



Commentary on the Book Sincere Counsel to the Students of Sacred Knowledge- Part 12¹

Explained by: Shaikh Yahya bin ‘Ali al-Hajuri (may Allah preserve him)

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Text: “ Chapter Ten²: Self Sufficiency

My son, strive hard to protect your honor from running after this world and having to lower yourself to its people. Be content and you shall live honorably. A saying goes: ‘Whoever is content with bread and vegetables will not be subjugated by anyone’. A Bedouin once passed by Basra and said: ‘Who is the Master of this city?’ It was said to him: ‘Al Hasan al-Basri’. He said: ‘And how did he become their master?’ They said: ‘He had no need of their worldly effects but they were in need of his knowledge’. Know, my son, that my father was a rich man who left wealth worth thousands behind him. When I reached puberty, I was given twenty dinars and two houses and I was told it was all he had left. I took the dinars and bought books of Sacred Knowledge with them. I sold the houses and spent the money in my pursuit of knowledge. Nothing remained of the wealth I had inherited. Your father has never humiliated himself in his quest for knowledge nor has he gone around cities like other preachers have. He has never sent a note asking someone for something from others and all his affairs are running smoothly:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا - وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine [65:2-3]

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Commentary: "This chapter is about the excellence of contentment. A chapter he admonishes his son towards contentment in order for you protect your honour. It is more general than contentment. It includes being eager for manliness. His statement: “running after the world and

¹ The following is a translation and transcription of the fourteenth tape of the Shaikh’s commentary. The original tape can be found here:

http://www.sh-yahia.net/nwe_sounds/durus/Gesture%20to%20the%20liver%20advice%20boy/014.mp3

² Chapter titles correspond to the English titles and numbers, which may be slightly different than in the original Arabic

³ The English translation of the text is based on the translation of the book *Sincere Counsel To the Students of Sacred Knowledge* printed by Dar as-Sunnah Publishers

lowering yourself to its people”, then this is the protection. He is training his son to have honour. Contentment as comes in the Hadith:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ هُدِيَ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَرُزِقَ الْكُفَّافَ وَقَنَّعَ بِهِ

He has succeeded who is guided to Islam and is granted sufficient provision and is content with it
[Saheeh Ibn Majah no. 3355]

It was said: ‘whoever is content with bread and vegetables will not be subjugated by anyone’. That is: whoever is content with little, Allah will honour him and suffice him from having a lot. His concern should not be expanding [his provision] nor should his concern be boasting nor keeping up with the wealthy people. That will lead him to either to begging or to lowering himself or other than that. A Bedouin once passed by Basra and said: ‘Who is the Master of this city?’ It was said to him: ‘Al Hasan al-Basri’. al-Hasan was a freed slave. He said: ‘And how did he become their master?’ They said: ‘He had no need of their worldly effects but they were in need of his knowledge’.

The next point following this is that he (Imam Ibn al-Jawzi) mentions his own situation. His father was rich and he left for him wealth. So he used the wealth to buy books and sold the houses and used them for seeking knowledge. And [he mentions to his son] that your father has never humiliated himself in his quest for knowledge. That is he continue to be honorable and far removed from what the people knew of the worldly life.

He said “nor has he gone around cities like other preachers have” that is: for the worldly life. He also said: “he has never sent a note asking someone for something from others” that is letters requesting something. You are perhaps aware that the Shaikh (i.e. Shaikh Muqbil bin Haadi al-Wadi’ee may Allah have mercy upon him) has written on the contents of this chapter in his work *Dispraise of Begging*.

From the biography of Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy upon him) that he had a thawb with a lot of patches. The Sultan offered him money, but he refused. It is mentioned in his biography: “the worldly life was presented to him and he rejected and the doubts were presented to him and he extinguished them”. This chapter is important and it is necessary to have concern for it.

This treatise is good *Sincere Counsel to the Students of Sacred Knowledge* written by Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him). He had a number of children and none but one child remained. It was his son Abul-Qasim. He saw he did not have a concern for seeking knowledge, so he authored this treatise and it became [a treatise] for the Muslims. He said in the introduction that he supplicated to Allah for ten children and he was given it: five boys and five girls. Four of them passed and only one boy remained. He utilized the opportunity and asked Allah to guide him. He saw from his son

something of playfulness, so he wrote this treatise to encourage him with good manners. He encouraged him through two paths: one path is through the knowledge and its evidences. From that is a number of advices from them is contentment and it comes in the Hadith of Ka'ab bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

مَا ذُنْبَانِ جَانِعَانِ أُرْسِلَا فِي غَنَمٍ بِأَفْسَدَ لَهَا مِنْ حِرْصِ الْمَرْءِ عَلَى الْمَالِ وَالشَّرَفِ لِدِينِهِ

Two wolves free among sheep are no more destructive to them than a man's desire for wealth and honor is to his religion [Saheeh Musnad no. 1100]

So he (Imam Ibn al-Jawzi) is scared that his son will be wasted due to his eagerness for the worldly life. Likewise, Allah will not make him be wasted if he seeks knowledge. Allah is All-rich for His servants”.

Text: “Chapter Eleven: True Fear of Allah Results in all Good...”

Commentary: “These is an admonishment for his son and all those who listen to have Taqwa”

Text: “...Whoever takes care of Allah’s limits shall be taken care of by Him...”

Commentary: “This is beautiful. This is an important chapter where he encourages his son to have the Taqwa of Allah and hold fast to it. And whenever the Taqwa of Allah is correct, Allah will observe all good for him. For verily Taqwa is the guide to all good in the worldly life and the hereafter.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا - وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine [65:2-3]

And Allah says:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him [65:4]

Umar bin Abdul Aziz (may Allah have mercy upon him) used to be the Caliph as you know. When the people increased in saying you have abandoned your children without concern for them or any provisions for them, he gathered them and they were a group like ten. He said: “O my sons, if you

are righteous, then Allah is the Ally for those who are righteous. If you are not righteous, then I do not want to aid you [in disobedience] through this wealth. Then he left them and passed away and they were poor. Then Allah made them rich until from their descendents came Sulaymaan bin Abdul Malik who ruled the ummah.

Whoever rectifies his taqwa, Allah will rectify all good [for him] in the worldly life and hereafter. Whoever's taqwa is weak, then that [good] will be weak. So this is a good advice when he said: "My son, when fear of Allah is real, you shall see all good. A person who truly fears his Lord does not care about others". A sign of Taqwa is sincerity. Also what he mentioned in an earlier chapter about one's life span. Thirty years are spent in sleep and thirty years remain for something. This thirty is divided into half for one's needs and affairs and fifteen years in childhood. So the total is thirty years for sleeping, fifteen years in childhood, and fifteen years remains.

So Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him) mentioned that the time that will remain for your other affairs and benefits: will it be spent purely for Allah or for other than Allah? That is: does seven years remain for Allah with good health? If a person's intention is corrupted, his action will be corrupted. If his intention is good, even if his action is from the permissible action, then his action will be obedience. Whoever is sincere in his obedience, then he does not bother with what they (the people) want. Whoever protects the limits of Allah, Allah will protect him. Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him) uses as evidence the Hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). That is: whoever obeys Allah and guards the limits of Allah, Allah will protect him. Whoever does not guard them, then he will be wasted.

The Hadith of 'Ibn Abbas is Hasan".

Text: "... Do not forget, my son, that it was the good deeds that Yunus had in store that saved him from hardship. Allah Mighty and Sublime says:

لَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ - لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

Had he not been of them who glorify Allah. He would have indeed remained inside its belly (the fish) till the Day of Resurrection [37: 143-144]..."

Commentary: "Then he mentions the story of Yunus (may peace be upon him) and when he had Taqwa, then he was saved due to the Taqwa. He was in the great whale, but Allah saved him. Allah says:

لَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ

Had he not been of them who glorify Allah [37:143]

If he did not glorify Allah while in there, he would be there until the Last Day. So Allah removed him, his people believed in him. Allah says:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذُهِبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

And (remember) Dhan-Nun (Jonah), when he went off in anger, and imagined that We shall not punish him (i.e. the calamities which had befallen him)! But he cried through the darkness (saying): La ilaha illa Anta [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah)], Glorified (and Exalted) are You [above all that (evil) they associate with You]. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers."

[21:87]

He was in the whale and he did not cease to remember Allah. Similar to this is the story of Fir'aun".

Text: "...It was also the evil deeds that Fir'aun had stored for himself that rendered him unable to find an escape when disaster befell him. He was told:

الآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Now (you believe) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the Mufsidun (evil-doers, corrupts, etc.) [10:91]... ”

Commentary: "Fir'aun said: "I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah" when he entered the ocean. Allah says:

الآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Now (you believe) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the Mufsidun (evil-doers, corrupts, etc.) [10:91]

Yunus (may peace be upon him) entered the whale upon good. Fir'aun did not benefit [from his statement] because he did not enter the ocean upon goodness. Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah be

pleased with him) is encouraging his son to enter [different situations] upon goodness and with righteousness so that this will benefit him in the time of need”.

Text: “...It was reported in a Hadith that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: There is no youth who fears Allah in his youth except that Allah raises him in status when he is old...”

Commentary: “The Hadith has weakness. It is sufficed by the Hadith: “**Seven shall be shaded by Allah under his shade on a day in which there is no shade except His Shade**” among which is:

وَشَابُّ نَشَأَ بِعِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ وَرَجُلٌ

A youth raised upon worshipping Allah [Agreed upon]

As for the above Hadith, then it is weak”.

Text: “...Know that the best actions you can store is lowering your gaze from the forbidden, not speaking without need, staying away from punishable deeds and preferring Him, Glorious is He, over your soul’s desire...”

Commentary: “He (Imam Ibn al-Jawzi) is encouraging his son to lower his gaze from haram because the youth is one with inclination towards haram. Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: “Know that the best actions you can store is lowering your gaze from the forbidden, not speaking without need, staying away from punishable deeds and preferring Him, Glorious is He, over your soul’s desire”.

Text: “...Somebody had seen Sufyan al-Thauri in his dream and he was asked: “What did Allah do to you? He replied: I had only been put into the grave and there I was, in front of the Lord of the Worlds. I entered and straight away met someone who said: Sufyan? I said: [Yes, I am] Sufyan. He said: Do you remember a day you preferred Allah over your desires? I said: Yes [upon answering] I was immediately served with big food plates from Paradise...”

Commentary: “Means Allah honored him.

This chapter mentions the story of the three in the cave and about one who avoids the prohibitions of Allah. He mentions four traits [a person should have]:

1. Lowering the gaze
2. Not speaking without a need
3. Staying away from punishable deeds
4. Preferring Him over the desires of the soul

Along with these four he mentioned the [narration] of Sufyan”.

******* End of the Fourteenth Tape *******