

# THE LIVES OF MAN

A SUFI MASTER EXPLAINS  
THE HUMAN STATES:  
BEFORE LIFE, IN THE WORLD,  
AND AFTER DEATH

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## THE THIRD LIFE

### *The Intermediate Realm*

The third life extends from the time a man leaves the *dunyā* at death until the moment he rises from his grave at the blowing of the Horn. This is the Intermediate Realm [*Barzakh*]. God the Exalted has said: *And behind them is a barzakh until the day when they are raised.* [23:100]

When a Muslim dies, and his death is confirmed, he has to be prepared for the grave. Thus he must be washed, shrouded, and prayed over [*janāza*], all of which must be done according to the Prophetic *Sunna*. His relatives, neighbours, and friends must be informed, and also the people of goodness and virtue, so that they may pray and ask mercy for him, and attend his funeral. It is recommended that whoever is informed of the death of his brother Muslim should say: 'We are God's and to Him we shall return'<sup>20</sup> and then: 'O God! Place his record in 'Illyiyyīn,<sup>21</sup> record him as a man of excellence [*muhsin*], provide a successor for him in caring for his family in the ephemeral world, and forgive us and him, O Lord of the Worlds!'<sup>22</sup>

Next, one can pray some more for him, and praise him as a good man, for the Prophet has said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Mention the goodness of your dead, and refrain [from mentioning] their wickedness.' And there is another *hadīth* with the sense that: 'You are God's witnesses on earth, those whom you praise will be thus [i.e. praiseworthy].'<sup>23</sup> However, exaggerated praises bordering on or actually becoming lies are to be avoided.

The Intermediate Realm is the abode which lies between

the world and the life-to-come. It has more affinity with the latter, and is in fact a part of it. It is a place where spirits and spiritual things are predominant, while physical bodies are secondary but share with the spirits in their experiences, whether felicity and joy, or torment and grief.<sup>24</sup> Spirits endure, while bodies decay and gradually dissolve so that nothing remains except the lowermost tip of the spine, from which they will be formed anew at the Resurrection, as is recorded in *hadith*. The exception is the bodies of the Prophets, upon them be blessings and peace, for they are alive in their graves, and so are the martyrs who died in God's path. *Do not think that those who are slain in the way of God are dead. Nay, they are living, with their Lord, provided for.* [3:169] 'Their spirits will be inside green birds who freely move in the Garden, and retire into lanterns attached to the Throne.' [*Hadith.*] It has also been related that the souls of believers will be inside white birds which feed on the Garden's fruits.

Much reward lies in escorting funerals, praying for the dead and attending their burial. In a sound *hadith* it is said: 'Anyone who escorts the funeral procession of a Muslim until he prays for him shall receive one measure of the reward. If he remains until he is buried, he receives two measures—and each measure is the size of Mount Uhud.' And it has been said that whenever someone escorts the funeral of his brother Muslim, God orders the angels to escort his own funeral and pray over him when he dies.

It is recommended that people who have died be moved quickly to their graves. 'When a funeral procession is ready and the men lift him up, if the person had been righteous it says: "Advance! Advance!" If, however, the dead person had been otherwise it would say: "Woe is me! Where are you taking me?"' [*Hadith.*] 'Make haste with the funeral procession. If he had been righteous, you are taking him on to goodness, whereas if he had been otherwise, it is an evil which you will unload from your necks.' [*Hadith.*]

The dead person perceives and is aware of those who

wash, shroud, and bury him. It has been said that his spirit is held by an angel who stands near him and walks with it in his funeral, so that he hears all that is said about him, whether good or evil.

### *The Torment of the Grave*

When he is laid out in his grave it is recommended that those who put him there say: 'In the name of God, and according to the religion of the Messenger of God.'<sup>25</sup> It is also recommended that those who are near the grave put three handfuls of dust on it, saying with the first: '*From it did We create you*' with the second: '*To it shall We return you*' and with the third: '*And from it shall We bring you forth another time*'. [20:55] Then dust should be very gradually and gently poured over him until the grave is filled and evened, after which the people present should remain for a while reading Qur'an, and asking forgiveness and firmness for him, for according to a *hadith* this is the time when he will be questioned by the two angels, Munkar and Nakir, who are the grave's tormentors. They ask: 'Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?' Those whom God gives strength then say: 'My Lord is God, Islam is my religion, and Muḥammad is my Prophet.' But those whom God allows to swerve will be confused and hesitating, just as in the world they had been doubtful, tortuous, neglectful of God's orders, and prone to violate His prohibitions. They say 'Er! Er! I do not know!'—as has been mentioned in sound *hadiths*. They will then strike him, and his grave will tighten around him and fill with torture.

As for the firm believer, however, who was established in faith and observance during his life, he will be given good tidings by the angels, his grave will be spacious and filled with both light and delight, his good works will surround him: his prayers, fasts, charity, recitations of Qur'an, and

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remembrance of God the Exalted; all these things will drive away any terrors or fears that may come near him. 'The grave is either one of the Garden's meadows or one of the Fire's pits.' [*Hadith.*] 'I have never seen anything more terrifying than the grave'. [*Hadith.*]

Whenever 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, may God be pleased with him, came near a grave he wept so much that his beard became wet. Someone once remarked to him that when he mentioned the Garden and the Fire he never wept as much, and he said: 'I heard the Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, say: "The grave is the first of the Hereafter's stages. If one is saved from it then what comes next is easier, but if one is not saved from it, then what comes next is even harder."'

The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, said: 'The grave has an oppressive tightness, and were [it possible for] anyone to escape this, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh would have done so,'—for he is the one for whom the Throne of the All-Merciful shook.<sup>26</sup>

It is said that the torment of the grave is mostly the consequence of three things: slander, calumny, and not guarding oneself against being soiled with urine. There are two *hadiths* relating to this: 'Much of the grave's torment is from urine.' And there is the incident in which when the Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, heard two men being tormented in their graves, he asked for palm twigs and put them on their graves, saying that their suffering might be relieved to a certain extent for as long as they remained moist. He then remarked that they were being tormented, and not for committing anything major. One of them was had become used to calumny, and the other did not clean himself from urine.

He frequently asked protection, may blessings and peace be upon him, from the grave's torment, and urged others to include this in their supplications following the *tashahhud* of every ritual prayer, and in their evening and morning invocations. For the grave's torment is real, and so is its bliss:

bliss for the people of faith and obedience, torment for those of disbelief, hypocrisy, depravity, and rebellion. Each of the two groups differs in the intensity of bliss or torment in proportion to how they differed in the world in their doing those things which attract reward and bliss, or chastisement and torment.

Spirits are subject to the grave's bliss or torment much more than bodies, although both share in it. There are differences of opinion [among scholars], but the truth is, as we said, that both spirits and bodies are subject to the grave's bliss or torment.

### *How the Living may help the Dead*

Praying for the dead, asking forgiveness for them, and giving charity on their behalf are some of the things God causes the dead in their graves to benefit from and be protected by. There are many *hadiths* about this, and many fine and virtuous people have witnessed it in their dreams. Sa'd ibn 'Ubada, may God be pleased with him, once said to the Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'My mother's soul departed suddenly, and had she been able to speak she would have given alms. Would it bring benefit to her if I did so on her behalf?' 'Yes!' he replied. So he dug a well [for people to take water from] and said: 'This is on behalf of Sa'd's mother.'

And another man said: 'O Messenger of God! My parents have died; is there anything left with which I may be good to them?' And he replied: 'There are four things: praying and asking forgiveness for them, carrying out their promises, being good to their friends, and giving proper attention to those kinship bonds which could only have been attended to by them.'

And the Prophet said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Were it not for the living the dead would have been

doomed'; in other words, because of the prayers and requests for forgiveness and for mercy which they receive.

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'My Nation is a nation covered with mercy. Its members enter their graves with sins like unto the mountains, and leave their graves having been forgiven because the living have asked forgiveness for the dead.'

It is related that the gifts of alms, prayers, and Qur'anic recitation sent by the living to the dead reach them carried by the angels on plates of light, and adorned with silk handkerchieves, and they say to them: 'This gift is from so-and-so', and in this way they find joy and delight.

A dead man was once seen in a dream and, upon being questioned about his state, said that he had been greeted by an angel who attempted to burn his face with a flame held in his hand. But one of the living said: 'God have mercy on so-and-so!'—and the flame went out.

One of the greatest things which one may offer to the dead is to recite Qur'an and send on the reward for it. This is of great benefit and *baraka*. The Muslims have agreed on this everywhere throughout the ages, the majority of scholars and virtuous people have recommended it, and there are *hadiths* to confirm this. Although these *hadiths* have weak chains of transmission, there is a principle, as the *hadith* scholar al-Suyuti (may God show him His mercy) has said, that: 'Weak *hadiths* may be acted upon when they indicate acts of goodness.' And these are indeed acts of goodness.

All the Qur'an is blessed and beneficial, but the most beneficial thing to offer to the dead is *Surat al-Ikhlās* eleven times, and this has been seen in many blessed dreams. Each person should recite this noble *sūra* the said number of times, either each night, each day, or more, or less, or even only on Thursday night, and offer the reward to his parents, teachers, and all those who had rights over him.

He must not forget his dead ones when he prays, asks forgiveness, or gives alms, lest he in turn be forgotten after his death, for the one who remembers is remembered, and

the one who forgets is forgotten. Benevolence goes ahead of you, and God allows *not the reward of those who have done good to be wasted*. [18:30]

### *Visiting Graves*

You should know that it is recommended to visit graves. The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, permitted this after having at first forbidden it. It contains benefits both for the living visitor and the dead person who receives the visit. The Prophet said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Visit graves, for they are a reminder of death.' And: 'I used to forbid you to visit graves, but now you should visit them. They render one able to do without the things of the world, and remind one of the Hereafter.' He also said: 'No man visits the grave of his brother and sits by it but that he [the dead man] finds solace in this, having his spirit restored to him until the visitor departs.' And he said: 'A dead [person] in his grave is never more comforted than when those that he loved in the world pay him a visit.'

When a visitor enters the cemetery or passes it by he should say: 'Peace on you, O place of believers. We are granted respite until tomorrow. That which you were promised has come to you, and we will, God willing, rejoin you. You are our predecessors and we are your followers. I ask God to give us and you wellbeing. O God, forgive us and them!'<sup>27</sup>

It is recommended to visit the cemetery on Thursday night, Friday, Friday night until sunrise, and on Monday, for it is said—and this is supported by various narrations—that the spirits of the dead return to their graves at those times.

The visitor must ask for forgiveness and mercy for them, read whatever Qur'an he can and make over the reward to them; he should remember that soon he will go to the same end, and learn the lessons to be drawn from their condition.



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When he visits the graves of his parents, relatives, or anyone else who had rights over him, he must sit with unhurried serenity, pray for them, and ask abundantly for forgiveness, for they rejoice at this, and are glad. When he visits the graves of righteous people he should pray in abundance, for prayers are answered at many such places, as has often been experienced. The tomb of Imām Mūsā al-Kāzim, the son of Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq, is known in Baghdad as the 'Proven Medicine', that is, for prayers to be answered and worries to be relieved, and so is the tomb of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, also in Baghdad. Some of the noble house of the 'Alawī Sayyids used to sit at the tomb of our master al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam for such long periods, in the heat of the sun, that sweat could have been wrung from their clothes, while they, because of their profound concentration in prayer, were unaware of this. This is reported of Shaykh 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī and others.

As for rubbing tombs and kissing them, these are distasteful practices which are to be discouraged. Even worse is the custom of circling around them.

Some have said that it is better, if possible, to stand facing the top of the [buried person's] head. They claim that the dead are more aware of those who are before their faces, but God knows best.

Know that the deeds of the living are shown to their dead families and relatives: if these deeds are good they rejoice and are optimistic, and they pray for them to have firmness and rectitude, but if these deeds are otherwise, they feel sad and hurt, and they pray for them to be guided and given success in doing good. The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, has said: 'Your deeds are shown to your dead relatives and kin. If they are good they rejoice, and if they are otherwise they say: "O Lord God! Do not let them die before You guide them as You guided us!"'

And he said: 'Your deeds are shown to God on Mondays and Thursdays, and to the Prophets, fathers, and mothers

on Fridays. They rejoice at your good deeds, and their faces grow in radiance and in light. Therefore fear God, and do not distress your dead!

### Afterword

Know that all creatures shall be assembled in the Intermediate Realm between the Two Blasts, for at that time not a single creature will remain alive. *The Horn is blown, and all who are in the heavens and earth fall down in a swoon, save him whom God wills.* [39:68]

This is the 'First Blast', at which all living creatures shall die, so that only God, the Living, the Self-Subsistent, remains. This is the first phase of the Rising. The second phase is when all the dead are returned to life, by the permission of God the Exalted: *Then it is blown another time, and there they stand, awaiting.* [39:68] Between the two Blasts are forty years.

As for those whom God excepts (*'save him whom God wills'*), there are many opinions as to who they are. Some commentators say that they are the Angels, others say they are the Prophets, others still claim that they are the martyrs (and this opinion is the preferable one); and views other than these also exist.

The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, said: 'The Dajjāl will be raised among my Nation, and shall remain for forty.' The narrator of this account said that he did not know whether this meant forty days, months or years. 'Then God will send Jesus son of Mary, may blessings and peace be upon him, who will look like 'Urwa ibn Mas'ūd al-Thaqafi. He will stalk him, and destroy him.' Then people will live for seven years during which there will be no enmity between any two people. Then God will send a cold wind from the direction of Syria, and anyone with as much as an atom's weight of goodness (or—he may have said—'faith')

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remaining on the face of the earth will die, to the extent that if one of you should enter into the bowels of a mountain it will follow him there and kill him. Those who will remain will be the worst of people, moving as delicately as birds, wearing the skins of predatory beasts, recognising no good, disapproving of no evil, and Satan will appear to them, saying: 'Will you not obey my call?' They will answer: 'What then should we do?' He will command them to worship idols and as they do this their provision will come to them and their lives will be comfortable. Then the Horn will be blown, and all those who hear it will cock their heads to one side, listening, and the first to hear it will be a man puddling his camel's drinking-pond with clay, after which everyone will swoon. Then God will send down a drizzling rain, which will make the bodies grow. At the second Blast they will *stand, awaiting*, and it will be said: 'O people! To your Lord!' and, '*Let them stand, for they are to be questioned!*' [37:24] Then it will be said: 'Bring the Fire's contingent!' 'How many from how many?' 'From every thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine!' And this will be the *day which renders children grey-haired* [73:17], *the day when it befalls in earnest.* [68:42]

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'The Hour will not come for as long as someone still says "*Allah*".'

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Evil people will remain, living like donkeys in chaotic depravity; it is upon them that the Hour shall come.'

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'God will grasp the earth on the Day of Rising, fold up the heavens in His right hand and say: "I am the King! Where are the kings of the earth?"'

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'God will fold up the heavens on the Day of Rising, take them in His right hand, then say: "I am the King! Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?" He will then fold up the earth in His left hand and say: "I am the King! Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?"'

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Islam

will wear out, in the way a garment becomes worn out; until no-one will know what fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, or charity might be. The Book of God the Exalted will one night be taken up, so that not one verse will remain on earth. Some groups of people will remain in which old men and women will say: "We remember that our parents used to say *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*, and so we say it too."

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'You will not see the Hour before you see ten preceding signs. The first will be the sun rising from the West, then the Smoke, then the Dajjāl, then the Beast, three lunar eclipses, one in the East, one in the West, and one in the Arabian peninsula, the appearance of Jesus, upon whom be peace, then Jūj and Ma'jūj,<sup>28</sup> and the last will be a fire coming out of the Yemen, from the lower part of Aden.'

Know that knowledge of when the Hour will come is possessed only by God the Exalted. No-one else knows it. *Say: Knowledge of it is only with my Lord, He alone will manifest it in its time. [7:187] Indeed, with Him is the knowledge of the Hour. [31:34]*

Created beings may, however, know about those signs and conditions which indicate its imminent advent. Many of these, which are described in many sound *ḥadīths*, have already come about, and only the major ones such as the sun rising from the West, the Dajjāl (God curse him!), the Beast, and the coming of Jesus remain.

## THE FOURTH LIFE

### *Judgement-day*

The fourth life extends from the time when a person leaves his grave for the Resurrection and Gathering, until the moment when mankind enter the Garden or the Fire.

God, Who is High and Majestic, shall command Isrāfil, upon whom be peace, to blow the Horn a second time: *And the Horn is blown, and lo, from their graves they hasten to their Lord!* [36:51] *Then it is blown another time, and there they stand, awaiting.* [39:69] *Those who disbelieve claim that they will not be raised again. Say: 'Nay, by my Lord! You will be raised again, and then you will be informed of what you did, and that is easy for God'.* [64:7] *Your creation and your resurrection were only as a single soul. God is Hearer, Knower.* [31:28] *Have they not seen how God originates creation, then reproduces it? For God, that is easy. Say: Walk the land and see how He originated creation, then God brings forth the later growth. Indeed God is Able to do all things.* [29:19-20] *That is because God, He is the Truth, and because He quickens the dead, and He is Able to do all things. And because the Hour will come, there is no doubt about it, and God will raise those who are in the graves.* [22:6-7] *And of His signs is that you see the earth lowly, but when We send down water on it, it thrills and grows. Indeed He who quickened it is the Quickener of the Dead. He is Able to do all things.* [41:39] *And he gave us an example, forgetting his own creation, and said, Who will revive bones which have rotted away? Say: He will revive them Who first originated them; and He has knowledge of every creation.* [36:78-9]

Abū Razīn al-Uqaylī, may God be pleased with him, said: 'I once asked, "O Messenger of God! How does God

originate creation, and what is the sign of that in His creation?" He replied: "Have you never crossed your people's valley when it was barren, then crossed it again when it was swaying with greenery?" I said: "Indeed I have!" And he told me: "That is His sign in His creation".

In his book called *The Memorial*, al-Qurṭubī, may God show him His mercy, mentions a long *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayra, may God be pleased with him, who said: 'The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, once spoke to us, a group of his Companions.' And he narrated the *ḥadīth* until he came to His saying (Majestic is His praise!): *On the day when the earth shall be changed to other than the earth, and the heavens, and they will come forth before God, the One, the Invincible, [14:48]* after which he said that the Messenger of God continued thus:

He will level it, then spread it just as an 'Ukāzī<sup>29</sup> leather rug is spread, so that you will see neither crookedness nor curvature. [20:107] God will then drive the people in one cry, [79:13] and they will be in the changed earth in the same state they had been in before, those who were inside it will be inside it, and those who were on its surface will be on its surface. Then God will send down upon you from beneath the Throne water called The Life [*al-Hayawān*], and it shall rain for forty days, until the water has risen twelve arm-lengths above you. Then He will give His command to the bodies, which will grow just as plants and vegetables grow, until, when your bodies are as fully formed as they had been, God the Exalted shall declare: 'Let the Bearers of the Throne return to life!'—and this will take place—then: 'Let Gabriel, Mikā'il, and Isrāfil come back to life!' And Isrāfil will be commanded to take the Horn,<sup>30</sup> after which God the Exalted will call the spirits, which will be brought to Him, the Muslims glowing with light, the others dark, and He will cast them into the Horn, then say

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to Israfil: 'Blow the Resurrection-Blast!' He blows, and the spirits fly out like bees, filling the space between heaven and earth, and God will say: 'By My Might and Majesty! Let each spirit return to its body!' And the spirits will repair to their bodies, enter through the nostrils, and spread as venom spreads in a man who is bitten. Then the earth shall split apart from around you, and I shall be the first for whom it shall do so. You will emerge as young people of thirty-three, while the language on that day will be Syriac. Quickly *they hurry to their Lord*. [36:50] *Hastening toward the Summoner, the disbelievers saying: This is a hard day*. [54:8] *That is the day of emerging*. [50:42] *And we assemble them and leave not one of them*. [18:47]

It has been mentioned in *hadith* that humans rot away entirely, with the exception of one bone, the tip of the sacrum, which is a tiny bone at end of the spine. When God, Who is of mighty Ability, wishes to resurrect mankind, the sky pours down a rain which resembles male sperm, after which they grow from the places where they were buried, in the way that crops grow. Then He resurrects Israfil, upon whom be peace, and commands him to blow the Horn for the Resurrection. The spirits will then be returned to their bodies and brought back to life, by the leave of God the Exalted. The earth splits open to let them out, graves are overturned, and the bodies and spirits are summoned to stand before God the Exalted, at the Standing-Place of the Resurrection: *And on the day when We cause the mountains to move, and you see the earth emerging, and We assemble them and leave not one of them, and they are set before their Lord in ranks. 'You have come to Us as We created you at first. But you thought that We would set no time for you'*. [18:47-8]<sup>31</sup> *On the day when the earth splits from around them, hastening forth; that is a gathering easy for Us*. [50:44]

The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon

him, said: 'A man dies in accordance with what he had lived in, and is resurrected in accordance with what he had died in'.

He also said: 'Mankind shall be resurrected barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised, with women mixing with the men.' At this, 'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her, exclaimed: 'O shame! Each looking at the other!' And he replied: "The situation will be too desperate for them to be worried by that."

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'People shall be gathered more hungry than they had ever been, more thirsty than they had ever been, more naked than they had ever been, and more exhausted than they had ever been. Those who had given food for God's sake will be fed by Him, those who had given drink for God's sake will be given to drink by Him, those who had given clothes for God's sake will be clothed by Him, and those who had acted for God's sake will be protected by Him.'

Once they are out of their graves they shall be ordered to walk to the place of gathering, which, it is said, will be the blessed and holy land in Syria,<sup>32</sup> towards which they will be driven by the angels. It has also been related that God will cause a fire to come from the lower part of Aden (or in another version, from a valley called Barhūt, which is in the south of Hadramawt) which will drive the people toward the land of the gathering. It will accompany them wherever they walk, stop when they rest, and will be with them evening and morning, moving at the pace of camels.

People will then see their deeds appearing before them: good ones will comfort and accompany them, wicked ones will reproach them and make them feel desolate. They may even climb on their backs and force them to carry them: *They bear their burdens upon their backs. Evil is that which they bear!* [6:31] *They will surely bear their own loads and other loads beside their own, and they will surely be questioned on the Day of Rising concerning that which they had invented.* [29:13]

Each person will be accompanied by his Recording Angels, who had taken down all his actions in his worldly



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life: *And every soul comes, along with it a driver and a witness.*  
[50:21]

Evil deeds committed in the world by people who died unrepentant will become manifest upon them: usurers<sup>33</sup> for instance will see their stomachs grow so large that as they walk, they are constantly overbalanced by their weight and stumble over. Adulterers will see their genitals swell so large that they will have to drag them along on the ground. Alcohol-drinkers will come to the Gathering with their cups in their hands. Liars, backbiters and slanderers will see their tongues lengthen until they reach their chests. Those who withheld their *Zakāt* will have their money made manifest in the shape of large snakes coiled around them. The arrogant will be brought in the form of small ants trodden both by the good and the depraved. And so shall it continue. *The guilty will be known by their marks, and will be seized by the forelocks and the feet.* [55:41]

Three groups of people, described in *hadīth*, are to be gathered [on the Day of Rising]: those who will ride, those who will walk on their feet, and those who will walk on their faces. For 'the One who made them walk on their feet is capable of making them walk on their faces.'

Mu'adh ibn Jabal, may God be pleased with him, said: 'I once asked, "O Messenger of God! What of the saying of God, the High and Majestic: *On the day when the Horn is to be blown, and you shall come in hosts?*" And the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said: "O Mu'adh ibn Jabal, you ask about a formidable thing!" Then he wept abundantly, and said: "Ten different kinds [of people] of my nation will be gathered in groups distinct from the groupings of the Muslims. Their forms will have been changed: some will have the forms of monkeys, others the forms of pigs, others will be upside down, their legs upwards, being dragged on their faces. Some will be blind, hesitant. Others will be deaf and dumb, lacking in reason; others still will be chewing their tongues which will hang on their chests, and their saliva will be pus, so that they disgust the other people

of the gathering. Some will have their hands and feet cut off, some will be crucified on tree-trunks of fire, some will be fouler than putrid cadavers, and some will wear flowing robes of tar. As for those whose forms resemble monkeys: they are the slanderers. Those who have the forms of pigs are the people of ill-gotten, illicit, and unlawfully taxed money. Those whose heads and faces are beneath them are those who consumed usury. The blind are those who ruled tyrannously. The deaf and dumb are those who were proud of their actions. Those who chew their tongues are the ulema and judges whose conduct differed from their words. Those whose hands and feet are cut off are those who injured their neighbours. The people crucified on trunks of fire are those who frequently denounced people to the authorities. Those fouler than putrid cadavers are those who enjoyed passions and pleasures but withheld God's due in their wealth. And those who wear the robes are the arrogant, the boastful, and the conceited." (Related by al-Qurtubî, may God show him His mercy, in his *Memorial*.)

The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, said: 'People will be gathered in a shining white land resembling pure flour, where there will be signs for no-one.'

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Mankind will be gathered on a single plain, each will hear the Summoner, and eyesight will be penetrating.'

This is the 'standing-place' [*mawqif*] of the Day of Rising, where all creatures will be assembled: jinn, men, devils, cattle, wild beasts, and predators. Then the angels, upon whom be peace, shall descend to them at God's command, and surround them, rank upon rank, and the criminals and the unjust will find no place to flee. God has said: *O company of jinn and men, if you have power to penetrate all regions of the heavens and the earth, then do so! You will never penetrate them save with [Our] sanction. Which is it, of the favours of your Lord, that you deny? There will be sent against you flames of fire and brass, and you will not escape.* [55:32-5]

The gathering-place will become crowded: there will be

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jostling and turmoil, and the sun will draw near until it is one mile above their heads. (The narrator of this account remarked that he did not know whether this would be a mile in distance, or the 'mile' which is the furthest that can be seen.)<sup>34</sup> Then people will be afflicted by great hardship, such heat and thirst that only God knows of: they will perspire until their sweat penetrates the earth to a depth of seventy arm-lengths. The Prophet said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'The sun will come near the earth on the Day of Rising, and people will sweat. There will be some whose sweat will reach up to their heels, some for whom it will reach the middle of their legs, some to their knees, some to their thighs, some to their waists, some to their mouths' — here he raised his hand to his mouth—'and some will be [completely] covered by their sweat'—and he put his hand above his head.

He also said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'A man will be under the shade of his charity on the Day of Rising.'

And he said: 'Seven [kinds of people] will be shaded by God under His Shade on the day when no shade will exist save His: a just leader, a young man who grew up in the worship of God, a man whose heart was attached to the mosques, two men who had love for each other in God, came together in this and separated in it, a man who, when a woman of rank and beauty attempted to seduce him, said: "I fear God!", a man who concealed his charity so that his left hand did not know what his right hand spent, and a man who remembered God when alone, and whose eyes overflowed with tears.' The meaning of 'His shade' here is 'the shade of His Throne'.

And he said: 'Whoever reprieves an insolvent man, or agrees to reduce his debt, will be shaded by God under His shade.'

And he said: 'Whoever wishes to behold the Day of Rising, let him recite: *When the sun...* [81:1] and: *When the heaven is split asunder...* [84:1]

When mankind's standing at this place is prolonged and

their hardship becomes overwhelming, they debate among themselves to decide whom they should go to who might intercede on their behalf, so that their Lord would pass judgement on them and they would be delivered from their situation. So they go to Adam, upon whom be peace, and he in turn sends them to Noah, upon whom be peace, who sends them on to Abraham, upon whom be peace. Abraham refers them to Moses, upon whom be peace, who sends them on to Jesus, upon whom be peace, and Jesus sends them on to Muḥammad, upon whom be blessings and peace. And Muḥammad says: 'I am [the one] for this. I am [the one] for this.' He goes to his Lord, asks His permission, then prostrates himself before Him and praises Him, and He bids him raise his head, and tells him to intercede, for he has been granted intercession. The *ḥadīths* regarding this are sound and well-known. It is said that this is the 'Praiseworthy Station' [*al-maqām al-maḥmūd*] which the first and the last of mankind envy him: *It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station.* [17:79]

It has come down to us that Muslim children who die before puberty will be permitted to give their parents to drink. They will move through the crowd searching for them at a time when thirst will be at its utmost. Once, a righteous man who had resolved never to marry saw in a dream that he was at the standing-place on the Day of Rising, thirsty beyond description, and there were children with water-bowls in their hands which they gave to some people but not to others. He asked them to let him drink, but they answered: 'We only give water to our parents'. In the morning he asked to be married, in the hope that God might bestow a child upon him, and that were that child to die he would be given to drink in that awful situation. We ask God for His kindness, and for wellbeing through His grace. Āmīn!

Distress and terror will increase to such an extent that the disbelievers will say: 'O Lord! Release me, even if it be to the Fire!' When the Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings

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and peace, intercedes with his Lord, asking for judgement to be passed and the people to be released, He will issue His command to the angels who carry the Tremendous Throne, and they will carry the Throne of the All-Merciful to the Standing-Place. The Garden is then brought to the right of the Throne, and the Fire to the left, and mankind will be brought before God to be judged. Some will be subjected to no reckoning at all—and these are the Foremost [*al-sābiqūn*]; some will be gently called to account, and others harshly, and anyone who will be harshly questioned will [inevitably] be tormented. Some will be given their books in their right hands, some in their left, and some behind their backs.

God the Exalted shall ask the Messengers about their communication of the Message to their nations, and shall ask those nations whether the Messengers had conveyed it: *Then We shall question those to whom [Our message] was sent, and We shall question the Messengers. With knowledge shall We speak to them, and never were We absent.* [7:6] Some faces will become white and some will grow black. *On the day when some faces will be whitened and others blackened. As for those whose faces have been blackened, it will be said unto them: Did you disbelieve after your [profession of] faith? Then taste the punishment for having disbelieved. And as for those whose faces have been whitened, they dwell in the mercy of God for evermore.* [3:106–7]

All people will be made to stand before God to be questioned about their deeds. The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, said: 'There is not one of you who will not be spoken to directly by God, with no interpreter between them. You shall look to the right and see nothing but that which you had sent ahead, to the left and see nothing but that which you had sent ahead, before you and see nothing but the Fire before your face. So protect yourself from the Fire, even with [as little as] half a date [as charity].'

And he said: 'The feet of a man will not move [from the Standing-Place] until he is questioned about four things: his

youth and how he spent it, his life and how he used it, his wealth, how he earned it and how he spent it'—and in one version [of the *hadīth*]: 'and his actions, what they were'.

This is the time when people's tongues, hands, feet, and skins shall bear witness as to what they did. It has been suggested that the 'skins' [*ḥulūd*] meant here are the genitals. *On the day when their tongues, their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do. [24:24] This day We seal up their mouths, and their hands speak to Us, and their feet bear witness as to what they used to earn. [36:65] And they say to their skins: Why do you testify against us? They say: God has given us speech, even He Who gives speech to all things. [41:21]*

Similarly, each place on earth shall testify as to what they had done on it, whether good or evil. God the Exalted said: *That day it will relate its news. [99:4]* The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, said: 'Do you know what its 'news' are? It will testify against each of God's slaves, man or woman, [and relate] what they have done. It will say: he did such-and-such a thing on such-and-such a day.' And the *hadīth* continues.

He also said, as reported by Ibn 'Umar, may God be pleased with him: 'God will draw His believing slave nearer [to Him] until He shelters him; then He will ask him about his sins, and he will keep confessing [to one after another] until when he fears that he is lost, He will say: "I concealed them for you in the world, and I shall forgive you for them today".'

This prolonged and hard situation may be made easier for the devout believer; [it may be shortened to the extent that] it becomes only as long as [the time taken to perform] an obligatory prayer, or, in another version, the time between the noon and afternoon prayers. This has been affirmed in a *hadīth*.<sup>35</sup>

One of the most distressing situations for mankind at the Standing-Place shall be when God orders the Fire to be brought, led by seventy thousand halters, each halter held by seventy thousand angels. When it comes near to mankind

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and they hear its breathing, its roars, and other terrifying and hideous noises, they will fall to their knees. Even the Prophets will become fearful, and the innocent will be afraid, to the extent that each of the noble Messengers, may peace be upon them, will say: 'O Lord! Myself! Myself! I beseech You for no-one else!' The exception shall be God's Messenger, upon whom be blessings and peace, who will keep saying: 'My nation! My nation!' It has been related that he will advance towards the Fire and drive it back from mankind. It has been ordered to obey him, and will allow the angels holding its halters to take it to the left of the Throne.

The reckoning is recorded, and every creature is given its due, even the cattle. It has been said that the hornless goat shall exact its retribution from the horned one. Then, when the animals have received their dues from each other, God will say to them: 'Become dust!' At that *the disbeliever will say: 'Would that I were dust!'* [78:40]

### *The Balance and the Bridge*

Then the Balance [*Mīzān*] shall be erected for the weighing of deeds. As God the Exalted has said: *And We set a just balance for the Day of Rising, so that no soul is wronged in anything. Though it be the weight of a mustard grain, We bring it forth, and sufficient are We as Reckoners.* [21:47] *The weighing that day is true. As for those whose scales are heavy, they are the triumphant. And as for those whose scales are light, they are those who have lost their souls because of the wrong they used to do to Our revelations.* [7:8-9]

Good and evil deeds shall both be weighed. Those people whose good acts outweigh the bad are the victors and the fortunate, while those whose evil ones outweigh the good have lost and failed. As for those whose good and evil deeds are equal, it is said that they will be stood on the *A'rāf* between the Garden and the Fire, after which, through God's

Mercy, they will go on to the Garden. It is related that there will be an angel standing at the Balance, who, when the balance is heavy, will announce: 'So-and-so, son of so-and-so, has a heavy balance; he will be in such bliss as will never be followed by hardship!' And when the balance is light he will proclaim: 'So-and-so, son of so-and-so, has a light balance; he will suffer and never know happiness again!'

The Bridge [*Şirât*] shall be thrown across Hell and mankind will be ordered to cross it. It is related that it will be sharper than a sword, narrower than a hair, and that people will have to cross it with their deeds. Those whose faith is more perfect and who were quicker to obedience, will be light, and shall cross as [swiftly as] lightning. [Others will be] like the wind, others like birds, others like the best of horses, others like riders, others like strong men burdened by their deeds, others will go on hands and knees, some will be scorched by the Fire, and others will tumble into it. The first to cross will be the Messengers, may blessings and peace be upon them, each of them saying: 'O Lord! Save! Save!' The very first to cross will be Muḥammad, upon whom be blessings and peace; while the first nation to cross shall be his.

Trustworthiness and Kinship-bonds will be sent to stand by the Bridge. It will be moist and slippery, and will have hooks like the thorns on the Sa'dān bush, which will take whoever they are ordered to take.

### *The Hawḍ*

Then the believers will reach the *Hawḍ* ['lake'] of the Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace. They will drink from it and their thirst will vanish. Its water will be whiter than milk, more fragrant than musk, and sweeter than honey. It will have two channels bringing water from the [river] Kawthar. Its breadth will be one month's journey, its length likewise, and around it will be pitchers [as



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numerous] as the stars in the sky. Anyone who drinks one sip from it will never thirst again.

The ulema have differed over whether the *Hawđ* will be after the Bridge and before entering the Garden, or before the Balance and the Bridge. Both of these are possible.

This nation will be recognized among the nations because they will be shining from the effects of the *wuđū*'-ablution, as is stated in a *hadith*. Some people will be driven away from the *Hawđ* after the Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, has seen and recognized them. They will be taken to the left side, and when he says: 'They are from among my companions!' he will be answered: 'You do not know what they did after you!'

### *The Intercession*

The intercession [*shafā'a*] will then become permitted, and the Prophets, the True Ones [*Ṣiddiqūn*], the ulema, the righteous, and the believers will intercede, each according to his rank with God the Exalted. A man of this nation will intercede for [a number as large as the flocks of] Rabī'a and Muđar<sup>16</sup>, while others will intercede for just one or two people.

The first to be permitted to intercede shall be Muḥammad, upon whom be blessings and peace, who has said: 'I am the first to intercede and the first to be permitted intercession.' He is the greatest in rank among Prophets, and his is the greatest intercession. He will intercede many times, the first and weightiest of which shall be at the Judgement; and regarding this he has said: 'I shall continue to intercede until I am granted the release of people who had already been designated for the Fire.' And: 'I will continue to intercede until it will be said to me: "You have left no trace of your Lord's wrath in your nation."<sup>17</sup>

Among his many intercessions will be one for members of his nation who will have actually entered the Fire, so that they will be taken out of it, and for others who will have their degrees in the Garden raised, and so on until he will say to his Lord: 'Will You permit me [to intercede for] everyone who ever said *lā ilāha illa'Llāh*?'

And He – Sublime is He! – will declare to him: 'To do that is not for you; but by My might, I shall not let those who believed in Me one day in their life be like those who did not believe in Me at all!' This perhaps refers to those people of the Fire whom the Most Merciful will take out with His Hand – but God knows best.

Abū Hurayra, may God be pleased with him, related that he asked the Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, who would be most blest with his intercession on the Day of Rising, and he replied: 'The people most blest with my intercession shall be those who said *lā ilāha illa'Llāh*, sincerely and without being prompted.'

Zuhar ibn Arqam, may God be pleased with him, related that God's Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: 'Whoever says *lā ilāha illa'Llāh* with sincerity shall enter the Garden.' Someone asked: 'O Messenger of God! What does 'sincerity' in this involve?' And he replied: 'That it should restrain him from the things God has forbidden.'

Anas, may God be pleased with him, said that he once asked the Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, to intercede for him on the Day of Rising, and he replied: 'I shall do that, God willing.' So he asked him where he should seek him and he replied: 'You should first seek for me at the Bridge.' He said: 'And if I do not find you at the Bridge?' and he replied: 'Then at the Balance.' And he asked again: 'What if I do not find you at the Balance?' and he said: 'Then at the *Hawd*. I shall be found nowhere but at these three places.'

## *The Righting of Injustice*

Know that one of the most difficult things on the Day of Rising is to have treated people unjustly, for injustice is something which God does not overlook. In a *hadith* injustice is said to be of three kinds: one that is never forgiven by God, namely polytheism [*shirk*], one that is never overlooked by God, namely people's injustice to each other, and one that is disregarded by God, namely a person's injustice to himself in that which is between him and his Lord.

The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, said: 'Do you know who the bankrupt are in my nation?' They said: 'Bankrupt people according to us are those who have neither money nor property.' But he said: 'The bankrupt of my nation are those who will come on the Day of Rising having prayed, fasted, and given *Zakat*, but who have insulted this one, slandered that one, taken someone's wealth, or beaten him up. This one will be given of his good deeds and that one will be given of his good deeds; and if his good deeds are exhausted before all his debts are thus settled, he will be given some of their sins, which will be cast upon him; then he will be thrown into the Fire.'

It has been said that some people will be pleased to find on the Day of Rising that their fathers or their brothers owe them such debts, so that they will demand of them and cause them much distress. 'Let those who wronged their brothers set those wrongs aright before that Day comes when there will be neither dinar nor dirham, but only good and evil deeds. If they have good deeds, these will be taken away from them; and if not, then the evil deeds [of the wronged] will be cast upon them, and then they will be thrown into the Fire.' [*Hadith.*]

Know that the Day of Rising is a formidable day. *Do such [people] not think that they will be resurrected, for a formidable day, the day when mankind stands for the Lord of the Worlds? [83:4-6]* Its hardships are protracted, and its terrors great. It has been described in a terrifying manner and at some length

by God in His Mighty Book, and by the Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace. The righteous predecessors, also, described it as they learnt of it from that which was transmitted to them from God and His Messenger. The ulema have compiled many volumes on the subject, for example the volume on 'Death and What Follows' in the *Ihya*<sup>37</sup> and *The Precious Pearl which Reveals the Knowledges of the Hereafter*,<sup>38</sup> both by Hujjat al-Islām al-Ghazālī (may God show him His mercy), *The Memorial* by al-Qurtubī,<sup>39</sup> and two volumes by as-Suyūṭī (may God show him His mercy), namely *The Opening of Hearts: Explaining the State of the Dead and the Graves*, and *Unveiled Moons: The Conditions of the Hereafter*.<sup>40</sup> We have mentioned here the main events and topics, giving a summary of those essentials of the subject of which has to be aware. People who wish to confine themselves to this will find it sufficient, while those who wish for more should read those books that we have mentioned, and other similar ones which we have not. And assistance and success come from God.

### *Afterword*

The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, said: 'For whoever relieves a Muslim's distress in this world, God shall grant him relief from one of the distresses of the Day of Rising. And whoever shields a Muslim will be shielded by God both in this world and in the Hereafter.'

And he said: 'Each Prophet has one prayer which must be answered. They have prayed, but I have concealed my prayer, so that it may be an intercession for my nation, including, God willing, all those who died without imparting anything to God.'

And: 'If you wish, I will tell you of the first thing that God will say to the believers on the Day of Rising, and of the first thing they will say to Him.' They responded: 'Please do, O

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Messenger of God!' and he said: 'He will ask the believers: "Were you eager to meet Me?" "Yes, Lord!" they will reply. He will ask: "Why was that?" and they will say: "We hoped for Your forgiveness, mercy, and good-pleasure." He will then say: "I shall make My mercy certain to be given you".'

And: 'When God created the Garden, He sent Gabriel there and told him: "Behold it, and behold what I have prepared there." He went and looked, and beheld what God had prepared there for its people. Then he went back and said to Him: "By Your Might! None will ever hear of it but that he will enter it!" So He ordered it to be surrounded with unpleasant things, and said: "Return, and look at what I have prepared in it for its people!" He returned, and, when he found it surrounded with unpleasant things, came back and said: "By Your Might! I fear that none will enter it!" And He said: "Go to the Fire, behold it, and see what I have prepared therein for its people!" And its parts were boiling over each other. He returned to Him and said: "By Your Might! No-one who hears of it will enter it!" So He ordered it to be surrounded with pleasures, and said: "Return to it!" He said: "By Your Might! I fear that no-one will be saved from it!"'

And: 'The one among the people of the Fire who had been living most luxuriously in the world will be brought on the Day of Rising and will dip his finger into the Fire. Then he will be asked: "O son of Adam, have you ever seen any goodness at all, has any kind of pleasure ever come to you?" He will reply: "No, by God, O Lord!" And the one among the people of the Garden who was most miserable in the world will be brought and will dip his finger into the Garden. Then he will be asked: "O son of Adam, have you seen any misery at all, has any kind of hardship ever befallen you?" And he will answer: "No, by God! I have never been through any misery at all, nor has any kind of hardship ever befallen me".'

'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her, once remembered the Fire, and she wept. The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, asked why she was weeping, and she

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replied: 'I remembered the Fire, and so I wept. Will you remember your family on the Day of Rising?' And he answered: "There are three situations where no-one can remember anyone: at the Balance until he knows whether his balance is light or heavy, at the record when it is said: "*There! Read my record!*" until he finds out whether his record will be placed in his right or left hand, or behind his back, and at the Bridge when it is cast across the Fire.'

And he has said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'After the people of the Garden have gone to the Garden, and the people of the Fire have gone to the Fire, death will be brought between the Garden and the Fire, and will be slaughtered. Then a herald will proclaim: "O people of the Garden! Death is no more! And, O people of the Fire! Death is no more!" At this, the people of the Garden will become even more joyous, and the people of the Fire will become even more sorrowful.'

And: 'The people of the Garden shall be of one hundred and twenty parts: eighty from this nation and forty from all other nations.'

And: 'I have seen nothing like the Garden, whose seeker sleeps, nor like the Fire, whose flier sleeps.'

And: 'Someone who fears sets out at nightfall, and someone who sets out at nightfall will reach the resting-place. Indeed the merchandise of God is precious. Indeed the merchandise of God is the Garden.'

And: 'I shall be the first of men to come out when they are resurrected. I shall be their leader when they arrive. I shall be their orator as they listen. I shall be their intercessor when they are detained. I shall be their giver of good tidings when they despair. Honour and the keys will on that day be in my hand. The Flag of Praise on that day will be in my hand. I am the dearest of the children of Adam to my Lord. One thousand servants will move around me, *like hidden pearls, or scattered pearls.*'

May God's blessings and peace be upon him, and may He increase him in favour, honour, and rank in His sight!

## THE FIFTH LIFE

### *The Fire and the Garden*

The fifth life extends from the time the people of the Fire enter the Fire and the people of the Garden enter the Garden, and continues into unending, limitless eternity.

This is the longest of all lives, the best, most pleasant and most joyous for the people of the Garden, and the worst, hardest, and most hateful and wretched for the people of the Fire.

### *The Fire*

We shall begin by mentioning the Fire and its people, because even believers of *taqwā* will come to it before entering the Garden.

God the Exalted has said: *There is not one of you that shall not come to it. That is a fixed ordinance of your Lord. Then We shall rescue those who had taqwā, and leave the unjust therein crouching.* [19:71-2]

*O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are set angels, severe, strong, who disobey not God in that which He commands them, but do that which they are commanded.* [66:6]

*I shall immerse him in Saqar. And what will convey to you what Saqar is? It leaves nothing, spares nothing.* [74:26-8]

*Therefore have I warned you of the flaming Fire, which only the most wretched shall endure, those who denied and turned away.* [92:1-6]

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*Nay, he will indeed be flung into the Shatterer. And what might convey to you what the Shatterer is? The kindled fire of God, which leaps up over the hearts. It is closed in on them, in outstretched columns. [104:4-9]*

*We have prepared for the disbelievers a Fire whose tent encloses them. When they ask for help they will be helped with water like molten lead, which burns faces. Evil the drink, and ill the resting-place! [18:29]*

*Those who disbelieve Our signs, We shall expose them to the Fire. As often as their skins are consumed, We shall exchange them for fresh skins that they may taste the torment. Indeed God is Mighty, Wise. [4:56]*

*Those who disbelieve, theirs is the fire of Jahannam. They are neither done with and die nor is its torment lightened for them. Therein we punish every disbelieving one. And they cry for help there: 'O Lord! Release us and we will do right, not what we used to do!' Did We not grant you a life long enough for him who reflected to reflect therein? And the warner came to you. [35:37]*

*And those whose scales are light are those who lose their souls, in Jahannam they abide for evermore. The fire burns their faces, and in it they are livid. Were not My revelations recited to you, and then you used to deny them? They will say: 'Our Lord! Our wretchedness overcame us and we were erring people. Our Lord! Bring us out of it, and if we act thus again, then indeed we shall be unjust.' He will say: 'Begone therein, and speak not unto Me!' [23:103-8]*

*Indeed the criminals are in Jahannam's torment unceasingly. It is not lightened for them, and in it they despair. We wronged them not, but they it was who were unjust. And they cried: 'O Mālik! Let your Lord make an end of us!' He said: 'You are to remain.' [43:74-7]*

Like the verses describing the Fire, the *ḥadīths* are very numerous. We will mention but a few of these, as warnings and reminders.

The Prophet said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'This fire of yours is one of seventy parts of the fire of Jahannam.' They said: 'O Messenger of God! It is sufficient!' And he told them: 'It has ninety-nine more parts, each as hot as the others'



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'The fire of Jahannam was heated for a thousand years until it became red. Then it was heated for a thousand years until it became white. Then it was heated for a thousand years until it became black. It is thus black, and dark.' [*Hadīth.*]

'The least tormented of the people of the Fire shall be those who have sandals and laces of fire, and whose heads boil from them as though they were cauldrons. They imagine that none is in more torment than they, yet theirs is the most insignificant torment of them all.' [*Hadīth.*]

'Some of them are enveloped by the Fire to their heels, some to their knees, some to their waists, and others to their shoulders.' [*Hadīth.*]

'O people! Weep! And if you cannot weep then make as though you were weeping, for the people of the Fire shall weep in Jahannam until their tears run over their faces like streams. Then the tears will stop, blood will flow, and eyes ulcerate, so that if ships were launched therein they would float.' [*Hadīth.*]

'Hunger will be cast upon the people of the Fire, until it equals their other torments. They will cry for help, and help will come in the form of *bitter thorn-fruit, which neither nourishes nor releases from hunger*. [88:7] They will cry for help, and will be given food *that they choke on*. They will then remember that in the world they used to relieve choking by drinking; and so they will cry for a drink, and boiling water will be raised to them with iron hooks. When it nears their faces it scorches them, and when it enters their stomachs it lacerates them. They will say: "Call the guards of Jahannam!" And the guards will say: "*Did the Messenger of your Lord not come to you with clear signs?*" "Yes!" they reply. And the guards say: "Call, then, but *the call of the disbelievers can only go astray!*" They will then say: "O *Mālik!* Let your Lord make an end of us!" But he will reply: "*You shall remain!*" [43:77] Al-A'mash has said: 'Between their calls and *Mālik's* reply will be a thousand years.' 'They will then say [to each other]: "Call on your Lord, none is better for you than your Lord!" and then: "*Our Lord! Our wretchedness has overcome us, we were*

a people gone astray. Our Lord! Bring us out of it, and if we repeat [our sin] we will indeed be unjust!" [23:106-7] He will answer them: "Begone therein! And speak not to Me!" [23:108] When this happens, they will lose hope for anything good, and begin to sigh, to lament, and to wail.' [Hadith.]

It has been related that in the Fire there are snakes as large as the necks of Bactrian camels, and scorpions as big as mules, the sting of which produces painful fevers for forty autumns. Were a bucket of the rotting drink [*ghassāq*] of Hell to be spilt into the world its stench would affect all the world's inhabitants; and should a drop of the Tree of Zaqqūm<sup>41</sup> be dropped onto the world it would spoil the means of livelihood of all people in the world. And should one of the people of the Fire come out into the world, all the world's inhabitants would die because of his stench and disfigurement.

The Fire's gates are seven, as He has said (Exalted is He!): *It has seven gates, and each gate has an appointed portion of them.* [15:44] It also has seven layers. The first is called *Jahannam*, which is for those among the people of *tawhīd* who were sinners. The second is called *Saqar*, the third *Lazā*, the fourth *al-Hutama*, the fifth *al-Sa'ir*, the sixth *al-Jahīm*, and the seventh *al-Hāwiya*. This is the lowermost one, which has neither bottom nor end. These seven layers are filled with agonising torments, hideous tortures, and great humiliation, and each layer is worse than the one above it. May God protect us, our parents, our loved ones, and all Muslims, from it, through His grace and generosity!

Know that the people of the Fire are of two kinds: those who are people of *tawhīd* and enter it because of their sins, and those who are disbelievers [*kāfirūn*], polytheists [*mushrikūn*], and hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*], who outwardly announce their faith but who conceal disbelief within their hearts. The first group will not remain in the Fire forever, for they will leave it through intercession [*shafā'a*] and God's mercy, but they will nevertheless differ in this: some being taken out before the end of their sentences, and some not. It is said that the last to emerge from it will do so after seven thousand

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years, which is—according to one opinion—the age of the world. No person of *tawhīd* will stay in the Fire forever, for those who have as much as an atom's weight of faith will be allowed out, as is stated in sound *hadīths*.

People in the second category will remain in the Fire forever: they include the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and others, who are all to remain in the Fire permanently. *Those who disbelieve and die as disbelievers, upon them is the curse of God, and of the angels and men combined. Eternally therein: the torment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved. [2:161-6] God forgives not that a partner be ascribed unto Him, but He forgives all else to whomsoever He will. [4:48] Whoso ascribes partners to God, for him God has forbidden the Garden; and his abode shall be the Fire. The unjust shall have no helpers. [5:72] The hypocrites shall be in the lowest layer of the Fire. [4:145]*

It has been said that the molar tooth of a disbeliever in the Fire shall be as big as Mount Uhud, while the thickness of his skin will be forty-two arm lengths, and that they will drag their tongues, which will be one and two leagues long, while people tread on them. God shall enlarge their bodies in the Fire so that their torments may be multiplied and their chastisement made more intense.

When the sinners among the people of *tawhīd* are brought out from the Fire, until not one of them remains in it, its gates will be locked, and it will close on the disbelievers. *It is indeed closed in on them, in outstretched columns. [104:8-9]* Some of them will be locked in coffins full of fire and left there for eternity, in God's torment, under His abhorrence and wrath, unendingly.

We ask God for wellbeing, to die in Islam, and for protection from the states of the people of the Fire!

## *The Garden*

Know that the verses and *hadīths* describing the Garden are very numerous, and we therefore propose to mention only a few, in order to teach and to remind.

*And give glad news to those who believe and do good works, that theirs shall be gardens underneath which rivers flow: Each time they are given food of the fruits thereof they say: 'This is what was given us before'—and it is given to them in resemblance. There for them are purified wives. There forever shall they abide [2:25]*

*And those who had taqwā are driven to the Garden in groups, until, when they reach it and its gates are opened, and the guardians say to them: Peace be upon you, you were good, so enter it for evermore! they say: Praise is for God, Who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us inherit the earth, sojourning in the Garden where we will. Fine is the workers' wage! And you see the angels thronging round the Throne, extolling the praise of their Lord; and they are judged aright; and it is said: Praise is for God, Lord of the Worlds! [39:73-5]*

*And for those who fear the standing before their Lord there shall be two gardens, until: So blessed is the Name of your Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Bounty! [55:45-78]*

*And the foremost! The foremost! They are those who are brought nigh, in gardens of delight, until: A multitude of those of old, and a multitude of those of later time. [56:10-40]*

*The righteous shall drink of a cup the mixture of which is of camphor, until: Your endeavour has found acceptance. [76:5-22]*

*Enter the Garden, you and your spouses, to be made glad, until: Therein for you is fruit in plenty whence to eat. [43:70-3]*

*Those who had taqwā will be in a secure place, in gardens and watersprings, until: A favour from your Lord: that is the supreme triumph. [44:51-7]*

*The likeness of the Garden that people of taqwā are promised: therein are rivers of water unpolluted, and rivers of milk the flavour of which changes not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of clear honey. There is for them every kind of fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord. [47:15]*

*Gardens of Eden, which they enter wearing armlets of gold and pearl, and their raiment therein is silk. And they say: Praise is for God, Who has put grief away from us. Our Lord is Forgiving, Generous. Who, of His grace, has installed us in the mansion of*

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*eternity, where toil touches us not, nor can we be affected by weariness. [35:33-5]*

*And the Garden is brought nigh for those who had taqwā, not distant. This is what you were promised, for every penitent heedful one, who feared the All-Merciful in secret and came with a contrite heart. Enter it in peace, this is the day of immortality. There they have all that they desire, and We have more. [50:31-5]*

*The people of taqwā will dwell among gardens and rivers, firmly established in the favour of a Mighty King. [54:54-5]*

The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, said: 'God the Exalted says: "I have prepared for My virtuous servants that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart imagined." Recite, if you wish: *No soul knows what is kept hidden for them of delightful joy, as reward for what they used to do.*' [32:17]

And he said: 'Two gardens of silver with silver vessels, and two gardens of gold, with golden vessels; and nothing stands between people and the vision of their Lord but the Veil of Glory over His Face, in the Garden of Eden.'

And: 'The Garden comprises one hundred degrees. [The distance] between each two degrees is like the [distance] between Heaven and earth. *Firdaws* is the highest degree, from which spring the four rivers of the Garden. Above it is the Highest Throne. When you petition God, therefore, ask for the *Firdaws*!'

And: 'The area of the Garden which could be surrounded by a whip is better than the world and all that it contains. Should one of the women of the Garden appear to the people of the earth, she would illuminate it entirely, and render it fragrant with musk. The scarf which is upon her head is better than the world and all that it contains.'

And: 'In the Garden there is a tree under the shade of which a rider may travel for a hundred years and still not traverse it. The length of one of your bows in the Garden is better than everything on which the sun has ever risen or set.'

And: 'The believer shall have a tent in the Garden made of a single hollowed pearl, the length of which shall be sixty

miles. In each of its corners the believer shall have spouses invisible to the others, and the believer shall visit each of them in turn.'

Abū Hurayra, may God be pleased with him, once asked: 'O Messenger of God! From what was creation created?' And he said: 'From water.'<sup>42</sup> He asked again: 'Of what is the Garden built?' And he replied: 'One brick of gold and one brick of silver; its mortar is fragrant musk, its pebbles are pearls and rubies, its dust is saffron. Those who enter it shall find joy without sorrow, permanence with neither extinction nor death; their clothes shall never wear out, neither shall their youth pass away.'

And: 'The first group to enter the Garden will have faces like the full moon. The second group shall be like the most beautiful scintillating planet in the sky. Each man shall have two wives, each clothed in seventy robes, and the marrow of their legs will be visible through them.'

And: 'The people of the Garden shall enter it beardless, hairless, their eyelids lined with kohl, aged thirty or thirty-three years.'

And he said one day to his Companions: 'Are any of you [willing to] work in earnest for the Garden? For the Garden has no rival. It is, by the Lord of the Ka'ba, a scintillating light, a swaying, fragrant plant, a lofty palace, a flowing river, a multitude of ripe fruits, a comely wife, and many garments, in a perpetual abode of life and vigour, in a lofty house of soundness and splendour.' They said: 'We are the ones who shall work for it in earnest, O Messenger of God!' And he said: 'Say: "If God the Exalted so wills!"'

And he said likewise: 'The palm trees of the Garden shall have trunks of green emeralds, palm roots of red gold, and its palms shall be clothes for the people of the Garden, from which their garments and robes are made. Its fruits are the size of jugs and pails, whiter than milk, sweeter than honey, softer than butter, devoid of stones.'

And: 'The people of the Garden eat and drink, and neither spit, urinate, pass excrement nor blow their noses.' They

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asked: 'What about the food?' and he replied: 'Belching, and perspiration like sprinkled musk.<sup>43</sup> They are inspired to extol, hallow and praise God.' And in another version of this *ḥadīth* the following is added: 'And glorify, just as they have been inspired to breathe.'

And he has said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'Men among the people of the Garden will each be given the strength of a hundred in eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and desire.'

And: 'A herald shall announce: "O people of the Garden! It is time for you to be healthy and never fall ill. It is time for you to live and never die. It is time for you to be young and never grow old. And it is time for you to be happy and never be miserable.' This is His saying, Exalted is He!: *And they are called: This is the Garden, you have inherited it because of that which you used to do.* [7:43]

And he was asked: 'What is al-Kawthar?' He replied: 'A river in the Garden given to me by God, whiter than milk, sweeter than honey, on which are birds with necks like the necks of camels.' And 'Umar said: 'Those are indeed in pleasure.' He said: 'Those who eat them are in even greater pleasure.'

And he said: 'I met Abraham, upon whom be peace, on the night of the *Isrā'*, and he said: "O Muḥammad! Give my greetings to your *Umma*, and inform them that the Garden has fragrant soil, sweet water, and is made of plains the planting of which is *Subḥān Allāh, al-ḥamdu li'Llāh, Lā ilāha illa'Llāh, wa'Llāhu akbar.*'<sup>44</sup>

And: 'In the Garden there are rooms the outside of which can be seen from within, and the inside from without.' A bedouin got up and said: 'For whom shall they be, O Messenger of God?' and he replied: 'For those who speak with goodness, feed [the people], fast regularly, and pray by night while others sleep.'

And: 'God will address the people of the Garden, saying: "O people of the Garden!" "At your service, O Lord!" they will say, "At your pleasure! All goodness is in Your hands."

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“Are you content?” he asks them, and they reply: “How may we not be content, O Lord, when You have given us what no creature of Yours has ever been given?” And He says: “Shall I then give you that which is better still?” and they ask him: “O Lord! What could be better still?” “I shall grant you My good pleasure [*riḍwān*],” He says, “and shall never be wrathful against you again.”

It has been reported that the poor among the Muslims will enter the Garden half a day before the rich (and this is five hundred years), that the rivers of the Garden flow on its surface without furrows, that the height [of people there] will be sixty cubits (the height of their forefather Adam), that the least among them shall receive ten times as much as the [whole] world, has a thousand servants, seventy-two *hūrīs* for wives, and that it will take him a thousand years to see all the gifts and honour that God has prepared for him, that every tree-trunk in the Garden is made of gold, that the gates of the Garden are eight, and that its degrees are as many as the number of verses in the Noble Qur’ān. May God make us among its people, through His Grace and Generosity. Āmīn!



## AFTERWORD

### THE VISION OF GOD, AND HIS OVERWHELMING MERCY

We now provide an afterword to this life, and thereby, God willing, conclude the whole book.

The believers will see their Lord (Blessed and Exalted is He!) in the Garden. *For those who do good is the best reward, and still more.* [10:26]

This verse has been given the commentary that 'the best reward' refers to the Garden, while 'still more' refers to the vision of God, the High and Majestic. *That day faces will be resplendent, looking towards their Lord.* [75:22-3]

The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, said: 'After the people of the Garden have entered the Garden, He Who is Blessed and Exalted shall ask: "Do you wish Me to give you anything more?" And they will reply: "Have You not brightened our faces? Have You not made us enter the Garden and saved us from the Fire?" He will then remove the veil, and nothing they were ever given will have been dearer to them than the vision of their Lord, the High, the Majestic.' And in another version he recited: *'For those who do good is the best reward, and still more.'*

Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh, may God be pleased with him, said: 'We were once with the Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, when he looked at the full moon, and then said: "You will see your Lord with your eyes as you see this moon. You will not be hindered from seeing Him. Therefore if you can manage to pray before sunrise and before sunset, do so!" Then he recited: *Extol the praises of your Lord before sunrise and before sunset.*' [20:130] The two prayers meant here are the morning [*fajr*] and afternoon [*aṣr*] prayers.

Abū Razīn al-'Uqaylī asked: 'O Messenger of God! Will

we all see God, without obstruction, on the Day of Rising?" He said: 'Yes.' He then asked: 'What is the sign of that in the creation?' and the Prophet replied: 'O Abū Razīn! Do you not all see the moon, without obstruction, on the night when it is full?' He said: 'Indeed we do.' 'God is greater,' he told him, 'and that is but a creature of God's creation, Who is High and Majestic.'

And the Prophet said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'The people of the Garden when they enter it will be situated according to the merits of their deeds. Then they will be allowed to visit their Lord for a time equivalent to that of Friday in the world. His Throne will come down to them, and He will manifest himself before them in a meadow of the Garden. A dais of light will be erected for them, and a dais of pearl, a dais of ruby, and a dais of chrysolite, a dais of gold, and a dais of silver; and the lowest of them—and none of them is low—will sit on dunes of musk and camphor, and will not feel that those on chairs are better seated.'

Abū Hurayra said: 'O Messenger of God! Shall we see our Lord?' He replied: 'Yes! Do you doubt your seeing the sun and the moon?' Abū Hurayra said: 'No!' And he said: 'Similarly you will not doubt seeing your Lord. None will remain in that gathering but that God will converse with him, to the extent that He will say to each man: "O so-and-so, son of so-and-so! Do you remember the day you said such-and-such a thing?" And He will remind him of some shortcoming of his in the world, and the man will say: "Did You not forgive?" Then He will reply: "Indeed, it is through the broadness of My forgiveness that you have reached this degree." And as they thus converse a cloud will come over them, and shall rain on them a perfume the scent of which they had never experienced before. And our Lord will say: "Come to the honour I have prepared for you; take whatever you wish!" They will go to a market surrounded by angels the like of which no eye has ever seen, no ear ever heard, and no heart ever imagined. There they will take whatever they desire, for there will be neither selling nor

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buying, and in that market the people of the Garden shall meet one other. A man of high rank may meet someone of lower rank—and none of them are low—and he will be amazed by the clothes he will see him wearing. Their conversation will not end before he sees even better ones on him, for there should be no sadness there. Then we will return home to be met by our spouses who will greet and welcome us, and declare that we have returned with even more beauty than when we had left them, and we will reply: “We have met our Lord the Compeller. It is our right to return with what we have returned with”.

The greatest, highest, most noble and perfect felicity is to see the Noble Face of God in the abode of honour and of bliss. May God grant us this, purely through His Grace, Generosity, and Munificence, and grant it also to our parents, our loved ones, and all Muslims, by His Mercy; for He is the Most Merciful!

*My Mercy embraces all things. [7:156] Inform My slaves that I am indeed the Forgiving, the Merciful. [15:49] Say: Peace be upon you! Your Lord has prescribed mercy upon Himself, that whoever of you does evil and repents afterward of that, and does right, God is Forgiving, Merciful. [6:54] Say: O My servants, who have been prodigal with their own selves! Despair not of God's Mercy! God forgives all sins. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. [39:53] Whoso does evil or wrongs his own soul, then seeks God's forgiveness, will find God to be Forgiving, Merciful. [4:110]*

The Messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, said: ‘God has a hundred mercies, one of which He has sent down to be divided between humans, jinn, birds, cattle, and insects, and by which they have compassion and mercy towards each other. And He has saved ninety-nine mercies, with which He will be merciful to His slaves on the Day of Rising.’

It has been related that on the Day of Rising, God will cause this inscription to appear from beneath the Throne: ‘My Mercy has outstripped My wrath, and I am the Most

Merciful of the Merciful.' And then as many as the people of the Garden will be let out of the Fire.

And the Prophet said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'God has more compassion for His believing slave than a mother has for her child.'

And: 'God will have such forgiveness that [even] Iblis will hope to be reached by it.' But Iblis, may God curse him, cannot be included under any circumstance in God's forgiveness, for he is among those who have despaired and lost hope in God's forgiveness and mercy, and he is the leader of the polytheists. *God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed to Him, but He forgives all else to whomsoever He will.* [4:48]

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him: 'God will forbid the Fire to take anyone who affirms that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God.'

And: 'A herald shall call from underneath the Throne on the Day of Rising: "O Nation of Muḥammad! Whatever you owe Me I release you from, and whatever you owe each other, release each other from it! Then enter the Garden through My mercy.'

This ends all that we wished to include in this treatise, which, God willing, is a blessed one. All *baraka* is from God. Grace and goodness are in God's hand. The whole matter is God's. There is neither ability nor strength save by God the High, the Tremendous. God is Sufficient for us, and He is the best of guardians.

O Lord! Accept our deeds, for You are the Hearer, the Knower! Relent towards us, for You are the Relenter, the Merciful! *Our Lord! Cause not our hearts to stray after You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Your Presence. You, only You, are the Bestower.* [3:8] *Flood us with patience, and take us to You as Muslims!* [7:126]

May God bless our master Muhammad, His slave and His Messenger, trustworthy in the revelation, together with his pure, fragrant family, and his well-guided and well-guiding

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Companions, and those who excel in following them until the Day of Reckoning, and us along with them, through Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

The treatise stands concluded, God be thanked, through His assistance and gracious bestowal of success. Its dictation ended on the morning of Sunday the twenty-ninth of Sha'bān in the year 1110 of the *Hijra*, may the best of blessings and most fragrant peace be on the *Muhājir*.

Praise and thanks are for God,  
the Lord of the Worlds

## NOTES

- 1 In view of some well-known contemporary concerns, we should affirm that the contents of this book are equally applicable to both sexes, and that the masculine form of the pronoun is inclusive of the feminine. For confirmation of this see, for instance, Imām Suyūṭī's *Tuhfat al-julasā'*.
- 2 It is important to remember throughout this book that 'happy' (*sa'ād*) and 'wretched' (*shaqī*) refer principally to man's destiny in the after-death state.
- 3 The 'people of the Right' (*aṣḥāb al-yamīn*) are those destined for salvation, while the 'people of the Left' (*aṣḥāb al-shimāl*) are destined for damnation.  
The expression 'the two fistfuls' is a reference to the famous *ḥadīth* in which a dying man once said, 'I heard God's Messenger (upon him be blessings and peace) say: 'God the Blessed and Exalted took a fistful with His right hand, and said: "This is for this [the Garden], and I do not mind," and took another fistful with His left hand, and said: "This is for this [the Fire], and I do not mind".' And I do not know in which of the two fistfuls I lie.' (Ibn Hanbal, V, 68.)
- 4 The following verse runs: *Or lest you should say: It is only that our fathers ascribed partners to God of old, and we were [their] seed after them. Wilt Thou destroy us on account of that which those who follow falsehood did?*
- 5 For the full text of this *ḥadīth*, narrated by Imām Muslim, see Robson's translation of the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, I, 23.
- 6 The Torah (*tawrah*): the ancient scripture revealed by God to Moses.
- 7 I.e. what they wear is all they have.
- 8 Cited in *Tahārat al-Qulūb* by Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dīrīnī. [Author's note.]
- 9 Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut, 1406), III, 45-6.
- 10 *Ḥadīth* related by Imām Muslim, Imāra, 133.
- 11 As these passages affirm, the age of forty is the pivot, the turning point, after which one's life in general works out the consequences of how one's soul was shaped during one's youth. In this connection it is interesting to recall the remark of Oscar Wilde, that 'by the age of forty, every man has the face that he deserves.'
- 12 Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the upright dignity of an elderly Muslim, surrounded by respectful

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family and friends, and the unseemly descent into churlishness and hopeless desire so common among ageing unbelievers.

- 13 See the translation by Muhammad Abul Quasem, *Al-Ghazali on Islamic Guidance*, p. 56.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 15 This *hadīth*, which is narrated by Imām Bukhārī, expounds an attitude which is forgotten by some Muslims of our generation, who believe that the world is of some value in its own right. How often one hears the *hadīth*: 'work for the *dunyā* as though you were to live forever, and work for the *ākhirā* as though you were to die tomorrow,' cited by those who are partial to large cars and swelling bank accounts, forgetting the true, traditional interpretation of the *hadīth*, which is 'work for the *dunyā* without haste, and for the *ākhirā* with great urgency'. The matter was summed up by our master Hātim al-Aṣamm, who declared: 'Work for your *dunyā* in accordance with the length of your stay therein. Work for your *ākhirā* in accordance with the length of your stay therein. Work for the Fire in accordance with your ability to endure it. And work for God in accordance with your need for Him.'
- 16 In Arabic: *Allāhumma innā nas'aluka bi-nūri wajhika'l-kaīm, wabi-haqīqa 'alayk, husn al-khatima 'inda al-mamāt, lanā wali-ahbābina wali'l-muslimina yā arham ar-rahimīn.* "Rabbanā lā tuzigh qulubānā ḥa'ḍa idh hadaytanā wahab lanā min ladunka rahma, innaka anta'l-Wahhāb." "Rabbanā afrigh 'alaynā sabran watawaffanā muslimīn".
- 17 As stated in a famous *hadīth*: 'Death is the gift to the believer.' (Related by al-Hākim al-Nisāburī.)
- 18 A serious skin disease.
- 19 This account, if it is in fact authentic, applies to whoever is wished goodness by God, and is in a state of felicity, and grows up in rectitude, righteousness and Islam, and is blessed with success in doing good works, and for whom sins and cvildoing are made hateful in his prolonged life. And God knows best. [Note by Shaykh Hasanayn Makhlūf.]
- 20 *Innā li'Llāhi wa'innā ilayhi raji' un.*
- 21 'Illiyīn: the book where the acts of the righteous are recorded. See Qur'an, 83:18-21.
- 22 *Allāhumma 'j'al kitābahu fi 'illiyīn, wa'ktubhu 'indaka min al-muhsinīn, wa'khlufhu fi ahlihi fi'l-ghābirīn, wa'ghfir lanā wa-lahu yā rabb al-'ālamīn.*
- 23 For more on this *hadīth* see Imām Ghazālī, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, p.119.
- 24 Before they rot away [Note by Shaykh Hasanayn Makhlūf.]
- 25 *Bismillah, wa- alā millat Rasūlillah.*

## NOTES

- 26 Sa'd ibn Mu'adh was a Medinan nobleman who died of wounds received at the Battle of al-Khandaq.
- 27 In Arabic: *as-salāmu 'alaykum dāra qawmin mu'minin. Ghadun mu'aj jalūn, wa-atākum mā tū'adūn, wa-innā in shā' Allāhu bikūm lahiqūn Antum lanā salafun wa-naḥnu lakum taba'. Nas'alu 'Llāhu lana wa lakumu 'l-āfiya. Allāhumma 'ghfir lanā wa-lahum.*
- 28 Jūj and Ma'jūj. Two large communities which will appear before the end of time, and wreak havoc in the earth. According to many authors, they will appear from Central Asia.
- 29 'Ukāz: a market town near Makka famed for the quality of its leather.
- 30 The 'Horn' (*al-ṣūr*) is an immense trumpet made of light, whose great size is known only to God the Exalted.
- 31 Imām al-Haddād here suggests that we read the following verses as well (18:48–54), which he does not quote, assuming, probably, that we know them by heart.
- 32 'Syria' here means all the lands between Iraq and the eastern borders of Sinai.
- 33 'Usury' here refers to *ribā*, which includes any money gained or paid as interest.
- 34 A 'mile' (*mīl*) in Arabic is usually defined as extending as far as one's vision reaches.
- 35 See Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, III, 75: The Messenger of God, upon whom be blessings and peace, said: 'By Him in Whose hand lies my soul, it shall be shortened for the believer until it becomes briefer for him than the obligatory prayer which he used to perform in the world.'
- 36 Rabī'a and Mudar: two Arabian tribes possessed of vast numbers of sheep.
- 37 *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, book 40. An English translation exists; see the Bibliography.
- 38 *al-Durrat al-Fākhira fī Kashf 'Ulūm al-Ākhira*, printed many times. There is an English translation available.
- 39 *al-Tadhkira fī Ahwāl al-Mawtā wa-Umūr al-Ākhira*. See Bibliography.
- 40 [I] *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr bi-sharḥ ḥāl al-mawtā wa'l-qubūr*. [II] *al-Budūr al-Sāfira fī ahwāl al-Ākhira*. Mention might also be made of his *Buṣhrā al-ka'ib bi-liqā' al-Ḥabīb*, his *Tuḥfat al-julasā' bi-ru'yat Allāh li'l-nisā'*, and his *al-Durar al-hisān fī'l-ba'th wa-na'im al-jinan*.
- 41 Zaqqūm: A tree that grows from the bottom of hell, whose crop is like the heads of devils. They must eat thereof, and fill their bellies from it. (37:64–6; see also 44:43–6.)
- 42 Qur'ān 21:30: *And from water did We create every living thing.*
- 43 I.e., instead of waste matter being disposed of in the usual fashion, it



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- will leave the body in the form of belching and perspiration.
- 44 Qur'anic formulas regularly repeated by Muslims, meaning 'Sublime is God, praise is for God, there is no deity but God, and God is most great'.

## GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS

- A'raf*. Boundary area, or limbo, between the Fire and the Garden, occupied by those who are deserving of neither.
- '*Arafāt*. Plain near Makka which witnesses the culminating event of the Hajj.
- Barzakh*. The 'intermediate world': which includes the life in the grave between death and resurrection.
- Dajjāl*. The Antichrist.
- Dunyā*. This world, as opposed to the *ākhirā*, which signifies the other world, the world-to-come.
- Hawd*. The vast lake to which the believers shall come on the Day of Judgement.
- '*Ilīyyīn*. A book in which the actions of the righteous are recorded.
- Iqāma*. The short *adhān* made just before the prayer begins.
- Isrā'*. The 'night journey' of the Prophet, upon whom be blessings and peace, from Makka to Jerusalem.
- Jahannam*. Hellfire.
- Mī'rāj*. The ascension of the Prophet, upon whom be blessings and peace, through the heavens to the Presence of God.
- Qibla*. The direction of the Sacred House in Makka.
- Saqar*. A place in Hell.
- Sirāt*. The bridge stretched over Hell on the Day of Judgement.
- Sunna*. The pattern of life of the Blessed Prophet, which comprises the norm and example for his followers.
- Sūrat al-Ikhlās*. Sura 112 of the Qur'ān.
- Talbiya*. The pilgrims on their way to the House say: "*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*" (Here I am O God! At Your service!). This is *talbiya*.
- Taqwā*. Awareness of God, and hence careful observance of His law.
- Tashahhud*. 'Bearing witness': the devotional phrases said towards the end of the *ṣalāt* prayer.
- Tawhīd*. Belief in God's Oneness and Uniqueness.
- Umma*. The 'nation', or world-community, of Islam.