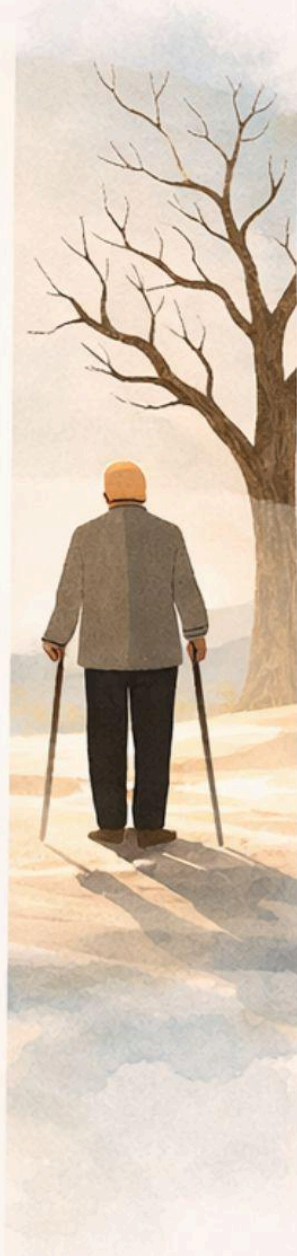
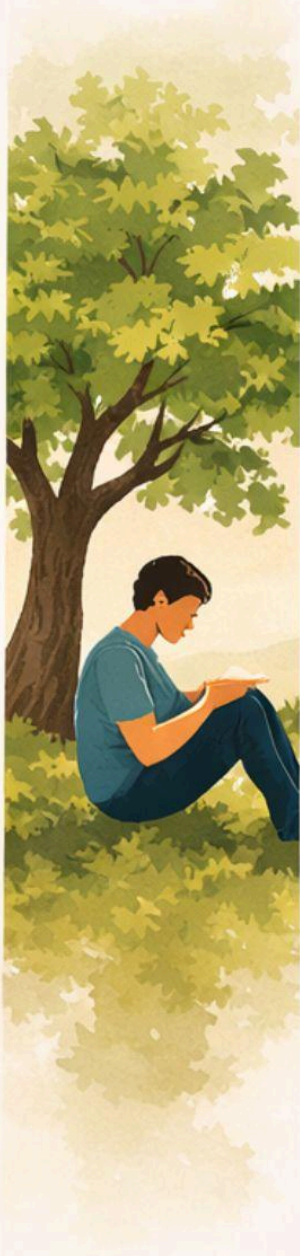




Awakening *the* Oblivious Sleeper *to the* Seasons of Life

by Ibn al-Jawzi



Tanbīh an-Nā'im al-Ghamr 'Alā

Mawāsim al-ʿUmar

Awakening the Oblivious Sleepers

to the Seasons of Life

By Abu al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH)

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Stages of the Lifespan	3
Chapter 1: Regarding the First Season of Life	5
Chapter 2: Regarding the Second Season of Life	10
Chapter 3: Regarding the Third Season of Life	17
Chapter 4: Regarding the Fourth Season of Life	22
Chapter 5: Regarding the Fifth Season of Life	27
Conclusion	31

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَبِهِ التَّوْفِيقُ وَالْهُدَايَةُ

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful. And through Him is the Capacity and the Guidance.

قَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ الْحَافِظُ، شَيْخُ الْإِسْلَامِ، مُفْتِي الْأَنْامِ، بَرَكَةُ الزَّمَانِ، مُحْيِي السُّنَّةِ، جَمَالُ الدِّينِ أَبُو
:- الْفَرَجِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْخَزْرَجِيُّ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

The shaykh, the imām, the ḥadīth master, Shaykh al-Islām, the muftī of mankind, the blessing of the age, reviver of the Sunnah, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū'l-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Khazrajī – may Allah Most High have mercy on him – said:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْأَعْمَارَ مَوَاسِمَ، يَرْبِحُ فِيهَا مُمْتَنِّلُ الْمَرَاسِمِ، وَيَخْسِرُ الْمُضَيِّعُ الْحَسِيرُ وَالْحَاسِمُ.
فَهِيَ مَوْضُوعَةٌ لِبُلُوغِ الْأَمَلِ، وَرَفْعِ الْخَلْلِ. زَائِدَةُ الْأَرْبَاحِ لِمَنْ اتَّجَرَ، مُهْلِكَةُ الْأَرْوَاحِ لِمَنْ فَجَرَ،
الْحَسَنَةُ بَعْشَرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ وَأَكْثَرَ، وَالسَّيِّئَةُ تَرُدُّ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ إِلَى حَالِ

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, who has made lifespans into seasons whose profit is earned by those who comply with the Divine ordinances, while the one who neglects being short-sighted and cutting himself off (from good), incurs loss. They have been set down as a means for attaining aspirations and removing deficiencies: they increase the profits of whoever engages in trade (with Allah), and they destroy the souls of whoever plunges into wickedness. The good deed is multiplied ten times over, up to seven hundredfold and even more, while the evil deed returns the one who was upright to his former state.

وَبِهَذَا الْعُمْرِ الْيَسِيرِ يَشْتَرِي الْخُلُودَ الدَّائِمَ فِي الْجَنَانِ، وَالْبَقَاءَ الَّذِي لَا يَنْقَطِعُ كِبَقَاءِ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَمَنْ فَرَطَ فِي الْعُمْرِ وَقَعَ فِي الْخُسْرَانِ.

With this brief lifespan a person purchases everlasting eternity in the gardens, and a subsistence that never comes to an end, like the remaining of the All-Merciful. Whoever squanders his lifespan falls into sheer loss.

فَيَنْبَغِي لِلْعَاقِلِ أَنْ يَعْرِفَ قَدْرَ عُمْرِهِ، وَأَنْ يَنْظُرَ لِنَفْسِهِ فِي أَمْرِهِ، فَيَعْتَنِمَ مَا يَفُوتُ اسْتِدْرَاكُهُ، فَرُبَّمَا كَانَ فِي تَضْيِيعِهِ هَلَاكُهُ.

So it befits the intelligent person to know the worth of his lifespan and to look out for his own soul with regard to it, seizing what cannot be made up once it has slipped away; for it may well be that he is being destroyed by his wasting of it.

The Stages of the Lifespan

اعْلَمْ وَفَقَّكَ اللهُ تَعَالَى أَنَّ مَوَاسِمَ الْعُمْرِ خَمْسَةٌ

Know – may Allah Most High grant you success – that the seasons of a lifetime are five:

المَوْسِمُ الْأَوَّلُ: مِنْ وَقْتِ الْوِلَادَةِ إِلَى زَمَانِ الْبُلُوغِ، وَذَلِكَ خَمْسَ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً

The first season: from birth until puberty, and that is 15 years.

وَالثَّانِي: مِنْ زَمَانِ بُلُوغِهِ إِلَى نِهَآيَةِ شَبَابِهِ، وَذَلِكَ إِلَى تَمَامِ خَمْسٍ وَثَلَاثِينَ سَنَةً، وَهُوَ زَمَانُ الشَّبَابِ

The second: from puberty until the end of his youth, and that is age 35 years, and this is the time of youth.

وَالثَّلَاثُ: مِنْ ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ إِلَى تَمَامِ خَمْسِينَ سَنَةً، وَذَلِكَ زَمَانُ الْكُهُولَةِ، وَقَدْ يُقَالُ: «كَهْلٌ» لِمَا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ

The third: from that time until the completion of 50 years, and that is the time of middle age; and it is also said, “one is a *kahl* (middle-aged)” even before that.

وَالرَّابِعُ: مِنْ بَعْدِ الْخَمْسِينَ إِلَى تَمَامِ السَّبْعِينَ، وَذَلِكَ زَمَانُ الشَّيْخُوخَةِ

The fourth: From 50 years to 70 years, and that is the time of old age.

وَالْخَامِسُ: مَا بَعْدَ السَّبْعِينَ إِلَى آخِرِ الْعُمْرِ، فَهُوَ زَمَانُ الْهَرَمِ

The fifth: From 70 years until the end of one’s life; this is the time of decrepitude.

وَقَدْ يَتَقَدَّمُ مَا ذَكَرْنَا مِنَ السِّنِّينَ وَيَتَأَخَّرُ، فَلْنَرُسُمَهَا خَمْسَةَ أَبْوَابٍ

What we have mentioned regarding the number of years may come earlier or later; so let us lay them out as five chapters.

Chapter 1: Regarding the First Season of Life

اعْلَمَنَّ أَنَّ هَذَا الْمَوْسِمَ يَتَعَلَّقُ مُعْظَمُهُ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ، فَهَمَّا يُرَبِّيانِ وَلَدَهُمَا وَيُعَلِّمَانِهِ، وَيَحْمِلَانِهِ عَلَى مَصَالِحِهِ، وَلَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَفْتُرَا عَنْ تَأْدِيبِهِ وَتَعْلِيمِهِ؛ فَإِنَّ التَّعْلِيمَ فِي الصَّغَرِ كَالنَّقْشِ فِي الْحَجَرِ.

Know that this season (of life) mostly concerns the parents: they raise their child, teach him, and direct him towards what benefits him. They should not grow lax in disciplining and teaching him, for teaching in childhood is like engraving on stone.

قَالَ عَلِيٌّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: (قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا): عُلِّمُوهُمْ وَأَدِّبُوهُمْ

‘Alī – may Allah be pleased with him – said, regarding the saying of the Most High, “Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire” [66:6]: “Teach them and discipline them.”

فِيُعَلِّمَانِهِ الطَّهَارَةَ، وَالصَّلَاةَ، وَيَضْرِبَانِهِ عَلَى تَرْكِهَا إِذَا بَلَغَ تِسْعَ سِنِينَ، وَيَحْفَظَانِهِ الْقُرْآنَ، وَيُسْمِعَانِهِ الْحَدِيثَ، وَمَا احْتَمَلَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ أَمْرًا بِهِ، وَيُفَبِّحَانِ عِنْدَهُ مَا يُفَبِّحُ، وَيَحْتَنُنَانِهِ عَلَى مَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ، وَلَا يَفْتُرَانِ عَنْ تَعْلِيمِهِ عَلَى قَدْرِ مَا يَحْتَمِلُ؛ فَإِنَّهُ مَوْسِمُ الزَّرْعِ

Thus they teach him purification and prayer, and they beat him for leaving it when he reaches nine years. They make him memorize the Qur’an, have him hear ḥadīth, and whatever knowledge he is able to bear, they command him with it. They make ugly in his eyes whatever is ugly, and urge him towards noble character. They should not slacken in teaching him, according to what he can bear, for this is the season of sowing.

قَالَ الشَّاعِرُ:

لَا تَسْهُ عَنْ أَدَبِ الصَّغِيِّ ... وَإِنْ شَكَى أَلَمَ التَّعْبِ

وَدَعِ الْكَبِيرَ لِشَأْنِهِ ... كَبِيرَ الْكَبِيرِ عَنِ الْأَدَبِ

The poet said:

Do not neglect disciplining the young one,
even if he complains of the pain of tiredness;

And leave the elder to his own condition –
for the grown man has grown beyond discipline.

وَقَالَ غَيْرُهُ:

إِنَّ الْغُصُونِ إِذَا قَوَّمْتَهَا اعْتَدَلَتْ ... وَلَا يَلِينُ إِذَا قَوَّمْتَهُ الْخَشَبُ

قَدْ يَنْفَعُ الْأَدَبُ الصَّغِيرَ فِي مَهْلٍ ... وَلَيْسَ يَنْفَعُ فِي ذِي الشَّيْبَةِ الْأَدَبُ

Another said:

Indeed, branches – if you straighten them, they become upright,
but wood, once hardened, will not grow soft when you try to straighten it.

Discipline may benefit the youngster while there is still time,
but for the one with white hair, discipline no longer benefits.

كَانَ عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ بْنُ مَرْوَانَ يُحِبُّ ابْنَهُ الْوَالِيدَ، وَلَا يَأْمُرُهُ بِالْأَدَبِ، فَخَرَجَ لِحَانًا، فَقَالَ: أَضَرَ حُبُّنَا بِالْوَالِيدِ

‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān used to love his son al-Walīd and did not command him to learn proper language and adab, so he ended up making many language mistakes. ‘Abd al-Malik then said: “Our love has harmed al-Walīd.”

وَقَدْ يُرْزَقُ الصَّبِيُّ ذَهْنًا مِنْ صِغَرِهِ فَيَتَخَيَّرُ لِنَفْسِهِ؛ كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: (وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ)، فَذُكِرَ فِي التَّفْسِيرِ: أَنَّهُ كَانَ ابْنُ ثَلَاثِ سِنِينَ، فَقَالَ لِلْكَوْكَبِ وَالْقَمَرِ وَالشَّمْسِ مَا قَالَ، إِلَى أَنْ قَالَ: (وَجَهَّتْ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

A child may be granted an intelligent mind from an early age, so that he chooses rightly for himself; as Allah the Exalted says: “*And indeed We gave Abraham his right judgment before*” [21:51]. It is mentioned in the tafsīr that he was three years old when he said to the star, the moon, and the sun what he said, until he finally said: “*I turn my face towards the One who originated the heavens and the earth*” [6:79].

فَإِذَا عَبَرَ الصَّبِيَّ خَمْسَ سِنِينَ بَانَ فَهْمُهُ وَنَسَاطَةُ فِي الْخَيْرِ، وَحُسْنُ اخْتِيَارِهِ، وَصَدَفُ نَفْسِهِ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا، وَعَكْسُ ذَلِكَ.

When the child passes the age of five, his understanding becomes apparent, as does his energy in doing good, the soundness of his choices, and his turning away from base things – or, conversely, the opposite of that.

مَرَّ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَلَى صِبْيَانٍ يَلْعَبُونَ، فَتَفَرَّوْا مِنْ هَيْبَتِهِ، وَلَمْ يَبْرَحْ ابْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ -، فَقَالَ لَهُ: مَا لَكَ لَمْ تَبْرَحَ؟! فَقَالَ: مَا الطَّرِيقُ ضَيِّقٌ فَأَوْسَعَهَا لَكَ، وَلَا لِي دَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُهُ.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb – may Allah be pleased with him – once passed by some boys who were playing; they all scattered out of awe of him, and Ibn al-Zubayr – may Allah be pleased with him – did not move. He said to him, “What is it with you that you did not move aside?” He replied, “The road is not narrow that I should make room for you, and I have no sin for which I should be afraid.”

وَقَالَ الْخَلِيفَةُ لَوْلَادِ وَزِيرِهِ وَهُوَ فِي دَارِهِمْ: أَيُّمَا أَحْسَنَ دَارِنَا أَمْ دَارِكُمْ؟ فَقَالَ: دَارِنَا. قَالَ: لِمَ؟ قَالَ: لِأَنَّكَ فِيهَا.

A caliph said to the son of his vizier, while the boy was in their (the caliph’s) residence, “Which is better, our house or your house?” He replied, “Our house.” He asked, “Why?” He said, “Because you are in it.”

وَيَبِينُ فَهَمُّ الصَّبِيِّ وَعُلُوُّ هِمَّتِهِ وَتَقْصِيرُهَا بِاخْتِيَارَاتِهِ لِنَفْسِهِ؛ وَقَدْ تَجْتَمِعُ الصَّبِيَانُ لِلْعَبِّ فَيَقُولُ الْعَالِي
الْهِمَّةُ: مَنْ يَكُونُ مَعِي، وَيَقُولُ الْقَاصِرُ: مَعَ مَنْ أَكُونُ. وَمَتَى عَلَتْ هِمَّتُهُ أَثَرَ الْعِلْمِ

The understanding of a child and the loftiness or lowliness of his ambition becomes evident from what he chooses for himself. Children may gather to play and the one of high ambition says, “Who will be with me?” while the one of low ambition says, “With whom shall I be?” Whenever his aspiration is high, he prefers knowledge.

فَإِذَا رَاهِقَ الصَّبِيُّ فَيَنْبَغِي لِأَبِيهِ أَنْ يُزَوِّجَهُ؛ فَقَدْ جَاءَ فِي الْحَدِيثِ: «مَنْ بَلَغَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ أَمَكَهُ أَنْ يُزَوِّجَهُ فَلَمْ
يَفْعَلْ، وَأَخَذَتِ الْوَالِدُ إِثْمًا، كَانَ الْإِثْمُ بَيْنَهُمَا

When the boy reaches the age of near-maturity (mumāraqa), it is befitting for his father to marry him off; for it has come in the ḥadīth: “If someone has a child who reaches the age where he can be married, and he is able to marry him but does not do so, and the child then commits a sin, the sin is shared between them both.”

وَالْعَجَبُ مِنَ الْوَالِدِ كَيْفَ لَا يَذْكُرُ حَالَهُ عِنْدَ الْمُرَاهِقَةِ، وَمَا لَقِيَ وَمَا عَانَى بَعْدَ الْبُلُوغِ، أَوْ كَانَ قَدْ وَقَعَ
فِي زَلَّةٍ فَيَعْلَمُ أَنَّ وَلَدَهُ مِثْلُهُ

It is astonishing that a father does not recall his own state at the time of adolescence, what he faced and endured after puberty, or that he may have fallen into some slip, and thus know that his child is just like him.

قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْحَرَبِيُّ: أَصْلُ فَسَادِ الصَّبِيَانِ بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ

Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī said: “The root of the corruption of children is (that it comes) from one another.”

وَيُنْزَرُ مَنْ يُؤْتِرُ الْعِلْمَ عَلَى النِّكَاحِ، وَيُعَلِّمُ نَفْسَهُ الصَّبْرَ؛ فَإِنَّ أَحْمَدَ بْنَ حَنْبَلٍ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ - لَمْ يَتَزَوَّجْ إِلَّا
بَعْدَ الْأَرْبَعِينَ.

Rare indeed is the one who prefers knowledge over marriage and trains himself in patience;
for Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal - may Allah have mercy on him - did not marry until after the age of
forty.

Chapter 2: Regarding the Second Season of Life

وَهُوَ مِنْ زَمَانِ الْبُلُوغِ إِلَى مُنْتَهَى الشَّبَابِ، وَهَذَا هُوَ الْمَوْسِمُ الْأَعْظَمُ الَّذِي يَقَعُ فِيهِ الْجِهَادُ لِلنَّفْسِ وَالْهَوَىٰ وَغَلْبَةِ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَبِصِيَانَتِهِ يَحْصُلُ الْقُرْبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَبِالتَّقْرِيطِ فِيهِ يَقَعُ الْخُسْرَانُ الْعَظِيمُ. وَبِالصَّبْرِ فِيهِ عَنِ الرُّزْلِ يُثَنَّى عَلَى الصَّابِرِينَ، كَمَا أَنْتَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَى يُوسُفَ - عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ -، إِذْ لَوْ زَلَّ مَنْ كَانَ يَكُونُ

This (season) is from the time of puberty until the end of youth. This is the greatest season, in which the striving against the ego, desires, and the overpowering of Satan takes place. By guarding this season, nearness to Allah Most High is attained; and by neglecting it, tremendous loss occurs. By being patient in it, and refraining from slips, a person earns praise – just as Allah, Mighty and Majestic, praised Yūsuf (peace be upon him); for if he had slipped, what would he have become?

«قَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -: «عَجِبَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ الشَّابِّ لَيْسَتْ لَهُ صَبْوَةٌ».

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Your Lord is amazed at a young man who has no (wayward) inclination.”

«وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: «أَيُّهَا الشَّابُّ التَّارِكُ شَهْوَتَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِي، أَنْتَ عِنْدِي كَبَعْضِ مَلَائِكَتِي».

And Allah Most High says: “O young man who abandons his desire for My sake, you are, in My sight, like some of My angels.”

وَلْيَعْلَمِ الْبَالِغُ أَنَّهُ مِنْ يَوْمِ بُلُوغِهِ وَجَبَ عَلَيْهِ مَعْرِفَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِالذَّلِيلِ لَا بِالتَّقْلِيدِ، وَيَكْفِيهِ مِنَ الدَّلِيلِ رُؤْيُهُ نَفْسِهِ وَتَرْتِيبُ أَعْضَائِهِ، فَيَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِهَذَا التَّرْتِيبِ مِنْ مُرْتَبٍ، كَمَا أَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِلْبِنَاءِ مِنْ بَانٍ

The one who has reached puberty must know that, from the very day he becomes legally responsible, it is obligatory upon him to know Allah Most High by proof, not by blind

imitation. It suffices him, as a proof, to look at himself and the arrangement of his limbs and body, and to realize that such order must have an Orderer, just as any building must have a builder.

وَيَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ نَزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكَانِ يُصْبِحَانِهِ طُولَ دَهْرِهِ، وَيَكْتُبَانِ عَمَلَهُ، وَيَعْرِضَانِهِ عَلَى اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى،
(قَالَ تَعَالَى: (وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۝ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ۝ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

He must also know that two angels have been assigned to him, accompanying him throughout his life; they write down his deeds and present them to Allah, Glorified and Exalted. Allah says: “And indeed, over you are keepers; noble, recording; they know whatever you do.” [82:10–12]

«قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْفَضْلِ: «مُنْذُ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً مَا أَمَلَيْتُ عَلَى كَاتِبِي سَيِّئَةً، وَلَوْ فَعَلْتُ لَأَسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْهُمَا

Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl said: “For forty years I have not dictated a single bad deed to my two (recording) angels; and had I done so, I would have felt shame before them.”

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْعَبْدُ فِيمَا يَرْتَفِعُ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ، فَإِنْ زَلَّ فَلْيَرْفَعْ الزَّلَلَ بِتَوْبَةٍ وَاسْتِدْرَاكِ

So let the servant reflect on what of his deeds is being raised up (to Allah). If he slips, let him erase that slip by repentance and by making amends.

وَلْيَغُضَّ طَرْفَهُ؛ فَقَدْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ

And let him lower his gaze, for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says: “Tell the believing men to lower (some) of their gazes.” [24:30]

وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: «النَّظْرُ إِلَى الْمَرْأَةِ سَهْمٌ مَسْمُومٌ مِنْ سِهَامِ الشَّيْطَانِ، مَنْ تَرَكَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي
آتَيْتُهُ إِيمَانًا يَجِدُ حَلَاوَتَهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ». وَمَنْ اسْتَعْمَلَ الْغَضَّ سَلِمَ

And Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says: “Looking at a woman is a poisoned arrow from the arrows of Satan; whoever leaves it for the sake of seeking My pleasure, I will grant him a faith whose sweetness he will find in his heart.” Whoever practices lowering his gaze will be kept safe.

وَأَيُّكَتَفِ بِالْمَرْأَةِ الْوَاحِدَةِ، وَلَا يَنْرَحِّصُ فِي كَثْرَةِ الْإِسْتِمْتَاعِ بِالنِّسَاءِ؛ فَإِنَّهُ يُشْنِتُ الْقَلْبَ، وَيُضْعِفُ
الْقُوَى، وَلَيْسَ لِذَلِكَ مُنْتَهَى.

Let him suffice himself with one wife and not take liberties in seeking excessive enjoyment with many women, for that scatters the heart, weakens one’s strength, and has no end point.

كَانَ بَعْضُ السَّلَفِ يَقُولُ لِنَفْسِهِ: «مَا هَهُنَا إِلَّا هَذِهِ الْكِسْرَةُ وَهَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةُ، فَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَاصْبِرِي، أَوْ
«فَمَوْتِي».

Some of the early righteous used to say to themselves: “Here there is nothing but this piece of bread and this woman. So if you wish, be patient; or else, die.”

وَكَانَ خَلْقٌ كَثِيرٌ يَتَأَسَّفُونَ فِي حَالِ الْكِبَرِ عَلَى تَضْيِيعِ مَوْسِمِ الشَّبَابِ، وَيَبْكُونَ عَلَى التَّقْرِيطِ فِيهِ. فَلْيَبْطُلِ
الْقِيَامُ مِمَّنْ سَيَقْعُدُ، وَلْيُكْثِرِ الصِّيَامُ مِمَّنْ سَيَعْجِزُ.

Many people, when they grew old, would regret having squandered the season of youth and weep over their negligence in it. So let the one who will one day be unable to stand (in prayer) lengthen his standing now, and let the one who will later be too weak to fast, fast much now.

وَالنَّاسُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: مَنْ ابْتَكَرَ عُمُرَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَدَامَ عَلَيْهِ فَذَلِكَ مِنَ الْفَائِزِينَ، وَمَنْ خَلَطَ وَقَصَرَ فَذَلِكَ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ، وَمَنْ صَاحَبَ التَّقْرِيطَ وَالْمَعَاصِيَ فَذَلِكَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ.

People are of three types:

The one who begins his life early with goodness and continues upon it – such a one is among the successful.

The one who mixes good with shortcomings – he is among the losers.

And the one who lives in constant negligence and sin – he is among the destroyed.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الشَّابُّ فِي أَيِّ مَقَامٍ هُوَ، فَلَيْسَ لِمَقَامِهِ مِثْلٌ، وَلْيَتَلَمَّحْ شَرَفَ بِضَاعَتِهِ وَتَمَنَّهَا الْمُسْتَوْفَى. فَالصَّبْرُ الصَّبْرُ؛ فَإِنَّ السَّاعِيَ يُصْبِرُ عَنِ النِّكَاحِ مَعَ كَوْنِهِ شَابًّا شَدِيدَ الشَّبَقِ، فَيُقَالُ لَهُ: أَحْسَنْتَ. فَلْيَصْبِرِ الشَّابُّ الصَّبْرُ (هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ لِيُقَالَ لَهُ:).

So let the young man look: in which rank is he? For there is no other rank like that of his age. Let him contemplate the nobility of the “merchandise” he holds (his youth) and the full price that will be paid for it. So, patience – patience! For a striving person may endure remaining unmarried, despite being a young man of strong desire, and it is said to him: “You have done well.” So let the young man be patient so that it may be said to him: “*This is your Day.*”

وَلْيَحْذَرُ زَلَّهُ فِي الشَّبَابِ؛ فَإِنَّهَا كَعَيْبٍ قَبِيحٍ فِي سِلْعَةٍ مُسْتَحْسَنَةٍ.

And let him beware of his slips in youth, for they are like an ugly flaw in an otherwise beautiful commodity.

وَمَنْ زَلَّ فِي الشَّبَابِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيْنَ لَدَتْهَا! وَهَلْ بَقِيَ إِلَّا حَسْرَتُهَا الدَّائِمَةُ الَّتِي كَلَّمَا خَطَرَتْ لَهُ تَأَلَّمَ، فَصَارَ يَذْكُرُهَا عُقُوبَةً، وَمَنْ خَرَقَ ثَوْبَ النُّقَى بَاعَهُ بِالْخَلْقِ وَالْمَكْسُورِ.

Whoever has slipped in his youth, let him ask: where is the pleasure now? What remains of it except a constant regret – each time it crosses his mind he feels pain, so that its very remembrance becomes a punishment. Whoever tears the garment of piety sells it for something worn and broken.

قَالَ الْجُنَيْدُ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ -: «لَوْ أَقْبَلَ عَبْدٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ لَحِظَةً، كَانَ الَّذِي فَاتَهُ أَكْثَرَ
«مِمَّا حَصَلَ لَهُ».

Al-Junayd – may Allah have mercy on him – said: “If a servant were to turn to Allah for a thousand years, then turn away from Him for a single moment, what he missed in that moment would be greater than all that he had gained.”

«وَكَانَ بَعْضُ السَّلَفِ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ - يَقُولُ: «وَدِدْتُ لَوْ أَنَّ يَدَيَّ قُطِعَتَا، وَغُفِرَ لِي عَنْ ذُنُوبِ الشَّبَابِ».

Some of the early righteous used to say: “I wish that both my hands were cut off and that the sins of my youth be forgiven for me.”

قَالَ الْمُصَنِّفُ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ -: قُلْتُ يَوْمًا فِي الْوَعْظِ: «أَيُّهَا الشَّابُّ، أَنْتَ فِي بَادِيَةٍ، وَمَعَكَ جَوَاهِرُ نَفِيسَةٌ،
وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تُقَدِّمَ بِهَا عَلَى بَلَدِ الْجَزَاءِ، فَاحْذَرْ أَنْ يُلَاقِيَنَّكَ غَرِيرٌ مِنَ الْهَوَى فَيَشْتَرِي مَا مَعَكَ بِأَدْوَنِ تَمَنٍّ،
فَتَقْدَمَ الْبَلَدَ فَتَرَى الرَّابِحِينَ، فَتَفْقَعَ أَسْفًا، وَتَبْكِي لَهْفًا، وَتَقُولُ: (يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ
«اللَّهِ)، هَيْهَاتَ أَنْ يَرُدَّ الْأَسْفُ مَا سَلَفَ».

The author – may Allah have mercy on him – said: One day I said in an admonition: “O young man, you are in a wilderness and you carry with you precious jewels, and you want to arrive with them at the land of recompense. Beware lest some naive deceiver from your own desires meet you and buy what you have for a paltry price. Then you reach that land and see the successful ones, and you burst with regret, weeping in anguish, and say: ‘Alas for me, for what I neglected in regard to Allah!’ [39:56]. Far, far indeed – regret does not bring back what has passed.”

وَمِمَّا قُلْنَاهُ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ فِي هَذَا الْمَعْنَى:

أَمَّا الشَّبَابُ فَظُلْمَةٌ لِلْمُهْتَدِي ... وَبِهِ ضَلَالُ الْجَاهِلِ الْمُتَمَرِّدِ

لَيْسَ الَّذِي تَرَكَ الذُّنُوبَ مَشِيبًا ... كَالنَّارِكِ لَهَا وَقْتٌ شَعْرٍ أَسْوَدِ

فَأَفْرَحُ إِذَا جَاهَدْتَ نَفْسَكَ صَابِرًا ... يَا صَاحِ صَبْحٍ فِي اللَّهْوِ يَا نَارَ اخْمِيدِي
إِغْنَمِ مَدِيحَةَ يُوسُفَ فِي صَبْرِهِ ... وَاحْذَرِ تَعَجُّلَ آدَمَ فِي الْمُنْفِسِ
لَوْلَا اجْتِبَاهُ لَكَانَ شَيْنًا فَاصِحًّا ... يَعْصِي فَيَأْلُكَ مِنْ حَزِينٍ مُكْمَدِ
فَأَقْمَعُهُ بِالصَّبْرِ الْجَمِيلِ وَدُمَّ عَلَى ... الصَّوْمِ الطَّوِيلِ فَإِنَّهُ كَالْمَبْرَدِ
وَاعْضُضْ جُفُونَكَ عَنْ حَرَامٍ وَافْتَنِّعْ ... بِحَلَالٍ مَا حَصَلَّتْ تُحْمَدُ فِي عَدِ
وَدَعِ الصَّبَا فَاللَّهُ يَحْمَدُ صَابِرًا ... يَا نَفْسُ هَذَا مَوْسِمٌ فَتَزَوِّدِي
الصَّبْرُ عَنْ شَهَوَاتِ نَفْسِكَ تَوْبَةً ... فَأَثْبُتْ وَغَالِطُ شَهْوَةٍ لَمْ تَرُقْدِ
تُحْمَدُ هُنَاكَ إِذَا هَوَاكَ تَرَكَتَهُ ... يَا سَعْدُ تَسْعُدُ بِالْمَعَاشِ الْأَرْعَدِ
إِنْ شِئْتَ نَيْلَ الْفَخْرِ فَاصْبِرْ وَاصْطَبِرْ ... إِنَّ الْمَفَاخِرَ فِي الطَّرِيقِ الْأَبْعَدِ

And from the poetry I composed on this theme:

As for youth – it is a darkness even for one rightly guided,
and by it the ignorant, defiant one goes astray.

The one who abandons sins when his hair is white
is not like the one who leaves them when his hair is black.

So rejoice if you strive against your soul with patience;
O friend, cry out at vain play – “O fire, be extinguished!”

Profit from the praise of Yūsuf for his patience,
and beware of Adam’s haste in that which led to corruption.

Were it not that Allah chose him, it would have been a disgrace that exposed him –
he disobeyed, so ah! what grief and sorrow!

So repress (the nafs) with beautiful patience, and keep to prolonged fasting,
for it is like a file (that wears down) (desire).

Lower your eyelids from the unlawful and be content
with the lawful that you have attained – you will be praised tomorrow.

Leave childish ways, for Allah praises the one who is patient;
O soul, this is your season, so stock up (on provisions).

To be patient in resisting your soul's desires is itself repentance;
so remain firm and outwit a desire that will not sleep.

You will be praised there (in the Hereafter) when you abandon your caprice;
O Sa'd, you will find bliss in a more delightful life.

If you wish to attain true glory, be patient – and be even more patient,
for the true glories lie on the farthest part of the road.

Chapter 3: Regarding the Third Season of Life

هَذَا الزَّمَانُ فِيهِ بَقِيَّةٌ مِنَ الشَّبَابِ، وَلِلنَّفْسِ فِيهِ مَيْلٌ إِلَى الشَّهَوَاتِ، وَفِيهِ جِهَادٌ حَسَنٌ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ طَاقَاتُ الشَّيْبِ تَزَعُ وَتُزَعِّجُ عَنْ مَهَادِ اللّهُوِ.

This (third) period of life still contains something of youth, and the soul still inclines in it toward desires. There is still good striving to be done, although the streaks of grey hair now shake a person and disturb him from the bedding of play and amusement.

وَلْيُكْتَفِ الْكَهْلُ بِنُورِ الشَّيْبِ الَّذِي أَضَاءَ لَهُ سَبِيلَ الرَّحِيلِ، وَلْيُعَامِلْ بِالْبَقِيَّةِ الْمَائِلَةِ إِلَى الْهَوَى فَيَرْبَحْ، لَكِنْ لَا كَرِبِحِ الشَّبَابِ.

Let the middle-aged person be content with the light of grey hair that has illuminated for him the path of departure (from this world). Let him deal well with the remaining part of his soul that still inclines to desire, so that he may profit – though not with the same profit as a young man.

قَالَ الشَّافِعِيُّ - رَحِمَهُ اللهُ - فِيمَنْ أَتَى امْرَأَةً وَهِيَ حَائِضٌ: «إِنْ كَانَ فِي أَوَّلِ الْحَيْضِ فَعَلَيْهِ دِينَارٌ، وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي آخِرِهِ فَنِصْفُ دِينَارٍ».

al-Shāfi‘ī – may Allah have mercy on him – said, regarding a man who has intercourse with a woman while she is menstruating: “If it is at the beginning of her menses, he owes a dīnār (in charity); and if it is at the end of it, then half a dīnār.”

وَهَذَا لِأَنَّهُ فِي أَوَّلِهِ قَرِيبُ الْعَهْدِ بِالْجِمَاعِ فَلَا يُعَدَّرُ، وَفِي آخِرِهِ قَدْ بَعُدَ عَهْدُهُ بِهِ فَخُفِّفَ عَنْهُ.

This is because, at the start of her menses, he is still close to the time when intercourse was permissible, so he is not excused; whereas toward the end, a longer time has passed since it was allowed, so the ruling is lightened for him.

قَالَ الْمُصَنِّفُ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ -: وَمِمَّا قُلْتُهُ فِي هَذَا الْمَعْنَى

قَدْ رَأَيْتُ الْمَشِيبَ نُورًا تَبَدَّى ... نَوَّرَ الطَّرِيقَ ثُمَّ مَا إِنَّ تَعَدَّى

إِنَّ نُورَ الشَّبَابِ عَارِيَةٌ عِنْدِي ... فَجَاءَ الْمُعِيرُ حَتَّى اسْتَرَدَّ

جَاءَنِي نَاصِحٌ أَتَانِي نَذِيرٌ ... بَبَيَاضٍ أَرَانِي الْأَمْرَ جِدًّا

دَعُ حَدِيثَ الصَّبَا وَرَامَةَ وَالْعَوُ ... رِ وَنَجْدًا يَا سَعْدُ وَاسْعَ لِسُعْدَى

ثُمَّ خَلَّ حَدِيثَ لَيْلَى وَنُعمَ ... وَمَسَاعٍ وَكُلُّنَّمْ دَعُ دَعْدَا

وَتَزَوَّدَ زَادَ الشِّتَاءِ فَقَدْ فَآ ... تَ رَبِيعُ ضَيَّعَتْ فِيهِ الْوَرْدَا

قِفْ عَلَى الْبَابِ سَائِلًا عَفْوَ مَوْلَى ... لِكَ فَمَا إِنْ يَزَالُ يَرْحَمُ عَبْدًا

The author – may Allah have mercy on him – said: And of what I have composed on this meaning:

I have seen grey hair as a light that has appeared,
lighting up the paths and not going beyond (its task).

The light of youth, in my view, was but a loan –
then the lender came and took it back.

A sincere adviser came to me, a warner approached me,
in the form of whiteness (of hair) that showed me the matter is serious.

Leave talk of youth, and of Rāmah, and the lowland,
and of Najd, O Sa‘d – and strive for true felicity.

Then leave talk of Laylā and Nu‘m,
and of Masā‘ and Kulthūm – leave aside “Da‘d”!

Take provisions for the winter (of old age), for the spring has passed,
and in that spring you wasted your roses.

Stand at the door, asking the pardon of your Master,
for He does not cease to have mercy on a servant.

:- وَلَهُ أَيْضًا - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ

عَشْتِ وَظِلُّ الشَّبَابِ مَمْدُودٌ ... وَالْغُصْنُ يَهْتَزُّ وَالصَّبَا رُودٌ

فَأَقْبَلَ الشَّيْبُ فِي عَسَاكِرِهِ ... أُسُودُ غَابٍ فَعَابَتِ السُّودُ

كُنْتُ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ فَاشْرَقَ فَجْرُ الْمَشِيِّ ... بِ فَاللَّيْلُ عَنْهُ مَطْرُودٌ

قَدْ مَيَّلَ الْغُصْنُ فِي نَضَارَتِهِ ... لَكِنَّهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ دَوَتْ عُدُ

وَجَاءَكَ الْمَوْتُ فَانْتَظِرْهُ وَذَا الْعُمُ ... رُ يُسِيرُ وَالسَّيْرُ مَعْدُودٌ

لَا بَدَّ مِنْ مُزْعَجٍ عَلَى غَرْرِ ... هَيْهَاتَ بَابُ الْبُقَاءِ مَسْدُودٌ

تَرَحَّلَ عَنْ كُلِّ مَا تُخَافُهُ ... وَيَأْكُلُ الْجِسْمَ فِي الْبَلَى الدُّودُ

نَعَمْ وَيَمْحُو النَّرَى مَحَاسِنَهُ ... لَا تُعْرِفُ الْبَيْضُ فِيهِ وَالسُّودُ

وَالسَّمْعُ قَدْ صُمَّ عَنْ مَوَاعِظِهِ ... وَالْجَهْلُ فَأَسُّ وَالْقَلْبُ جُلْمُودٌ

He also said – may Allah have mercy on him:

You lived while the shade of youth was outstretched,
the branch swaying and the east wind cool.

Then old age advanced with its armies –
like lions of the forest, and the dark (manes) disappeared.

You were in darkness, then the dawn of grey hair shone,
and the night (of heedlessness) was driven away from it.

The branch (of your youth) swayed in its freshness,
but after that, its stem withered.

Death has come to you, so wait for it, and this life
is brief, and the journey is numbered (in steps).

There must be a disturber who comes suddenly;
alas, the gate of permanence in this world is shut.

Depart from everything you will leave behind –
for worms will eat the body in decay.

Yes, and the soil will erase its beauty,
no white nor black will be distinguished therein.

The ear has become deaf to admonitions,
ignorance is an axe, and the heart is a rock.

:- وَقَالَ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ

يَا هَلْ يَعُودُ مَا مَضَى لِي رَجْعًا ... أَمْ هَلْ أَرَى نُجُومَهُ لَوَامِعًا

إِذَا تَذَكَّرْتُ زَمَانًا مَاضِيًا ... جَدَّدَ حُزْنَا انْقِضَ الْأَضَالِعَا

مَا لِلشُّمُوسِ قَدْ بَدَتْ أَوْافِلًا ... وَطَالَمَا رَأَيْتُهَا طَوَالِعَا

كَانَ الصَّبَا لَهْوًا عَجِيبًا حَالَهُ ... يَا سُرْعَانَ مَا فُطِمْتُ رَاضِعَا

بَادِرُ بَدَا الْبَاقِي وَأَدْرِكُ مَا مَضَى ... لَعَلَّ مَا بَيَقَى يَكُونُ نَافِعَا

يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَى مَا قَدْ مَضَى ... وَذَهَبَتْ أَيَّامُهُ ضَوَائِعَا

He also said – may Allah have mercy on him:

Will what has passed ever return to me again?

Will I ever see its stars shining once more?

Whenever I recall a time now gone,

it renews a sorrow that crushes the ribs.

What has happened to the suns that now set and disappear,
when so often I saw them rising bright?

Childhood was a wondrous game in its state –
how quickly I was weaned from its milk!

Hasten now with what remains, and try to make up for what has passed,
perhaps what remains may still bring benefit.

Alas for me over what has gone,
and whose days have slipped away in waste.

Chapter 4: Regarding the Fourth Season of Life

قَدْ يَكُونُ فِي أَوَّلِ الشَّيْخُوخَةِ بَقِيَّةُ هَوَى، فَيُنَابِ الشَّيْخُ عَلَى قَدْرِ صَبْرِهِ، وَكُلَّمَا قَوِيَ الْكِبَرُ ضَعُفَتْ
الشَّهْوَةُ فَلَا يُرَادُ الذَّنْبُ، كَمَا قَالَ الشَّاعِرُ:

تَارَكَكَ الذَّنْبُ فَتَارَكَتَهُ ... بِالْفِعْلِ وَالشَّهْوَةُ فِي الْقَلْبِ

فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى تَرْكِهِ ... لَا لَكَ فِي تَرْكِكَ لِلذَّنْبِ

There may remain some desire at the beginning of old age, so the elderly person is rewarded in proportion to his patience. But as old age grows stronger, desire grows weaker, and sin is not as sought – just as the poet said:

Sin has left you, so you left it in practice,
while desire for it still rests in the heart.

So praise is due to God for its being left,
not to you for your “leaving” the sin.

فَإِذَا تَعَمَّدَ الشَّيْخُ ذَنْبًا فَهُوَ مُرَاعِمٌ، إِذِ الشَّهْوَةُ الطَّالِبَةُ قَدْ خَسِرَتْ؛ وَلِهَذَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
«وَسَلَّمَ -: «أَبْغَضُ الْخَلْقِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى شَيْخٌ زَانٍ».

ومنهم من يُفْصِدُ الْمُرَاغِمَةَ فَيَلْبَسُ الشَّيْخُ الْخَاتَمَ الذَّهَبَ.

So if an old man deliberately commits a sin, then he is (truly) defiant, for the driving desire has already receded. For this reason the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The most hated of creation to Allah Most High is an old man who commits fornication.”

And some intend this very defiance: the old man will put on a gold ring (knowing its prohibition for men).

فَالْوَيْلُ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَنْهَهُ شَيْبُهُ عَنْ عَيْبِهِ؛ مَا ذَاكَ إِلَّا لِخَلَلٍ فِي إِيمَانِهِ، وَقَدْ يَقُولُ الشَّيْخُ الْعَالِمُ: عِلْمِي يَدْفَعُ عَنِّي! وَيَنْسَى أَنَّ عِلْمَهُ حُجَّةٌ عَلَيْهِ.

Woe, then, to the one whose grey hair does not restrain him from his flaws – that is only due to some defect in his faith. A learned shaykh might even say, “My knowledge will protect me!” forgetting that his knowledge is actually a proof against him.

وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ بَعْضَ مَشَايخِنَا فِي الْمَنَامِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ: مَا فَعَلَ اللَّهُ بِكَ؟ فَقَالَ: غَفَرَ لِي وَهُوَ مُعْرِضٌ عَنِّي. فَقِيلَ لَهُ: غَفَرَ لَكَ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْكَ!! فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ، وَعَنْ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ لَمْ يَعْمَلُوا بِعِلْمِهِمْ.

One of our shaykhs was seen in a dream. He was asked, “What did Allah do with you?” He replied, “He forgave me, yet He turned away from me.” They said, “He forgave you and turned away from you?!” He said, “Yes – and from a group of scholars who did not act upon their knowledge.”

وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ بَعْضَ مَشَايخِنَا – وَكَانَ مُفَرِّطًا – وَهُوَ عُرْيَانٌ، وَقَدْ تَعَلَّقَ بِنَدْيِهِ ثَلَاثُ كِلَابٍ صِغَارٍ – وَالْجَرُّ مِنْهَا – يَمُصُّ نَدْيَهُ.

I myself saw one of our shaykhs – and he had been negligent – (in a dream) while he was naked, and three little dogs (puppies) were hanging onto his breast, suckling from it.

وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ فِي الْمَنَامِ يَحْيَى بْنَ أَكْثَمٍ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ: مَا فَعَلَ اللَّهُ بِكَ؟ فَقَالَ: قَالَ لِي: يَا شَيْخَ السُّوءِ. (وَكَذَلِكَ (مَنْصُورُ بْنُ عَمَّارٍ).

Yahya ibn Aktham was seen in a dream and was asked, “What did Allah do with you?” He said, “He said to me: ‘O evil shaykh!’” (And likewise it was said regarding Manṣūr ibn ‘Ammār.)

قَالَ الْفُضَيْلُ بْنُ عِيَّاضٍ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ -: «يُغْفَرُ لِلْجَاهِلِ سَبْعُونَ ذَنْبًا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُغْفَرَ لِلْعَالِمِ ذَنْبٌ وَاحِدٌ». قَالَ اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ -: (قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād – may Allah have mercy on him – said: “Seventy sins of an ignorant person will be forgiven before one sin of a scholar is forgiven.” Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says: “Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?” [39:9]

«قَالَ أَبُو الدَّرْدَاءِ: «وَيْلٌ لِمَنْ عَمِلَ وَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَرَّةً، وَوَيْلٌ لِمَنْ يَعْلَمُ وَلَا يَعْمَلُ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ

Abū al-Dardā’ said: “Woe one time to the one who acts without knowing; and woe seven times to the one who knows but does not act.”

وَقَالَ: «أَخَوْفُ مَا أَخَافُ أَنْ يُقَالَ لِي: أَعْلِمْتَ؟ فَإِنْ قُلْتُ: لَا، فَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ، وَإِنْ قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ، لَمْ تَبْقَ آيَةٌ

He also said: “What I fear most is that it will be said to me, ‘Did you know?’ If I say, ‘No,’ (that is a lie, for) I did know. And if I say, ‘Yes,’ then there will not remain a single verse of command or prohibition except that it will rebuke me.”

قَالَ الْمُصَنِّفُ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى -: وَمِمَّا قُلْتُهُ فِي ذِكْرِ الشَّيْبِ

عَرَّرْنَا بِالشَّبَابِ الْمُسْتَعَارِ ... أَقْفْنَا بِالمَشْيِبِ مِنَ الخُمَارِ

أَنَارَ لَنَا المَشْيِبُ سَبِيلَ رُشْدٍ ... وَنَدِمْنَا عَلَى خَلْعِ العِدَارِ

فَوَا أَسْفَى عَلَى عُمْرٍ تَوَلَّتْ ... لَدَاذْنُهُ وَأَبَقَتْ قُبْحَ عَارِ

فَنَحْنُ الْيَوْمَ تَبْكِي مَا فَعَلْنَا ... فَكَيْفَ وَكَمْ وَقَعْنَا فِي خَسَارِ

فَلَيْسَ لَنَا سِوَى حَزَنِ وَخَوْفٍ ... وَنَذْبٍ فِي خُضُوعِ وَانكِسَارِ

تَعَالَوْا نَبُكْ مَا قَدْ كَانَ مِنَّا ... وَقُومُوا فِي الدِّيَاجِي بِاعْتِدَارِ

وَمَا شَيْءٌ لِمَحْوِ الذَّنْبِ أَوْلَى ... مِنَ الْأَحْزَانِ وَالذَّمْعِ الْغِزَارِ
سَتَدْرِي يَا مُفْرَطُ صِدْقِ قَوْلِي ... إِذَا غُوِدِرْتَ فِي بَطْنِ الصَّحَارِ
وَخَلَّكَ الرَّفِيقُ أُسِيرَ قَفْرِ ... تُرَافِقُكَ النَّدَامَةُ فِي الْفِقَارِ
وَقَدْ فَازُوا بِمَا حَازُوا جَمِيعًا ... وَأَنْتَ رَهِينُ ذُلٍّ وَافْتِقَارِ
فَخُذْ حَذْرًا وَزَادًا تَكْتَفِيهِ ... لِرِحْلَتِهِ إِلَى تِلْكَ الدِّيَارِ
تَمَتَّعْ مِنْ شَمِيمِ عَرَارِ نَجْدٍ ... فَمَا بَعْدَ الْعَشِيَّةِ مِنْ عَرَارِ

The author – may Allah have mercy on him – said: And of what I have composed concerning grey hair:

We were deceived by borrowed youth,
and sobered up from our intoxication by grey hair.

Grey hair has lit up for us the path of right guidance,
and we regret having cast off the bridle (of restraint).

Alas for a lifetime whose pleasures have gone,
leaving only the ugliness of its shame.

Today we weep over what we have done –
so what then, and how much more, loss have we fallen into!

We now have nothing but sorrow and fear,
and lamentation in humility and brokenness.

Come, let us weep over what has issued from us,
and stand in the darkness of night offering apologies.

Nothing erases sin more fittingly
than deep sorrows and flowing tears.

O neglectful one, you will truly know the truth of my words
when you are left in the belly of the desert (grave).

Your companions abandon you, a prisoner in a desolate place,
with only remorse accompanying you in the wasteland.

They have all won what they strove for and gathered,
while you remain hostage to humiliation and need.

So take caution and provisions sufficient for you
for that journey to those (other) lands.

Enjoy the fragrance of the wild arar of Najd,
for after this evening there will be no more arar (no more chance).

وَقَالَ أَيضًا:

أَشْيَبٌ وَعَيْبٌ إِنَّ ذَا لَبَغِيضٌ ... سَوَادُ صِحَافٍ وَالْغَدَائِرُ بِيضٌ

مُكَاتِرَةٌ لِلَّهِو وَالضَّعْفُ زَائِدٌ ... وَجِسْمُ الْكَبِيرِ ذَائِبٌ وَمَهِيضٌ

إِذَا هَمَّ مَشِيْبٌ بِذَنْبٍ فَإِنَّهُ بَغِيضٌ ... وَمَا اللَّهْوُ فِيهِ بَغِيضٌ

مَرِيضٌ مِنَ الضَّعْفِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ الْقُوَى ... وَحَقٌّ لِهَذَا أَنْ يُقَالَ مَرِيضٌ

He also said:

Grey-haired and (still) flawed – such a one is truly repulsive;
his dishes are black, yet his locks of hair are white.

Still competing in play and amusement while weakness increases,
and the body of the elder is wasting away and frail.

When grey hair contemplates a sin, it is detestable indeed –
for such a one, the very *play* (itself) is detestable.

Sick from the weakness that has taken away his strength –
and it is only right that such a one be called “sick.”

Chapter 5: Regarding the Fifth Season of Life

«فِي الْحَدِيثِ: «ابْنُ ثَمَانِينَ أَسِيرُ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ».

In the ḥadīth: “One who reaches eighty years is (like) the prisoner of Allah on earth.”

وَلَمْ يَبْقَ فِي زَمَانِ الْهَرَمِ إِلَّا تَذَارُكُ مَا مَضَى، وَالِاسْتِغْفَارُ، وَالِدُعَاءُ، وَعَمَلٌ مَا يُمَكِّنُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ،
اِغْتِنَامًا لِلسَّاعَاتِ، وَالتَّأَهُبُ لِلرَّحِيلِ.

In the time of decrepitude (very old age), nothing remains except making up for what has passed, seeking forgiveness, making du‘ā’, and doing whatever good is still possible – seizing the remaining hours and preparing for departure.

وَكَانَ سَرِيًّا لَا يَنَامُ إِلَّا غَلْبَةً، وَدَخَلُوا عَلَى الْجُنَيْدِ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى - وَهُوَ فِي الْمَوْتِ، وَهُوَ يَرْكَعُ
وَيَسْجُدُ، فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَثْنِيَ رِجْلَهُ فِي صَلَاتِهِ، فَمَا أَمَكَّنَهُ لِخُرُوجِ الرُّوحِ مِنْهَا. فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: مَا هَذَا؟ فَقَالَ:
هَذِهِ نِعْمٌ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

Sari (al-Saqatī) would not sleep except when sleep overpowered him. They entered upon al-Junayd – may Allah Most High have mercy on him – while he was in the throes of death and he was still bowing and prostrating. He tried to fold his leg in prayer, but was unable to because the soul was leaving it. A man said, “What is this?” He replied, “These are the greatest of Allah’s blessings.”

وَكَانَ عَامِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ قَيْسٍ يُصَلِّي كُلَّ يَوْمٍ أَلْفَ رَكْعَةٍ، وَلَقِيَهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ: أَكَلَّمَكَ كَلِمَةً؟ فَقَالَ: أَمْسِكِ
الشَّمْسَ حَتَّى أَكَلَّمَكَ.

‘Amir ibn ‘Abd Qays used to pray a thousand rak‘ahs every day. A man met him and said, “May I speak a word to you?” He replied, “Hold back the sun, then I will speak to you.”

«وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ سَأَلَهُ: «عَجَّلْ فَإِنِّي مُبَادِرٌ». قِيلَ: وَمَا الَّذِي تُبَادِرُ؟ قَالَ: «خُرُوجَ رُوحِي».

And a man said (to someone who was delaying), “Hurry up, for I am in haste.” He was asked, “What are you hastening toward?” He replied, “The departure of my soul.”

«وَقَالَ عُثْمَانُ الْبَاقِلَانِيُّ: «أَبْغَضُ الْأَشْيَاءِ إِلَيَّ وَقْتُ إِفْطَارِي، لِأَنِّي أَشْتَعِلُ بِالْأَكْلِ عَنِ الذِّكْرِ».

‘Uthmān al-Bāqallānī said: “The most disliked time to me is the time of breaking my fast, because I am busied then with eating away from remembrance (of Allah).”

وَكَانَ دَاوُدُ الطَّائِي - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ - يَشْرَبُ الْفَتِيَتَ وَلَا يَأْكُلُ الْخُبْزَ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ فِي ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَ: «بَيْنَ أَكْلِ
«الْخُبْزِ وَشُرْبِ الْفَتِيَتِ قِرَاءَةُ خَمْسِينَ آيَةً».

Dāwūd al-Tāī - may Allah have mercy on him - used to drink soaked crumbs (a mush of bread in water) and not eat regular bread. He was asked about that and said: “Between eating bread and drinking (this) mush is the time in which fifty verses of the Qur’an can be recited.”

وَدَخَلَ قَوْمٌ عَلَى عَابِدٍ، فَقَالُوا: لَعَلَّنَا شَغَلْنَاكَ. قَالَ: صَدَقْتُمْ، كُنْتُ أَقْرَأُ فَقَطَعْتُمُونِي

Some people entered upon a worshipper and said, “Perhaps we have busied you (from something).” He replied: “You speak the truth - I was reciting (Qur’an) and you cut me off.”

وَمَنْ نَظَرَ فِي شَرَفِ الْعُمُرِ اغْتَنَّمَهُ. وَفِي الصَّحِيحِ: «مَنْ قَالَ: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، غُرِسَتْ لَهُ نَخْلَةٌ فِي
«الْجَنَّةِ».

Whoever reflects on the nobility of life (and its worth) will make the most of it. In the authentic ḥadīth: “Whoever says: *Subḥānallāhi wa bi ḥamdih* (Glory be to Allah and praise is His), a date-palm is planted for him in Paradise.”

وَقَالَ الْحَسَنُ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ -: «الْجَنَّةُ قِيَعَانٌ، وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ تَغْرِسُ، فَرُبَّمَا فَتَرُوا، فَيُقَالُ: مَا لَكُمْ فَتَرْتُمْ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: فَتَرَ صَاحِبُنَا». فَقَالَ الْحَسَنُ: «أَمِدُّوهُمْ رَحِمَكُمُ اللَّهُ».

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī – may Allah have mercy on him – said: “Paradise is (like) open land, and the angels are planting (trees in it). Sometimes they slacken, and it is said to them: ‘What is wrong that you have slackened?’ They reply: ‘Our companion (whose deeds we plant by) has slackened.’” So al-Ḥasan said: “Support them, may Allah have mercy on you (by remembering Allah more).”

وَقَدْ رَأَيْنَا جَمَاعَةً مِنَ الْأَشْيَاحِ يَرْتَاخُونَ إِلَى حُضُورِ النَّاسِ عِنْدَهُمْ، وَسَمَاعِ الْأَحَادِيثِ الَّتِي تَضُرُّ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ، فَمَضَى زَمَانُهُمْ فِي غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ، وَلَوْ فَهَمُوا لَكَانَتْ تَسْبِيحَةً أَصْلَحَ. وَهَذَا لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا مِنَ الْعَقْلَةِ عَنِ الْأَجْرَةِ؛ لِأَنَّهُ بِتَسْبِيحَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ يُحْصَلُ الثَّوَابُ عَلَى مَا ذَكَرْنَا، وَالْأَحَادِيثُ الدُّنْيَوِيَّةُ تُؤْذِي وَلَا تَنْفَعُ.

We have seen a number of elders who find comfort in people’s presence around them and in listening to worldly talk that harms and does not benefit. Thus their time passes in nothing of worth; yet if they understood, a single *tasbīḥa* (saying “subḥānallāh”) would be better. This only happens due to heedlessness of the Hereafter, for with one *tasbīḥa* a person attains reward as we have mentioned, while worldly conversations bring harm and no benefit.

كَانَ أَبُو مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيُّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - يَصُومُ فِي الْحَرِّ، فَيُقَالُ لَهُ: أَنْتَ شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ. فَيَقُولُ: إِنِّي أُعِدُّهُ لِيَوْمٍ طَوِيلٍ.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī – may Allah be pleased with him – used to fast in the intense heat. It was said to him: “You are an old man.” He replied: “I am preparing it (this fast) for a very long day.”

«وَقِيلَ لِعَابِدٍ: «ارْفُقْ بِنَفْسِكَ». قَالَ: «الرَّفْقُ أَطْلُبُ».

It was said to a worshipper: “Be gentle with yourself.” He replied: “That gentleness (of the Hereafter) is precisely what I seek.”

جَاءَ بَعْضُ رُفَقَاءِ سَرِيِّ السَّقَطِيِّ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى - إِلَيْهِ يَزُورُهُ، فَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهُ جَمَاعَةً، فَقَالَ: «يَا سَرِيُّ! صِرْتَ مَنَاحًا لِلْبَطَالِينِ»، ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ وَلَمْ يَقْعُدْ.

One of the companions of Sari al-Saqatī – may Allah Most High have mercy on him – came to visit him and found a group of people sitting with him. He said: “O Sari! You have become a resting-place for the idle,” then he left and did not sit.

Conclusion

وَمَنْ عَرَفَ شَرَفَ الْعُمْرِ وَقِيَمَتَهُ لَمْ يُفْرِطْ فِي لَحْظَةٍ مِنْهُ.

Whoever knows the nobility and value of his lifespan will not waste even a single moment of it.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الشَّابُّ فِي حِرَاسَةِ بَضَاعَتِهِ. وَلْيَحْتَفِظِ الْكَهْلُ بِقَدْرِ اسْتِطَاعَتِهِ. وَلْيَتَزَوَّدِ الشَّيْخُ لِلْحَاقِ جَمَاعَتِهِ. وَلْيَنْظُرِ الْهَرَمُ أَنْ يُؤْخَذَ مِنْ سَاعَتِهِ.

So let the young man carefully guard his “merchandise” (his time and energy). Let the man in midlife preserve what he can. Let the elder take provisions to catch up with his group (who went ahead), and let the very old one realize that he may be taken at any hour.

نَفَعَنَا اللَّهُ وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِعُلُومِنَا، وَلَا سَلَبْنَا فَوَائِدَ فَهُومِنَا، (وَمَنَعَنَا بِأَسْمَاعِنَا وَأَبْصَارِنَا، وَلَا يَجْعَلْ عَلْمَنَا حُجَّةً عَلَيْنَا)، إِنَّهُ وَلِيُّ ذَلِكَ وَالْقَادِرُ عَلَيْهِ، وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

May Allah benefit us and you by our knowledge, and not strip us of the fruits of our understanding. (And may He allow us to enjoy our hearing and our sight, and not make our knowledge a proof against us.) Indeed, He is the Protector of that and fully capable of it.

And may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and his companions.

وَكَانَ الْفَرَاغُ مِنْ كَتْبِهَا يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ الْمُبَارَكِ، تَاسِعَ عَشَرَ جُمَادَى الْآخِرَةِ، سَنَةَ ثَمَانٍ وَتِسْعِينَ وَآلْفٍ. وَحَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ، وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، وَعَلَى صَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ، آمِينَ، آمِينَ.

The completion of writing was on the blessed Thursday, the nineteenth of Jumādā al-Ākhirah, in the year one thousand and ninety-eight. Allah is sufficient for us, and what

an excellent Disposer of affairs. There is no power and no might except through Allah, the Most High, the Magnificent. And may Allah's blessings be upon our master Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers, and upon his companions, and may He grant them peace. Āmīn, Āmīn.