1. Let go of laziness and slovenliness, O my soul—otherwise you will bring on you contempt.
2. For I do not see that the lazy have a share in anything, but contrition and frustration of hopes.

And it is said:

1. How much shame and weakness and contrition is born to men from laziness.
2. Beware of laziness in investigating the doubtful and the exceptional that come to your knowledge.

It is said further: Laziness comes from paucity of meditation on the virtues of knowledge and its merits. Hence it is necessary when embarking on study to bestir oneself for the acquisition [of knowledge] and [prod oneself] to industriousness and perseverance in the meditation of the merits of learning. For truly, knowledge remains while riches disappear, just as the Prince of Believers, 'Alī b. abi Ṭālib, said:

1. We are satisfied with the allotment made by the All-Powerful; to us, knowledge, to the enemies, wealth.
2. For wealth will soon perish while knowledge will remain forever.

From useful knowledge good fame derives and remains after one’s death. Indeed, this is life everlasting. The venerable Imām, the most glorious Zahir ad-Dīn, Mufti of the imāms, al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī, known as al-Marghinānī,44 recited to us:

The ignorant are dead before their death while the learned live even though they are dead.

The ʿAṭāl al-Islām, Burhān ad-Dīn recited to us:

1. Ignorance is a death before the death to those that harbor it, and their bodies are graves before the graves.
2. Verily, a man who does not live by knowledge is dead nor will there be a resurrection for him at the time of resurrection.

Somebody else said:

1. The master of knowledge stays alive forever after his death while his bones rot under the dust.


On Industriousness, Perseverance and Assiduity

2. But the ignorant is dead while still he walks on the ground, thought to be alive but actually non-existent.

Another poet said:

The life of the heart is knowledge, so go after it, and the death of the heart is ignorance, so shun it.

The venerable Imām, the Professor Burhān ad-Dīn recited for us:

1. Behold learning occupies the highest rank while inferior to it is the grandeur of the greatest in a princely procession.
2. For the man of learning his splendor continues to increase after his death while the stupid man just lies below the ground after his death.
3. No one who ascends the ladder of empire and of generality can at all hope for the heights [reached by the man of learning].
4. I shall dictate to you some of the things of which [knowledge] consists. So listen, for it is not possible for me to tell about all the virtues of learning.

5. [Knowledge] is the most perfect light which leads men along the right path away from blindness while the ignorant man passes his life among the shades [in darkness].
6. [Knowledge] is the most extreme height which protects him who seeks refuge with it and by means of it one goes along secure against adversity.
7. Through it one is taken into the [divine] confidence while [ordinary] men remain unconcerned. Through it one has hope [for eternal life] even while the soul remains still within the breast [i.e., while still alive].
8. By means of it man intercedes for the one who descends in rebellion [against God] to the very bottom of Hell, the most terrible of punishments.
9. So he who aspires to learning, aspires to all necessary things. And he who possesses it, possesses all those things that are worthy of quest.
10. This is the honor of honors, O possessor of intelli-
gence! So when you have won it, you make light of the [worldly] honors you fail to attain.

11. And if the world seems to escape you as well as its voluptuous pleasures, then blink your eyes at them for verily knowledge is the best of gifts.

There was recited to me a poem by some other poet:

1. Since the learned man is held in honor through his knowledge, knowledge of the Law is the most worthy of honors.

2. How much fragrance does it exhale, but not perishable like musk! And how high does it soar, but not full of greed like the hawk!

There was also recited to me another poem by another poet:

1. Learning is the most precious thing which you could store. He who takes up learning will never have his glory effaced.

2. So acquire for yourself those matters of which you previously were ignorant. For the beginning and the end of knowledge is happiness.

The pleasures of knowledge, learning and insight are sufficient incentive for intelligent men to acquire knowledge. Laziness is often derived from a great deal of phlegm and "humor," so the way to diminish [laziness] is by a reduction of food.

It is said that seventy prophets agreed that forgetfulness comes from a great deal of phlegm, while a great deal of phlegm comes from a great deal of drinking of water and a great deal of drinking of water comes from a great deal of eating. Dry bread cuts out phlegm and so does the eating of dried figs with unseasoned bread to the extent of eliminating any necessity for drinking water and thereby increasing phlegm. Using the toothpick reduces phlegm and increases memory and talent for speaking. It is also a practice prescribed by the Sunna [the tradition of the Prophet], for it increases the efficacy of prayer and the reading of the Koran and likewise vomiting reduces phlegm and humor. The way of reducing eating is to reflect on the advantages of eating a small amount; [those advantages] are health, chastity and honor.

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On this subject it is said:

Disgrace and again disgrace and disgrace once more is man’s affliction on account of food.

The Prophet is reported to have said: "Three kinds of people are beyond doubt hateful to God: the glutton, the miser and the arrogant. Reflection reveals the ill effects of excessive eating for this is unhealthy and dulling to the character. It is said: The [full] stomach destroys intelligence. It is reported that Jalilus (Galeno)39 stated: "The pomegranate is useful, all of it, while fish is harmful, all of it." Nevertheless a little fish is better than a great deal of pomegranate. Through [excessive eating] there is also loss of wealth and eating beyond satiety is entirely harmful. By [eating too much] punishment is merited in the next world and the glutton is detestable to [righteous] souls. The correct way of reducing food is to eat oily dishes as well as the most delicate and most desirable40 food, and not eat with a terrible appetite. However, if one has an honest objective in eating a great deal, [an objective] such as that of becoming strong by this means in order to fast, pray and do difficult work, then this [practice] is permissible.

39. Galeno, Greek physician, d. c. 300 A.D.
40. I.e., digestible.
On the Beginning of Study

Our teacher, the venerable Ṣaḥīḥ al-Īsām, Buḥrān ad-Dīn, used to begin his studies on Wednesday. In so doing he had the backing of tradition, for he quoted the Prophet who said: "Nothing is begun on Wednesday but will be perfected." Abū Ḥanīfa used to do Likewise.

Buḥrān ad-Dīn was wont to relate [the following tradition] which he [heard] from his teacher, the venerable Imām, the most glorious Qiwām ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ṭabdārāsīd. I heard from a certain man, in whom I have confidence, that the venerable Imām Yūsuf al-Hamadānī undertook all his best work on Wednesday. [He did] this because Wednesday is the day in which light was created and it is a day injurious to the ways of the infidel at the same time being a day propitious for the believer.

On the subject of the amount of study to be undertaken in the initial stages of learning, Abū Ḥanīfa quoted the venerable Judge, the Imām ʿUmar, son of the Imām Abū Bakr az-Zaranjī, who said: Our elders stated: It is necessary that the amount of study for the beginner be an amount he can retain in his memory after two repetitions. Every day he should increase [the span of] his memorial recall by one word so that even if the duration and quantity of his study become large, it would [still] remain possible for him to recall it [by repeating it] two times, and thus increase [his retention] gently and gradually. But if

55. Qiwām ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ṭabdārāsīd. Abū Bakr az-Zaranjī, 11th cent.; cf. Flügel, loc. cit., 310, where no death date is given.

study in the beginning is [to be] long so that it is necessary to make ten repetitions [of the material]; then in the end [the learner] is also able to proceed in this fashion [i.e., to become proficient gently and gradually]. [He can do this] because he becomes accustomed to this amount and does not break this habit without great effort. It is said: Learning is [worth] one letter while repetition is [worth] a thousand letters.

It is necessary to begin [one’s study] with matters that are more readily understood. The venerable Imām, Professor Šafr af-Dīn al-ʿUqullī, used to say: "In my opinion the right procedure [in study] is what our elders practiced, for verily they chose to begin with a few subjects of broad content because those are more readily understood and retained, are less fatiguing and occur frequently among men." It is also essential to write down an extract [of the material] after memorizing and [to practice] a great deal of repetition, since indeed this method is most profitable. Nor should the student write anything unless it is fully understood, for verily [writing down of undigested matter] blunts the character, destroys intelligence and wastes time. It is important that the student exert himself strenuously to understand what he is offered by the teacher, applying both intelligence and meditation as well as a great deal of repetition. For if reading is limited but repetition and reflection are extensive then [the student] will attain a firm grasp and understanding. It is stated: Holding in memory two letters is better than listening to two loads [of books] while the comprehension of two letters is better than the retention in memory of two loads [of books]. But if there is lack of comprehension and one does not exert oneself [at least] one or two times, one becomes used to this negligence so that even an easy proposition will not be comprehended. And it is necessary not to neglect understanding [one’s subject matter] and to do one’s work diligently while praying to Almighty God and beseeching Him humbly. Verily He hearkens to those who call upon Him and does not disappoint those who have hope in Him.

The venerable Imām, the most glorious Qiwām ad-Dīn Ḥammād b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl Ḣaṣṣāf al-Anṣārī recited a

37. Šafr af-Dīn al-ʿUqullī, jurist, d. 1180/1.
poem to us composed by the Judge al-Halil b. Ahmad as-Sarahi who had it dictated to him:

1. Serve knowledge in a way that it becomes a useful thing [to you] and keep its lesson alive by praiseworthy action.
2. And if you do not retain anything, repeat it, then affirm it in a most energetic manner [i.e., hammer it into your head].
3. Then make notes about it in order that you may return to it and its study always.
4. Then when you are sure it will not slip from your grasp, go on after it to something new;
5. But at the same time repeat what preceded [this new knowledge]; and establish firmly [in your mind] the import of this increase [in knowledge].
6. Discuss with people subjects of learning in order that you may live. Do not keep yourself away from the enlightened.
7. If you conceal knowledge you will be forgotten so that you see no one but the ignorant and the boorish.
8. Then you will be bridled with a fire on the Day of Resurrection and will be made to burn with a vehement chastisement.

And it is necessary to pursue knowledge by means of discussion, argument and questioning. It is also essential that [one does these things] with fairness, circumspection and deliberation, and by fortifying oneself against altercation and anger. For discussion and argument are [a kind of] consultation. Consultation again aims at establishing the truth. This result is only attained through circumspection, the avoidance of violent dispute, and fairness [in general], not however through hostility and anger.58 For verily [argument and discussion] aiming at forcing and crushing the adversary are illicit. They are permissible only when they seek to bring out the truth. Feints and tricks are not admissible [in discussion] except when the opponent is quibbling and does not seek the truth. Muhammad b. Yabya used to say when perplexity [in an argument] assailed him and the answer did not present itself to him: "That which you have forced me to admit [appears] indeed to be necessarily so, and I shall go into it further; 'above every knowing [man] is a Knower [i.e., God']."59 The usefulness of posing questions and discussing is greater than the usefulness of sheer repetition since in this there is repetition and one more element. And it is said: Posing questions for an hour is better than a month of repetition; but this holds good only when the discussion is carried on with someone who has a just and candid nature. Beware of an argument with an adversary who is a quibbler of perverse nature, for indeed [undesirable traits of] character creep in stealthily, habits are contagious and proximity [to those of perverse habits] leaves its traces. In the poem which Halil b. Ahmad quoted, there were many useful points.

It is further said:

Knowledge has this condition for the one who serves it: that he should make all men the servants of knowledge.

It is incumbent [upon the student] in the quest for knowledge that he meditate at all times on the more subtle matters [or, the fine points] of knowledge and that he accustom himself thereto; for only by reflection can subtle problems be solved. For this reason it is said: Reflect and you will reach a solution. And it is essential to reflect before speaking in order to speak correctly [or, the truth]. For verily, a speech is like an arrow, [so that] it is necessary to "aim" by means of reflection before speaking so that one gets directly to the point. [The author of this book] said regarding the principles of jurisprudence [qiyd al-fikhl]: This is an important principle, namely, that the discourse of the arguing jurist be based on reflection. It is said that the first principle of intelligence is to discourse with consideration and circumspection.

Somebody said:

1. I commend to you in the composing of your speech five things, that is, if you are obedient to him who makes recommendations to you meaning you well.

58. al-Halil b. Ahmad as-Sarahi, judge, referred to by Sunan as-Safdi, fol. 291*. The "as-Sarahi" of the Leipzig text as well as the as-Safdi of the Munich text are misspellings.
59. The passage: "For discussion, ... and anger," is missing in Leip.
Instruction of the Student

2. Do not neglect the purpose of the discourse, its time, its quality and quantity, and its place.

[And the student should also] under all circumstances and at all times endeavor to profit from everybody present. The Messenger of God said: “Wisdom is an aberrant beast of the believer—wherever he finds it, he seizes it.” It is said: Seize whatever is clear and discard whatever is turbid. I heard the venerable Imam, the most glorious Professor Faqi al-Din al-Kisai say: Abu Yasef had a female slave who [for a time] was given as a surety [or, in trust] to Muhammad b. al-Hasan who said to her “Do you remember anything learned which Abu Yasef said?” She said: “Nothing except that he used to repeat frequently: ‘A share in tribal [clan] holdings is not transmissible by will.’” So Muhammad remembered this [which he heard] from her. This question had been perplexing to Muhammad and now his doubt was removed by the statement. He then realized that knowledge could be attained from everyone. Therefore Abu Yasef said when he was asked, “By what means did you attain your knowledge?” “I never scorned to profit [by anyone] nor was I stingy in profiting [others].” It is said to Ibn ‘Abbas: “In what way did you pursue knowledge?” He answered: “With the aid of a tongue fond of asking and a heart full of good sense.” Verily, the student of knowledge is called a “What do you say” only because very often they used to say in the early days “what do you say” concerning this or that question. And indeed Abu Hanifa used to study [or: study law] by propounding questions often and discussing them in his shop when he was a cloth-merchant. By this example one recognizes that the acquisition of knowledge and learning can be linked to the earning of a livelihood. Abu Ta’s al-Kabir used to work for a living and at the same time repeat assiduously [what he was learning]. For if it is obligatory for the student of learning to make a living so as to be able to keep his family and other [dependents], let

On the Beginning of Study

[him] work for his livelihood and [at the same time] repeat assiduously and discuss rather than let him be idle [or lazy]. For him who is of same mind and body, there is no excuse for omitting the study of knowledge and learning [on the pretext of poverty], for no one was poorer than Abu Yasef and this did not prevent him from learning. But whoever possesses a great deal of wealth, then his honest [by acquired] property will be beneficial to the honest man who plods on in the path of learning. It was said to a learned man: “By what means did you acquire knowledge?” He said: “Through a rich father. Because by means of his [riches] he supported virtuous and learned men and so was the cause of an augmentation of learning.”

Abu Hanifa is quoted as saying: “Verily, I acquired knowledge by praising God and thanking Him. As often as I understood an item of learning and gained grasp of a point of law or a piece of wisdom, I said: Praise be to God. Thus my knowledge was augmented.” In the same manner [as did Abu Hanifa], is it necessary in the quest for learning to occupy oneself with giving thanks by means of the tongue, the heart, the hands, and one’s wealth. [It is important] to realize that knowledge, learning and guidance come from God Almighty, and to ask for the assistance of God by praying to him and beseeching Him. For indeed, the Almighty One is the leader of those who seek His guidance. So they who follow the truth—the followers of the Prophet’s tradition and of the common opinion [the consensus] of the community—seek the truth from God Almighty who is the highest truth, the elucidator, the leader [along the right path], the defender [against error]. So God the Almighty leads them and defends them from error. Those, however, who err [from the religion of God], admire their own intelligence and their own opinions, seeking the truth from man who is weak and has only his reasoning [for a tool]. For reasoning does not reach everything in all respects just as vision does not reveal all things to the sight. Hence they [the people who seek truth from man alone] are excluded from and incapable [of the

60. Faqi al-Din al-Kisai (Leip. text wrongly, al-Kisai’); F. Abû Bakr al-K., d. 1391, a legist.
61. See Introduction I, footnote 34.
63. Mas. text then suggests: So he was to be thanked for kindness of spirit, learning, and for becoming a source for increase of learning as well.
64. abu al-awwas wa’l-jam’a; the term denotes the body of the community of Muslims as opposed to the heretics who scolded from it; cf. Encyclopedia of Islam, 1, 1908.
highest truth]. Consequently, they err and cause others to deviate [from the path of God].

The Messenger of God said: "It is prudent for a person to act by using his intellect, so the first thing to do is to act with the mind in order to recognize one's own limitations." 65 The Prophet further said: "He who knows himself knows his Lord. But if he knows his own limitations, he knows the power of God, and he does not lean [depend entirely] on himself and his own intellect but rather puts his trust in God and seeks the truth from Him; and those who put their faith in God, God will be their sufficiency and assistance. He will lead them along the right way."

He who possesses wealth should not be avaricious, hence it is necessary to seek refuge in God so as to avoid avarice. The Prophet said: "What affliction is worse than avarice?" The father of the venerable Êmân, the Sun of the Êmâms, al-ÊulÊwâni was poor and sold sweets. He used to get learned men to accept his sweets and he said [to them]; "Pray for my son." Thus, through the lavishness of his liberality, his trust, his compassion, and his supplication, his son attained what he did (i.e., eminence as a scholar). With wealth one can buy books as well as concern oneself with having books written. For this is a help in [attaining] knowledge and learning. Muhammad b. al-Êasan had so much wealth that he [hired] 300 curators to look after his riches, but he paid out all of his wealth for [attaining] knowledge and learning. [In fact], he did not retain a single valuable garment. So when Abî Yâsîf saw him [dressed] in shabby garments he sent him some luxurious clothes, but he did not accept them saying: "To you [good] things are given in advance but to us [good] things are put off [until the future life]." Although the acceptance of a gift is in accordance with the Prophet's tradition, he perhaps did not accept these clothes because [in receiving these particular gifts] he saw an abasement of himself. The Prophet said: "Believers are not allowed to vilify themselves."

It is reported that the venerable Fâqîr al-Êasrânî al-Êarsâbândî [after] collecting the rinds of melons discarded in a desolate place washed them and ate them. A female slave saw him and

65. This saying not in MaM. text.
one time. For this [method] is the most stimulating for holding [subject matter] in the memory. And it is essential not to become accustomed to repeating silently since it is necessary that learning and repetition be carried on with vim and alacrity, lest one break the habit of repetition. It is not necessary to speak in a loud voice when talking to oneself for this impedes repetition. The best conditions [for learning in general] are the middle ones [those in which a moderate course is pursued]. It is reported that Abū Yūsuf discussed jurisprudence with learned men vigorously and with alacrity and his son-in-law who was among these men of learning, marveled at his performance and said: "I know that he has been hungry for five days and in spite of this hunger, he discusses vigorously and with zeal."

It is essential that there be no break and no intermission in the pursuit of learning, for this is indeed harmful. It was our teacher, the venerable Imām Burhān ad-Dīn who said: "Verily, I became superior to my companions since neither relaxation nor perturbation interfered with my study of knowledge."

It was reported by the venerable Imām, Saḥḥ al-Islām `Alī al-Asbīḥārī that there occurred during the time of his learning of knowledge a break [in his formal schooling] during a period of twelve years because of the overthrow of the government. So he left the country with his companion, with whom he was wont to debate matters, and did not cease his discussions. The two of them used to sit [together] in order to hold a discussion each day and they did not leave off getting together for the purpose of argumentation back and forth during this period of twelve years. Later his companion became the venerable Saḥḥ al-Islām for the Saḥīfīes since he had [always] been a Saḥīfī and thus was not to be influenced by the Ḥanafīe `Alis.

And it was our teacher, the venerable Judge Fāhr al-Islām Qāḍī Ḥan who said: "It is necessary in making a study of legal knowledge to memorize one particular law book constantly so that after this it will be easy for one to retain whatever legal information one hears."


CHAPTER SEVEN
On Placing One's Faith in God

It is necessary in the quest for knowledge to put one's trust in God while one pursues learning and not be concerned with matters pertaining to the sustenance of life [food] nor occupy one's mind therewith. Abū Ḥanīfa told about what he heard from ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan az-Zahlī,68 the companion of the Messenger of God: "A man who devotes all he has to [the study of] the religion of God—God Almighty gives him sufficient care and nourishes him in unexpected ways." So verily, he who occupies himself with matters of sustenance, such as food and clothing, is not yet free for the acquisition of noble traits and elevated matters [i.e., acquiring a scholarly bent and religious knowledge].

It is said:

Renounce noble matters, do not make a journey to seek them, but remain where you are for verily you are zealous for food and clothes.

A man said to Maṣūr al-Ḥallāj,69 "Give me sound advice." So he said: "[My advice] has to do with your own soul. If you do not keep it occupied and work it hard, it will keep you occupied." So it is necessary for everyone to occupy himself with good deeds so that the soul does not concern itself with [mundane] desires. The intelligent man should not be eager for the affairs of this world since this kind of solicitude and sad concern does not avert calamity nor is of use, but rather is harmful to the spirit, the mind and the body. These [concerns with worldly matters] cause a cessation of good works. One [should] rather attend to matters pertaining to the future life since these prove useful. And, as for his [i.e., the Prophet's] saying: "Verily,

68. Not identified.
69. Maṣūr al-Ḥallāj, mystic and theologian, executed in 922.
there are sins whose only excuse is [man's unavoidable] concern with his [earthly] life.” This means that there should be only as much concern [for affairs of this world] as does not interfere with doing good deeds or as would not keep the heart from complete concentration in prayer. For indeed this [minimum] amount of solicitude and effort [of the mind for this life] belongs to the deeds of [i.e., is conducive to] the future life.

It is further essential in the search for knowledge to reduce one's attachment to worldly affairs as much as one can. Therefore [the students] elect to go abroad [in order to acquire knowledge]. And it is necessary to bear patiently one's labors and hardships in the journey of learning [i.e., in a journey undertaken for the sake of study]. Just as Musharraf said about the journey of knowledge—and this saying was not related of him with reference to any other kind of journey—“Indeed, we experienced fatigue from this journey of ours,” so that it should be known that the journey of acquiring knowledge is a very serious affair; according to most learned men it is more excellent than a holy war against the infidels. The [divine] recompense is determined by the amount of toil and labor [exerted], so he who perseveres in this [toil and labor] will encounter such delight in knowledge as to overcome all other delights of this world. On this matter Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan used to say when he spent nights awake and solved his difficult problems: “How far removed are the sons of kings from these [unspeakable] delights!”

It is obligatory for the student not to be occupied with anything else but knowledge and never turn away from learning. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said: “Indeed, this trade of ours goes on from the cradle to the grave; so he who wishes to refrain from this pursuit of knowledge for even one hour, might as well leave it entirely this very hour.”

A learned jurist, Ibrāhīm b. al-Jarrāḥ, came to Abū Yūnāf to visit him during his mortal illness, when he was very close to his death. Abū Yūnāf asked him: “Is the throwing of stones [during the ḫaṭṭ] on horseback superior to the throwing of stones

on foot?” Then when the other did not know the answer, Abū Yūnāf gave the answer himself, namely, that the early authorities preferred the throwing of stones on foot.

Thus is it important for the learned one to concern himself with study at all times. In this way then one attains great delight in this [pursuit]. And it was said that after his death Muḥammad b. al-Hasan appeared to someone in a dream and was asked: “How was the moment in which you actually passed away?” So he answered: “I was meditating on a certain question regarding the slave buying his freedom. In this way I did not notice the departure of my soul [from my body].” And it is said, that he told in the last [days] of his life: “Questions pertaining to the slave buying his freedom have drawn me away from preparing for the day [of my death].” Verily, he said this because of his humility.

74. Throwing of stones during the ḫaṭṭ on the 10th of Dhu 'l-Ḥijja, as part of the ḫaṭṭ ceremonies, each pilgrim has to throw seven small stones at Mina, near Mecca; these stones are said to symbolize the stoning of Satan, once driven off by Abraham at this very place.
CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Time for the Acquisition of Knowledge

It is said the time for learning [extends] from the cradle to the grave. 'Abū Dālā l-Nadim, who reached the age of eighty years, had taken up the study of theology. Over a period of forty years he never spent the night stretched out on a couch. Then for the next forty years he gave legal opinions.

The best periods [for study] are at the beginning of adolescence as well as the hour of dawn and that between the setting of the sun and the first vigil of the night. And it is necessary to put all one's energy into the study of knowledge at all times. But if one becomes irked by one discipline one occupies oneself with some other subject. When he became tired of scholastic theology, Ibn 'Abbās used to say: 'Let me have the collections of the poets.' Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan did not sleep in the night but placed codices before him and when he got tired of one kind of book, looked for another. And he drove away sleep with [cold] water for he used to say: 'Verily, sleep is induced by heat so it must be driven off with cold water.'

75. Ḥasan b. Ziyād al-Lu'ain (the Pearl-Merchant), of Kūfa, student of 'Abū Manfa', friend of 'Abū Yāsuf, d. 819.

CHAPTER NINE

On Helpfulness and Good Advice

It is obligatory that the possessor of knowledge be sympathetic and helpful rather than jealous. For envy is injurious to him and of no use. Our teacher, the venerable Ṣaḥḥ al-Islām Burhān ad-Dīn, used to say: 'They said: The son of the learned man will be learned himself because the man of knowledge wishes that his disciples in learning the Koran become scholars. So through the blessing that comes from his faith and compassion, his son will become learned.' And it is reported that ɑṣ-Ṣādir al-aqāl Burhān al-a'imma fixed the time for study with his sons, ɑṣ-Ṣādir al-Ṣāḥib Ḥusayn ad-Dīn and ɑṣ-Ṣādir al-Sa'īd Ta'ī ad-Dīn, as the height of the morning [late morning] after [the completion] of all his [other] lessons. But they [the sons] said: 'Our natural faculties are tired and worn out at that time.' So their father replied [said]: 'Foreigners and the sons of the great come to me from various regions of the earth. Hence, I have to take up their instruction first [i.e., before I teach you].' Thus, through the blessing [resulting from] his benevolence, his sons became superior [in legal knowledge] to most jurists of the world at that time.

And it is necessary not to enter into a litigation with anyone nor have an altercation with him because this is time-consuming. It is said: He who does good to others is rewarded because of his beneficence, while he who does evil, his evil deeds suffice him.

The venerable Ịmām az-Zāhīd Rukn al-Islām Muḥammad b.

76. Burhān ad-Dīn 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar b. Māzu, legist; cf. Flügel, loc. cit., p. 311. The text has erroneously Burhān al-a'imma, a title which really belongs to 77.
78. Ta'ī ad-Dīn Ahmad b. 'Abdullāh b. Uqayl b. Māzu; mentioned by Flügel, op. cit., p. 312.
this [evil thinking] springs from malignity of intent and wickedness of the character. It is just as Abū Tūyib al-Mutanabbi said:59

1. If the deeds of a man are evil, then his thoughts are evil. And he believes whatever suspicion haunts him.
2. He makes enemies of his friends on the basis of what their enemies say; and he plunges into a dark night of doubt.

Another poem of unknown authorship was recited to me:

1. Draw away from the vile and do not seek him out; but to whom you have already dispensed good, increase this [do him even more good].
2. You may protect yourself against every guile of your enemy; but when the enemy plots [against you] do not plot against him.

A poem by the Saʿīb al-ʿAmīd Abū ʿl-Fāth al-Bustī was recited to me:

1. The intelligent man is not safe from a fool who besets him with tribulation and causes him annoyance.
2. Let him choose peace in preference to war and remain silent even if someone shouts at him.

82. Dīwān, 248, 8, 9, pp. 649–50.
83. Arabic poet, d. 1010.

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abi Bakr, known as Imām Ḥāfiẓ Zādah al-Muṣṭafī,58 told me: “Sūltān al-Ṣārīr [the Prince of the Canon Law] Yaṣūṣ al-Hamadānī recited this verse to me:

Send the man away. Do not punish him for the misdeeds he committed. His character and his deed will be sufficient [punishment] for him.”

It is said: He who wishes to humiliate his enemy by showing his superiority to him58 let him repeat these verses:

1. If you wish to see your enemy prostrated and to kill him with grief and inflame him with worry,
2. Then strive for the noblest [attainments] and increase your knowledge more and more. Verily, he who adds to his knowledge continuously increases the sorrow of the man who envies him.

It is stated: You should apply yourself to things useful to your soul, not to conquer your enemy. Nevertheless, if you concern yourself with things that are valuable to your soul, you guarantee [this] conquest over your enemy. But beware of hostile action for this will cover you with shame and waste your time. Furthermore, you must bear injustice patiently, especially if it comes from the fools. ʿIbāb b. Maryam54 said: “Bear once with a fool so you may gain tenfold [reward from God].”

A poem of unknown authorship was recited to me:

1. I put men to the test one generation after another and I did not see anything but trickery and prattle.
2. Nor did I find of any trials anything more hurtful and harder to bear than the mutual hostility of men.
3. And I tasted the bitterness of things everywhere and there was nothing more bitter than begging.

Beware lest you think evil of the believer for, verily, to do this produces hostility. This is not allowed according to [the Prophet’s] word: “Think only good things of believers.” Indeed,

79. Rukn al-Jāhīm Muḥammad b. ʿAbī Bakr ʾ Imāmzādah, Muḥāf of Bāḥarak, d. 1177/8. The mistake of the text in writing “the Imām Ḥāfiẓ Zādah” for “Imāmzādah” is due to the fact that two outstanding Ḥanafī jurists, d. 1090 and 1223, respectively, bore the name Ḥāfiẓ Zādah.
80. Lit: to press the nose of his enemy in the dust.
81. Jesus, Son of Mary.
CHAPTER TEN

On the Means Useful to the Attainment of Knowledge

It is necessary to him who is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge to seek it at all times, so that he may attain excellence. And the way to attain knowledge is to have ink on hand on every occasion so that one can jot down items of scientific interest. It is said: He who commits to memory is uncertain as if in flight; but he who writes down a matter stands firm. It is also said: Knowledge is that which is taken from the lips of men since they recall only the best things they hear and mention only the best things they recall.

I heard the šāhī, the Inām al-Adib, the professor Rukn al-Islām, known as al-Adib al-Muḥtar, say: “Hilāl b. Yasar said: ‘I saw the Prophet telling his companions some items of knowledge and wisdom; so I said: ‘O Messenger of God, repeat to me what you said to those people.’ The Prophet replied: ‘Do you have any ink with you?’ Whereupon I said: ‘I do not have ink with me.’ So he said: ‘O Hilāl, do not separate yourself from ink for it is good in itself and it is good for those who have it in their possession till the Day of Resurrection’.”

Aṣ-Sadr al-Sahib Ḫusāṣ ad-Din made the recommendation to his son Sams ad-Din that he commit to memory some slight amount of knowledge and wisdom every day for [the reason that] it will grow and, in a brief space of time, it will amount to a great deal.

And ʿIṣām b. Yūsuf purchased for himself a reed-pen for one dinar in order to write down at once matters which he heard. For verily life is short while knowledge is extensive.

84. Lit: inkstand.
86. Not identified.
87. See p. 59, footnote 77.
88. ʿIṣām b. Yūsuf is mentioned by Ibn Šaʿd, Ṭabāqat, ed. Ed. Sachau et al. (Leiden, 1903-1940), VII/2, 128, and characterized as a native of ʿSaḥī.

It is necessary not to waste time nor hours but make use of nights as well as periods of retirement.

Yāḥyā b. Muʿāḍ al-Rāzī is reported to have said: “The night is long, so do not shorten it by sleeping, and the day is brilliant, so do not obscure it with your sins.”

It is necessary to question venerable men and acquire information from them for it is not possible ever more to attain what has escaped us. Just as our teacher, the šāhī al-Islām, said with respect to his venerable colleagues and teachers [ṣaḥābiyyah]: “How many a šāhī, great in knowledge and excellence, did I reach without consulting him sufficiently.” And I say this kind of missed opportunity is the source of the verse:

Alas for a meeting missed, alas! Nothing that has passed by and vanished can be obtained [again].

“All said: ‘If you are occupied with [learning] something then concentrate on it wholeheartedly. To withdraw from [the study of] the knowledge of God makes for a full measure of shame and loss; so seek refuge in God from this [distraction] both night and day.”

It is essential for the student of knowledge to bear miseries and baseness patiently while seeking learning. Flattery is blame-worthy except in the quest of knowledge. In order to attain information, flattery of the professor and one’s associates cannot be helped.

It is said: Knowledge is nobility without debasement. But no one reaches it except through debasement in which there is no nobility.

Someone said:

I see that you desire to ennoble your heart; but you will not attain nobility ere you have humbled it.

89. Yāḥyā b. Muʿāḍ al-Rāzī, celebrated preacher, d. 872.
On Abstinence during Learning

A certain author related a tradition on the subject-heading [of this chapter] as coming from the Messenger of God, who said: "He who does not exert abstinence while learning, God the Almighty chastises in one of three ways: either he deprives him of life in his youth or exiles him to [far-off] country districts, or punishes him [forcing him to enter] the service of the Sultan." Thus, the more continent the seeker of knowledge, the more useful his knowledge, the easier [his] learning and the more extensive [his] acquisition of useful matters. It is part of perfect continence to guard against satiety and a large amount of sleep as well as a great deal of conversation about useless matters. Also, one must beware of eating food in the market place if possible, because food of the market is more apt to be impure and contaminated. Eating in the market [is also] more remote from the contemplation of God and nearer neglect of Him. And [one should not eat in the market place] since there the eyes of the poor fall on the food, the poor who are not able to purchase anything. Thereby they are harmed and the blessing of the food vanishes.

It is related by the venerable Imām al-Ja'fari Muḥammad b. al-Fadl that, when he was in the process of acquiring knowledge, he did not eat food of the market place. Once when his father, who used to live in the country, prepared his [son's] food and brought it to him on Friday, saw bread from the market place in the house of [his] son, he did not address him since he was [so] displeased with him. So his son made excuses by saying: "I myself did not bring it nor did I get satisfaction out of it, but my friend brought it." His father replied: "If you were on your

90. al-Imām al-Ja'fari Muḥammad b. al-Fadl; probably Abū Bakr M. b. al-F. al-Kaṣālī, jurist, d. 981/2.
Prophet, and he who neglects the usage of the Prophet is deprived of the fulfilment of his legal obligations. He who is deprived of the fulfilment of his legal obligations is denied the future life.

Some say: This tradition comes from the Messenger of God. It is essential that there be many prayers and that the prayers be said in humility for indeed this is a help to the study and the acquisition of knowledge.

A poem was recited to me by Šah al-Jalīl az-Zāhid al-Jājj Najm ad-Dīn ‘Umar b. Muḥammad an-Nasifī: 94

1. Be observant of commands and prohibitions and be assiduous and observant of prayer.
2. Seek knowledge of the divine law and be diligent and procure help through good deeds; then you will become a legist, guardian of the law.
3. Ask God that He preserve your memory for you who desire its excellence, for God is supreme in remembering.

He further said:

1. Be obedient and work diligently and do not become lazy. Thus will you return to your Lord.
2. And do not sleep at night for the best of mankind only sleep a little part of the night.

And it is necessary to have a book with one under every condition, in order to read it. It is said: He who does not have a book in his sleeve, wisdom is not well established in his heart. It is also obligatory that in the book there be some blank pages and that one carry ink in order to write down what one hears. We have already recalled the tradition of Ḥiṭāl b. Yāsīr [concerning this].


CHAPTER TWELVE

What Creates Memory and What Brings about Forgetfulness

The most forceful factors in [strengthening] memory are industriousness and assiduousness. [Also] a reduction of eating as well as praying at night and reading of the Koran are among the causes of remembering. It is said: There is nothing that increases memory more than reading the Koran silently, 95 and reading the Koran silently is the most excellent thing because of the word [of the Prophet]: “And the most excellent among the works of my community is the reading of the Koran silently.”

Ṣaddād b. Ḥakīm 96 saw one of his deceased brothers in his sleep and said to him: “What thing did you find the most useful [in procuring for yourself admission to Paradise]? He replied: “Reading the Koran silently.”

And one should say while lifting the Koran: “In the name of God, and Glory be to God, and Praise be to God, and There is no God but God, and God is greatest, and There is no power or strength except in God, the Exalted, the Mighty, Who knows the number of all the letters that ever were and that shall be written throughout the centuries and ages.” And let it be said after every written section [of the text]: “I believe in one unique God, the sole truth, Who has no companion; and I do not believe in any [deity] besides Him.” There also should be considerable praying to the Prophet since he is a mercy for the worlds.

It is said in a poem:

1. I complained to Wākī 97 of my bad memory. So he directed me to cease from evil doing;

92. Lit. with the eyes.
93. Ṣaddād b. Ḥakīm, student of Muḥammad b. al-Bāsān, d. between 825-845.
2. For verily memory is a benefit of God and a benefit of God is not given to him who sins.

Rubbing the teeth, drinking honey and eating the incense plant with sugar as well as eating 21 raisins, red ones, each day on an empty stomach, create memory, since these things cure one of a great many sicknesses and illnesses. For everything that diminishes phlegm and “humor” increases memory and everything that augments phlegm creates forgetfulness. Moreover amongst those things which create forgetfulness are sinful deeds, the commission of many peradectes as well as concern and worry over worldly affairs and being distracted by many occupations and attachments. We have mentioned earlier in this book that it is not behothing the wise man to concern himself with worldly matters since these are harmful and useless. Worldly solicitude of necessity create darkness in the heart, but concern over the future life of necessity brings light into the heart. One trace [sign of this light] becomes apparent through prayer. Care for worldly affairs impedes one from doing good, while concern for the future life gives one impetus to do good as does occupying oneself with prayer in a spirit of humility.

The acquisition of learning drives out concern and sorrow just as the venerable Imam Naṣr b. al-Ḥasan al-Marghīnānī said in one of his poems:

1. Find your wealth, O Naṣr b. al-Ḥasan, in all [branches of] learning which can be amassed.
2. These will keep sorrow away. Nothing else can be relied on [to do so].

The Šāhī, the glorious Imam ad-Din ‘Umar b. Muḥam-mad an-Nasafi said in one of his poems:

1. Farewell greetings to her who enslaved me through her elegance, the splendor of her cheeks, and the furtive glances of her eyes.
2. A charming young maiden captivated me and filled me with love. Imagination is baffled by the attempt to describe her [charms].

3. But I said [to her]: “Leave me alone and excuse me, for indeed I have become enamored of the study of the fields of knowledge and their unveiling.

4. And for me seeking science and learning and reverence for God suffice to keep me from the song of singing maidens and their perfume.”

And the eating of fresh coriander, acid apples and beholding a man crucified, and reading the inscriptions on tombs, as well as passing through a train of camels and throwing live fleas on the ground and the application of the cupping glass to the nape of the neck, all of these things create forgetfulness.
Chapter Thirteen

Which Things Bring, and Which Prevent Earning a Livelihood, and Which Things Augment, or Diminish, the Years of One's Life

It is essential for the student of learning that he have sustenance, and knowledge of those things which increase it as well as the duration of life and health in order to be free from all other occupations so as to devote his time to the pursuit of knowledge only. Books have been written describing all of these matters, so I shall only cite from some of them briefly.

The Messenger of God said: The decrees of God are not averted except by prayer, and your span of life is not augmented except through piety. For verily man is deprived of sustenance because of a crime he has committed. This tradition establishes for certain that the perpetration of a crime is the cause of deprivations of sustenance especially in the case of the crime of telling lies which entails poverty. There is a special tradition which establishes this [i.e., with regard to the effect of lying].

So does sleep in the morning cut off sustenance and a great deal of sleep is the factor that brings about poverty and the poverty of learning also.

Somebody said:

The joy of man lies in putting on [fine] clothes [whereas] the collecting of knowledge is [achieved] through leaving off sleeping.

Another one said:

Is it not a great loss [shame] that the nights pass without use and yet are considered as part of my life?

Again another said:

You there, get up this night! Perhaps you will be well-

guided. Until when will you sleep through your night while your life is consumed [wasted]?

To sleep naked and urinate naked, to eat in a state of impurity and to eat lying down on one's side on a couch and to disdain [neglect] the remnants of the table; to burn up the skins of onion and garlic; to sweep the house in the night and leave sweepings in the house; to go ahead of venerable old people [or: of learned men]; to call one's parents by their given names; the using of toothpicks made of every kind of wood [while only bitter wood should be used]; washing the hand with mud and earth, and sitting on the doorstep; lying on one's side against one of the doorposts; making sacred ablutions in the latrine; sewing clothes on one's body; drying one's face with clothes; leaving spiderwebs in the house; to neglect prayers; to make a hasty exit from the mosque after the morning prayers; to be very early in going to the market, and to be late in returning from it; to buy pieces of bread from poor people; to beg; to invoke evil on one's children; to leave off covering vessels, and extinguishing the lantern by blowing at it [with one's breath]; —all of these [activities] bring about poverty. This is known through traditions going back to Muhammad.

Likewise to write with a knotted reed-pen,\(^98\) to comb oneself with a broken comb; to keep from praying for one's parents; to be seated while winding one's turban around the head; to put on one's trousers standing up; [to show] avarice, and miserliness, extravagance, laziness, sluggishness and neglect in one's affairs —all lead to poverty.

The Messenger of God said: "By almsgiving bring down [from God] your sustenance." Early rising is blessed since it increases all kinds of good things, especially sustenance. [Also] beauty of handwriting is among the keys to securing sustenance and a merry expression on the face and good speech increase sustenance.\(^99\)

According to al-Hasan b. 'Ali,\(^100\) sweeping the courtyard and washing the pots and pans\(^101\) lead to riches. The strongest factor

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\(^98\) The interpretation of this phrase is owed to Professor Nahid Abbott, University of Chicago.

\(^99\) Muh. text has "both power of memory and sustenance."

\(^100\) Al-Hasan b. 'Ali, son of the Caliph 'Ali, d. probably 669.

\(^101\) Lit: Vessels.
in bringing about the means for sustaining life is the performance
of prayer with reverence and humility and modesty and right
position of the body, the rest of the obligatory things, tradi-
tional rites and accepted practices pertaining to it [prayer].

The forenoon prayer is a known, they, a famed [procedure]
in [assuring sustenance]; [equally effective are] reading of the
Sūra al-Waqi'a, in particularly at night at the time [one
usually] sleeps, and reading the Sūra al-Mulk, the Sūra al-
Masātim, and "By the night when it veils," and "Have
we not expanded for thee thy breast."] And [to attain suste-
nance one should] be in the place of worship before the call to
public prayer, prolong purification and carry out the ritual of
the morning prayer as well as private prayers in the house.
[Furthermore], one should not speak of mundane [profane] mat-
ters after the private prayers nor sit too frequently with women
unless it is necessary. One should not engage in vain discourse
benefiting neither one's worldly nor one's religious station.

It is said: Whoever occupies himself with those things which
are not significant for him, those things which are important
to him will escape him.

Būrūnjīhū said: "When you see a man who speaks a good
deal be persuaded he is insane." And 'Alī said: "When intelli-
gence is complete speech becomes rare."

The writer [of this book] said: On this subject there occurred
to me the following verse:

When the intelligence of a man is perfect, his speech
becomes rare. Contrarily, you can be sure of the stupidity of
a man if he speaks a great deal.

Somebody else said:

1. Speech is a necessary evil, but silence is salvation. So
    when you have to talk do not be prolific.

2. You will never once repent of your silence, but often-
times you will repent of your speech.

102. S. 56: Chapter of the Event.
103. S. 67: Kingship.
104. S. 73: The Heavily Burdened.
106. S. 94, 1. Sura of "Have We Not Expanded."
107. Būrūnjīhū, legendary vizier of the Sassanian king Khosrāv I Anāhir-

wān (531–579), renowned for his wisdom.

Also sustenance is increased if one recites each day from the
moment of daybreak to the time when the prayer starts a
hundred times: Praise be to God, the Exalted, Praise be to
God; and: In praising Him [I am asking] God to forgive me my
sins, and: I turn to him penitently. And by saying every day in
the morning and evening one hundred times: There is no God
but He, the King, the Truth, the Elucidator. And one should
say after both morning and evening prayer each day thirty-
three times: Praise be to God and Glory, there is no God but He.
Also [repeat]: God is the greatest one, four times three hundred
times. And one should seek pardon from sins from God, the
Exalted, seventy times after the morning prayer and one should
repeat frequently the words: There is no strength nor power
except in God the Most High, the Greatest; and: Benediction and
peace on the Prophet. And one should say every Friday seventy
times: O God! make me content with those things which are
allowed by you rather than those things which are prohibited by
you. And make me satisfied with your favor to the exclusion of
anybody else's. And let one say this in praise of Him every day
and night: You are God the most glorious, the wise one; you are
God the king, the most sanctified, you are God the forbearing,
the generous, you are God the creator of good and evil, you are
God the creator of Paradise and Hell, the one who knows the
hidden and the manifest, and the one who is cognizant of secret
things and those out in the open. You are the greatest, the most
exalted; you are God the creator of everything and to you every-
thing reverts. You are God the Judge on the Day of Judgment.
You never did cease nor will you ever cease.

[Say also]: You are God, there is no God but you, the unique,
the eternal. "He brought not forth, nor hath He been brought
forth; co-equal with Him, there hath never been any one." You
are God. There is no God but you, the Compassionate, the
Merciful. You are God. There is no God but you, the King, the
Most Sanctified, the Preserver of Peace, the one who is trusted,
the tutor, the glorious, the omnipotent, the magnificent. There
is no one who is God but you, the creator, the founder, the fash-
ioner, whose are the most beautiful names. Whatever there is in

108. This sentence is missing in the Maḥ. text.
109. S. 112, 3–4; Bell's translation.
the heaven and the earth praises him, for he is glorious and wise.
Increase of the span of life is further owed to piety and that
one leave of doing harmful things and venerate the elders and
stand by one’s kin, and that one say both at dawn and at dusk
every day three times: Praise be to God who fills the scales of
judgment, the ultimate limit of knowledge, the highest measure
of satisfaction and the weighty occupant of the Throne. And:
There is no God but He, who fills . . . of the Throne. And: God
is greatest who fills . . . of the Throne.
And one should beware of cutting down green trees unless it is
necessary. And [there should be] carrying out purification com-
pletely and praying with glorification [of God] and reading the
Koran and [going on] both the ḫāj and informal visits to the
sacred places [.MustCompile].
One should [also] preserve good relations
to one’s fellow-men.
And it is necessary that one learn something of medicine and
obtain the blessings of traditions of Muḥammad handed down
to us concerning medicine which the venerable Imām Abū
‘l-Abbās al-Mustaghfīr has collected in his book called “The
Medicine of the Prophet” [Ṭibb an-Nabī].
Whoever looks for this book will find it.
May the blessing of God rest on our lord Muḥammad, the
seal of the noble envoys, and on his kin and his companions,
the outstanding leaders of the community, forever and ever.
Amen.

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