

Benefits & Principles
From
The Forty Ahadeeth
Of
Imam
Nawawi

Hadeeth No. 31

Have Zuhd (abstinence) of the World

Translated & Compiled

By

Abbas Abu Yahya

In the name of Allaah the Most the Most Merciful

Praise be to Allaah, Lord of all that exists. Here we present various benefits and principles attached to the Ahadeeth from one of the most famous collections of Ahadeeth amongst the works of the scholars. 'Araba'een an-Nawawi – Forty Hadeeth Nawawi.

In these translations you will find benefits from various different explanations of this famous compilation. Also, you will find various other topics ranging across the different sciences of Islaam adhering to authenticity and referencing to its sources.

Written by the one in need of his Creator's forgiveness

Abbas Abu Yahya¹

¹ May Allaah reward with goodness all those who participated in preparing this work.

Hadeeth No.31 – Have Zuhd of the World

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Hadeeth No.31 – Have Zuhd of the World

The Hadeeth

عن أبي العباس سهل بن سعد الساعدي رضي الله عنه قال : جاء رجل إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال : يا رسول الله دلني على عمل إذا عملته أحبني الله وأحبنى الناس فقال : " ازهد في الدنيا يحبك الله وازهد فيما عند الناس يحبك الناس " .

حديث حسن رواه ابن ماجه وغيره بأسانيد حسنه

From Sahl bin Saad Al-Sa'adi *-Radi Allaahu anhu-*, who said:

A man came to the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* and said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, direct me to an act which, if I do it, [will cause] Allaah to love me and people to love me.' He *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said:

'Have Zuhd (abstinence) of the world and Allaah will love you, and abstain from what people possess and people will love you.'

[a Hasan Hadeeth collected by Ibn Majah and others with good chains of authorities.]

Benefits

1- The Status of the Hadeeth

Shaykh Albaani declared the hadeeth to be Saheeh in 'al-Jamia as-Sagheer' No.922 & in 'Silsilah as-Saheehah' No. 944

2 - From the Definitions of Zuhd (Abstention of the Dunyaa)

a) Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymeeyah (d.728 A.H.) -*Rahimullaah*- said:

'The Zuhd which is legislated, is leaving off a desire for that thing which does not bring about any benefit in the Hereafter, and those things which are the extra permissible things but are not used to aid a person for obedience to Allaah.'²

b) AbdurRahmaan bin Ali bin Muhammad Ibn Jawzi (d. 598 A.H.) said:

'Zuhd is not just leaving wealth or giving wealth to show that you are generous and strong, nor to get people's hearts to incline to you, on the contrary, Zuhd is leaving worldly things due to having the knowledge that it is insignificant in relation to the immeasurable value of the Hereafter.'³

c) Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Abee Bakr Ibn Qayyim aj-Jawzeeyah (d.751 A.H.) -*Rahimullaah*- said:

² [Taken from: 'Majmoo' al-Fatawa' 10/21]

³ [Taken from: 'Mukhtasir Minhaj al-Qasideen' p.324]

‘Indeed Zuhd is the taking of the land of this Dunyaa and taking it to the places/levels of the Hereafter.’

He continues:

‘The intent of Zuhd is not rejection of having possessions, since in fact Sulayman and Dawood *-alayhim as-Salaam-* were the ones who had the most Zuhd from amongst the people at their time and they had been endowed with wealth, land and women.

Our Prophet *-sallAllahu alayhi wa sallam-* had definitely the most Zuhd above all mankind, and he had nine wives. ‘Ali bin Abi Taalib, AbdurRahman bin ‘Awf, Zubayr and Uthmaan *-Radi Allahu anhum-* were from those who had Zuhd even though they had wealth, and there were many others like them.’⁴

d) Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Abee Bakr Ibn Qayyim aj-Jawzeeyah (d.751 A.H.) *-Rahimullaah-* also said:

‘Having Zuhd of something as is mentioned in the Arabic language – which is the language of Islaam – is turning away from the Dunyaa, and regarding it as being despised and being something of insignificance, and doing without it with something better than it.’⁵

⁴ [Taken from ‘Madarij as-Salikeen’ by Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 A.H.) Volume 2/13-14]]

⁵ [Taken from ‘Madarij as-Salikeen’ by Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 A.H.) 284]

Some of The Best Definitions

e) Al-Hasan said:

‘Having Zuhd of the Dunyaa is not prohibiting oneself from that which is Halaal, nor by wasting money, but it is knowing that what is in Allaah’s Hand is more trustworthy than one’s own-self and what he has in his hand (i.e. possesses).’⁶

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d.795) -*Rahimullaah*- said:

‘Abu Sulayman said: ‘Do not testify for anyone that he has Zuhd, since indeed Zuhd is in the heart.’⁷

The Praise of Zuhd and the Dispraise of Desiring the Dunyaa

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d.795) -*Rahimullaah*- said:

‘This hadeeth includes two great pieces of advice:

one of which is: Zuhd in the Dunyaa, and this necessitates that Allaah –Azza wa Jal – loves His slave.

The Second: Abstaining from trying to attain what people possess, then this necessitates the love of the people.

⁶ [Taken from ‘Madarij as-Salikeen’ by Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 A.H.) 285]

⁷ [Taken from: ‘Tayseer Rab al-Bariya fee Sharh al-Arba’een an-Nawawi’ p.436]

As for Zuhd in the Duniyaa, then there are many indications in the Qur'aan which praise Zuhd, and likewise a dispraise of desiring the Duniyaa, like Allaah Ta'ala said:

بَلْ تُؤْتُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا () وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى

<<But you prefer the worldly life, While the Hereafter is better and more enduring. >>⁸

like Allaah Ta'ala said:

تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ

<< Some Muslims desire the commodities of this world, but Allaah desires [for you] the Hereafter. >>⁹

Allaah Ta'ala said in the story of Qaroon:

<<So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, 'Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.' But those who had been given knowledge said, 'Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the

⁸ [al-'Ala:16-17]

⁹ [Anfal:67]

patient.’ >> [al-Qasas:79-80] to His saying: <<That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous. >>¹⁰

Allaah Ta’ala said:

وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ

<< And they rejoice in the worldly life, while the worldly life is not, compared to the Hereafter, except [brief] enjoyment. >>¹¹

Allaah Ta’ala said:

قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا

<<Say, The enjoyment of this world is little, and the Hereafter is better for he who fears Allaah. And injustice will not be done to you, [even] as much as a thread [inside a date seed].’>>¹²

There are very many Ahadeeth regarding the dispraise of the Dunyaa and its insignificance to Allaah –Azza wa Jal.

In Saheeh Muslim from Jabir *-Radi Allaahu anhu-* from the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-*

‘That the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* passed by the market place and the people were surrounding him, and he passed by a dead young Billy goat

¹⁰ [al-Qasas: 83]

¹¹ [Radd:26]

¹² [4:77]

which had small ears. He *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* took the Billy goat by its ear and said: ‘Which one of you would like to have this for a Dirham?’

They said: ‘We do not want it at all, what can we do with it?’

He *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said: ‘Do you wish you owned it?’

They said: ‘We swear by Allaah, even if it was alive we would not want it because it has small ears, so why would we want it dead?’

The Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said:

‘I swear by Allaah the Dunyaa is more insignificant to Allaah than this is to you.’¹³

From al-Mustawrad al-Fahree from the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* who said:

‘The Dunyaa compared to the Hereafter is nothing except like if one of you were to put your finger in the open sea, and see what it comes out with it.’¹⁴

Tirmidhi collected from the hadeeth of Sahl bin Sa’ad *-Radi Allaahu anhu-* from the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* who said:

‘If the Dunyaa had a value to Allaah that of the wing of a mosquito, then Allaah would not have given a Kaffir even a drink of water. [i.e. that it has no value to Allaah]’

¹³ [Muslim]

¹⁴ [Muslim]

Tirmidhi¹⁵ authenticated it.¹⁶

Zuhd of the Mubtadia (Innovators)

Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymeeyah (d.728 A.H.) -*Rahimullaah*- said:

‘The Straight path in Zuhd, worship and al-Wara’ (being cautious about the Halaal & Haram) is leaving off Haram matters, desires and limiting oneself in worship.

So, adhering to the Sunnah is the means of protection from the evil of one’s own self and the evil of the Shaytaan, and protection is not in the way of the innovated paths. Since those who follow these innovated paths will definitely fall into sin and hardships, even if they were to just follow an interpretation, they will most definitely follow desires, and this is why these people were labeled the people of Bida’ and people of desires.

As for the path of the Sunnah then that is knowledge, justice and guidance, as for Bida’ then it has ignorance and oppression and it is following presumption and that what their souls desired.’¹⁷

¹⁵ [Saheeh al-Jamia as-Sagheer No. 5168]

¹⁶ [Taken from: ‘Jamia’ al-Uloom wal-Hikam’ – by Ibn Rajab (d.795 A.H.) 2/133 p.434]

¹⁷ [Taken from: ‘Majmoo’ al-Fatawa’ 10/p.568]

Some of What the Muftadaia' say Regarding Zuhd

- 1- Junaid said: 'I love that a believer does not busy his heart with these three things, otherwise his condition will change: seeking provision, seeking hadeeth and marriage. I love for a Soofi that he does not read nor write since it is more important for his concern.'¹⁸
- 2- Abu Sulayman ad-Daraani said: 'When a man seeks hadeeth, or travels in search of livelihood, or marries then he has indeed become dependent upon the Dunyaa.'¹⁹

The response to them is:

1- Seeking livelihood

From al-Maqdaam bin Ma'ad Yakrib *-Rahiallaahu anhu-* from the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* who said:

'No one ever ate food better than that which he earned with his own hands. Indeed, the Prophet of Allaah, Dawood *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* used to eat from what his hands had earned.'²⁰

2- Marriage

From Ibn Mas'ood *-Rahiallaahu anhu-* that the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said:

¹⁸ [Qoot al-Qalob 3/135]

¹⁹ [al-Fatohaat al-Makkeeyah 1/37]

²⁰ [Collected by Bukhari]

‘O you youth, whoever amongst you can marry then he should marry, and whoever cannot then he should fast, since it is a protection for him.’²¹

3- Seeking Knowledge

The Prophet *-sallAllahu alayhi wa sallam-* said:

‘Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.’^{22,23}

‘Have Zuhd of the world’

Shaykh Salih bin Fawzan bin Abdullaah al-Fawzan said:

‘Regarding the saying of the Prophet *-sallAllahu alayhi wa sallam-*: ‘Have Zuhd of the world’ Means leaving it, i.e. abstaining from this Dunyaa, and the meaning is not to leave that which you are in need of, and that which you cannot do without from seeking provision and Halaal earnings since going without that is prohibited. However, the ‘abstaining’ here is going without that of which you have no need of.

Zuhd is not abstaining from the permissible things which you yourself are in need of and likewise what your children need. Indeed, Zuhd is abstaining from excessiveness of the Dunyaa of which you have no need of. The

²¹ [Collected by Bukhari]

²² [‘Saheeh al-Jamia as-Sagheer’ No. 3808]

²³ [Taken from: ‘Tayseer Rab al-Bariya fee Sharh al-Arba’een an-Nawawi’ p.436]

Muslim seeks his needs but he does not severely long for worldly things whilst he has what is sufficient for him.

Hence this is the principle: ‘Have Zuhd (abstinence) of the world and Allaah will love you’ means if you abstain from excessiveness in the Dunyaa then Allaah will love you, so here this is approval of having Zuhd in that which a person has no need of.’

In this hadeeth there is an evidence that Allaah loves His believing slaves, here in this hadeeth it describes Allaah with having Love, just like Allaah hates and dislikes. The Love of Allaah is not like the love of the creation, and His hate and His dislike is not like the hate and dislike of that of the creation, rather this is specific to Allaah –Subhanahu wa Ta’ala – just like the rest of His Attributes.’²⁴

Shaykh Muhammed bin Salih al-Uthaymeen (d.1421 A.H.) said:

‘The Creator’s –Azza wa Jal – Love for us is not the same as our love for Him, on the contrary it is greater and greater, but it is real.

As for those people who negate Allaah’s Attributes, then they judge Allaah according to their intellects and they say: ‘whatever agrees with our

²⁴ [Taken from ‘al-Minhatul ar-Rabbaneeyah fee Sharh al-Arbaeen an-Nawaweeyah’ by Salih al-Fawzan p.244-245]

intellects regarding the Sifaat (Attributes) of Allaah then we accept that, and whatever opposes our intellects then we negate that.'

Likewise, for that which does not agree with their intellect nor does it oppose their intellect then most of those people negate that Attribute of Allaah, and they say: It is not possible for us to affirm a Characteristic of Allaah until the intellect testifies to affirming it, and some of them remained neutral regarding this point.

Those who are the closest to al-Wara' (being cautious) are those who remained neutral, even though they think that they remained cautious they do not follow the path of al-Wara (being cautious) since the [correct] path of being cautious is that we affirm completely what Allaah Ta'ala affirmed for His-Self, whether our intellects understand it or not. Also, that we negate completely what Allaah Ta'ala negated for His-Self, whether our intellects understand it or not. As for that which cannot be comprehended by our intellects regarding the Attributes of Allaah Ta'ala whether, affirming them or negating them, then here we affirm what Allaah Ta'ala affirmed for Him-Self, and negate that what Allaah negated for Him-Self.

Therefore, Allaah's Love for the worshippers of Allaah is established and proven in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and the Ijma' (Consensus) of the Salaf as-Salih.

Allaah Ta’ala said:

فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

<< Allaah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who
will love Him >>²⁵

Allaah -Azza wa Jal- said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

<< Indeed, Allaah loves the righteous [who fear Him]. >>²⁶

Allaah said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا

<< Indeed, Allaah loves those who fight in His cause in a row >>²⁷

There are a number a number of Ayaat similar to these.

The people who follow their intellects – those who judge Allaah by their own intellects – say: ‘Love of Allaah means being firm upon good actions.’

We say: ‘Does not being firm upon good actions necessitate having love for that action? Because it cannot be possible that a person is rewarded for an action except that he loves to carry out that action. It is not possible for the intellect to judge that a person can be rewarded for an action and

²⁵ [al-Maidah:54]

²⁶ [Tawbah:4]

²⁷ [Saff:4]

he does not love to carry out that action, the intellect negates this, so if we refer to the intellect then the intellect becomes a proof against them.

Therefore, it is obligatory that we affirm this love without any intermediaries, so we say: this love is a real love.

If they reject this love and say that Allaah does not love, then they have belied the Qur'aan. This is why we say: As for the rejection of the reality of the Sifaat of Allaah, if it is a rejection like denial or discard then this is Kufr (disbelief). If it is a rejection by interpretation then this needs an explanation, which is:

1- If this interpretation is possible then he does not become a disbeliever, however, he has opposed the way of the Salaf whereby, from this respect he is a sinner and an innovator.

2- If this interpretation is not possible then it is never accepted from him.²⁸

Asking the people of knowledge

Shaykh Salih bin Fawzan bin Abdullaah al-Fawzan said:

'In this hadeeth it mentions that the matters of the Deen are to be asked to the people of knowledge. This man asked the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* about this matter he did not invent something from his own-self,

²⁸ [Taken from 'Sharh al-Arbaeen an-Nawawi' – Shaykh Muhammad bin Salih al-Uthaymeen p.348-349]

because whoever innovates in the Deen from himself then he becomes a Mubtadia' (innovator). If one tries to come closer to Allaah by something which the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* did not bring, thinking that it is a good action, then this is a Bida' and it is vile and rejected. As for matters of the Deen, then they are asked for from the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* and after him the scholars who are the inheritors of the Prophets, so you should not begin to do something in bringing yourself closer to Allaah by it, while you do not know is this action from the Deen or not?'²⁹

Pleasing the People

From Aeysha *-Rahiallaahu anha-* that the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said:

'Whoever pleases Allaah at the cost of the anger of the people, then Allaah will make the people sufficient for that person, and whoever angers Allaah at the cost of pleasing the people, then Allaah leaves him to the people.'³⁰

Shaykh Salih bin Fawzan bin Abdullaah al-Fawzan said:

²⁹ [Taken from 'al-Minhatul ar-Rabbaneeyah fee Sharh al-Arbaeen an-Nawaweeyah' by Salih al-Fawazan p. 245]

³⁰ [Silsilah Saheehah no.2311]

‘In this hadeeth there is an evidence that contentment of the people is a matter which is desired, as long as there is no sin in that or any evil.’³¹

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d.795) *-Rahimullaah-* said:

‘So, the intent of Zuhd in the Duniyaa is to free your heart from being busy with the Duniyaa, so that you can be free for what Allaah requests from you and to get to know Allaah, and come close to Him and to become familiar with Him and have the desire to meet Allaah. And these matters are not regarded as being from the Duniyaa, just like the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said: ‘What has been made beloved to me from your worldly things are women and perfume, and the comfort of my eyes has been placed in the prayer³².’³³

A brief summary from ‘Jamia al-Uloom’

‘What rectifies Zuhd are three things:

First: The Knowledge that the slave of Allaah whereby he knows that the Duniyaa is like a transitory shade, and like an imaginary guest, and this is like the saying of Allaah Ta’ala:

³¹ [Taken from ‘al-Minhatul ar-Rabbaneeyah fee Sharh al-Arbaeen an-Nawaweeyah’ by Salih al-Fawazan p.244]

³² [Nisa’ae/Musnad/Saheeh al-Jamia as-Sagheer – Saheeh no.319]

³³ [Taken from: ‘Jamia’ al-Uloom wal-Hikam’ – by Ibn Rajab (d.795 A.H.) 2/p.151]

كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ حُطَّامًا وَفِي
الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيٰةُ الدُّنْيَا اِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُوْرِ

<< like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. >>³⁴

Likewise, Allaah called this Dunyaa << the enjoyment of delusion.>> and Allaah prohibited being deceived by the Dunyaa, and He informed us about the evil end of those deceived ones, and He cautioned us from their ruin, and He criticized the person who is pleased with this Dunyaa, and finds tranquility with it.

Second: that the slave of Allaah has knowledge that behind this world is a place greater in status than this place, and it is clearly more important, and it is the place of eternity, so having Zuhd in this world is to perfect the want of that which is greater than this Dunyaa [i.e. the Hereafter].

Third: that the slave of Allaah has knowledge and truthful Eemaan that his Zuhd (Abstention) from the Dunyaa does not prevent him from anything

³⁴ [Hadeed:20]

that was written for him, in addition if he is greatly concerned with the Dunyaa, he will still only get that which was judged by Allaah for him. Therefore, when this becomes known with surety, then the person's heart freezes over, and he knows that which he is guaranteed from the Dunyaa will come to him.

So, these three matters make Zuhd of the Dunyaa easy for the slave of Allaah and establish his footing in Zuhd.'³⁵

Shaykh Salih bin AbdulAziz 'Ala-Shaykh said:

'So, in reality this is a great piece of advice and there is no doubt that we are in need of it, especially in these times were many of the creation have become attached to the Dunyaa with their hearts. When they look towards the Dunyaa they look at it with love for it, and this is from what weakens a person's heart from being attached to the Hereafter, and attachment to that which Allaah –Jala wa Ulaa- loves and is pleased with.'³⁶

All Praise belongs to Allaah, may His peace

³⁵ [Taken from: 'Nadratul Na'eem' 6/2219]

³⁶ [Taken from 'Sharh al-Arbaeen an-Nawawi' by Shaykh Salih 'Ala Shaykh p.227]

and blessings be upon our final
Prophet Muhammad, his
family, his companions
and all those who
follow his
guidance.