

THE COMPENDIUM
of Knowledge and Wisdom

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of Knowledge and Wisdom

جامع العلوم والحكم
في تفریح خمسین حديثاً من جوامع الكلم

IBN RAJAB AL-HANBALI



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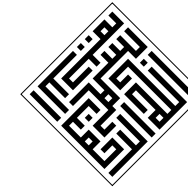
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For my mother Fatima Batha
Jannah lies beneath the feet of mothers
M I S H K A T

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Publishers Preface

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, most merciful and compassionate. Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and His blessings be upon His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), the seal of prophethood, and his family and his companions and all those who follow him.

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, who was Zayn ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān (Rajab) as-Salāmī (736 AH/1335 CE–795 AH/1392 CE), was born in Damascus, Syria.

The author was an expert on chains of transmission and this forms the initial part of the study of each hadith. Then he moves on to examine the various narrations and supporting narrations, and fiqh rulings, supplementary material from the Companions, the Followers and the Followers of the Followers, and the ṣāliḥūn and ‘ulamā’ up until his own day. As is the case with most of the works of major scholars, Ibn Rajab quotes from great ‘ulamā’ of all the madhhabs.

We would like to acknowledge the work of the International Centre for Islamic Studies of Australia in first commissioning this translation and its first major edit, and to express our thanks to them for allowing us the honour of publishing it. Then after the work of the translator we would in particular like to thank Mawlana Shams ad-Duha for his painstaking work on editing the book and in sourcing the hadith which it comprises, and Muhammad Ansa for his proofreading and indexing, and Abdallateef Whiteman for his layout and cover design. Mufti Abdullah Marufi for typing the Arabic and Shaykh Muhammad Akram for his help on sourcing biographical material on Ibn Rajab.

YAHYA BATHA

Imam Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī's Introduction

PRAISE BELONGS TO Allah Who perfected the *dīn* for us and made the blessing on us complete and Who made our ummah – and to Allah belongs the praise – the best ummah. He sent among us a Messenger from ourselves reciting His *āyāt* to us, purifying us and teaching us the Book and the Wisdom. I praise Him for His many blessings. I witness that there is no god but Allah alone without partner, and this act of witnessing is the best protection for someone who seeks protection by it. I witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger whom He sent as a mercy to all creatures. He made it obligatory for him to explain what has been sent down to us, and so he elucidated all the important matters for us. He singled him out with concise comprehensive speech (*jawāmiʿ al-kalīm*) so that he often expressed separate pieces of wisdom and sciences in one phrase or in half a phrase, may Allah bless him and his companions with a blessing which will be a light for us in every darkness, and may He grant him much peace.

Allah, glorious is He and exalted, sent Muḥammad ﷺ with concise comprehensive speech. He singled him out to receive astonishing wisdoms, as has been narrated in the two Ṣaḥīḥ books¹ from Abū Hurayrah ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, “I was sent with concise comprehensive speech.”² Az-Zuhrī ؓ said, “Concise comprehensive speech, according to that which has reached us, is that Allah, exalted is He, united many issues for him, [issues] which used to be written in books before him [separately] in one or two issues and so on.”³

Imam Aḥmad ؓ narrated the hadith of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ؓ that he said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came out to us one day and it was as if he were someone saying farewell. He said, ‘I am Muḥammad, the unlettered Prophet,’ saying it three times, ‘and there is no prophet after me. I have been given the first parts of speech and its conclusions and its comprehensive concision’,”⁴ and he mentioned the rest of the hadith.

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim are referred to as the two Ṣaḥīḥ books (Ṣaḥīḥayn).

² Al-Bukhārī (7013) and Muslim (523)

³ Imam al-Bukhārī mentions this comment by az-Zuhrī after narrating the aforementioned hadith.

⁴ Narrated by Imam Aḥmad in his Musnad (2:172). Al-Haythamī says in Majmaʿ az-Zawāʿid (1:169) that the chain of this hadith has ʿAbdullāh ibn Lahīʿah who is a weak nar-

Abu Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī narrated the hadith of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, “I have been given concise comprehensive speech and its conclusions and speech has been made extremely concise for me.”⁵

Ad-Dāraquṭnī ؒ narrated from the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, “I have been granted concise comprehensive speech and speech has been made extremely concise for me.”⁶ We narrate from the hadith of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ishāq al-Qurashī, from Abū Bardah from Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī ؓ that he said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘I was granted the openings of speech and its conclusions and its comprehensive concision.’ So we said, ‘Messenger of Allah! Teach us something of that which Allah, mighty and majestic is He, has taught you.’” He said, “So he taught us the *tashahhud*.”⁷

In Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim there is from Sa‘īd ibn Abī Bardah ibn Abī Mūsā from his father from his grandfather that the Prophet ﷺ was asked about al-bit‘ (a Yemeni intoxicant made from honey) and al-mizr (an intoxicant made from a grain such as sorghum but possibly barley or wheat). He [Abū Mūsā] said, “And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given concise comprehensive speech with its conclusions. He said, ‘I forbid you every intoxicant which intoxicates [and holds you back] from prayer.’”⁸

Hishām ibn ‘Ammār related in the book *al-Maḥ’ath* with a chain of transmission from Abū Sālim al-Ḥabashī that he said, “I was told that the Prophet ﷺ used to say, “I have been preferred over whoever [of the Prophets] was before me with six things, without boasting.” Among those he mentioned was concise comprehensive speech, and he said, “I was granted concise comprehensive speech. The People of the Book used to make it a portion [which they recited] during the night until the morning, and my Lord expressed it for me in one āyah:

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

‘Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.’⁹”¹⁰

The concise comprehensive speech with which he was singled out is of two kinds:

rator. However the meaning of the hadith is correct and well supported by other narrations and therefore can be classed as *hasan* (good).

5 As mentioned in al-Maṭālib al-‘āliyah (4:28) where the hadith has been ascribed to Abu Ya‘lā. Al-Haythamī says in Majma‘ az-zawā‘id (1:182) that the chain has ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ishāq who is weak.

6 Ad-Dāraquṭnī (4:144-145). The chain has Zakariyyā ibn ‘Aṭīyyah whose hadith are [sometimes] *munkar* (rejected because they conflict with āyāt of the Qur’ān or other hadith which are better established). The narration is therefore weak.

7 This hadith is narrated by the author with his own chain.

8 Muslim (1733).

9 Sūrat al-Ḥadīd: 1.

10 Muslim (523).

First, that which is in the Qur’ān such as His words, exalted is He:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ

“Allah commands justice and doing good and giving to relatives. And He forbids indecency and doing wrong and tyranny.”¹¹ Al-Hasan said, “No good was left in this āyah without Him commanding it and no evil without Him forbidding it.”¹²

Second, that which is [the Prophet’s] speech ﷺ which is published and to be found in the *sunnah* [collections] which are traced back to him. The men of knowledge ؓ compiled collections of his comprehensive words ﷺ. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn as-Sunnī compiled a book which he called al-*Ijāz wa jawāmī‘ al-kalim min as-sunan al-ma’tūrah* – “The Succinctness and Concise Comprehensive Speech in the Transmitted Sunnahs”. The Qāḍī Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Qudā‘ī gathered together some of the succinct and concise comprehensive speech in a book which he called *ash-Shihāb fi’l-ḥikam wa’l-ādāb* “The Flaming Torch of Wisdom and Culture”. Some other people compiled books in the same fashion as he had done and increased [the number of hadith] greatly over the number he had mentioned. Al-Khaṭṭābī indicated in the beginning of his book *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* “Unusual hadith” a small number of the comprehensive hadith.

The Imam and Ḥāfiẓ Abū ‘Amr ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ dictated at an assembly a book which he called *al-Ḥadīth al-kullīyah* “Universal Hadith” in which he collected the comprehensive hadith about which it is said that the dīn revolves around them, and those succinct and comprehensive phrases of a similar meaning. This session of his comprises twenty-six hadith.

Then the faqīh, the Imam who did without the world, the exemplar, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā an-Nawawī ؒ took these hadith which Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ had dictated and increased them to forty-two hadith calling his book *al-Arba‘ūn* “The Forty”. These forty which he collected became very famous and are memorised a great deal. Allah produced great benefit because of the blessing of the compiler’s intention and his good purpose, may Allah, exalted is He, show him mercy.

A group of seekers of knowledge and dīn repeatedly asked me to attach a commentary to these aforementioned hadith. So I asked Allah, exalted is He, to choose [by means of the du‘ā called *istikhārah*] whether I should write a book comprising a commentary on those meanings of the hadith which Allah, exalted is He, makes easy [for me], and qualifying them with whatever explanations of their principles and their structures Allah, glorious is He, would open up for me. I ask Him for help in what I intend to do and the grace of a correct intention and purpose in what I want to do. I depend in all my affair upon Him, and I disclaim any power [to avert evil] or strength [to do good] except by Him.

11 Sūrat an-Naḥl: 90.

12 Al-Bayhaqī in Shu‘ab al-īmān. (Ad-Durr al-manthūr)

One of those who explained these forty hadith took their compiler to task ﷺ for leaving out the hadith, "Attach inheritances to their people, then whatever of the inheritance is left behind is for the nearest male [relative]." ¹³ [This critic] said, "...because it gathers together the principles of the laws of inheritance which are a half of knowledge, and so ought to have been mentioned among these comprehensive hadith just as is the hadith 'Clear proof is demanded of the claimant and the oath is the right of the one who denies [the claim]'" ¹⁴ because it collects together the rules of passing judgement." So I decided to add this hadith to the forty hadith which the Shaykh ﷺ had compiled, and add other hadith of concise comprehensive speech which comprise various sciences and wisdoms, until the number of the hadith became fifty.

These are the extra hadith over and above what the Shaykh ﷺ compiled: "Attach inheritances to their people", and the hadith, "The same things are made ḥarām by suckling which are made ḥarām by blood kinship", and the hadith, "When Allah makes a thing ḥarām, He also makes the price paid for it ḥarām", and the hadith, "Every intoxicant is ḥarām", and the hadith, "The son of Adam has not filled a vessel worse than his belly", and the hadith, "There are four [things]; whoever has them is a hypocrite", and the hadith, "If you were to rely on Allah as He ought to be relied upon, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds", and the hadith, "May your tongue remain moist with the remembrance of Allah, exalted is He." ¹⁵ I have called this book, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm wa'l-hikam fī sharḥ khamṣīna ḥadīthan min jawāmi' al-kalim* "A Collection of Sciences and Wisdoms in Commentary on Fifty Hadith from the Concise Comprehensive Speech."

You should know that my sole intention is to explain the prophetic expressions which comprise these universal hadith. For that reason I will not qualify the Shaykh's words ﷺ in which he introduces the narrators of these hadith such as the Companions ō nor his expressions in ascribing [the hadith] to the books to which he ascribes them. I will only produce the meaning which indicates that, since I have told you that my intention is only to explain the concise and comprehensive words of the Prophet ﷺ and what disciplines, wisdom, gnoses, judgements and parts of the Sharī'ah they comprise. Before speaking in explanation of the hadith, I will briefly indicate its chain of transmission, so that its authenticity, strength or weakness is known. I will mention some of those hadith which are related in the same sense, if there are any hadith in that category other than the hadith which the Shaykh mentioned. If there are no other hadith in that category, or if no others in it are authentic, then I will draw attention to all of that. By Allah there is success and He is the One from whom help is sought and upon whom one depends, and there is no power [to avert evil] nor strength [to do good] except by Allah.

¹³ Hadith 43 in this compilation.

¹⁴ Hadith 33 in this compilation.

¹⁵ Hadith nos. 43-50 in this compilation.

الحديث الأول

عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبِي حَفْصٍ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رضي الله عنه قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ﴿إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ؛ فَهَاجَرَتْهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا، أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا؛ فَهَاجَرَتْهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ. رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.



Intention

The Amīr al-Mu'minīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying, 'Actions are only by intentions, and each man has only that which he intends. Whoever's emigration is for Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger. Whoever's emigration is for some worldly gain which he can acquire or a woman he will marry, then his emigration is for that for which he emigrates'."¹

Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṣārī alone narrated this hadith from Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm at-Taymī from 'Alqamah ibn Abī Waqqāṣ al-Laythī, from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه. There are no other authentic paths of transmission for it apart from this one, as 'Alī al-Madīnī and others said. Al-Khaṭṭābī said, "I know of no disagreement among the people of hadith about that," even though it is narrated as a hadith of Abū Sa'īd and others, and it is said that it has been narrated by numerous paths, but none of that is authentic according to the people who memorise [hadith]. Later a great number of people narrated it from al-Anṣārī. It is said that more than two hundred narrators transmitted it from him, and it is even said that it was seven hundred. Among the great ones who narrated it were Imam Mālik, ath-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī, Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Layth ibn Sa'd, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Shu'bah, Ibn 'Uyaynah and others.

The people of knowledge agreed that it is authentic and accepted it totally. Al-Bukhārī began his *Ṣaḥīḥ* with it and established it in the position of the introduction to it, by which he indicated that every action not intended for the sake of the face of Allah is invalid and fruitless in the world and in the next world. For that reason 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī said, "If I were to

¹ Al-Bukhārī (1) and Muslim (1907).

write a book in chapters, I would put the hadith of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb on 'actions are only by intentions' in every chapter." Some also say that he said, "Whoever wishes to compile a book, let him begin with the hadith, 'Actions are only by intentions.'"

This hadith is one of those around which the *dīn* revolves. It is narrated that ash-Shāfi'ī said, "This hadith is one third of all knowledge, and it is involved in seventy sections of *fiqh*." Imam Aḥmad ʔ said, "The foundations of Islam are based on three hadith: the hadith of 'Umar, 'Actions are by intentions', and the hadith of 'Ā'ishah, 'Whoever innovates in this affair of ours that which is not from it then it is rejected', and the hadith of an-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, 'The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām* is clear'." Al-Ḥākim said, "They narrated to us from 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] from his father that he mentioned his words ʔ, 'Actions are by intentions' and his words, 'The creation of any one of you is gathered in the belly of his mother for forty days' and his words, 'Whoever innovates in our *dīn* whatever is not of it then it is rejected,' and then he said, 'These hadith ought to begin every compilation, because they are the foundations of the hadith.'"

Ishāq ibn Rahwayh said, "Four hadith are among the foundations of the *dīn*: the hadith of 'Umar, 'Actions are only by intentions', and the hadith, 'The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām* is clear', and the hadith, 'The creation of any one of you is gathered in the belly of his mother for forty days' and the hadith, 'Whoever makes anything in our affair which is not of it, then it is rejected'."

'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd narrated from Abū 'Ubayd that he said, "The Prophet ʔ gathered together all the business of the next world in one expression: 'Whoever innovates in our affair that which is not from it, then it is rejected', and he gathered the business of the world in one expression: 'Actions are only by intentions'. These two enter into every chapter."

Abū Dāwūd said, "I thought about the hadith which are narrated with chains of transmission and found them to be four thousand hadith. Then I thought further and found that the pivot of these four thousand lies in four hadith: the hadith of an-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, 'The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām* is clear', the hadith of 'Umar, 'Actions are only by intentions', the hadith of Abū Hurayrah, 'Allah is good and wholesome and only accepts what is good and wholesome, and Allah commands the *mu'minūn* with that with which He commands the Messengers...' and the hadith, 'A part of the excellence of a man's *dīn* is his leaving alone that which does not concern him.'" He said, "Each one of these four hadith is one quarter of knowledge."

Abū Dāwūd ʔ also said, "I recorded five hundred thousand hadith of the Messenger of Allah ʔ from which I chose those which comprise this book," – meaning *Kitāb as-Sunan* – "in which I collected four thousand eight hundred hadith, of which four hadith are sufficient for a man's *dīn*: the first of which are his words ʔ, 'Actions are by intentions', second, his words ʔ, 'A part of the excellence of a man's *dīn* is his leaving what does not concern him', third, his words ʔ, 'The *mu'min* will not be a *mu'min* until he is only contented for

his brother with that with which he is contented for himself', and fourth, his words ʔ, 'The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām* is clear.'"

In another narration he said, "*Fiqh* revolves around five hadith: 'The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām* is clear', and his words ʔ, 'There is [to be] no causing harm nor returning harm', and his words, 'Actions are by intentions' and his words, 'The *dīn* is sincerity,' and his words, 'That which I have forbidden you, avoid it, and that which I have commanded you, do that of it which you are able'."

In another narration he said, "The principles of the sunnahs in every field are four hadith: the hadith of 'Umar, 'Actions are by intentions', and the hadith, 'The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām* is clear', and the hadith, 'A part of the excellence of a man's *dīn* is his leaving alone that which does not concern him', and the hadith, 'Do without the world and Allah will love you, and do without what is in people's hands and people will love you.'"

Ḥāfiẓ Abū'l-Ḥasan Tāhir ibn Mufawwiz al-Mu'āfirī al-Andalusī wrote:

The pillars of the *dīn* for us are four expressions from the Best of Creation:

Beware of ambiguities,
do without,
and leave what does not concern you
and act with intention.

His saying ʔ, "Actions are only by intentions" and in another narration, "Actions are by intentions", both of which necessarily imply restriction [of the meaning to the sense of "only"] according to the authentic position, but it is not our aim here to address that nor to say a lot about it.

There are different understandings of his words, "Actions are by intentions" and many of the later [scholars] claim that it means "Actions are correct by, or judged according to, or are acceptable by intentions." According to this what is meant by actions are the actions of the *Sharī'ah* which require intentions. As for what does not need intention, ordinary everyday acts such as eating, drinking, dressing, etc., or for example, returning trusts and guarantees such as deposits and things which have been forcibly expropriated, then none of these things require intentions, so that all of these are excluded from the general actions mentioned here.

Others say that 'actions' here are general and that nothing is excluded from them, and someone said that this is the majority opinion, by which he seems to have meant the majority of the earlier generations. That is in the words of Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and others of the earlier generations, and it is what is apparent from the words of Imam Aḥmad. He said in the narration of Ḥanbal, "I prefer that everyone who does an act such as prayer, fasting, *ṣadaqah* or any type of good action, that an intention should precede the doing of it. The Prophet ʔ said, 'Actions are by intentions' and this applies to every single affair."

2 All of the hadith mentioned above will follow in this compilation.

Al-Faḍl ibn Ziyād said, "I asked Abū 'Abdullāh – meaning Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] – about intention in action, and I asked, 'How is the intention?' He said, 'One struggles with oneself – if one means to do an action – not intending it for people.' "

Aḥmad ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥarbī said, "Yazīd ibn Hārūn narrated 'Umar's hadith 'Actions are by intentions' while Aḥmad was sitting, and Aḥmad said to Yazīd, 'Abū Khalid, this is suffocation (*khunāq*).'"³

According to this statement some said that what is to be understood from the words is, "Actions happen or actually take place according to their intentions," so that he informs us that a voluntary action only comes about by an intention from the one who does it, which is the cause of the action and of its existence. Then his words after that, "and for each man there is only that which he intends," informs us about the *Sharī'ah* judgement which is that for the one who does the action the intention is his portion of the action. If it is good then his action is good and he will have its reward, but if it is corrupt then his action is corrupt, and the burden of it will be upon him. It is possible then that the meaning of his words, "actions are only by intentions" is that "actions are right, corrupt, acceptable or rejected, rewarded or unrewarded according to the intentions" and thus inform us of the judgement of the *sharī'ah* that the action's rightness or corruption is according to the rightness of the intention or its corruption, as in his words ﷺ, "actions are according to results", i.e. their rightness, their corruption, their acceptability or their lack of it are according to the results.

His words after that, "and for each man there is only that which he intends," informs us that nothing comes about from someone's action except that which he intends by it. If he intends good, good will come about from it, and if he intends evil, evil will come about from it. This is not purely a repetition of the first phrase, because the first phrase points out that the rightness or the wrongness of an action is according to the intention which brought it into existence, whereas the second phrase points out that the reward of the one who does the action for the action is according to his right intention, and that his punishment for it is according to his wrong intention. It is also possible that his intention is [merely] permissible (*mubāḥ*) so that the action would be permissible, and thus he would not obtain any reward or receive punishment for it. Thus the action in itself – its rightness, wrongness or permissibility – is according to the intention which motivates it and brings it into existence, and the reward for the one who does the action, his punishment and his [merely] being safe, are according to his intention by which the action became right, wrong, or permitted.

You should know that linguistically intention means a type of purpose and will, even though there are distinctions made between these expressions, but this is not the place to mention that.

³ Possibly "the strangling cord" (*khināq*). By that he may be describing the difficulty of struggling with oneself to make sure one's actions are with the correct intention and purpose.

In the words of the people of knowledge, intention has two meanings:

First: to distinguish some acts of worship from others, for example to distinguish the midday prayer from the afternoon prayer, and to distinguish the fast of Ramaḍān from other fasts, or to distinguish acts of worship from ordinary everyday acts, such as distinguishing the *ghusl* performed after sexual intercourse from bathing in order to cool oneself or for the purpose of cleanliness, etc. This meaning of intention is found a great deal in the language of the *fuqahā* in their books.

Second: to distinguish the purpose of the action, whether it is for Allah alone without partner, or for Allah as well as for other than Him. This is the intention about which the gnostics speak in their books when they talk about sincerity and its consequences, and it is the one which is to be found a great deal in the words of the right-acting first generations.

Abū Bakr ibn Abi'd-Dunyā compiled a work which he called, *Kitāb al-ikhhlās wa'n-niyyah* "The Book of Sincerity and Intention" by which he meant only this [second meaning of] intention, which is also the intention which is repeatedly mentioned in the words of the Prophet ﷺ sometimes with the expression '*niyyah*' (intention), sometimes with the expression '*irādah*' (will), and sometimes with an expression close to that. It has been mentioned many times in the Book of Allah ﷻ also without use of the term 'intention' but with expressions close in meaning to that.

Those who distinguish between 'intention', 'will', 'purpose' and similar words do so because of their view that 'intention' only has the first meaning which the *fuqahā* mention. Some of them say, "The intention is specific to the act of the one who intends, and will or 'wanting' is not specific to that, just as a person might want Allah to forgive him but not intend it." But we have mentioned that intention in the language of the Prophet ﷺ and the early generations of the ummah was in the main only used for this second meaning, and it was at that time used to mean 'will' or 'want'. For that reason it is very often expressed by the term 'will' in the Qur'ān, as in His words, exalted is He:

مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ

"Among you are those who want the *dunyā* and among you are those who want the *ākhirah*."⁴

And His words ﷻ:

تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ

"You desire the goods of the *dunyā*, whereas Allah desires the *ākhirah*."⁵

And His words:

⁴ Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 152

⁵ Sūrat al-Anfāl: 68

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ

“If anyone desires to cultivate the *ākhirah*, We will increase him in his cultivation. If anyone desires to cultivate the *dunyā*, We will give him some of it but he will have no share in the *ākhirah*.”⁶

And His words, exalted is He:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلاَهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا . وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا

“As for anyone who desires this fleeting existence, We hasten in it whatever We will to whoever We want. Then We will consign him to Hell where he will roast, reviled and driven out. But as for anyone who desires the *ākhirah*, and strives for it with the striving it deserves, being a *mu'min*, the striving of such people will be gratefully acknowledged.”⁷

And His words, exalted is He:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“As for those who desire the life of the *dunyā* and its finery, We will give them full payment in it for their actions. They will not be deprived here of their due. But such people will have nothing in the *ākhirah* but the Fire. What they achieved here will come to nothing. What they did will prove to be null and void.”⁸

And His words:

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

“Do not chase away those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face.”⁹

6 Sūrat ash-Shūrā: 20

7 Sūrat al-Isrā': 18-19

8 Sūrah Hūd: 15-16

9 Sūrat al-An'ām: 52

And His words:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

“Restrain yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face. Do not turn your eyes from them, desiring the attractions of this world.”¹⁰

And His words:

ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“That is best for those who seek the pleasure of Allah. They are the ones who are successful.”¹¹

And His words

وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ رَّبًّا لِيَرْبُوَ فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُو عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْغَفُونَ

“What you give with usurious intent, aiming to get back a greater amount from people's wealth, does not become greater with Allah. But anything you give as *zakāh*, seeking the Face of Allah – all who do that will get back twice as much.”¹²

Also it is expressed in the Qur'ān with the expression *ibtighā'* – “desiring” – as in His words, exalted is He:

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى

“...desiring only the Face of their Lord Most High.”¹³

And His words:

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَشِيئًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ

“The metaphor of those who spend their wealth, desiring the pleasure of Allah and firmness for themselves...”¹⁴

And His words:

10 Sūrat al-Kahf: 28

11 Sūrat ar-Rūm: 37

12 Sūrat ar-Rūm 38-39

13 Sūrat al-Layl: 20

14 Sūrat al-Baqarah: 264

وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ

“...when you give desiring only the Face of Allah.”¹⁵

And His words:

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“There is no good in much of their secret talk, except in the case of those who enjoin *sadaqah*, or what is right, or putting things right between people. If anyone does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We will give him an immense reward.”¹⁶

He denies that there is any good in much of what people discuss together except for when they command the well-recognised good actions, of which He singles out *sadaqah* and putting things right between people because of the universal benefit in them. It indicates that confidential discussions for that purpose are good. As for the reward for it from Allah, He singles it out for whoever does it desiring the good pleasure of Allah. He only regards commanding the well-recognised virtues such as *sadaqah* and putting things right between people, etc., good even if one does not desire the face of Allah by it because of the unlimited benefit which is a consequence of it, so that people attain good and excellence because of it. As for commanding [the well-recognised good actions], then if someone intends the face of Allah by it and desires His good pleasure, it is good for him and he will be rewarded for it. However, if someone does not intend that there is no good in it for him and no reward for doing it. This is contrary to the case of someone who prays or fasts and does *dhikr* of Allah intending by that some worldly advantage, because for him there will be altogether no good in it, because the benefit in it does not reach beyond him to any other, O Allah, except someone else who models himself on him in that [and sincerely worships and remembers Allah in imitation of the man who is in fact only showing off].

As for that which is related in the Sunnah and the words of the first right-acting generations naming this meaning “intention”, there is a great deal of it. We will mention some of it, such as that Aḥmad and an-Nasā’ī related from the hadith of ‘Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever goes on an expedition in the way of Allah only intending [to acquire] a cord to be used for hobbling a camel, will have what he intends.”¹⁷

Imam Aḥmad related from the hadith of Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Truly, most of the *shuhadā’* [people who die in the Way of Allah] of

¹⁵ Sūrat al-Baqarah: 272

¹⁶ Sūrat an-Nisā’: 114

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥibbān.

my ummah will be people of the beds,¹⁸ and how often someone who is killed between two rows [of warriors] Allah knows best his intention.”¹⁹

Ibn Mājah narrated the hadith of Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, “People will be assembled according to their intentions.”²⁰ In the hadith of Abū Hurayrah ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ he said, “People will only be made to rise [on the Day of Rising] according to their intentions.”²¹

Ibn Abi’d-Dunyā narrated from the hadith of ‘Umar ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, “People who fought each other will only be made to rise according to their intentions.”²²

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* there is from Umm Salamah ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ, “Someone who takes refuge will seek refuge at the House, and an expeditionary force will be sent against him. Then when they are in a desert part of the land, the earth will cave in with them.” I [Umm Salamah] asked, “Messenger of Allah, what about someone who had been coerced [into joining the army]?” He said, “It will cave in with him along with them, but he will be made to rise on the Day of Rising according to his intention.”²³ There is a hadith with a similar meaning from ‘Ā’ishah ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ in which he said, “They will all be destroyed at once, and they will issue forth from different points of origin, and Allah will make them rise according to their intentions.”²⁴

Imam Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah related the hadith of Zayd ibn Thābit that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever’s concern is the world, then Allah will disperse his unity,” and in another wording, “[disperse] his affair, and He will put his need in front of his eyes and only that of the world will come to him which is written for him. Whoever’s intention is the next world, Allah will unite his affair and place his wealth in his heart and the world will come to him in spite of itself.” This is the wording of Ibn Mājah. The wording of Aḥmad is, “Whoever’s concern is the next world. ... and whoever’s intention is the world.”²⁵ Ibn Abi’d-Dunyā related it and he had, “Whoever’s intention is the next world ... and whoever’s intention is the world.”

In the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* books there is from Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ “Truly, you never spend anything desiring by it the face of Allah, but that you will be rewarded for it, even the morsel of food which you place in your wife’s mouth.”²⁶ Ibn Abi’d-Dunyā narrated from ‘Umar, but with an interrupted (*munqaṭi‘*)²⁷ chain of transmission, that he said, “There is no action for someone who has no intention, and there is no reward for someone who

¹⁸ i.e. they will die in their beds although wanting to die in battle.

¹⁹ Aḥmad (1:397).

²⁰ Ibn Mājah (4230). Al-Ḥākim.

²¹ Ibn Mājah (4229). Also collected by Imam Aḥmad in his *Musnad*. Al-Mundhirī in *at-Targhib wa’t-tarhīb*.

²² Ibn Abi’d-Dunyā in *al-Ikhlās wa’n-niyyah*.

²³ Muslim (2882)

²⁴ Muslim (2884)

²⁵ Aḥmad (5:183), Ibn Mājah (4105). Ibn Ḥibbān.

²⁶ al-Bukhārī (56), and Muslim (1628).

²⁷ *Munqaṭi‘* is deemed a weak chain of transmission.

has no expectation,” meaning that there is no reward for someone who does not anticipate a reward for his action from Allah ﷻ.

With a weak chain of transmission from Ibn Mas'ūd there is that he said, “Words do not benefit unless there is action, and words and actions do not benefit unless there are intentions, and words, actions and intentions are no use unless they accord with the Sunnah.”

Yahyā ibn Abī Kathīr said, “Know intention, because it is more far-reaching than action.” Zubayd al-Yāmī said, “I prefer to have an intention in every thing, even eating and drinking.” He also said, “Make an intention for every thing by which you mean good, even going to the rubbish dump.”

Dāwūd at-Tā'ī said, “I think that all good is only united in good intention, and it is sufficient good for you even if you do not become worn out.” Dāwūd said, “Solicitous concern for the well-being of others (*birr*) is the aspiration of someone who fears [Allah], and even if all of his limbs are connected to love of the world, one day his intention will return him to his origin.”

Sufyān ath-Thawrī said, “I have not concerned myself with anything more difficult for me than my intention, because it fluctuates.”

Yūsuf ibn Asbāt said, “Purifying the intention of its corruption is more difficult for people of action than long exertion.”

Someone asked Nāfi' ibn Jubayr, “Will you not come to the funeral prayer?” He said, “As you are! Not until I form my intention.” They say that he thought for a little and then said, “Proceed.”

Muṭarrif ibn 'Abdullāh said, “Rightness of the heart comes from right action. Right action comes from right intention.”

Someone of the early right-acting generations said, “Whoever is pleased to perfect and complete his action then let him make his intention good, because Allah ﷻ rewards the slave when his intention is good even if it is only [in the giving of] a morsel of food.”

Ibn al-Mubārak said, “Many a small action is exalted by intention, and many a great action is lessened by intention.”

Ibn 'Ajlān said, “Action is not right without three [things]: fearful awareness (*taqwā*) for the sake of Allah, good intention, and hitting the mark.”

Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād said, “Allah ﷻ only wants from you your intention and your will.”

Yūsuf ibn Asbāt said, “Preferring Allah ﷻ is better than being killed in His way.”

Ibn Abi'd-Dunyā narrated all of that in *Kitāb al-ikhhlāṣ wa'n-niyyah* “The Book of Sincerity and Intention”. He also narrated in it with an interrupted chain of transmission from 'Umar that he said, “The best of actions is to perform what Allah ﷻ has made obligatory, and to be cautious of what Allah ﷻ has forbidden, and [to have] a true intention for that which is with Allah ﷻ.”

From this we know the meaning of what is narrated from Imam Aḥmad that the foundations of Islam are three hadith: the hadith, “Actions are only by intentions”, the hadith, “Whoever innovates in our affair that which is not from it, then it is rejected,” and the hadith, “The *ḥalāl* is clear and the *ḥarām*

is clear”, because all of the *dīn* can be reduced to doing those things which are commanded, giving up those things which are forbidden and desisting from doubtful things, all of which the hadith of an-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr contains. That is only made complete by two matters:

First, that the action in its outward form should accord with the Sunnah, which the hadith of 'Ā'ishah implies, “Whoever innovates in our affair that which is not from it, then it is rejected,”

Second, that by the action one inwardly intends the face of Allah ﷻ as is implied by the hadith of 'Umar, “Actions are only by intentions.”

About His words, exalted is He:

يَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“...to test which of you is best in action,”²⁸ al-Fuḍayl said, “Most sincere and most correct.” He said, “If an action is sincerely intended but it is not correct it is not accepted, and if it is correct but it is not sincere it is not accepted until it is sincere and correct.” He said, “Sincerity is when it is for the sake of Allah ﷻ. Correctness is when it is according to the Sunnah.” Something that proves this thing that al-Fuḍayl said is His words ﷻ:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

“So let him who hopes to meet his Lord act rightly and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.”²⁹

One of the gnostics said, “They are distinguished in terms of merit by their intentions, not by fasting and prayer.”

His words ﷻ, “So whoever's emigration is for Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger. Whoever's emigration is for something of the world which he obtains or a woman whom he marries, then his emigration is for that for which he emigrates.” When he ﷻ mentioned that actions are in accordance with intentions, and that for the one who acts his portion of his action is his intention whether good or bad, and these two comprehensive expressions encompass every matter, then he mentioned an example of an action after that whose outward form is single, but whose rightness or corruption differ according to intention, and so it is as if he was saying that all other actions follow the example of this one.

The essence of emigration is abandoning the land of *shirk* [where others than Allah are associated as partners with Him] and moving to the abode of Islam, just as the Emigrants, before the Opening of Makkah [to Islam], would emigrate from it to the Madinah of the Prophet ﷺ and already those of them who had done so had before that emigrated to the Negus in the land of the Ethiopians. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ informed us that this emigration differs ac-

²⁸ Sūrat al-Mulk: 2

²⁹ Sūrat al-Kahf: 110

cording to the different purposes and intentions behind it. Whoever emigrates to the abode of Islam from love of Allah and His Messenger and out of desire to learn the *dīn* of Islam, and to be able to practise his *dīn* openly whereas he had been unable to do that in the abode of *shirk*, then this is the one who truly emigrates for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. It is sufficient for him as honour and as a boast that he attains what he intends of emigrating for the sake of Allah and His Messenger.

With this meaning in mind, he confined himself in the main clause of the conditional sentence to repeating the conditional clause word for word [“then his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger”], since the attainment of that which he intended by his emigration is the limit of what can be sought in this world and the next. Whoever’s emigration is from the abode of *shirk* to the abode of Islam to attain some worldly thing or a woman whom he wishes to marry in the abode of Islam, then his emigration is for the purpose for which he emigrates: the former is a trader and the second courts a wife, and neither of them are emigrants.

In his words, “...to that which he emigrates,” there is contempt and scorn for that worldly matter which he seeks, since he did not mention it by name. Also, emigration for Allah and His Messenger is single without any multiplicity, and for that reason he repeated the main clause in the wording of the conditional clause. There are limitless types of emigration for worldly affairs: sometimes a person will emigrate in order to seek some permitted worldly thing, and sometimes for something forbidden. The individual worldly things which are intended by emigration are innumerable, and so for that reason he said, “Then his emigration is to that for which he emigrates,” meaning, “whatever it may be.”

It has been related from Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ in commentary of His words, exalted is He:

إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَأَمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ

“When women who have *īmān* come to you as *muhājirūn*, submit them to a test...”³⁰

He said, “When a woman used to come to the Prophet ﷺ he would make her swear an oath by Allah that she had not emigrated because of dislike for her husband, and by Allah she had not emigrated preferring one land over another, and by Allah she had not emigrated seeking something of the world, and by Allah she had only emigrated from love of Allah and His Messenger.” Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr narrated it, al-Bazzār in his *Musnad*, and at-Tirmidhī narrated it in some copies of his book in an abbreviated form.³¹

Wakī‘ narrated in his book from al-A‘mash from Shaqīq – Abū Wā’il – that he said, “A nomadic Arab from the area proposed to a woman called Umm Qays but she refused to marry him unless he emigrated, so he emigrated

30 Sūrat al-Mumtaḥanah: 10

31 Ibn Jarīr in his *tafsīr* (28:67), al-Ḥārith in his *Musnad*, al-Bazzār in his *Musnad*.

and she married him, and we used to call him, ‘The Emigrant for the sake of Umm Qays.’” He said, “So ‘Abdullāh – meaning Ibn Mas‘ūd – said, ‘Whoever emigrates desiring something, then it [his emigration] is for it [that for which he emigrates].’”³² The context here implies that this did not happen in the time of the Prophet ﷺ but in the time of Ibn Mas‘ūd [after the death of the Prophet ﷺ], however it has been narrated by way of Sufyān ath-Thawrī from al-A‘mash from Abū Wā’il from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said, “Among us there was a man who proposed to a woman called Umm Qays, but she refused to marry him unless he emigrated, and so he emigrated, and we used to call him ‘The Emigrant for the Sake of Umm Qays’.” Ibn Mas‘ūd said, “Whoever emigrates for something, then it [his emigration] is for it [that for which he emigrates].”³³

It has become well known that the story of the emigrant for the sake of Umm Qays was the reason for the words of the Prophet ﷺ, “Whoever’s emigration is for the sake of some worldly thing which he attains or a woman whom he marries...” and many of the later scholars mention that in their books but we have not seen any sound source with an authentic chain of transmission for that, and Allah knows best.

All of the other actions are like emigration in this context, their soundness or corruption are according to the intention which causes them, such as *jihād* and Ḥajj, etc. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about the different intentions people have for *jihād* and what they intend by it, such as showing off, showing their courage, tribalism, etc., and which one of them is in the way of Allah? He said, “Whoever fights so that the Word of Allah be uppermost is in the way of Allah.” Every worldly motive they had asked about was omitted.

In the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* books it is narrated from Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī that a nomadic Arab came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, “Messenger of Allah, one man fights for spoils, and one man fights for fame, and another man fights so that his position will be seen, so who is it that is in the way of Allah?” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever fights so that the Word of Allah is uppermost is in the way of Allah.” In a version of Muslim’s there is that, “He ﷺ was asked about a man who fights from bravery, one who fights defensively and another who fights to show off, which of them is in the way of Allah?...” In another version of his there is [mention of], “a man who fights out of anger or [another who] fights defensively.”³⁴

An-Nasā’ī reported a hadith of Abū Umāmah that he said, “A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, ‘What do you think of a man who goes on a military expedition seeking reward and fame, what will he get?’ So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Nothing!’ Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Truly, Allah only

32 According to al-Haythamī in his book *Majma‘ az-zawā‘id*, the narrators are authentic. Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar said that the chain of transmission is authentic, and that it is in accordance with the conditions of the two Shaykhs, al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

33 At-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (9:103) and Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr.

34 Related by the group: al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah.

accepts that which is sincere and by which His face is desired.’”³⁵

Abū Dāwūd narrated a hadith of Abū Hurayrah, “That a man asked, ‘Messenger of Allah! A man wants *jihād* and he desires some of the world’s goods?’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘There is no reward for him.’ The man repeated it three times while the Prophet ﷺ kept saying, ‘There is no reward for him.’”³⁶

Imam Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd related the hadith of Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal that the Prophet ﷺ said, “There are two types of military expeditions. As for someone who desires the face of Allah, obeys the imam [the amir], spends of his precious substance, is lenient to his companions and avoids making corruption, then [both] his sleep and his vigilance are rewarded.³⁷ As for someone who goes on a military expedition boastfully, showing off, seeking reputation, disobeying the imam and creating corruption in the land, then he will not return with sufficiency.”³⁸

Abū Dāwūd related the hadith of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr that he said, “I said, ‘Messenger of Allah, tell me about *jihād* and military expeditions.’ He said, ‘If you fight steadfastly and anticipating a reward, then Allah will raise you up as one who is steadfast and anticipating a reward. If you fight showing off and vying [with each other as to who will attain the most spoils], then Allah will raise you up showing off and vying. In whatever state you fight or are killed, then Allah will raise you up in that state.’”³⁹

Muslim related the hadith of Abū Hurayrah ؓ that he said, “I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, ‘The first person to have judgement passed on him on the Day of Rising will be a man who was killed as a martyr (*shahīd*) and he will be brought, and He will show him His blessings and he will acknowledge them. He will say, ‘So what did you do for them?’ and he will say, ‘I fought for You until I was killed as a martyr (*shahīd*).’ He will say, ‘You lie! But rather you fought so that it might be said, “[He was] daring,” and that has been said.’ Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face and thrown in the Fire.

“[Then there will be] a man who learnt knowledge and taught it and who recited the Qur’ān. He will be brought, and He will show him His blessings and he will acknowledge them. He will say, ‘What did you do for them?’ and he will say, ‘I learnt knowledge and taught it, and recited the Qur’ān for You.’ He will say, ‘You lie! But rather you learnt knowledge so that someone might say, “[He is] a man of knowledge,” and you recited Qur’ān so that someone might say, “[He is] a Qur’ān reciter,” and it has been said.’ Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown in the Fire.

³⁵ An-Nasā’ī (2:25).

³⁶ Abū Dāwūd (2516), Al-Hākim.

³⁷ Al-Hākim.

³⁸ Aḥmad (5:234), Abū Dāwūd (2515), an-Nasā’ī (6:49) and in *as-Sunan al-Kubrā* (4397), Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Hilyah* (5:220), al-Hākim (2435).

³⁹ Abū Dāwūd (2519), al-Bayhaqī in *al-Kubrā* (9:168) and in *ash-Shu‘ab* (4264), al-Hākim (2437, 2529).

“[Then there will be] a man to whom Allah was enormously generous giving him all kinds of wealth. He will be brought and He will show him His blessings and he will acknowledge them, and He will say, ‘So what did you do for them?’ He will say, ‘I didn’t leave any way in which You love wealth to be spent but that I spent in it for You.’ He will say, ‘You lie! But rather you did it so that someone might say, “He is very generous,” and that has been said.’ Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown in the Fire.”⁴⁰

In the hadith there is that when this hadith reached Mu‘āwiyah he wept until he fainted. When he recovered he said, “Allah and His Messenger told the truth. Allah ﷻ says:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ

‘As for those who desire the life of the *dunyā* and its finery, We will give them full payment in it for their actions. They will not be deprived here of their due. But such people will have nothing in the *ākhirah* but the Fire.”⁴¹

A warning has been transmitted against learning knowledge for any other purpose than the face of Allah, as Imam Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah related from the hadith of Abū Hurayrah ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, “Whoever learns knowledge of that type by which the face of Allah is sought and only learns it to obtain some of the world’s goods, then he will not find the odour of the Garden on the Day of Rising,”⁴² meaning, its scent.

At-Tirmidhī related a hadith of Ka‘b ibn Mālik that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever seeks knowledge in order to argue with foolish people, or to compete with people of knowledge, or to turn people’s faces towards him, then Allah will put him in the Fire.”⁴³ Ibn Mājah related the same meaning from a hadith of Ibn ‘Umar, Hudhayfah and Jābir, may Allah be pleased with them, from the Prophet ﷺ and the wording of Jābir is, “Do not learn knowledge in order to complete with people of knowledge or to argue with foolish people or to do well in assemblies. For whoever does that, then [beware of] the Fire! The Fire!”⁴⁴ Ibn Mas‘ūd said, “Do not learn knowledge for three reasons: to argue with foolish people, or to dispute with *fuqahā*, or to turn people’s faces towards you. Seek from your words and your actions that which is with Allah because it endures and what is other than it will go away.”

A warning is transmitted about acting for the sake of other than Allah,

⁴⁰ Muslim (1905).

⁴¹ Sūrah Hūd: 15-16

⁴² Aḥmad (2:338), Abū Dāwūd (3664) and Ibn Mājah (252).

⁴³ At-Tirmidhī (265).

⁴⁴ Ibn Mājah (253).

in general, as Imam Aḥmad related from a hadith of Ubayy ibn Ka'b ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Tell this ummah the good news of high rank, might, exaltation, *dīn* and firm establishment in the land. Whoever of them does the work of the next life for the sake of the world will have no portion in the next life."⁴⁵

Know that there are a number of types of acting for other than Allah: sometimes it is pure showing off such that someone only intends to be seen by people for some worldly purpose, which is the state of the hypocrites in their *ṣalāh*, as Allah ﷻ says:

وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَآؤُنَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"When they get up to pray, they get up lazily, showing off to people, and only remembering Allah a very little."⁴⁶

He says, exalted is He:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآؤُونَ

"So woe to those who do *ṣalāh*, and are forgetful of their *ṣalāh*, those who show off..."⁴⁷

Similarly Allah, exalted is He, describes the *kāfirūn* as merely showing off, in His words:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

"Do not be like those who left their homes in arrogance, showing off to people and barring them from the way of Allah."⁴⁸

This unalloyed showing off is unlikely to issue from a *mu'min* in the *ṣalāh* or the fast, but it may issue from him in the obligatory *ṣadaqah* (the *zakāh*) or the Ḥajj and other outward actions or in those actions whose benefits go beyond the person themselves, because sincerity in them is very difficult. The Muslim does not doubt that this action is void and its perpetrator deserves the abhorrence of Allah and punishment.

Sometimes an action can be for the sake of Allah but there is some showing off in it. If the showing off occurs in its fundamental parts then authentic texts show that it is invalid and void.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* there is from Abū Hurayrah ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah, blessed is He and exalted, said, 'I am the most independent of partners from the ascription of partnership. Whoever does an action in which he associates other than Me as a partner with Me, then I abandon him and his partner.'"⁴⁹ Ibn Mājah also related it and his wording is, "Then I am free of it

45 Aḥmad (5:134).

46 Sūrat an-Nisā': 141

47 Sūrat al-Mā'ūn: 4-6

48 Sūrat al-Anfāl: 47

and it is for the one whom he associated as a partner."⁵⁰

Imam Aḥmad related from Shaddād ibn Aws, that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Someone who prays showing off has ascribed a partner [to Allah], and someone who fasts showing off has ascribed a partner [to Allah], and someone who pays *ṣadaqah* showing off has ascribed a partner [to Allah]. Truly, Allah ﷻ says, 'I am the best divider of the shares for the one who associates anything with Me, because all of his action, whether it is much or little, is for his partner whom he associated as a partner with Me; I have no need of it.'"⁵¹

Imam Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah narrated the hadith of Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī Faḍālah – and he was one of the Companions – that he said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "When Allah gathers together the first and the last on the Day about which there is no doubt, a crier will call out, 'Whoever associated a partner in an action which he did for Allah ﷻ then let him seek his reward from other than Allah ﷻ because of all partners Allah is the One Who has least need of the association of partners.'"⁵²

Al-Bazzār narrated in his *Musnad* the hadith of aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays, that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Truly, Allah ﷻ says, 'I am the best partner, for whoever associates a partner with Me, then it is for My partner.' People! Purify your actions for the sake of Allah ﷻ because Allah only accepts actions that are purely for His sake. Do not say, 'This is for Allah and for kindred,' because it is for kindred and none of it is for Allah. Do not say, 'This is for Allah and for your sakes,' because it is for your sakes and none of it is for Allah."⁵³

An-Nasā'ī narrated with a good chain of transmission from Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī ؓ that, "A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, 'Messenger of Allah, what do you think about a man who goes on a military expedition seeking reward and renown?' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'There will be nothing for him.' The man asked him about it three times and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept saying, 'There will be nothing for him.' Then he said, 'Truly, Allah only accepts actions which are purely for Him and by which His face is sought.'"⁵⁴

Al-Ḥākim narrated a hadith of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that he said, "A man asked, 'Messenger of Allah, I take a stand by which I intend the face of Allah, and I want my stand to be seen?' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not reply to him, until there was revealed:⁵⁵

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

49 Muslim (2985).

50 Ibn Mājah (4202).

51 Aḥmad (4:125-6).

52 Aḥmad (3:466), at-Tirmidhī (3154), Ibn Mājah (4203), Ibn Ḥibbān.

53 Ad-Dāraquṭnī (1:51), al-Bayhaqī in *ash-Shu'ab* (6836)

54 An-Nasā'ī (3140).

55 Al-Ḥākim (2:111).

‘So let him who hopes to meet his Lord act rightly and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.’”⁵⁶

Among those from whom this same sense is narrated – that when any showing off is mixed with an action it is invalid – are a whole party of the first right-acting generations, among whom were ‘Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit, Abū’l-Dardā’, al-Ḥasan, Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab and others. Among the *mursal* ⁵⁷ hadith which al-Qāsim ibn Mukhaymirah narrated from the Prophet ﷺ is that he said, “Allah does not accept an action in which there is showing off to the weight of a mustard seed.”⁵⁸

We know of no disagreement among the first right-acting generations about this, even if there is some disagreement among the later generations. If someone mixes an intention, which is not showing off, with his intention for *jihād*, for example taking a wage for the service, or taking something from the spoils, or trading [while on the expedition], then the reward of the *jihād* will be decreased by that amount but it will not be entirely invalidated. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, there is from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, “When the warriors gain spoils they hasten with two-thirds of their reward [in this world], but if they do not gain anything then they have a complete reward [in the *ākhirah*].”⁵⁹ We have previously mentioned a number of hadith which show that whoever intends to gain some worldly goods by his *jihād* has no reward, which are interpreted to refer to someone who has no other intention but worldly gain in his *jihād*.

Imam Aḥmad said, “The reward of the merchant, the hired man, the one who leases [possibly riding animals for *jihād*] depend on how pure their intentions are for the military expeditions, but they are not the same as the one who struggles with himself and his own wealth without mixing anything else with it.” He also said about someone who takes a prize for *jihād* that if he does not embark for the sake of the dirhams there is no harm in him accepting them. It is as if he goes out for the sake of his *dīn*, and then if he is given something he takes it.

Similarly, it is related that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr said, “When one of you decides to join a military expedition and then Allah provides him with supplies, there is no harm, but when he is refused a dirham he remains at home, then there is no good in that.”

Similarly, al-Awzā‘ī said, “If the warrior’s intention is the military expedition, then I do not see any harm in it. The same is said of someone who takes something for the Ḥajj so that he might go on the Ḥajj with it either for himself or for someone else.” It has been narrated that Mujāhid said that the Ḥajj of the camels’ attendants [who accompany the party to look after their camels], the Ḥajj of someone employed [perhaps to accompany someone else on Ḥajj], and the Ḥajj of the trader [who trades during the Ḥajj] “are complete, and

⁵⁶ Sūrat al-Kahf: 105

⁵⁷ A hadith in which a Follower narrates from the Prophet ﷺ without an intermediary narrator who was a Companion.

⁵⁸ Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī narrated it.

⁵⁹ Muslim (1906).

nothing is deducted from their reward,” which is based on the interpretation that their original intention was the Ḥajj rather than the earnings.

As for when the action is originally for the sake of Allah, and later the intention to show off creeps into it, then if it is a transitory thought which he rejects there is no disagreement that it will do him no harm. If he gives himself up to it, then there is a question as to whether that invalidates his action or whether it does not harm him, and whether he will be rewarded according to his original intention. There is some disagreement among the people of knowledge of the first right-acting generations about that, which Imam Aḥmad and Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī narrate. They both thought that the weightier point of view was that his action is not invalidated because of that and that he will be rewarded because of his former intention, which is the point of view narrated of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and others.

The evidence for this position is taken from something Abū Dāwūd narrated among his *mursal* hadith from ‘Aṭā’ al-Khurasānī that, “A man asked, ‘Messenger of Allah, all of Banī Salamah fight. Some of them fight for the sake of the world, some fight out of valour, and some of them fight out of desire for the face of Allah, so which of them are martyrs (*shahīd*)?’ He said, ‘Each one of them, if his original intention is that the word of Allah should be the uppermost.’”⁶⁰

Ibn Jarīr mentioned that this disagreement is only with respect to actions whose ends are closing connected to their beginnings such as *ṣalāh*, fasting and Ḥajj, but as for those where there is no direct connection such as recitation, *dhikr*, spending money and spreading knowledge, then they are cut off when the intention to show off occurs and renewal of the intention is needed. In that respect it has been narrated that Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd al-Hāshimī said, “Often I narrate a hadith for which I have an intention, but when I come to part of it, my intention changes, so that one hadith requires many intentions.” This does not negate *jihād*, as is clear from the *mursal* hadith of ‘Aṭā’ al-Khurasānī, because *jihād* becomes obligatory when one is present in the ranks [of the fighting men] and it is not permitted to abandon it at that moment, so it becomes like the Ḥajj.⁶¹

As for when someone does an action purely for Allah and then later Allah creates praise in the hearts of the *mu’minūn* for that act of his, and he rejoices in the bounty of Allah and His mercy and is happy for that, it will not harm him at all. There is the hadith of Abū Dharr from the Prophet ﷺ to this purport, that he asked about a man who does a good action for the sake of Allah and for which people praise him, and so he said, “That is an early bringer of good tidings to the *mu’min*.” Muslim and Ibn Mājah narrated it⁶² and he [Ibn

⁶⁰ Abū Dāwūd in his *Marāsīl* (321).

⁶¹ i.e. if the thought to show off occurs to a warrior while he is among the fighting men before the battle, he may not abandon the battle in order to renew his intention, and so his original intention to fight for the sake of Allah is that for which he will be rewarded. Trans.

⁶² A *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith which Muslim (2642) and Ibn Mājah (4225) narrated.

Mājah] had [the wording], “A man does an action for the sake of Allah for which people love him,” and it was in this sense that Imam Aḥmad, Ishāq ibn Rahwayh, Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī and others interpreted it.

Similarly, there is the hadith which at-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah narrated from Abū Hurayrah ؓ that, “A man asked, ‘Messenger of Allah, what about a man who does an action which he keeps a secret, and then when it is discovered he is pleased with that?’ He said, ‘He has two rewards: the reward for [his having kept it] secret and the reward for [its becoming] public.’”⁶³

We will confine ourselves to this amount of discussion on sincerity and showing off, because it is enough.

In summary, how excellent are the words of Sahl ibn ‘Abdullāh at-Tustarī, “There is nothing harder on the self than *ikhhlās* (doing something purely for the sake of Allah), because it has no portion from it.”

Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn ar-Rāzī said, “The most difficult thing in the world is *ikhhlās*. How I struggle to remove showing off from my heart and it is as if it grows in it again with other colours.”

Ibn ‘Uyaynah said, “One of the supplications of Muṭarrif ibn ‘Abdullāh was, ‘O Allah, I ask Your forgiveness for that of which I repented to You and then returned to it. I seek Your forgiveness for that which I imposed on myself for Your sake and then did not fulfil it for You. I seek forgiveness for that which I claimed that I intended for Your face and then my heart mixed in with it that which You know.’”

SECTION [on intention according to the meaning used by the people of *fiqh*]

As for the meaning of intention which the people of *fiqh* use to distinguish acts of worship from ordinary everyday acts, and to distinguish one act of worship from another, because withholding oneself from eating and drinking is sometimes employed as a prophylactic measure for the protection of health, and sometimes because of an inability to eat, and sometimes in order to give up the appetites for the sake of Allah ؓ and so fasting requires an intention to distinguish it from these other reasons for giving up food.

Other acts of worship are similar in that respect, such as *ṣalāh* and fasting, of which some are obligatory and some optional. There are a number of different obligations. The obligatory prayers are five every day and night, but different fasts can be obligatory: Ramaḍān, a fast for expiating a serious wrong action, and for a vow which one failed to fulfil, and these are only distinguished by the intention. Similarly, *ṣadaqah* may be optional or obligatory. That which is obligatory is the *zakāh*. There is also that which is for expiation of a serious wrong action. These are only distinguished from each other by intention, all of which is comprised generally in his words ؓ “And there is only for each man that which he intends.”

There are well known differences among the people of knowledge about some of the above. For example, one of them did not require that someone

63 At-Tirmidhī (2384), Ibn Mājah (4226).

have a specific intention for the obligatory prayer, but on the contrary it was enough for him that one intend the obligatory prayer of the moment even if he doesn’t have the name of the prayer present in his consciousness at that time. This is narrated as the view of Imam Aḥmad. Based on that statement whoever misses a prayer from the day or the night and forgets which one it is must make up three prayers, the dawn prayer [a two *rak‘ah* prayer], the sunset prayer [a three *rak‘ah* prayer] and any one of the four *rak‘ah* prayers.

Similarly, a group of the people of knowledge took the position that the fast of Ramaḍān also does not require a specific intention but that it is sufficient merely to have the intention to fast since the time [the month of Ramaḍān] is not appropriate for any other fast. This is also narrated of Imam Aḥmad. It is often narrated from some of them that the fast of Ramaḍān does not require an intention at all because of its specific nature, so that in that way it is like returning deposits. It has been told about al-Awzā‘ī that the *zakāh* is like that too, and one of them interpreted his words to mean that it is sufficient to have the intention of *ṣadaqah* as [in the case of] the Ḥajj. Similarly, Abū Hanifah said, “Even if someone were to give the entire *niṣāb* ⁶⁴ without any intention it would discharge his obligation of *zakāh*.”

It has been narrated that the Prophet ﷺ heard a man calling out the *talbiyah* ⁶⁵ for the Ḥajj for [some other] man, and so he asked him, “Have you done the Ḥajj for yourself?” He said, “No.” He said, “This one is for you, then later perform the Ḥajj for the [other] man.” Some things have been said concerning the soundness of this hadith, but in fact it is sound from Ibn ‘Abbās and others. ⁶⁶ Ash-Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad in what is well known of him, and others passed judgement based on it, that [the single obligatory] Ḥajj of Islam is discharged by having the intention of Ḥajj whether one intends it as an optional and voluntary act, or any other intention, and that a specific intention is not a precondition of the Ḥajj. That means that someone who performs the Ḥajj on behalf of another person and has not done it himself, then that Ḥajj is reckoned as his. It is similar if he performs Ḥajj because of a vow or as an optional act and he has not performed the [single obligatory] Ḥajj of Islam, then it is transformed into it. It is well established that the Prophet ﷺ told his Companions during the Farewell Ḥajj after they had begun it with him and had done the *ṭawāf* ⁶⁷ and the *sa‘y* ⁶⁸ that they should cancel their Ḥajj and make it an ‘*Umrah*. ⁶⁹ Some of them were performing the form of Ḥajj called *qirān* ⁷⁰, and others the form called *ifrād* ⁷¹ so that their *ṭawāf* on arrival was just a

64 *Niṣāb*: the minimum portion of held wealth on which *zakāh* is due. Trans.

65 *Labbayk Allāhumma labbayk*... “At Your service O Allah, at Your service...”

66 Abū Dāwūd (1811), Ibn Mājah (2903), Abū Yā‘lā (2440), Ibn Khuzaymah (3039), Ibn Ḥibbān (3988) and others collected it.

67 *Ṭawāf*: circumambulation around the Ka‘bah. Trans.

68 *Sa‘y*: going between between Ṣafā and Marwah. Trans.

69 Al-Bukhārī (1598), and Muslim (1213) from Jābir ؓ.

70 *Qirān*: Ḥajj and ‘*Umrah* combined. Trans.

71 *Ifrād*: Ḥajj performed alone. Trans.

ṭawāf of arrival ⁷² and not an obligatory *ṭawāf*. Yet he told them to regard it as the *ṭawāf* of an *ʿUmrah* which is an obligation [of the *ʿUmrah*]. Imam Aḥmad then judged on the basis of that in cancelling Ḥajj and he acted according to it, which is problematic in principle for it makes it obligatory to make a specific intention for the obligatory *ṭawāf* for the Ḥajj and *ʿUmrah*, and most of the people of *fiqh* disagree with him on that, including Mālik, ash-Shāfiʿī and Abū Ḥanīfah.

Imam Aḥmad made a distinction between *ṭawāf* in the state of *iḥrām* ⁷³ being transformed, such as the *ṭawāf* which is cancelled and made into an *ʿUmrah* so that the *ṭawāf* is transformed in accordance with the transformation of his *iḥrām* just as the *ṭawāf* in the *iḥrām* which he had intended as an optional act while he still owed the [single obligatory] Ḥajj of Islam is transformed [into the Ḥajj of Islam] in accordance with the transformation of his *iḥrām* from its original [purpose], and its then standing in place of his obligatory [Ḥajj]. This is different from the case when he performs the *ṭawāf* for visiting [the Kaʿbah] or with the intention of taking leave or as an optional act, because these would not discharge his duty since he did not intend the obligation and they would not be transformed into an obligation in accordance to the transformation of his *iḥrām*, and Allah knows best.

Something that is related to this section is that a man at the time of the Prophet ﷺ had given his *ṣadaqah* to another man. The son of the man who had given the *ṣadaqah* went and took it from the recipient. His father came to know of that and took his dispute with his son to the Prophet ﷺ saying, “I did not intend [to give it to] you!” The Prophet ﷺ said to the man who had given the *ṣadaqah*, “You have what you intended,” and he said to the one who had taken it, “You have what you took.” Al-Bukhārī narrated it. ⁷⁴

Imam Aḥmad based himself upon this hadith and acted by it according to the texts which we have from him about it, even though the majority of his companions disagreed with him, because the man was only prohibited to give *ṣadaqah* [*zakāh*] to his son for fear that it would merely be from his affection [rather than discharging the duty of purification of his wealth], but since it reached his son without his knowledge of it, affection was not a motive in his giving it, and he and he (the son) was happened to be one of those who, at the same time, could legally accept *ṣadaqah*. For this reason, even if someone gives his *ṣadaqah* to someone whom he thinks is in need but who in reality is not in need then it discharges his duty [to pay the *zakāh*] according to the sound position, since he only gives it to someone whom he believes can legally accept it, and the state of being in need is something hidden about which it is often difficult to discover the truth.

⁷² Like the two *rakʿahs* for greeting the mosque. Trans.

⁷³ To be in the state of *iḥrām* is the prerequisite of Ḥajj and *ʿUmrah*. It involves doing a *ghusl*, donning the two cloths, praying two *rakʿahs* and making the intention for Ḥajj and/or *ʿUmrah* at or before the *mīqāt*. The rules of Ḥajj or *ʿUmrah* apply once the *iḥrām* is completed.

⁷⁴ Al-Bukhārī (1422).

As for purification, the disagreement about the stipulation of an intention for it is well known, which derives from the question of whether purification for the prayer is a separate act of worship or just one of the preconditions of the prayer, like removal of impurities and covering the private parts. Those who do not stipulate that there should be an intention do so because they consider it to be just like the other preconditions of the prayer. Those who stipulate that there should be an intention do so because they regard it as an independent act of worship, and because if it is an act of worship in itself, then it is not valid without an intention. This is the position of the majority of the people of knowledge, and proof of the soundness of that is the overwhelming majority of authentic sources from the Prophet ﷺ that state that, “*Wuḍūʾ*’ expiates wrong actions and errors, and that whoever does *wuḍūʾ*’ as it is commanded then it is an expiation for his wrong actions.” ⁷⁵

This indicates that the *wuḍūʾ* which is commanded in the Qurʾān is itself an independent act of worship, since one of its consequences is expiation of wrong actions, and because *wuḍūʾ* without an intention does not expiate any wrong actions, about which there is total agreement, and it is not commanded and the prayer is invalid with it. For this reason, there is nothing in the nature of reward as that which is related about *wuḍūʾ* for any of the other preconditions of the prayer, such as for the removal of impurities and covering the private parts. Even if someone, as well as intending *wuḍūʾ*, intends to cool himself and remove impurity or dirt, it fulfils what is required of him according to the texts transmitted from ash-Shāfiʿī, and it is also the position of most of the companions of Aḥmad, because this [extra] purpose is not *ḥarām* or disapproved. For that reason, even if his purpose, along with removing the cause which obviates his *wuḍūʾ*, is to teach *wuḍūʾ*, there is no harm. The Prophet ﷺ sometimes used to do the prayer with the purpose of teaching it to people, and similarly the Ḥajj, as he said, “Take your rites from me.” ⁷⁶

One of the branches of knowledge into which intention enters is cases concerning oaths. The oath which arises from vain and useless talk (*laghw*) does not require expiation, and it [*laghw*] is defined as careless statements without any deep purpose in the heart, such as the saying, “No, by Allah!” and “Of course, by Allah!” during conversation. Allah, exalted is He, says:

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ

“Allah will not take you to task for inadvertent statements (*laghw*) in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the intention your hearts have made.” ⁷⁷

Similarly, in the matters of oaths, one must return, to the intention of the one who swears and his purpose in his oath. If he swears to divorce or to free a slave and then later claims that he intended something other than what the apparent outward sense of his expression conveys, he is believed with

⁷⁵ Al-Bukhārī (158), Muslim (226) from ʿUthmān ؓ, and in other collections.

⁷⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (1297) from Jābir ؓ.

⁷⁷ Sūrat al-Baqarah: 225

respect to that which is between him and Allah ﷻ. As to whether it should be accepted in outward judgement or not, there are two well known positions that the people of knowledge take, both of which are narrated of Aḥmad. It is narrated of 'Umar that a man was brought to him whose wife had said to him, "Tell me what I am like." He had said, "You are like a gazelle, or you are like a female pigeon." She said, "I will not be contented until you say, 'You are a female camel loosed from the hobbling cord,'"⁷⁸ and so he said it. 'Umar said, "Take her hand, for she is your wife." Abū 'Ubayd narrated it and said, "He meant the female camel which is hobbled, and then it is loosed from its hobbling cord which slips off her and so she is loosed because she had been let loose from it. The man had meant that and so 'Umar removed the judgement of divorce because that [metaphor and not divorce] had been his intention." He said, "This is the principle for every person who talks in some way which resembles the expressions used in divorce or freeing slaves, whereas he had intended something else. His word is decisive in respect to that which is between him and Allah ﷻ and in outward judgement, according to the interpretation of the school of 'Umar ﷺ."

It has been narrated that Sumayt as-Sadūsī said, "I proposed to a woman and they said to me, 'We will not marry her to you until you divorce your wife.' So I said, 'I divorce her,' three times, and so they married her to me. Then later they realised that my wife was still with me, and they asked, 'Did you not divorce her three times?' I said, 'So-and-so was with me [as my wife] and I divorced her, and so-and-so and I divorced her, but as for this one, I did not divorce her.' Then I went to Shaqīq ibn Thawr, who wanted to go in a deputation to 'Uthmān, and said to him, 'Ask the Amīr al-Mu'minīn about this.' He went and asked him. He ('Uthmān) said, 'It is according to his intention.'" Abū 'Ubayd narrated it in *Kitāb at-ṭalāq* "The Book of Divorce" and said that the people of knowledge have a consensus on situations like this.

Ishāq ibn Mansur said, "I asked Aḥmad, 'Do you know the hadith of Sumayt.' He said, 'Yes. As-Sadūsī. He made that his intention, and Shaqīq mentioned it to 'Uthmān who said that it was according to his intention. If the one who had sworn was [in the position of being] the wrongdoer [in the dispute with the other person] and he intended something different from what his adversary made him swear to, then his [alleged] intention is not any use to him.'"

It is narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from Abū Hurayrah ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Your oath is according to what your companion believes and affirms." In another narration of his, "The oath is according to the intention of the one who demands the oath,"⁷⁹ and this principle applies to the wrongdoer, but as for someone who has been wronged that [intention] will benefit him.

Imam Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah narrated a hadith of Suwayd ibn Hanḥalah in which he said, "We went out intending to go to the Messenger of Allah

⁷⁸ Both *khaliyyah* "a female camel loosed from the hobbling cord" and *ṭāliq* "a she camel not having her fore shank and arm bound together" also mean "divorced". Trans.

⁷⁹ Muslim (1653).

ﷺ and Wā'il ibn Ḥujr was with us. An enemy of his seized him [on the way]. People found it difficult to swear an oath, and so I swore an oath that he was my brother, and so they let him go. We came to the Prophet ﷺ and I told him that the other people had found it difficult to swear an oath and that I had sworn that he was my brother, and he said, 'You told the truth. A muslim is a muslim's brother.'"⁸⁰

Similarly, intention is involved in divorce and freeing slaves. If someone expresses words which carry the possible interpretation of divorce or freeing a slave, then he must have an intention. Whether circumstantial indications, such as anger or a request for a divorce, will stand in place of intention or not is something on which there is a very well-known disagreement among the people of knowledge. Similarly, whether the divorce takes place inwardly just as if he had intended it, or whether he is merely obliged with it in outward judgement alone is another thing on which there is a famous difference of opinion. If he brings about the divorce by an open indirect allusion such as "it is the final decision" and the like, does he cause three divorces or one? There are two well-known different views on that. The clear position of Aḥmad's *madhhab* is that three divorces take effect by that if his intention is unspecific [to any number], but that if he intends less than three then whatever he intends comes into effect, but there are other narrations from him that in this latter case he is still obliged with three divorces.

Even if someone sees a woman and, thinking her to be his wife, he divorces her and then it becomes clear that she is a stranger, nevertheless, his wife is divorced since he intended to divorce his wife, which Aḥmad stated. It is also said in another narration from him that she is not divorced, which is the position of ash-Shāfi'ī. If it is the opposite, and he sees a woman whom he thinks a stranger and divorces her and then it becomes clear that it is actually his wife, then is she divorced? On this there are two views both of which are narrated from Aḥmad, but the dominant position in the *madhhab* of ash-Shāfi'ī and others is that she is divorced.

If he has two wives one of whom he forbids to go out and then he sees that one of his wives has gone out and thinks that it is the one whom he forbade, and so says to her, "So and so, did you go out? You are divorced!" Then people of knowledge have differed about it. Al-Ḥasan said, "The one whom he forbade is divorced because it was her he meant." Ibrāhīm said, "They are both divorced." 'Aṭā' said, "Neither of them are divorced." Aḥmad said, "The one whom he forbade is divorced," and in one narration, "because he meant to divorce her." On whether the [wife he actually] addressed is divorced there are also two [differing] narrations from him. The companions [of Aḥmad] differed about the statement that she is divorced, as to whether it is only in legal ruling or also in the inward reality, on which they took two different paths.

It is inferred from his words ﷺ, "Actions are by intentions, and each man has only that which he intends" that contracts and agreements by which someone intends inwardly to reach something *ḥarām* are invalid, such as contracts

⁸⁰ Ibn Mājah (2119), Aḥmad (4:79).

of sale by which usury and the like are intended, as is the *madhhab* of Mālik, Aḥmad and others, because by this contract he only intends usury and not a sale, “And for each man there is only that which he intends.”

There are very many issues connected to *fiqh* surrounding intention, but in what we have mentioned there is enough. Ash-Shāfi‘ī said about this hadith, “It is involved in seventy chapters of *fiqh*,” and Allah knows best.

Intention is the purpose of the heart, and it is not necessary to express verbally that which is in the heart in any of the acts of worship. One of the companions of ash-Shāfi‘ī narrated that his position was that one must verbally express the intention for the prayer, but meticulous scholars said that he was mistaken. Later *fuqahā’* differ about verbally expressing the intention for the prayer and for other [acts of worship]. Some regard it as desirable, some as disapproved. We do not know of any special narration on these issues from the first right-acting generations except in the case of the Ḥajj alone, because Mujāhid said, “When someone intends the Ḥajj he should name what he is embarking upon.” It is also narrated that he said, “He should name it in the *talbiyah*,” but this is not the issue we are discussing, because the Prophet ﷺ used to mention his rites in his *talbiyah* saying, “*Labbayk, ‘Umrah* and Ḥajj.” But our discussion here is on the issue that one says while making the intention for *iḥrām*, “O Allah, I intend Ḥajj” or “*‘Umrah*” which some of the *fuqahā’* regard as preferable, and about which the words of Mujāhid are not explicitly clear. Most of the right-acting early generations including ‘Atā’, Tāwus, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad and an-Nakha‘ī were specific that one should form a detailed intention at the beginning. It is narrated by an authentic path from Ibn ‘Umar that he saw a man while beginning his *iḥrām* saying, “O Allah, I intend Ḥajj and *‘Umrah*,” and so he asked him, “Are you telling people? Does Allah not know what is in your self?”

Mālik was specific about this, that it is not recommended to name [aloud] that which one intends by one’s *iḥrām*. This is narrated by the author of the book *Tahdhīb al-Mudawwanah* who was one of his followers. Abū Dāwūd said, “I asked Aḥmad, ‘Before the takbīr [of the prayer] do you say anything?’ And he said, ‘No.’” This implies that one does not articulate the intention verbally, and Allah, glorious and exalted is He, knows best.