

CHAPTER THREE

CONTRIBUTIONS OF IBN ABĪ AL-DUNYĀ IN PURIFYING THE SOUL AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, purification of the soul was discussed in detail from the Islamic perspective. This chapter is mainly devoted to the discussion of purification of the soul at the individual level based on Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's works. The books that are related to the topic are first discussed to introduce the role of each book in purifying the soul at the individual level. Then, the content of each book is analyzed to present the contributions of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā through each book. This chapter discusses and analyzes thirty-six (36) books of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's works that are categorized into five fields: *ibādah* (worship), *al-munjiyāt* (the deliverers), *al-muhlikāt* (the fatalities), *al-munabbihāt* (the stimulants) and *al-mubashshirāt* (the glad tidings).

3.2 Purification Of Human Soul At The Individual Level

The importance of purifying one's soul is generally established in the previous chapter. However, the process of purification is greatly needed at both, the personal and the societal levels. Individuals are the basic foundation of any society. In fact, societies initially emerged through the process of groups of individuals meeting and living together. Therefore, in Islam, a great deal of concentration is devoted to the proper development of the human being. The more individuals are developed in a

purified and well-behaved manner, the healthier a society will be. Individuals and societies are interrelated and are both affected by each other. However, regarding the building of moral societies, individuals are the starting point. If we manage to build upright individuals, then we should produce upright societies and by extension form a virtuous Ummah. Therefore, it is crucial not to lessen or neglect the role of purification of the behaviour of individuals as long as it gives benefit back to the entire society. According to ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān Al-Ḥāzimī (2016), the very first steps for the progression of the Ummah after clarifying and establishing the concept of Islamic monotheism, is the proper development of the individual to reach the peak of human perfection. And by human perfection he means the body of values, manners, knowledge, skills, customs and traditions that do not contradict with the Islamic *sharī‘ah*.

At the individual level, purification of the soul is achieved when one embraces Islam (Malkāwī, 2009: 6) as clarified in the Qur’an: “For all you know, he might have grown in spirit” (Al-Qur’an. ‘Abasa 80:3)⁹⁴ and in: “Go to Pharaoh, for he has exceeded all bounds, and ask him, Do you want to purify yourself [of sin]?” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nāzi‘āt 79:17–18)⁹⁵. Purification of the soul at the individual level is also achieved through avoiding the entrance to Hell as stated in the Qur’an: “The most pious one will be spared this—who gives his wealth away as self-purification” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Layl 92:17–18)⁹⁶. Also, the soul itself could be purified when it is categorized as faithful, righteous and dutiful (Malkāwī, 2009: 6) as in: “Have you killed a pure soul for other than [having killed] a soul?”⁸² (Al-Qur’an. Al-Kahf 18:74)⁹⁷. And in: “But he said, ‘I am but a Mes-senger from your Lord, [come] to announce to you the gift of a pure son’” (Al-Qur’an. Maryam 19:19)⁹⁸. According to

⁸² Translation based on Al-Mehri, A. B. 2010. *The Qur’ān: With Surah Introductions and Appendices, Saheeh International*. United Kingdom: Birmingham.

Ibn Taymiyyah (1994: 37) the soul is purified when it leaves all that is forbidden by Allah (SWT) and does all that is prescribed upon it: “Prosperous are those who purify themselves, remember the name of their Lord, and pray” (The Qur’an. Al-A‘lā 87:14–15). Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyaynah and Qatadah commented on this saying that he has succeeded who purifies himself through obedience [to Allah] and performance of good deeds (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1994: 37–38).

In the Sunnah, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was reported (by Zayd Ibn Arqam) to say among his supplications to Allah (SWT): “O Allah! Grant me the sense of piety and purify my soul as You are the Best to purify it” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Thikr wa Al-Du‘ā’ wa Al-Tawbah wa Al-Istighfār: Bāb Al-Ta‘awūth min Al-‘Ajz wa Al-Kasal wa Ghayrihi: #2722). This Hadith refers to the importance of purification on the personal level as the Prophet (SAW) would have not included it among his supplications if it was not of a clear importance. Also, Ibn Qayyim (2003: 199) relates in his book *Al-Wābil Al-Ṣayyib* that Ḥuṣayn Ibn ‘Ubayd Al-Khuzā‘ī said that the Prophet (SAW) asked him one day: “How many Gods do you worship?” He said: “Seven; six in earth and one in the sky.” The Prophet (SAW) said: “Which one do you worship for your desires and fears?” He said: “The one in the sky.” The Prophet (SAW) said: “If you become a Muslim, I will teach you two useful phrases.” And when Ḥuṣayn embraced Islam he said to the Prophet: “O Messenger of Allah teach me the two phrases you promised me before.” Then the Prophet said: “Say: O Allah grant me true guidance and protect me from the evil of myself.”⁸³ This Hadith emphasizes the need to purify one’s soul and the importance of not neglecting purification. Although Ḥuṣayn had recently converted to Islam but still the Prophet (SAW) taught him to say those words to keep his attention targeted on the priority of purifying

⁸³ Hadith Gharib. Al-Tirmidhi. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhi*. Kitāb Abwab Al-Da‘awat: Bab 70: #3483.

himself constantly. That is, once purification is neglected, evil desires of the self arise and begin to have influence. Thus, these desires are a main cause for a person to go astray. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an: "If they do not respond to you, you will know that they follow only their own desires. Who is further astray than the one who follows his own desires with no guidance from God?" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:50)⁹⁹. Ibn Qayyim (2011: 125–126) comments on this saying that loyal individuals to Allah have agreed that the soul interrupts between the heart and the path to Allah (SWT), and that the path to Allah (SWT) may not be reached until after disagreeing with the *nafs*. Therefore, purification on the individual level is crucial and, indeed, it is a prolonged process that lasts the entire lifetime of a person.

The previous Hadith also points out to the status of the *nafs* and to the destructive results it causes if left without purification. It is important to know that all the spiritual diseases of the heart arise from the *nafs*. In fact, all the evil desires start out from the *nafs*, and then spread out to the other organs of the body starting with the heart. And the heart is considered spiritually to be the core and most important organ of the body. The Prophet (SAW) clearly points to this in the Hadith related by Al-Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr: "There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-‘Imān: Bāb Faḍl man Istabra’a li-Dīnihi: Al-Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr: #52). This Hadith also refers to the personal efforts that should be made in the process of purifying the heart. According to this, each individual is left with one out of two choices to make regarding the desires and evil thoughts of the *nafs*. He either purifies himself and monitors its desires or welcomes all that comes from the *nafs* and becomes a slave to it looking into life only through its desires: "for anyone who has transgressed, and preferred the

life of the world, Hell will be home; for anyone who feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained himself from base desires, Paradise will be home” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nāzi‘āt 79:37–41)¹⁰⁰. Due to this, a person is in constant struggle between the desires of the *nafs* and the obedience to Allah (SWT) by preventing the inclination of the *nafs*. Thus, either of the two paths will determine the final scene of each individual: “If that dying person is one of those who will be brought near to God, he will have rest, ease, and a Garden of Bliss...But if he is one of those who denied the truth and went astray, he will be welcomed with scalding water” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Wāqī‘ah 56:88–89/92–93). Though, it is worth noting that for each and every desire, Allah (SWT) has given people a pure path to fulfill it. This means desires are not meant to be a means of torture, but rather they are effective tools to regulate the lives of people in the best and most fruitful way. Hence, those pure paths should be followed by every individual in order to achieve purification of the *nafs*.

In another Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) said: “There are three things he who does them would have tasted the taste of faith: whoever worships Allah alone and that there is no Creator but Allah, and whoever gives his share of Zakah with content every year ... and who purifies himself⁸⁴. A man asked: ‘what is purification of the soul?’ The Prophet (SAW) replied: “It is to believe that Allah (SWT) is with him wherever he is”⁸⁵ (Hadith. Al-Tabarānī. *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Awsaṭ*: #555). This Hadith shows the significance of purifying oneself as it was linked with the oneness of Allah (SWT) and the Zakah which both are compulsory for the righteousness of one’s faith. Also, the description of purification provided by the Prophet (SAW) refers to the level of *Iḥsān*, which is the highest level of faith: “Excellence is to worship Allah as if you see Him, for although you do not see Him yet He certainly sees you” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb

⁸⁴ Related by ‘Abdullah Ibn Mu‘āwiyah Al-Ghādirī.

⁸⁵ Related by Jubayr. Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Al-Silsilah Al-Ṣaḥīḥah: #1046).

Al-‘Imān: Bāb Al-‘Imān ma huwa wa Bayanu Khiṣālīh: #9). This means that by reaching the level of *Iḥsān*, purification of the soul is attained at the individual level. It is worth noting as well, that purification of one’s soul starts with the first level of faith ‘*Islam*’ and continues to reach its peak at the level of *Iḥsān*.

Like faith, purification of the soul at the personal level consists of stages and the fineness of the purity of one’s *nafs* varies from one person to another. It also depends on many factors which were discussed in the previous chapter including the efforts made by each individual.

3.3 Contributions Of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā In The Purification Of The Human Soul At The Individual Level

Being a responsible man and a man of reform, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā focused on different aspects of purification in a Muslim’s life and, all in all, on the correct manner of developing human beings as well as different ways of doing so. Hence, due to the wide scope of purification and it being a fundamental and an ongoing process, a great portion of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā’s books dealt with the topic. Indeed, purification is related to almost every aspect of our lives. According to Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, purification “Deals with all the apparent and hidden aspects of our selves...our thoughts, our apprehensions, our inclinations, our movements, our eating and drinking, our engagements, entertainments and interests, the daily routines of our lives, in short, no department and nothing that touches our lives is outside the pale of purification” (quoted in; Picken, 2011: 151). Due to this, the number of books, which discuss the theme of purification at the individual level, outweigh those at the societal level. However, both levels were given good attention, since the first builds up to the second inevitably.

At the individual level, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā incorporated thirty-six (36) of his works that directly or indirectly deal with purification. In the previous chapter, the approaches and methods set by Islam for the purification of the soul were discussed. Furthermore, the selected books of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā for this study are categorized below according to the theory of ‘purification and beautification,’ which was discussed in the previous chapter. That is because this theory sums up the actual process for purifying each person’s soul. Purification, in essence, is all about getting rid of all that is evil and forbidden in order to acquire that which is virtuous. Ibn Taymiyyah alludes to this important point claiming that, “*Tazkiyah* is not only a process of purification but indeed, this purification requires that not only ‘good’ qualities are encouraged but also ‘bad’ characteristics are eliminated...the soul and deeds will not be purified until that which contradicts is removed” (quoted in; Picken, 2011: 150). Furthermore, this ‘purification and beautification’ process needs a number of tools in order to be successful. In this study, the tools that were introduced by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā through his books are categorized into five main categories: *‘ibādah* (worship), *al-munjiyāt* (the deliverers), *al-muhlikāt* (the fatalities), *al-munabbihāt* (the stimulants) and *al-mubashshirāt* (the glad tidings). Each section consists of several titles from Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā’s books that are discussed and studied below. Thus, the methodologies used in studying these books are descriptive and inductive. The given data is studied and analyzed to deduce basic generalizations regarding the efforts made by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in the field of purifying the soul at the individual level.

3.3.1 Purification Of The Soul Through Worship (‘*Ibādah*)

Worship is the first and most important tool that helps in the purification of an individual’s soul. As Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an: “I created jinn and mankind

only to worship Me” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Dhāriyāt 51:56)¹⁰¹. Purification of the soul is, as well, considered a main and crucial aim for which religious duties are intended. Thus, this supreme aim is reflected in each and every worship Muslims perform. For example, the prayers, which form one of the five pillars of Islam and holds a very sensitive and important status among the other religious duties is considered an essential tool that helps in the purification of the soul: “Keep up the prayer: prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behaviour” (Al-Qur’an. Al-‘Ankabūt: 29: 45)¹⁰². The Prophet (SAW) was told that a man used to pray all night, but he steals in the morning. The Prophet said: “What you said he is doing will prevent him from stealing”⁸⁶ (Hadith. Aḥmad. *Musnad Aḥmad*. Abū Hurayrah: #9777). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā wrote six books in the field of *‘ibādah*, which enhances the process of purifying the soul. These books are linked to purification of the soul at the individual level as follows:

3.3.1.1 *Al-Awliyā’* [the allies of Allah]

The allies of Allah are those who believe and are conscious of Him (SWT). They abstain from evil deeds and sins and do righteous deeds: “But for those who are on God’s side there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. For those who believe and are conscious of God” (Al-Qur’an. Yūnus 10:62–63)¹⁰³. Ibn Kathīr (2016: 2/382) comments on this ayah saying that Allah (SWT) tells us that His allies are those who believe and are conscious of Allah...so whosoever is conscious of Allah is an ally of Allah. And those will neither fear from the hardships of the Day of Judgment nor will they grieve what they left behind in life. ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd and Ibn ‘Abbās said

⁸⁶ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Shu‘ayb Al-Arnā’ūṭ: #9777).

that the allies of Allah are those who are when seen Allah is remembered (2016: 2/382).

Further, the above ayah continues to offer the allies more rewards in return for their obedience: “For them there is good news in this life and in the Hereafter- there is no changing the promises of God- that is truly the supreme triumph” (Al-Qur’an. Yūnus 10:64)¹⁰⁴. ‘Aṭā’ Ibn Yasār narrated from a man among the people of Egypt who said: I asked Abū Al-Dardā’ about this āyah 10:64: “For them is good news in the life of the present world.” He said: No one asked me about it since I asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW) about it, and he (SAW) said: “No one asked me about it other than you, since it was revealed. It is the righteous dream that the Muslims sees, or that is seen about him”⁸⁷ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Tafsīr Al-Qur’an: Bāb Qawluhu lahum Al-Bushrā fī Al-Ḥayāt Al-Dunyā: #2273).

Thus, the relation between being an ally to Allah (SWT) and the process of purification is very apparent. That is, if in exchange for being an ally, the individual enters paradise (let alone the other rewards), which is the utmost desire of every Muslim, then reaching to that level surely requires a great level of success in purifying the soul. Also, to become an ally one needs to be a believer and conscious of Allah which requires one to refrain from sins and perform righteous deeds, which is the main aim of soul purification. However, the strength of allegiance of an ally differs from one person to another according to the degree of faith and piety. Allah (SWT) says: “We gave the Scripture as a heritage to Our chosen servants: some of them wronged their own souls, some stayed between [right and wrong], and some, by God’s leave, were foremost in good deeds. That is the greatest favour” (Al-Qur’an. Fāṭir 35:32)¹⁰⁵. Ibn Taymiyah (1995: 10/6–7) comments on this saying that people are of

⁸⁷ Hadith Ḥasan (Al-Tirmidhī: #2273).

three degrees: those who wronged their own souls, those who are moderate and those who are foremost in good deeds. Thus those who wronged their own souls are the wrong doers by leaving out a religious duty commanded by Allah or doing sins. The moderate ones are those who do the obligatory duties and leave out the prohibited ones. Those who are foremost in good deeds perform their obligatory and non-obligatory duties and leave out prohibited and disliked deeds. Thus the last two types of people are those mentioned as Allies of Allah in the above ayah. However, those who wronged themselves will have some kind of allegiance according to their level of belief and piety. The differences of levels resemble the levels of faith mentioned earlier (Islām, Imān and Iḥsān) and it is attached to it. The higher the degree the more purified the soul will be.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā focuses on the allies of Allah (SWT) since this group of people was given the honour of being connected with Allah in the Qur'an (*Awliyā' Allah*). The book includes one hundred and twenty-one (121) narrations of Hadiths, anecdotes, aphorisms and stories from the Prophet's companions, their successors and later scholars along with ayahs of poetry. The book discusses Allah's preference for them, their characteristics, purified souls and every good manner they carry, which shows that reaching such a status needs a lot of soul purification.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts his book with a threat from Allah toward those who show hostility to His *Awliyā'*: "I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb Al-Tawāḍu' #6502). This Hadith clearly shows the status Allah Has given to the pious worshippers. In another Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) says that there is a group of special people whom Allah (SWT) prevents from going into trials and hardship, He grants them good health during their life and enters them into Paradise in good health

too (p. 10). Also, if one of them swears by Allah (SWT), Allah would answer their supplication (p. 13). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions many examples of pious worshipers throughout the book to allow the reader to have a closer look at this special group of Muslims (ex., pp. 24–26). He also mentions a number of their traits such as being steadfast (p. 26), pleased with Allah's decree (p. 25), humble (p. 25) and being far from ill manners and evil actions (p. 37).

3.3.1.2 *Al-Tahajjud Wa Qiyām Al-Layl* [to arise from night's sleep for prayer]

Tahajjud and *qiyām* are non-obligatory prayers that are usually performed at night starting from the period after *Al- 'Ishā'* prayer and until *Al-Fajr* prayer. It could be performed before sleeping (known as *qiyām*) or after sleeping and waking up before Fajr (known as *tahajjud*). Islam, in general, gave a special role to the daily prayers being the timings in which the Muslim connects with His Creator. However, the more distinctive element in 'night prayer' is that it is first performed as a personal choice of the Muslim individual (non-obligatory prayer) and second the sensitive timing it is performed in. While the night is meant for resting and sleeping, which is the usual case for people, some Muslims tend to wake up after midnight to worship Allah (SWT) and remember Him while others are sleeping. Waking up from a deep sleep to pray just for the sake of Allah (SWT) and far away from people's eyes needs a lot of sacrifice and requires truthful faithfulness. From that point appears the distinct role of night prayer in purification of the soul.

It is worth noting as well that sleeping is one of the many desires that need to be controlled, otherwise it may result in negative consequences. Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (2003) in his book '*Madārij Al-Sālikīn*' counts oversleeping as one of the

five most corruptive things for the heart (pp. 1/451–452). And the heart is known to be the most important and sensitive organ of all, as discussed earlier. He comments saying that oversleeping “deadens the heart, slacks the body, consumes time and causes a lot of negligence and laziness” (2003: 456). Therefore, acquiring the ability to sacrifice some night sleep only for the sake of Allah (SWT) prevents the individual from falling into the precautions of oversleeping and helps to obtain the demanded control over this desire. It is related by Ibn Mas‘ūd that Allah (SWT) laughs at two men. A man who got up on a cold night from his fluffy warm bed, made ablution and prayed. Then, Allah (SWT) says to His angels: “Why would my slave do that?” The angels reply: “Oh, our Lord he did so hoping in what you have and fearing from your punishment.” Then Allah (SWT) says: “Then, I grant him what he hoped for and give him refuge from what he feared”⁸⁸ (Hadith. Al-Ṭabarānī. *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabīr*. Ibn Mas‘ūd. #8532). This narration clearly shows the purification results of night prayer and that it may not be performed only with the inner will of the individual. Overall, when prayers are performed the right way, they result in positive results such as keeping the Muslims away from sins and bad deeds which pour directly into the pail of purification: “Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing”⁸⁹ (Al-Qur’an. Al-‘Ankabūt 29: 45)¹⁰⁶.

This book of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā includes three hundred and thirty-eight (338) narrations of Hadiths, anecdotes, aphorisms and stories from the Prophet’s companions, their successors and later scholars. All the narrations are related to the main theme of the book and are categorized into six headings: encouragement for *qiyām* and *tahajjud*, those who prayed at night with a single āyah repeatedly, traits of

⁸⁸ Hadith Hasan (Al-Haythamī. *Mujamma‘ Al-Zawā‘id*: #3540)

⁸⁹ Translation based on Al-Mehri, A. B. 2010. *The Qur’ān: With Surah Introductions and Appendices*, Saheeh International. United Kingdom: Birmingham.

those who perform *tahajjud*, the reward of *tahajjud*, *qiyām* at dawn and matters on *tahajjud* and *qiyām*.

Contributions of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in purifying the soul at the individual level through this book are clear and systematic. First, the book covers almost all the aspects related to night prayer, which leaves the reader with sufficient information about the topic. This paves the way for the next step after knowledge and understanding, being action. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts his book with several Hadiths and anecdotes that address the grace and importance of night prayer in this life and hereafter. This, in turn, will encourage the individual to perform this prayer. For example, in the first Hadith related by Bilāl Ibn Rabāḥ that the Prophet (SAW) said: “Hold fast to night prayer, for it is the practice of the righteous before you, and indeed it is a means of nearness to Allah, a means of prevention from sin, an expiation for bad deeds, and a barrier for the body against disease”⁹⁰ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. Kitāb Al-Da‘awāt ‘an Rasulillah: Bāb 102 fī Du‘ā’ Al-Nabī: #3549). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose to start his book with this great Hadith, which lists five magnificent benefits to the individual when performing night prayer. And each one of the five helps in the process of soul purification. Practicing what righteous people do gives the individual a sense of keeping pace on the right track and strengthens one’s steadiness. Being near to Allah (SWT) and getting His satisfaction is the utmost aim of every Muslim. Being prevented from sins and bad deeds is very crucial in purifying the soul as we mentioned earlier that purification is all about getting rid of the bad to acquire the good and be granted with Allah’s acceptance. The Hadith even mentions an earthly benefit of night prayer, which works as a barrier for the body against disease. Among those diseases would be laziness. These two diseases may never occur in an individual

⁹⁰ Hadith Ḍa‘īf (Ḍa‘īf Al-Tirmidhī: #3549).

who wakes up in the middle of the night while others are sleeping with full liveliness and willingness to receive Allah's acceptance. It has been mentioned earlier that these two diseases are amongst the things the Prophet (SAW) used to seek refuge from in Allah (SWT). It is the element of disobeying the desires of the soul and avoiding indulgence. As such, the individual will have more control over the desires of the nafs, and will have less trouble opposing it.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā goes on providing other narrations on the encouragement for night prayer. He provides narrations, which state that night prayer could be a reason for entering paradise peacefully (p. 30) and that it acts as a light in front of its performer on the Day of Judgment (p. 35). He states also that night prayer is amongst the most beloved deeds for Allah (p. 33) and that it is an honour for the believers (p. 360). All these narrations are apparently linked to the purification of the soul. Paradise may not be entered peacefully if the soul was not purified and filled with wrongdoings. For example, The Prophet (SAW) said: "Anyone who cuts off relationship from his nearest relatives will not enter Paradise" (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Ṣilah wa Al-Ādāb: Bāb Ṣilat Al-Raḥim wa Taḥrīmi Qaṭ'iatiḥā: #2556) and He said in another Hadith: "The person who goes about with calumnies will never enter paradise" (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-'Imān: Bāb Bayānu Ghilaḥi Taḥrīmi Al-Namīmah: Ḥuthayfah Ibn Al-Yamān #105). Similarly, Allah (SWT) would not like an action from His believers if it was not of any benefit to them.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā even mentions some ways to help the individual in waking up and performing night prayer (pp. 102–103). Good manners for night prayer such as raising and lowering one's voice while praying and specifying special clothing that is perfumed and neat is also stated in the book (pp. 96–102). Such things help in purifying the soul from the point of giving specialty and value to the performed

worship as it is only done for the One and only Creator of this world. Allah says: “Those who honour God’s rites show the piety of their hearts” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ḥajj 22:32)¹⁰⁷. Different supplications to Allah (*du‘ā*) that were said while performing night prayer by the Prophet (SAW), his companions and other righteous people are stated in the book as well (pp. 42–48). Supplications help directly in the process of purification as the Muslim asks Allah (SWT) knowing that it is only Him who Has the power to answer his supplications and so emptying the heart from any other partner except for Allah (SWT): The Prophet (SAW) said: “Supplication is itself the worship” (He then recited): “And your Lord said: Call on Me, I will answer you”⁹¹ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb al-Da‘awāt: Bāb faḍl Al-Du‘ā’: Al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr: #3372). Furthermore, the link between night prayer and supplication is very solid as the following Hadith explains, Jābir (RA) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying, “Every night there is a special time during which whatever a Muslim asks Allah of any good relating to this life or the Hereafter, it will be granted to him; and this moment comes every night” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb: Salāt Al-Musāfirīn wa Qisaruha: Bāb fī Al-Layl Sā‘ah Mustajabun fīha Al-Du‘ā’: #757).

On the other hand, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā quotes in his book Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī (p. 111) saying, “A slave would commit a sin and for which be deprived from night prayer.” This saying clearly suggests that sins could be one of the reasons that deprive the Muslim from performing night prayer and receiving its great benefits as way of punishment from Allah to the sinful individual. Interestingly, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā also states that performing the night prayer could be chosen as a good punishment for the sinful individual for his wrongdoings or dereliction in worship by way of self-accountability (p. 113). As Allah (SWT) says: “Keep up the prayer at both ends of the

⁹¹ Hadith Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ (*Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #3372).

day, and during parts of the night, for good things drive bad away- this is a reminder for those who are aware” (Al-Qur’an. Hūd 11:114)¹⁰⁸. Indeed, sins are amongst the things that weaken and hinder the process of purification.

Finally, the book mentions a very important point in encouraging the individual to keep steady on the path of purification despite whatever obstacles and hardships may occur. That is because rewards depend on the type of deed that is done. Allah (SWT) says: “You are only being repaid for what you have done” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ṭūr 52:16)¹⁰⁹. The book states that praying two *rak’ahs* in the middle of the darkness of the night will in return take away the solitude of the grave (p. 32). As for those who extend their standing in the night prayer, Allah (SWT) will lessen on them the terrors and burdens of the Day of Judgment (p. 33). Similarly, he states that lengthy standing up during night prayers lessens the agony of death (pp. 148–149).

3.3.1.3 *Al-Jū’* [hunger]

Eating is one of the most prominent desires of a human being. If eating is not kept under control and in moderation it may lead to many physical and spiritual complications. The desire for eating is indeed one that can cause destructive consequences. Ādam and Ḥawwā’ were sent out of paradise due to the desire of eating: “We said, Adam, live with your wife in this garden. Both of you eat freely there as you will, but do not go near this tree, or you will both become wrongdoers. But Satan made them slip, and removed them from the state they were in. We said, ‘Get out, all of you! You are each other’s enemy. On earth you will have a place to stay and livelihood for a time” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:35–36)¹¹⁰. According to Al-Imām Al-Ghazālī in his famous book *‘Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm Al-Dīn’* (2005: 964–9) the desire of overeating is the base of many other desires. That is because it is usually followed by

the desire of lust, which is followed by a strong desire for money to exceed the range of food and lust desires and so on it continues. However, if the individual takes control over his desire for eating until full and narrows the ways of Satan, his soul will comply with the obedience of Allah (SWT) and leave out the stray way.

Al-Miqdām Ibn Ma‘d reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say: “No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing” (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. Kitāb Al-Zuhud ‘an Rasulillah: Bāb mā Jā’a fī Karāhiyat Kathrat Al-Akl: #2380). In this Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) clearly directs Muslims to stay away from eating until full and if their desire for food was irresistible then they may increase the amount of food and drink but only by thirds and not to the fill. Furthermore, anything that brings pleasure and joy to people such as dressing well, eating delicious food, being social, etc... should be kept at a moderate level, not too little and not too much: “We have made you [believers] into a just community” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:143)¹¹¹. Al-Baghawī (1989: 158) quotes Al-Kalbī on this ayah saying that ‘a just community’ means, people of a balanced religion between extremism and negligence, because these two are disreputable in Islam. If things are not kept in moderation, then positive results turn into negative. For example, eating is meant to nurture the body and it also has the element of enjoyment but exceeding the moderate limit of it, by eating far too little or far too much, will be harmful. The Hadith also adds an important Islamic view to eating which is moderation in eating. In other words, not eating to the fill does not mean to eat less in a way that effects the energy and health of the body, which in turn effects other organs of the body. This meaning is the one that is meant by this book of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā.

Moreover, Abū Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to supplicate: “O Allah! I seek refuge in You from hunger; surely, it is the worst companion” (Sunan Abī Daūd: 17/1485). On the other hand the Prophet was reported to supplicate as well saying: “O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which is not beneficial, and from a heart which does not fear (You), and from a soul which does not feel content, and from prayer which is not answered” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 17: 1479). In the previous two Hadiths it is clearly shown that eating too much or too little is not what Islam calls for or encourages, because such two extremes do not achieve the goal of being balanced. Further, Al-Ghazālī (2005) lists ten benefits for moderate hunger: purity of the heart, sensitiveness of the heart, humility and modesty, a reminder of Allah’s punishment and test and a reminder of those in hardship, it breaks down the desire for sins and takes control over the soul inclined to evil, it lessens the period of sleeping and keeps it in moderation, it eases the perseverance in worship, helps to acquire health and drives away diseases, it requires less hoarding and it enables the Muslim to be selfless and to offer charity to orphans and poor people. Indeed all these ten advantages of moderate hunger are directly involved in the process of purifying the soul.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā incorporated the idea of moderate hunger in his book through many Hadiths and narrations. He loaded the book with many examples of people who favoured moderate hunger over eating until full, starting with the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW), the companions, the followers and righteous people. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā emphasized throughout his book on the actual intention of hunger and that it is not meant to torture oneself or to completely stop eating and leave the body weak and unwell. If so, then hunger will lead to negative results and will be a hinderance rather than a help in the process of purification. An unhealthy, weak body will not have the

energy or power to worship Allah and concentrate on the rituals. The body works like the paddles of a boat in the middle of a sea that may not reach its destination without good paddles. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā provides a narration in (pp. 93–94) in which he clearly states that in order to stay in hunger one has to eat moderately and not to the fill. In another place (p. 127), he mentions that Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī says that one should eat what is sufficient for his body to be healthy and strong. Also, in (pp. 132–133) he states a narration of two Muslim scholars who meet and one asks the other to describe him the food one eats that is not profusion. The scholar replies: it is the food that removes hunger and does not reach you to the fill.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts his book with a golden rule that represents the final word in dealing with hunger and fullness (pp. 23–24). A Prophetic rule that ensures the satisfaction of eating while preventing harm and diseases can be found in a narration by Al-Miqdām Ibn Ma'd that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "A human being has never filled any vessel which is worse than his own belly, a few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he insists, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink and one-third for breathing." This Hadith is actually based on a Qur'anic rule mentioned: "And eat and drink [as We have permitted] but do not be extravagant: God does not like extravagant people" (Al-Qur'an. Al-A'rāf 7:31)¹¹². In (p. 43) 'Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) narrated that "The first trial to occur in this nation after the passing of its Prophet (SAW) was people eating to their fill. For when people fill their stomachs, their bodies are fattened, their hearts are hardened, and their desires are uncontrollable." Thus, tough hearts and heavy bodies with concentration on worldly desires surely do not help in the process of purification. As previously mentioned, the importance of the heart is very significant in such a process. Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā states in his book a narration that is

described as a prescription for the success in this life and the afterlife. In (p. 56), ‘Abd Al-Wāḥid Ibn Ziyād narrates that he heard Mālik saying to Ḥawshab (a friend of Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī): “Do not sleep while you are full and leave the food while you still have a desire for it.” Ḥawshab said: “This is a prescription of doctors in the worldly life.” Muḥammad Ibn Wāsi‘ who was listening to them said: “Yes, and it is a prescription for the path of the people of afterlife.”

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā continues to illustrate on the topic through his book and pays careful attention to the negative results of overeating and bloatedness and the positive results of moderate hunger. This illustration is very important as it enables the reader to be well informed with the sequences of either paths he chooses to follow. Leaving these sequences unknown will push the person to try it on his own or merely neglect any results as they may seem vague and unclear. In such cases, the process of purification becomes unpaved and could be hindered. Among the negative sequences of fullness mentioned in the book are: laziness in performing prayers, It ruins the body, it causes diseases (p. 72), it deadens the heart as large amounts of water deadens the grass (p. 78), it causes the body to exceed all bounds (p. 75), it blocks well understanding and increases sleep (p. 102), it weakens the body (p. 102), it takes away wisdom (p. 78) and ruins many other virtues (p.103). On the contrary, moderate eating helps hasten to good deeds (p. 81), it softens the heart (p. 76, 89), it lightens the heart (p. 97), it promotes a healthy body and lessens sleep (p. 100), it is the zakah of the body by which it purifies and softens (p. 126), it teaches people to share and feel for the poor, orphaned, sick and hungry people (pp. 57–60) and it also teaches altruism (p. 82).

It is worth noting that Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī was quoted saying: “The Muslims used to feel ashamed to be called fatty!” (p. 72). More than that Salamah Ibn Sa‘īd

says: “The man used to bring reproach upon his fattiness as bringing reproach upon a sin he does” (p. 73). These two narrations show how they used to evaluate fatness for healthy people as it was considered a sign of over eating. Furthermore, it is mentioned in this book that ‘Umar (RA) once met his son who bought fresh meat and asked him, “What is this?” His son replied that he had a strong desire for it and bought it, but ‘Umar said: “Is it that whenever you have a desire for meat you buy it? It is a waste to eat whenever you felt you wanted to” (p. 123). In this narration ‘Umar points out the importance of having control over the desire for eating as saying yes to the desire each and every time will teach the person to get what he wants all the time and shall not resist objecting it. Due to this, the soul should be taught to have the ability to say no to its desires whenever it needs to do so (p. 84). As Al-Būṣīrī (the poet) wrote in his famous poetry *Al-Burdah*:

The soul is like a baby, leave it and it grows up
in love with suckling, but wean it, and it is weaned finally
And contradict both the soul and Satan, and disobey
And if they give true advice to you, still look skeptically⁹²

3.3.1.4 *Al-Riqqah Wa Al-Bukā'* [sensitivity of the heart and weeping]

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā devotes his effort to a very sensitive element that should be present in every Muslim. The softness or sensitivity of the heart, which, by nature, is usually followed by tears of the eyes, is of different levels according to the degree of purity of the heart. Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said:

“The people of Yemen have come to you and they are more gentle and soft-hearted. Belief is Yemenite and wisdom is Yemenite” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Maghāzī:

⁹² والنفس كالطفل إن تهمله شبَّ على حب الرضاع وإن تقطمه ينقطع
وخالف النفس والشيطان واعصهما وإن هما محضاك النصح فاتهم

Bāb Qudūm Al-‘Ashariyyīn wa Ahl Al-Yaman: #4390). Weeping usually results from a spiritual state following a certain form of worship, like praying, reciting the Qur’an or remembering Allah by oneself.

Soft heart and weeping has actually a good status in Islam. Allah (SWT) says: “They fall down on their faces, weeping, and [the Quran] increases their humility” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Isrā’ 17:109)¹¹³. He (SWT) also says in another place: “These were the prophets God blessed- from the seed of Adam, of those We carried in the Ark with Noah, from the seed of Abraham and Israel- and those We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Lord of Mercy were recited to them, they fell to their knees and wept” (Al-Qur’an. Maryam 19:58)¹¹⁴. The first āyah (17:107–109) describes those who were given knowledge that they fall down on their faces when the Qur’an is recited to them. The second āyah describes those who Allah has guided and chosen. Those who when the revelations of Allah were recited to them they fell down on their faces and wept. Thus, the two āyahs refer to weeping due to reciting or listening to the Qur’an, which softens their sensitive hearts and causes the effect. The two āyahs also describe those with sensitive hearts as: Those knowledgeable of Allah and those who Allah Has guided and chosen. This indicates that softhearted Muslims are those who have strong bonds with Allah’s words, commands and all that is related to Him and vice versa. Therefore, purification of the soul is directly linked to the sensitivity of the heart. The more purified one’s soul is, the more sensitive his heart is.

In the Sunnah, There are two Hadiths that reflect the great reward of having a soft heart and weeping. Ibn Abbās reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: “Two eyes will never be touched by the fire of Hell; An eye which weeps out of Fear of Allah and an eye which spends the night in guarding in the Cause of Allah” (Jāmi‘ Al-Tirmithī: 1639). Also, Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet

(SAW) said: “No man will enter Hell Fire who weeps for fear of Allah, Most High, until the milk goes back into the udders. And the dust (of Jihād) in the cause of Allah, and the smoke of Hell will never be combined”⁹³ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Faḍā’il Al-Jihād: Bāb mā jā’a fī Faḍl Al-Ghubār fī Sabīli-llah: #2311). Such a great reward surely indicates the importance of sensitivity of one’s heart and weeping. It shows part of the inner feelings a person goes through when reciting the Qur’an or performing any kind of religious worship. Such interaction is needed as it tightens the bond between the Muslim and his Creator (SWT) and helps in the process of purifying the soul.

It is clear from what has been introduced above that the sensitivity and softness of the heart are linked to the degree of one’s faith and to the strength of the relationship between the Muslim and Allah (SWT). On the contrary, harsh and rough hearts are usually closed toward any truth and are deprived from soft and gentle feelings towards themselves and others. Sin after sin accumulates in the heart until it is fully coated and it may not allow the entrance of good or truth until that coat is removed: “No indeed! Their hearts are encrusted with what they have done” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Muṭaffifīn 83:14)¹¹⁵; “As for those who disbelieve, it makes no difference whether you warn them or not: they will not believe. God has sealed their hearts and their ears” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2: 6–7)¹¹⁶. Beyond that, hearts could turn from being alive into being inanimate things or even worse if they continue to deny the truth and Allah’s commands as in the āyah: “Even after that, your hearts became as hard as rocks, or even harder for there are rocks from which streams spring out, and some from which water comes when they split open, and others which fall down in

⁹³ Hadith Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2311)

awe of God” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:74)¹¹⁷. Hence, there could never be a better likening for the harshness of some hearts than that in the previous āyah.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gathers narrations of people who showed a high level of sensitivity and softness of heart with lots of weeping. He starts his book with ‘weeping out of fear from Allah and its reward’ and ends with examples from those who wept out of fear from Allah (SWT). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā successfully incorporated the contents of this book with the purification of the soul. He arranged the subtopics throughout the book starting with the main and most important type of weeping, which is weeping out of fear from Allah. This kind of fear grants the heart a great deal of sensitivity and softness. It also allows the soul to accept the good and reject the bad because it fears Allah (SWT) and obeys all that He commands. And in fact, this lies in the heart of the process of purification.

The first Hadith in this book is very rewarding for those who wept out of their fear of Allah. The same Hadith with slight differences in wording is narrated also by Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “A man who wept out of the fear of Allah shall not enter the Fire until the milk returns to the udder; and dust in the cause of Allah and the smoke of Hell shall not come together” (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. Kitāb: Faḍā’il Al-Jihād: Bāb mā jā’a fī Faḍl Al-Ghubār fī Sabīli-llah: #2311). Then, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā continues to list other rewards of fearing Allah and weeping for that. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā narrates in more than one place that those who cry out of the fear of Allah are granted mercy on the Day of Judgment (pp. 48–49, 54). Weeping could be out of fear of committing sins or due to the strong desire to enter paradise (pp. 49, 57). Mālik Ibn Dinār narrated that weeping due to committing a sin wipes out sins like the wind, which brings down the dried leaves of a tree (pp. 50–51).

On the contrary, if a person suffers from the harshness of his heart, he is directed to rub the head of an orphan, feed the poor and sit among those who remember Allah constantly (p. 62). Also, people who are the most soft hearted are those with the least sins (p. 75). In other words, committing fewer sins softens the heart and vice versa (p. 145). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā moves further to give numerous examples of pious people who linked an earthly thing with that of the afterlife (pp. 63–71). This helped to keep them in continuous remembrance of Allah and of the Day of Judgment and caused them to burst into tears time after time. This technique is actually the Prophetic way to keep remembering the afterlife: Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was passing through the bazaar with his Companions on his both sides, when he saw a dead skinny lamb. He held its ear and said: “Who of you would like to have it for a dirham?” They replied, “We do not like to get it for nothing, and what shall we do with it?” Then he (SAW) asked: “Would you like to have it for nothing?” They replied, “Had it been alive, it would have been defective because it is skinny; but when dead it is of no use.” The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Truly, the world is more contemptible to Allah than this (dead lamb) is to you” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Zuhd wa Al-Raqā’iq: Bāb Hadathana Qutaybah Ibn Sa’īd #2957).

Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions various situation and religious duties, where the Prophet (SAW), the Companions and pious Muslims have wept from. For example, weeping while reciting the Qur’an (pp. 81–94), weeping after listening to a sermon (pp. 97–116), weeping while praying (pp. 117–120), weeping during the call for prayer (pp. 123–124) and weeping while making an ablution (pp. 127–128). Then he ends the book with examples of other Prophets’ (SAW) weeping and the weeping of angels.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā involves in this book a very important topic that is directly connected to the purification of the soul. That is to hide weeping from the others to avoid hypocrisy. Weeping in front of others and showing a great deal of fearfulness of Allah may sometimes lead the person to admire his doing and count himself a pious person better than others. This does not necessarily mean that every weeping is considered as showing off. It depends on the intention of the person. Every religious act must be purely devoted for the sake of Allah (SWT) alone without involving anyone or anything else. Otherwise, this act may not be accepted by Allah (SWT) and instead considered a sin in the record of that person. Abū Hurayrah said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say: “The first of people against whom judgment will be pronounced on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who died a martyr. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognise them. [The Almighty] will say: ‘And what did you do about them?’ He will say: ‘I fought for you until I died a martyr.’ ‘He will say: You have lied- you did but fight that it might be said [of you]: He is courageous. And so it was said.’ Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. [Another] will be a man who has studied [religious] knowledge and has taught it and who used to recite the Quran. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognise them. [The Almighty] will say: ‘And what did you do about them?’ He will say: ‘I studied [religious] knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Qur’an for Your sake.’ He will say: ‘You have lied- you did but study [religious] knowledge that it might be said [of you]: He is learned. And you recited the Qur’an that it might be said [of you]: He is a reciter. And so it was said.’ Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. [Another] will be a man whom Allah had made rich and to whom He had given all kinds of wealth. He will be brought and

Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognise them. [The Almighty] will say: ‘And what did you do about them? He will say: I left no path [untrodden] in which You like money to be spent without spending in it for Your sake.’ He will say: ‘You have lied- you did but do so that it might be said [of you]: He is open-handed. And so it was said.’ Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Imārah: Bāb man Qatala lil-Riyā’ wa Al-Sum‘ah Istahaqqa Al-Nār: #1905).

Among the ways mentioned to hide ones tears while weeping were: pretending to have a flu (pp. 131–132), through laughing (p. 132), by leaving the place (p. 134), by constantly wiping out the tears (p. 133), by getting up or changing the topic of the conversation as Ibn Al-Mubārak used to do (p. 135) and weeping out in total silence (p. 136). It is also narrated that Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī once gave a sermon and a man started to cry loudly. Then Al-Ḥasan said: “Allah (SWT) will ask you on the Day of resurrection what you intended with your cry” (pp. 132–133). In another incident, Ḥuthayfah Ibn Al-Yamān once cried while he was praying and when he was done he turned back and saw a man right behind him. He told him: “Do not tell anyone about this” (pp. 134–135).

3.3.1.5 *Al-Uzlah Wa Al-Infirād* [loneliness and privacy]

The nature of the human being pushes him to be social. However, not all social meetings are beneficial. Some are useful and some are held just for the sake of conversing and killing time and some could be even harmful and wrongful, like when it contains backbiting and talebearing. Due to this, and in order for the Muslim to succeed in purifying his soul, one should be selective with his social gatherings. In

other words, there are times when the person needs to prefer loneliness and says no to social occasions, as well as times when he should say yes.

Loneliness and privacy have their basics drawn from the Islamic *Sharī'ah*. For instance, Muslims sit in privacy after prayers to recite their after-prayer *Zikr* (remembrance of Allah). They also sit for *i'tikāf* in the mosque for the last ten days of Ramaḍan. Even night prayer (*tahajjud*) is a form of worship that is performed mostly in privacy during the night. And so the life of the Muslim is balanced between privacy and social life. Loneliness in the Qur'an is mentioned by way of leaving the wrongdoing or wrongful people in order to maintain the purity of the heart. Allah says: "Now that you have left such people, and what they worshipped instead of God, take refuge in the cave" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Kahf 18:16)¹¹⁸. And in: "But for now I will leave you, and the idols you all pray to, and I will pray to my Lord and trust that my prayer will not be in vain. When he left his people and those they served beside God, We granted him Isaac and Jacob and made them both prophets" (Al-Qur'an. Maryam 19:48–49)¹¹⁹. And again in: "If you do not believe me, just let me be" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Dukhān 44:21)¹²⁰ and in: "When you come across people who speak with scorn about Our revelations, turn away from them until they move on to another topic" (Al-Qur'an. Al-An'ām 6:68)¹²¹. Another positive case of loneliness is when a person lessens social gatherings that are a mere waste of time or sometimes a person needs some privacy in order to fulfill a responsibility that is beneficial for the Ummah. However, these cases of privacy are partial and the Muslim may not be lonely to the extent of not attending prayers or meeting relatives and friends in Eid occasions except for some very special cases that are life-threatening, like in the case of the people of the cave.

Mashhūr Ibn Ḥasan, the editor of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's book stated six benefits of loneliness (1997: 12–15): first it allows the Muslim to have more time for worship and being thoughtful of Allah. It prevents him from social sins such as backbiting, talebearing and hypocrisy. It keeps him away from turbulence and hostility. It prevents him from facing wickedness and harmful doings of some people. It stops people's greediness towards him and vice-versa. It prevents him from meeting bad humoured and idiotic people, which helps to keep him away from backbiting them. Mashhūr (1997: 17–21) also mentions seven negative consequences of loneliness as it causes the person to miss: learning and teaching, usefulness and being useful, disciplining others and being disciplined, pleasure, receiving rewards and being the cause for others to receive it, humility, life experiences and social experiences.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduces the merits and limits of loneliness and privacy. The dislike of social loneliness has been discussed earlier in this chapter. But, loneliness in this book is of a different kind. Loneliness could be positive in the case when sociality deprives the person from being productive at any level or performing his/her religious duties properly. This may occur, especially, when social relations are non-beneficial and are merely a waste of time. Loneliness also helps to reinforce the process of soul purification as it stands as a great chance for a second thought about one's inner state and religious achievements. If performed correctly, loneliness and privacy greatly enhance the process of purification through paving the way to become nearer to Allah and further from wrongful doings.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā touches upon all these meanings in his book. He focuses on more than one place on the correct understanding of solitude and the main idea behind practicing it. He starts his book with a Hadith on trials where one of the companions asks for the solution on such days and the Prophet (SAW) says among his answer to

“stay home” (1997: 48). The same was reflected in (pp. 57, 65, 84, 120, 160, 165). In (p. 55) he mentions a Hadith in which the Prophet (SAW) praises the man who keeps away from people’s evilness and still performs all his religious duties. The same was reflected in (pp. 58–59, 102). He states that one of the positive results of solitude is relief from the wickedness and inequity of some people (pp. 60, 107).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā refers to some disadvantages of mixing with people such as: hypocrisy, backbiting, talebearing (pp. 66–67, 73). He emphasizes on the idea of partial solitude rather than totally staying away from people. For example, he provides a narration about Al-Ḥārith Ibn Al-Ṣūmah who was a great worshipper. Al-Ṣūmah used to prefer privacy than meeting people, but he never stopped going to the mosque and he was always seen there. Thus, merely going to the mosque means meeting a lot of Muslims there. Another narration points out that loneliness is for the tongue (p. 98), which means to be mindful regarding what one says in order to prevent sins and harmful speech. This meaning is also reflected in the conversation of Abū Dhar with Al-Aḥnaf Ibn Qays (p. 121). In his conversation, Abū Dhar presented his preferences between silence and evil speech, a good partner and loneliness and loneliness and a bad partner. The preferences he chose were silence, a good partner and loneliness respectively. Another type of loneliness mentioned in this book is when one prefers to stay away from people who keep him away from Allah (p. 94). Or to stay away from those who you do not benefit nor do they benefit from you (pp. 83, 135). Thus, all these types and perspectives on loneliness and privacy support the process of purification at the level of individuals. The beginners in the long path of purification especially need some privacy to concentrate on their worship before going out and facing people with all the good and bad they possess. Similarly, the privacy of the Prophet (SAW) in Ghār Ḥirā’ before he was sent as the Messenger of Allah to people.

It provided him with peace of mind, purity and lots of observations that helped later on.

3.3.1.6 *Al-Ham Wa Al-Huzn* [worries and sadness]

Worries and sadness are two emotional states that may hold positive or negative results depending on how they dealt with within one's soul and thought. Worries are usually concerns about future things and sadness is related to something that has already occurred (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1991: 6). This book deals with worries and sadness from a different point of view. It focuses on sadness and worries that occur when a Muslim feels ashamed and regretful due to his sins and negligence of Allah's commands. It shows that a Muslim could probably find hardship and suffering through his life and may not rest in complete peace only when he enters paradise. But it suggests that true worries and sadness should only be for wasting one's precious time and life in an inappropriate manner. The book also suggests that one may find some comfort from the worries and sadness of life in the sadness of pious Muslims who do not give a great deal of energy to sadness and worries other than that connected to faith and the afterlife. These worries and sadness are considered positive and they lead to purification of the soul and repentance. Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said: "No fatigue, nor disease, nor worry, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Marḍā: Bāb mā Jā'a fī Kaffarat Al-Maraḍ: #5641).

On the other hand, the book also refers to the undesired types of worry and sadness, which are the ones that are purely connected to life. And that an individual will regret the worries and sadness he has towards this world. This is because our life

on this planet is not for eternity and that we are meant to live this life for the sake of the afterlife and in order to be tested by Allah (SWT). Therefore, any worries or sadness that drive us negatively and give us destructive results towards our true and everlasting home in paradise are not desirable. Moreover, worry and sadness are two elements that if people take seriously, will drive them into more sadness, overthinking and depression, which will hinder their work and waste their time and health. Due to this, spreading sadness and frustration is one of Satan's preferred doings. Allah (SWT) says: "[Any other kind of] secret conversation is the work of Satan, designed to cause trouble to the believers" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Mujādalah 58:10)¹²². Anas Ibn Mālik reported that the Prophet (SAW) used to say: "O Allah! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Da'awāt: Bāb Al-Isti'ādah min Al-Jubn wa Al-Kasal: #5425). Ibn Qayyim (2003: 1/500–502) comments on sadness in his book '*Madārij Al-Sālikīn*' saying that sadness is neither wanted nor sought and that it was not mentioned in the Qur'an except by way of inhibition or denial. For example: "Do not lose heart or despair- if you are true believers you have the upper hand" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Imrān 3:139)¹²³ and in: "He [Muhammad] said to his companion, 'Do not worry, God is with us'" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Tawbah 9:40)¹²⁴ and in: "There is no fear: they will not grieve" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Mā'idah 5:69)¹²⁵. Due to this when Muslims enter Paradise they say: "They will say, 'Praise be to God, who has separated us from all sorrow! Our Lord is truly most forgiving, most appreciative'" (Al-Qur'an. Fāṭir 35:34)¹²⁶.

In this book Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā reflects on the purification of the soul through focusing on the positive side of worry and sadness in a Muslim's life, which enhances the process of purification. It is worth noting that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā referred to some narrations that held some exaggerations and might convey some mistakable notions of

worry and sadness. However, these narrations are not the dominant portion of this book. Also pointing out to other narrations that reflect the true meaning of worry and sadness shows the comprehensive understanding and religious background of the author. It also reflects his intention to convey those meanings as they are truly meant, in order to provide benefit of the Ummah.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduces five views on worry and sadness and how they are dealt with in a positive manner. First, he provides many narrations, which point out that sadness could be a result of some kind of affliction of the Muslim in the worldly life (pp. 29, 64, 66, 96). Being afflicted by tribulations and trials is part of this life. Every Muslim is tested with these trials, as Allah (SWT) says: “That We have created man for toil and trial” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Balad 90:4)¹²⁷. Usually these trials are accompanied by pain, worry and sadness. The purpose of these trials and afflictions is to purify the Muslim from his sins and to distinguish the believers from the hypocrites: “Do people think they will be left alone after saying ‘We believe’ without being put to the test? We tested those who went before them: God will certainly mark out which ones are truthful and which are lying” (Al-Qur’an. Al-‘Ankabūt 29: 2–3)¹²⁸. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gives examples for such types of sadness, like the sadness of Ādam (AW) when he left paradise (p. 30), the sadness of Ya‘qūb (AW) when he lost his son Yūsuf (AW) (pp. 30–31, 68) and the sadness of ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (RA) for the loss of his brother (pp. 88–90). Such trials are sometimes means for Allah’s forgiveness of a Muslim’s sins. Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa‘īd Al-Khudrī narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said: “No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Marḍā: Bāb mā Jā’a fī Kaffārat Al-Maraḍ: #5641).

The second type of sadness is the one that is caused due to missing worship. Muslims bear in mind that worshipping Allah (SWT), in all forms, is the best thing they can do in life. It is the thing that brings them closer to Allah (SWT) and allows them to receive His acceptance and satisfaction to enter paradise. It is also one of the main tools to purify the Muslim's soul and so missing worship or being careless towards it should cause some degree of sadness. A Muslim is usually attentive and sensitive to anything that disturbs his relationship with Allah. This sadness for missing the good deeds is good to help the Muslim avoid the recurrence of such negligence. In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā presents examples for this type of sadness as missing prayer in mosque or in congregation (pp. 36–37), being sad for leaving out *awrād* (religious litanies) (p. 64), for loss of one's life in non-beneficial things (p. 65) and for one's dereliction (p. 82).

The third type of sadness mentioned in this book is the one that is caused due to committing them. This type of sadness is very important for the Muslim and it indicates that he is sensitive hearted towards wrongful doings although he commits it. This type allows the Muslim to turn back and stop committing the sin and to replace it with a good doing, which enhances the purification of one's soul. In (p. 81), Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā provides a narration, which advises Muslims to make Allah (SWT) their first and only worry in life and to make sadness for committing sins their only cause of sadness. He provides other examples for this type of sadness in (p. 63) and in (p. 76).

The fourth type of sadness mentioned in this book is the one that is linked to the afterlife. This type is broad and it involves any worship or action that pushes towards success or failure in the hereafter. Ibn abī Al-Dunyā relates a narration by Mālik Ibn Dinār and Al-Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍ (pp. 32–33, 86), in which they say that being sad for

the sake of life itself effects on the result in the hereafter and vice versa. In other words, they mean to say every Muslim should be focused on the afterlife and not the worldly life, as the first will continue for eternity and it is the result of the last, while the last will end one day sooner or later. To emphasize this meaning, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā relates another narration by Mālik Ibn Dinār, in which he differentiates between the worries of the pious and that of the vicious (p. 76).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā then points out to the negative side of sadness and that even within the previously mentioned types of positive sadness, sadness should be kept within accepted levels (pp. 60–62). Failing to do so will transform sadness into a harmful and discouraging element. Um Ḥabībah (RA) narrated that she heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: “It is not legal for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to mourn for any dead person for more than three days except for her husband (for whom she should mourn) for four months and ten days” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Janā’iz: Bāb Ihdād Al-Mar’ah ‘ala Ghayri Zawjihā: #1281). This Hadith shows that sadness should not take a great deal from the Muslims life and it should not hinder his work for the Last Day.

3.3.2 Purification Of The Soul Through Deliverers [*al-munjiyāt*]

By deliverers, we mean the things that when a Muslim believes, does or follows; he is saved from hell fire and is closer to paradise. These deliverers cover a wide range of compulsory and recommended religious duties. It is directly connected to the success of the purification of the soul of an individual. The more a Muslim acquires those deliverers, the more success he makes in purifying his soul. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā composed twelve books in the field of deliverers, which enhances the process of

purifying the soul. These books are analyzed and linked to purification of the soul as follows:

3.3.2.1 *Al-Ikhlāṣ* [sincerity]

Sincerity is known in Islamic terms as *Al-Ikhlāṣ*. The term is used in Islamic theology in the sense of devoting one's worship to Allah alone and believing in his absolute oneness (Saleh: 2011). *Ikhlāṣ* is a crucial element in the Muslim's life, without which any performed duties are not accepted. Allah says: "Though all they are ordered to do is worship God alone, sincerely devoting their religion to Him" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Bayyinah 98:5)¹²⁹. In fact, *Ikhlāṣ* may convert small deeds into great ones and great works into nothing! It all depends on one's sincerity. Being that critical, *Ikhlāṣ* is the first and main thing a Muslim should think about when dealing with purification of the soul. Thus, a soul may not be purified unless the heart is fully emptied from anything else but Allah (SWT). Due to this, Islam gave *Ikhlāṣ* great attention through numerous āyahs and Hadiths. This is because it is the basis that each Muslim has to start off from for the performance of all other religious duties.

In 15:39–40, Allah says: "Iblis then said to God, 'Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth and put them in the wrong, all except Your devoted servants'" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Hijr 15:39–40)¹³⁰. This āyah clearly shows that Muslims who achieve *Ikhlāṣ* through their life have stronger protection from falling into the wrong due to their true sincerity to Allah (SWT). Also, with the presence of *Ikhlāṣ* there is no place in the heart for backbiting, talebearing, hypocrisy and other diseases of the heart. This tremendously helps in achieving purification of the soul. Indeed, the first and most important result of sincerity is purification of the soul.

The main theme of this book is purification of the soul through sincerity. Being truly sincere to Allah in everything said or done needs a lot of effort. In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā presents a comprehensive view of the concept of *Ikhhlās*. He states right at the beginning of the book five main things that should be obtained in order for any deeds to be accepted. *Ikhhlās* is one of them (p. 32). The same meaning is emphasized once more in two narrations in (pp. 50–51). He goes further when he refers to a narration that says *Ikhhlās* is a sign of a man's religion (p. 33). He gives an example of a kind of worship that needs *Ikhhlās* in order to be accepted, which is supplication to Allah. Even this worship when performed with *Ikhhlās*, is more prone to be answered (pp. 37–38).

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā identifies one technique that helps to acquire *Ikhhlās*. He provides a narration by Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in which he advises Muslims to focus on the acceptance of their good deeds rather than the good deed itself (p. 39). This technique helps the Muslim to not appreciate his/her work to the extent that it becomes incompletely devoted for the sake of Allah. Then, He mentions some of the negative results for not being sincere. For example, he states a narration by Ibrāhīm, a scholar jurisprudence, saying: "A man may do a deed that looks good in the eyes of people, or he may do the good deed but not for the sake of Allah, then he would receive in turn the dislike and disapproval of people and vice versa" (p. 40). A more strict narration is seen on page (45), which says the angel goes up pleasantly with the deed of a man and it reaches Allah (SWT), He says: "Take it to *sijjīn* (a register inscribed where the record of wicked is preserved), it was not for my sake." This point is repeated again on page (55) to emphasize on the terrible consequences of hypocrisy and that everything is totally bared to Allah.

Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gives examples of sincere people and how they acted accordingly in order for the reader to follow (pp. 43–44). He also mentions the fruits and results of being sincere. Such as the acceptance of people toward the sincere person (p. 41), it puts weight on the scale of good deeds on the Day of Judgment (p. 52) and in turn it allows the person to receive Allah’s help in reforming his public life (p. 54). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā ends his book with many examples for people who hide their good deeds and cry out of the fear of Allah for the sake of sincerity and as an effort from them to keep away from hypocrisy and insincerity. This conclusion is very beneficial for the readers of the book as it encourages them toward righteousness and gives them excellent examples to follow and imitate.

3.3.2.2 *Al-Tawāḍu‘ Wa Al-Khumūl* [humility and anonymity]

Having lived in a period of a prosperous civilization, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā wrote this book among his other books as a step to treat some of the undesired outcomes of his period. Among those outcomes was arrogance. Indeed, it is not easy to keep steadfast with humbleness when great success and big achievements are made, unless one is equipped with deep faith and a purified soul. *Tawāḍu‘* is a very important characteristic that should be acquired by every Muslim. It keeps the individual in the right place where he is meant to be and maintains his relationship as the slave of the Creator (SWT): “I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Dhāriyāt 51:56)¹³¹. It also protects the Muslim from being arrogant, which has sinful sequences: Abū Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Allah, the Exalted, says: ‘Honour is My robe and pride is My garment. Whoever vies with

Me regarding one of them, shall be tormented”⁹⁴ (Hadith. Al-Ṭabarānī. *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Awsāt*. ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. #3380).

By *Khumūl*, the author refers to the state of being unknown rather than famous, which goes in harmony with humility. Showing off one’s worship or good deeds may lead the Muslim to overvalue himself above the others (i.e., be arrogant) and miss *Ikhlāṣ* in all what he is doing (i.e., be hypocrisy). Therefore, *tawāḍu‘* and *khumūl* are connected to each other and influence one another. In Islam, All people are equal in humanity without any superiority. However, what distinguishes an Individual from the other is *Imān* (faith), which only Allah knows and sees deep inside each one. *Tawāḍu‘* is the gateway to good manners and the initial means for being near to both the Creator and the created. All of this would undoubtedly enhance the process of purifying the soul as those with arrogance are prohibited from entering Paradise: He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-‘Imān: Bāb Tahrim Al-Kibr wa Bayānuh: Juz’ 1: #91).

Due to the importance of this characteristic, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduced in this book a good number of Hadiths unlike the previous books. It is also worth noting that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā is the first one to write about *tawāḍu‘* in a separate book and not within a book of other topics. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā divided the book into sections. Each section discusses part of the main topic and it is arranged as follows: anonymity, fame, humility, humbleness in dressing, good manners, arrogance and haughtiness. However, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā included a section on good manners although he compiled a separate book on that topic, but it is clear that he wanted to point out to the reader the significant reward of good manners unlike the punishment and bad results of arrogance.

⁹⁴ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi‘*: #2789).

In the first section on being anonymous (pp. 97–115), Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā states several Hadiths and narrations that refer to anonymous people having their supplication to Allah answered. Those Hadiths and narrations do not necessarily mean that any anonymous individual is answered by Allah, but it means that there are many individuals whom in terms of appearances do not show any sign of extensive worship, but Allah knows best about what is in their heart, the strength of their faith and the worship they do away from people's eyes. Also, those who other people know little about what is inside their hearts (i.e., their inner relation with Allah) are protected from falling into trials (p. 115).

In another section, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā points out to the dislike of being famous and known due to the fear of falling into trials such as arrogance, pride and hypocrisy (pp. 116–117). He also mentions narrations dealing with unfamiliar and ugly outfits, which are considered types of fame-clothing and should be avoided (pp. 127, 129). He specifies two types of disliked clothing: fame-clothing that causes people to look up to that person once he appears and lousy clothing, in which the religion of the individual is insulted and humiliated (pp. 127–128). On the other hand, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā states Hadiths and narrations on humbleness in clothing and that it is part of faith (p. 162). He sheds light on the notion of that what is more important than the clothing is the inner intention of the heart behind the clothing (p. 173) and that Allah loves to see the results of his favours upon people (p. 176). Thus, being humble toward Allah and the people, in regards to clothing and in the inner intentions, tremendously help in purifying the soul as those with arrogance are prohibited from entering paradise.

3.3.2.3 *Al-Tawbah* [repentance to Allah]

Tawbah means to be sorrowful and regretful towards a committed sin and to have the true intention to repent and to stop committing that sin and to never go back to doing it again. Also, if the sin is related to the rights of other people, the repentant has to give back that right or get the forgiveness of the harmed individual first in order for his *tawbah* to be accepted. However, every Muslim should perform *tawbah* because everyone tends to make mistakes intentionally or unintentionally: “Every son of Adam sins, and the best of the sinners are the repentant”⁹⁵ (Hadith. *Al-Tirmidhī. Sunan Al-Tirmidhī. Kitāb Şifat Yawm Al-Qiyāmah: Bāb 49: #2499*). Even the Prophet (SAW) used to perform *tawbah* and on a daily basis although Allah (SWT) had already forgiven him his faults of the past and those to follow: “By Allah! I ask for forgiveness from Allah and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day” (Hadith. *Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Da‘awāt: Bāb Istigfār Al-Nabī fī Al-Yawm wa Al-Laylah: #6307*).

Tawbah is a life transformational process. It changes the life of the Muslim drastically to become purified from sins and evil acts. Due to this special nature of the ritual, *tawbah* paves the way for a successful life: “And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nūr 24:31)¹³². Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts this book by introducing Hadiths and narrations on what necessitates *tawbah*: Sins. The first narration directs the attention of the reader to one main reason for falling into sinful acts, that is the Satan (p. 30). The Satan, as well, cheers when the believer neglects *tawbah* or stops performing it (p. 119). He also mentions the difference between the believer who looks at his sins as a mountain that may fall on him at any time, and the wicked person who sees his sins as a fly standing on his nose

⁹⁵ Hadith Ḥasan (Şaḥīḥ Al-Tirmidhī: #2499).

then flies away (pp. 39–40). The book even states that scorning sins is considered one of the major sins (pp. 77–78). That is because it frustrates the Muslim from performing *tawbah*.

Then he encourages the reader to perform *tawbah* through mentioning Allah's happiness with the repentance of his slaves (p. 41). He also does that through pointing out two worships that wipe out sins: prayer (pp. 42, 84), *tawbah* and *istighfār*⁹⁶ (p. 119). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā warns Muslims at the same time not to delay their repentance to Allah because they do not know when death may occur and stop them from doing so (p. 53). Finally, he mentions a number of points in which the believer finds the mercy and assistance of Allah (SWT). The first is that Allah does not consider the sin unless it is performed (p. 105) and it is counted as one sin, on the contrary to the good deed that is considered and then counted as one good deed, even if the believer just thought of doing it. And if a believer actually does a good deed, then it is written as ten good deeds multiplied to seven hundred or more (pp. 52–53). Second, it is disliked to talk negatively about sinful people who have already performed *tawbah* or even to remind them of their sinful past as Allah (SWT) wipes out everything once *tawbah* is correctly performed and accepted (p. 108). Thus, doing so will strengthen the Satan on that repentant believer and may cause him to fall into the sin again (p. 100). This all shows the amount of aid the Muslim receives through his life from Allah (SWT) and that Allah likes all his slaves to enter paradise but it is people who refuse and choose to go astray.

⁹⁶ It is an act of seeking forgiveness from Allah (SWT).

3.3.2.4 *Al-Tawakkul 'ala Allah* [trust and reliance upon Allah]

Al-Tawakkul 'ala Allah is a form of worship that is practiced by using the heart. For that reason it is closely related to the purification of the soul. According to Ibn Rajab Al-Ḥanbalī (quoted in; Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1987: 19), *Al-Tawakkul 'ala Allah* is “the truthful reliance of the heart on Allah (SWT) in bringing the good, and driving away the evil matters of this life and the Hereafter.” In other words, *Al-Tawakkul 'ala Allah* is to trust in Allah and submit to Him alone and consider him sufficient as a Reckoner. Thus, it is considered one means of strengthening the heart, creating calmness in one’s soul and leaving him at rest and peace of mind. Thus, those who succeed in practicing *al-tawakkul* will face the challenges of life with more ease, optimism and trust in Allah and that all what He decrees is for the better and for their own good.

In the Qur’an, *al-tawakkul* is linked with faith and it is a distinctive trait of a believer’s character: “If you are true believers, put your trust in God” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Mā’idah 5:23)¹³³, “True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe when God is mentioned, whose faith increases when His revelations are recited to them, who put their trust in their Lord” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Anfāl 8:2)¹³⁴. This indicates the negation of faith at the absence of *tawakkul*. In the Sunnah, *Al-tawakkul* is considered one of the reasons for which a believer enters Paradise without being into account by Allah: Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said: “Seventy thousand people of my followers will enter Paradise without being taken into account [by Allah], and they are those who do not practice *ruqyah* and do not see an evil omen in things, and put their trust in their Lord” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb wa man Yatawakkal ‘alā Allah fahuwa ḥasbuh: #6472). This shows the importance of *tawakkul* in the life of the individual Muslim and to the crucial results it leads to.

Furthermore, *tawakkul* it is an action of the heart, and being so this results in the tranquillity and purity of the soul. This means *tawakkul* helps in relieving us from anxiety, worry and depression, all of which may catch people due to the hardship and challenges of life. But, by believing that all our affairs are in Allah's hands and that we can only do what we are in control of, the soul will be eased and steady in facing the waves of the life: "Those whose faith only increased when people said, 'Fear your enemy: they have amassed a great army against you,' and who replied, 'God is enough for us: He is the best protector'" (Al-Qur'an Al-Imrān 3:173)¹³⁵. Thus, this tranquility and steadiness in the heart leads to the purity of the soul and to its assurance that everything Allah forbids is harmful and all whatever He permits is useful.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā concentrates on a number of meanings that help in the correct understanding and practice of the concept *tawakkul*. By doing this, he has also paved the way for the Muslim individual to succeed in the process of purifying the soul. Hence, purification may not take place if *tawakkul* is absent. He starts the book with the most concerning issue among many people, which is provision. The Hadith he relates (p. 34) reads: "If you were to rely upon Allah with the full reliance He is due, you would be given provision like the birds: They go out hungry in the morning and come back with full bellies in the evening." This Hadith directs Muslims shun worrying about their livelihoods and to trust Allah, the One who provides them with provisions. On the other hand, on pages (45–46) Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā highlights a very important issue that is interrelated with *tawakkul*, and if absent it totally reverses the concept. That is to make full use of all available means, be they physical efforts, intellectual reasoning, seeking advice and even supplication to Allah (SWT), then putting trust in Him and leaving the results to Him. If this step is

not taken, then *tawakkul* will turn into *tawākul* (complacency), which ends with many negative results and contradicts the Islamic view for independence and hard work.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gave descriptions to the concept *tawakkul* in a number of narrations. He included narrations that linked *tawakkul* with faith (p. 39) and that its true meaning is to be pleased with Allah's decree (p. 53–54) and to have trust in Him (p. 54) and to expect all that is good from Him (p. 65). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā also mentions in this book some of the positive results of *tawakkul*, which greatly enhances the process of purification of the soul through encouragement. *Tawakkul* is one reason for a person's escape from hellfire (pp. 43–48) and entering paradise without account (p. 61). It also removes worries and depression (p. 52) and separates us from the difficulties on the Day of Judgment (p. 89–90), which leaves the individual in tranquility. Most importantly, it protects from the evilness of the Satan, who spares no time or effort to mislead people (pp. 55–56, 83).

3.3.2.5 *Al-Riḍā 'An Allah bi Qaḍā'ih* [being pleased with Allah's decree]

This book is another circle in the chain of the previous books (*al-tawakkul*, *al-yaqīn* and *al-qanā'ah*) that dealt with the Muslim's trust in Allah (SWT). Thus, when an individual puts his full trust in Allah, he trusts Allah's wisdom in His decree and receives it with calmness and acceptance of the heart. Having faith in Allah's decree is an action of the heart as it deals with the unknown and unseen. It is one of the six pillars of *Imān* that every Muslim must believe in. As discussed earlier in chapter two, believing in Allah's decree, its bad and good consequences, has a very positive influence on the soul and its purification. It results in the belief that Allah (SWT) is the only One that has complete control over life, death, sustenance, harm and benefit.

Understanding this will lead the Muslim to fully trust in Allah (SWT). Hence, there is

no need to fear anyone or anything other than Allah. Realizing this fact can be a source of great good. There is no need for despair or sorrow as all can be good: Şuhayb Ibn Sinān reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it" (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Zuhd wa Al-Raqā'iq: Bāb Al-Mu'min Amruhu Kulluhu Khayr: #2999). This results as well in tranquillity of the Muslim's heart, calmness and contentment when receiving Allah's decree.

In his book '*Al-Amn Al-Nafsi*,' Muḥammad Mūsā Al-Sharīf (2003) refers to four principles concerning Allah's decree. The first principle is that all people's destiny is determined already: "Allah ordained the measures (of quality) of the creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, as His Throne was upon water" (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Qadar: Bāb Hijā' Ādam wa Mūsā: #2653). Knowing this keeps the person in calmness as everything is already set and it is all by Allah's hand whom he trusts. The second principle is that no trial prescribed upon a person can be missed and no threatening can harm or reach him unless prescribed upon him. This gives the feeling of security and that it is Allah (SWT) who's will decides whether anything happens and not people, "And know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah had already

prescribed against you”⁹⁷ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitab Şifat Al-Qiyāmah wa Al-Raqā’iq wa Al-Wara’: Bāb 59: #2516). The third principle reads: All that Allah prescribes upon people is good but evil comes from people themselves: “Anything good that happens to you [Prophet] is from God; anything bad is [ultimately] from yourself” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nisā’ 4:79)¹³⁶. Knowing that Allah’s decree is all good gives the Muslim a relief and keeps him tranquil that whatever trials he goes through it is good although it may look the opposite. Also, it encourages him to sit and think twice of any unlawful things he may have done and caused trouble to himself. The fourth principle, which is the most important, says that Allah’s decrees are based on Allah’s ultimate knowledge and full justice: “He has the keys to the unseen: no one knows them but Him. He knows all that is in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowledge, nor is there a single grain in the darkness of the earth, or anything, fresh or withered, that is not written in a clear Record” (Al-Qur’an. Al-An‘ām 6:59)¹³⁷; “He does not wrong anyone by as much as the weight of a speck of dust: He doubles any good deed and gives a tremendous reward of His own” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nisā’ 4:40)¹³⁸.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started this book with an emphasis on a significant Hadith that points out the third principle for the peace of soul mentioned above: “I am in wonder of a believer; Allah (SWT) does not prescribe for him only what is good for him” (1990: 41–42). Thus, if all that Allah prescribes for Muslims is good, then this results in trusting Allah, which paves the way for many other good manners to be acquired, such as: patience, contentment, pleasure, deep faith, humility and certainty. This meaning is also reflected in the following narration (pp. 47–48) in which ‘alqamah interprets the āyah, “Misfortunes can only happen with God’s permission—

⁹⁷ Hadith Şaḥīḥ (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2516).

He will guide the heart of anyone who believes in Him” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Taghābun 64:11)¹³⁹ saying: “It is the misfortune or trial that come up to the man, but he knows it is from Allah so entrusts and be content.

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions a lot of examples of righteous people who showed contentment with Allah’s decree (pp. 59–61, 103). Also, some narrations link this contentment with the result of *istikhārah*⁹⁸ since the Muslim during this prayer asks Allah for guidance and hence should be contented with the results whatever they are because Allah knows what is best for him (p. 93). However, the destiny of each individual will take place whether one accepts it or refuses it (p. 53). The difference lies in the reward for being content and Allah’s punishment for those who show objection and act unpleasantly in response His decree. To avoid this, the Prophet (SAW) directs us to be content and not to regret for doing something different, because it opens the door for the Satan to mislead us (p. 79–80). This meaning is stressed again with a golden rule that says, A Muslim asks Allah with what he wishes and likes, but if what he dislikes happens, then he should not object to what Allah prefers and has chosen for him (p. 106).

3.3.2.6 *Al-Ṣabr Wa Al-Thawāb ‘Alayh* [patience and its reward]

Patience has a very special status in Islam. It is a venerable trait, which Allah mentioned many times in the Qur’an and the Prophet (SAW) mentioned in numerous Hadiths. This indicates the important status of patience in Islam and its significance in the Muslim’s life. Indeed, it is sufficient an indication of the importance of patience and its status in Islam to know its reward: “Those who persevere patiently will be given a full and unstinting reward” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Zumar 39: 10)¹⁴⁰.

⁹⁸ It is a form of prayer, in which the Muslim asks Allah advice and help to guide him towards the best of anything he intends to do in his life. Such as, applying for a new job, marriage, travelling, etc.

Moreover, patience is actually involved in almost all the aspects of a Muslim's life. There is the patience in performing the religious duties, patience in keeping away from the forbidden and avoidance of falling into it, and patience during trials and life hardships. Also, Muslims need to be patient when seeking knowledge and with their teachers and students. They have to be patient when performing *da'wah* and in dealing with people of different ages and backgrounds. And the list goes on. Due to this, it is impossible to live without having the grace of patience. Like other behaviours and manners, people may vary in the degree of their patience.

According to the description above it is clear that patience is strictly needed in the process of purifying the soul. Indeed, purification may not take place without the presence of patience. Patience also helps the individual to acquire good manners: "Good and evil cannot be equal. [Prophet], repel evil with what is better and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend, but only those who are steadfast in patience, only those who are blessed with great righteousness, will attain to such goodness" (Al-Qur'an, Fuṣṣilat 41: 34–35)¹⁴¹. Like most of his works, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā did his best in this book to point out the role of patience throughout the Muslim's life. He started the book with a Hadith that indicates Allah's help to those who try to be patient and that there is neither a better nor bigger award than patience (p. 17). He also mentions in another place of the book that believers need patience like their need to food and drink (p. 61). And that the best rank of patience is the *comely patience*, in which the Muslim keeps patient without complaining (p. 83), but is satisfied and committed with full submission to Allah (p. 86).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions Hadiths and narrations referring to different kinds of patience because patience covers a wide range of fields. For example, he states a narration that categorizes patience into four categories: longing and eagerness,

compassion, asceticism and expectation (p. 25). Thus, eagerness for paradise protects one from falling into the desires of the soul. Asceticism allows the Muslim to bear trials along with hardship of life. Expectation of death urges the Muslim to head towards doing good deeds. Also, those who have patience during trials and hardship, days will receive the reward of fifty of that of the companions (pp. 18–20). Furthermore, there is the patience during trials and hardship (pp. 25–26, 42, 128), patience during harm (p. 26), patience from the desires of the soul (p. 27), patience towards the inclination to committing bad deeds (pp. 28–29), patience when facing sickness (pp. 50, 81), patience while in anger (p. 61), patience during victory (pp. 62–64), patience while waiting for relief (p. 87) and patience in being consistent in performing religious duties and avoiding forbidden acts (p. 128). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gave many examples in this book on righteous people who faced many of their life trials and hardship with patience and submission to Allah (SWT).

3.3.2.7 *Qīṣar Al-Amal* [shortening long hopes]

This Book deals with a topic that is of immense importance in a materialistic society. It discusses the importance of reducing long hopes for the sake of working hard for the afterlife, which is the true everlasting life. We live in a consumer-based world, which may distract us from being concerned about the afterlife. The antidote to this is ‘*Qīṣar Al-Amal*,’ reducing long hopes. Thus, this book can be an effective antidote to our materialistic lives. Furthermore, shortening long hopes leads the Muslim to focus on the afterlife since the life he is living in is not everlasting, but rather it is a world of tests and trials: “Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveller” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb Qawl Al-Nabī kun fī Al-Dunyā Ka’annaka Gharīb aw ‘Abiru Sabīl: #6416). This urges the Muslim to take advantage

of his worldly life through avoiding bad deeds and performing the good. In this sense, *qīṣar al-amal* helps in the process of purifying the soul at the individual level.

According to Imām Al-Ghazālī (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1997: 6), long hopes are caused by ignorance and love of the world: “The heart of an old man remains young in two respects, i.e., his love of the world and his incessant hope” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb man Balagha Sittīna Sanatan Faqad A‘dhara Allaha Ilayhi fī Al-‘Umr: Abū Hurayrah: #6420). Thus, the love of the world keeps the Muslim busy entertaining, adventuring and always looking for more, which causes him to lose track and pay less attention if none to the afterlife. Due to this, it is a cause for losing the battles and for moving backward at various levels: “The people will soon summon one another to attack you as people when eating invite others to share their dish. Someone asked: Will that be because of our small numbers at that time? He replied: No, you will be numerous at that time: but you will be scum and rubbish like that carried down by a torrent, and Allah will take fear of you from the breasts of your enemy and last *wahn* into your hearts. Someone asked: What is *wahn*. Messenger of Allah (SAW): He replied: Love of the world and dislike of death”⁹⁹ (Hadith. Abū Dawūd. *Sunan Abī Dawūd*. Kitāb Al-Malāḥim: Bāb fī Tadā‘ī Al-Umam ‘alā Al-Islam: #4297). As for ignorance, people tend to think that death is far away from them, especially young people, whereas it is as close to them as it is to the elders. According to this, the Muslim should always be ready for death as he knows within it there are no more good deeds and after it there is the Day of Judgement where all what he has done is brought into account.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started this book with a Hadith that is considered among the solutions available to avoid long hopes: “Be in this world as if you were a stranger or

⁹⁹ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dawūd: #4297).

a traveller” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: #6416). Being a stranger or a traveller usually does not require the individual to be loaded with secondary things that are not of primary importance. Travellers usually focus on the target of their trip and Muslims should be the same, focusing on the aim behind their creation. The same meaning is reinforced again in later pages: (p. 97). Also, preparing oneself for death and expecting it at anytime is one of the successful remedies for long hopes (pp. 71–72, 77). This is because being attached to the worldly life and holding on to it usually weakens the individual’s focus on the afterlife. Afterwards, the individual gradually becomes fully attached to his desires in life and may probably fall into sinful actions, as the world becomes his source of fake joy and temporary happiness. Some even drew a resemblance between life and afterlife with dreams and wakefulness, respectively (p. 52).

The book also refers to two causes for long hopes: giving too much concern to money and life (pp. 35–36). Interestingly, the Prophet (SAW) described for His companions what is a long hope through drawing on the sand using a stick in His hand (pp. 31, 33–34). Such practical teaching gives a better understanding to a problem some people may suffer from. However, hope in its essence is a blessing from Allah (SWT) and the Muslim needs it throughout his life. But, it is the long hope and the everlasting way of living that is the indignation (p. 38). And those who suffer from long hopes will fall into bad deeds (p. 82).

In the second part of the book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā focuses on what seems to be suggestions to overcome the problem of long hopes. He calls Muslims to take initiative and perform good deeds before they no longer have the capability to do so. He mentions a Hadith that encourages Muslims to take advantage of their youth before they grow older, health before they fall ill, wealth before they become poor,

free time before they get fully engaged with responsibilities and their lives before they die (p. 89). He also points to the role of good health and free-time in performing more good deeds (pp. 89–90): “There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) Health and free time” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb mā jā’a fī Al-Ṣiḥḥati wa Al-Farāgh wa an la ‘Aysha illa ‘Ayshu Al-Ākhirah: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās: #6412). Other topics are referred to as well, such as: castigation of procrastination and constructing of premises and buildings. Procrastination is usually a negative behaviour because it deprives the individual from benefitting from his time fully and wisely and results in delays and unproductivity. The negative side of focusing on building constructions is when it takes a great deal of effort and time causing more attachment to the worldly life in the individual’s heart and increasing one’s hope to live longer to grow his/her business.

3.3.2.8 *Al-Qanā‘ah Wa Al-Ta‘affuf* [contentment and abstinence]

‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Āṣ reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “He is successful who has accepted Islam, who has been provided with what is sufficient for his wants and has been made content by Allah with what He has given him” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Zakah: Bāb fī Al-Kafāf wa Al-Qanā‘ah: #1054). In another Hadith related by ‘Ubaydillah Ibn Miḥṣan, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Whosoever begins the day feeling family security and good health; and possesses provision for his day is as though he possesses the whole world”¹⁰⁰ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bāb 34: #2346). These two Hadiths refer to the need of contentment and abstinence (i.e., to be content with what you have and to stop begging others for help) in people’s life. Like the concepts of *tawakkul*

¹⁰⁰ Hadith Ḥasan (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Tirmidhī: #2346).

and *tawākul* discussed earlier, it is important to differentiate here between an individual doing his best and making use of all available means but at the same time he is content with what Allah gave him and an individual who sits in poverty and need begging others for help instead of helping himself and claiming that it is Allah's decree and he can do nothing about it.

However, contentment is not limited to poor people. Indeed, even rich people need that positive trait and each individual needs it too. Contentment is not about how much money a person owns, but it is about being satisfied with what is in your hand, being thankful to Allah and not looking forward in greediness and envy to what is in other people's hands: "Riches does not mean, having a great amount of property, but riches is self-contentment" (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb Al-Ghinā Ghinā Al-Nafs: Abū Hurayrah: #6446). Also, contentment actually involves all aspects of life. It includes being content with one's appearance, family, homeland, sex being male or female, period of time one lives in, etc. Being content with what Allah (SWT) prescribed upon an individual paves the way for many good manners and blocks the way of many bad manners. To name but a few: greediness, envy, animosity, talebearing, scandal, jealousy, etc. Therefore, contentment and abstinence greatly help in the success of purifying one's soul.

Being very significant, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā involved different aspects on contentment and abstinence. He arranged the Hadiths and narrations into four subcategories: castigation of begging and the grace of abstinence (pp. 17–37), to look for a living through *ḥalāl* means and being content with it (pp. 38–43), asking Allah and not people (pp. 44–74) and castigation of greediness (pp. 75–80). In the first section, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts with words of advice from the Prophet (SAW) to his companions on different occasions to abstain from asking people for anything and

rather to depend on themselves (pp. 17–18). This lesson refers to the importance of being dependent. This is so for many reasons: those who ask people may go further to depend on others although they can depend on themselves, which results in dependency and greediness. Also, asking people is a type of begging and when people are asked, they may or may not give, which places the asker in a lower position (pp. 19–20). The punishment is greater when one asks others while he is rich and not in need (pp. 22–23, 27–28, 29). However, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā states a Hadith in which the Prophet (SAW) considers asking people unlawful except in three cases: A man whose wealth has been destroyed by some calamity, so he asks until he gets enough to keep him going, then he refrains from asking. A man who undertakes a financial responsibility, and asks for help until he pays off whatever needs to be paid and a man concerning whom three wise men from his own people swear by Allah that it is permissible for so-an-so to ask for help, so he asks until he has enough to be independent of means, then he refrains from asking (p. 25). Also, it is acceptable to accept money or any other form of help from others as long as they are doing it without being asked (pp. 20–21, 28–29, 30).

Furthermore, livelihood should be sought only through means that Allah (SWT) permits and accepts and should not be sought through unlawful means whatsoever (p. 38). For this reason dependency and contentment is important. Muslims should bear in mind that Allah has set for each one his share and people should look for it and be content with what Allah Has given each of them (pp. 38–39). It is more decent and appropriate for the Muslim to ask Allah (SWT) Who owns everything for his need rather than asking people like him (p. 45). In fact, people should look to other people who are lower than them in their living and not the opposite to feel the favour of Allah upon them (p. 63). Islam has always taken care of the physical and emotional needs of

people as shown in this book. This is because each of the two sides complete the other and are both needed for a healthy steady life.

3.3.2.9 *Muḥasabat Al-Nafs Wa Al-Izrā'* 'Alayhā [self-accountability and admonishment]

The topic of this book lies in the heart of purifying the soul. Thus, if self-accountability is neglected, then as a result desires of the soul will take place leading the Muslim to stray routes. For this reason, Islam gives close attention to self-accountability in a number of āyahs and Hadiths. Allah says: “You who believe! Be mindful of God, and let every soul consider carefully what it sends ahead for tomorrow” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ḥashr 59:18)¹⁴². Shaddād Ibn Aws reported that the Prophet (SAW): “A wise man is the one who calls himself to account (and refrains from doing evil deeds) and does noble deeds to benefit him after death; and the foolish person is the one who subdues himself with his temptations and desires and seeks from Allah the fulfilment of his vain desires”¹⁰¹ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bāb 25: #2459). The above āyah and Hadith point to the necessity of self-accountability and that it is a primary tool that holds the Muslim back from doing evil deeds and encourages him to do what is good instead. The Hadith also shows that self-accountability leads to success in the afterlife, whereas without it desires become dominant. The Hadith also uses the word ‘*ājiz*’ (literally meaning disabled) to refer to those who do not call themselves to account like those with special needs and require the help of others.

It is worth noting that the period Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā lived in was marked with a civilizational development at various levels. This led the people to become more open

¹⁰¹ Hadith Ḥasan (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2459).

to new things with the presence of prosperity and the new luxurious life. Due to this, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose many of his works to treat the present problems he observed from people during his time. In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā focuses on self-accountability, which works as a significant tool in helping individuals not to trespass Allah's limits.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts this book with a very important Hadith (p. 28) that points out to the necessity of self-accountability and that wishing and dreaming is not enough to get what a person's aims at. There must be a belief accompanied by effort and this is what usually makes the difference; not mere wishes nor daydreams. He then follows this Hadith with 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb's advice to every Muslim to take a step forward and call himself into account before it is too late and self-accountability becomes of no use (pp. 29–30). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gives many examples of righteous people calling themselves into account to encourage readers to take the step (pp. 30–31, 34, 36, 42–45, 57–58). Also, in (pp. 31–32) he states a narration that points to the self-reproaching soul that blames its holder and takes part in the process of self-accountability. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā touches as well on topics that are involved in the process of self-accountability such as: castigation of the soul (pp. 46–53), having control over one's soul (p. 61) and *jihād* of the soul (pp. 61–63).

3.3.2.10 *Al-Wajal Wa Al-Tawaththuq Bil'amal* [fear and working hard]

Fearing Allah (SWT) is very important in the life of the Muslim. In fact, fear and hope both have to exist at the same time to create a balance between avoiding what Allah has forbidden and dislikes and performing and seeking what Allah permits and likes: “[Prophet], tell My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful, and that it is My punishment which is the painful punishment” (Al-Qur'an. Al-Hijr 15: 49–

50)¹⁴³. Also, fearing Allah works as a safety valve that protects the Muslim from falling into evil doings and, therefore, it is directly linked to the purification of the soul: “He who knows the greatness of Allah, his fear increases. And he who fears Allah’s indignation, his deeds are good” (Ibn Al-Jawzī, n.d.: 1/91).

Fearing Allah (SWT) has many positive results on the life of the Muslim. First, it encourages the Muslim to perform *tawbah*, which was discussed above. Also, it is stated in the Qur’an as a condition for faith: “It is Satan who urges you to fear his followers; do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are true believers” (Al-Qur’an. Āl-‘Imrān 3:175)¹⁴⁴. It is one reason among others for the Muslims to become the successors of the earth: “And leave you to dwell in the land after them. This reward is for those who are in awe of meeting Me, and of My warnings” (Al-Qur’an. Ibrāhīm 14:14)¹⁴⁵. It encourages doing the good and maintaining sincerity to Allah within actions: “Saying, ‘We feed you for the sake of God alone: We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you, we fear the Day of our Lord—a woefully grim Day’” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Insān 76:9–10)¹⁴⁶. Those who fear Allah are among those who will be under the shade of Allah when there is no shade except His: “Allah will give shade, to seven, on the Day when there will be no shade but His...a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for illicit intercourse with her and says: I am afraid of Allah” (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adhān: #660). Also, fearing Allah leads to Paradise: “Whoever fears traveling at night- and whoever travels at night reaches his destination- Allah provides him with the most precious of goods, and indeed Allah’s goods are but Paradise”¹⁰² (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Ṣifat Al-Qiyāmah: Bāb 18: Abū Hurayrah: #2450). It is, as well, one of the three deliverers

¹⁰² Hadith Ḥasan Gharīb (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2450).

mentioned in the following Hadith: “Three deliverers: Fearing Allah (SWT) in private and in public, ...”¹⁰³ (Hadith. Al-Ṭabarānī. #3039, Abū Al-Shaykh. #330).

Unlike his other books, Ibn abī Al-Dunyā stated few narrations and not a single Hadith about the topic of this book. Instead, he devoted the rest of the pages to the narrations, tales and proverbs of Antonus, the tourist. Through all of these, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā somehow managed to point out the importance of fear of Allah in the Muslim’s life and that fear itself is not sufficient if it is not accompanied by action (p. 27).

3.3.2.11 *Al-Wara’* [pious]

According to Al-Jurjānī (1988: 7), *al-wara’* means to abstain from all doubtful things to avoid falling into the forbidden. Some of the companions said regarding *wara’*, “We use to abstain from seventy causes for ḥalāl being afraid to fall into one that is forbidden” (2003: 25). Furthermore, the following Hadith explains the problem behind practicing doubtful things and its negative results: “Both legal and illegal things are evident but in between them there are doubtful (suspicious) things and most of the people have no knowledge about them. Whoever saves himself from these suspicious things saves his religion and his honour. And whoever indulges in these suspicious things is The believer who mixes like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the Hima (private pasture) of someone else and at any moment he is liable to stray into it. (O people!) Beware! Every king has a Hima and the Hima of Allah on the earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart” (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Imān: Bāb

¹⁰³ Al-Albānī said: Ḥasan (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi’ Al-Ṣagīr wa Ziyādātuh: #3039).

faḍl man istabra'a li-dīnih: #52). The Hadith also points out that *wara'* is practiced through the heart and that it results in three major benefits: protecting the soul, accomplishing good deeds and protecting one's faith (2003: 26).

Moreover, *wara'* serves a great deal in the process of purification. In fact, both of them share the element of purifying. Purification of the soul consists of two main stages as discussed earlier: Purifying the soul from any undesired characteristics and unlawful acts or anything that Allah (SWT) prohibits or dislikes. The second stage is to fill the soul with all that is good. *Al-Wara'* works on the first stage and encourages toward the second. It purifies the heart from wrongful doings and results in self-accountability. Al-Aṣḥānī (1988: 13) divided *al-wara'* into three categories: obligatory, which is related to forbidden things and it includes every Muslim. Recommended, which deals with doubtful things and it includes the average Muslim and excellency, in which a lot of permitted things are left unless necessary. The last category includes Prophets, the truthful and those who bear witness to the truth and the righteous.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā sheds light on the three categories mentioned by Al-Aṣḥānī. He starts the book with the obligatory category (pp. 39–40) and emphasizes on it in other places (pp. 42, 52). By this repetition Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā tries to stress on the importance of the obligatory religious acts because nothing other than it is better in keeping the Muslim near to Allah: “And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him” (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb Al-Tawāḍu': Abū Hurayrah: #6502). Then he refers to the second category in (p. 60) and then the third in (p. 56). In addition, he gives examples of the care of the companions and the righteous in learning *wara'* and checking on it regularly so as not to neglect it (p. 51).

Interestingly, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gathered Hadiths and narrations concerning *waraʿ* of different organs of the body: sight, hearing, smelling, tongue, hands and stomach. As for the sight, he focuses on lowering one's gaze so that one avoids seeing or staring at unlawful things and that the first sudden gaze is not harmful but the second could be (p. 64). Due to this, the Prophet (SAW) taught us to turn away our sight when it happens (p. 65). This is because a continuous look causes a desire to start in one's heart (p. 8). Sneaking inside the houses and private places is considered a loss of the trust (p. 66). In hearing, he mentions examples of those who showed *waraʿ* in listening to a flute (p. 68) and the reward for that (p. 71) as well as the punishment for those who eavesdrop (p. 73). In smelling, he gives examples of the righteous Muslims who prefer bad smell over smelling a nice smell from a forbidden woman (p. 74). As for the tongue, he states Hadiths and narrations pointing out the importance of that organ, which needs *waraʿ* the most (pp. 76–77). Similarly, for the hands he mentions the advice of the Prophet (SAW) to one companion not to use his hands for anything but the good (p. 80). Further, having *waraʿ* in regard to one's stomach means not to eat or drink anything besides *ḥalāl* foods and drinks as it is a reason for Allah's answering one's supplications (p. 83). Thus, having *waraʿ* in all the body's organs is an essential step for the purification of the heart, as the organs may not act in a good way unless the soul is purified and is ready to be filled with all the good.

3.3.2.12 *Al-Yaqīn* [certainty]

Al-Yaqīn is an action of the heart. According to Al-Saʿdī (2000), *yaqīn* is the "Absolute knowledge in which there is no doubt at all and it requires action" (p. 40).

Ibn Qayyim (2003) gives a crucial status to *yaqīn* when it comes to faith (p. 2/374).

He resembled the status of *yaqīn* to faith with that of the soul to the body. Thus, *yaqīn* is the highest rank of faith, which points to the level of *Ihsān*, the highest level of faith a Muslim may reach. Hence, *yaqīn* is very crucial and when it is present it strengthens all the other actions both, physical and in the heart. Similarly, if *yaqīn* is absent it weakens them. Indeed *al-tawakkul*, which has been discussed above, is one primary result of *yaqīn*. Meaning that, when the Muslim acquires *yaqīn*, he is certain in Allah's creed and wisdom in everything and so he puts his full trust in Him and moves forward. This in return allows the soul to be purified of any bad deeds and helps it to obtain the good.

Furthermore, *yaqīn* also results in the tranquility and peace of the soul, which reflects on the individual's actions by being obedient to Allah in all that He has commanded and forbidden. In fact, *yaqīn* removes uncertainty and hesitation and replaces it with certainty, trust and content. It also results in many actions of the heart such as *tawakkul*, *tawbah* and *Husn al-zān bi-llah* (good expectation from Allah). *Yaqīn* is as well one of the good reasons that helps the individual to perform acts of the worship and urges what is right and forbids what is wrong. This is because *yaqīn* prevents the entrance of suspicions and desires into the heart and carries away any slackening while performing religious duties.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā (1993) tried his best to introduce the concept of *yaqīn* from all its aspects. He also shed light on the influence of *yaqīn* on the Muslim's life and how it helps directly in acquiring many of the Islamic good manners that are involved in the process of purifying one's soul. On page (16) he mentions a Hadith, which was among the Prophet's supplications to Allah. In this Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) asked Allah to grant him *yaqīn*. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā also states a supplication by Abū Bakr Al-Siddīq asking Allah to grant him *yaqīn* as well

(pp. 19–20). This shows the importance of supplication to Allah at all stages of a Muslim's life.

To reflect on the importance of *yaqīn*, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā states several narrations referring to that. For instance, he mentions a narration by Abū Bakr Al-Siddīq in which he mentions that *yaqīn* is the best of things a Muslim may acquire (pp. 14–15). The same is reflected in the Hadith of the Prophet (SAW), as the Prophet urges Muslims to ask Allah to grant them *yaqīn* and good health, as they are the best of things in the world (p. 24). Furthermore, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā was more focused on the positive effects of *yaqīn* on the individual as well as the negative effects when *yaqīn* is weakened or neglected. Among the positive influences of *yaqīn* is that it alleviates the afflictions of life (pp. 16, 28–29), it is one of the causes for an individual to be removed from the fire of Hell (p. 17), it helps one to pray humbly (p. 25) and brings relief after hardship (p. 29). On the other hand, if *yaqīn* is weak it lessens the individual's trust in what Allah has for him (p. 34) and it is a cause for more flaws in his faith (p. 27).

3.3.3 Purification Of The Soul Through Keeping Away From Fatalities [*al-muhlikāt*]

Fatalities are any beliefs, actions or sayings that end up the individual to be confronted with danger at the level of his hereafter life and also his worldly life. This is because Allah (SWT) does not forbid something unless it is harmful or causes damage or hurt in any way: “who makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful, and relieves them of their burdens, and the iron collars that were on them” (Al-Qur'an. Al-A'raf 7:157)¹⁴⁷. As well as clarified in this āyah: “They ask you [Prophet] about intoxicants and gambling: say, ‘There is great sin in both, and some

benefit for people: the sin is greater than the benefit” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:219)¹⁴⁸. Thus, such fatalities negatively affect the process of purification and may stop it or cause it to work in a manner contrary to what it should be, and thus resulting in the failure of the individual. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā composed four books introducing four crucial types of fatalities:

3.3.3.1 *Dham Al-Dunyā* [castigation of the worldly life]

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an: “My people, the life of this world is only a brief enjoyment; it is the Hereafter that is the lasting home” (The Qur’an. Ghāfir 40:39). There are also many other Qur’anic āyahs, which dispraise the life of this world and invite people to exploit their efforts for the hereafter. Those who hold on to the false life of the world, yearning for material benefits may be distracted from obedience, worship and performing their religious duties on time and in the desired manner. It also deprives them from purifying their souls. As narrated in Al-Bukhārī, the Prophet (SAW) urges Muslims to be in this world like a stranger or a wayfarer in order not to avoid losing the correct balance of favouring the hereafter over the worldly life: An illustration of this point can be found in a Hadith narrated by ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar said who said, “Allah’s Messenger (SAW) took hold of my shoulder and said: “Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: #6416).

As his habit, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started this book with an alarming Hadith that shows the status of the worldly life in the sight of Allah and that it is more insignificant than a dead sheep that was left behind by its owner carelessly. The following Hadith magnifies this point, “If the world to Allah was equal to a mosquito’s wing, then He would not allow a disbeliever to have a sip of water from it”

(Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1993: 11–13). Also, the world is a prison for the Muslim and a paradise for the disbeliever as stated in the Hadith: “The world is a prison for a believer and a Paradise for a non-believer” (p. 14–15). This is because, no matter how luxurious his worldly life is, it is nothing compared to the comfort that awaits him in paradise. And on the contrary, no matter how miserable the life of the non-believer is, it is nothing compared to the misery in hellfire.

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā provides a Hadith that compares between the reality of worldly life and the hereafter: “This world in comparison with the Hereafter is (similar to the amount of water) one gets when he puts his finger in the sea. Let him then see what it returns with” (p. 18). Then, he mentions a saying for ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb that shows being ascetic in life is a comfort for both, the heart and the body (pp. 80–81). Another comparison is presented in a Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) saying: “Two hungry wolves free among sheep, one at the beginning of the herd and the other is at the end, are no more destructive to them than a man’s desire for wealth and honour are to his religion” (p. 151–152). This Hadith indicates the ending scene of those who desire wealth and worldly matters while ignoring the priority of their religion. As such, they will end up corrupting their religion and hence, losing their hereafter.

3.3.3.2 *Dham Al-Muskir* [castigation of intoxicant]

Islam takes an uncompromising stand towards intoxicants and forbids their consumption in either small or large quantities. Intoxicants are undoubtedly harmful and adversely affect the mind and the body. They cloud the mind, cause diseases, waste money and destroy individuals, families and communities. Therefore, it is undoubtedly one of the fatalities that harms humans and never helps in the process of

purifying the soul. Due to this, Islam forbids them for the greater benefit of people as stated earlier.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā relates narrations about the evil and harmfulness that lies in all intoxicants. He also includes narrations that show the prohibition of intoxicants. He starts his book with a part of a sermon said by ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, in which he narrates a story said by the Prophet (SAW) about a religious man who worshipped Allah most of his time, but he was seduced by a woman to drink some wine and caused him to fall into the forbidden and perform an evil act. Thus, the Prophet (SAW) then commented: “So avoid wine, for by Allah, faith and addiction to wine cannot coexist but, one of them will soon expel the other” (1992: 28–29). The religious man chose the wine thinking it would be the least harmful of the other things he may fall into, but he actually fell into them all after drinking the wine. Due to this, wine is known as the mother of all evils (*om al-khabā’ith*).

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā states a narration by the Prophet (SAW) teaching Muslims how to deal with grapes and fruits that were used to make wine (pp. 34–35). He also mentions many narrations on forbidding wine throughout the book. He even goes into detail by stating a Hadith that forbids Muslims to use wine for medication that reads: “Allah does not put cure in the forbidden” (pp. 37–38). Then, he talks about the punishment of those who drink wine and how they will not be allowed to drink from the wine of the Paradise (pp. 39–40). Another tougher punishment is determined in the following Hadith: “Whoever drinks wine, Allah will not be pleased with him for forty days, and if he dies, he dies as a non-believer, but if he repents, Allah will accept his repentance and if he does it again, then it is a right upon Allah to make him drink from the *mud* of *Khibāl* on the Day of Resurrection.”

Om Salamh said: O, Messenger of Allah! What is the *mud* of *Khibāl*? He said: “The pus of the people of hell” (p. 46).

Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentioned many stories about people who drank wine and committed sins or fell into evil actions. However, he interestingly mentioned some companions and others than them who refused to drink wine during their life even before they became Muslims as they saw and witnessed how it sheds the man’s mind and turns him into an unconscious state that would humiliate him or even get him into trouble and faults (pp. 68–69).

3.3.3.3 *Dham Al-Malāhī* [castigation of pastimes]

This book points out all that is a pastime, which wastes time on non-beneficial things and hence, deprives the Muslim from worshipping Allah (SAW) and drags him to an evil ending. Musical instruments, chess, gambling and homosexuality were all considered as pastimes in this book. Thus, most of these things are actually forbidden in Islam and any forbidden act or behaviour means it is neither positive nor good and it, surely, effects the life and afterlife of the Muslim and, in turn, breaks down the process of purifying the soul as a whole.

Using the word *malāhī* in its broader sense, Ibn abī Al-Dunyā denounces not only music but also instruments of diversion like: backgammon, chess and pigeon-flying. He also includes narrations on gambling and pederasty. He starts the book with a warning Hadith mentioning the punishment for those who use forbidden musical instruments and drink intoxicants (p. 23). Although the Hadith mentioned is *munkar*¹⁰⁴, it is narrated from another way as *da‘īf*¹⁰⁵ in (p. 26): “In this Ummah there

¹⁰⁴ A Hadith by a weak narrator that goes against another authentic Hadith.

¹⁰⁵ A Hadith with either discontinuity in the chain of narrators or with a criticised narrator.

shall be collapsing of the earth, transformation and *Qadhf*.” ‘Ā’ishah (RA) said: “O Messenger of Allah! Even when they testify that there is no God but Allah?” He said: “If singing slave-girls spread, usury, drinking intoxicants and silk is worn, then it is then.” Furthermore, all the narrations follow until (p. 38) talk about the same content of the starting Hadith.

In a subsequent section of his book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā moves to another controversial topic concerned with buying, selling and teaching singing slave-girls (pp. 38–41). He provides a narration by Mujāhid commenting on the āyah: “But there is the sort of person who pays for distracting tales,” saying: it is singing. (p. 42). Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentioned narrations on the prohibition of sodomy, its punishment and the legal ruling for those who falsely accuse others with sodomy (pp. 93–101). He then talked about lesbians and their crime and punishment (pp. 102–108). He also talked about effeminacy, which is the manifestation of traits in a boy or a man that are associated with feminine nature, behaviour, mannerisms, style or gender roles. He also mentioned a number of legal decisions concerning them (pp. 112–119).

3.3.3.4 *Makā'id Al-Shayṭān* [plots of Satan]

The subject of this book is very important. Although the narrations gathered for this topic are few, it succeeded in conveying the intended message. In spite of the fact that the plot of the Satan is weak, but unfortunately many Muslim fall into his trap. The Satan tends to use many strategies and techniques to achieve his aim. Therefore, knowing these tactics is very important for every Muslim to avoid falling into his plots. As mentioned earlier in chapter two, the plots of the Satan are one of the main

causes of Muslims deviating from the straight path. It also stands as a barrier to them achieving purification of their souls.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā includes other topics related to Satan such as, the nature of Satan, his plots and tactics and how to be protected from him. Another topic presented relates to the types of Jinn, their dwelling places, their reaction to the Qur'an and many other topics that are not of direct concern to the topic of this thesis. However, concerning the topic of this thesis, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions one of the Satan's plots in leading Muslims astray: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The Satan will come to you and say: 'Who created you?' And the man replies: 'It is Allah.' Then he will say: 'Who created Allah?' So if anyone of you reaches that, let him say: 'I believe in Allah and in His Messenger,' as it helps to stop it" (n.d.: 49).

Furthermore, another plot mentioned in the book that Satan may use against Muslims is the beautification of this worldly life. It is among the Satan's plots to make the Muslim chase behind the desires of the worldly life and move from one enjoyment to another eventually forgetting the afterlife (p. 60). Another trick of the Satan is to misguide women. If they do not comply with what Allah commanded them to do and avoid what He has forbidden, they end up tools of the Satan used to mislead Muslims and pull them into fault (p. 62). The book also mentions the plot of Satan toward the Prophets (SAW), the companions and righteous people. Interestingly, a narration is stated in the book which indicates that the Satan becomes even more sad than the family of the dead if the person died without falling into one of his plots (p. 52).

3.3.4 Purification Of The Soul Through Stimulants [*al-munabbihāt*]

Stimulants here are meant to be as alarms that warn the Muslim of a miserable ending, a dreadful sequences of events or simply something that brings about an inner awakening toward a near-future reality he is forgetting. It helps in the purification of the soul in the way that it prevents him from proceeding into a sinful act and reminds him to take advantage of time to increase his performance of good deeds. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduced ten books that are considered stimulants that help in purifying the soul:

3.3.4.1 *Al-I'tibār Wa A'qāb Al-Surūr Wa Al-Aḥzān* [lessons and the sequences of happiness and sadness]

Happiness and sadness are both considered a trial, like the alternation of good and evil in the Muslim's life. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an, "Every soul is certain to taste death: We test you all through the bad and the good, and to Us you will all return" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Anbiyā' 21:35)¹⁴⁹. In another ayah Allah (SWT) says, "Who created death and life to test you [people] and reveal which of you does best" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Mulk 67:2)¹⁵⁰. Thus, all these different situations the Muslim may go through some or all of it and what matters is his stance in these situations. Hence, if the trial he faces is a reward and a blessing, then his stance will be between thankfulness or ingratitude: "Whether he was grateful or not" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Insān 76:3)¹⁵¹. And if the trial he faces is a tribulation, then his stance will be between contentment and patience or discontent and despair.

Moreover, through these situations the truthful faith and strength of the belief of the Muslim will be shown according to his stance: "Do people think they will be left alone after saying 'We believe' without being put to the test? * We tested those who

went before them: God will certainly mark out which ones are truthful and which are lying” (Al-Qur’an. Al-‘Ankabūt 29:2–3)¹⁵². The alternation of trials through life indicates as well that life is changeable and unsteady, therefore the Muslim should bear this in mind to cope with it.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduces at the beginning of this book the inconsistency of the worldly life and that after sadness comes happiness and after relief may come hardship and vice versa (1993: 27–30). For example, he mentions the story of Ḥuraqah Bint Al-Nu‘mān Ibn Al-Munthir and how her life changed from luxury and wealth to hardship and poverty after her father’s death¹⁰⁶ (pp. 31–34). Another example, is when the son of Sulaymān Ibn ‘Abd Al-Malik died, he asked ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Azīz: “Does a believer be patient until he does not find any pain for his calamity?” He replied: O Leader of the Faithful! It is not equal for you what you like and dislike, but the believer depends on patience” (pp. 41–42). This narration points out the important role of patience when trials take place. A solution Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā presents for Muslims during trials. Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā continues to introduce examples and stories of life trials and how people reacted to them.

3.3.4.2 *Dhikr Al-Mawt* [recalling the death]

Death is the reality that everyone will face one day. An experience every human being will go through when leaving this worldly life. The Prophet (SAW) said: “Frequently remember the destroyer of enjoyment”¹⁰⁷ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bāb Dhikr Al-Mawt: Abū Hurayrah: #2307). The meaning of this Hadith is to recall death frequently because it reminds the Muslim of the

¹⁰⁶ Her father was working under Kisrā, the King of Persia, and one day Kisrā got angry at him and locked him up until he died.

¹⁰⁷ Hadith Ḥasan Gharīb (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2307).

hereafter. Recalling death also causes the Muslim's heart to soften, it helps the soul to be purified and encourages the Muslim to do more good deeds and avoid sinful acts. That is because; it is this worldly life in which deeds are accepted, while after death the deeds stop. Even the chance to repent will not be possible after death. Recalling death also helps to reduce long hopes that were discussed earlier in this thesis. It reminds the Muslim that facing death is an undoubtable reality that will arrive one day and within which all the enjoyments and entertainment of life will come to an end: "Every soul will taste death and you will be paid in full only on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is kept away from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have triumphed. The present world is only an illusory pleasure" (Al-Qur'an. Āl-Imrān 3:185)¹⁵³.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā provides numerous narrations that talk about death from all its aspects. He mentions several issues that are related to death that which occurs before death, while dying and after being dead. For example, he refers to the importance of being prepared for death, the different states of people while dying, signs of good ending, thinking well of Allah and His mercy and the meeting between the souls of old dead people with those that recently died. Thus, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions many narrations on the ending of righteous people's lives, among whom was 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (pp. 18–24). Then, he provides narrations about death being pleasant and the deceased not preferring to go back to the worldly life (pp. 26–27). He sheds light on the positive side of death and how it is when the Muslim is accepted by Allah and receives his book with his right hand, which is the ultimate goal of all Muslims (pp. 36–38). He devotes a section to things that help the Muslim to remember death. For example, by imagining the final scene and the funeral day and what comes after it and by visiting graveyards (p. 86–87).

Furthermore, he presents narrations on the status of both the believer and non-believer in their graves, either being a piece of paradise or a piece of hell (p. 145–148). He also talks about the questions every human being will be asked after he is put into his grave (pp. 148–149). He also discusses the reaction of the universe, the sky and earth, whenever a believer dies, as the sky and earth will cry on his departure from this worldly life, unlike the non-believer (pp. 160–162): “Neither heavens nor earth shed a tear for them” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Mujādalah 44:29)¹⁵⁴. Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā even referred to the ethics and morals of the Muslim towards the dead and that they are not supposed to be mentioned only in a good way, recalling their goodness and keeping silent towards their badness (p. 169). Thus, all these informative narrations serve a beneficial role that the Muslim should understand and act upon accordingly.

3.3.4.3 *Ṣifat Al-Nār* [hellfire: a descriptive account]

Talking about hellfire and describing it is part of the unseen. However, numerous āyahs and Hadiths are available on this topic. It stands as an alarm or an alert that warns sinful Muslims and disbelievers to avoid it, as it is not something pleasant or preferable to end up in: “They will have layers of Fire above them and below. This is how God puts fear into His servants: My servants, beware of Me” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Zumar 39:16)¹⁵⁵. Thus, this helps in the process of purifying the soul by encouraging the Muslim to always look for what pleases Allah (SWT) and to avoid all that He has forbidden.

Furthermore, this book handles part of the psychological aspect, which disparages Allah’s commands and His forbids. It works on purifying the individual’s soul through fear and the miserable endings of those who do not comply with Allah’s

commands. Allah says in the Qur'an: "[Prophet], tell My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful, but My torment is the truly painful one" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Hijr 15:49–50)¹⁵⁶. Though hellfire is a place no one would like to go to. In contrast, the pious perform deeds that will save them from going there. This is why Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah is quoted in this book saying: "Hell is created as a mercy, for Allah injects its fear in his creatures that they might refrain from bad deeds" (1997: 95).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā begins this book by a Hadith, in which the Prophet (SAW) advises Muslims to seek refuge in Allah (SWT) from hellfire (pp. 13–14). He, then, talked about the number of gates of hellfire, their description and degrees (pp. 18–21). In describing its depth, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduces a number of Hadiths, For example: It is related by Abū Hurayrah that he and the companions were sitting with the Prophet (SAW) and they heard a noise of something falling. The Prophet (SAW) said: "Do you know what is this?" They said: "Allah and His Prophet know best." He said: "This is a stone that fell in hellfire, since seventy years and it has just reached the bottom of hellfire" (p. 23). More terrifying, is the description of the non-believer's body when he is put into hellfire: "The molar tooth of an unbeliever or the canine teeth of an unbeliever will be like *Uhud* and the thickness of his skin is a three night's journey" (p. 29). He also talks about the drink and food of the people of hellfire (pp. 59–69). Furthermore, he provides narrations on the different types of torment in hellfire (pp. 86–98) and the cry of the people of hellfire (pp. 131–161).

3.3.4.4 *Al-'Uqūbāt* [the punishments]

The topic of this book is among the other topics referred to earlier, which Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā is considered to be the first to write about in a separate book. Doing so sheds light on the topic and adds extra focus to it. This book is focused on the reasons

and types of punishments that occur due to people's sins and disobedience of Allah: "If the people of those towns had believed and been mindful of God, We would have showered them with blessings from the heavens and earth, but they rejected the truth and so We punished them for their misdeeds" (Al-Qur'an. Al-A'rāf 7:96)¹⁵⁷. Thus, knowing these punishments and their causes is greatly beneficial for the Muslim. It enables him to avoid the causes and be aware of any related sinful acts. It also encourages him to work hard and faithfully in order to achieve purification of his soul and be blessed with Allah's acceptance. It stands as an example to learn from and it provides lessons from other individuals, societies and nations as well.

Furthermore, Allah's punishment may be limited to individuals, a society or a whole nation, as the full title of the book implies: *Al-'Uqūbāt al-ilāhiyyah lil-Afrād wa al-jama'aāt wa al-umam*. The book includes topics such as types of punishments, reasons for Allah's punishment, examples of Allah's punishment of individuals, societies, nations, angels and animals and the importance of asking Allah for His forgiveness and regretting the committing of sins. Within this notion of reward and punishment, Muslims may succeed in purifying their souls from everything that may hinder their purity and sincerity to Allah (SWT).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduces this book by talking about the reasons behind Allah's punishment and its types (1996: 18–69). He starts first with a Hadith that sums up the main reason behind Allah's punishment, sins: "The people will not perish until their sins and faults become abundant, and there remains no excuse for them" (p. 18). The love of the worldly life and dislike of death are indirect reasons for punishment, because they lead the Muslim to fall into sins (pp. 21–22). Also, punishment may occur when Muslims stop enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong, leaving wrong doers carelessly without any advice or reform (pp. 41–43). Then, he gives

examples from stories of the Prophets (SAW) with their people, how they reacted to Allah's commands and what was their punishment (pp. 69–166).

Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā points out through some narrations that punishment is sometimes delayed but that does not mean it will not occur (pp. 168–169). He also devoted some narrations on punishments for talking badly about the Prophet's companions (pp. 199–200). He refers to a Hadith that describes the state of Muslims during hardships and trials (p. 208). Notably, he ends the book with a Hadith by which he intends to convey to the Muslim that supplication to Allah is one of the causes to survive from punishments (p. 226).

3.3.4.5 *Al- 'Umr wa Al-Shayb* [age and grey hair]

Grey hair in Islam is a blessing. Those who spend their youth in the cause of Allah complying with His commands and avoiding what He has prohibited, when they grow older and grow grey hair they will have by each grey hair a good deed and will be raised a degree in paradise: "Grey hair is a believer's light. No man grows grey hair in Islam, but it is for every grey hair that he gets a good deed and is raised a degree" (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1992: 9). Also, Muslims are forbidden to wish for death as being alive is a blessing from Allah with lots of good deeds and rewards for them if their lives are in the way of Allah. The topic of this book also indicates the importance of time in the life of the Muslim as every minute and even second counts. Thus, it is important for the elders after reaching old age and growing grey hair to take lessons and work hard, as it is a reminder for them that life is ending as it had started for them when they were babies. The importance of this book in relation to purification of the soul is that it reminds the Muslim of life's ending and that beyond that is the Day of

Judgment. Therefore, it also encourages Muslims to perform more good and repent to Allah for all their sins and faults before it is too late to do so.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā devotes this book to making emphasis on the value of time and age in one's life. He collected about ninety narrations in this book, which were distributed over various topics such as, the grace of long life, especially when it is accompanied with good deeds, the respect that should be shown from youths towards the elders and the lessons drawn from being old and growing grey hair. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā begins this book with a Hadith about two bedouins who came to the Prophet (SAW) and one of them asked him, "Who is the best of people?" The Prophet (SAW) replied: "Whose life is long and his deeds are good" (pp. 45–46). This Hadith refers to the blessings of living long and that grey hair is a one of the symbols of it.

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā points out the encouragement of the Prophet (SAW) for the Muslims to change the colour of their grey hair and dye it with a colour that is different from black (pp. 48–50). The reason for this is not for being shy about grey hair, but rather to be distinguished from the people of the Book (i.e., Jews and Christians), as they tend to leave their grey hair without dying. He also talks about the necessity of showing respect to the elders (p. 53). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā ends this book with a narration that indicates the importance of time in a Muslim's life and how they should manage it wisely in performing the good deeds: Al-Ḥasan said, "I saw people who were more stingy for their time than their stinginess for their money" (p. 81).

3.3.4.6 *Al-Qubūr* [graves]

Graves are the first residency of the hereafter (known as *ḥayāt al-barzakh*): "The grave is the first stage of the Hereafter. Whoever is delivered from it, what comes

after it is easier. If he is not delivered from it, then what comes after it is harder”¹⁰⁸ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bāb 5: ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān: #2308). Every human being will go through three stages or residencies: the worldly life, the life in grave (*ḥayāt al-barzakh*) and the everlasting home (i.e., hellfire or paradise). Thus, the grave is either a garden among the gardens of paradise or a pit among the pits of hellfire. In relation to purification of the soul, this book implies the same positive effect that other previous books concerned with the unseen, such as *Ṣifat Al-Nār* and *Dhikr Al-Mawt*, implies. It encourages the Muslim to perform more good deeds and keep away from the forbidden.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā compiled in this book a great number of narrations that are all related to the grave and death. Due to the importance of this book and the way it was composed, many scholars were reported to quote from it. Also, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā is considered to be the first to write a book on this kind of genre. The book includes topics such as drawing lessons from funerals, writings found on some graves, the Day of resurrection and the dead that spoke advice from their graveyards. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions narrations about people who dreamt about graveyards and got to know through their dream some of what happens inside it and how the dead are treated differently according to their faith and good deeds (pp. 47–48). Also, among the narrations is the story related by Yahyā Ibn Jābir who said that Abū Al-Dardā’ attended a funeral one day and he went to visit the family of the dead and found them crying on him, he said: “Poor them, a dead of tomorrow is crying on the dead of today” (pp. 64–65).

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions some narrations on the proper behaviour Muslims should practice during and after the funeral. For example, showing

¹⁰⁸ Hadith Ḥasan Gharīb (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2308).

sadness, not laughing and showing respect for the feelings of the family's dead (pp. 67–79). He also states narrations on how people will be called out of their graves witnessing that there is no God but Allah and being afraid of what awaits them (pp. 80–87). Then, he refers to many narrations that deal with the torment of the grave (pp. 94–100). With these narrations the reason behind the torment is sometimes explicit, which influence the reader and softens the heart and gives encouragement toward being ready for such an experience, which everyone will face one day.

3.3.4.7 *Kalām Al-Layālī Wa Al-Ayyām* [talks of nights and days]

This is one of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's creative topics, which nothing of a similar nature has been compiled before. It is based on the talks of days and nights to human beings by way of a sermon and what humans think of day and night. It points out the importance of time and the necessity of making use of it properly as life, no matter how long, is short. It also provides lessons taught from incidents that happen during the days and nights.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā begins this book with the following Hadith (1997: 13): “Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says, ‘O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your Cause,’ and the other (angel) says, ‘O Allah! Destroy every miser’” (Hadith: Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Zakāh: Bāb Qawlillahi Ta‘ālā Fa’ammā man A‘tā Wattaqā: #1347). This Hadith talks about a good and a bad doing that people may perform within their day and the result of each one of them by way of a lesson. Then, he provides narrations in which the day and night give a piece of advice to people to perform good because once they leave they do not come back and thus is the nature of all the days of life. For this reason, the Muslim should be alert concerning his time management and the good deeds done in that time (pp. 16–

21). Also, days will act as witnesses to what people do and say in them on the Day of Judgment (p. 24). Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā states a narration related by Abū Al-Dardā' saying: "O son of Ādam! You are but days, so whenever a day passes, some of you is gone as well. O son of Ādam! You are still tearing down your life since your mother gave birth to you" (p. 25). This indicates the reality of every individual's life being short enough to work hard with faithfulness and sincerity, as the more one proceeds forward in his life the nearer he is to lay down in grave. All these points mentioned above help a person in the process of purifying the soul by avoiding sins and doing what is right.

3.3.4.8 *Al-Muḥtaḍirīn* [moribunds]

The experience of death is a one that every human being will go through. It is not an optional choice nor can it be retried. This book is not a book of horror nor is it a book of fairytales. The choice of the topics and narrations all point to the persistent intentions of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā for reform. Talks of death at any stage usually help to soften the heart and purify the soul. The moments of leaving the worldly life and leaving everything behind, family, spouse, children, friends, money, business, home, etc., and heading into the unknown are very critical moments of each person's life. Thus, listening to what people say before they die is very insightful and it is part of revealing the unseen sometimes because some of those on deathbed tend to say what they see in front of them as part of the world they will be leaving to: "You paid no attention to this [Day]; but today We have removed your veil and your sight is sharp" (The Qur'an. Qāf 50:22). According to Al-Ṭabarī, what is meant by 'sharp sight' in the āyah is that now when death came and the truth is revealed to you, you know everything clearly and you know what you have done in your worldly life and whether

it is right or wrong because everything is now unveiled to you like never before (2001: 21/435).

Among the topics mentioned in this book are: having good expectations of Allah while on the deathbed, consoling oneself with patience while on the deathbed, poetry on the bed of death and the sayings of the Prophet (SAW), righteous successors, and princes and kings while on the deathbed. Thus, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts this book with the important scene of being on the deathbed. It is a blessing from Allah to succeed in saying *al-shahādah* before death: “Prompt your dying ones to say *lā ilāhā illāllah* (there is none worthy of worship except Allah” (1997: 17). This is also considered part of the right of the Muslim upon his Muslim brother. In another narration the Hadith gives some explanation regarding doing so before death as the *shahādah* wipes away all the previous sins and faults and it is a reason for entering paradise (pp. 18, 20).

In the next section, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā moves to writing on good expectations from Allah when death comes: “Allah says, ‘I am to my slave as he thinks of Me. Let him think of Me what he wants’” (p. 32). He mentions the final words of the Prophet (SAW), which were: “Prayer, prayer; and fear Allah about those whom your right hands possess (i.e., wives)” (pp. 43–44). Surely, the final words of the last Prophet of the Prophets (SAW) is extremely important, which means prayers and giving women their rights were of his primary concerns for his people. Then, he states many examples of righteous people who are on the deathbed and what their final words were (pp. 109–129).

3.3.4.9 *Al-Maraḍ Wa Al-Kaffarāt* [sickness and penance]

Sickness is one among numerous types of trials and hardships that may occur during the life of a Muslim. Sickness is among the tests of the worldly life. Each trial in life holds a different test by which the Muslim is tested according to his reaction to that trial. As for the Muslim, he should receive all kinds of trials with acceptance and content. This is because he believes that everything that comes from Allah is good and that everything happens to him, even if apparently was bad, is for his good: “You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you: God knows and you do not” (The Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:216). On the other hand, sickness is not a preferable thing, and so the Muslim should do his or her best to keep their life healthy and clear from diseases to have the strength to worship Allah well. However, if even by doing so he falls ill, then he is asked to do his best to look for remedies and be patient and content with Allah’s decree at the same time. In relation to purification of the soul, sickness does soften the heart and purify the soul. Sick people are usually nearer than others to their Creator and Curer (SWT). In sickness also lies the reward of penance and a means for higher degrees in paradise for those who show content and do not object to Allah’s decree.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā collected more than two hundred narrations on sickness and how it stands as a penance for sins. He views sickness from the Islamic perspective relating narrations on the reward of accepting the sickness with satisfaction and on what to say when visiting someone who is sick. The book also includes topics on the reward for those who visit the sick and the ethics of such a visit. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose to begin his book with a Hadith that shows one of the Prophet’s (SAW) sicknesses with high fever and how he was content and patient regardless of his pains (1991: 14–16). This is because, the Prophet (SAW) is the

Ummah's exemplar and he is the one that all Muslims are trying to resemble in their reactions to life's hardships. The Hadith also indicates that trials are of degrees in their difficulty and that the Prophets (SAW) are the ones who receive the most difficult trials. Therefore, the difficulty of the trial depends on the strength of the faith of each Muslim.

The book indicates through narrations that sickness is a means for wiping out the sins of the sick (pp. 16–17). It also includes many Hadiths on the reward of visiting the sick and the ethics for this visit (pp. 64–70). It also provides many supplications that may be read for the sick during the visit (pp. 147–148). The book also mentions that the Prophet (SAW) used to read for himself *al-mu'awwidhāt* (i.e., the last three surahs in the Qur'an) (pp. 149–150). It states a very rewarding Hadith for those who suffer from sickness and diseases: "On the Day of Judgement, when the people who were tried (in this world) are given their rewards, the people who were pardoned (in life), will wish that their skins had been cut off with scissors while they were in the world" (pp. 159–160). It refers to the importance of supplication to Allah during sickness (pp. 173–174).

3.3.4.10 *Al-Ahwāl* [the book of horrors]

This book focuses on an unseen issue that has an effective role in purifying the soul. It stands as a reminder and an admonishment of the day of resurrection. Like hell, which is unseen, the horrors of the day of resurrection are meant for the purpose of causing people to fear disobeying Allah's commands. It is based on the notion of recompensation and punishment, which both should go in harmony. The horrors of the day of resurrection and the fact of being asked about everything one has done in life should urge people not to cheat, harm or oppress anyone.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduced topics such as, the *ṣūr*¹⁰⁹, the change of the earth other than the one we are living on, resurrection and the Reckoning Day. Thus, these topics all contain different degrees of horror as these are the days the Muslims will go through, which are very critical and determinate as there is no such a thing as a second try. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā starts this book with an inspiring and alarming Hadith that urges Muslims to initiate performing good deeds before it is too late to do so. The Hadith gives seven reasons that may hinder his performance of good deeds: “Hasten to do good deeds before you are overtaken by one of the seven afflictions. Are you waiting for poverty which will make you unmindful of devotion, or prosperity which will make you corrupt, or a disease which will disable you, or senility which will make you mentally unstable, or sudden death which will take you all of a sudden, or Al-Dajjāl who is the worst expected, or the Hour, and the Hour will be most grievous and most bitter” (1993: 27). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā presented this Hadith in his book because he is moving gradually toward describing the scenes one after the other beginning with the alarming signs that indicate we are drawing near the stage of the afterlife.

In one part of the book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions a Hadith that indicates the nearness of the Day of Judgment and this was during the time of the Prophet (SAW), so we can imagine how near is it then to our days now: “How can I be comfortable when the one with the horn is holding it in his lips and his forehead is leaning forward, waiting to be given permission to blow?” We said: “O Messenger of Allah! So what should we say?” He said: Say: “Allah is sufficient for us and what a good protector He is” (p. 82). In another page, he states the *tafsīr* of ‘ikrimah of the āyah: “When the Trumpet sounds” (The Qur’an. Al-Muddathir 74:8), as he says it means:

¹⁰⁹ It is the horn in which the angel *Isrāfīl* will blow under the command of Allah (SWT) when this worldly life comes to an end.

“When the trumpet is blown” (p. 85). Then, when ‘A’ishah (RA) asked the Prophet (SAW) where would the people be on the day when the earth would be changed with another earth and the Heaven would be changed with another Heaven, He said: “They would be on the *ṣirāṭ*¹¹⁰” (p. 101). He also provides Hadiths that describe the way people will rise from their graves on the day of resurrection (pp. 107–108). He also mentions many breathtaking scenes of that day. Thus, all these episodes of the hereafter help to soften the heart and assist in the process of purifying the soul.

3.3.5 Purification Of The Soul Through Glad Tidings [*al-mubashirāt*]

Glad tiding are a crucial part of the Muslim’s life in the journey through this world. It is a principle in Islam to create a balance between fear and hope, happiness and sadness, fear and safety and punishment and reward. Thus, glad tidings come in harmony with this balance, as it occupies the other scale pan with *al-munabbihāt* (the stimulants). In order for the Muslim to be tranquil and positive, there must be glad tidings in his or her life to encourage them through their journey and help them to stay steadfast. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā composed four books introducing four important tools of glad tidings (*al-mubashirāt*):

3.3.5.1 *Ḥusn Al-Zan Bi-llah* [good expectation from Allah]

This book focuses on the merit of expecting good from Allah (SWT) at all times. Thinking well of Allah manifests itself in believing in the means of salvations granted by Allah (SWT) and not otherwise. That is, thinking and expecting good from Allah usually benefits those who sincerely repent and are determined not to return to sins and to spend the rest of their lives in goodness, obedience and righteousness.

¹¹⁰ The bridge across hellfire.

Such a repentant person hopes to attain mercy through thinking well of Allah (SWT). Thus, this is how *Husn Al-Zan bi-llah* should be sought. This book entreats the Muslim to be optimistic, to repudiate hopelessness and to strive towards betterment through work, which greatly boosts the purification of the soul.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā begins this book with a Hadith that was said by the Prophet (SAW) just three days before his death: “None of you dies but only hoping good from Allah” (1993: 11–12). This Hadith indicates that *Husn Al-Zan bi-llah* leads to *Husn Al-Khātimah* (good ending). In another Hadith related by Abū Hurayrah, the Prophet (SAW) says: “Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, said: My mercy excels My wrath” (pp. 19–20). This Hadith shows How much merciful Allah (SWT) is with his slaves. Another Hadith that refers to Allah’s mercy is also reported by ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb: There were some prisoners brought to Allah’s Messenger (SAW) and amongst whom there was also a woman who was searching (for someone) and when she found a child amongst the prisoners, she took hold of it, pressed it against her chest and provided it nursing. Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said: “Do you think this woman would ever afford to throw her child in the Fire?” We said: “By Allah, so far as it lies in her power, she would never throw the child in Fire.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said: “Allah is more kind to His servants than this woman is to her child” (pp. 21–22). Thus, this Hadith is full of mercy and lenience by which Muslims should think of their Creator through it.

Furthermore, it is related in this book that they used to prefer to remind the person on the deathbed of his good deeds so that he thinks good of Allah and expects the good from Him (SWT) (p. 27). Another Hadith Qudsi¹¹¹ is mentioned in this book indicating Allah’s mercy and His urging of His slaves to believe in Him and in His

¹¹¹ It refers to Hadith in which the meaning is revealed by Allah and the phrasing is formulated by the Prophet (SAW).

mercy: “O son of Ādam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind...” (pp. 28–29). The book also states a very important warning Hadith directed to those who talk on behalf of Allah and make their own judgments on people. The book warns such people not to do so as it is not their business to judge people, but rather to call them to the right path and present their advice to them: The Prophet (SAW) stated that a person said: “Allah would not forgive such and such (person).” Thereupon Allah the Exalted and Glorious, said: “Who is he who adjures about Me that I would not grant pardon to so and so; I have granted pardon to so and so and blotted out his deeds” (pp. 36–37).

Again, as it is the habit of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā throughout his works that he would not merely focus on one aspect of the topic, but he tries through narrations to correct concepts as well since he is concerned in every book he introduces to make clear all the aspects of the topic to benefit the reader as much as possible. Thus, he states narrations that alert the reader not to depend on Allah’s mercy alone while persisting with sins and faults. Allah is merciful, but His punishment is also painful (pp. 47–48). The book ends with a Hadith full of positive thinking toward Allah (SWT): “Allah Has people whom He frees from the fire every night and day, and for each of them there is an answered supplication” (p. 90).

3.3.5.2 *Ṣifat Al-Jannah* [paradise: a descriptive account]

This book focuses on the psychological aspect that is based on the concept of recompensation and punishment. Thus, the two scales should be balanced. If recompensation outweighs punishment, there will be over-reliance, overstepping of Allah’s boundaries and overindulgence in life’s desires. On the other hand, if punishment outweighs recompensation, there will be desperation with which the

performance of good deeds will become very weak and may even be stopped. Allah (SWT) says: “And do not cause corruption to the earth after its reformation and call Him in fear and hope” (7: 56). The book works on purifying the individual’s soul through encouraging individuals to work hard and comply with Allah’s commands for a happy and bright ending. It also deals with a sensitive issue, which is the belief of Muslims in the unseen. It also gives hope to Muslims that things are not limited to what it is in the small, harsh worldly life, but after that is a luxurious, happy and joyful life in paradise.

The first Hadith in this book calls Muslims to endeavour for paradise and provides mention of some of its pleasures (1997: 39–40). Then, he proceeds to mention more Hadiths that talk about the enjoyment and pleasure in paradise with descriptions of its construction, its sand, yard, ceiling, etc. (pp. 43–50). He also provides a description of the dwellers of paradise; being youth and never growing old, full and never hungry again, healthy with no illness. Their hearts are pure towards each other, they praise Allah in the morning and in the evening (pp. 52–53). Then he mentions the number of degrees in paradise being a hundred, and describes the distance between one degree and another being as far as the earth is from the sky and that *firdaws* is the highest degree of them all (p. 94). The best reward however that the dwellers of paradise are given is Allah’s acceptance, and the best of that and the best of anything else they receive in paradise is the grace of seeing their Creator (SWT) (pp. 100–102).

The first food the people of paradise will be served is the caul of the fish liver (p. 109). They will have all that they desire or their soul wishes to the extent that even when they see a bird flying in paradise and desire to eat it, it will drop down grilled and ready to eat in front of them (p. 111). They do not need to visit the bathroom, nor

do they sweat (pp. 110–111). In paradise there are castles, especially made for some Muslims that resemble the white castle of ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb that was seen by the Prophet (SAW) (p. 142). Moreover, Muslims will be visiting each other in paradise and remembering their days in the worldly life, meaning that the social relationships are continued even in paradise (p. 177). The book was ended with a summary of what the Muslim expects in Paradise: “In paradise there is what no eye has seen, nor ear has heard and no human heart has conceived” (p. 232).

3.3.5.3 *Al-Faraj Ba’d Al-Shiddah* [relief after hardship]

The theme of this book brings back hope and calls for optimism. It is based on the notion of Muslim’s tranquility through their strong faith in Allah’s will and his destiny, being good or bad. This belief helps Muslims to pursue their life in peace of mind, optimism and calmness in thick and thin. Thus, there is no escape from facing hardship or going through trials in this life, because it is a testing life. Therefore, there are some ethics in dealing with trials and hardship when they occur. As Muslims, we believe that what comes from Allah is all good, no matter how bad it looks or sounds, but Allah knows best and we do not know, our knowledge is very limited. This is also related to *Husn Al-Zan bi-llah* (thinking good of Allah). Also, contentment and patience are two characteristics that must exist during trials to overcome them with success. *Du‘ā’* is the worship that is also involved in every aspect of the Muslim’s life along his journey. All these aspects included help in purifying the Muslim’s soul.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā collects more than one hundred narrations on topics such as: types of hardship, ways to bring relief after hardship and the power of *du‘ā’* (supplication). The book also features examples of people who experienced relief after hardship and the reward of showing patience during hardship. The book

begins by introducing a Hadith, which states that waiting for relief after hardship is considered a kind of worship (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1993: 10). This indicates the importance of positivity and urges Muslims to think of the good and to expect it after hardship rather than living with sadness and desperation, as that is in fact one of the Satan's aims. Then, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā moves to discuss another important aid in time of hardship, which is patience. He states the following Hadith: "No one is given a better or vaster gift than patience" (p. 12). Also, another tool mentioned in the book is *taqwā* (i.e., piety): "God will find a way out for those who are mindful of Him," Al-Rabī' Ibn Khaytham commented: "A way out from any hardship that faces people" (p. 13). He also focuses on the concept of good and bad decree and that there is nothing in this world that can happen to anyone without Allah's will (pp. 14–15). This adds calmness and tranquility to the Muslim's soul.

Moreover, among the aiding tools is *al-istighfār* (asking Allah for forgiveness) (p. 16) and saying *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billah* (there is no power or strength save in Allah) (pp. 18–19, 21). And in relation to the relief that follows hardship, the book states a narration for Ibn Mas'ūd, in which he says: "If hardship enters a tunnel, relief would come and enter with it," then he said, Allah (SWT) says: "For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease * truly where there is hardship there is also ease" (p. 28). Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions throughout the book different *thikr* (remembrance) and supplications that are considered aiding tools as well during the times of hardship.

3.3.5.4 *Al-Mutamannīn* [wishers]

This book is another masterpiece of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's creativity in choosing the topics and presenting them through writing. It is also one of the topics that has not

been written on before, which means it was totally Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's idea in composing such a book. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā tends through his writings to put his hand on problems he finds in his society and wishes to treat with lots of creativity and lenient. The whole book is devoted to 'wishes' of different people, with different statuses and different backgrounds. Whether good or bad, people wish for what is usually a reflection of their inner state. Therefore, getting to know what great people wish is important. Thus, the role of this book in purifying the soul is that it leaves an impression on the reader that resembles the books that deal with the life of the greats. It motivates the reader and introduces him to the mentality of great people and how they think and how far they look to the future with their visions. It encourages the Muslim to be a part of these great ambitions that are above shallow minded wishes or ones that are merely attached to this temporary life or to self-desires and materialistic things.

The first wish mentioned in the book was the one that every Muslim should wish for, because it represents the utmost level of love and obedience to Allah (SWT). That is to sacrifice with the most valuable thing a person has, his life, to be sacrificed in the cause of Allah (1997: 18–25). The first wish in the book was the wish of the Prophet (SAW) who is our model and exemplar. Then, the book states narrations of companions that wished they were a bird, a tree, sand or a non-living thing because they feel how heavy and hard the responsibility they have over them and in return, how precise the account will be on the Day of Judgment (pp. 25–27). Among the wishes, is 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb's wish to have a house full of men like Abū 'Ubaydah (pp. 37–38). Some people wish to cry non-stop out of fear from Allah (SWT). However, the Prophet (SAW) warns Muslims not to wish for death when they face hardship, but if they had too then they may ask Allah (SWT) to keep them alive if

being alive is better for them or to prescribe death upon them if it was better for them (p. 66).

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter purification of the soul at the individual level was discussed and analyzed according to the works of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā to shed light on the contributions he made in the field. Thirty-six books were analyzed in the process of compiling this chapter. They are classified into five main subcategories according to the theory of *purification and beautification*: *ibādah* (worship), *al-munjiyāt* (the deliverers), *al-muhlikāt* (the fatalities), *al-munabbihāt* (the stimulants) and *al-mubashshirāt* (the glad tidings). The analysis showed that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā succeeded in introducing every topic of his work in a comprehensive way, presenting different narrations and using a number of techniques to convey the messages he intended through his books. To him, every book is a masterpiece on its own that he gave lots of attention and effort to. Thus, the various topics introduced regarding the purification of the soul at the individual level and the comprehensive presentation of each topic will result in a great benefit for the reader. In addition, the reader will find what they seek within these books to be, introduced in a creative and well organized manner. Consequently, the next chapter will discuss the contributions made by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā on the topic of purifying the *nafs* but at the societal level this time. The study and analysis will also rely mainly on the books of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā involving thirteen books.