

تزكية النفس

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

ZUHD

Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril حفظه الله

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Zuhd

Ash-Shaykh Al-Imām Ahmad Mūsā Jibrīl (حفظه الله)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



We spoke about Wara', and now Zuhd is a level above Wara' on the path to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Like Wara', Zuhd is a level in the pursuit of achieving nearness to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The meaning of Zuhd is all throughout the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and it was something implemented in the lives of the Salaf. For example, verses that warn about Dunyā are verses about Zuhd. Verses warning in one way or another about those whom the Dunyā has deceived are verses about Zuhd. Zuhd was defined by some as a form of detachment from Dunyā matters except for what's essential. It's to have a short-lived hope for Dunyā in one's heart. It's to always remember that Dunyā is a temporary journey. Contrary to what many think, you don't have to be eating stale bread or living in a desert or wearing a rough cloak in order to be a Zāhid. Zuhd is not just about avoiding luxurious lifestyles while desiring them in your heart, because Zuhd is detachment from Dunyā in one's heart. Az-Zuhri said about Zuhd that it's when one doesn't let permissible things distract him from his path to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. And don't understand that only poor people can have Zuhd. Ibn Taymiyyah clearly addressed that. He said, *"Zuhd can exist alongside wealth as well as poverty, because some of the early Salaf were Zuhhād even though they were wealthy."* Imām Ahmad explained how a rich man can have Zuhd. He said, *"A person who does not experience joy in abundance of wealth or sadness in its scarcity is regarded as a Zāhid."*

Part of Zuhd is not coveting other people's wealth. It's being detached from what you see people have. Zuhd means trusting what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى has in store for you more than the trust you have for what's in your own hands. When you face a hardship or a loss, Zuhd means that you should hope for the reward from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and accept it more than if that hardship never happened. Zuhd is disdain for worldly matters and looking down on them. There are many meanings of Zuhd that you'll find in the early books. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله تعالى's definition of Zuhd was a distinct one, just like his comparison between Zuhd and Wara'. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى said, *"I heard Shaykh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah say Zuhd is the abandonment of what doesn't benefit one in the Ākhirah."* He said

Wara' — which was our previous topic — is the avoidance of what one fears may cause him harm in the Ākhirah. Wara' represents a stage that proceeds Zuhd and it leads up to it. It serves as a preliminary phase on the path to achieving Zuhd, and it functions like an introduction to Zuhd. So simply put, what Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله تعالى is saying is Wara' is leaving what may harm you in the Ākhirah. Zuhd is leaving what doesn't benefit you in the Ākhirah. With Zuhd, it's not only the Harām and the Makrūh and the doubtful matters or what leads up to them that you're leaving — that's Wara', that's our previous topic. Zuhd, you're a step above that. Now you're leaving some of the Mubāh, even if it doesn't harm your Ākhirah, to focus more on the Ākhirah. A person who is a Zāhid and decides to leave what's Mubāh to concentrate on their Ākhirah is usually already far away from the Harām, that's why every believer who has Zuhd has Wara', but not every believer who has Wara' has Zuhd, and there are complete books written on this topic. Ibn Al-Mubārak wrote about it, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal wrote about it, Ar-Rāzi wrote about it, Ibn Abi Ad-Dunyā wrote about it, Al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Abi 'Āsim and others wrote about this very essential, important topic, because our Messenger ﷺ was Azhad An-Nās, he was the most detached person from Dunyā matters. He showed the least desire for Dunyā matters. He was content with just the basic essentials. 'Umar رضي الله عنه cried when he saw him lying on a reed mat that made its marks on his side, ﷺ. He cried when he saw that among the few items that were in his house, in his room, were a few handfuls of barley in the corner of the room. When the Messenger ﷺ saw him crying, he said, "What's wrong, 'Umar?" He said, "The mat left its marks on your side and all you have is a few things. Qaysar and Kusrā, the empires of the time, they live among fruits and rivers." The Messenger ﷺ said,

يَا ابْنَ الْخَطَّابِ أَلَا تَرْضَى أَنْ تَكُونَ لَنَا الْآخِرَةُ وَلَهُمُ الدُّنْيَا؟

O Son of Khattāb! Does it not please you that the Ākhirah is for us and the Dunyā is for them?

He lived a simple life by choice, not by force. He said ﷺ once, *“If I had a mountain like Uhud of gold, it would not please me that any of it would stay with me more than three days.”* He would give it out for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى within less than three days, except a portion that he would keep to pay off his debt, except a very essential portion. That’s Zuhd. He was the most honored of all creation, yet he lived a simple life, even though the world was at his fingertips. Even though if he wanted, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى would have turned mountains into gold and silver for him.

The Sahābah after him, who learned from him, they had Zuhd in their lives. They showed a great detachment from Dunyā, they lived simply. Ibn Mas’ūd رضي الله عنه, he told the people of his time — he was addressing the Tābi’in, the best generation after the Sahābah — He said *“You fast more, you pray more, you strive harder than the Sahābah, but they were better than you!”* They said, *“Abu ‘Abd Ar-Rahmān,”* — his Kunyā was Abu ‘Abd Ar-Rahmān — they said, *“Why Abu ‘Abd Ar-Rahmān? Why were they better than us?”* He said,

كانوا أزهد في الدنيا وأرغب في الآخرة منكم

They were more detached from this Dunyā. They were more eager for the Ākhirah.

The Sahābah turned away from the fleeting pleasures of this Dunyā, even though those pleasures were very close to them. They understood that everything in this Dunyā is temporary, and the only thing that lasts was their good deeds. They succeeded رضي الله عنهم in keeping the Dunyā in their hands, not in their hearts. Al-Asbahāni and As-Suyūti — just to give you an example — and Ibn Al-Mubārak and others mentioned the story about ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه. He put 400 Dīnār in a pouch and he told his servant, *“Take this pouch to Abu ‘Ubaydah. Tell him, ‘This is for your needs’, and wait to see what he does with it.”* The servant delivered the money and the message to Abu ‘Ubaydah. Abu ‘Ubaydah رضي الله عنه

made Du'ā for 'Umar رضي الله عنه and immediately told his maid to divide it among people in charity. It was all completely distributed to poor people. The servant returned to 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه, he told him what he saw. 'Umar رضي الله عنه had already prepared another pouch with 400 Dīnār for Mu'ādh رضي الله عنه. He said, *"Take this pouch to Mu'ādh. Tell him, 'This is for your needs', and see what he does with it."* He delivered the pouch and the message, Mu'ādh رضي الله عنه made Du'ā for 'Umar, then he instructed his maid to divide it among certain people in charity. When Mu'ādh's wife saw this, she said, *"We're poor! Give us something!"* There were only two Dīnārs left in the pouch that he gave to his wife. The servant told 'Umar what Mu'ādh did, and that's when 'Umar said,

إنهم إخوة! بعضهم من بعض

They're brothers to one another!

It was reported that Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنها gave 100,000 Dirhams, and by the end of the day she had distributed all of it. Her servant told her, *"Why didn't you buy us some meat with just one of those Dirhams?"* In Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, 'Umar, who led the globe of his time رضي الله عنه, reaches Bilād Ash-Shām in honor with the Izār, Khuffān, and Imāmah, leading his own camel in the water. The soldiers approached him, they said, *"Amīr Al-Mu'minīn, you're meeting troops and leaders like this?"* 'Umar رضي الله عنه said his famous quote,

إنا قوم أعزنا الله بي الإسلام

If you chase this Dunyā, it will hurt your Ākhirah, and if you chase the Ākhirah, it will hurt your Dunyā, so prioritize what lasts over what is temporary. Again, focusing on Dunyā, solely on Dunyā, will negatively impact your Ākhirah. Focusing solely on the Ākhirah may negatively impact your Dunyā. It's essential to prioritize what's eternal, which is the Ākhirah, over what's fleeting, which is this Dunyā. Prioritize what lasts over what's temporary. Zuhd in this Dunyā is a path to salvation in the Ākhirah. Abu Dawud said, *"I used to sit with Imām Ahmad رحمه الله تعالى, and his gatherings were gatherings only about the Ākhirah."* He said, *"I never heard him talk about anything related to this Dunyā."* Zuhd is a state that many individuals may not achieve, but they may gain entry into Jannah. However, attaining the *highest* ranks of Jannah necessitates a significant degree of Zuhd. To reach the status of the Siddiqīn and Shuhadā' and Sālihīn, one must cultivate a profound level of Zuhd.

This brings to light a matter that's not often discussed, and it relates to the Zuhd of Talabat Al-'Ilm and Ulamā' — *specifically* about Talabat Al-'Ilm and Ulamā'. It's not talked about often when Zuhd is addressed. Ulamā' and Mujāhidīn need a high degree of Zuhd. How can you truly please Allāh سبحانه وتعالى with your words and actions when you're accepting huge amounts of money or grants or gifts from Tawāghīt, or living in luxurious mansions provided by them, or traveling with diplomatic passports provided by them, or receiving endless perks from them? Assume they were legitimate Shar'ī leaders, real Khulafā' and Umarā'. An 'Ālim and Tālib 'Ilm must not only have Zuhd not to ask them for anything, but he must have Zuhd not to accept anything. That's when they're righteous Umara' and Khulafā'! Imagine when it's Tawāghīt spreading Fasād and Kufr on this Earth. The Dunyā benefits that you gain from them will also negatively affect your Dīn. There's a cost for what you get from them, and it impacts your Dīn. It's not just from rulers — from anyone! A Tālib 'Ilm and an 'Ālim and a Mujāhid should have Zuhd from what Islamic centres, bussiness, and bussines men offer to gift or grant. People exhibit generosity when they hold affection for an 'Ālim. One can obtain substantial wealth by accepting contributions provided by the congregation. Being an 'Ālim, as I've always said, is among the biggest money

makers of our time. A true ‘Ālim and a true Tālib ‘Ilm who aspires to please Allāh سبحانه وتعالى must embody Zuhd from material possessions that they’re offered.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا

And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient...

They became Imāms لما صبروا, when they’re patient. Yes, patient means afflictions, but Qatādah also said,

لما صبروا عن الدنيا

Patience means when they hold back and refrain from worldly pleasures and pursuits. They became Imāms when they were Zuhhād in this Dunyā. That’s the quality of who?

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً

And We made from among them leaders

The quality of the true Imāms. Sufyān said,

لا ينبغي للرجل أن يكون إماماً يقتدى به حتى يتخامى عن الدنيا

A man should not serve as an Imām until he distances himself from worldly pursuits.

Zuhd for a Tālib ‘Ilm and a Mujāhid and An ‘Ālim is also Zuhd in what people say about you. Zuhd signifies that their admiration and criticism of you falls with equal weight on you. If you’re concerned about their opinion about you while you’re on the Haqq, you haven't even started on the path of Zuhd yet. Zuhd signifies letting go of the yearning for acknowledgement from others. Even if it’s merely a feeling within the heart. Zuhd refers to the idea of not being concerned with getting followers or becoming famous. If you’re concerned about gaining followers, whether it’s virtually or in real life, you still haven’t reached the status of Zuhd, you haven’t even started on that path yet. Zuhd from seeking praise and the desire for leadership is more challenging and more crucial than Zuhd from other worldly affairs. This high level of Zuhd that's required for Talabat Al-‘Ilm can only be achieved by those who sincerely dedicate their hearts to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and those who seek to please Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. When you’re doing Da’wah for a paycheck, you haven’t even started on the path of Zuhd. Tailoring your talks on the account of speaking the Haqq and standing for the oppressed to make yourself appealing for invitations from Masājīd, that undermines Zuhd. Giving up on Dunyā or fame or followers because you can’t achieve it and it hasn’t been made available to you, that’s very simple and it’s easy and everyone can do it. Zuhd comes into play when the Dunyā comes to a person willingly, but then he turns away from it, choosing to let it go because he desires what’s with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The prevalence of corrupt Fatwas, the unfortunate positions adopted by Ulamā' and Talabat Al-‘Ilm today, and the spread of Irjā’ can largely be attributed to a deficiency in Zuhd. When an individual embodies Zuhd, they turn down the enticing opportunities and offers presented by Ibn Zāyed and Ibn Salmān.

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

Nay, you prefer the life of this world,

وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى

Although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.

You prefer the life of this world over the Ākhirah, and the Ākhirah is better and more lasting. Qatādah said, “People choose this Dunyā over the Ākhirah except those whom Allāh سبحانه وتعالى *has bestowed mercy over.*” We’ve met Shuyūkh, or so-called “Shuyūkh”, who constantly requested incentives, cash, houses, mansions, and buildings. They kept asking and asking, and as long as they were okay with being treated like toilet paper for the rulers, they received what they wanted. And we also saw so-called “Shuyūkh” who wouldn’t ask, but they would accept what was given to them. And by Allāh, we saw and met Shuyūkh who, despite the world’s temptations, chose to decline everything that was presented to them and only sought the reward from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

Zuhd makes you live like a king! No one but the King of Kings controls you when you have Zuhd. Among the benefits of Zuhd for everyone is living an honorable and noble life, like you're a king. Someone asked Muhammad Ibn Wās'i for advice. He said, “Be a king in the Dunyā and the Ākhirah.” He said, “How? How do I become a king?” He said, “By having Zuhd in this Dunyā.” You live honorable with Zuhd in this Dunyā. You attain happiness and peace of mind in this Dunyā with Zuhd. You attain purity of the heart with Zuhd. Zuhd removes envy and malice from the heart, because you don’t care, you don’t want what other people have. Zuhd makes you love your muslim brothers and sisters as you should. It removes jealousy. Most importantly, you attain the highest ranks of Jannah with Zuhd.

Let's conclude quickly with just a few pointers on how to attain Zuhd. One of the biggest matters that helps a believer attain Zuhd and detach his heart from Dunyā desires is remembering the reality of this Dunyā. When you realize

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

The life of this world is nothing but a deceptive enjoyment.

When you realize that, when a believer realizes

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يُنْفَدُ^ص وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ

Whatever you have will end, but what Allāh has is lasting.

When a believer realizes that this Dunyā is temporary and all Dunyā pleasures will eventually fade away, they become less attached to it and more focused on the everlasting life. Remembering death attains Zuhd. Individuals who often contemplate death will find contentment and satisfaction in the most simplest things. The more a believer is reminded of the afterlife, the more he's worried about it, the more it becomes his concern, the less the allure of this Dunyā effects him. How can a believer not have Zuhd in this Dunyā when the Messenger ﷺ illustrated the insignificance of this Dunyā in sayings and in actions? He emphasized that the only true life is the everlasting life of the Ākhirah. He said,

اللهم لا عيش إلا عيش الآخرة

O Allah! There's no life except the life of the Ākhirah.

That's the only life, the real life. Contemplating the Qur'ān attains Zuhd. So many verses in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is full of warnings about the temporary nature of this Dunyā. The Qur'ān highlights the lowliness of this Dunyā and how quickly it fades away. The Qur'ān encourages us to focus on the everlasting life, the true life, the Ākhirah. A sign that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves you and wants good for you is that he places in your heart that which helps you see the true nature of the Dunyā and the Ākhirah, and with that you prioritize the life that truly matters. A single verse of the so many verses on Zuhd is sufficient to raise your level of Zuhd and serve as a warning not to get attached to the temporary pleasures that don't last in this Dunyā.

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them, the splendour of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby. But the provision (good reward in the Hereafter) of your Lord is better and more lasting.

Allāh سبحانه وتعالى tells His Messenger, don't let your eyes crave what we allowed some of the disbelievers to enjoy in this Dunyā. Don't crave it. But why not? The end of the verse tells you why you shouldn't crave that.

وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

But the provision (good reward in the Hereafter) of your Lord is better and more lasting.

The reward of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is, number one, خير, it's better, وأبقى, it's everlasting.

وصلی اللہ علی سیدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم