

AL-GHAZĀLĪ  
LETTER TO A DISCIPLE  
*Ayyuhā 'l-Walad* • bilingual  
English-Arabic edition trans-  
lated with an Introduction &  
Notes by TOBIAS MAYER

أَيُّهَا الْوَالِدُ



THE ISLAMIC TEXTS SOCIETY

Copyright © Islamic Texts Society 2005

This edition published 2005 by  
THE ISLAMIC TEXTS SOCIETY  
22A Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, CB2 2DQ, UK

ISBN-13: 978 0946621 62 0 cloth

ISBN-13: 978 0946621 63 7 paper

ISBN-10: 0946621 62 4 cloth

ISBN-10: 0946621 63 2 paper

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is  
available from the British Library.

No part of this book may be  
reproduced in any form without  
the prior permission of the publishers.

All rights reserved.

Set with ArabT<sub>E</sub>X and BaKoMaT<sub>E</sub>X  
in Bembo and Naskh types.

The publishers wish to thank  
Prof. Klaus Lagally (Stuttgart) for his generous help.

## Contents

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Abbreviations                          | vi     |
| Introduction                           | vii    |
| I. Intellectual context                | vii    |
| II. Biographical context               | xi     |
| III. Content of <i>Ayyuhā 'l-walad</i> | xxii   |
| IV. Arabic text of the epistle         | xxxv   |
| Notes to Introduction                  | xxxvii |
| Translation and Arabic Text            | 2      |
| Notes to Translation                   | 63     |
| Appendix: Persons Cited in the Text    | 65     |
| Bibliography                           | 71     |
| Index                                  | 75     |

IN THE NAME OF GOD, the Infinitely Good, the Merciful. Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the worlds, and the 'outcome belongs to the God-conscious,'<sup>1</sup> and blessings and peace be upon His Prophet Muḥammad, and all his family.

Know that one of the advanced students devoted himself to the service of the master, the Imām, the Ornament of Religion and Proof of Islam, Abū Ḥāmid ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (may God sanctify his spirit) and occupied himself with the acquisition and study of knowledge under him, until he mastered the details of the sciences and filled out the good qualities of the soul. Then one day he considered his situation, and it occurred to him, 'I have studied various kinds of science, and I have spent my life learning and mastering them. I now ought to find out which kind will be of use to me on the morrow, to keep me company in my grave, and those which are not of use to me, so that I may give them up. As God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'O God, I take refuge in Thee from knowledge which is not useful!'<sup>2</sup>

This thought persisted to the point that he wrote to the honourable master, the Proof of Islam, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (may God the Exalted be merciful to him), seeking a ruling, asking questions, and requesting both advice and a prayer, 'Even though the works of the master such as *The Revival [of the Religious Sciences]* (Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn) and others contain the answers to my questions, what I want is for the master to write down what I need in a few pages to be with me for the rest of my life, and I will act in accordance with what is in them during my term, if God the Exalted wills.' So the master wrote him this message in reply, and God knows best.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ. وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى نَبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

إِعْلَمْ أَنَّ وَاحِدًا مِنَ الطَّلَبَةِ الْمُتَقَدِّمِينَ لَأَزَمَ خِدْمَةَ الشَّيْخِ الْإِمَامِ زَيْنِ الدِّينِ حُجَّةِ الْإِسْلَامِ أَبِي حَامِدِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْغَزَالِيِّ، قَدَّسَ اللَّهُ رُوحَهُ، وَاشْتَغَلَ بِالتَّحْصِيلِ وَقِرَاءَةِ الْعِلْمِ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى جَمَعَ دَقَائِقَ الْعُلُومِ وَاسْتَكْمَلَ فِضَائِلَ النَّفْسِ. ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ تَفَكَّرَ يَوْمًا فِي حَالِ نَفْسِهِ وَخَطَرَ عَلَى بَالِهِ وَقَالَ: إِنِّي قَرَأْتُ أَنْوَاءًا مِنَ الْعُلُومِ وَصَرَفْتُ رِيْعَانَ عُمْرِي عَلَى تَعَلُّمِهَا وَجَمْعِهَا، وَالْآنَ يَنْبَغِي لِي أَنْ أَعْلَمَ أَيُّ نَوْعِهَا يَنْفَعُنِي غَدًا وَيُؤْنِسُنِي فِي قَبْرِي؟ وَأَيُّهَا لَا يَنْفَعُنِي حَتَّى أُتْرَكَهُ، كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اللَّهُمَّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ.

فَاسْتَمَرَّتْ هَذِهِ الْفِكْرَةُ حَتَّى كَتَبْتُ إِلَى حَضْرَةِ الشَّيْخِ حُجَّةِ الْإِسْلَامِ مُحَمَّدِ الْغَزَالِيِّ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، اسْتِيفْتَاءً وَسَأَلَهُ مَسَائِلَ وَالتَّمَسَّ نَصِيحَةً وَدُعَاءً. قَالَ: وَإِنْ كَانَ مُصَنَّفَاتُ الشَّيْخِ كَالْإِحْيَاءِ وَغَيْرِهِ تَشْتَمِلُ عَلَى جَوَابِ مَسَائِلِي، لَكِنَّ مَقْصُودِي أَنْ يَكْتُبَ الشَّيْخُ حَاجَتِي فِي وَرَقَاتٍ تَكُونُ مَعِيَ مُدَّةَ حَيَاتِي وَأَعْمَلُ بِمَا فِيهَا مُدَّةَ عُمْرِي، إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى. فَكَتَبَ الشَّيْخُ هَذِهِ الرَّسَالََةَ إِلَيْهِ فِي جَوَابِهِ. وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ



'Know O beloved and precious disciple—may God prolong your days in obedience to Him and travel with you on the path of those He loves—that public advice should be quoted from the goldmine of messengerhood [the Prophet]. If you have received advice from him, what need do you have of my advice? And if you have not received it, then tell me what you have achieved in these years gone-by!

ﷺ

O disciple, included in what God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) advised his community, is his statement, 'An indication of the withdrawal of God the Exalted from the worshipper is his busying himself with what does not concern him, and if an hour of a man's life slips by in other than that for which he was created in the way of worship, then it is proper that his affliction be protracted. Whoever passes forty without his virtue overpowering his vice, let him get ready for hellfire!'<sup>3</sup> This advice contains enough for people of knowledge.

ﷺ

إِغْلَمْ أُيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ الْمَحِبُّ الْعَزِيزُ، أَطَالَ اللَّهُ بِقَاكَ بِطَاعَتِهِ  
وَسَلَّكَ بِكَ سَبِيلَ أَحِبَّائِهِ، أَنْ مَنُشُورَ النَّصِيحَةِ يُكْتَبُ مِنْ مَعْدِنِ  
الرَّسَالَةِ، إِنْ كَانَ قَدْ بَلَغَكَ مِنْهُ نَصِيحَةٌ، فَأَيُّ حَاجَةٍ لَكَ فِي  
نَصِيحَتِي، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَتْلُغَكَ فَقُلْ لِي مَاذَا حَصَلَتْ فِي هَذِهِ السَّنِينَ  
الْمَاضِيَةِ؟

ﷺ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، مِنْ جُمْلَةِ مَا نَصَحَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ، أُمَّتَهُ قَوْلُهُ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: عَلَامَةُ إِعْرَاضِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَنِ  
الْعَبْدِ أَشْتِغَالُهُ بِمَا لَا يَغْنِيهِ، وَإِنْ إِمْرًا ذَهَبَتْ سَاعَةٌ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ فِي  
غَيْرِ مَا خُلِقَ لَهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادَةِ، لِحَدِيدٍ أَنْ تَطُولَ عَلَيْهِ حَسْرَتُهُ. وَمَنْ  
جَاوَزَ الْأَرْبَعِينَ وَلَمْ يَغْلِبْ خَيْرُهُ عَلَى شَرِّهِ فَلْيَتَّجِهْزِ إِلَى النَّارِ. وَفِي  
هَذِهِ النَّصِيحَةِ كِفَايَةٌ لِأَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ.

ﷺ



O disciple, advice is easy—what is difficult is accepting it, for it is bitter in taste to those who pursue vain pleasures, since forbidden things are dear to their hearts. [This is] particularly so for whoever is the student of conventional knowledge, who is occupied with gratifying his ego and with worldly exploits, for he supposes that his knowledge alone will be his salvation and that his deliverance is in it, and that he can do without deeds—and this is the conviction of the philosophers.<sup>A</sup> Glory be to God Almighty! This conceited fool does not know that when he acquires knowledge, if he does not act on the strength of it, the evidence against him will become decisive, as the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) said, ‘The man most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection is a scholar whom God did not benefit by his knowledge.’<sup>4</sup>

It is reported that al-Junayd (may God sanctify his heart) was seen in sleep after he had died, and was asked, ‘What is the news Abū ’l-Qāsim?’ He said, ‘Those expressions were wide of the mark, and those counsels came to nothing. Nothing was of benefit to me except some small prayers I made in the middle of the night.’<sup>5</sup>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

<sup>A</sup>This statement shows that in this section Ghazālī is not just generally attacking the self-satisfaction of the learned, but a definite doctrine of the philosophers: evidently the Neoplatonic teaching that posthumous salvation is attained through the development of the individual’s intellectual potentialities while on earth, ultimately producing ‘contact’ (*ittiṣāl*) with the active intellect. This was held for example by Avicenna (d. 428 AH/1037 CE). The doctrine has been described as follows, ‘The soul enjoying supreme *eudæmonia* (*sa’āda*) is the one that achieves a perfect disposition for intellectual thought in the present life.’ (H. A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, OUP, 1992, p. 109). Avicenna, like Fārābī, allegorizes hellfire along the same lines. Since the active intellect is the locus of *eudæmonia*, the souls of those who in life have been fixated with their bodies experience great pain after death.

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، النَّصِيحَةُ سَهْلَةٌ وَالْمَشْكِلُ قَبُولُهَا، لِأَنَّهَا فِي مَذَاقِ  
مُتَّبِعِي الْهَوَى مُرَّةٌ، إِذِ الْمُنَاقِبِ مَخْبُوبَةٌ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ، وَعَلَى  
الْخُصُوصِ لِمَنْ كَانَ ظَالِبَ الْعِلْمِ الرَّسْمِيِّ وَمُشْتَعِلًا فِي فَضْلِ  
النَّفْسِ وَمُنَاقِبِ الدُّنْيَا، فَإِنَّهُ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ الْمَجْرَدَ لَهُ سَيَكُونُ  
نَجَاتَهُ وَخَلَاصَهُ فِيهِ وَأَنَّهُ مُسْتَعْنٍ عَنِ الْعَمَلِ. وَهَذَا أَعْتِقَادُ  
الْفَلَاسِفَةِ. سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ. لَا يَعْلَمُ هَذَا الْمَغْرُورُ أَنَّهُ حِينَ  
حَصَلَ الْعِلْمُ، إِذَا لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِهِ، تَكُونُ الْحُجَّةُ عَلَيْهِ أَكْثَرَ كَمَا قَالَ  
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَشَدُّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
عَالِمٌ لَا يَنْفَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِعِلْمِهِ.

وَرُوِيَ أَنَّ الْجُنَيْدَ، قَدَّسَ اللَّهُ بَرَّةً، رُوِيَ فِي الْمَنَامِ بَعْدَ  
مَوْتِهِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ: مَا الْخَبْرُ يَا أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ؟ قَالَ: طَاحَتْ تِلْكَ الْعِبَارَاتُ  
وَفَنِيَتْ تِلْكَ الْإِشَارَاتُ وَمَا نَفَعْنَا إِلَّا رُكْبَعَاتٍ رَكَعْنَا فِي جُوفِ  
الَّيْلِ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, be neither destitute of good deeds nor devoid of spiritual states, for you can be sure that mere knowledge will not help. It is as though a man in the desert had ten Indian swords and other weapons besides—the man being brave and a warrior—and a huge, terrifying lion attacked him. What is your opinion? Will the weapons repel this danger of his from him without their being used and being wielded? It is obvious they will not repel it unless drawn and wielded!

Likewise, if a man studied a hundred thousand intellectual issues and understood them, but did not act on the strength of them, they would not be of use to him except by taking action. Or it is as though a man had a temperature and jaundice, which is treated by oxymel and barley infusion—no recovery will take place except by using them.

Though thou pour two thousand measures of wine,  
Unless thou drink, no oblivion is thine!

Even if you studied for a hundred years and collected a thousand books, you would not be eligible for the mercy of God the Exalted except through action. [As God says,] 'Man does not receive other than that for which he strives;'<sup>6</sup> 'So let him who hopes for the meeting with his Lord act righteously;'<sup>7</sup> '... a reward for what they used to earn;'<sup>8</sup> 'Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds will have gardens of Paradise, to dwell in forever, whence they will not seek change;'<sup>9</sup>

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، لَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مُفْلِسًا وَلَا مِنَ الْأَحْوَالِ  
خَالِيًا، وَتَيَقَّنْ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ الْجَرْدَ لَا يَأْخُذُ بِأَيْدِي. مِثَالُهُ لَوْ كَانَ عَلَى  
رَجُلٍ فِي بَرِّيَّةٍ عَشْرَةُ أَسْيَافٍ هِنْدِيَّةٍ مَعَ أَسْلِحَةٍ أُخْرَى، وَكَانَ  
الرَّجُلُ شُجَاعًا وَأَهْلَ حَرْبٍ، فَحَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ أَسَدٌ عَظِيمٌ مَهِيْبٌ، فَمَا  
ظَنُّكَ؟ هَلْ تَدْفَعُ الْأَسْلِحَةَ شَرَّهُ عَنْهُ بِلَا اسْتِعْمَالِهَا وَالضَّرْبِ بِهَا؟  
وَمِنَ الْمَغْلُومِ أَنَّهَا لَا تَدْفَعُ إِلَّا بِالتَّخْرِيكِ وَالضَّرْبِ.

فَكَذَا لَوْ قَرَأَ رَجُلٌ مِئَةَ أَلْفِ مَسْأَلَةٍ عِلْمِيَّةٍ وَتَعَلَّمَهَا، وَلَمْ  
يَعْمَلْ بِهَا، لَا تُفِيدُهُ إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ. وَمِثْلُهُ أَيْضًا لَوْ كَانَ لِرَجُلٍ حَرَارَةٌ  
وَمَرَضٌ صَفْرَاوِيٌّ يَكُونُ عِلَاجُهُ بِالسَّكَنْجَبِينَ وَالْكَشَاكِبِ، فَلَا  
يَحْضُلُ الْبُرْءُ إِلَّا بِاسْتِعْمَالِهَا.

گر می دو هزار رطل همی پیمائی  
تا می نخوری نباشدت شیدائی

وَلَوْ قَرَأْتَ الْعِلْمَ مِائَةَ سَنَةٍ وَجَمَعْتَ أَلْفَ كِتَابٍ، لَا تَكُونُ  
مُسْتَعِيدًا بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ، «وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا  
مَا سَعَى»، «فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا»، «جَزَاءُ  
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ»، «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ  
جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا»،



'Descendants have replaced them who neglected prayer and followed passions. They shall come to perdition—except for whoever repents and believes, and acts righteously, for these will enter the Garden and not be harmed at all.'<sup>10</sup>

What say you regarding this Tradition (*ḥadīth*), 'Islam is based on five things: testimony that there is no god but God, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God; keeping-up the formal prayer; paying alms; the fast of Ramaḍān; and pilgrimage to the House for whoever is capable of the journey?'<sup>11</sup>

Faith is verbal declaration, consent by the heart, and action in accordance with the [five] pillars—and the evidence of deeds is incalculable, even though the worshipper attains Paradise by the bounty and grace of God the Exalted. Nevertheless [this is] consequent to his being predisposed through obedience to Him and worship of Him, since 'The Mercy of God is near to those who do good.'<sup>12</sup>

If moreover it is said, 'He gets there by faith alone', we reply: Yes, but when will he get there? How many difficult obstacles must he overcome before arriving?<sup>A</sup> And the first of these obstacles is that of faith [itself] and will he be safe from the denial of faith or not, and when he arrives, will he be unsuccessful and destitute? Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said, 'God the Exalted will say to His worshippers on the Day of Resurrection, "O worshippers of Mine, enter the Garden by My mercy and divide it between you according to your deeds."'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

<sup>A</sup>Deeds indicate faith and are part of it: an aspect of what constitutes faith is 'action in accordance with the pillars' (*amal bi'l-arkān*). Such time as elapses between the incidence of a faith worthy of the name, and death, must be filled with actions consistent with faith.

« فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَةَ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ».

وَمَا تَقُولُ فِي هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ: بِنَبِيِّ الْإِسْلَامِ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ، وَحَجِّ الْبَيْتِ لِمَنْ آسَظَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا. وَالْإِيمَانِ قَوْلٌ بِاللِّسَانِ وَتَصْدِيقٌ بِالْجَنَانِ وَعَمَلٌ بِالْأَرْكَانِ. وَدَلِيلُ الْأَعْمَالِ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ أَنْ يُحْصَى، وَإِنْ كَانَ الْعَبْدُ يَنْبُلُ الْجَنَّةَ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَكَرَمِهِ، لَكِنْ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَشْتَعِدَّ بِطَاعَتِهِ وَعِبَادَتِهِ، لِأَنَّ «رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ».

وَلَوْ قِيلَ أَيْضًا: يَنْبُلُ بِمَجَرَّدِ الْإِيمَانِ، قُلْنَا: نَعَمْ، لَكِنْ مَتَى يَنْبُلُ؟ وَكَمْ مِنْ عَقَبَةٍ كَوُودٍ يَقْطَعُهَا إِلَى أَنْ يَصِلَ؟ فَأَوَّلُ تِلْكَ الْعَقَبَاتِ عَقَبَةُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَأَنَّهُ هَلْ يَسْلَمُ مِنْ سَلْبِ الْإِيمَانِ أَمْ لَا؟ وَإِذَا وَصَلَ هَلْ يَكُونُ خَائِبًا مُفْلِسًا؟ وَقَالَ الْحَسَنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ: يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِعِبَادِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: اذْخُلُوا، يَا عِبَادِي، الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَتِي وَاقْتَسِمُوهَا بِأَعْمَالِكُمْ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



O disciple, insofar as you do not act, you will not find recompense. It is related that a man from the tribe of Israel worshipped God the Exalted for seventy years. Thus God the Exalted wished to show him to the angels, so He sent an angel to him to inform him that in spite of this worship, entering the Garden was not fitting for him. When he heard this the worshipper replied, 'We are created for worship and it is incumbent on us to worship Him!' When the angel went back he said, 'My God, you know best what he said.' God the Exalted replied, 'Since he did not turn away from worshipping Us, We will not turn away from him with [Our] grace! Witness O angels of Mine, that I have forgiven Him.'<sup>A</sup>

God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Call yourselves to account before you are called to account, and weigh up your deeds before they are weighed for you.'<sup>13</sup> And 'Alī (may God be pleased with him) said, 'Whoso believes that he will attain his goal without effort is a wishful thinker. And whoso believes he will reach his goal by the expending of effort is presumptuous.' Al-Hasan (may God the Exalted be merciful to him) said, 'Seeking the Garden without action is a sin,' and he said, 'An indication of the true state of affairs is to give up paying attention to action, not to give up action.' And the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'The astute man is one who passes judgement on himself and works for what is after death, and the fool is one who pursues vain pleasures and counts on God the Exalted to realize his wishes.'<sup>14</sup>

ﷻ

<sup>A</sup>God's forgiveness in this case—evidently that of a fundamentally saintly soul—presumably pertains to his inadvertent and minor sins.

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ لَمْ تَجِدِ الْأَجْرَ. حُكِّي أَنَّ رَجُلًا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَبَدَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى سَبْعِينَ سَنَةً. فَأَرَادَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنْ يَجْلُوهُ عَلَى السَّلَائِكَةِ، فَأَرْسَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكًا يُخْبِرُهُ أَنَّهُ مَعَ تِلْكَ الْعِبَادَةِ لَا يَلِيقُ بِهِ دُحُولُ الْجَنَّةِ. فَلَمَّا بَلَغَهُ قَالَ الْعَابِدُ: نَحْنُ خُلِقْنَا لِلْعِبَادَةِ فَيَنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَعْبُدَهُ. فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ الْمَلَكُ قَالَ: إِلَهِي أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا قَالَ. فَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: إِذَا هُوَ لَمْ يُغْرِضْ عَن عِبَادَتِنَا فَتَحْنُ مَعَ الْكَرَمِ لَا نُغْرِضْ عَنْهُ. إِشْهَدُوا يَا مَلَائِكَتِي أَنِّي قَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَهُ.

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: حَاسِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسَبُوا، وَزِنُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُوزَنَ عَلَيْكُمْ. وَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: مَنْ ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ بِدُونِ الْجَهْدِ يَصِلُ فَهُوَ مُتَمَنَّ. وَمَنْ ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ بِبَدْلِ الْجَهْدِ يَصِلُ فَهُوَ مُسْتَغْنٍ. وَقَالَ الْحَسَنُ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: طَلَبُ الْجَنَّةِ بِلا عَمَلٍ ذَنْبٌ مِنَ الدُّنُوبِ. وَقَالَ: عَلَامَةُ الْحَقِيقَةِ تَرْكُ مَلَاخِظَةِ الْعَمَلِ لَا تَرْكُ الْعَمَلِ. وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالْأَخْمَقُ مَنْ آتَبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَتَمَتَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْأَمَانِي.

ﷻ

O disciple, how many nights have you spent rehearsing your learning, reading books, and depriving yourself of sleep? I do not know what the motive was in this—if it was winning the goods of the world, the allure of its vanities, getting its honours, and vainglory to the debit of your associates and peers, woe to you and woe again! But if your objective in it was the revival of the Prophet's Law (God bless him and give him peace), the cultivation of your character and breaking the 'soul that inciteth to evil,'<sup>15</sup> blessing upon you and blessing again! He has told the truth who spoke the verse:

Sleeplessness of the eye but for Thy sake is vain,  
Their crying but for Thy loss inane.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

O disciple: 'Live as long as you want, but you must die; love whatever you want, but you will become separated from it; and do what you want, but you will be repaid for it!'<sup>16</sup>

O disciple, what result have you had from studying the science of scholastic theology (*kalām*), rhetoric, medicine, collections of poems, astronomy, metrics, grammar and inflections, other than wasting your life in opposition to the Lord

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، كَمْ مِنْ لَيَالٍ أَحْيَيْتَهَا بِتَكَرُّرِ الْعِلْمِ وَمُطَالَعَةِ  
الْكِتَابِ وَحَرَمْتِ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ النَّوْمَ؟ لَا أَعْلَمُ مَا كَانَ الْبَاعِثُ  
فِيهِ. إِنْ كَانَ نَيْلَ عَرَضِ الدُّنْيَا وَجَذَبَ حُطَامِهَا وَتَحْصِيلَ مَنَاصِبِهَا  
وَالنَّبَاهَاةَ عَلَى الْأَقْرَانِ وَالْأَمْثَالِ، فَوَيْلٌ لَكَ تُمَّ وَيْلٌ لَكَ. وَإِنْ كَانَ  
قُضْدَكَ فِيهِ إِحْيَاءَ شَرِيعَةِ النَّبِيِّ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَتَهْدِيبَ  
أَخْلَاقِكَ وَكَسْرَ النَّفْسِ الْأَمَّارَةِ بِالشُّوْءِ، فَظَوَّبِي لَكَ تُمَّ ظَوَّبِي لَكَ.  
وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ مَنْ قَالَ شِعْرًا:

سَهَرُ الْعُيُونِ لِغَيْرِ وَجْهِكَ ضَائِعٌ  
وَبُكَاءُهُنَّ لِغَيْرِ فَقْدِكَ بَاطِلٌ

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ: عِشْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ، وَأَحِبِّبْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّكَ  
مُفَارِقُهُ، وَأَعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّكَ مَجْرِيٌّ بِهِ.

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، أَيُّ شَيْءٍ حَاصِلٌ لَكَ مِنْ تَحْصِيلِ عِلْمِ الْكَلَامِ  
وَالْخِلَافِ وَالطَّبِّ وَالذَّوَابِينِ وَالْأَشْعَارِ وَالنُّجُومِ وَالْعَرُوضِ وَالنَّحْوِ  
وَالتَّضْرِيْفِ غَيْرُ تَضْيِيعِ الْعُمْرِ بِخِلَافِ ذِي الْجَلَالِ.

of Majesty? I have seen in the Gospel of Jesus (upon him be blessings and peace), 'From the moment the dead man is put on the bier till he is put at the graveside, God in His Majesty will ask him forty questions. The first of them is, "Worshipper of Mine, for years you purified yourself in view of men and not for one hour did you purify yourself in view of Me."<sup>17</sup> And every day He looks into your heart He says, "What is this you are doing for others than Myself, when it is My goodness with which you are surrounded? But as for you, you are deaf and heedless!"

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, knowledge without action is madness and action without knowledge is void. Know that the knowledge which does not remove you from sins today and does not convert you to obedience, will not remove you tomorrow from hellfire. If you do not act according to your knowledge today, and you do not make amends for days gone-by, you will say tomorrow on the Day of Resurrection, 'Send us back and we will act virtuously!<sup>18</sup> And it will be replied, 'Fool! You have just come from there!'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, get zeal in respect of the spirit, subdual in respect of the ego and mortification in respect of the body, for your destination is the grave, and the people of the graves expect you at any moment to meet up with them. Beware, beware lest you meet up with them without provision!

إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ فِي إِنْجِيلِ عِيسَى، عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ: مِنْ سَاعَةِ أَنْ يُوَضَعَ أَلْتَيْتُ عَلَى الْحِنَاةِ إِلَى أَنْ يُوَضَعَ عَلَى شَفِيرِ الْقَبْرِ يَسْأَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَظَمَتِهِ مِنْهُ أَرْبَعِينَ سُؤَالَ. أَوَّلُهَا يَقُولُ: عَبْدِي طَهَّرْتَ مَنْظَرَ الْخَلْقِ سِنِينَ وَمَا طَهَّرْتَ مَنْظِرِي سَاعَةً. وَكُلَّ يَوْمٍ يَنْظُرُ فِي قَلْبِكَ يَقُولُ: مَا تَضَعُ لِغَيْرِي وَأَنْتَ مَخْفُوفٌ بِخَيْرِي. أَمَا أَنْتَ فَاصْمٌ لَا تَسْمَعُ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، أَلْعِلْمُ بِلَا عَمَلٍ جُنُونٌ، وَالْعَمَلُ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لَا يَكُونُ. وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ أَلْعِلْمَ الَّذِي لَا يُبْعِدُكَ الْيَوْمَ عَنِ الْمَعَاصِي وَلَا يَحْمِلُكَ عَلَى الطَّاعَةِ لَنْ يُبْعِدَكَ غَدًا عَنِ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ. وَإِذَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ بِعِلْمِكَ الْيَوْمَ وَلَمْ تَدَارِكِ الْأَيَّامَ الْمَاضِيَةَ تَقُولُ غَدًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: «فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا» فَيَقَالُ: يَا أَحْمَقُ أَنْتَ مِنْ هُنَاكَ تَجِيءُ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، إِجْعَلِ الْهَمَّةَ فِي الرُّوحِ وَالْهَزِيمَةَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَالسُّوْتِ فِي الْبَدَنِ لِأَنَّ مَنَزَلَكَ الْقَبْرُ وَأَهْلُ الْقَبْرِ يَنْتَظِرُونَكَ فِي كُلِّ لِحْظَةٍ مَتَى تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِمْ. إِيَّاكَ إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَصِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِلَا زَادٍ.



Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (may God be pleased with him) said, 'These bodies are a cage for birds or a stable for beasts.' Think about yourself—which of them are you? If you are one of the heavenly birds, when you hear the sound of the drumbeat of 'Return to your Lord'<sup>19</sup> you will fly upwards till you roost on the highest towers in the Gardens, as God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'The throne of the Infinitely Good trembled from the death of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh.'<sup>20</sup> And God forbid if you are one of the beasts! As God the Exalted said, 'They are as cattle, nay, they are more astray.'<sup>21</sup> Let yourself not feel safe from being removed from the corner of your home to the chasm of hellfire!

It is related that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may God the Exalted have mercy on him) was given a drink of cold water. So he took the cup and he fainted, and it dropped from his hand. When he came to, it was said, 'What happened, Abū Sa'īd?' He replied, 'I recalled the longing of the people of hellfire, when they will say to the people of the Garden, "Pour down water upon us—or whatever God has bestowed upon you."<sup>22</sup>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

O disciple, if mere knowledge were enough for you and you did not need deeds besides it, His call 'Is there any suppliant? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness? Is there anyone repentant?'<sup>B</sup> would be superfluous, and without purpose. It is related that a group of the Companions (God's good-pleasure

<sup>A</sup>Ghazālī's point in citing this somewhat unexpected Tradition is that it indicates the degree of proximity to God attainable by the virtuous. There is implicit the interpretation that the 'highest towers' are close by (or even the same as) God's throne, such that Sa'd's 'roosting' makes it tremble or shake.

<sup>B</sup>The words are from a Tradition according to which, God, during the last third of the night, descends to the lowest heaven and asks these questions of any who are awake and praying. Bukhārī, *Tahajjud*, 14; *Tawhīd*, 35, *Da'awāt*, 12; Muslim, *Musāfirīn*, 168–170; Abū Dāūd, *Sunna*, 19; Tirmidhī, *Ṣalā*, 168; Mālik, *Qur'ān*, 30; Ibn Ḥanbal, 4.16.

قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقُ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: هَذِهِ الْأَجْسَادُ قَفَصُ الطُّيُورِ أَوْ إِضْطَبُلُ الدَّوَابِّ. فَتَفَكَّرْ فِي نَفْسِكَ: مِنْ أَيِّهِمَا أَنْتَ؟ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الطُّيُورِ الْعُلُويَّةِ فَحِينَ تَسْمَعُ طِينِينَ طَبِلٍ «إِزْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكَ» تَطِيرُ صَاعِداً إِلَى أَنْ تَقْعُدَ فِي أَعَالِي بُرُوجِ الْجَنَانِ، كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَهْتَرَّ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ مَوْتِ سَعْدِ بْنِ مُعَاذٍ. وَالْعِيَاذُ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الدَّوَابِّ، كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: «أُولَئِكَ كَمَا لَأَنْعَمَ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ». فَلَا تَأْمَنِ أَنْتِقَالَكَ مِنْ زَاوِيَةِ الدَّارِ إِلَى هَاوِيَةِ النَّارِ.

وَرُوي أَنَّ الْحَسَنَ الْبَصْرِيَّ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، أُعْطِيَ شَرْبَةَ مَاءٍ بَارِدٍ، فَأَخَذَ الْقَدْحَ وَعُغِشِي عَلَيْهِ وَسَقَطَ مِنْ يَدِهِ. فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قِيلَ: مَا لَكَ يَا أَبَا سَعِيدٍ؟ قَالَ: ذَكَرْتُ أُمِّيَّةَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حِينَ يَقُولُونَ لِأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ: أَنْ أَيْضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، لَوْ كَانَ الْعِلْمُ الْمَجْرَدُ كَافِياً لَكَ وَلَا تَحْتَاجُ إِلَى عَمَلٍ سِوَاهُ لَكَانَ نِدَاءً: هَلْ مِنْ سَائِلٍ؟ هَلْ مِنْ مُسْتَفْهِرٍ؟ هَلْ مِنْ تَائِبٍ؟ صَائِعاً بِلَا فَايِدَةٍ. وَرُوي أَنَّ جَمَاعَةً مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ، رِضْوَانُ

be upon them all) mentioned 'Abd Allāh the son of 'Umar (may God be pleased with both) in the presence of the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace), and he said, 'What an excellent man he is. If only he would pray at night!'<sup>23</sup> And he said (upon him be blessings and peace) to a man from among his Companions, 'O so and so, do not sleep much at night, for a large quantity of sleep at night will leave its owner a poor man on Resurrection Day.'<sup>24</sup>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, 'And part of the night keep vigil as a work of supererogation for you'<sup>25</sup> is a command, 'And before daybreak they (i.e. the God-conscious) seek forgiveness'<sup>26</sup> is a commendation, 'And those seeking forgiveness before daybreak'<sup>27</sup> is a reminder.

He (upon him be peace) said, 'Three voices are loved by God the Exalted—the cock's crow, the voice of him who recites the Qur'ān, and the voice of those seeking forgiveness before daybreak.'<sup>28</sup> Sufyān al-Thawrī (the mercy of God the Exalted be upon him) said, 'God, Blessed and Exalted, created a wind, blowing before daybreak, carrying invocations and prayers for forgiveness to the Almighty King.' He also said, 'At the start of the night a crier calls from beneath the Throne, "Let the worshippers get up!" So they get up and they pray as God wills. Then a crier calls at midnight, "Let those who stand at length in prayer get up!" So they get up and they pray until before daybreak. And when it is before daybreak a crier calls, "Let those seeking forgiveness get up!" So they get up and seek forgiveness. And when the dawn breaks a crier calls, "Let the heedless get up!" So they get out of their beds like the dead risen from their graves.'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ، ذَكَرُوا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: نِعْمَ الرَّجُلُ هُوَ لَوْ كَانَ يُصَلِّي بِاللَّيْلِ. وَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ: يَا فَلَانُ، لَا تَكْثِرِ النَّوْمَ بِاللَّيْلِ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ النَّوْمِ بِاللَّيْلِ تَدْعُ صَاحِبَهُ فَقِيرًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، « وَمِنْ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ » أَمْرٌ، « وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ » شُكْرٌ، « وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ » ذِكْرٌ.

قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ثَلَاثَةٌ أَصْوَاتٍ يُحِبُّهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: صَوْتُ الدَّيْكَ، وَصَوْتُ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ، وَصَوْتُ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ. قَالَ سُفْيَانُ الثَّوْرِيُّ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى خَلَقَ رِيحاً تَهْبُ بِالْأَسْحَارِ تَحْمِلُ الْأَذْكَارَ وَالْإِسْتِغْفَارَ إِلَى الْمَلِكِ الْجَبَّارِ. وَقَالَ أَيْضاً: إِذَا كَانَ أَوَّلُ اللَّيْلِ، يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنْ تَحْتِ الْعَرْشِ: أَلَا لِيَقُمْ الْعَابِدُونَ. فَيَقُومُونَ وَيُصَلُّونَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ. ثُمَّ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ فِي شَطْرِ اللَّيْلِ: أَلَا لِيَقُمْ الْقَائِتُونَ. فَيَقُومُونَ وَيُصَلُّونَ إِلَى السَّحَرِ. فَإِذَا كَانَ السَّحَرُ نَادَى مُنَادٍ: أَلَا لِيَقُمْ الْمُسْتَغْفِرُونَ. فَيَقُومُونَ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ. فَإِذَا طَلَعَ الْفَجْرُ نَادَى مُنَادٍ: أَلَا لِيَقُمْ الْعَافِلُونَ. فَيَقُومُونَ مِنْ فُرُشِهِمْ كَأَلْوَتَى نُشِرُوا مِنْ قُبُورِهِمْ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



O disciple, in the advice Luqmān the Wise gave his son it is related that he said, 'My son, do not ever let the cock be more canny than yourself. He calls out before daybreak while you are sleeping.' He has done well who spoke the verse,

A dove moaned frailly in the dark one night  
On a branch, while I was sleeping.  
I have lied, by God's House! Were I a lover,  
Then doves wouldn't beat me in weeping.  
I claim I am mad with love, fervent with longing  
For my Lord, yet I do not weep and such animals  
are weeping.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

O disciple, the essence of knowledge is to know what obedience and worship are. Know that obedience and worship are conformity to the Lawgiver as regards commands and prohibitions, in both word and deed. That is, all that you say and do, or do not do, should be following the paradigm of the Law, such that were you to fast on the day of the 'Īd feast and the Days of the Tashrīq<sup>A</sup> you would be a rebel. Or if you prayed in a garment unlawfully acquired, though there is the appearance of worship, you sin.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

<sup>A</sup>The Days of the Tashrīq are the three days following the festival of 'Īd al-Adhā at the end of the Greater Pilgrimage (Hajj).

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، رُوِيَ فِي وَصَايَا لُقْمَانَ الْحَكِيمِ لِأَنَّهُ قَالَ: يَا بَنِي، لَا يَكُونَنَّ أَلَدِيكَ أَكْمَيْسَ مِنْكَ. يَنَادِي بِالْأَشْعَارِ وَأَنْتَ نَائِمٌ. وَلَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ مَنْ قَالَ شِعْرًا:

لَقَدْ هَتَفْتُ فِي جُنْحِ لَيْلِ حَمَامَةٍ  
عَلَى فَنٍّ وَهِنًا وَإِنِّي لَنَائِمٌ  
كَذَبْتُ، وَبَيْتِ اللَّهِ، لَوْ كُنْتُ عَاشِقًا  
لَمَا سَبَقْتَنِي بِالْبُكَاءِ الْحَمَائِمِ  
وَأَزْعُمُ أَنِّي هَائِمٌ ذُو صَبَابَةٍ  
لِرَبِّي، فَلَا أَبِي وَتَبِي الْبَهَائِمِ

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، خُلَاصَةُ الْعِلْمِ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ الطَّاعَةَ وَالْعِبَادَةَ مَا هِيَ. إِعْلَمْ أَنَّ الطَّاعَةَ وَالْعِبَادَةَ مُتَابَعَةُ الشَّارِعِ فِي الْأَوَامِرِ وَالنَّوَاهِي بِالْقَوْلِ وَالْفِعْلِ. يَعْني: كُلُّ مَا تَقُولُ وَتَفْعَلُ وَتَشْرِكُ يَكُونُ بِاقتِدَاءِ الشَّرْعِ، كَمَا لَوْ صُمْتَ يَوْمَ الْعِيدِ وَأَيَّامَ التَّشْرِيقِ تَكُونُ عَاصِيًا، أَوْ صَلَّيْتَ فِي ثَوْبٍ مَغْضُوبٍ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ صُورَةَ عِبَادَةٍ، تَأْتِمُّ.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾



O disciple, it is desirable for you that your speech and action be in accord with the Law, since knowledge and action which are not modelled on the Law are error. And you must not be deceived by the ecstatic expressions and outbursts of the Sufis, since travel on this path should be by way of self-exertion, severing the ego's appetite and killing its passions with the sword of discipline, and not by way of outbursts and useless statements.

Know that the unrestrained tongue, and the heart that is rusted over and full of negligence and greed, are a sign of misfortune, and if you do not kill the ego with sincere exertion your heart will not be animated by the lights of gnosis.

Know that the answers to some of the things about which you asked me are not brought about through writing and discussion. If you attain to that state you will know what they are, and if not—knowing them is an impossibility, in that they pertain to direct experience. The description of anything to do with direct experience is not furnished through discussion, as the sweetness of what is sweet and the bitterness of what is bitter is not known except by taste. Thus it was related that an impotent man wrote to a friend of his to tell him what the pleasure of sex was like. So he wrote back to him in reply, 'O so and so, I thought you were just impotent! Now I know that you are impotent *and* stupid, since this pleasure is to do with direct experience—if you attain it you know it—otherwise the description of it is not furnished through talking and writing!'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَوْلُكَ وَفِعْلُكَ مُوَافِقًا لِلشَّرْعِ،  
إِذِ الْعِلْمُ وَالْعَمَلُ بِلا أَقْتِدَاءِ لِلشَّرْعِ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَيَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَلَّا تَغْتَرَّ  
بِالشُّطْحِ وَطَامَاتِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ، لِأَنَّ سُلُوكَ هَذَا الطَّرِيقِ يَكُونُ  
بِالمُجَاهَدَةِ وَقَطْعِ شَهْوَةِ النَّفْسِ وَقَتْلِ هَوَاهَا بِسَيْفِ الرِّيَاضَةِ، لَا  
بِالطَّامَاتِ وَالتَّرَهَاتِ.

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللِّسَانَ الْمُطْلَقَ وَالْقَلْبَ الْمُطْبَقَ الْمَلُوءَ بِالغَفْلَةِ  
وَالشَّهْوَةَ عَلامَةَ الشَّقَاوَةِ. فَإِذَا لَمْ تَقْتُلِ النَّفْسَ بِصِدْقِ المُجَاهَدَةِ  
فَلَنْ يَحْيَا قَلْبُكَ بِأَنْوَارِ المَعْرِفَةِ.

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ بَعْضَ مَسَائِلِكَ الَّتِي سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْهَا لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ جَوَابُهَا  
بِالْكِتَابَةِ وَالْقَوْلِ. إِنْ تَبْلُغُ تِلْكَ الْحَالَةَ تَعْرِفُ مَا هِيَ، وَإِلَّا فَعِلْمُهَا  
مِنَ الْمَسْتَحِيلَاتِ لِأَنَّهَا ذَوْقِيَّةٌ، وَكُلُّ مَا يَكُونُ ذَوْقِيًّا لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ  
وَصْفُهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَحَلَاوَةِ الْحُلُوِّ وَمَرَارَةِ الْمُرِّ لَا تُعْرَفُ إِلَّا بِالذَّوْقِ.  
كَمَا حُكِيَ أَنَّ عَيْنِيًّا كَتَبَ إِلَى صَاحِبِهِ لَهُ أَنْ عَرَّفَنِي لَذَّةَ المُجَامَعَةِ  
كَيْفَ تَكُونُ. فَكَتَبَ لَهُ فِي جَوَابِهِ: يَا فُلَانُ إِنِّي كُنْتُ حَسِبْتُكَ  
عَيْنِيًّا فَقَطْ، وَالآنَ عَرَفْتُ أَنَّكَ عَيْنِيٌّ وَأَحْمَقُ. لِأَنَّ هَذِهِ اللَّذَّةَ  
ذَوْقِيَّةٌ إِنْ تَصِلُ إِلَيْهَا تَعْرِفُ، وَإِلَّا لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ وَصْفُهَا بِالْقَوْلِ  
وَالْكِتَابَةِ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, some of your questions are of this sort, and as for those capable of being answered, we have mentioned them in the *Revival of the Sciences* and other works. We mention here excerpts from it while referring you to it. We say: the spiritual traveller needs four things. The first thing is an authentic creed which contains no innovation. The second is true contrition after which there is no going back to re-offending. The third is reconciliation with enemies, so that none of them retains a claim against you. The fourth is obtaining enough knowledge of the Shari'a for the commands of God the Exalted to be executed, then whatever of the other sciences through which there is salvation.

It is related that Shiblī (may God be merciful to him) served four hundred masters and he said, 'I studied four thousand Traditions, then I chose a single Tradition out of them, and acted in accordance with it, giving up the rest, for I meditated on it and I found my deliverance and salvation in it, the knowledge of the ancients and the moderns being all included in it I contented myself with it, and it is that the Messenger of God (may God bless him and give him peace) said to one of his Companions, "Work for your terrestrial life in proportion to your stay in it, and work for your afterlife in proportion to your eternity in it! Work for God in proportion to your need for Him, and work for the Fire in proportion to your ability to endure it!"'<sup>29</sup>

ﷺ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، بَعْضُ مَسَائِلِكَ مِنْ هَذَا الْقَبِيلِ، وَأَمَّا الْبَعْضُ الَّذِي يَسْتَقِيمُ لَهُ الْجَوَابُ فَقَدْ ذَكَرْنَاهُ فِي إِحْيَاءِ الْعُلُومِ وَغَيْرِهِ، وَنَذَكُرُ هَاهُنَا نَبْذًا مِنْهُ وَنُشِيرُ إِلَيْهِ فَنَقُولُ: قَدْ وَجَبَ عَلَى السَّالِكِ أَرْبَعَةٌ أُمُورٍ: الْأَمْرُ الْأَوَّلُ آغْتِقَادَ صَحِيحٍ لَا يَكُونُ فِيهِ بِدْعَةٌ. وَالثَّانِي تَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا لَا يُرْجَعُ بَعْدَهَا إِلَى الرَّثَةِ. وَالثَّلَاثُ إِسْتِرْضَاءَ الْخُصُومِ حَتَّى لَا يَبْقَى لِأَحَدٍ عَلَيْكَ حَقٌّ. وَالرَّابِعُ تَحْصِيلُ عِلْمِ الشَّرِيعَةِ قَدْرَ مَا تُؤَدِّي بِهِ أَوْامِرُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، ثُمَّ مِنَ الْعُلُومِ الْأُخْرَى مَا تَكُونُ بِهِ النَّجَاةُ.

حُكِيَ أَنَّ الشَّيْبَلِيَّ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ، حَدَمَ أَرْبَعَمِائَةَ أُسْتَاذٍ؛ وَقَالَ: قَرَأْتُ أَرْبَعَةَ آلَافِ حَدِيثٍ، ثُمَّ أَحْتَرْتُ مِنْهَا حَدِيثًا وَاحِدًا وَعَمِلْتُ بِهِ وَخَلَيْتُ مَا سِوَاهُ لِأَنِّي تَأَمَّلْتُهُ فَوَجَدْتُ خَلَاصِي وَنَجَاتِي فِيهِ، وَكَانَ عِلْمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ كُلُّهُ مُنْدَرِجًا فِيهِ فَكَتَفَيْتُ بِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ لِبَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ: إِعْمَلْ لِدُنْيَاكَ بِقَدْرِ مَقَامِكَ فِيهَا، وَاعْمَلْ لِآخِرَتِكَ بِقَدْرِ بَقَائِكَ فِيهَا، وَاعْمَلْ لِلَّهِ بِقَدْرِ حَاجَتِكَ إِلَيْهِ، وَاعْمَلْ لِلنَّارِ بِقَدْرِ صَبْرِكَ عَلَيْهَا.

ﷺ

O disciple, if you have knowledge of this Tradition, there is no need for much learning.

Meditate on some other quotations: Hātim al-Aṣamm was one of the companions of Shaqīq al-Balkhī (the mercy of God the Exalted be upon them both), and one day he asked him and said, 'You have kept company with me for thirty years. What have you got out of them?' He replied, 'I got eight useful lessons by way of knowledge and they are enough of it for me, for I hope for my deliverance and salvation because of them.' So Shaqīq said, 'What are they?' Hātim al-Aṣamm replied:

[The first useful lesson is that] I observed mankind, and saw that everyone had an object of love and of infatuation which he loved and with which he was infatuated. Some of what was loved accompanied him up to the sickness of death and some [even] up to the graveside. Then all went back and left him solitary and alone, and not one of them entered his grave with him. So I pondered and I said: the best of what one loves is what will enter one's grave and be a friend to one in it. And I found [it to be] nothing but good deeds! So I took them as the object of my love, to be a light for me in my grave, to be a friend to me in it and not leave me all alone.

[The second useful lesson is that] I saw mankind being guided by their pleasures and hurrying to what their egos desired, so I meditated on His saying (the Exalted), "But as for

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، إِذَا عَلِمْتَ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ، لَا حَاجَةَ إِلَيَّ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ  
الْكَثِيرِ

وَتَأَمَّلْ فِي حِكَايَاتِ أُخْرَى، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ حَاتِمًا الْأَصْمَّ كَانَ مِنْ  
أَصْحَابِ الشَّقِيقِ الْبَلْخِيِّ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِمَا، فَسَأَلَهُ يَوْمًا  
قَالَ: صَاحِبْتَنِي مُنْذُ ثَلَاثِينَ سَنَةً مَا حَصَلَتْ فِيهَا؟ قَالَ: حَصَلْتُ  
ثَمَانِي فَوَائِدَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَهِيَ تَكْفِينِي مِنْهُ لِأَنِّي أَرْجُو خَلَاصِي  
وَنَجَاتِي فِيهَا. فَقَالَ شَقِيقٌ: مَا هِيَ؟ قَالَ حَاتِمٌ الْأَصْمُّ:

[الْفَائِدَةُ الْأُولَى] أَنِّي نَظَرْتُ إِلَى الْخَلْقِ فَرَأَيْتُ لِكُلِّ مِنْهُمْ  
مَحْبُوبًا وَمَعْشُوقًا يُحِبُّهُ وَيَعْشَقُهُ، وَبَعْضُ ذَلِكَ الْمَحْبُوبِ يُصَاحِبُهُ  
إِلَى مَرَضِ الْمَوْتِ، وَبَعْضُهُ إِلَى شَفِيرِ الْقَبْرِ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ كُلُّهُ  
وَيَتْرُكُهُ فَرِيدًا وَجِيدًا وَلَا يَدْخُلُ مَعَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدٌ.  
فَتَفَكَّرْتُ وَقُلْتُ: أَفْضَلُ مَحْبُوبٍ الْمَرْءُ مَا يَدْخُلُ فِي قَبْرِهِ وَيُوَانِسُهُ  
فِيهِ. فَمَا وَجَدْتُ غَيْرَ الْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ فَأَخَذْتُهَا مَحْبُوبًا لِي لِتَكُونَ  
سِرَاجًا لِي فِي قَبْرِي وَتُوَانِسَنِي فِيهِ وَلَا تَشْرِكَنِي فَرِيدًا.

[الْفَائِدَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ] أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ الْخَلْقَ يَتَقَدَّرُونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِمْ  
وَيُبَادِرُونَ إِلَى مُرَادَاتِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ، فَتَأَمَّلْتُ قَوْلَهُ تَعَالَى: «وَأَمَّا مَنْ



him who feared the station of his Lord, and kept the soul back from vain pleasure, the Garden is his abode.”<sup>30</sup> I was certain that the Qur’ān is genuine truth, so I hurried to what my ego was opposed to, and I set to work combating it and restraining it from its pleasures, until it was satisfied with obedience to God the Glorified and Exalted, and it gave up.

[The third useful lesson is that] I saw every individual in mankind exerting himself in accumulating the ephemeral things of the world, then clutching at them, laying hold on them, and I meditated on His saying (the Exalted), “What is in your possession dwindles and what is in God’s possession is eternal.”<sup>31</sup> So I sacrificed the gains I got from the world to God the Exalted, and I distributed them among the poor so that they might become a treasure for me with God the Exalted.

[The fourth useful lesson is that] I saw that some of mankind believed their nobility and standing to be in the size of their nations and tribes, so they were conceited because of them. Others had the opinion that it lay in the wealth of their possessions, and the numerousness of sons, so they were proud of them. Some reckoned nobility and standing lay in forcibly acquiring the property of men, in tyrannizing them and spilling their blood. A group held that it consisted in wasting money, spending it lavishly, and squandering it. I meditated on His saying (the Exalted), “The noblest of you in the view of God is the most God-conscious of you.”<sup>32</sup> So I chose God-consciousness, believing the Qur’ān to be accurate truth, and their opinion and evaluation utterly empty falsehood.

خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ  
الْمَأْوَىٰ. « وَتَيَقَّنْتُ أَنَّ الْقُرْآنَ حَقٌّ صَادِقٌ، فَبَادَرْتُ إِلَىٰ خِلَافِ  
نَفْسِي وَتَشَمَّرْتُ لِجَاهِدِهَا وَمَنْعِهَا عَنِ هَوَاهَا حَتَّىٰ أَرْتَضْتُ  
لِطَاعَةِ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ وَاتَّقَادَتْ.

[الْفَائِدَةُ الثَّلَاثَةُ] أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ يَسْعَىٰ فِي  
جَمْعِ حُطَامِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يُنْسِكُهُ قَابِضًا يَدَهُ عَلَيْهِ. فَتَأَمَّلْتُ فِي قَوْلِهِ  
تَعَالَىٰ: « مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ. » فَبَدَلْتُ مَحْضُولِي مِنَ  
الدُّنْيَا لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَىٰ فَفَرَّقْتُهُ بَيْنَ الْمَسَاكِينِ لِيَكُونَ ذُخْرًا لِي  
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَىٰ.

[الْفَائِدَةُ الرَّابِعَةُ] أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ بَعْضَ الْخُلُقِيِّ طَنَّ شَرَفَهُ وَعِزَّهُ  
فِي كَثْرَةِ الْأَقْوَامِ وَالْعَشَائِرِ فَأَغْتَرَّ بِهِمْ. وَزَعَمَ آخَرُونَ أَنَّهُ فِي  
ثُرْوَةِ الْأَمْوَالِ وَكثْرَةِ الْأَوْلَادِ فَافْتَخَرُوا بِهَا. وَحَسِبَ بَعْضُهُمْ  
الشَّرَفَ وَالْعِزَّ فِي غَضَبِ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ وَظُلْمِهِمْ وَسَفْكِ دِمَائِهِمْ.  
وَأَعْتَقَدْتُ طَائِفَةً أَنَّهُ فِي إِتْلَافِ الْمَالِ وَإِسْرَافِهِ وَتَبْذِيرِهِ. وَتَأَمَّلْتُ  
فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَىٰ: « إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ. » فَاخْتَرْتُ التَّقْوَىٰ  
وَأَعْتَقَدْتُ أَنَّ الْقُرْآنَ حَقٌّ صَادِقٌ وَظَنَنْتُهُمْ وَحُسْبَانَهُمْ كُلَّهُمْ بَاطِلٌ  
زَائِلٌ.

[The fifth useful lesson is that] I saw some people blaming others and some slandering others, and I found that that was through envy regarding money, fame and knowledge. So I meditated on His saying (the Exalted), "We distribute their subsistence amongst them in the life of the world,"<sup>33</sup> and I understood that the distribution was from God the Exalted in eternity, so I did not envy anyone and I was content with the distribution of God the Exalted.

[The sixth useful lesson is that] I saw some people acting with hostility towards others due to some motive and cause. So I meditated on His saying (the Exalted), "Verily, Satan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy,"<sup>34</sup> and I understood that enmity towards anyone but Satan was not allowed.

[The seventh useful lesson is that] I saw everyone striving in earnest, and working intensely in quest of their food and livelihood to the point that they thereby fell into what was dubious and banned, degrading themselves and lowering their worth. So I meditated on His statement (the Exalted), "No beast is on earth without its provision depending on God,"<sup>35</sup> and I understood that my provision depended on God the Exalted and that He had guaranteed it. So I occupied myself with worshipping Him and severed my hope from other than Him.

[The eighth useful lesson is that] I saw everyone relying on something created—some on the dinar and dirham, some on wealth and property, some on their business and trade, and others on some similar created thing. So I meditated on His statement (the Exalted), "And whoso relies upon God—He is his sufficiency. Verily, God brings His command to pass. God has made a portion for everything."<sup>36</sup> So I relied on God, and He is my sufficiency and the most excellent trustee!

الْفَائِدَةُ الْخَامِسَةُ [ أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ النَّاسَ يَذُمُّ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا وَيَغْتَابُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا فَوَجَدْتُ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْحَسَدِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالْجَاهِ وَالْعِلْمِ. فَتَأَمَّلْتُ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: « نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا. » فَعَلِمْتُ أَنَّ الْقِسْمَةَ كَانَتْ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي الْأَزَلِّ، فَمَا حَسَدْتُ أَحَدًا وَرَضِيتُ بِقِسْمَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى .

الْفَائِدَةُ السَّادِسَةُ [ أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ النَّاسَ يُعَادِي بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا لِعَرَضٍ وَسَبَبٍ. فَتَأَمَّلْتُ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: « إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا. » فَعَلِمْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا تَجُوزُ عِدَاوَةٌ أَحَدٍ غَيْرِ الشَّيْطَانِ.

الْفَائِدَةُ السَّابِعَةُ [ أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ كُلَّ أَحَدٍ يَسْعَى بِحِدِّ وَيَجْتَهِدُ بِمُبَالَغَةٍ لِيَطْلُبَ الْقُوَّةَ وَالْعَاشَ بِحَيْثُ يَقَعُ فِي شُبْهَةٍ وَحَرَامٍ وَيَذُلُّ نَفْسَهُ وَيُنْقِصُ قَدْرَهُ. فَتَأَمَّلْتُ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: « وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا. » فَعَلِمْتُ أَنَّ رِزْقِي عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَقَدْ ضَمِنَهُ. فَاشْتَعَلْتُ بِعِبَادَتِهِ وَقَطَعْتُ ظَمْعِي عَمَّنْ سِوَاهُ.

الْفَائِدَةُ الثَّامِنَةُ [ أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مُعْتَمِدًا عَلَى شَيْءٍ مَخْلُوقٍ. بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى الدِّينَارِ وَالذَّرْهِمِ، وَبَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى الْمَالِ وَالْمَلِكِ، وَبَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى الْحِرْفَةِ وَالصَّنَاعَةِ، وَبَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى مَخْلُوقٍ مِثْلِهِ. فَتَأَمَّلْتُ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: « وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِغٌ أَمْرِهِ. قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا. » فَتَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبِي وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ.



Shaqīq said, 'May God the Exalted grant you success! I have examined the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, and the "Furqān" (i.e. the Qur'ān), and I discovered that the four books revolve around these eight useful lessons. Thus whoever acts on the basis of them, acts in accordance with these four books.'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, you have understood from these two stories that you do not need extra learning. Now I will explain to you what is indispensable for the traveller on the way of truth.

Know that the traveller should have a master as a guide and instructor, to rid him of bad traits through his instruction and replace them with good ones. The significance of instruction is comparable to the work of the farmer who uproots thorn-bushes and removes weeds from the midst of the crops, so that his plants are in a proper condition, and his yield is brought to perfection.

The traveller must have a master to refine him and show him the way to God the Exalted. For God sent a messenger to His creatures in order to show the way to Him. And when he died—God bless him and give him peace—he appointed deputies in his place to show the way to God the Exalted. The criterion for the master who is fit to act as a representative of the Messenger of God (God's blessings and peace be upon him) is that he be knowledgeable. And yet not every knowledgeable man is fit for deputyship. I will explain to you some of his characteristics by way of generalization, lest everyone claim that he is a guide.

فَقَالَ شَقِيقٌ: وَفَقَكَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى. إِنِّي قَدْ نَظَرْتُ التَّوْرَةَ  
وَالزَّبُورَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ فَوَجَدْتُ الْكُتُبَ الْأَرْبَعَةَ تَدُورُ عَلَى  
هَذِهِ الْفَوَائِدِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ. فَمَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا كَانَ عَامِلًا بِهَذِهِ الْكُتُبِ  
الْأَرْبَعَةِ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، قَدْ عَلِمْتَ مِنْ هَاتَيْنِ الْحِكَايَتَيْنِ أَنَّكَ لَا تَحْتَاجُ  
إِلَى تَكْثِيرِ الْعِلْمِ. وَالآنَ أُبَيِّنُ لَكَ مَا يَحِبُّ عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْحَقِّ:  
إِعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ يَنْبَغِي لِلسَّالِكِ شَيْخٌ مُرْشِدٌ مُرَبِّ لِيُخْرِجَ الْأَخْلَاقَ  
السَّيِّئَةَ مِنْهُ بِتَرْبِيَّتِهِ وَيَجْعَلَ مَكَانَهَا خُلُقًا حَسَنًا. وَمَعْنَى التَّرْبِيَّةِ  
يُشْبِهُ فِعْلَ الْفَلَّاحِ الَّذِي يَقْلَعُ الشُّوكَ وَيُخْرِجُ النَّبَاتَاتِ الْأَجْنَبِيَّةَ  
مِنْ بَيْنِ الزَّرْعِ لِيُحَسِّنَ نَبَاتَهُ وَيَكْمُلَ رَيْعُهُ.

وَلَا بُدَّ لِلسَّالِكِ مِنْ شَيْخٍ يُؤَدِّبُهُ وَيُرْشِدُهُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
تَعَالَى. لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ أَرْسَلَ لِلْعِبَادِ رُسُلًا لِلإِرشَادِ إِلَى سَبِيلِهِ. فَإِذَا  
أَرْتَحَلَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَدْ خَلَفَ الْخُلَفَاءَ فِي مَكَانِهِ حَتَّى  
يُرْشِدُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. وَشَرَطُ الشَّيْخِ الَّذِي يَصْلُحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ  
نَائِبًا لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ، صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ وَسَلَامُهُ عَلَيْهِ، أَنْ يَكُونَ عَالِمًا.  
وَلَكِنْ مَا كُلُّ عَالِمٍ يَصْلُحُ لِلْخِلَافَةِ. وَإِنِّي أُبَيِّنُ لَكَ بَعْضَ عِلْمَاتِهِ  
عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْإِجْمَالِ حَتَّى لَا يَدَّعِي كُلُّ أَحَدٍ أَنَّهُ مُرْشِدٌ.



So we say: it is someone who is averse to love of the world and love of fame; who has been the disciple of a person possessed of insight whose discipleship is part of a chain leading back to the Master of Messengers (God bless him and give him peace); who is proficient in disciplining his soul with little food, speech and sleep, and with much prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.

By his discipleship of that insightful master he has made into a way of life for himself proficiency in virtues such as patience, prayer, gratitude, reliance on God, certitude, contentment, self-composure, mildness, humility, knowledge, sincerity, modesty, fidelity, dignity, silence, deliberateness in acting, and suchlike. In consequence, he is a light among the lights of the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), fit to be followed as an example.

However, finding the like of him is unusual—harder than red sulphur! Whoever is favoured by good fortune in finding a master such as we have mentioned, and the master accepts him, should venerate him outwardly and inwardly.

As for outward veneration—it is that he should not contend with him nor engage in argument with him over anything, even if he is aware of an error of his. He should not lay his prayer carpet down in front of him unless at the time of carrying out the formal prayer, and when he has finished he should remove it. He should not increase the number of optional prayers in his presence. He should do whatever task is commanded by the master as far as he can manage and is capable.

As for inward veneration—it is that everything he hears and receives from him externally should not be rejected by him internally, neither acts nor statements, lest he be charac-

فَنَقُولُ: مَنْ يُعْرِضُ عَنِ حُبِّ الدُّنْيَا وَحُبِّ الْحَيَاةِ، وَكَانَ قَدْ تَابَعَ لِشَخْصٍ بَصِيرٍ تَتَسَلَّسَلُ مُتَابَعَتُهُ إِلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَكَانَ مُحْسِنًا رِيَاضَةً نَفْسِهِ بِقَلَّةِ الْأَكْلِ وَالْقَوْلِ وَالنَّوْمِ وَكَثْرَةِ الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّدَقَةِ وَالصَّوْمِ.

وَكَانَ بِمُتَابَعَتِهِ ذَلِكَ الشَّيْخِ الْبَصِيرِ جَاعِلًا مُحَاسِنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَهُ سِيرَةً كَالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالشُّكْرِ وَالتَّوَكُّلِ وَالْيَقِينِ وَالْقَنَاعَةِ وَطَمَأْنِينَةَ النَّفْسِ وَالْحِلْمِ وَالتَّوَاضُعِ وَالْعِلْمِ وَالصَّدَقِ وَالْحَيَاءِ وَالْوَفَاءِ وَالْوَقَارِ وَالسُّكُونِ وَالتَّائِيٍّ وَأَمْثَالِهَا، فَهُوَ إِذَا نُورٌ مِنْ أَنْوَارِ النَّبِيِّ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَضْلُحُ لِلْإِفْتِدَاءِ بِهِ.

وَلَكِنَّ وُجُودَ مِثْلِهِ نَادِرٌ أَعَزُّ مِنَ الْكِبْرِيَّتِ الْأَحْمَرِ. وَمَنْ سَاعَدَتْهُ السَّعَادَةُ فَوَجَدَ شَيْخًا كَمَا ذَكَرْنَا، وَقَبْلَهُ الشَّيْخُ، يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَحْتَرِمَهُ ظَاهِرًا وَبَاطِنًا.

أَمَّا أَحْتِرَامُ الظَّاهِرِ فَهُوَ أَلَّا يُجَادِلُهُ وَلَا يَشْتَغِلَ بِالْإِحْتِجَاجِ مَعَهُ فِي كُلِّ مَسْأَلَةٍ، وَإِنْ عَلِمَ خَطَأَهُ. وَلَا يُلْقِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ سَجَادَتَهُ إِلَّا وَقْتُ آدَاءِ الصَّلَاةِ فَإِذَا فَرَّغَ يَرْفَعَهَا. وَلَا يُكْتَرُ نَوَافِلُ الصَّلَاةِ بِحَضْرَتِهِ. وَيَعْمَلُ مَا يَأْمُرُهُ الشَّيْخُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ بِقَدْرِ وَسِعِهِ وَطَاقَتِهِ.

وَأَمَّا أَحْتِرَامُ الْبَاطِنِ فَهُوَ أَنْ كُلَّ مَا يَسْمَعُ وَيَقْبَلُ مِنْهُ فِي الظَّاهِرِ لَا يُنْكِرُهُ فِي الْبَاطِنِ، لَا فِعْلًا وَلَا قَوْلًا، لِئَلَّا يَتَّسِمَ بِالنَّفَاقِ.

terized by hypocrisy. If he is unable, let him leave his company until his interior is consistent with his exterior. He should be on his guard against socializing with the wicked, so as to check the power of the demons among *jinn* and men in the recess of his heart, and so be rid of the taint of villainy, and at any rate he should choose poverty over wealth.

Then know that Sufism has two characteristics: correctness towards God the Exalted; and withdrawal from mankind. Whoever is correct towards God (Mighty and Majestic!), and masters his character with men, dealing with them mildly, is a Sufi. Correctness is to sacrifice the ego's pleasure to God's command (the Exalted). And excellence of character with men is not to get men to do what your ego wants, but to get your ego to do what they want, as long as they are not at odds with the Shari'a.

Next you questioned me about servanthood, and it is three things. The first of them is observing the ordinance of the Shari'a. The second of them is being satisfied with the divine decree, with predestination, and the fate allotted by God the Exalted. The third of them is rejecting the satisfaction of your ego, in seeking the satisfaction of God the Exalted.

You questioned me about reliance on God. It is that your creed about God the Exalted on what He has promised (and threatened),<sup>A</sup> come to be sincerely held. I mean you should believe that what has been predestined for you will inevitably reach you, even if all that is in the world tried to divert it from you. And what is not written will not come to you, even if the whole world helped you.

<sup>A</sup> *Wa'ada* can mean both 'promise' and 'threaten', hence *al-wa'd* means 'the promise' and *al-wa'id* 'the threat'.

وَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ يَشْرِكْ صُحْبَتَهُ إِلَى أَنْ يُوَافِقَ بَاطِنُهُ ظَاهِرَهُ. وَيَحْتَرِزُ  
عَنْ مَجَالَسَةِ صَاحِبِ الشَّوْءِ لِيَقْصُرَ وَلَايَةَ شَيْطَانِ الْحَيْنِ وَالْإِنْسِ  
عَنْ صَمْنِ قَلْبِهِ، فَيُصَفَّى مِنْ لُوثِ الشَّيْطَانَةِ، وَعَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ يَخْتَارُ  
الْفَقْرَ عَلَى الْغِنَى.

ثُمَّ أَعْلَمَ أَنَّ التَّصَوُّفَ لَهُ خَصْلَتَانِ: الْإِسْتِقَامَةُ مَعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى  
وَالشُّكُونُ عَنِ الْخَلْقِ. فَمَنْ اسْتَقَامَ مَعَ اللَّهِ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَأَحْسَنَ  
خُلُقَهُ مَعَ النَّاسِ وَعَامَلَهُمْ بِالْحِلْمِ فَهُوَ صُوفِيٌّ. وَالْإِسْتِقَامَةُ أَنْ يَفِدِيَ  
حَظَّ نَفْسِهِ عَلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ مَعَ النَّاسِ أَلَّا  
تَحْمِلَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مُرَادِ نَفْسِكَ، بَلْ تَحْمِلَ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى مُرَادِهِمْ، مَا  
لَمْ يُخَالِفُوا الشَّرْعَ.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكَ سَأَلْتَنِي عَنِ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ وَهِيَ ثَلَاثَةٌ أَشْيَاءَ: أَحَدَهَا  
مُحَافَظَةُ أَمْرِ الشَّرْعِ. وَثَانِيهَا الرِّضَاءُ بِالْقَضَاءِ وَالْقَدْرِ وَقِسْمَةِ اللَّهِ  
تَعَالَى. وَثَالِثُهَا تَرْكُ رِضَاءِ نَفْسِكَ فِي طَلَبِ رِضَاءِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى.

وَسَأَلْتَنِي عَنِ التَّوَكُّلِ وَهُوَ أَنْ يَسْتَحْكِمَ آعْتِقَادَكَ بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَى  
فِيمَا وَعَدَ، يَعْني تَعْتَقِدُ أَنَّ مَا قَدَّرَ لَكَ سَيَصِلُ إِلَيْكَ لَا مَحَالَةَ وَإِنْ  
أَجْتَهَدَ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي الْعَالَمِ عَلَى صَرْفِهِ عَنكَ، وَمَا لَمْ يُكْتَبْ لَنْ  
يَصِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنْ سَاعَدَكَ جَمِيعُ الْعَالَمِ.



You questioned me about sincerity. It is that all your deeds be for God the Exalted, and that your heart be not gladdened by men's praises nor that you care about their censure. Know that insincerity is produced by overestimating mankind. The cure for it is for you to see them as subject to omnipotence, and for you to reckon them as though inanimate objects, powerless to bestow ease or hardship, so you become free of insincerity towards them. As long as you reckon them as having control and free-will, insincerity will not keep away from you.

ﷺ

O disciple, as for the rest of your questions—some are covered in my works, so look for them there. And putting others down in writing is an offence. Act in accordance with what you know for what you do not know to be unveiled to you.<sup>A</sup>

ﷺ

O disciple, after today do not question me about what is difficult for you, except with 'the tongue of the heart', on account of His statement (the Exalted), 'And if they were patient till you emerged for them, it would be better for them.'<sup>37</sup> Accept the advice of Khaḍīr (upon him be peace) when he said, 'Do not ask me about anything until I set about mentioning it to you.'<sup>38</sup> Do not rush so that you may reach the proper time when it will be unveiled to you and you will see it, 'I will show you My signs—so do not hurry Me!'<sup>39</sup> So do not question me prematurely, and be certain that you will not arrive without spiritual travel, on account of His statement (the Exalted), 'Have they not travelled the earth and considered?'<sup>40</sup>

ﷺ

<sup>A</sup>Ghazālī is paraphrasing a prophetic Tradition: 'Whoso acts in accordance with what he knows, God bestows on him the knowledge of what he does not act on' (*man 'amila bi-mā 'alima awrathahu* 'Llāhu ta'ālā 'ilma mā lam ya' mal). Jarrāḥī, *Kashf al-khafā'*, vol. 2, p. 365, ḥadīth 2542.

وَسَأَلْتَنِي عَنِ الْإِخْلَاصِ وَهُوَ أَنْ تَكُونَ أَعْمَالُكَ كُلُّهَا لِلَّهِ  
تَعَالَى وَلَا يَزِثَّاحَ قَلْبُكَ بِمَحَامِدِ النَّاسِ وَلَا تُبَالِي بِمَذَمَّتِهِمْ. وَأَعْلَمُ  
أَنَّ الرِّيَاءَ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْ تَعْظِيمِ الْخَلْقِ. وَعِلَاجُهُ أَنْ تَرَاهُمْ مُسَخَّرِينَ  
تَحْتَ الْقُدْرَةِ وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ كَالْحِمَاذَاتِ فِي عَدَمِ قُدْرَةِ إِيْصَالِ الرَّاحَةِ  
وَالْمَشَقَّةِ لِتَخْلُصَ مِنْ مُرَاءَاتِهِمْ. وَمَتَى تَحْسَبُهُمْ ذَوِي قُدْرَةٍ وَإِرَادَةٍ  
لَنْ يَبْعُدَ عَنْكَ الرِّيَاءُ.

ﷺ

أُيُّهَا أَوْلَادُ، وَالْبَاقِي مِنْ مَسَائِلِكَ بَعْضُهَا مَسْطُورٌ فِي مُصَنَّفَاتِي  
فَاطْلُبْهُ ثِمَّةً، وَكِتَابَةٌ بَعْضُهَا حَرَامٌ. إِعْمَلْ أَنْتَ بِمَا تَعْلَمُ لِيُنْكَشَفَ  
لَكَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمْ.

ﷺ

أُيُّهَا أَوْلَادُ، بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ لَا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا أَشْكَلَ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا بِلسَانِ  
الْجَبَّانِ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى «وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ  
خَيْرًا لَهُمْ». وَأَقْبَلْ نَصِيحَةَ الْحَضِرِ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، حِينَ قَالَ: «فَلَا  
تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا». وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ حَتَّى  
تَبْلُغَ أَوَانَهُ فَيُنْكَشَفَ لَكَ وَتَرَاهُ «سَأُورِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ». «فَلَا  
تَسْأَلْنِي قَبْلَ الْوَقْتِ، وَتَيَقِّنَنَّ أَنَّكَ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَّا بِالسَّيْرِ، لِقَوْلِهِ  
تَعَالَى «أَوْ لَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا».

ﷺ



O disciple—by God, if you travel you will see marvels at every stage! Persevere, for the main thing in this affair is perseverance. As Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (may God the Exalted be merciful to him) said to one of his disciples, 'If you can persevere, then come. If not, then do not engage in travesties of the Sufis.'<sup>41</sup>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, I advise you about eight things. Accept them from me lest your knowledge becomes a liability for you on the Day of Resurrection. Accomplish four of them and give up four of them. As for the ones to give up:

[The first of them] is that you do not argue with anyone regarding any issue, insofar as you are able, since there is much that is harmful in it, and 'its evil is greater than its utility.'<sup>A</sup> For it is the origin of every ugly character trait, such as insincerity, envy, haughtiness, resentment, enmity, boastfulness and so on. Certainly, if an issue arises between you and an individual or a group, and your intention in regard to it is that the truth become known and not lost sight of, discussion is allowed you. However there are two indications of this intention. The first is that you make no distinction between the truth's being disclosed on your own tongue or that of someone else. The second is that discussion in private be preferable to you than in public.

<sup>A</sup>This echoes Q. II:219 on wine and gambling 'wa-ithmuhumā akbaru min naf' ihimā.'

أَيُّهَا أَوْلَادُ، بِاللَّهِ إِنْ تَسِرَ تَرَ الْعَجَائِبَ فِي كُلِّ مَنْزِلٍ. وَأَبْدُلْ  
رُوحَكَ فَإِنَّ رَأْسَ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ بَدْلُ الرُّوحِ. كَمَا قَالَ ذُو النَّوْنِ  
الْمِصْرِيُّ، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، لِأَحَدِ تَلَامِيذِهِ: إِنْ قَدَرْتَ عَلَى بَدْلِ  
الرُّوحِ فَتَعَالَ، وَإِلَّا فَلَا تَشْتَعِلْ بِتُرَاهَاتِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا أَوْلَادُ، إِنِّي أَنْصَحُكَ بِثَمَانِيَةِ أَشْيَاءَ. إِقْبَلْهَا مِنِّي لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ  
عِلْمُكَ حُضْمًا عَلَيْكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ. تَعْمَلْ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةً، وَتَدَعْ مِنْهَا  
أَرْبَعَةً. أَمَّا اللَّوَاتِي تَدْعُ:  
[فَأَحَدُهَا] أَلَّا تُنَاطِرَ أَحَدًا فِي مَسْأَلَةٍ مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ، لِأَنَّ فِيهَا  
آفَاتٌ كَثِيرَةٌ. فَأَيُّهَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهَا، إِذْ هِيَ مُنْبَعُ كُلِّ خُلُقٍ ذَمِيمٍ  
كَالرِّيَاءِ وَالْحَسَدِ وَالْكِبْرِ وَالْحَقْدِ وَالْعَدَاوَةِ وَالنَّبَاهَاةِ وَغَيْرِهَا. نَعَمْ  
لَوْ وَقَعَ مَسْأَلَةٌ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ شَخْصٍ أَوْ قَوْمٍ، وَكَانَتْ إِرَادَتُكَ فِيهَا أَنْ  
يُظَهَرَ الْحَقُّ وَلَا يَضِيعَ، جَازَ [لَكَ] الْبَحْثُ لَكِنْ لِيَتْلِكَ الْإِرَادَةُ  
عَلَامَتَانِ: إِحْدَاهُمَا أَلَّا تُفَرِّقَ بَيْنَ أَنْ يَنْكَشِفَ الْحَقُّ عَلَى لِسَانِكَ  
أَوْ عَلَى لِسَانِ غَيْرِكَ. وَالثَّانِيَةُ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْبَحْثُ فِي الْخَلَاءِ أَحَبَّ  
إِلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ فِي الْمَلَأِ.

Listen—I will mention to you something useful at this juncture: understand that questioning about difficulties is [as it were] showing the sickness of the heart to a doctor, and replying to it is an attempt to cure this sickness. Know that the ignorant are the sick at heart, and the knowledgeable are the doctors. The man of inadequate knowledge is not expert in nursing, nor will the wholly knowledgeable man treat every patient. Instead he will treat whoever longs to get treatment and health. If the sickness is chronic or incurable, the expertise of the doctor in regard to it is to state that it is incurable, and he will not concern himself with treating it since it would waste his time.

Next, know that the disease of ignorance is of four kinds. The first of them is curable, and the rest incurable. As for what is incurable, the first is someone whose questioning or arguing is out of his envy and hate. Whenever you answer him with the best, clearest, or most evident reply, it only increases him in hate, hostility, and envy. The *modus operandi* is not to engage in replying to him. It has been said,

An end may be hoped for every hostility,  
But his who was hostile to you through envy.

Thus you should turn away from him and leave him with his sickness. God the Exalted said, 'Turn away from whoever holds back from remembering Us and wants nothing but the

وَأَسْمَعُ إِنِّي أَذْكَرُ لَكَ هَاهُنَا فَايِدَةً، وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ السُّؤَالَ عَنِ  
الْمَشْكَالَاتِ عَرَضٌ مَرَضُ الْقَلْبِ عَلَى الطَّيِّبِ، وَالْجَوَابُ لَهُ سَغِي  
لِإِصْلَاحِ مَرَضِهِ. وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْجَاهِلِينَ الْمَرْضَى قُلُوبُهُمْ، وَالْعُلَمَاءَ  
الْأَطِبَّاءَ، وَالْعَالِمَ النَّاقِصَ لَا يُحْسِنُ الْمَعَالِجَةَ، وَالْعَالِمَ الْكَامِلَ لَا  
يُعَالِجُ كُلَّ مَرِيضٍ، بَلْ يُعَالِجُ مَنْ يَزْجُو قُبُولَ الْمَعَالِجَةِ وَالصَّلَاحِ.  
وَإِذَا كَانَتْ الْعِلَّةُ مُزْمِنَةً أَوْ عَقِيمًا لَا تَقْبَلُ الْعِلَاجَ فَحَدَاةُ  
الطَّيِّبِ فِيهِ أَنْ يَقُولَ هَذَا لَا يَقْبَلُ الْعِلَاجَ فَلَا تَشْتَغِلْ فِيهِ  
بِمَدَاوَاتِهِ لِأَنَّ فِيهِ تَضْيِيعَ الْعَمْرِ.

ثُمَّ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَرَضَ الْجَهْلِ عَلَى أَرْبَعَةِ أَنْوَاعٍ: أَحَدُهَا يَقْبَلُ  
الْعِلَاجَ وَالْبَاقِي لَا يَقْبَلُ. أَمَّا الَّذِي لَا يَقْبَلُ الْعِلَاجَ فَأَحَدُهَا مَنْ  
كَانَ سُؤَالُهُ وَأَعْتِرَاضُهُ عَنِ حَسَدِهِ وَبُغْضِهِ، فَكَلَّمَا نُحْيِيَهُ بِأَحْسَنِ  
الْجَوَابِ وَأَفْصَحِهِ وَأَوْضَحِهِ، فَلَا يَزِيدُ لَهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بُغْضًا وَعَدَاوَةً  
وَحَسَدًا. فَالطَّرِيقُ إِلَّا تَشْتَغِلَ بِجَوَابِهِ، فَقَدْ قِيلَ:

كُلُّ الْعَدَاوَةِ قَدْ تُرْجَى إِزَالَتُهَا  
إِلَّا عَدَاوَةَ مَنْ عَادَاكَ عَنْ حَسَدٍ

فَيَنْبَغِي أَنْ تُعْرِضَ عَنْهُ وَتَشْرِكُهُ مَعَ مَرَضِهِ. قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى:  
«فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا.»



life of the world.<sup>42</sup> The envious man in whatever he says and does, sets fire to the crop of his deeds,<sup>43</sup> as the Prophet (upon him be peace) said, 'Envy devours good deeds as fire devours wood.'<sup>44</sup>

The second has foolishness as his sickness, and he too is incurable. As Jesus said (upon him be peace), 'Verily, I was not incapable of bringing the dead to life, but I was incapable of curing the fool.'<sup>45</sup> This is someone who spent a small time in pursuit of learning, studying something in the way of non-revelatory and revelatory knowledge, so out of his stupidity he interrogates and queries the great scholar who has passed his life in the non-revelatory and revelatory sciences, and this idiot in his ignorance thinks that what is a problem for him is also problematic for the great scholar. Since he does not know [even] this much, his questioning is due to his foolishness, and you should not engage in answering him.

The third is someone asking for guidance, and everything he does not understand in the discussion of the great scholars is put down [by him] to the shortcomings in his own knowledge, and his questioning is to learn. However he is unintelligent and does not grasp realities. Thus you should not engage in answering him either, as God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'We, the assemblies of the prophets, have been commanded to address men in proportion to their intellects.'<sup>46</sup>

As for the sickness which is curable—it is that of someone asking for guidance, [who is] intelligent, understanding, not overwhelmed by envy, anger, the love of reputation, prestige and wealth, being a seeker of the Straight Path,<sup>47</sup> and

وَالْحُسُودُ بِكُلِّ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَفْعَلُ يُوقِدُ النَّارَ فِي زَرْعِ عَمَلِهِ، كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: الْحَسَدُ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْخَطْبَ.

وَالثَّانِي أَنْ تَكُونَ عَلْتُهُ مِنَ الْحَمَاقَةِ وَهُوَ أَيْضًا لَا يَقْبَلُ الْعِلَاجَ، كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِنِّي مَا عَجَزْتُ عَنْ إِحْيَاءِ الْمَوْتَى وَقَدْ عَجَزْتُ عَنْ مُعَالَجَةِ الْأَخْمَقِ. وَذَلِكَ رَجُلٌ يَشْتَغَلُ بِطَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ زَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَيَتَعَلَّمُ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْعِلْمِ الْعَقْلِيِّ وَالشَّرْعِيِّ فَيَسْأَلُ وَيَغْتَرِضُ مِنْ حَمَاقَتِهِ عَلَى الْعَالِمِ الْكَبِيرِ الَّذِي مَضَى عُمُرُهُ فِي الْعُلُومِ الْعَقْلِيَّةِ وَالشَّرْعِيَّةِ. وَهَذَا الْأَخْمَقُ لَا يَعْلَمُ وَيَظُنُّ أَنَّ مَا أَشْكَلَ عَلَيْهِ هُوَ أَيْضًا مُشْكَلٌ عَلَى الْعَالِمِ الْكَبِيرِ. فَإِذَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ هَذَا الْقَدْرَ يَكُونُ سُؤَالُهُ مِنَ الْحَمَاقَةِ. فَيَنْبَغِي أَلَّا تَشْتَغَلَ بِجَوَابِهِ.

وَالثَّلَاثُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مُسْتَرْشِدًا وَكُلُّ مَا لَا يَفْهَمُ مِنْ كَلَامِ الْأَكَابِرِ يُحْمَلُ عَلَى قُصُورِ فَهْمِهِ وَكَانَ سُؤَالُهُ لِلِاسْتِيفَادَةِ، لَكِنْ يَكُونُ بَلِيدًا لَا يُذْرِكُ الْحَقَائِقَ، فَلَا يَنْبَغِي الْإِسْتِغَالُ بِجَوَابِهِ أَيْضًا، كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: نَحْنُ مَعَاشِرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ أَمْرْنَا أَنْ نُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ عَلَى قَدْرِ عُقُولِهِمْ.

وَأَمَّا الْمَرَضُ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ الْعِلَاجَ فَهُوَ أَنْ يَكُونَ مُسْتَرْشِدًا عَاقِلًا فَهَمًّا، لَا يَكُونُ مَغْلُوبَ الْحَسَدِ وَالغَضَبِ وَحُبِّ الشُّهْرَةِ وَالنَّجَاهِ وَالنَّالِ، وَيَكُونُ طَالِبَ الطَّرِيقِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ سُؤَالُهُ



whose questioning and querying are not out of envy, obstinacy or desire to test. This man is curable, and it is permissible to engage in a reply to his question, in fact replying to him is obligatory for you.

[The second thing] to give up is: That you are on your guard against becoming a preacher or admonisher for it involves much harm, unless you first 'practice what you preach', then preach it to people. Think of what was said to Jesus (upon him be peace), 'O Son of Mary! Preach to your soul, and if it learns its lesson, preach to people—otherwise show humility before your Lord.'<sup>48</sup>

If you are put to the test with this occupation, be careful of two traits: First is pretentiousness in talking, by way of idioms, allusions, outbursts, verses and poems—for God the Exalted detests the pretentious. The pretentious and excessive man exhibits inward decadence and the indifference of his heart. The idea of admonition is for the worshipper to recollect the fire of the hereafter and his own remissness in the service of the Creator, to consider his past life which he has spent in what did not concern him, and consider what difficulties lie before him such as the absence of firmness of faith in his life's final moments, the nature of his state in the clasps of the Angel of Death, and whether he will be capable of answering Munkar and Nakīr,<sup>49</sup> that he worry about his state during the Resurrection and its episodes, and whether he will cross the Bridge safely or tumble into the abyss.<sup>50</sup> The recollection of these things should remain in his heart and upset his apathy. To foment these fires and lament these calamities is termed 'admonition'.

وَأَعْتَرَا ضُهُ عَنْ حَسَدٍ وَتَعَنَّتْ وَأَمْتَحَانٍ. وَهَذَا يَقْبَلُ الْعِلَاجَ فَيَجُوزُ أَنْ تَشْتَغَلَ بِجَوَابِ سُؤَالِهِ، بَلْ يَجِبُ عَلَيْكَ إِجَابَتُهُ.

[وَالثَّانِي] مِمَّا تَدْعُ هُوَ أَنْ تَحْذَرَ مِنْ أَنْ تَكُونَ وَاعِظًا وَمُذَكِّرًا لِأَنَّ فِيهِ أَفَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ، إِلَّا أَنْ تَعْمَلَ بِمَا تَقُولُ أَوَّلًا ثُمَّ تَعِظَ بِهِ النَّاسَ. فَتَفَكَّرْ فِيمَا قِيلَ لِعِيسَى، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: يَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ عِظْ نَفْسَكَ فَإِنَّ آتَعَطَّتْ فَعِظِ النَّاسَ وَإِلَّا فَاسْتَحْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ.

وَإِنْ أَتَيْتَ بِهَذَا الْعَمَلِ فَاحْتَرِزْ عَنْ خَصْلَتَيْنِ: الْأُولَى عَنِ التَّكْفِيفِ فِي الْكَلَامِ بِالْعِبَارَاتِ وَالْإِشَارَاتِ وَالطَّمَامَاتِ وَالْأَبْنِيَاتِ وَالْأَشْعَارِ، لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُبْغِضُ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ، وَالتَّكْفِيفُ الْمُتَجَاوِزُ عَنِ الْحَدِّ يَدُلُّ عَلَى خَرَابِ الْبَاطِنِ وَغَفْلَةِ الْقَلْبِ. وَمَعْنَى التَّذْكِيرِ أَنْ يَذْكَرَ الْعَبْدُ نَارَ الْآخِرَةِ وَتَقْصِيرَ نَفْسِهِ فِي خِدْمَةِ الْخَالِقِ، وَيَتَفَكَّرَ فِي عُمْرِهِ الْمَاضِي الَّذِي أَفْنَاهُ فِيمَا لَا يُعِينُهُ، وَيَتَفَكَّرَ فِيمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْعَقَبَاتِ مِنْ عَدَمِ سَلَامَةِ الْإِيمَانِ فِي الْخَاتِمَةِ، وَكَيْفِيَّةِ حَالِهِ فِي قَبْضِ مَلِكِ الْمَوْتِ وَهَلْ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى جَوَابِ مُنْكَرٍ وَنَكِيرٍ، وَيَهْتَمُّ بِحَالِهِ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَوَاقِفِهَا، وَهَلْ يَغْبُرُ عَنِ الصَّرَاطِ سَالِمًا أَمْ يَقَعُ فِي الْهَآوِيَةِ؟ وَيَسْتَمِرُّ ذِكْرُ هَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاءِ فِي قَلْبِهِ فَيُزْعِجُهُ عَنْ قَرَارِهِ. فَغَلَيَانُ هَذِهِ النِّيرَانِ وَنَوْحَةُ هَذِهِ الْمَصَائِبِ يُسَمَّى تَذْكِيرًا.

Informing mankind and apprising them of these things, warning them of their remissness and negligence, making them see the defects of their egos, so that the heat of these fires impinges on the congregation, and the calamities disturb them so that they make amends for their past lives as far as possible, and they are distressed by the days passed in disobedience to God the Exalted: all this in this way is termed 'preaching'.

It is as if you saw that a flood bore down on an individual's house with him and his family inside, and you said, 'Look out! Look out! Run from the flood!' In these circumstances does your heart long for you to give the owner of the house your message with pretentious expressions, anecdotes and allusions? It is completely repugnant to you! The situation of the preacher is like this and he should give them up.

The second trait is that your effort in your preaching should not be for the people in your congregation to roar or show hysteria and tear at their clothes, so that it is said, 'What a gathering that was!' For all this is worldliness, and that is produced by indifference. Rather your zealous intention must be to lead men from the world to the hereafter, from recalcitrance to obedience, from acquisitiveness to renunciation, from stinginess to generosity, from doubt to certainty, from indifference to vigilance, and from illusion to God-consciousness. You should evoke in them love of the afterlife and loathing for the world. You should teach them about worship and asceticism. Do not allow them to be complacent due to the kindness of God the

وَإِغْلَامُ الْخَلْقِ وَإِطْلَاعُهُمْ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَتَنْبِيهِهُمْ عَلَى تَقْصِيرِهِمْ وَتَفْرِيطِهِمْ وَتَبْصِيرُهُمْ بِغُيُوبِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لِتَمَسَّ حَرَارَةُ هَذِهِ النَّيْرَانِ أَهْلَ التَّجْلِسِ وَتُخْزِعَهُمْ تِلْكَ الْمَصَائِبُ لِيَتَذَارَكُوا الْعُمُرَ الْمَاضِي بِقَدْرِ الطَّاقَةِ وَيَتَحَسَّرُوا عَلَى الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ فِي غَيْرِ طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: هَذِهِ الْجُمْلَةُ عَلَى هَذَا الطَّرِيقِ تُسَمَّى وَعُظًّا.

كَمَا لَوْ رَأَيْتَ أَنَّ السَّيْلَ قَدْ هَجَمَ عَلَى دَارِ أَحَدٍ، وَكَانَ هُوَ وَأَهْلُهُ فِيهَا، فَتَقُولُ: الْحَذَرُ الْحَذَرُ، فِرُّوا مِنَ السَّيْلِ. وَهَلْ يَشْتَهِي قَلْبُكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَالَةِ أَنْ تُخْبِرَ صَاحِبَ الدَّارِ خَبْرَكَ بِتَكْلِيفِ الْعِبَارَاتِ وَالنَّكَبِ وَالْإِشَارَاتِ؟ فَلَا تَشْتَهِي الْبَتَّةَ، فَكَذَلِكَ حَالُ الْوَاعِظِ، فَيَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَحْتَنِبَهَا.

وَالْخُصْلَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ أَلَّا تَكُونَ هَمَّتُكَ فِي وَعْظِكَ أَنْ يَنْعَرَ الْخَلْقُ فِي مَجْلِسِكَ أَوْ يُظْهِرُوا الْوَجَدَ وَيَشُقُّوا الشِّيَابَ لِيُقَالَ: نِعَمَ الْمَجْلِسِ هَذَا. لِأَنَّ كُلَّهُ مِثْلٌ لِلدُّنْيَا، وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنَ الْعَفْلَةِ. بَلْ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ عَزْمُكَ وَهَمَّتُكَ أَنْ تَدْعُو النَّاسَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْصِيَةِ إِلَى الطَّاعَةِ وَمِنَ الْحُرْصِ إِلَى الزُّهْدِ وَمِنَ الْجُبْلِ إِلَى السَّخَاءِ وَمِنَ الشَّكِّ إِلَى الْيَقِينِ وَمِنَ الْعَفْلَةِ إِلَى الْيَقِظَةِ وَمِنَ الْغُرُورِ إِلَى التَّقْوَى، وَتُحَبَّبَ إِلَيْهِمُ الْآخِرَةُ وَتُبْعَضَ إِلَيْهِمُ الدُّنْيَا، وَتُعَلِّمَهُمْ عِلْمَ الْعِبَادَةِ وَالزُّهْدِ، وَلَا تُغَيِّرُهُمْ بِكَرَمِ اللَّهِ



Exalted (Glorious and Majestic!) and His mercy, since predominating in their natures is disinclination from the path of the Law, drive in what displeases God the Exalted, and getting tripped up by bad morals. Put fear into their hearts, alarm them and put them on their guard regarding the dangers they will face. Perhaps their inward qualities will be transformed, and their outward behaviour exchanged—'acquisitiveness' and an 'appetite' for obedience, and for repentance from disobedience, will appear.

This then is the right way to preach and advise, and all preaching not thus is a curse upon both speaker and listener. Nay, it is said that [the former] is a ghou, a demon who sweeps men off the path and destroys them, and they must run from him, since this speaker will wreak havoc on their religion the like of which Satan himself cannot. It is incumbent on whoever has the wherewithal and capability, to get him down from pulpits and prevent him from sermonizing, for this is part of 'enjoining good and forbidding evil.'<sup>51</sup>

[The third thing] to give up is that you have nothing to do with princes and rulers, nor see them, because the spectacle of them, gatherings with them and socialising with them are a serious danger. If you are put to the test by this, avoid praising them and complimenting them, for God the Exalted is angered if a wrongdoer or tyrant is praised, and whoever prays for their long life wants God to be disobeyed on His earth.

تَعَالَى، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَرَحْمَتِهِ، لِأَنَّ الْغَالِبَ فِي طِبَاعِهِمُ الرِّبْحُ عَنِ  
مَنْهَجِ الشَّرْعِ وَالسَّغْيِ فِيمَا لَا يَرْضَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ وَالْإِسْتِعْثَارُ  
بِالْأَخْلَاقِ الرَّدِيَّةِ. فَالْقَوْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّغْبَ وَرَوَّعَهُمْ وَحَدِّزْهُمْ عَمَّا  
يَسْتَقْبِلُونَ مِنَ الْخَوَافِ، لَعَلَّ صِفَاتِ بَاطِنِهِمْ تَتَغَيَّرُ وَمُعَامَلَةٌ  
ظَاهِرِهِمْ تَتَبَدَّلُ وَيُظْهَرُ الْحِرْصُ وَالرَّغْبَةُ فِي الطَّاعَةِ وَالرُّجُوعُ عَنِ  
الْمَعْصِيَةِ.

وَهَذَا طَرِيقُ الْوَعِظِ وَالنَّصِيحَةِ، وَكُلُّ وَعِظٍ لَا يَكُونُ هَكَذَا  
فَهُوَ وَبَالٍ عَلَى مَنْ قَالَ وَسَمِعَ. بَلْ قِيلَ: إِنَّهُ غَوْلٌ وَشَيْطَانٌ يَذْهَبُ  
بِالْخَلْقِ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ وَيُهْلِكُهُمْ، فَيَجِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ يَفِرُّوا مِنْهُ لِأَنَّ  
مَا يُفْسِدُ هَذَا الْقَائِلُ مِنْ دِينِهِمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ بِمِثْلِهِ الشَّيْطَانُ. وَمَنْ  
كَانَتْ لَهُ يَدٌ وَقُدْرَةٌ يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يُنْزِلَهُ عَنِ مَنَابِرِ الْمَوَاعِظِ  
وَيَمْنَعَهُ عَمَّا بَاشَرَ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ جُمَّلَةِ الْأَمْرِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ  
الْمُنْكَرِ.

[وَالثَّلَاثُ] مِمَّا تَدْعُ إِلَّا تُخَالِطُ الْأَمْرَاءَ وَالسَّلَاطِينَ وَلَا تَرَاهُمْ،  
لِأَنَّ رُؤْيَتَهُمْ وَمُجَالَسَتَهُمْ وَمُخَالَطَتَهُمْ آفَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ. وَلَوْ أَبْتَلَيْتْ بِهَا،  
دَعَّ عَنْكَ مَدْحُهُمْ وَثَنَاءُهُمْ لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَغْضَبُ إِذَا مُدِّحَ  
الْفَاسِقَ وَالظَّالِمَ. وَمَنْ دَعَا لِطَوْلِ بَقَائِهِمْ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُغْصَى  
اللَّهُ فِي أَرْضِهِ.



[The fourth thing] to give up is to accept nothing of the benefaction of princes nor their presents, even if you know they were acquired legitimately. For expecting it from them degrades religion, in that sycophancy, partiality for them and complicity in their tyranny are produced by it. All this is corruption in religion. The least of its harm is that when you receive their donations and profit from their material possessions, you like them, and whoever likes an individual would prefer him to have a long life span, unavoidably. Preferring the survival of the tyrant constitutes a desire for the creatures of God the Exalted [to continue] to suffer tyranny, and a desire for the world's ruination. What is worse than this for religion and our final ends? Beware! Beware that the demons' suggestions, or some people's talk to you does not deceive you to the effect that 'the best and most appropriate thing is for you to receive the money from them and distribute it amongst the poor and beggars, for they are wasting it in dissolute living and disobedience and your spending it on helpless people is better than their spending it.' For the Accursed One has severed many people's necks by these whisperings! We have mentioned this in the *Revival of the Sciences*, so look for it there.<sup>52</sup>

As for the four things which you must do: [The first is] that you make your relations with God the Exalted such that were a servant of yours to behave thus with you, you would be content with him and not weary of liking him, nor get angry. Whatever would dissatisfy you for yourself on the part of this hypothetical servant of yours, should dissatisfy you also for God the Exalted, and He is actually your Lord!

[وَالرَّابِعُ] مِمَّا تَدْعُ إِلَّا تَقْبَلُ شَيْئًا مِنْ عَطَاءِ الْأَمْرَاءِ وَهَدَايَاهُمْ، وَإِنْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّهَا مِنَ الْحَلَالِ. لِأَنَّ الْمَطْمَعِ مِنْهُمْ يُفْسِدُ الدِّينَ، لِأَنَّهُ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْهُ الْمَدَاهِنَةُ وَمُرَاعَاةُ جَانِبِهِمْ وَالْمُوَافَقَةُ فِي ظُلْمِهِمْ. وَهَذَا كُلُّهُ فَسَادٌ فِي الدِّينِ. وَأَقْلُ مَصْرَتِهِ أَنَّكَ إِذَا قَبِلْتَ عَطَايَاهُمْ وَأَنْتَقَعْتَ مِنْ دُنْيَاهُمْ أَحْبَبْتَهُمْ، وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ أَحَدًا يُحِبُّ طَوْلَ عُمُرِهِ وَبَقَايِهِ بِالضَّرُورَةِ، وَفِي مَحَبَّةِ بَقَاءِ الظَّالِمِ إِرَادَةٌ [لِلدَّوَامِ] الظُّلْمِ عَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَإِرَادَةٌ خَرَابِ الْعَالَمِ. فَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ يَكُونُ أَضَرَّ مِنْ هَذَا لِلدِّينِ وَالْعَاقِبَةِ؟ وَإِيَّاكَ إِيَّاكَ أَنْ يَخْدَعَكَ أَشْتَهَوَاءُ الشَّيَاطِينِ أَوْ قَوْلُ بَعْضِ النَّاسِ لَكَ بِأَنَّ الْأَفْضَلَ وَالْأَوْلَى أَنْ تَأْخُذَ الدَّيْنَ وَالذَّرْهَمَ مِنْهُمْ وَتُفَرِّقَهُمَا بَيْنَ الْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ فَإِنَّهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي الْفُسُوقِ وَالْمَعْصِيَةِ، وَإِنْفَاقَكَ عَلَى ضُعَفَاءِ النَّاسِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ إِنْفَاقِهِمْ، فَإِنَّ اللَّعِينَ قَدْ قَطَعَ أَعْنَاقَ كَثِيرٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ بِهَذِهِ الْوَسْوَسَةِ، وَقَدْ ذَكَرْنَاهُ فِي إِحْيَاءِ الْعُلُومِ فَاطْلُبْهُ نَمَتَّ.

وَأَمَّا الْأَرْبَعَةُ الَّتِي يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ تَفْعَلَهَا: [فَالْأَوَّلُ] أَنْ تَجْعَلَ مَعَامَلَتَكَ مَعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِمَحِثٍ لَوْ عَامَلَ مَعَكَ بِهَا عَبْدُكَ تَرْضَى بِهَا مِنْهُ وَلَا يَضِيقُ خَاطِرَكَ عَلَيْهِ وَلَا تَغْضَبُ، وَالَّذِي لَا تَرْضَى لِنَفْسِكَ مِنْ عَبْدِكَ الْمَجَارِي فَلَا تَرْضَ أَيْضًا لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى وَهُوَ سَيِّدُكَ الْحَقِيقِيُّ.

[The second is] whenever you interact with people, deal with them as you would wish yourself to be dealt with by them, for a worshipper's faith is incomplete until he wants for other people what he wants for himself.

[The third is] if you read or study knowledge, your knowledge must improve your heart and purge your ego—just as if you learned that your life would only last another week, inevitably you would not spend it in learning about law, ethics, jurisprudence, scholastic theology and suchlike, because you would know that these sciences would be inadequate for you. Instead, you would occupy yourself with inspecting your heart, discerning the features of your personality, giving worldly attachments a wide berth, purging yourself of ugly traits, and you would occupy yourself in adoring God the Exalted, worshipping Him, and acquiring good qualities. And not a day or night passes for [any] worshipper without his death during it being a possibility!

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

O disciple, listen to another statement from me, and think about it to find salvation. If you were notified that the ruler would be coming to you on a visit in a week's time, I know that during this period you would be occupied with nothing but putting in order what you knew his glance would fall on of your clothing, your person, house, furnishings and so on. Now think what it is I am hinting at, for you are intelli-

﴿وَالثَّانِي﴾ كَلَّمَا عَمِلْتَ بِالنَّاسِ أَجْعَلُهُ كَمَا تَرْضَى لِنَفْسِكَ مِنْهُمْ لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَكْمُلُ إِيمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِسَائِرِ النَّاسِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ.

﴿وَالثَّلَاثُ﴾ إِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْعِلْمَ أَوْ طَالَعْتَهُ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ عِلْمُكَ يُضْلِحُ قَلْبَكَ وَيُزَكِّي نَفْسَكَ، كَمَا لَوْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ عُمْرَكَ مَا يَبْقَى غَيْرَ أُسْبُوعٍ، فَبِالضَّرُورَةِ لَا تَشْتَغِلُ فِيهَا بِعِلْمِ الْفِئَةِ وَالْأَخْلَاقِ وَالْأُصُولِ وَالْكَلَامِ وَأَمْثَالِهَا، لِأَنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْعُلُومَ لَا تُغْنِيكَ. بَلْ تَشْتَغِلُ بِمِرَاقَبَةِ الْقَلْبِ وَمَعْرِفَةِ صِفَاتِ النَّفْسِ وَالْإِعْرَاضِ عَنِ عِلَاقِ الدُّنْيَا وَتُزَكِّي نَفْسَكَ عَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ الذَّمِيمَةِ وَتَشْتَغِلُ بِمَحَبَّةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَعِبَادَتِهِ وَالْإِتِّصَافِ بِالْأَوْصَافِ الْحَسَنَةِ، وَلَا يَمُرُّ عَلَى عَبْدٍ يَوْمٌ وَلَيْلَةٌ إِلَّا وَيُمْكِنُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مَوْتُهُ فِيهِ.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

أَيُّهَا الْوَالِدُ، إِنَّمَع مِنِّي كَلَامًا آخَرَ وَتَفَكَّرْ فِيهِ حَتَّى تَمُجِدَ خَلَاصًا: لَوْ أَنَّكَ أُخْبِرْتَ أَنَّ السُّلْطَانَ بَعْدَ أُسْبُوعٍ يَحِيثُكَ زَائِرًا، فَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ فِي تِلْكَ الْمُدَّةِ لَا تَشْتَغِلُ إِلَّا بِإِضْلَاحِ مَا عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ نَظَرَ السُّلْطَانَ سَيَقَعُ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الثِّيَابِ وَالْبَدَنِ وَالْدَّارِ وَالْفِرَاشِ وَغَيْرِهَا، وَالْآنَ تَفَكَّرْ إِلَى مَا أَشْرْتُ بِهِ فَإِنَّكَ فَهَمٌ، وَالْكَلَامُ الْفَرْدُ



gent. A single word is enough for someone clever. The Messenger of God said (upon him be blessings and peace), 'God will not look upon your forms, nor upon your deeds, but He will look into your hearts and your intentions.'<sup>53</sup> If you want the science of the states of the heart, look at the *Revival* and other works of mine.<sup>54</sup> This science is an individual obligation, while others are a collective obligation,<sup>55</sup> except the amount [needed] for obligations to God the Exalted to be performed.<sup>A</sup> And He it is who will grant you success in acquiring it.

[The fourth is that] you should not stock up more of the world's produce than is adequate for one year, as the Messenger of God (upon him be blessings and peace) used to arrange this for one of his wives, saying, 'O God, make the sustenance of Muḥammad's family enough!'<sup>56</sup> And he used not to arrange this for all his wives, but he used to arrange it for the one in whose heart he knew was a weakness. As for whoever [of his wives] was confident—he used not to arrange more than one or half a day's sustenance for her.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

O disciple, I have addressed the things you asked for in this discourse, and you must carry them out, and do not forget me in this—to mention me in your devout supplications! As for the prayer which you requested from me, look for it amongst the supplications in collections of authentic Traditions and recite this prayer during all the moments you have, in particular as a supererogation after your formal prostrations:

<sup>A</sup>The sentence contains an ellipsis. The thought is that Sufism ('the science of the states of the heart') is a responsibility for every adult Muslim. All other religious sciences are the responsibility of the scholars (i.e. a collective obligation) *except* insofar as the knowledge of certain details of such sciences is necessary for every adult Muslim in fulfilling his or her individual obligations towards God.

يَكْفِي الْكَفَيْسَ. قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَلَا إِلَى أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيَتَّبِعُكُمْ. وَإِنْ أَرَدْتَ عِلْمَ أَحْوَالِ الْقَلْبِ فَانظُرْ إِلَى الْإِحْيَاءِ وَغَيْرِهِ مِنْ مُصَنَّفَاتِي. وَهَذَا الْعِلْمُ فَرَضٌ عَيْنٍ، وَغَيْرُهُ فَرَضٌ كِفَايَةِ، إِلَّا بِمَقْدَارِ مَا يُؤَدِّي بِهِ فَرَائِضُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَهُوَ يُوقِّفُكَ حَتَّى تُحْصِلَهُ.

[وَالرَّايِغِ] أَلَّا تَجْمَعَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ كِفَايَةِ سَنَةٍ، كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ، يُعِدُّ ذَلِكَ لِبَعْضِ حُجْرَاتِهِ وَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ قُوَّتَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كِفَافًا. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ يُعِدُّ ذَلِكَ لِكُلِّ حُجْرَاتِهِ بَلْ كَانَ يُعِدُّهُ لِمَنْ عِلِمَ أَنَّ فِي قَلْبِهَا ضَعْفًا. وَأَمَّا مَنْ كَانَتْ صَاحِبَةً يَقِينِ فَمَا كَانَ يُعِدُّ لَهَا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ قُوَّتِ يَوْمٍ أَوْ نِصْفِ.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، إِنِّي كَتَبْتُ فِي هَذَا الْفَضْلِ مُلْتَمَسَاتِكَ فَيَسْبِغِي لَكَ أَنْ تَعْمَلَ بِهَا وَلَا تُلْسَانِي فِيهِ مِنْ أَنْ تَذَكَّرَنِي فِي صَالِحِ دُعَائِكَ. وَأَمَّا الدُّعَاءُ الَّذِي سَأَلْتَ مِنِّي فَاطْلُبْهُ مِنْ دَعَوَاتِ الصَّحَاحِ، وَأَقْرَأْ هَذَا الدُّعَاءَ فِي جَمِيعِ أَوْقَاتِكَ خُصُوصًا أَعْقَابَ صَلَوَاتِكَ:



O God, I beg Thee in regard to grace for its completeness, in regard to protection for its permanence, in regard to mercy for its totality, in regard to wellbeing for its realization, in regard to livelihood for the most plentiful, in regard to life for the most happy, in regard to beneficence for the most perfect, in regard to favour for the most inclusive, in regard to generosity for the most sweet, and in regard to gentleness for the most intimate.

O God, be for us and do not be against us! O God, conclude our lives with happiness, and make our hopes abundantly real, unite our mornings and evenings in wellbeing, and entrust our destiny and future state to Thy mercy, pour the vessel of Thy forgiveness over our sins,<sup>A</sup> grant us the correction of our faults, make God-consciousness our provision, and make our exertion to be for Thy religion, and our trust and our confidence to be in Thee.

O God, set us upon the path of righteousness, protect us in the world from causes of regret on the Day of Resurrection, lighten the weight of our sins, endow us with the way of life of the godly, restrain us from and avert from us the evil of the wicked, and release our necks and the necks of our fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters from hellfire, by Thy Mercy, Thou Infinitely Precious, Thou Ever-Forgiving, Thou Bountiful One, Thou Veiler of sins, Thou Omniscient and Omnipotent!

O God, O God, O God! By Thy Mercy, Thou Most Merciful of the Merciful, Thou First of all and Last of all, Thou Mighty Lord of Power, Thou who hast mercy on the needy, Thou Most Merciful of the Merciful, there is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee: I am a sinner! God bless our liege lord Muhammad, all his Family and Companions, and praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

<sup>A</sup>As well as *dhunūb* (sins), *dhanūb* would signify 'a full bucket', and so we have a possible paronomasia here: God's vessel (*siġāl*) filling-up our *dhanūb*.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ النِّعْمَةِ تَمَامَهَا، وَمِنَ الْعِصْمَةِ دَوَامَهَا،  
وَمِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ شُمُولَهَا، وَمِنَ الْعَافِيَةِ حُصُولَهَا، وَمِنَ الْعَيْشِ أَرْغَدَهُ،  
وَمِنَ الْعَمْرِ أَسْعَدَهُ، وَمِنَ الْإِحْسَانِ أَتْمَمَهُ، وَمِنَ الْإِنْعَامِ أَعَمَّهُ، وَمِنَ  
الْفَضْلِ أَعْدَبَهُ، وَمِنَ اللَّطْفِ أَقْرَبَهُ.

اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ عَلَيْنَا. اللَّهُمَّ آخِمْ بِالسَّعَادَةِ آجَالَنا،  
وَحَقِّقْ بِالرِّيَازَةِ آمَالَنا، وَأَقْرِنْ بِالْعَافِيَةِ غُدُونَنا وَأَصَالَنا، وَأَجْعَلْ  
إِلَى رَحْمَتِكَ مَصِيرَنَا وَمَالَنا، وَأَضْبُبْ سِجَالِ عَفْوِكَ عَلَى ذُنُوبِنَا،  
وَمَنْ عَلَيْنَا بِإِصْلَاحِ عُيُوبِنَا، وَأَجْعَلِ التَّقْوَى زَادَنَا، وَفِي دِينِكَ  
أَجْتِهَادَنَا، وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكُّلَنَا وَاعْتِمَادَنَا.

اللَّهُمَّ نَبِّئْنَا عَلَى نَهْجِ الْإِسْتِقَامَةِ، وَأَعِذْنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مِنْ  
مُوجِبَاتِ النَّدَامَةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَخَفِّفْ عَنَّا ثِقَلَ الْأَوْزَارِ، وَأَرْزُقْنَا  
عَيْشَةَ الْأَبْرَارِ، وَأَكْفِنَا وَأَصْرِفْ عَنَّا شَرَّ الْأَشْرَارِ، وَأَغْتِقْ رِقَابَنَا  
وَرِقَابَ آبَائِنَا وَأُمَّهَاتِنَا وَإِخْوَانِنَا وَأَخَوَاتِنَا مِنَ النَّارِ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا  
عَزِيزُ يَا غَفَّارُ، يَا كَرِيمُ يَا سَتَّارُ، يَا عَلِيمُ يَا جَبَّارُ.

يَا اللَّهُ يَا اللَّهُ يَا اللَّهُ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ، وَيَا أَوَّلَ  
الْأَوَّلِينَ، وَيَا آخِرَ الْآخِرِينَ، وَيَا ذَا الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينِينَ، وَيَا رَاحِمَ  
الْمَسَاكِينِ، وَيَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ  
مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ. وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ،  
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.