

زَادُ الْحَالِيَيْنِ مِنْ كَلَامِ رَسُولِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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# PROVISIONS FOR THE SEEKERS

A MANUAL OF PROPHETIC ḤADĪTHS WITH COMMENTARY


*A Translation and Commentary of Zād al-Ṭālibīn*

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*White Thread*  
P R E S S

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	9
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	11
INTRODUCTION	13
<b>PART 1</b>	
COMPREHENSIVE SAYINGS, SPRINGS OF WISDOM & SOUND ADMONITION	23
Nominal Sentences	26
Another Form of Nominal Sentences	41
Nominal Sentences Beginning With the Particle <i>Lā</i>	49
Nominal Sentences Beginning With the Particle <i>Inna</i>	51
Nominal Sentences Beginning With the Particle <i>Innamā</i>	60
Verbal Sentences	61
Verbal Sentences Beginning With the Negating <i>Lā</i> Particle	64
Imperative and Prohibitive Sentences	69
The Irregular Verb <i>Laysa</i>	81
Conditional Sentences Beginning With <i>Man</i>	84
More Conditional Sentences Beginning With <i>Idhā</i>	107
<b>PART 2</b>	
SOME UNSEEN EVENTS WHICH THE MESSENGER  PROPHESED & WHICH OCCURRED AFTER HIS DEMISE	113
<b>PART 3</b>	
STORIES & ACCOUNTS (40 NARRATIONS)	129
FURTHER STUDY REFERENCES	163
BIBLIOGRAPHY	173
BIOGRAPHIES	175
INDEX	179
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	189

## INTRODUCTION

**A**LL PRAISE IS FOR ALLĀH, the Loving Lord of the universe, who bestowed us with faith. Peace and blessings be upon His most beloved Messenger, Muḥammad, and all of the messengers of Allāh, who guided mankind to their Lord and to the path of eternal bliss and happiness.

Imām Nawawī says in his *Taqrīb*, “The science of ḥadīth is the noblest means of attaining closeness to the Lord of the Worlds. How can it not be so, when it is the exposition of the way of the best of mankind and the most noble of the first and last of creation, Muḥammad ﷺ?” No doubt, a thing is honored by the honor of whom it is connected to. Moreover, the science of ḥadīth is the means to all Islamic sciences, including understanding the Qur’ān and developing an Islamic lifestyle.

*The Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim.*

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was given an exceptional ability to convey in a few, simple, and beautifully phrased words, meanings that embrace whole libraries of wisdoms and truths. The Messenger ﷺ himself said, “I have been sent with the *jawāmi‘ al-kalim*” (*Bukhārī*), i.e., comprehensive but concise language that is able to express a multitude of meanings in few words. He was known to confine himself to conciseness and non-superfluous speech. Each one of these is a gem worthy of being written in gold.

Today, one can find many a book on proverbs and quotations from historical personages, religious and political leaders on the shelves of bookstores and libraries, but the eloquence of the final Messenger of Allāh ﷺ outshines them all in beauty, completeness, and wisdom. Sages and great philosophers appear as struggling students in the light of his divinely inspired wisdom. To cite an example of his speech, the Messenger of Allāh

ﷺ said, “The religion is sincerity” (*Bukhārī, Muslim*). Scholars have written pages elucidating the seemingly endless applications, meanings, and wisdoms contained in this expression of two words (الدين النصيحة) in the Arabic language (see ḥadīth 1).

For generations, Muslims all over the world have found great understanding and inspiration in the profound statements of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, which have provided them a guiding hand in navigating through the different aspects of their lives with goodness and virtue. Many scholars thus compiled books on these ḥadīths of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ, among which is *Zād al-ṭālibīn*.

### *Zād al-Ṭālibīn*

This book is a collection of 327 ḥadīths which the author, Shaykh ‘Āshiq Ilāhī al-Bulandshehrī, compiled from ‘Allāma Tabrīzī’s renowned ḥadīth compilation, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*. The first chapter contains 261 of these comprehensive gems of wisdom from Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ, followed by 25 ḥadīths on prophecy, and then a concluding chapter consisting of 40 accounts and narratives. Because the author had originally composed this work for students of Islamic studies and the Arabic language, he arranged the ḥadīths of the first chapter according to their grammatical sentence structures to facilitate an understanding of Arabic grammar.

*Zād al-ṭālibīn* has been a popular book taught in a number of *madrasas* as an initial ḥadīth work. It has proven to be a means of benefit for the students in that it accustoms them to the memorization of ḥadīth, inspires them with the comprehensive guidance contained within, and provides them with a collection of ḥadīth with which they can mold the hearts by expounding the virtues and excellences of Islam.

### *Ḥadīth Compilations*

The teachings of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ—his utterances, deeds, tacit approvals—were all well recorded, preserved, and transmitted orally by the Companions. Though many ḥadīths were recorded in writing during the lifetime of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ, it was only in the second century of Islam that systematic compilations of ḥadīth were produced by the likes of Imām Mālik ibn Anas (d. 193/808) and others. Subsequently many other compi-

﴿٥٩﴾ كَمْ مِّنْ صَائِمٍ لَّيْسَ لَهُ مِن صِيَامِهِ إِلَّا الظَّمُّ وَكَمْ مِّنْ قَائِمٍ لَّيْسَ لَهُ مِن قِيَامِهِ إِلَّا السَّهَرُ

59. How many there are who fast but do not gain anything from it but hunger, and how many there are who pass the night standing in prayer but do not gain anything from it but sleeplessness (*Dārimī*).

This ḥadīth is a commentary on those who fast without seeking reward from Allāh or who do not abstain from committing sins, even though the minimal obligation is fulfilled by such a fast. As for those who stand for lengthy vigils at night, their motive may be to show off, in which case no reward would be gained. Likewise is the case with all acts of worship—sincerity (*ikhhlās*) is essential in all of them (*Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ* 4:510). See also ḥadīth of intention above.

﴿٦٠﴾ مِّنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيهِ

60. Of the excellence of one's Islam is that he leaves that which does not concern him (*Tirmidhī, Aḥmad*).

The “excellence of one's Islam” is determined by his becoming a complete Muslim. “Leaving that which does not concern” a person refers to all nonessential actions and statements. A person should constantly be occupied with fulfilling the commands of Allāh, and should leave everything that does not obtain the pleasure of Allāh and that is not essential for this world or for the Hereafter. One's time should be occupied in striving for perfection in acts of worship and in seeking sacred knowledge. This is what will bring one endless bliss and salvation in the Hereafter (*Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ* 8:585).

﴿٦١﴾ أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَن رَّعِيَّتِهِ

61. Verily each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be questioned [on the Day of Judgment] regarding his sheep (*Bukhārī, Muslim*).

The ḥadīth continues with: “therefore, the leader of a people is responsible and will be questioned concerning his responsibility; a man is responsible for [the welfare of] his household and will be questioned concerning his family; a woman is responsible for [safeguarding the sanctity of] her husband's house and will be questioned concerning her responsibility in that. . . .”

﴿١٢٦﴾ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ

126. None of you is a [perfect] believer until his desires are in conformance with what I have come with (Abū 'l-Qāsim Ismā'īl ibn al-Faḍl, *Kitāb al-Ḥujja fī Ittibā' al-Maḥajja*).

For a person to be a complete believer, his ambitions, desires, and goals must all be in accordance with what is pleasing to Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ. Their desires and judgments must supersede his own desires and opinions (*Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ* 1:412) [A] The way to reach this state is by subduing one's lower self (*nafs*) from acting on impulses that are in violation of Islamic law and to patiently persevere in fulfilling the commands of Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ.

﴿١٢٧﴾ لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يُرَوِّعَ مُسْلِمًا

127. It is not lawful for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim (*Abū Dāwūd*). [A] Part of trusting another Muslim is that one should not fear being frightened by him.

﴿١٢٨﴾ لَا تَدْخُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ صُورَةٌ وَلَا كَلْبٌ

128. Angels do not enter a house in which there is a picture or a dog (*Bukhārī, Muslim*).

“Picture” refers to all animate drawings, forms, pictures, and photos, whether they cast a shadow or not, unless they are in a degraded position (i.e., a picture on a floor covering that is trodden upon). The occupants of such a dwelling are deprived of the presence of angels and their prayers and their seeking forgiveness for them. Angels do not enter places containing animate pictures because animate forms are often taken for worship. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Those who make [draw, print, or publish animate] pictures will be punished on the Day of Judgment and it will be said to them, ‘Bring to life what you have created’” (*Bukhārī, Muslim*). “Angels” here refer to guardian angels (*ḥafaza*) and angels of mercy, and not the Angel of Death, who calls upon people at their appointed time wherever they are.

The reason for angels not entering where dogs are present is because dogs are considered to be filthy. Also, some dogs have been referred to as devils in the ḥadīths (*Mirqāt*

﴿٢١﴾ وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَنْفَعُ فِيهِ إِلَّا الدِّينَارُ وَالدِّرْهَمُ

21. The Prophet ﷺ said, “A time will surely come upon the people when only *dīnārs* and *dirhams* will be of benefit” (*Aḥmad*).

Allāma Ṭībī explains this ḥadīth: “[A time will come when] only earnings will benefit [and preserve] a person, because without it he may fall into the unlawful.” Some scholars said, “Do trade and make a living, for you are in a time when, if one of you falls into some need, the first thing you will consume is your religion” (*Mirqāt al-Mafāṭīḥ* 6:33). In former times, pious people encouraged the absence of wealth (*faqr*) and deemed it an asset, but nowadays lack of wealth is considered a shortcoming. [As the ḥadīth states,] everything will come to revolve around the possession of wealth. Those who possess it will be able to advance in all fields, including, in many cases, “religion” (for instance, constructing *maṣjids*, *madrasas*, religious institutions, schools, publishing houses, and employing *imāms* and teachers). Therefore, some of the predecessors preferred that scholars be wealthy in order to avoid being mistreated by the wealthy. Sufyān al-Thawrī said, “Wealth was once frowned upon [by the religious scholars] but now it has become a form of protection and defense for the Muslim. If it were not for this wealth, then these rulers [the Abbasids] would treat me like a towel and clean with it what they please” (*Mazād al-Rāghibīn* 78).

﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: صِنْفَانِ مِنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ لَمْ أَرَهُمَا: قَوْمٌ مَعَهُمْ سَيَاطٌ كَأَذْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ يَضْرِبُونَ بِهَا النَّاسَ، وَنِسَاءٌ كَأَسِيَّاتِ عَارِيَّاتٍ مُمِيلَاتٍ مَائِلَاتٍ، رُؤُوسُهُنَّ كَأَسْنِمَةِ الْبُخْتِ الْمَائِلَةِ، لَا يَدْخُلْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يَجِدْنَ رِيحَهَا وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا لَتُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ كَذَا وَكَذَا

22. The Prophet ﷺ said, “There are two types of people who will enter the Hellfire, whom I have not yet seen: people who will have whips similar to ox-tails with which they will beat people, and women who will be dressed, yet nude. They will seduce men and will themselves be inclined toward them. Their heads will be like the swaying humps of Bactrian camels. They will neither enter Paradise nor smell its fragrance,

even though its fragrance can be smelled from such-and-such a distance” (*Muslim*).

Those in possession of such “whips” will beat people without right; they will torment and oppress them. The latter part refers to women who dress in clothing through which their physical forms are visible; or that they are clad in skimpy clothing and thus, semi-nude. It can also refer to those adorned with outer finery, [makeup,] and jewelry, but who are devoid of the clothing of *taqwā*, which is the fear of Allāh and modesty. They will lure men through their appearance and gait and will themselves be inclined to immorality and fulfillment of personal desires.

The ḥadīth compares them to the swaying humps of Bactrian camels either because they will tie pieces of cloth into their hair (which will resemble humps) or they will arrange their hair to appear attractive and draw attention. Some scholars have also explained this as walking with one’s head up with a haughty demeanor, rather than lowering one’s head in modesty. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī states that this type of hair style was found among women in Egypt during his time. The “distance” to which the fragrance of Paradise can be smelled was explained by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in another ḥadīth as being “a distance of forty years” (*Bukhārī*) (*Mirqāt al-Mafātiḥ* 7:83).

[A] “They will neither enter Paradise” means they will not immediately enter Paradise because of the sins they have committed, but will eventually enter because of their faith, if they are Muslim. No doubt, this ḥadīth cannot be more applicable than it is today. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ explicitly states in this and in other similar ḥadīths that particular groups of people will not be found in his time (owing to the blessedness and purity of that generation), but will be found among those who would come later. This ḥadīth is thus just one of the many proofs confirming the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and his prophecies.

﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَتَّزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ عَالِمًا اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُؤُوسًا جُهَالًا فَسُئِلُوا فَأَمَّتُوا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا

23. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allāh will not seize sacred knowledge by extracting it from people, but will seize it by removing the scholars until, when there remains no learned person, people will appoint ignorant men as leaders. When questioned, they will pass rulings without