or power, and he says while believing in what he says, “There is no might or power except with Allāh.” The student of knowledge does not proceed upon his quest for knowledge while relying on his power, as the worldly people do. He does not rely on his intellect. Rather, he proceeds while knowing he is weak without the help of Allāh. He is helpless without the might of Allāh the Exalted. Therefore, he seeks the help of Allāh and attaches his heart to Him.

How many people embark upon the path of knowledge or the path of *da'wah* relying on their expertise, and they are not given success; rather, it could reach the extent that it leads them to heresy. We know individuals who embarked upon Islamic knowledge and authored works upon the path of the Salaf, and then they were deceived by

themselves and their abilities, so they deviated and died upon heresy.

The student of knowledge must be extremely cautious against being impressed with himself and deceived by his intellect. Rather, he always remembers that he is a weak slave, and he will never obtain any good except with the aid of Allāh, so he seeks the help of Allāh.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...in receiving knowledge left as an inheritance from the Prophet ﷺ"; O student of knowledge, suffice yourself in seeking knowledge from the knowledge left as inheritance from the Prophet ﷺ, or knowledge we are directed to by the inheritance of the Prophet ﷺ.

Knowledge is of two types:

1) Knowledge which comes from the Book and the Sunnah—this is called legislative knowledge.

2) Knowledge which the Book and the Sunnah point to; this is the beneficial worldly knowledge—that which does not oppose anything from the legislation, such as the knowledge of medicine, engineering, and the like.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "This is what deserves to be called knowledge." The knowledge which the Muslims agree is knowledge is what comes in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. You will not find anyone who says that this is not knowledge; rather, this is knowledge that is surely, unmistakably knowledge.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "As for other than that..."—Meaning, from the affairs associated with the religion or connected to it.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...if it is knowledge, it is not beneficial"—It is knowledge in its origin, but it is not beneficial as long as it is outside the Book and the Sunnah. An example is what is known as "the science of logic." It is knowledge and it has a basis, but the intelligent person does not need it and the unintelligent person will not benefit from it. If the person is smart, he has no need of this knowledge. The Companions ﷺ were the most knowledgeable people of

this *ummah* according to the consensus, and they had no need for the science of logic. And the foolish person will not benefit from it because he will not understand it, even if he immerses himself in it.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "...or it is not knowledge, even if it is called such." The science called "metaphysics" is not knowledge; it is soothsaying which relies on lies and fabrications. They take one thing which is correct and add a hundred lies to it. This modern-day soothsaying is called "knowledge." They bring forth individuals and say, "Doctor so-and-so is a scholar." Especially at the end of the year, the people come to him and ask him what is going to occur in the upcoming year. So they mention things which are already known, things which have reoccurring reasons. They say, "America will get hit by a hurricane; during the year, there will be 10 or 20 hurricanes." This is already known. They call metaphysics "knowledge." This is more evil than ignorance, and this is in opposition to the religion of Allāh the Exalted.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "If it is beneficial knowledge..."—If other than the knowledge left as inheritance from the Prophet ﷺ is beneficial, then the knowledge left by the Prophet ﷺ is still better than that knowledge. So if you busy yourself with this knowledge, you have left off that which is superior for that which is inferior.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "And the purpose must be to understand the intent of the Messenger ﷺ"—Let your goal and purpose be to understand the intent of the Prophet ﷺ, because those who truly follow him are those who know the intent of the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned that the Companions would look at the intent of the Prophet ﷺ in following him. This is because the one who follows him is not the person who acts according to the text while being heedless of its wisdom. The one who follows him is the one who acts by the text and acts according to the wisdom.

An example of this is the narration found in *Sunan Abi Dāwūd*:

أَنَّ نَاقَةَ، لِلْبَرَاءِ بْنِ عَازِبٍ دَخَلَتْ حَائِطَ رَجُلٍ فَأَفْسَدَتْهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَقَضَى

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْأَمْوَالِ حِفْظَهَا بِالنَّهَارِ وَعَلَى
أَهْلِ الْمَوَاشِي حِفْظَهَا بِاللَّيْلِ.

The she-camel of al-Barā' bin 'Azib entered the garden of a man and damaged it. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ gave the decision that the owners of properties are responsible for guarding them by day, and the owners of animals are responsible for guarding them by night.¹

The gardens during the time of the Prophet ﷺ were not fenced, so the she-camel of al-Barā' entered the garden and harmed it. The owner of the garden took the affair to the Prophet ﷺ to get a ruling concerning this matter. The Prophet ﷺ ruled that the owners of properties are responsible for guarding them by day, and the owners of animals are responsible for guarding them by night. Therefore, if an animal enters during the day and causes harm, there is no responsibility upon the owner of the animal because the responsibility of protection during the day is on the owner of the garden. But if the animal enters during the night and causes harm, the responsibility is on the owner of the animal.

The scholars said, “What was the intent of the Prophet ﷺ with this ruling?”

They said: The intent was to remove harm from the people by ruling according to what normally occurs. Normally, the farmers work in their garden during the day, so he judged that they are responsible for protecting their gardens during the day. If the Prophet ﷺ did not give this ruling, it would have brought harm to the people. The farmer would stay in his garden all day farming and spend all night guarding it. This would cause him to remain in his garden all day and all night. This would have been a severe hardship. Likewise, the owners of animals would keep their animals in at night, fearing wolves, and keep them in during the day because they would be responsible for keeping them out of the gardens of others. This would also be a severe hardship.

¹ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* 3569

If we say, for the sake of argument, that the situation of a land was altered, so the town became extremely hot, causing the farmers to work at night and be unable to farm during the day, and causing the herders to keep their animals in during the day fearing the heat of the sun—then it would be correct to say that the responsibility of protecting the garden is upon the farmers during the night and upon the herders during the day. Why is this? This is because this was the intent of the Prophet ﷺ; and the intent was to make the affair easy upon the people.

If someone says, “No, I will adhere to the text, so the garden owner must protect his garden during the day even if he works at night, and the herder must protect it at night even if he keeps his animals in during the day,” we say to him, “You have opposed the intent of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.” So I intend by this example to say that the student of knowledge must know the intent of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and thus follow him based upon his intent.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “When your heart is certain...”—Meaning, the heart of the student of knowledge.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “...that this is the intent of His Messenger ﷺ, then do not turn away from it, whether it is connected to his rights, the rights of Allāh, or the rights of the people”—This means that you must act by it, because the benefit of knowledge is action. The Prophet ﷺ said:

مررت ليلة أُسري بي بأقوامٍ تُقرضُ شفاهم بمقاريض من نار، فقلتُ:
من هؤلاء يا جبريل؟ قال: خطباءُ أمتك الذين يقولون ما لا يفعلون،
ويقرؤون القرآن ولا يعملون به.

On the Night Journey, I passed by some people whose lips were being cut off with scissors of fire. I said, “O Jibrīl, who are these?” He said, “The *khubābā*’ (preachers) of your *ummah* who said what they did not do, and they recited the Book of Allāh but they did not act upon it.”²

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi*’ 128

Thus, when the student of knowledge learns the inheritance of the Prophet ﷺ and he knows the intent, he must act according to it, whether it is connected to the rights of Allāh or the rights of humans.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَائِدًا:

And strive to cling—in every field of knowledge—to the foundations narrated from the Prophet ﷺ.

EXPLANATION

The concern of the student of knowledge is knowing the foundational matters narrated from the Prophet ﷺ concerning what he is studying. If he is studying jurisprudence, it is necessary for him to study the foundational matters in that subject which are proven by the evidence. When he comes to the subject of vessels, he must know the foundational principles concerning vessels according to what is proven by the evidence. Thus, he knows the evidence shows that the origin of vessels is that they are pure, so he adheres to this principle. Each time he studies, he looks at the principle and foundational matters. Whatever agrees with the foundational matters is good; and whatever opposes them is good if there is a specific evidence for it, and if not, he returns to the principles. This is how his knowledge becomes firm and grounded upon the statement of Allāh the Exalted and His Messenger ﷺ.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رَحِمَهُ اللهُ سَائِدًا:

If he is in doubt concerning what the people differ about, then let him supplicate with the supplication narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. She said:

كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ يَفْتَتِحُ صَلَاتَهُ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ
فَاطْرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ

فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

When he stood to pray at night, he would open his prayer by supplicating: “O Allāh, Lord of Jibrīl, Mikā'il, and Isrāfil, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen—You will judge between Your slaves concerning that wherein they differ. Guide me to the truth of that wherein they differed, by Your leave, for You guide whomsoever You will to the Straight Path.”³

EXPLANATION

When the student seeks knowledge: The affair will either be agreed upon, and that which the *ummah* agrees upon is the truth; or there will be differences of opinions. If there is indeed a difference of opinion, he looks to see if the differing was preceded with an agreement of opinion. If this matter which is differed upon was previously agreed upon, then he clings to the agreement held by the first generation of this *ummah*, because it is the truth which is relied upon.

When we look at *'aqidah*, we find that the Salaf agreed upon its affair, and differing occurred after them, so there is no doubtful matter or wavering here; rather, the certain truth is what the Salaf of the *ummah* were upon, that which the first generation of this *ummah* agreed upon. The falsehood is certain: it is whatever opposes this.

If this differing was not preceded with an agreement, then look to see if there is a statement proven by the textual evidence. If we find a statement proven by the textual evidence, then we adhere to this and leave everything else. This is the meaning of the statement of the scholars: “There is no consensus when a text exists.” Imām ash-Shāfi'i رحمته الله said, “The people have agreed that whoever has a Sunnah presented to him does not have the right to abandon it for the statement of someone else, regardless of who they may be.”

If there is differing, and it was not preceded by an agreement and there does not appear an evidence to clearly strengthen the statement

³ *Sahih Muslim* 770

of anyone over the other—rather, the statements are doubtful to the student of knowledge—then ask Allāh for guidance. The student asks Allāh to guide him to the truth in which the people differ.

For this reason, Ibn Taymiyyah said, “If he is in doubt concerning what the people differ about, then let him supplicate with the supplication narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. She said:

كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ يَفْتَتِحُ صَلَاتَهُ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ فَاطْرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

“When he stood to pray at night, he would open his prayer by supplicating: ‘O Allāh, Lord of Jibrīl, Mikā’il, and Isrāfil, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen—You will judge between Your slaves concerning that wherein they differ. Guide me to the truth of that wherein they differed, by Your leave, for You guide whomsoever You will to the Straight Path.’”⁴

The student of knowledge asks his Lord to guide him to the truth concerning the matters in which the people differ, and to make him firm upon it.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

Allāh the Exalted said in what has been narrated from His Messenger ﷺ:

يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ فَاسْتَهْدُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ.

O My slaves, all of you are misguided except those whom I guide, so seek My guidance and I will guide you.⁵

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 770

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2577

 EXPLANATION

Guidance from Allāh is by way of clarity. Allāh has guided us to the truth by way of clarifying the evidence. Whoever adheres to the evidence has grabbed hold of the Straight Path and knows the path of guidance. Some of the evidence may become confusing to the student of knowledge, so he asks Allāh to guide him to the truth regarding that in which the people of knowledge differ.

 ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمته الله said:

As for classifying books and authors, then you have heard from us during the reminder what Allāh the Exalted made easy.

 EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah was one of the most knowledgeable people concerning books and authors. If you read his speech, you will be amazed with what he narrates concerning the authored works and books and their authors. This is because Allāh granted him vast knowledge. In his lessons, volumes of his collection of religious verdicts were compiled wherein he mentions books and clarifies which are beneficial and which are harmful, and the condition of the authors. This is why he said, “As for classifying books and authors, then you have heard from us during the reminder”—meaning, during the lessons—“what Allāh the Exalted made easy.”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām rahimahullah said:

There are not any books which have been compiled and arranged which are more beneficial than the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muḥammad bin Ismā'il al-Bukhārī.

EXPLANATION

This book is the most authentic book authored on the face of the earth. It is the most beneficial of the books which have been authored. It is not known that there is a more beneficial book. This is because the author is from amongst the knowledgeable scholars of this *ummah*, a precise scholar of *ḥadīth* and a memorizer of *ḥadīth*. He had the absolute highest requirements for declaring a narration authentic. He did not write a single *ḥadīth* except that he prayed two *raka'āt* (of Istikhārah). The *ummah* has agreed upon the authenticity of this great book. It is a beneficial book in every field of knowledge.

In the field of *'aqīdah*, the student of knowledge will find numerous benefits in this great book. One of the brothers said, "We live in a country where they are not pleased with us reading books of *'aqīdah* to them!" I said to him, "Read to them from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*." Every Muslim accepts *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Your intent will be to first

let them hear the *ahādīth* connected to *'aqīdah* and the foundational matters, then after that, let them hear selected explanations from the scholars, not from you. If you do this, you will have taught them *'aqīdah*.

Teaching *'aqīdah* is not limited to the books authored with the name *'aqīdah*; rather, the books of the authentic Sunnah contain a great deal of good for teaching *'aqīdah*.

It is also from the most beneficial books in jurisprudence for the student of knowledge in the field of *fiqh*. Likewise in biography, virtues, and every affair needed in knowledge—the benefit can be found in this book.

But it is the work of a human, and anything a human does will not contain all truth, except for that done by the Prophet ﷺ. Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq ؓ is the best and most knowledgeable of this *ummah* after the Prophet ﷺ, yet there were many narrations he did not have, and the same applies to 'Umar ؓ and the other Companions. Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah brings attention to this principle.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ؒ said:

But this alone will not establish the foundations of knowledge or complete the intent of becoming extremely vast in the field of knowledge. It is a must to know other *ahādīth* and the speech of the scholars in the affairs in which some of the scholars specialize.

EXPLANATION

The student of knowledge who desires to become extremely vast in knowledge cannot limit himself to one *shaykh*, even if it is al-Bukhārī or a *shaykh* with the knowledge of al-Bukhārī; rather, he takes from his *shaykh* that which he is precise in and adds to the knowledge of his *shaykh* with the knowledge of other affirmed scholars, in the proper order.

Sometimes the lessons can coincide and occur at the same time, so the student will have to make a choice. For example: There may be a lesson from Shaykh ‘Abdul-Muḥsin al-Badr and a lesson from Shaykh Ṣāliḥ as-Suḥaymī at the same time. The students of knowledge had a method for dealing with this during the days when the major scholars would give lessons in Masjid an-Nabawī, scholars like Shaykh Bin Bāz (may Allāh have vast mercy upon him, and grant him the highest level of Paradise), Shaykh al-Amīn¹ (the Imām of the *dunyā* during his era in the field of *tafsīr*, a true Salafī, the author of *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*), Shaykh al-Albānī, Shaykh ‘Abdur-Raḥmān al-Afrīkī, and a number of major scholars. Their lessons all occurred close to the same time. Some of the students would divide the lessons, sitting with this *shaykh* four or five times, and sitting with that *shaykh* three times; then after ‘Ishā’, they would gather together and say to one another, “What benefits did you write down from Shaykh Bin Bāz?” He would say, “I took this and that benefit.” Then they would see who took benefits from Shaykh Amīn, and so forth. So they would not leave the *masjid* until they had compiled all the benefits. This is better than listening to recordings, because this is studying among the students of knowledge.

O student of knowledge, by Allāh, you will not find any greater blessing for knowledge than benefiting others. If you want to be blessed in your knowledge, make it firm, and benefit from it, then do not be stingy with it, and you will find amazing blessings and amazing firmness.

Stinginess is blameworthy; consequently, stinginess in knowledge is more blameworthy. So if you obtain a benefit, share it; you will be blessed in it and you will benefit from it and become firm, *inshāAllāh*.

Also, reviewing among the students will make knowledge firm. Sometimes you will miss a benefit, so you will be reminded of it by the speech of your brother. You will review issues among yourselves and you will be reminded of benefits by way of this review. This is

¹ **Translator’s note:** The Shaykh is referring to Shaykh Muḥammad Amīn ash-Shanqīṭī, who lived from 1905–1974 CE.

very beneficial.

Merely Collecting Books is Not Sufficient



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām ﷺ said:

This *ummah* has collected knowledge in every field of knowledge, so whoever's heart Allāh places light in will be guided by what reaches him from this, and whoever is blinded, then gathering books will not increase him in anything except loss and misguidance. As the Prophet ﷺ said to Abū Labīd al-Anṣārī:

أوليس في التوراة والإنجيل عند اليهود والنصارى؟ فماذا تُغني عنهم.

Weren't the Torah and the Injil with the Jews and the Christians? So what did it benefit them?!¹

EXPLANATION

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "This *ummah* has collected knowledge in every field of knowledge." The scholars of this *ummah* have written numerous beneficial books concerning every field of knowledge, and these books are present and well-known, but all consideration is given to the effect these books have on the individual.

The point is not that you know about the books, and the point is

¹ *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī* 2653

not that you memorize the books, but the point is: what effect do the books have upon you?

This effect will not be good and blessed except with the help of Allāh the Exalted; for this reason, Ibn Taymiyyah brought attention to this principle: “Whoever’s heart Allāh places light in will be guided by what reaches him from this.” Whatever reaches you from the books of the firm scholars, Allāh will guide by way of it and enlighten the hearts; and whoever is blinded, gathering books will not increase him in anything except loss and misguidance.

Now we have new means of communication on the internet. Someone can download numerous books. He can take one of those books and read it while his only intention is to belittle the foundations of the Sunnah. He undermines the affirmed foundations of the Sunnah which Ahlus-Sunnah have agreed upon. By Allāh, these books only increase him in loss and misguidance.

You will find some doctors of other sciences better than them. The commoners will have sound *‘aqīdah*, while you find this doctor (of Islamic studies) pathetic; his Ph.D. only increased him in ignorance and clear misguidance!

Many people read books and they become drums: drums are large in size, with a loud sound, but there is nothing under its leather. If you remove the leather, you find nothing but empty air. If you remove the covering of some of those who have been propped up today, you will find nothing but corrupted air.

Thus, that which is of consequence is the guidance of Allāh for the slave—that he is guided and his heart is enlightened.

I visited a country and rode in a taxi, and there was a commoner speaking about the Sunnah and *tawhīd* (very proficiently); *māshāAllāh, tabāarakAllāh!* Then I entered the *masjid* to pray Jumu’ah, and there was a *shaykh* wearing a turban delivering the sermon. If I’d had the authority, I would have removed him from the *minbar*. It is not permissible for people like him to speak about the religion.

The consideration is given to the guidance of Allāh, so the successful person is the one who constantly seeks refuge with Allāh, (saying) “O Allāh guide me, O Allāh enlighten my heart.” And he adheres to the correct path regarding this matter.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, “As the Prophet ﷺ said to Abū Labīd al-Anṣārī”—This is the wording in most copies. In some narrations, it mentions Ibn Labīd, and this is correct, because he was Ibn Labīd and not Abū Labīd as is found in most copies of the narration.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

هَذَا أَوَانٌ يُخْتَلَسُ الْعِلْمُ.

This is a time when knowledge will be snatched.

Meaning: he time is near when knowledge will be snatched and raised.

هَذَا أَوَانٌ يُخْتَلَسُ الْعِلْمُ مِنَ النَّاسِ حَتَّى لَا يَقْدِرُوا مِنْهُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ.

This is the time when knowledge will be snatched from the people, until what remains of it shall not amount to anything.

The intent of this is that the time is drawing near, and there is no doubt that it is during the last days when knowledge will be raised with the death of the scholars, until the people take the ignorant as their leaders. They will give verdicts without knowledge, without the Sunnah, and without guidance. They will be misguided, and they will mislead others with this.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

هَذَا أَوَانٌ يُخْتَلَسُ الْعِلْمُ مِنَ النَّاسِ حَتَّى لَا يَقْدِرُوا مِنْهُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ.

This is the time when knowledge will be snatched from the people, until what remains of it shall not amount to anything.²

Ziyād bin Labīd al-Anṣārī ﷺ said:

² *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhi* 2653

كَيْفَ يُخْتَلَسُ مِنَّا وَقَدْ قَرَأْنَا الْقُرْآنَ فَوَاللَّهِ لَنَقْرَأَهُ وَلَنُقَرِّئَهُ نِسَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاؤَنَا.

How will it be taken from us while we recite the Qur'an? By Allāh, we recite it, and our women and children recite it!

Ibn Labīd رضي الله عنه said, "How can knowledge be snatched away from us while we—by the praise of Allāh—recite the Qur'ān and we do not neglect it? We recite it, and even our women and children recite it." The Prophet ﷺ said:

ثَكَلْتِكَ أُمُّكَ يَا زِيَادُ إِنْ كُنْتُ لِأَعْدُكَ مِنْ فُقَهَاءِ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ هَذِهِ التَّوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ عِنْدَ الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى فَمَاذَا تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ.

May you be bereaved of your mother, O Ziyād! I used to consider you to be among the learned scholars from the people of al-Madinah. The Torah and Injil are with the Jews and Christians, but what does it benefit them?

It does not benefit them at all; Allāh did not preserve them, and they altered and changed them. Allāh did not preserve their religion, and they altered and changed it until they became pagans.

There are two reasons the Torah and Injil did not benefit them:

1) It was not protected and preserved for them, so they altered it.

2) Along with their distortion, they did not act upon it; they did not act upon the part of the book which was not distorted. It appears in the narration collected by Ibn Mājah:

أوليس هذه اليهود والنصارى يقرؤون التوراة والإنجيل ولا يعملون بشيء مما فيهما؟

Don't the Jews and Christians read the Torah and Injil and they do not implement anything within them?!³

So how will knowledge be snatched from this *ummah*? Knowledge

³ Sunan Ibn Mājah 4048

will be taken away from this *ummah* by three affairs, which must be given attention.

THE FIRST REASON

The death of the scholars, such that the world will not leave a scholar behind. The scholars have been dying since the time of the Prophet ﷺ, but they left behind knowledge as an inheritance, and one scholar would leave another behind him. But when we stay away from the scholars and do not learn from them, the scholars will die, and no other will follow him. This is how knowledge will be removed from us.

For this reason, we must be diligent in taking knowledge from our scholars. If you sit with a scholar, be diligent in taking pearls from him. Don't busy yourself with that which has no good in it—you go to a *shaykh* and ask him a question, then you go to another *shaykh* and ask him the same question, then you go to a third *shaykh* and ask him the same question. Then after a year, you travel a long distance from your country and ask a *shaykh* the same question. You know the answer, now act upon it! Take pearls of knowledge from the scholars so that when they die, they can leave a scholar behind, or at least we will have a group that resembles the scholars.

THE SECOND REASON

Turning away from the Book and the Sunnah and seeking guidance elsewhere. This is very prevalent during this time, and refuge is sought with Allāh.

Many people who claim to be upright don't seek guidance from the verses of the Qur'an or the Sunnah; they only follow their *shaykh*. If he is guided, then they are guided, and if he is astray, then they are astray. They turn away from the path of guidance, which is the Book and the Sunnah, and they take men to follow. For this reason, you will find groups who are not allowed to read books which contain "Allāh said, His Messenger said." They only have weak or fabricated *aḥādīth*. You find groups who don't seek guidance by the verses of

the Qur'ān or the *ahādīth* from the Sunnah; they only memorize the principles of the *shaykh*.

This is to the extent that one of them from their elders led us in prayer, and after the prayer I said to him, "Why did you do that? The Sunnah is like this." He said, "Didn't the *shaykh* say we will unite upon what we agree upon and pardon each other for what we disagree upon?" This is proof and evidence! He said to me, "What you are saying contradicts the speech of the *shaykh*."

SubhānAllāh! We abandon seeking guidance from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and go to principles established by men, and we don't weigh them against the Book and the Sunnah!

This is the second reason why knowledge will be taken away from us. We abandon what comes in the Book and the Sunnah for that which is found elsewhere. Thus, compounded ignorance is prevalent; scholars without knowledge (are prevalent). They are called scholars, but they direct the people upon ignorance. Unfortunately, they disapprove of knowledge, and they create religious verdicts by finding fault in the religious verdicts of the scholars.

THE THIRD REASON

Not acting according to knowledge. This is from the calamities of our era. We increase the argument against ourselves and we do not implement the knowledge. We study but we don't implement. The Prophet ﷺ said:

مررت ليلة أُسري بي بأقوامٍ تُقرض شفاههم بمقاريض من نار، فقلت: من هؤلاء يا جبريل؟ قال: خطباء أمتك الذين يقولون ما لا يفعلون، ويقرؤون القرآن ولا يعملون به.

On the Night Journey, I passed by some people whose lips were being cut off with scissors of fire. I said, "O Jibrīl, who are these?" He said, "The *khutabā'* (preachers) of your *ummah* who said what they did not do, and they recited the Book of Allāh but they did not

act upon it.”⁴

We will continue to be upon good as long as the scholars remain among us and the knowledge we take from the scholars remains among us. And we seek guidance from the Book of our Lord and the Sunnah of our Prophet ﷺ; we place these two above everything else and we use them as a judge of everything else. And we act according to our knowledge. Thus, be diligent upon this great affair.

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* 128

Conclusion



ORIGINAL TEXT

Shaykh-ul-Islām رحمہ اللہ علیہ said:

Thus, we ask Allāh the Exalted to grant us guidance and correctness, and from Him we seek guidance. We ask Him to protect us from the evil of our souls. Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower. And all praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists, and may He exalt the rank and mention of the noblest of messengers.

EXPLANATION

With this, we complete the explanation of *The Concise Advices*. I hope Allāh the Exalted will make this a benefit for the one who explained it and for the reader. I hope it will be a way to understand the speech of this sincere scholar of this *ummah*; may Allāh have mercy upon him. And may Allāh exalt the rank and mention of our Prophet Muḥammad, and his family and his Companions.



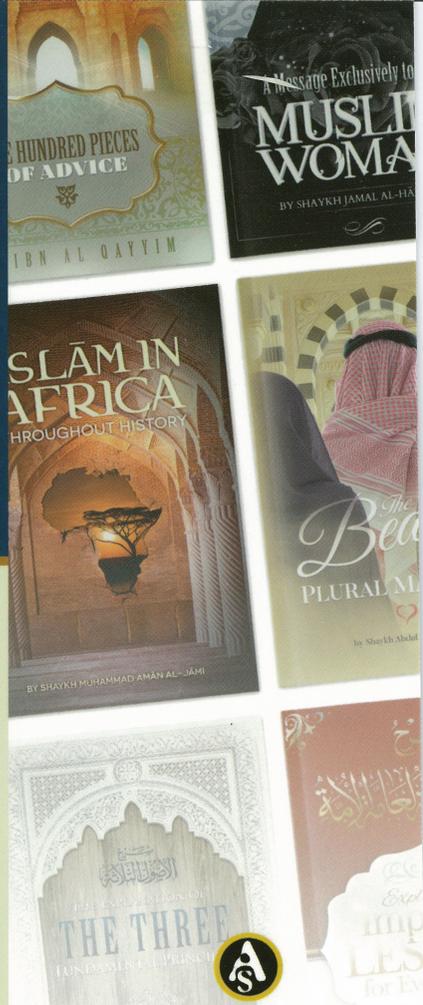


Explanation of the
**CONCISE
ADVICES**
of Shaykh-ul-Islām
IBN TAYMIYYAH

Abul-Qāsim as-Sabṭī—the scholar and world explorer—regarded a then 36-year-old Ibn Taymiyyah to be the most knowledgeable person he had encountered in the East and the West. Thus, he wrote to him requesting advice concerning four matters:

- Advice that would benefit him in his religion and his worldly life
- A comprehensive book that would suffice him in the field of knowledge
- The best supererogatory acts of worship
- The most profitable earnings

The result is a classic must-read book, concise in size yet immense in content. Explained by one of the leading scholars of jurisprudence, Shaykh Sulaymān ar-Ruḥaylī, this manuscript covers the subjects of seeking knowledge, the Hereafter, employment and trade, jurisprudence, repentance, 'aqīdah, ḥadīth, du'ā', worship, etiquette, and much more.



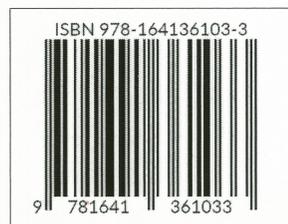
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