SELECTIONS FROM THE
FATḤ AL-BĀRĪ
(Commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)
by IBN ḤĀJAR AL-ʿASAQALĀNĪ

followed by
Twenty Fatwas on Life after Death

Translated by
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INTRODUCTION

This booklet intends to introduce non-Arabic speakers to one of the most seminal genres of Muslim religious literature, namely, the hadith commentary. It is surprising that no translations at present exist from this voluminous and influential body of writing, given that there are few hadith which can be understood adequately without reference to the often complex debates which have taken place concerning them between the scholars. These discussions have included investigations of the precise linguistic and lexicological meaning of the Prophetic speech, studies of the Isnād, debates over the circumstances surrounding the genesis of each hadith (asbāb al-wuffād), and issues of abrogation by stronger or later hadiths or by Qur’ānic texts. For this reason no Muslim scholar of repute uses a hadith before checking the commentaries to ascertain its precise meaning, context, and application.

The importance of this literature may be gauged by the fact that at least seventy full commentaries have been written on Imam al-Bukhari’s great Sahih. The best-known of these include al-Kaukab al-Dariri by Imam Shams al-Din al-Kirmāni (d. 786),1 ‘Umdat al-Qari by Imam Badr al-Din al-Ayni (d. 855),2 and the Irsād al-Sāri by Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Qastallāni (d. 923).3 However, the most celebrated is without question the magnificent Fath al-Bāri (Victory of the Creator) by Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalāni, a work which was the crown both of its genre and of the Imam’s academic career. It is appreciated by the ulema for the doctrinal soundness of its author, for its complete coverage of Bukhari’s material, its mastery of the relevant Arabic sciences, the wisdom it shows in drawing lessons (fawā’id) from the hadiths it expounds, and its skill in resolving complex disputes over variant readings. For Bukhari’s text has not come down to us in a single uniform version, but exists in several narrations (rināyāt), of which the version handed down by al-Kushmayhani (d. 389) on the authority of Bukhari’s pupil al-Firabri is the one most frequently accepted by the ulema. Ibn Hajar frequently uses the Kushmayhani variant as his standard text, but gives his reasons, often in complex detail, for preferring other readings where these seem to have particular merit. In doing this he makes it clear that he is authorised, through the ijtihād-system, for all the rināyāt he cites.4
IMĀM AL-BUKHĀRĪ

Ibn Hajar considered the hadith collection of Imām Muhammad ibn Ismā‘il al-Bukhārī (A.H. 194-256), entitled al-Jāmi‘ al-Sahih ('The Sound Comprehensive Collection'), to be the most reliable of all the hadith collections of Islam. His respect for the compiler was no less total, as is evident from the short biography which he offers of him, which portrays him as a saint as well as a scholar. He recounts, on Fīrābī’s eye-witness authority, how the imām would make ḡhusul and pray two rak‘ā before including any hadith in his work, and always carried on his person one of the hairs of the Prophet ﷺ. He collected his Sahih in Khurasan, and arranged it in the sanctuary at Makka, and completed it while seated between the minbar and the Prophetic Tomb in Madina. His miracles (karāmah) are numerous and well-attested. Once, after helping to build a fortress to defend the Muslim community, he provided the laborers with three small coins’ worth of bread, but even though there were a hundred laborers, there was enough for all. He ate little, but was endlessly generous to his students. One of his scribes, Muhammad ibn Abī Hātim, said: ‘When I was with him on a journey we would stay in a single room together, and I would see him rising fifteen or twenty times in a night to light the lantern, and work on an isnād, after which he would lie down again. I asked him: “Why do you impose all of this on yourself instead of waking me?” and he would reply, “You are a young man, and I do not wish to interrupt your sleep.”’ Ibn Abī Hātim further related: ‘I once saw al-Bukhārī in a dream. He was walking behind the Prophet ﷺ, setting his feet directly in the Prophet’s footsteps. And when he was lowered into his grave, a perfume like musk poured out from it. ‘So many people took dust from his grave,’ recalled another of his students, ‘that we had to place a wooden fence around it.’

Al-Khāṭib al-Baghdādi narrated that ‘Abd al-Wāhid ibn Abū Ḥāmid said: ‘I once saw the Prophet ﷺ, with a group of his companions, in a dream. He was standing, and I greeted him, and when he returned my greeting, I said: “Why are you standing here, O Messenger of Allah?” and he replied: “I am waiting for Muhammad ibn Ismā‘il.” A few days later the news of al-Bukhārī’s death reached me, and when I checked I realised that he had died at the moment when I beheld that dream.’

SHAYKH AL-ISLĀM IBN HAJAR AL-‘ASQALĀNĪ

Abū-Ḥaפעיל Ahmad ibn Hajar’s family originated in the district of Qābis in Tunisia. Some members of the family had settled in Palestine, which they left again when faced with the Crusader threat, but he himself was born in Egypt in 773, the son of the Shāfi‘i scholar and poet Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī and the learned and aristocratic Tujjār. Both died in his infancy, and he was later to praise his older sister, Sitt al-Rakb, for acting as his ‘second mother’. The two children became wards of the brother of his father’s first wife, Zākī al-Dīn al-Kharrūbī, who entered the young Ibn Hajar in a Qur’ānic school (kuttāb) when he reached five years of age. Here he excelled, learning Sūrat Maryam in a single day, and progressing to the memorisation of texts such as the Mūkhtasar of Ibn al-Hajīb on usūl. By the time he accompanied al-Kharrūbī to Makka at the age of 12, he was competent enough to lead the Tarāwīh prayers in the Holy City, where he spent much time studying and recalling God amid the pleasing simplicity of Kharrūbī’s house, the Bayt al-‘Aynā, whose windows looked directly upon the Black Stone. Two years later his protector died, and his education in Egypt was entrusted to the hadith scholar Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Qaṭṭān, who entered him in the courses given by the great Cairene scholars al-Bulqīnī (d.806) and Ibn Mulaqqin (d.804) in Shāfi‘ī fiqh, and of Zayn al-Dīn al-Īrāqī (d.806) in hadith, after which he was able to travel to Damascus and Jerusalem, where he studied under Shams al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī (d.809), Badr al-Dīn al-Bālṣi (d.803), and Fathīma bint al-Manjā al-Tanūkhiyya (d.803). After a further visit to Mecca and Madina, and to the Yemen, he returned to Egypt.

When he reached 25 he married the lively and brilliant Anas Khāṭūn, then 18 years of age. She was a hadith expert in her own right, holding ijāzas from Zayn al-Dīn al-Īrāqī, and she gave celebrated public lectures in the presence of her husband to crowds of ulema among whom was Imām al-Sakhāwī. After the marriage, Ibn Hajar moved into her house where he lived until his death. Many noted how she surrounded herself with the old, the poor and the physically handicapped, whom it was her privilege and pleasure to support. So widely did her reputation for sanctity extend that during her fifteen years of widowhood, which she devoted to good works, she received a proposal from Imām ‘Alām al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī, who considered that a marriage to a woman of such charity and baraka would be a source of great pride.

Once esconced in Egypt, Ibn Hajar taught in the Sufi lodge (khāniqāh) of Baybars for some twenty years, and then in the hadith college known as Dār al-Hadith al-Kāmilīyya. During these years, he served on occasion as the Shāfi‘ī chief justice of Egypt.

It was in Cairo that the Imām wrote some of the most thorough and beneficial books ever added to the library of Islamic civilization. Among these are al-Durar al-Kāmina (a biographical dictionary of leading figures of the eighth century), a commentary on the Forty Hadith of Imām al-Nawawī (a scholar for whom he had particular respect); Tahdīth al-Tahdīth (an abbreviation of Tahdīth al-Kāmil, the encyclopedia of hadith narrators by al-Mizzi), al-İṣba‘a fi tanwīz al-Sahāba (the most widely-used dictionary of Companies), and Bulāğ al-Maram min adillat al-abkām (on Shāfi‘ī fiqh).

Ibn Hajar commenced the enormous task of assembling his Fātih al-Bārī in 817.
It began as a series of formal dictations to his hadith students, after which he wrote it out in his own hand and circulated it section by section to his pupils, who would discuss it with him once a week. As the work progressed and its author's fame grew, the Islamic world took a close interest in the new work. In 833, Timur's son Shahrul was sent a letter to the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Barsbay requesting several gifts, including a copy of the *Fath*, and Ibn Hajar was able to send him the first three volumes. In 839 the request was repeated, and further volumes were sent, until, in the reign of al-Zahir Idris, the whole text was finished and a complete copy was dispatched. Similarly, the Moroccan sultan Abu Faris 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Hadi's requested a copy before its completion. When it was finished, in Rajab 842, a great celebration was held in an open place near Cairo, in the presence of the ulema, judges, and leading personages of Egypt. Ibn Hajar sat on a platform and read out the final pages of his work, and then poets recited eulogies and gold was distributed. It was, says one historian, 'the greatest celebration of the age in Egypt.'

Ibn Hajar died in 852. His funeral was attended by 'fifty thousand people', including the sultan and the caliph; 'even the Christians grieved.' He was remembered as a gentle man, short, slender, and white-bearded, a lover of chess and calligraphy, much inclined to charity; 'good to those who wronged him, and for giving to those he was able to punish.'

A lifetime's proximity to the hadith had imbued him with a deep love of the Messenger of God, as is shown nowhere more clearly than in the poetry assembled in his *Dhiwân*. A few lines will suffice to show this well:

By the gate of your generosity stands a sinner, who is mad with love,
O best of mankind in radiance of face and countenance!
Through you he seeks a means [tawassala], hoping for Allah's forgiveness of slips;
from fear of Him, his eyelids are wet with pouring tears.
Although his genealogy attributes him to a stone [hajar],
how often tears have flowed, sweet, pure and fresh!
Praise of you do not do you justice, but perhaps,
In eternity, its verses will be transformed into mansions.
My praise of you shall continue for as long as I live,
For I see nothing that could ever deflect me from your praise.

THE TRANSLATION

The following pages can hope to give no more than a fleeting taste of this literature. They have been selected from the Imam's commentary on Bukhari's *Kitab al-Ra'iq* (Section on 'Words that Soften the Heart'). The hadith and page numbers are shown before each translated selection. Not all chapter headings have been translated. Moreover, for obvious reasons, most of the Imam's intricate discussions of Arabic grammatical points have been omitted.

6412/1

Al-Makki ibn Ibrahim < 'Abdallah ibn Sa'id, who is Ibn Abi Hind < his father, that Ibn 'Abbás said: 'The Prophet < said: 'There are two blessings in which many people are cheated: health and leisure.'

Two blessings: a blessing [ni'ma] is 'a goodly state'; it is sometimes defined as 'a benefit conferred upon another out of kindness'.

The word cheating may be vocalised as *ghadn* or *ghaban*. According to al-Jawhari, the former refers to cheating in sales, and the latter to cheating in respect of opinions. On this basis both may be appropriate to this hadith, since the individual who fails to use these two blessings appropriately is cheated, both in that he has sold them at a ridiculously low price, and in that his opinion is not esteemed in consequence. According to Ibn Baṭṭal, the meaning of the hadith is that a person cannot be leisured until he is financially secure and sound of body; hence whoever experiences this should be careful not to be 'cheated' by abandoning the thanks due to Allah for His blessings, one aspect of such thanks taking the form of obeying His commands and prohibitions. Whoever is hackadaical in this is 'cheated'.

Many people: an indication that only a few are granted success in this. Ibn al-Jawzi remarks that a person may be healthy but not leisured because of his preoccupation with earning a living; conversely, he might be financially independent but in ill health: so when both come together, and he is overwhelmingly by sloth and hence abandons good acts, he is said to be 'cheated'. The upshot of this is that 'this world is the sowing-ground of the next', and the place where one trades for the sake of profit in the Afterlife. Hence whoever uses his leisure and health in the obedience of Allah is to be envied [maghabir], while whoever uses them in disobedience is cheated [maghba'in], since in due course his leisure must be succeeded by work, and his health by sickness or decrepitude.

Al-Tibi says: 'The Prophet said: 'Shall I point you to a trade which shall save you from a painful punishment?' [61:10] Consequently he must avoid obeying the *nafs* and responding to Satan, lest he lose his capital as well as his profit. His saying in which many people
are cheated resembles His saying: And scarce among My slaves are the thankful: [14:13] the "scarce" in this Qur'anic text is the reciprocal of the "many" in the hadith.

Al-Qādi Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabi states: 'There are different views as to which is the first blessing which may come upon a slave of God. Some say that it is faith, others that it is life, while still others hold it to be health. But the first of these is the preferable understanding, since it represents an unconditional blessing; while life and health are worldly blessings and are not real blessings at all unless accompanied by faith. In their absence, 'many people are cheated', that is to say, they lose all or part of their profit. Whoever goes along with his Soul that Commands Evil [al-nafs al-ammâra bi-l-sâ'], which eternally summons us to take our ease, and abandons any respect for the divinely-appointed boundaries and of consistent acts of obedience, has been cheated. Likewise if he is at leisure, for work might have served as an excuse for him.'

The life of this world is but games and play [...] enjoyment of delusion. [57:20] Ibn ʿAtiya said: 'What is meant by the life of this world [al-hayâ al-dunyâ] in this verse relates to conduct that is uniquely for this world; the verse does not apply to acts of obedience to Allah or to indispensable means of livelihood. The image invoked by this parable is that of a man, who is born, grows strong, gains money, children, and leadership, and then begins to decline, as his hair grows grey, and he weakens and becomes ill, and his health and money fall prey to various forms of affliction, until he dies, so that his body melts away and his property passes to others. Hence he resembles a piece of land on which rain falls, bringing up splendid and attractive plants, which then fade and dry out, and become dust blown away by the wind.'

According to al-Farā'î, the reciter may not pause after the words painful punishment [ʿadÎhûn shâhidâ], since the passage signifies that there shall be either painful punishment or forgiveness from Allah, and good-pleasure. However others prefer that one pause after painful punishment, since this will bring about an intense repulsion from the world; and one should then start afresh with forgiveness from Allah, and good-pleasure, emphasising that the punishment is for the unbelievers, while the latter blessings are for the people of faith.

After citing the hadith, Ghazâlî, in his Revival, writes as follows: 'Know that in their forgetfulness the people of dunyâ are like a group of people sailing upon a ship. When they come to an island, and disembark to relieve themselves, the captain warns them against returning late, and instructs them to remain only so long as is necessary, lest he raise anchor and set sail without them. Heeding this, some of them hurry back quickly, and hence find themselves able to sit in the best and most spacious parts of the ship. The others, however, behave in different ways. Some become entranced by gazing at the island's flowers and rippling streams, and its gems and precious metals, and then suddenly come to, and hasten back to the ship, and although they find spaces which are inferior to those occupied by those who preceded them, they are still safe. Others are so preoccupied by the flowers that they cannot bring themselves to leave them, so they pick and carry as many as they can. When they reach the ship they find only narrow, uncomfortable places, and are made still less comfortable by the fact that they cannot bring themselves to throw out what they have brought with them, although the flowers fade and dry soon enough. When the wind gets up, they are forced to throw their dry flowers overboard, and escape just with their own lives. Others, however, have penetrated the jungles and forgotten the captain's advice, so that when they hear his final call to depart, they rush back only to find that the ship has sailed without them, and they remain marooned with what they had collected, until they all perish. Still others are so obsessed with gathering good things that they are deaf even to the captain's cry. Of these, some are eaten by wild beasts, or are poisoned by snakes, while others wander aimlessly until they die of hunger. This class resembles the people who live for the world, who are preoccupied with its mortal pleasures, and live in heedlessness of their future. How repulsive is the man who claims to be intelligent and full of insight, and yet is deluded by gems, silver and gold, and by flowers and fruits, nothing of which will accompany him to his destination!'

6416/8

Al-Nawawî comments: ‘The meaning of the hadith is that you must not incline towards the world, or adopt it as your homeland, or tell yourself that you are to remain in it, or be any more attached to it than a foreigner outside his country.’

The hadith also shows that a teacher may touch the limbs of a pupil during instruction, and that someone giving advice may do likewise, for the sake of creating intimacy and attracting his attention.

6421/17
Muslim < Hishām < Qatâda < Anas ibn Mâlik ¶, who said: ‘Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: “The son of Adam grows old, and two things grow with him: love of money, and love of longevity.”'
Al-Qurtubi said: ‘The hadith establishes that the desire for a long life and abundant wealth is disliked [makenih].’

Another has said: ‘The reason why these two matters are singled out here is that the most beloved thing to a son of Adam is his own self, so that he longs for it to endure; while he loves money since that is one of the main factors in prolonging health.’

6424/18
Quatayba < Ya’qūb ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān < ‘Amr < Sa’īd al-Maqbūrī < Ābū Hurayra, who said that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘Allah the Exalted says: “There is no reward other than the Garden for My believing slave who, when a loved one is taken in death from him, then sincerely seeks Allah’s reward.”’

The expression a loved one extends beyond one’s family. Under this hadith is also to be placed the following account narrated by Alumad and al-Nasāʾī on the authority of Quatayba ibn Iyās: ‘A man once came with a son of his to the Prophet ﷺ, who asked him: “Do you love him?” to which he replied that he did. When the Prophet subsequently missed him, he enquired, “What became of so-and-so?” and they said: “O Messenger of Allah, his son died.” And he said, “Do you not wish that you should come to the gate of the Garden and find him waiting for you?” and they asked, “O Messenger of God! Is this for him alone, or does it apply to us all?” and he replied: “To you all.”’ Its isnād fulfills the condition of the sound narration (sahih), and it has been declared so by Ibn Hibbān and al-Ḥākim.

6446/53
Alumad ibn Yūnus < Ābū Bakr [Ibn ‘Ayyāsh] < Ābū Ḥāṣin < Ābū Ṣālih < Ābū Hurayra, that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘Richness does not lie in many possessions; richness is the richness of the soul.’

Ibn Baṭṭāl said: ‘The hadith means that copious wealth does not constitute real richness. For many people upon whom Allah has heaped property are unsatisfied with what they have been given, and struggle to acquire more, and pay no attention to where it comes from; and such people are in reality impoverished because of their craving. Real richness is richness of the soul, which takes place when one finds a satisfying sufficiency in what one has been given, and does not covet more or struggle to seek it. That is the person who is genuinely rich.

According to al-Qurtubi: ‘The meaning of the hadith is that the richness that is useful, great or praiseworthy, is the richness of the soul. When a person’s soul is detached and independent, it loses its covetousness, and thus becomes exalted and splendid, and acquires more favour, detachment, nobility, and praiseworthy-

ness than the soul of the wealthy person, who reached his position by impoverishing his soul through his covetousness, which plunged him into base matters and ignoble practices through the meanness of his aspiration and his avarice. The rich person thus finds himself condemned by many people, whose estimate of him is low, until he becomes the most despised and base of men.’

Richness of soul only comes about through richness of the heart, which must exist in absolute neediness of its Lord in all respects, realising that He is the Giver and Withholder, until he is satisfied with His decree and renders thanks for His blessings, and hurries back to Him to relieve his suffering. From this there develops the heart’s absolute need of its Lord, and the richness of soul which renders a believer independent of all that is not Him.

The chapter on the merit of poverty
It is said that al-Bukhārī uses this account, which follows the preceding discussion, to determine the point at issue with regard to preferring poverty over wealth, or vice versa, since the text richness is the richness of the soul provides a definition and a delimitation. All the texts that have been related in connection with the merit of wealth have to be interpreted in this sense: since whosoever is not rich of soul is to be criticised, how can he have superior merit? It is likewise with the texts which have come down to us in connection with the merit of poverty, since whosoever is not rich of soul is poor of soul: the condition from which the Prophet ﷺ sought refuge in Allah. The ‘poverty’ in dispute is the lack of money. As for the ‘poverty’ mentioned in Allah’s word O mankind; you are the poor before Allah, and Allah is the Rich, the Praiseworthy, [35:15] what is meant here is the creature’s abject need of the Creator, since for creatures, poverty is inescapably intrinsic to their essence; while Allah is the Rich, and stands in need of no-one.

‘Poverty’ [fāqr] is also applied to a technical matter known to the Sufis, and in connection with which their discourses are various. The upshot of their discussion is, as Ābū ʿĪsāʾ il-al-ʿAnṣārī put it: ‘to keep the hand detached from the dunyā, whether in its possession or its seeking, or its praise or its condemnation.’ Their explanation of this is that worldly things should not be in one’s heart, whether one’s hand has acquired them or not. This refers back to the previous hadith account which explains that richness is ‘richness of the soul’, and corresponds to the point we demonstrated in our commentary upon it. In this case, ‘poverty’ [fāqr] signifies need [fāqr] for money.

Ibn Baṭṭāl writes as follows on the question of assessing the comparative merit of wealth and poverty: ‘People have engaged in a lengthy argument here. Some regard poverty as preferable, using as their proof the hadiths in this and other chapters. Those who view wealth as better use other proofs, among them certain
hadiths cited prior to this chapter, such as the hadith of Sa'd in the section on Bequests which runs: ‘It is better to leave your heirs wealthy than to leave them as dependents,’ and the hadith of Ka'b al-Abbar in which he is asked for his advice about renouncing all one’s wealth, his reply being: ‘Keep some of your wealth, for that is better for you;’ and the hadith ‘The people of property have carried the rewards away’ which ends ‘That is God’s grace, which He gives to whom He will’. [57:21] [17:29] [According to Ibn Battahl, ‘The best view I have encountered on this question is the saying of Ahmad ibn Nasser al-Dinandi: ‘Poverty and wealth are two trials from Allah, by which He tests His slaves for patience and gratitude.’ All merit lies in sufficiency, as He has said: Do not render your hand chained to your neck, nor extend it fully.] [17:29]

Another scholar to have preferred the principle of sufficiency is al-Qurtubi: ‘Allah the Exalted combined in His Prophet all three states; poverty, wealth, and sufficiency. The former was the earliest of these conditions, and he discharged its concomitant duty of disciplining the self [riyadat al-nafs]; then the conquests were granted to him and he became wealthy, and he discharged the associated duty here also by giving it to the deserving; he himself confined himself to what was essential for his dependents, and this is “sufficiency”, his state when he died.’

Ibn al-Jawzi comments that ‘The warning against wealth is not directed against wealth as such, but insofar as wealth may obstruct people from Allah; so also vice versa. There are many wealthy people whose wealth has not distracted them from Allah, and many paupers whose poverty distracts them from Allah. But it is more usually the case that the poor man is further removed from danger, since the trial of wealth is stronger than the trial of poverty; and to be empty-handed is a form of protection.’

Abū ‘Ali al-Daqqaq, the shaykh of Abūl-Qasim al-Qushayri, held that the wealthy man is better than the pauper in that richness is an attribute of the Creator, and poverty an attribute of creatures, and the attributes of Allah are superior to those of His creatures. Many great scholars have approved this view; however it is arguable in view of the material supplied at the beginning of this chapter, from which it appears that this point in fact does not enter into the essence of the dispute, since the dispute does not pertain to the essence of the two qualities, but rather to their accidents.

6451/64

Abdallāh ibn Abi Shayba < Abū Usāma < Hishām < his father < ‘Āisha (may Allah be pleased with her), who said: ‘When the Prophet died, there was no meat on my shelf, only a little barley on a shelf of mine, from which I ate, until this continued for a period I considered excessive, and I weighed it, and it ran out.’

It appears that this was a special quality granted to ‘Āisha through the baraka of the Prophet. A similar occurrence is described in a hadith about the saddle-bag of Abū Hurayra which al-Tirmidhi considers ‘good’ (hasan), and which is also narrated by al-Bayhaqi in the Dailil al-Nubuwwa. Abū Hurayra said: ‘I once came to Allah’s Messenger with some dates, saying: “Pray for baraka in them for me!” He held them, and then prayed, after which he said: “Take them, and put them in a saddle-bag. When you want to take some out, insert your hand, but do not stir them.” When on the path of Allah [on jihād] I carried a particular load, and we would eat, and give dates to others, while the saddle-bag remained hung from my hips constantly. When ‘Uthmān was killed, this came to an end.’

From the hadith it can be learned that whoever is given some form of provision, or is honoured with a miracle [karāmāt], or receives a divine subtlety in any matter, must constantly give thanks, and recognise that the gift is from Allah, and not attempt to change that condition. And Allah knows best.

6452/65

‘Umar ibn Dharr < Mujahid, that Abū Hurayra used to say: ‘Allah! He besides Whom there is no other god! I used to press my liver to the ground out of hunger, and used to bind a stone against my stomach out of hunger. One day when I was sitting in their roadway, near their exit-place, Abū Bakr passed by, I asked him about a verse in Allah’s Book, my only reason for asking him being that he might give me something to take away from my hunger. He went on, however, without doing so. Then ‘Umar passed by me, and I asked him about a verse in Allah’s Book, my only reason for asking him again being that he might give me something to remove my hunger. He went on, however, without doing so. Then Abūl-Qasim passed by. When he saw me he smiled, and knew what was in my soul and on my face. Then he said: “Abū Hīrī!” and I replied: “At your service, Messenger of God!” and he said: “Join me!” So I followed him as he passed on his way, and he entered [his house]. When I asked leave to enter, he admitted me, and we went in; whereupon he found some milk in a cup. “Where is this milk from?” he enquired, and they told him, “Such-and-such a man, or such-and-such a woman, gave it to you.” He said, “Abū Hīrī!” and I replied, “At your service, Messenger of God!” He told me, “Go to the People of the Veranda,” and called them to me.” The People of the Veranda were the guests of Islam, having refuge in no family, wealth, or any person. When a donation of charity [sadaqa] came to him, he would send it to them and take none of it himself. When a gift [hadīyya] came to him, however, he would send for them, partake in it himself, and share it with them. This troubled me, and I asked what might remain of this milk after it had been distributed among the People of the Veranda, when my own need to drink from it and thus regain my strength was more urgent. But he had given me a command, and it was my responsibility to give it to them. What
could remain to me of that milk? Because there is no alternative to obeying God and His Messenger ﷺ, however, I went to invite them, whereupon they came, asking permission to enter, which was granted them, and they took their seats around the house. He said: “Abü Hirr!” to which I replied, “At your service, O Messenger of God!” and he told me to take it and give it to them. So I picked it up and began to pass it around them. One man would drink until his thirst was quenched, after which he would return the cup to me so that I might pass it to the next man, who also drank until he was quenched, until finally, with everyone satisfied, it reached the Prophet ﷺ, who took it, placed it upon his hand, smiled at me, and then said: “Abü Hirr!” I replied, “At your service, Messenger of God!” and he said: “You and I remain.” “That is true,” I said, and he told me to sit and drink. I did so, but he told me again to drink, and I drank again, but he continued to tell me to drink until I said: “No, by the One Who sent you with the truth, I can drink no more.” At this he said: “Show it to me,” and I gave him the cup. Praising God, he said, “In the name of God,” and drank what remained.

To bind a stone [hajar] against my stomach. According to al-Khaṭṭābī: ‘This has seemed problematic to some, who have imagined that there is an error in the text. On their view the correct reading is hujaz, which would mean “belts”. But whoever has lived in the Hijāz and is familiar with their usages knows that the word hujar means “a stone”. They were frequently afflicted by hunger, and, when their empty stomachs prevented them from standing up straight, they would take smooth stones the size of a hand, or somewhat larger, and tie them to their stomachs with a tight band, enabling them to stand upright. Pressing the liver to the ground refers to something similar.’

That he would give me something to take away my hunger: in the reading of Kusaymâyani: ‘that he would make me follow him.’ This is accepted by most of the narrators of the text.

It may be that the reason why Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were excused is that they took Abū Hurayra’s question at face value. Alternatively, they may have understood what he wanted, but did not have at that time any food to give him.

he smiled, and knew what was in my soul: Abū Hurayra intuited from his smile that he knew his plight, since a smile can sometimes be the result of pleasure, and at other times be a means of bringing solace and a sense of familiarity to the one at whom one smiles. The second interpretation is stronger here.

Abū Hirr: a form of his name which renders the feminine masculine, and the diminutive normative, since his agnomen [kunya] was originally Abū Hurayra, indicating the feminine diminutive of hirra.

The People of the Veranda were the guests of Islam: an indication that Abū Hurayra was himself one of them.

or any person: including friends as well as relatives. It is narrated in a hadīth from Tālha ibn ‘Amr reported by Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Hibban and al-Hākim that ‘whenever a man came to the Prophet ﷺ, he would stay with an acquaintance if he had one, otherwise he would stay with the People of the Veranda.’

and share it with them: The Prophet ﷺ accepted gifts, but not charity [sadaqa]. I was to be the one to give it to them: as though this were a custom, since he kept company constantly with the Prophet ﷺ, and served him. It has already been seen in a hadīth from Tālha ibn ‘Ubaydillah that ‘Abū Hurayra was destitute [miskin], with neither family nor money, and would go around with the Prophet ﷺ wherever he went.’ (Narrated by al-Bukhārī in his Tārīkh, 127)

there is no alternative to obeying God and His Messenger: because of His word: Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God. [4:80]

they took their seats around the house: that is, each sat in the place that was most appropriate for him. I have not discovered their number at that time, although it has already been related in the beginning of the Book of Prayer on the authority of Abū Hurayra that ‘I saw seventy of the People of the Veranda,’ a phrase which implies that there were in fact more than seventy. Abū Nu‘aym in his Hilya has collected their names, which number approximately one hundred; however much of this is not firmly established, as Abū Nu‘aym himself indicates in the following way: ‘The number of the People of the Veranda varied. Sometimes they would be many because they had gathered together, and at other times they would be few because they had dispersed either for a military expedition, or a journey, or to seek a jumāt.’ In his ‘Avānif, al-Suhrawardi states that they were four hundred.27 who took it: Rawḥ adds: ‘and something was left over in it.’

smiled: as though he intuited [tapharsa] the belief of Abū Hurayra that no milk would be left.21

he praised God, and said, “In the name of God”: he praised God for having bestowed the baraka which was in the milk, and said ‘in the name of God’ because he was about to drink.

and drank what remained: in the version of Rawḥ: ‘and drank of what remained’, indicating that there was still some left over, perhaps for the others in the house, if any were present.

In addition to the above lessons, the hadith teaches us the following: [1] that it is preferable to drink while seated; [2] that the one who serves should pass the vessel to each guest in turn, and take it back from him before serving the next guest, rather than obliging the guests to pass it round themselves, since that would lower the rank of the guest; [3] it reveals a tremendous miracle, many comparable examples of which have already been cited in the chapter on the Signs of Prophethood, which document the multiplication of food and drink through his baraka ﷺ; [4] it
shows that satiety is lawful, given the words of Abū Hurayra: 'I can drink no more', which the Prophet accepted (although it is possible that the permissibility here was restricted specifically to this event, given the hasan hadith of Ibn 'Umar related by al-Tirmidhi which runs: 'On the Day of Arising, the hungriest shall be those who were most often satiated in this world'); [3] the principle that concealing one's need and hinting at it is preferable to announcing it explicitly; [6] the noble generosity of the Prophet &s, who put others before himself; [7] a reminder of the straitened circumstances of the Companions, and the merit of Abū Hurayra, who abstained from proclaiming his request, contenting himself with hinting at it instead; [8] Abū Hurayra's preference for obeying the Prophet &s over the desire of his nafs, despite his intense need; [9] the merit of the People of the Veranda; [10] that the invited guest may not enter his host's house before asking permission; [11] that every guest should sit in the place that is most appropriate for him; [12] an indication of the closeness of Abū Bakr and 'Umar to the Messenger &s; [13] that a great man may call his servant by his agnomen; [14] that it is permissible to shorten someone's name, in the manner explained; [15] that one may act upon intuition [frisād]; [16] that someone who is being called may respond with the word Labbayk [At your service!]; [17] that a servant should seek permission to enter of the one he serves when he enters his house; [18] a man's asking about what is new in his house; [19] the Prophet's acceptance of gifts, and that he consumed part of them but would prefer the poor, and that he abstained from charity [sadaqā], which he would distribute to the deserving; [20] that the one who gives others to drink should be the last one to drink, with the exception of the host, who drinks after him; [21] that one should praise Allah for blessings, and name Him before drinking.

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‘Uthmān [ibn Abī Shayba] < Jarīt < Mansūr < Ibrāhīm < al-Aswad, that ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'The family of Muhammad &s never ate their fill of wheat foods for three consecutive nights from the time he came to Madina until his death.'

This is what the Messenger &s preferred, although he was in a position to enjoy the dunyā expansively, as Tirmidhi narrates on the authority of Abū Umāma: 'My Lord offered to turn the valley-floor of Makka into gold for me, and I said, "No, my Lord; but I shall be filled one day, and go hungry the next, so that when I am hungry I may humble myself to You in petition, and when I am filled, I render You thanks.'

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Chapter on Hope with Fear

Looking in hope should not cut one off from fear, and vice versa, lest the former lead one into a Divine ruse, and the latter into despair. 'Hope' [raja'] means that someone guilty of a shortcoming should have a good opinion of what Allah will do, and hope that He will erase his sin; likewise in the case of someone who has carried out an obedient act which he hopes will be accepted. A man who, without sorrowing or ceasing, plunges into disobedience hoping not to be taken to task, is deceived.

Admirable is the saying of Abū 'Uthmān al-Hirī: 'It is a sign of felicity that you should obey God, and fear that your action will not be accepted; and it is a sign of damnation that you should rebel against Him and hope to be saved.'

It is said that fear is the preferable state for a person who is healthy, and that hope is preferable for someone who is sick. Some say that on one's deathbed one should limit oneself to hoping alone, since this entails absolute neediness of Allah, as in the hadith which runs: 'Let none of you die without harbouring a good opinion of Allah.' But others say that fear is never completely to be renounced, since no-one should be entirely convinced that he is safe. This is supported by the hadith which al-Tirmidhi narrates on the authority of Anas, that the Prophet &s once came in upon a young man who was dying, and asked: 'How are you?', to which the man replied: 'My hope is in Allah, and my fear is for my sins.' Allah's Messenger &s said: 'These two things never conjoin in the heart of a slave of Allah in this condition without Allah giving him what he hopes for, and saving him from what he fears.'

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Chapter: Seclusion gives the Believer Rest from Bad Company

Ibn al-Mubarak relates that 'Umar said: 'Take your share of seclusion.'

How admirable is the statement of al-Junayd, may Allah grant benefit through his baraka: 'The endurance of seclusion is easier than forced politeness with company.'

Al-Khaṭṭābī said: 'There would be great good in seclusion even were it to bring nothing more than safety from backbiting and from seeing evils which one cannot remove.'

6495/126

Abū Nu‘aym < al-Mājishūn < 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abī Sa‘īd < his father < that he heard Abū Sa‘īd saying: 'I heard the Prophet &s say: "There shall come upon the people a time when a Muslim's best wealth will be some sheep with which he
follows the mountain gorges and the places of rain, fleeing with his religion from trials [fitan].”

Al-Khaṭṭābī records that ‘seclusion and socialising vary depending on their entailments. The proof-texts which have come down urging people to come together are to be interpreted as applying to gatherings for the sake of obedience to Allah, the imāms, and religious matters; and vice-versa.’ As for physical company and separation, it is preferable for whoever knows how to be self-sufficient in his livelihood and in preserving his religion to retreat from keeping the company of other people, on condition that he attend the prayer in congregation, greet Muslims with the salām, and uphold the rights of other Muslims in such matters as visiting the sick and attending funerals. What is required is to renounce superfluous association with others, since that leads to a preoccupation of the mind and wastes time that could be spent in more important things. Meeting with others should be treated like one’s need for lunch and supper: so that one limits oneself to what is necessary. This will bring more peace to body and heart alike.’

Al-Qushayrī states in his Risāla: ‘The way of the man who chooses seclusion is that he should view the people as being thereby secured from his own evil, not the other way around. For the former attitude leads to a belittling of one’s nafs, which is a trait of the humble, while the latter impels one to view oneself as superior, and hence breeds arrogance.’

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Chapter: Eyeservice and Love of Repute

‘Eyeservice’ [riyā] is to display one’s service to Allah so that others may behold it and praise the one who does it. ‘Love of Repute’ [ṣum’ā] is similar to eyeservice, except that it relates to the sense of hearing, while eyeservice pertains to vision.

Al-Ghazālī said: ‘It means to seek a position in people’s hearts by making a show of praiseworthy traits.’

Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām said: ‘Eyeservice is to act for other than Allah, while love of repute is to hide one’s works which are for Allah, but then to speak of them to others.’

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Chapter: The one who struggles against his nafs, for the obedience of Allah, the Glorious and Majestic

Struggle [mujāhada] means restraining the nafs from its desire for any activity other than ibhāda.

Ibn Baṭṭāl said: ‘A man’s struggle [jihād] against himself is the most perfect jihād. Allah the Exalted has said: As for he who fears the standing before his Lord, and denies his self its passion … [79:40] It comes about by restraining the nafs from sins, from dubious matters, and from much indulgence in permissible pleasures.’

Al-Qushayrī relates from his shaykh, Abū ‘Ali al-Daqqāq: ‘Whoever is not a person of mujāhada at the beginning, will never encounter the perfume of this Path.’

Abū ‘Amr ibn Bujayd said: ‘Whoever finds his religion to be precious for him, will pay little heed to his nafs.’

Al-Qushayrī said: ‘The basis of struggling with the nafs is to weaken it from familiar things, and to force it away from its whims. The nafs has two qualities: plunging into pleasures, and refraining from acts of obedience. Mujāhada, therefore, is made against these tendencies.’

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Chapter: Humility

6501/136

Mālik ibn Iṣmā‘īl < Zuhayr < Humayd < that Anas Ṣ reported that the Prophet ﷺ had a camel called al-‘Adbā‘, which was faster than any other, until a bedouin came on a fast camel and went even faster than it. The Muslims were taken aback by this, saying, ‘Al-‘Adbā‘ has been beaten in a race!’ but Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘It is upon Allah never to raise upsomthing in the world without lowering it.’

Ibn Baṭṭāl said: ‘This hadith reveals [1] the baseness of the world in God’s sight; [2] the duty of renouncing boasting and pride; [3] that everything of little significance is to be considered base; [4] hence it is the duty of every intelligent person to renounce it, and to renounce much competition in seeking it.’

Al-Ṭabarī said: ‘Humbleness is in one’s worldly as well as religious interest. For if people were to be humble in this world, rancour would vanish, and they would find rest from the exhaustion which ensues from boasting and pride.’

The hadith also reveals [5] the excellent character of the Prophet ﷺ, and his humbleness when a bedouin was faster than him in a race; [6] the permisibility of racing.

6502/136

Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Karāma < Khālid ibn Mukhllad < Sulaymān ibn Bilāl < Shārīk ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Nīm, that Abū Hurayra said: ‘Allah’s Messenger said: “Allah the Exalted has said: ‘Whoever harms a friend [wali] of Mine, I declare war on him. My slave draws near to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him. And My slave continues to draw nearer to Me with optional acts of devotion [nawfīḥ] until I love him. And when I love him, I am his ear with which he hears, his eye with which he sees, his
hand with which he strikes, and his foot on which he walks. If he asks Me, I surely bestow it upon him, and if he asks My protection, I surely grant it to him. I do not hesitate in anything which I am to do more than in taking the soul of the believer; he dislikes death, and I dislike to bring him harm.”

Allah the Exalted has said: Al-Kirmānī remarks that this is a Hadith Qudā. In some narrations the Prophet ﷺ tells this hadith from Allah the Almighty through Gabriel. This is in the hadith of Anas.

Whoever harms a friend [waḥf] of Mine, I declare war on him: In a nāwūfī narration from Wahh ibn Munabbīh: ‘Whoever degrades My believing waḥf, is taking Me on in battle.’

Al-Fākahānī said: ‘This is a powerful threat, since Allah destroys whoever He makes war upon. It is an eloquent metaphor, since whoever dislikes the one whom Allah loves, disobeys Him, and whoever disobeys Him is hostile to Him, and whoever is hostile to Him, He destroys utterly. And if this is established in the case of hostility, then it is also established that in the case of friendship and loyalty to Allah: whoever is the loyal friend of Allah’s friends, will be honoured by Him’.

Al-Tūfī said: ‘The enemy of Allah’s friend is the enemy of Allah, so whoever is hostile to him is as it were making war upon him, and whoever makes war upon him is as it were making war upon Allah.’

My slave draws near to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him. From this we learn that the discharge of obligatory acts [fārā’id] is the most beloved of acts in the sight of Allah.

Al-Tufī said: ‘The command to observe the fārā’id is absolute, and punishment results from abandoning them, in contrast to nāfīla actions. However if nāfīla acts accompany the fārā’id, then the fārā’id are more perfect. This is why they are more beloved to Allah, and more effective in bringing one close to Him. Moreover, the fard action is like a root and a foundation, while a nāfīla act is like a branch or a building. When one performs the obligations in the required way, and obeys the commandments and respects the Commander, and magnifies Him through obedience, and manifesting the majesty of Lordship and the baseness of slavehood, then using this to draw close is the greatest of actions. Someone who carries out the fard may be doing so out of fear of punishment, while the person who practices the nāwūfī is doing so only because of his preference for service. Hence he is rewarded with love, which is the greatest aspiration of the person who seeks Divine proximity through his acts of service.’

And My slave continues to draw nearer to Me with optional acts of devotion [nāwūfīl] until I love him. There appears to be a problem in reconciling this to the previous statement. Given that the fārā’id are the most beloved of works to Allah, how can they themselves not bring His love? The answer is that what is meant by nāwūfīl is that totality of practices which includes the fārā’id, and perfec...
imâms of the Path, Abû 'Uthmân al-Ḥārîrî, said: ‘Its meaning is that I will be swifter in fulfilling his needs than his own hearing, his sight, his hand, and his foot.’ Some of the later Sufis apply it to the spiritual degrees [maqâ'mîn] of Annihilation and Obliteration, which they mention, these being the utmost point beyond which is the void. In this station, the Muslim is established by God’s establishing him, he loves through God’s love for him, he sees through His sight of him, without there remaining with him anything to which a name could be attached, or which relates to any matter, or can be characterised by any predicate. The meaning of this discourse is that he witnesses Allah’s establishment of him so that he is established, Allah’s love of him so that he loves Him, and His sight of him so that he comes, looking to Him with his heart.

In none of these interpretations is there any scope for the believers in itthâd, or those who believe in absolute Unity, since he says, in the remainder of the hadith: ‘If he asks Me [...]’ which is like an explicit refutation of them.

The hadith reveals [1] the great value of the salât-prayer, which leads to Allah’s love for His slave by which he draws near to Him, since it is the place of intimate discourse. In a sound hadith narrated by al-Nâṣâ’î: ‘the coolness of my eye is in prayer.’

Holding to this hadith, some ignoramuses of the ‘people of manifestation and discipline’ say: ‘When the heart is protected with Allah, its passing notions are infallible.’ But this has been refuted by the correct followers of the Way, who comment: ‘None of that should be taken seriously unless it conforms to the Book and the Sunna; and infallibility [‘ismâ] is for the Prophets, and any other person may err’.

Al-Ṭâfîfî said: ‘This hadith is one of the foundations of the path of wayfaring [ṣulâkî] to Allah, and of attaining knowledge [ma'rîjâ] and love of Him. Inner duties constitute ‘faith’ [imânîn], and outward duties constitute îslâmîn, while îhsân [spiritual excellence] occurs when they are combined, as implied in the Hadith of Gabriel. Îhsân comprises the stations [maqâ'mîn] of the Wayfarers [ṣulâkîn], including renunciation [zuhdîn], sincerity [ikhlâsîn], vigilance [muraqâbîn], and others. [2]

The hadith also reveals [2] the fact that the prayers [du'a'] of whoever performs his duties and draws close through optional devotions will not be rejected, due to the existence of this truthful promise which is supported by an oath. The explanation of why responses to prayers may come slowly has been given above.

The hadith also explains [3] that however high the degrees attained by a slave of God, to the extent that he becomes God’s beloved, he never ceases to petition Him, due to his humility and manifest slavehood [‘ubâdîyâ].

I do not hesitate in anything which I am to do more than in taking the soul of the believer. The [Hilyat al-audâ],[4] in its biography of Wahh ibn Mundhîbîn, narrates: ‘I find in the books of the Prophets that Allah the Exalted says: “I hesitate to take the spirit of the believer more than I hesitate to do any other thing.”’

Al-Khaṭṭâbî writes: ‘Hesitation [tarâddûd] is not possible for Allah. However it is possible that its meaning is that “I do not send My messengers repeatedly with regard to something which I will do, as often as I send them for the soul of the believer,” as in the story of Mûsâ’s slapping the eye of the Angel of Death, and his coming repeatedly [tarâddûd] to him.’ The real sense is Allah’s gentleness for His slave.

Al-Kalâbîdî, in brief, that the reflexive form of the root is here used to indicate a transitive meaning, that is to say, that the word tarâddûd [hesitation] is employed to give the sense of tarâdûd [repeating]. The repetition conforms to the successive states in which the slave finds himself, such as exhaustion, until he reaches the stage at which his love for life is transformed into a love for death, at which point Allah takes his soul. Kalâbîdî states that ‘Allah may create in the heart of His slave such yearning for Him and love for the encounter with Him that he not only fails to dislike death, but actually longs for it. Hence He states that he hates death, and that this brings him harm, and that because Allah hates to bring him harm He banishes from him the hatred of death by means of the states which He sends upon him. Hence when death comes to him, he prefers and desires it.’

Ibn al-Jawzi attributes the ‘hesitation’ to the angels which take the spirit; so that Allah attributes the process to himself because their hesitation is itself by His command. It may be, he says, that the angels’ hesitation is occasioned by their kindness towards him, so that the angel, beholding the believer’s great rank and utility in the world, so respects him that he delays taking his soul; but when the Lord’s command is given, he has no choice but to obey.

A fourth interpretation is that the expression is framed in the species of language which we understand, although the Lord transcends what it implies; rather as He says ‘When he comes to Me walking, I come to him running.’ [5] It is like the hesitation that one of us feels when purposing to smack his son to teach him manners: our love for the child may cause us to hesitate in a way that would be foreign to the schoolmaster. Hence ‘hesitation’ is used here to help us to understand the
reality of Allah’s love for His friend.

Al-Kirmāni mentions a fifth interpretation, which is that the believer’s soul is taken slowly and deliberately, in contrast to all other matters, which happen suddenly upon the Divine command: ‘Bel!’.

he dislikes death, and I dislike to bring him harm. In his Kitāb al-Zuhd, al-Bayhaqi attributes the following to al-Junayd, the Master of the Group:10 ‘What He dislikes here is the difficulty and suffering associated with death which the believer must experience. The meaning is not ‘I dislike that he should die’, since death brings him to Allah’s mercy and forgiveness.’ Another of them expressed this as follows: ‘death is a fated decree, and takes the form of the separation of the spirit from the body, something which rarely occurs without very severe pain, as is indicated by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ who, when questioned on his deathbed, replied that he felt as though he was breathing through the eye of a needle, and as though the branch of a thorn-bush was being dragged through the length of his body. Ka‘b relates that ‘Umar once asked him about death, and he described it in similar terms. Now, since death has this attribute, and since Allah dislikes harming a believer, he uses the word ‘dislike’ here.

It is also possible that the bringing of harm refers to the extension of one’s lifetime, since that leads to the ‘worst time of life’ [16:70], the decay of one’s created form, and a decline to the lowest condition.

Shaykh Abu’l-Fadl ibn ‘Ata‘ said: ‘This hadith demonstrates the enormous worth of the wali, since his Lord’s choice has replaced his own choice, and His support for him has supplant’d his support for himself, and he has departed from his own power and ability through his sincere reliance [tawakkul].’ He also remarked: ‘It also demonstrates that a person who harms a wali but does not then suffer an immediate misfortune in his person, his property or his family, must not be considered safe from Allah’s revenge. For his misfortune could occur in some other, even more dire matter, such as a misfortune in his religion.’ He also said: ‘His statement that which I have made obligatory upon him includes outward (zāhir) obligations of commission, such as the prayer, zakāt, and other forms of worship, and also obligations of omission, such as fornication, murder, and other forbidden acts. It also includes inward (ḥātim) obligations, such as knowing Allah (‘ilm bi ‘Lāh), love and fear of Him, and reliance upon Him. These also subdivide into duties of commission and of omission.’ He also said: ‘Furthermore, the hadith contains an indication that the wali is informed of hidden matters [mughhayyabah], through the insight that Allah ta‘āla has given him. This is not obstructed by the apparent meaning of His word, Knower of the Unseen [ghayb], so no-one is informed over His unseen, save the messengers who enjoy His good-pleasure [72:27], for this passage does not exclude the inclusion of some of his followers inasmuch as they are his followers, just as we correctly say: “Only the minister visited the king today”, when it is well-known that some of the minister’s servants accompanied him’.37

Note: It is not clear why this hadith has been included in the chapter on humility. Al-Duwādī records that ‘this hadith has nothing to do with the subject of humility,’ while another has written that ‘It would have been more appropriate to have incorporated it into the previous chapter, which concerns disciplining the self. Al-Bayhaqi included it in a chapter which he called ‘Effort in Obedience and Constant Servitude’.

In defence of al-Bukhārī, the following points have been noted. Firstly, there is al-Kirmāni’s observation that drawing close to Allah through optional acts of devotion can only take place where there is absolute humility and reliance on Allah. Secondly, Kirmāni also notes that some hold that the quality is implicit as a response to His words, ‘I become his hearing’, and His ‘hesitation’. He also has a third explanation. A fourth occurs to me, which is as follows. Humility is necessarily implied by His words, ‘Whoever harms a friend of Mine,’ since this warns us against harming Allah’s friends, and requires us to be their ally; and being loyal to all Allah’s awliyā’ is only possible when there is absolute humility, since among them there are dusty, wild-haired ones, to whom ordinary people pay no attention. There are a number of sound hadiths which encourage humility, but none which conforms to his conditions of reliability, so in this chapter he included these two hadiths instead. Among the other hadiths are: ‘Allah the Exalted has revealed to me that you should be humble, until not one of you boasts that he is superior to anyone,’ a hadith which is narrated by Muslim, Abū Dāād and others. There is also the prophetic hadith narrated by Abū Hurayra which runs: ‘Nobody humbles himself before Allah without being exalted by Him,’ which is also in Muslim and Tirmidhī.

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Sa‘d ibn Abī Maryam < Abū Ghassān < Abū Ḥāzim < Sahl narrated that ‘God’s Messenger ﷺ said: “My mission and the Hour are like these two.” He pointed with his two fingers, and stretched them out.’

The Hour: the Day of Arising. Its prime meaning is ‘a period of time’, and in the usage of the horologists it denotes one twenty-fourth part of a night and day. Like these two. Ibn al-Tin said: ‘There is disagreement on the meaning of this. Some say that it means, ‘Like the length that is between the forefinger and the middle finger’, while others say that the meaning is that there shall be no prophet between him and the Hour. Al-Qurtubi writes: ‘The purport of the hadith is to show the imminence of the Hour’. According to al-Baydawī: ‘Its meaning is that the precedence of his mission over the arrival of the Hour is in proportion to the
excess length of one finger over the other. ’ It is also said that that it means that his
summons will continue without interruption, just as there is no space between the
two fingers.

According to al-Qurtubi in his Tadžkira: 19 ‘The hadith means that the Hour
will come soon. There is no contradiction between this and his statement in
another hadith that “the one asked knows no more than the questioner”, for the
meaning of the present hadith is that there shall be no prophet between him and the
Hour, just as there is no finger between the forefinger and the middle finger. This
awareness does not entail knowledge of its exact time, it simply indicates its
imminence, and that its preconditions have come in sequence, as He says: Its pre-
conditions have come [47:18], and as al-Dahākî commented: “the first of its
preconditions is the mission of Muhammad عليه السلام.” The wisdom behind the exis-
tence of preconditions is that the needless should be woken up and urged to
repent and make ready.’

‘Iyād said: ‘Some have attempted to interpret this as meaning that the differ-
ence between the length of the two fingers corresponds to the remaining life of
the world, and that the world’s total age is seven thousand years. They ground this
in narratives which are not sound.’

My own view is that there is no need to claim that the clause is not conditional.
In the section on Monotheism [ta'whîd] we will discuss a Prophetic hadith narrated
by Abû Hurayra which runs: ‘Allah, Great and Glorious, says: “When My
slave loves to meet Me, I love to meet him”.’ Therefore the ‘whosoever’ in the
hadith presently under discussion must be conditional.

Whosoever dislikes meeting Allah, Allah dislikes meeting him. Al-Mazûrî said:
“When Allah decrees a man’s death, he must necessarily die, even should he
dislike meeting Him. If Allah disliked that he should die, he would not die.
Hence the hadith is to be interpreted as meaning that Allah (sublime is He!) dis-
likes forgiving him, and wishes to distance him from His mercy.’

‘A’isha, or another of his wives. In the copies of Bukhârî this doubt is specified.
However Sa’d ibn Hishâm, in his own narration from ‘A’isha, states that it was
definitely ‘A’isha who made this statement.

Al-Khaṭṭābî said: ‘Meeting takes several forms. One of these is “vision”.
Another is “resurrection”, as in His saying: Those who cried lies to the meeting with Us
[6:31]. Another is “death”, as when He says: Whoever hopes for the meeting with his
Lord - for verily the term of Allah is coming [29:5], and when He says: Say: the death
from which you flee shall surely meet you [62:8].’

Ibn al-Athîr says in the Nihâya: ‘What is meant by meeting Allah here is the
voyage to the other world and questioning for what is with Allah. The reference is
to death itself, since everyone dislikes death. So whoever renounces the
world and despises it, loves the meeting with Allah; but whoever prefers it and
inclines towards it, dislikes the meeting with Him, since he will reach that meet-
ing only through death.’

Imâm [Abû ’Ubâyda] al-Qâsim ibn Salâm said: ‘In my view this does not indi-
cate the dislike of death and its agonies, since virtually everyone will have to
confront these. What is reproached in the hadith is the preference for the world and
inclination towards it, and disliking the journey to Allah and the other world.
This is made clear by Allah’s reproach of a people who loved this world, where
He speaks of those who do not hope for the meeting with Us, and are satisfied with the life
of this world, and are secure in it. [10:7]

Al-Nawawî has said: ‘The hadith means that the love and the dislike which are
religiously valid are the states which appear in one’s death throes at the time when
repentance is no longer accepted, for at that time the true situation is unveiled to
the dying person and his destination is made manifest to him.’

This hadith contains benefits other than the above. [1] The people of goodness
are mentioned first, because of their distinction, despite the fact that the evildoers
are more numerous. [2] Requital is akin to the act, so that He requites love with
love, and dislike with dislike. [3] The believers will look upon their Lord in the
next world (although this could be disputed, since ‘meeting’ is a more general

6507/156

Hajjâj: < Hâmmân < Qatâda < Anas < 'Ubâda ibn al-Šâmit: “Allah’s Messenger عليه السلام said: ‘Whosoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him, and whoso-
ever dislikes meeting Allah, Allah dislikes meeting him.’ ‘A’isha, or another of his
wives, said: “We dislike death!” And he replied, “It is not like that; but the believ-
er, when death attends him, is given the glad news of Allah’s good-pleasure and
honouring, so that there is nothing which is more beloved to him than that which
lies before him, so he loves to meet Allah, and Allah loves to meet him. And the
disbeliever, when death attends him, is given tidings of Allah’s punishment and
torment, so that there is nothing which is more hateful to him than that which lies
before him. He dislikes meeting Allah, and Allah dislikes meeting him.”’

The ulama hold that Allah’s love for His slave consists in His willing good for
him, guiding him to Him, and blessing him. His dislike for His slave entails the
opposite.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr and others relate that whosoever [man] is here not a condi-
tional particle, but a simple subject. The meaning is therefore not that Allah’s love
for His slave is caused by His slave’s love for him (and likewise with the dislike),
but is a description of the state of the two groups in themselves in the sight of their
Lord. The meaning is that the one who loves the meeting with Allah is the one
whom Allah loves to meet (and likewise in the case of dislike).’
term than ‘beholding’, and it is remotely possible that the meeting here implies only a meeting with Allah’s reward). [4] When signs of happiness appear upon the man nearing death this is an indication that he has been given good news; and vice versa. [5] Loving the meeting with Allah is not obstructed by the prohibition on longing for death, for the former is possible without the latter.

One commentator has mentioned that Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAmr asked the Angel of Death, who had come to take his spirit: ‘Have you ever seen a friend [kiyādī] slay his friend?’ And Allah the Exalted inspired the angel to ask him: ‘Have you ever seen a friend who dislikes to meet his friend?’ And he replied, ‘O Angel of Death, now take my spirit!’

6512/164
Ismāʿīl < Mālik < Muhammad ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥalīl < Maʿbad ibn Kaʿb ibn Mālik < Abu Qatada ibn Rabīʿ ibn ʿAṣār, that a funeral once passed by Allah’s Messenger ﷺ, who said: ‘He has found rest, or others have found rest from him.’ They said, ‘O Messenger of God, how is that?’ and he replied: ‘The believing slave finds rest in Allah’s mercy from the fatigue and misfortunes of the world, while the absence of the corrupt slave brings rest to humanity, the land, the trees and the animals.’

According to Ibn al-Tin: ‘It is possible that the believing slave denotes only the God fearing, or it may apply to every believer, while the corrupt may refer to the unbeliever, or to the sinner.’

Al-Dāwūd said: ‘The slaves find rest from him because of the detestable things he used to do. If they reproached him, he would harm them, and if they let him be, they would incur a sin.’ The land finds rest from the sins he used to commit, since sins are a cause of drought, which destroys livestock and family.

Al-Bājī qualified Al-Dāwūd’s first point by saying that when someone is afflicted by his harm he does not sin if he lets him be, for he has reproached him with his heart, or he may reproach him in a way which does not cause him to harm one.

It is possible that the slaves ‘finding rest’ from him refers to the oppression which he had inflicted upon them, and that the land finds rest from him because of unjust appropriation of it, and obstruction of its rights, and its improper use. The animals find rest because he used to exhaust them unlawfully. And Allah knows best.

6515/166
Abu l-Nuʿmān < Hammād ibn ʿAzīd < Ayyūb < ʿAbī ʿUmar: God’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘When one of you dies he is shown his place by morning and evening: either the Fire or the Garden, and it will be said: “This is your place until you are resurrected unto it.”’

Shown: to the spirit [nīḥ] and to the aspects of the body which are connected to it so as to permit perception of delight and suffering.

Al-Qurtubi holds that there are two possibilities here: the showing may be to the spirit alone, or to the spirit and to part of the body.

Ibn Baṭṭāl records that what is meant is communication of the fact that this will be the place of the requital of your works. The repetition is to supply a reminder of this. He finds a proof in the fact that the bodies dissolve, and ‘showing’ cannot be done to something that has dissolved, thus concluding that ‘the “showing” which is to continue until the Day of Arising is only and uniquely to the spirits. To this it has been objected that to interpret the ‘showing’ as ‘informing’ is a departure from the apparent meaning without any justification, something which is impermissible.

The ‘showing’ to the pious believer and the unbeliever is clear; as for the believer who sins, it is possible that he will be shown the place in the Garden to which he will eventually pass.

The resolution of this difficulty is apparent from the hadith of ʿAbū Hurayra narrated by Ibn Abīl-Dunyā and al-Ṭabarānī, and which Ibn Hibbān considers sound [ṣaḥīḥ]. This hadith, which pertains to the questioning in the grave, runs: ‘Then one of the doors of the Garden will be opened for him, and he will be told: “This is your place, and what Allah has prepared for you”; so he increases in anticipation and joy. Then one of the gates of the Fire is opened for him, and he is told: “This would have been your place, with what Allah has prepared for you therein, had you been a sinner,” so that he increases in anticipation and joy. In respect of the unbeliever, the hadith continues: “Then one of the gates of the Fire is opened for him […] and he increases in regret and panic.”

6521/178
Saʿīd ibn ʿAbī Maryam < Muhammad ibn Jaʿfar < ʿAbī Ḥāzim < Sahl ibn Saʿd, who said: ‘I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: “On the Day of Arising mankind shall be gathered together on an off-white land resembling white flour”’. Sahl or another narrator added: ‘“Therein shall be no sign for anyone.”’

No sign for anyone. Al-Khaṭābī said: ‘He meant that it will be flat.’
A ‘sign’ here means the object which provides road-directions. According to ʿIyād: ‘What is meant is that it shall contain no sign of habitation or construction, or any relic of any of the features by which one might be guided along a road, such as mountains and prominent rocks. This reality hints at a difference from the land of the world, which will have perished without hope of return.’
that there was more than one *Isrá*, and that a second Night Journey, distinct from that which occurred in Makkah, took place in Madina. Ibn Hanbal and al-Bazzār have narrated the following with a sound *ismād*: ‘The prophets with their nations were shown unto me last night [...]’ to the end of the hadith. In Jābir’s hadith reported by al-Bazzār we find: ‘Allah’s Messenger once postponed coming to the ‘Ishā’ prayer until some of the people in the mosque went to sleep [...]’ to the end of the hadith. It is clear that the Night Journey which took place in Madina was different from that which happened in Makkah. It was during the earlier event that he sought entry into the gates of the heavens, one after the other, meeting a prophet in each heaven, and returned to Allah after conforming with Moses about the obligatory prayers. But of many other things which the Prophet beheld, some were in Makkah, and others were in Madina after the Hijra. Most of these took place as dream-visions. And Allah knows best.

They did not resort to cauterisation, nor to asking for charms, nor to seeking omens from birds. The narration of Sa‘īd ibn Mansūr given by Muslim has ‘And they did not administer charms’ instead of ‘They did not resort to cauterisation’. Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya has condemned this narration, claiming that it was a mistake by its narrator. His reason is that since the charm-maker is doing a favour to the one receiving the charm, how could it be necessary to renounce this action? After all, Gabriel administered charms for the Prophet, and the Prophet administered charms for his Companions, and allowed them to administer charms, saying: ‘Anyone who can help his brother should do so’ – and helping is required. He [Ibn Taymiyya] said: ‘As for the one who asks for charms, he is asking someone else and hoping for help from him, whereas complete reliance upon Allah precludes that.’ He also said: ‘What is intended is that the seventy thousand are characterised by complete *tawakkul*, and hence would not ask others to give them charms, or to cauterise them, and they would not seek omens at all.’ Another, however, has responded by saying that an additional part of a hadith narration is acceptable if it comes from a reliable narrator, and Sa‘īd ibn Mansūr was a great scholar, relied upon by Bukhārī and Muslim, the latter relying upon this narration here. To consider a narrator mistaken when his additional material is to be considered sound is a position which one should not take. Moreover, the objection which led him to fault the narration is implicit also in the case of the one who asks for charms, since his reason is that the person who does not ask for charms from others is in a state of complete *tawakkul*, to which one could reply that the person who makes charms for others should not supply them to him, to secure complete *tawakkul*. There is no proof for what has been asserted in the fact that Gabriel did this, nor in the act of the Prophet, since he was acting as legislator and as elucidator of the rules. It could be said that the individuals indicated in the hadith renounce administer-
ing and seeking charms in order to reach a decisive separation, since someone who does these things is not entirely safe from relying on them. Otherwise, charms are not in themselves forbidden, the only exception being those charms which entail or imply empowering [shirk] with Allah. For this reason he said ﷺ: ‘Show me your charms, and there is nothing wrong with charms for as long as they contain no shirk.’ This text indicates the reason for the prohibition.

and upon their Lord was their reliance. This sentence may either be a comment on the foregoing themes of renouncing the seeking of charms, castration, and seeking omens; or it may be an instance of a general statement following a specific one.

According to al-Qurtubi the majority of scholars hold that tawakkul occurs when one has trust in Allah’s promise and certainty that His decree will come to pass, but does not neglect the sunna in seeking needful sustenance of food and drink, and seeking protection from enemies by acquiring weapons, closing doors, and so on. Nonetheless his heart should not trust in these contingent causes [isbaḥ]. One should, rather, believe that in themselves they can bring no benefit and prevent no harm, for the contingent cause and its consequence are Allah’s act, and everything is by His will. When a man relies on a contingent cause [isbaḥ] his tawakkul is compromised. In this people are, nonetheless, in two categories. The ‘arriver’ [waṣil] is he who pays no attention to contingent causes, even if he uses them, while the ‘wayfarer’ [ṣālik] is the person who pays attention to them from time to time, although he protects his soul from this by means of intellectual methods and spiritual experiences [iḥtiyāq bāḥiyya], until such time as he rises to the station [maqām] of the ‘arriver’.

Abū’l-Qāsim al-Qushayri writes: ‘The place of tawakkul is the heart. External movements do not contradict this when the slave of Allah is truly aware that everything is from Allah, and that whenever something comes easily it has been facilitated by Him, and that whenever something is difficult this is by His decree.’

‘Ukāsha b. Miyaḥan. The word ‘‘Ukāsha’ (or ‘Ukkāsha) may mean: ‘curly hair’, or a ‘spider’, or an ‘ant hill’. ‘Ukāsha was of the tribe of Asad b. Khuzayma. He was one of the first to enter Ismā’il, and was one of the most handsome of men. He made the hijra, and fought at Badr. Ibn Ishāq narrates: ‘The Prophet ﷺ said: “‘Ukāsha is the best horseman of the Arabs.”’ He also narrates: ‘On the day of Badr he fought so fiercely that his sword broke in his hand, upon which Allah’s Messenger ﷺ gave him a piece of wood, telling him, “Fight with this.”’ He did so, and it turned into a long, white, powerful sword in his hand, with which he fought until Allah granted the victory. The same sword remained in his possession until he died during the War of Apostasy [iḥḍa] under Khalid b. al-Walid in the year 12.

Beaten you to it, Ibn Baṭṭal said: ‘This means that “‘Ukāsha has beaten you to

achieving these qualities, namely tawakkul, the absence of seeking omens, and the other matters mentioned therewith.” He refrained from saying, “You are not one of them”, or “You do not have their qualities”, because of his gentleness with his companions, and his excellent courtesy [ṭayl] towards them.

Ibn al-Jawzi said: ‘It seems to me that the first speaker was asking with a sincere heart, and therefore received this response, while with the second he [the Prophet ﷺ] might have intended to end the matter. For had he replied in the affirmative to the second, then a third would soon have stood up, and then a fourth, and so on, and not all people merit the state he described.’

Al-Nawawi considered the sounder view to be that the Prophet ﷺ knew through revelation that ‘Ukāsha was accepted, but that no revelation was forthcoming in the case of the other man.

Al-Suyuti said: ‘My view is that this took place during an hour of divine response [ṣūr at iḥāl], which, as it so happened, had ended by the time the second man put his question. This is made clear by the words in the hadith version of Abū Sa‘īd, which runs: “Then they sat for a while, and talked,” and by the hadith narration of Ibn Ishāq, which includes, after “‘Ukāsha has beaten you to it,” the words, “The prayer has grown cold,” meaning that its time has ended.”

6571/262

‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shayba < Jarir < Mansur < Ibrahim < ‘Ubayda, that ‘Abdallāh ﷺ said: ‘Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: “I know the last to leave the Fire, and the last to enter the Garden. He shall be a man who crawls out of Hell, when Allah shall say: ‘Go, and enter the Garden.’ So he comes to it, but it seems to him to be full, so he goes back, and says, ‘O my Lord, I found it to be full.’ But He says, ‘Go, and enter the Garden.’ So he comes to it, but it seems to him to be full, so he goes back, and says, ‘O my Lord, I found it to be full.’ But He says: ‘Go, and enter the Garden; for there you shall have the likes of the world, and ten times its like,’ or: ‘for there you shall have ten times the likes of the world.’ And he says, ‘Are you mocking me, Lord, or laughing at me; when You are the King?’” And I saw Allah’s Messenger ﷺ laughing until his eye-teeth were visible. And it was said: “He was the lowest of the Garden’s people in degree.”’

I know the last to leave the Fire, and the last to enter the Garden. According to Iyād: ‘It is possible that this refers to two individuals, or to two types, or to two categories, which are referred to in the singular here since they have been judged together. It is also possible that ‘leaving’ here signifies passage across the Sirāt.”

Muslim, on the authority of Ibn Mas’ūd, provides a narration that strengthens the second of these two conjectures: ‘The last to enter the Garden shall be a man who sometimes walks, sometimes crawls, and sometimes is scorched by the Fire.
When he has crossed it, he turns round to face it, and says: “Praised be He Who saved me from you”.

You shall have the likes of the world, and ten times its like. The narration of Al-A’ mash adds: 'And he will be asked: “Do you remember the time in which you used to live?” that is, the life of the world. And he replies, “Yes.” And he is told: “Hope!” and he hopes.

Are you mocking me, Lord. The narration of Anas on the authority of Ibn Mas’ūd has: ‘Are you mocking me, when you are Lord of the Worlds?’ Al-Māzuri said: ‘This is problematic. Al-Dāhāk’s interpretation of this as signifying ‘His good-pleasure [rīdā]’ does not fit here. Attributing mockery to Allah is by way of mutuality, even though the mockery on the other side has not been mentioned. ‘Lyād reports from one source that ‘are you mocking me’ should in fact signify ‘Do not mock me’, and that he utters these words when the unimaginable joy which is before him deprives him of full self-control.’ Al-Qurṭubī writes: ‘The scholars have discussed many interpretations of this, and the best conclusion is that his words issued from him while he was in a state of astonishment and overwhelming joy.’

or laughing at me. Al-Baydāwī said: ‘When “laughter” is attributed to Allah this is a metaphor signifying “His good-pleasure”.

And it was said: ‘He was the lowest of the Garden’s people in degree’. Al-Kirmānī said: ‘This is not the conclusion of the Messenger’s words פפ, it is a phrase by the narrator, reporting the words of the Companions or other people of knowledge.’

Appendix
FATWĀS

Praise is for Allah, and may blessings and peace rest upon Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. This is the discourse of our master, the judge of judges, may Allah benefit the Muslims by the baraka of his learning, concerning the person buried in the grave, who is out of human sight, and who is visited by Munkar and Nakir.

1 Is the dead person made to sit up for the questioning, or does it occur while he is lying down?

RESPONSE: The angels put their questions to him while he is in a sitting position, as is known from the famous hadith of al-Bara‘, which Abū `Awāna considers sound (ṣaḥīḥ) and which Ahmad ibn Hanbal cites in his Musnad.

2 Does the spirit (rūḥ) wear the body as it used to in life, or not?

RESPONSE: Yes it does; but the apparent meaning of the hadith is that it resides in its upper half.

3 Where does the spirit reside after the questioning?

RESPONSE: The spirits of the believers are in ‘Ilīyūn, and those of the unbelievers are in Sijjin. Every spirit has a connection (tītās) [with the body], which is a spiritual (mu‘aṣar) connection which does not resemble the connection which existed during worldly life. The nearest comparison is with the detached state of the sleeper; some have compared it with the rays of the sun. This is the way to reconcile the divergent traditions which hold that the spirits are in ‘Ilīyūn and in Sijjin, and that the containers of the spirits are also at the containers which are their graves, as Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr narrates on the authority of the large consensus (jumhūr).

4 When the earth is replaced over him, and he is given tālqīn from above the grave, does he hear the words of the one who is doing this, despite the considerable distance between the two?

RESPONSE: Yes he does, due to the connection which we have referred to above. This must not be thought analogous to the condition of a living person buried in a collapsed well, for such a one cannot hear those above him.

5 Does the dead person know of those who visit him?

RESPONSE: Yes, he knows when Allah wants him to know. For the spirits are given permission to act, and have recourse to their homes in ‘Ilīyūn or Sijjin, as in the sound hadith ‘The spirits of the martyrs are in the insides of green birds which fly around in the Garden.’ This is in the Sahih; and Ahmad ibn Hanbal has a similar hadith concerning the spirits of believers. In the narration of the Sahih, ‘they have recourse to candles beneath the Throne’. None of this stands in the way of the connection discussed above. Whoever regards this as unlikely does so through a comparison with the visible conditions of this worldly life; whereas the conditions prevailing in the barzakh are quite different.

6 Does the punishment of the grave afflict the spirit or the body?

RESPONSE: It afflicts them both, although its real essence afflicts the spirit, and the body experiences pain or pleasure along with it. However no sign of this is apparent to a person still in the world who may be watching; were the body to be exhumed it would be found in the state in which it had just been buried.

7 When Munkar and Nakir come, what do they say?

RESPONSE: This is stated explicitly in the long hadith narrated by al-Bara‘ in Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s Musnad, and in the hadith of Abū Hurayra given by Ibn Hibbān.
8. Should the twig and palm-frond be planted in the middle or the side of the grave, or in another place?
RESPONSE: The sound hadith has prescribed this in general terms, and the purpose is served by planting it in any place at the grave.

9. Does the reward of a Qur'ānic recitation reach the dead person?
RESPONSE: This is a well-known issue on which I myself have written a booklet. To summarise, most of the early scholars held that the answer is yes, but that it is preferable to hold back from a definite, absolute answer, although it is preferred (mustahab) to do it, and to do it abundantly.

10. If a dead person is moved from one place to another, does his spirit move to the new place as well, or not?
RESPONSE: Yes. We have already stated that even though the spirit is not a part of the body of the dead person it nonetheless has a connection with it. Therefore this connection will abide wherever the body is taken.

11. If the head is buried separately from the body, where is the spirit?
RESPONSE: The spirit is connected with both, and will be connected with all parts of the body however much they may be detached and separated.

12. When a person is dying, should much medicine be used, or little?
RESPONSE: When he reaches the point of trembling like an animal being slaughtered then medicines are best put away; otherwise attempts to heal him are required by the Law. And your Lord is Powerful over all things.

13. Will the person guilty of deficient performance of worship be required to make up the missed acts on the Day of Arising?
RESPONSE: There will be no making-up (qada') at that time. The only making-up that occurs will be the subtraction from his optional acts of worship (naẓmī) in order to complete the tally of his obligatory ones. If he has no naruqīl, then the subtraction will be made from another category of his good deeds.

14. If a schoolteacher suffers from a disease so that he cannot remain in wudū' longer than is necessary for performing the obligatory prayers, and would spend the entire day washing if he repeated his ablution each time he broke it, is he allowed a concession (nikhla) to touch the Qur'ān simply out of necessity?
RESPONSE: Such a person is allowed the concession because of the hardship which would otherwise ensue; however he should make tayammun, which takes less time than wudū'. If the hardship still continues then there is no harm in doing without; and Allah knows best.

15. Are the two angels who sit at the grave the same as the two recording angels, as Tirmidhi has related?
RESPONSE: It appears that if the hadith is well-established they are indeed the ones who used to write down actions in the world.

16. Are they the angels whom Allah has spoken of as a driver and a witness?18
RESPONSE: There is a difference of opinion here, which has been recorded by Tabari and others.

17. Will the sun come close to people's heads on the Day of Arising?
RESPONSE: Yes, this is true; it is set forth in a sound hadith and belief in it is mandatory.

18. Will the sun exist at the Arising?
RESPONSE: Yes, but only at the standing-place (maqṣūf); after which the sun and moon shall be cast into hell.

19. Shall people be immersed in sweat?
RESPONSE: Yes. It is established in a sound hadith that some of them will be immersed in sweat up to their necks; others up to their chests, others up to their knees, and so on, in accordance with their works.

20. Shall human bodies be restored to their former state, or not?
RESPONSE: Yes. What Allah ta'ālā shall restore will be their former bodies, not something else. This is the sound, correct view, and I believe that whoever holds otherwise is wrong, because he goes against the evident meaning of the Qur'ān and the Hadith.

And Allah subhānahu wa-ta'ālā knows best, and unto Him is the last return. And may He grant blessings and abundant peace to our master Muhammad and his family and companions, until the Day of Arising.
A pupil of Imam 'Abd al-Din al-İji in kalâm, and author of ِDanā'ir al-Qurān, a Sufi tafsīr.

2. A native of 'Aynātb (north of Aleppo), he became Hana'l chief gābi of Egypt, and inspector-general of awqāf. He was the disciple of the Sufi shaykh 'Allā' al-Din al-Sirāfī, who accompanied him from Jerusalem to Egypt. Among his works is lqīl al-junnūn fī tārikh ahī al-zamān, on history.


4. This is, of course, one reason why English translations of the hadith literature cannot be used as a basis for fiqh discussions.


6. Ḥady, 243.

7. Ḥady, 245.

8. Ḥady, 243.

9. Ḥady, 235.

10. Ḥady, 235.

11. Ḥady, 243.

12. Ḥady, 247.


14. Her name, ‘daughter of the saddle’, was given her when she was born during a journey to the Hijāz.

15. Rahmani, Ic 46 (1972), 353. At the time Ḍānas Ḥaṭṭān was in her seventies.


17. Ibn Ḥasās, 23.

18. Dīwān Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqālānī, ed. Sycel Abu Ḥafṣ (Hyderabad, n.d.), 16. This edition uses the original manuscript preserved in the Egyptian National Library (MS Taymūriyya 811), dated 852. It also makes use of other manuscripts, which all include this poem.

19. That is, ḡabān means stupidity.

20. A popular proverb, not a hadith.

21. The place of this topic in the chapter of Raqā‘iq is clear: the death of a child or a loved one softens the heart, banishes pride and exulting in dunyā, and such are the conditions for salvation.

22. Bukhārī, Adhān, 155; Muslim, Maṣūdī, 142.

23. The occurrences recorded in these hadiths were Prophetic miracles (mu‘jiza), while a miracle worked through pure-hearted, saintly believers, is known as a kufrma.

24. Alb al-su‘fīf: a spiritual elite among the Companions who resided in a veranda attached to the house of the Prophet ﷺ, who are here briefly described by Abī Hurayra. In his comments on a similar hadith, Imam al-Hākim writes: ‘I have pondered these narrations concerning the People of the Veranda, and I have found them to be among the greatest of the Companions in scrupulousness (wara’) and reliance upon Allah, and in constant service of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. For them, Allah chose what He chose for His Prophet ﷺ, by way of poverty, indigence, and humbleness in worship of Allah, and leaving the dunyā to its people. They are the group to which the Sufis belong, generation after generation; so that whoever follows their sunna, and their patient endurance of renouncing the things of this world, and their familiar intimacy with poverty, and their refusal to beg, are in every age the followers of the alb al-su‘fī and the people of reliance upon their Creator. It has been narrated to me by the shaykh of ta‘awwuf in his age, Abū Muhammad Ja‘far ibn Nusayr al-Khulṣu, on the authority of Abī Muhammad al-Jarrī, who said: ‘I once heard Saḥī al-Tustari saying: “When Allah the Exalted sent the Prophet ﷺ, there dwelt upon the earth seven kinds of men: kings, farmers, nomads, merchants, craftsmen, hired labourers, and the weak and poor. He did not command any of them to change his vocation; but he commanded them to know, and be certain, and to fear God, and to rely on Him in whatever circumstance they lived.” And Saḥī may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The intelligent person should declare: ‘It is not proper that after having known that I am Your slave, that I should set my hope in other than You; for I do not imagine that You, Who have created and fashioned me as Your slave, should require me to rely on myself.”” Al-Hākim said: ‘Allah’s Messenger ﷺ has described this group in terms of the qualities by which Allah has singled them out from among the other groups; so whoever possesses these qualities, rightly possesses the name of ta‘awwuf’.” (al-Hākim al-Nisābūrī, al-Mustad’ak  ‘alā al-su‘ā‘ayn (Hyderabad: Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-Uthmāniyya, 1334–42), III, 15–6.

25. In addition to his celebrated Sehīt, Imam al-Bukhārī also wrote a Tārikh, whose purpose is to identify the narrators listed in isnād. He wrote it on moonlit nights beside the tomb of the Prophet ﷺ.


27. Frāsa: the spiritual intuition of the person close to Allah. Imam Tirmīdī relates the following hadith: ‘Beware the frāsa of the believer, for he sees with the light of Allah.’ i.e. gatherings for irreverent purposes are best shunned.

28. A ma‘wīf report is one that goes back only to one narrator.


31. Here we have the Imam’s understanding of the Hadith of Gabriel. The text of this is: ‘‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ said: “
One day when we were with Allah's Messenger, we were visited by a man whose garments were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black, upon whom no signs of travel could be seen. Sitting before the Prophet ﷺ, leaning his knees against his and placing his hands on his thighs, he said: "Tell me, Muhammad, about idān."

The Prophet replied: "Idān is that you should bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, that you should establish the Prayer, pay the Zakāt, fast in Ramadān, and make the Hajj to the House if you are able to go." The man said: "You have spoken truly." And we were amazed that he should question him and then confirm that he had spoken the truth. He then said: "Tell me about faith [imán]."

He replied: "Faith means that you believe in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and that you have faith in the Decree, both its good and its evil."

The man said: "You have spoken truly." He then said: "Tell me about excellence [ibāsīn]."

And he replied: "Excellence means that you should worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you."

Then the man said: "Tell me about the Hour."

The Prophet replied: "Concerning that, the one who is questioned knows no more than the questioner."

The man said: "Then tell me of its foretokens." He said: "The slave girl will give birth to her mistress, and you will see the barefoot, the naked, the destitute and the shepherds vying with each other to construct tall buildings."

Then the man departed. After I had waited for a long time, the Prophet asked me, "Do you know who the questioner was? "Umar?" I replied, "God and His messenger know best." He said: "That was Gabriel, who came to teach you religion." (Muslim, Imān, 1.)

Ibn Rajab comments as follows: 'One of the early ājūfīn said: 'Whoever acts in accordance with his witnessing (mushāhada) of Allah, is a gnostic (ṯārif), and whoever acts in accordance with Allah's witnessing of him, is a sincere person (mukhlīṣ)." [...] The maqām of mushāhada is that the slave should act in accordance with his heart's witnessing of Allah, whereby the heart is illumined by ṭamā and the inner sight (bīrta) passes through into gnosis, until the unseen (ghayb) becomes like the seen. This is the reality of the maqām of ṭamā' indicated in the hadith of Gabriel, upon him be peace."

"Jāmī′ al-ḏātī wa-l-ḥikam, Damascus: Dār al-Khayr, 1417/1, 76.)

The Adornment of the Saints, a major collection of Sufi biographies by Abū Nuʿaym.

34 Ḥāḍīth qudsi in Bukhārī, Tawhid, 15.
35 sayyid al-tāʾīja. The 'Group' are the Sufis.
36 That aspects of the ghayb, the world usually outside the realm of sense-perception, are accessible to the wāli by Allah's leave is demonstrated most obviously by the phenomenon of the righteous dream (al-nāʿa′ al-salābih), which is "one sixty-fourth part of Prophecy" (Bukhārī, Taḥrīr, 4). However those who deny Allah by having recourse to magic arts or to astrology are repudiated. Ḥātim Qurṭubī records the following proof: 'When 'Ali ibn Abī Tālib, the Commander of the Faithful wished to march out against the Khārijites, someone asked him: 'Are you going to confront them when the moon is in Scorpio?' And he replied, may Allah be pleased with him: 'And where is their moon?'" In other words, an astrological conjunction that would bring defeat could not logically apply to both sides. (Muhammad al-Qurtubi, al-Jāmī′ li-ḥikam al-Qurʻān (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Masriyya, 1933–50), XIX, 28.)
37 'Many a dusty, wild-haired one, who is rejected at people's doors, would be vindicated by Allah were he to swear by Him.' (Muslim, Brr, 138.)
38 Qurṭubī's work al-Tadhkira (The Memorial) is one of the most important works of eschatology.
39 Ibn Hajar wrote a separate work entitled al-Ghunayn fi-l-nīyā (Enough about the Vision) in which he discusses the Companions' differences of opinion on whether the Prophet and during the Isrā′ saw Allah with his eye or his heart. After a detailed discussion he concludes that both took place, during two separate Night Journeys.

Muslim, Salām, 64.

The Shēr is the bridge suspended over hell, which all must cross.

That is to say, 'hope to acquire now whatever you used to aspire to.'

Originally published in 1348 in Cairo by the Idārāt al-Tibā′ al-Munīriyya as an appendix to the Fātiḥah Ibn al-Salāḥ. The title of the collection is al-Janāb al-Kaff an al-Su′āl al-Khaft (the 'Adequate Response about the Obscure Questioning'), pp. 39–43.

The newly-dead person is urged to repeat the words which must be spoken to the questioning angels. See Ibn al-Naṣīf al-Miṣrī, Reliance of the Traveller, tr. Nāhī Kellner (Beltsville, Maryland: Amana, 1994), 92–4.

Muslim, Ima′rā, 121.

They say: "Behold ye this man who came before you! What do you say about him, and to what do you attest in his regard?" He says: 'Muhammad! I bear witness that he is Allah's Messenger and that he came with the Truth from Allah.' And he is told: 'With that did you live, with did you die, and with it shall you be resurrected, Allah willing.' Nūr al-Dīn al-Hayrāmī, Maqām al-Zamān ilā zawād′ Ibn Ḥikīm ( Cairo, al-Maktabal al-Salafīyya, n.d.), 198.

Quʻrān 50:21: And every soul shall come, a driver and a witness shall be with it.

BIOGRAPHIES (Does not include narrators appearing only in Imādī)

Abū 'Ali al-Daqqīq (d.404). A leading Shāfiʿī scholar and the shaykh of Ḥātim al-Qusayy in Sufism. Al-Qusayy married Abū 'Ali's daughter Fatima, who was well-known as a jurist and Sufi in her own right.

Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī (d.543). A Mālikī hadith scholar known as 'al-Quḍā'ī because he was chief judge of his native Seville. He studied under Imām al-Ghazzālī. He wrote the Arḍar al-ahwālī, the best-known commentary on the hadith collection of Tirmidhī.

Shaykh Abū ′Uṯmān ibn Ḥaṭṭāṭ (d.799). This is the Egyptian Shaykh Ibn ʿAthār al-Iskandari, the pupil of Abu'l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī of the Shāhidul ṭarīqā. He wrote around twenty books, mainly on Sufism, including the famous Ḥikām (Aphorisms). Ibn Ḥajar's admiration for him is evident in his biography in Ḥanārī, 1, 273–5.

Abū Hurayra (d.58). The famous companion and member of the abī al-Saffa. He is remembered particularly for the enormous number of hadith which he transmitted, made possible by his constant companionship with the Prophet and during the last three years of the latter's life.
Abū Ismā‘il al-Anṣārī (d.481). Hanbali hadith scholar of Herāt, who wrote some of the best-known of all Sufi writings, including the Manāẓil al-Sā‘irīn ('Stages of the Travellers') and the Munāẓārī ('Intimate Conversations'). He is usually referred to as 'Shaykh al-İslâm'.

Abū Muhammad ibn Abī Jamara (d.475, 695 or 699). A Mālikī hadith expert and Sufi of Mursiya in Andalusia, who migrated to Egypt, where he wrote Jam‘ al-Nihāya, a collection of Bukhārī’s Sahih that has been the subject of many commentaries.

Abū Nu‘aym al-İsľahānī (d.430). One of the most respected hadith masters of his day. Compiler of the large Hilyat al-ādābīyāt ('Adornment of the Saints'), an important collection of hadiths and sayings of men and women who had achieved closeness to Allah.

Abu’l-Qāsim al-Qushayri (d.469). A Shāfi‘i scholar and hadith expert of Nishapur in Central Asia. He is remembered for his Risāla (Treatise) on the foundations of the Sufi path.

Abū ‘Uthmān al-Hārî (d.298). Another Sufi of Nishapur, well-known for his scrupulousness in following the Sharia‘, and for his charity and kindness.

al-A‘rīmah, Abū Muhammad Sulaymān (d.148). A Kufan hadith pupil of al-Zuhrī and Asas ibn Malik. He gave his name to one of the fourteen canonical readings of the Qur‘ān.

‘Azm ibn al-‘As (d.437). A Qurayshite Companion. He is regarded as the convert of ‘Umar to Islam, and as the conqueror of Egypt.

al-Bājī, Abū’l-Walid Sulaymān (d.474). Mālikī scholar of Spain, who compiled most of his works in Saragossa. He defeated Ibn Hazm in debate, and worked to unite the Muslim rulers against the Christian threat.

al-Baydāwī, ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar (d.683?). Shāfi‘i scholar of Shirāz, who wrote one of the most respected Qur’ānic commentaries, Aimsir al-tanzil wa-asrār al-ta‘wil ('Lights of Revelation and Secrets of Interpretation'), and also a hadith textbook, Tanwil al-arwāh min mutābā‘ al-an-zār ('Ascending Lights from the Rising-places of Discussions').

al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Ahmad (d.458). Ash‘ari and Shāfi‘i scholar of Nishapur, and the compiler of major hadith collections including the Shu‘ab al-imān ('Branches of Faith') and al-Sunan al-Kabīrā ('The Greatest Sunan Collection').

al-Bazzār, Abū Bakr Ahmad (d.293). Born in Basra, this hadith master taught in Isfahan, Baghdad and Syria. He compiled a famous Musnad.

al-Dāwūdī, Abū Ja‘far Ahmad (d.402). A Mālikī fiqh and kalām expert from Tripolitania, who is buried in Tilmisān. He wrote a commentary on Bukhārī’s Sahih, and another on Imām Malik’s Musnad.


al-Farrā‘, Abū Zakariyya Yahyā (d.207). Grammarian of Persian origin who became the best-known exponent of the Kufan school of grammar. He was also a hadith specialist.

al-Hākim al-Nisabūrī, Abū ‘Abdallāh (d.405). Shāfi‘i scholar of Central Asia, and compiler of the hadith collection al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Sahihayn, which lists hadiths which appear to conform to the conditions set by Bukhārī and Muslim but which were not included in their collections.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Abū ‘Umar Yusuf (d.463). Mālikī chief judge of Lisbon, and author of many works on hadith methodology and the Arabic language.


Ibn Abī‘l-Dunyā, Abū Bakr ‘Abdallāh (d.281). A narrator of ascetical, edifying stories and hadiths, he was born and died in Baghdad.

Ibn al-‘Athīr, Majd al-Dīn (d.606), of Mosul. Author of a dictionary of unusual words in the hadith, al-Nihāya fi gharaib al-ḥadīth ('The Utmost in Hadith Oddities'), and a large hadith collection Jawīr al-nuṣūr ('Compendium of Sources').


Ibn Bāṭṭāl, ‘Ali ibn Khalaf (d.449). A Mālikī scholar from Cordova, author of one of the first commentaries on Bukhārī’s Sahih.


Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad (d.241). Major hadith scholar and jurist of Baghdad; compiler of the great Musnad. The Hanbali school of fiqh takes its name from him.

Ibn Hibbān, Muḥammad ibn Jibrīl (d.352). Widely-travelled Central Asian scholar who became a leading hadith expert, compiling a Musnad and an important biographical work.

Ibn Iṣḥāq, Muḥammad (d.150). A hadith scholar who studied in Medina and Alexandria before settling in Baghdad. He compiled the first complete Sira work, which is mainly today read in the expanded version of Ibn Hishām.


Ibn al-Mubarak, Abū ‘Abdallāh (d.181). Hadith expert from Merv in Central Asia, he studied under Imām Malik in Madina. He is known for his Kitāb al-Zuhd and his Kitāb al-Jihād.

Ibn al-Jawhari, Abū Nasr ‘Imlī (d.397?). A Turk from Central Asia who became one of the best-known Arabic lexicographers. He is principally known for his dictionary al-Sīḥāh ('Sound Usages').

Ibn al-Junayd, Abū l-Qāsim ibn Muhammad (d.298). The leading Sufi of Baghdad of his day, whose sermons were attended byulema of all disciplines. In fiqh he followed the madhab of Abū Thawr.

Ka‘b al-‘Aḥbar, Abū Bakr Muhammad (d.380). A hāfiz of hadith, in which discipline he compiled his work Bahr al-Fawā'id ('Ocean of Benefits'), and a leading Sufi imām who wrote al-Tā‘ahfi li-maddabhab ahl al-Tasawwuf ('Introduction to the Way of the People of Sufism').

Khālid ibn al-Walid (d.21). A Yemeni rabbi who converted to Islam during the reign of ‘Umar, and reported many stories of the ancient Israelites.

al-Kalābādhī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad (d.380). A hāfiz of hadith, in which discipline he compiled his work Bahr al-Fau‘ād ('Ocean of Benefits'), and a leading Sufi imām who wrote al-Tā‘ahfi li-maddabhab ahl al-Tasawwuf ('Introduction to the Way of the People of Sufism').

Khālid ibn al-Walīd (d.21). Arab military genius who opposed the Muslims at Uhud, but who repented, and, as Sayfūllāh, the 'Sword of God', led some of the early conquests under Abū Bakr Quraysh. A Yemeni rabbi who converted to Islam during the reign of ‘Umar, and reported many stories of the ancient Israelites.

al-Khaṭṭābī, Abū Sulaymān (d.388). Shāfi‘i hadith scholar and poet who studied and taught throughout the Middle East. He compiled about twelve works, including the Mu‘ālim al-Sunnah (or al-Sunan) ('Features of the Sunnah'), which is a commentary on Abū Dāwūd, and the Kitāb al-Uṣūl ('Book of Withdrawal into Solitude').

al-Kirmānī, Shams al-Dīn Muhammad (d.786). Author of one of the greatest commentaries on Arabic lexicography, al-Kawākib al-Dalā‘īl (‘The Radiant Stars’).
al-Kushmayhani, Muhammad ibn Muhammad (d. 389). From Merv in Central Asia, he was the leading pupil of Imam al-Bukhari’s star pupil Imam al-Fihri.

al-Ma‘zuri, Abu ‘Abdallah Muhammad (d. 576). His family was from Mazur in Muslim Sicily, but he spent most of his life in Tamas. He taught Maliki fiqh to Abu Bakr ibn al-A‘rabî, al-Qadi’ Iyad, and Ibn Rushd. He wrote the first commentary on Sahih Muslim, and also compiled a work of Ash‘ari kalâm.

al-Nasâ‘î, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Ahmad (d. 393). A Shafi‘i hadith specialist and qadî, compiler of al-Sunan, one of the seven best-known collections of hadith.

al-Nawawi, Abu Zakariyya Yalâyî (d. 676). Shafi‘i jurist and hadith specialist, author of a major commentary on Sahih Muslim and and of texts of Shafi‘i law. A major influence on Ibn Hajar, who writes ‘may Allah be pleased with him’ (r.a) after his name. (Hady al-Sani, 1, 4.)

Imam [Abû ‘Ubayd] al-Qasîm ibn Sa‘îm (d. 224). A fiqh scholar from Herât, who died on Hajj. He is regarded as the first author of separate works on the unusual words (ghariq) in the hadith and the Qur‘an.


Rawî ibn Ziba‘î (d. 847). A Successor, sometimes regarded as a Companion, who was a noted worshipper and warrior of the early period.


al-Tabarînî, Abu‘l-Qasîm Sulaymân (d. 360). Palestinian hadith scholar who taught in Isfahân, where he compiled three major hadith collections, including al-Mu jam al-Awsat (‘The Medium Lexicon’).

al-Tabarî, Muhammad ibn Jarîr (d. 310). Celebrated hadith scholar of Baghdad, who compiled one of the longest tafsir works and a world-history.

Taqi al-Dîn Ibn Taymiyya, Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Alhâm (d. 728). A Syrian scholar and popular preacher whose literalist interpretation of the divine attributes resulted in his condemnation by most of the ulema of his time.

al-Tibi, al-Husayn ibn Muhammad (d. 743). Hadith scholar of Egypt, who spent all his inheritance and his commercial fortune on the poor. He wrote a well-known commentary on the Mishkat al-Masîhib of al-Tabrîzî.

al-Tirmidhi, Abu ‘Isa Muhammâd (d. 279). One of the most distinguished Central Asian pupils of Imam al-Bukhari, and compiler of the fawa’id, one of the seven most widely-used collections of hadith.

al-Tufî, Abu ‘I-Rabi’ Sulaymân (d. 716). Hanbali fiqh of Iraq who wrote several works on usûl al-fiqh, but whose use of ijîhab is considered excessive by some ulema. He compiled a popular abbreviated text of al-Tirmidhi’s fawa’id.

Wahhîb ibn Munabbîh (d. 1107). Hadith scholar of the Yemen, regarded as thiqa (reliable) by the historians. Some of his hadiths are used by Imam al-Bukhari.
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