

CHAPTER FOUR

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

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, purification of the soul at the individual level was discussed and analyzed based on Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's works. The books that are related to the topic were first discussed to introduce the role of each book in purifying the soul at the individual level. Then, the content of each book was analyzed to present the contributions of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā through each book in purifying the soul at the individual level. In This chapter, purification of the soul at the societal level will be discussed and analyzed also based on Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's works. The same methodology for analysis that was adopted in the previous chapter will be applied in this chapter as well. The related topics of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's works will also be discussed in order to introduce the link between each topic and purification of the soul at the societal level. Afterwards, the content of each book will be analyzed to present the contributions of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā through each book. The books in this chapter are not categorized, as they are a total of only thirteen. For this reason, the researcher preferred to merely analyze them without any specific categorization.

4.2 Purification Of The Human Soul At The Societal Level

In the second chapter, purification of the soul from the Islamic perspective was established and discussed in detail. The discussion continued with purification of the soul on the individual level, in specific, it was discussed along with an analysis of Ibn

Abī Al-Dunyā's works that are related to the topic to highlight his contributions in that field. After purification of the soul is established at these two levels, it is important for the entire picture to be taken into consideration to establish purification of the soul on the societal level. Societies are like a building constructed from several individuals. Thus, the type, strength and quality of those constructing units will influence the resulting construction. Thus, social behaviours are actually the outcome of the education, manners and thoughts of the individuals residing that society. For example, character and manners are actually two sides of the same coin, two aspects of single ethical reality. Characters are the qualities that reside in the heart, and manners are the outward behaviour that people manifest. In other words, good manners are the result of good character. Therefore, it is crucial to learn about the methods of achieving a pure soul and the social behaviour that should follow it.

All fields of social life are usually attributed to the individual. For example, corrupted and torn families are usually so because of the neglect and ignorance of the individual members towards purifying their souls and their failure to follow the principles Islam has placed for people's social well-being and peace. Also, a quick glance at shopping places, factories and companies will reveal the inevitable need for its individuals to purify their souls. Only then, corruptions and ill manners, as well as, cheating and animosity will be prevented. It is worth noting that good manners have the same effect that laws have on a society. Beyond that, good manners and the observance of Allah tend to influence the behaviour of the individual within the society much more better. In other words, those who succeed in purifying their souls and controlling their desires and stopping bad behaviours are good individuals wherever they go, be it inside their countries or outside, and whether the laws in the area punish evil actions or not. Whereas those who comply only with the laws of

where they are settling are considered good citizens. Therefore, the regulations of Islam are based on developing quality individuals to establish virtuous societies and create an environment filled with peace and harmony.

Furthermore, the regulations of Islam have been set to accomplish two main aims. The first is to emphasize on monotheism and reinforce it through continuous efforts towards the purification of the soul. The second is to establish a Muslim society in which this monotheism arises and good manners flourish. For this reason, every Muslim is required to accomplish two duties at the same time because each one helps to accomplish the other. The first duty is to put efforts towards purification of the soul to reform it and perfect it. And the second duty is to put effort alongside the efforts of fellow Muslim brothers and sisters to establish an Islamic society that Allah (SWT) is pleased with.

4.3 Contributions Of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā In The Purification Of The Human Soul

At The Societal Level

Being a man of reform and one that held a responsibility towards the people of his time, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā applied Allah's command in the āyah: "Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones" (Al-Qur'an. Āl-'Imrān 3:104)¹⁵⁸. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā focused his efforts first on the individual, the corner stone from which the society is formed. Most of his works were introduced to help the individual to succeed in the process of purifying the soul. However, a significant part of his efforts was devoted to the purification of the soul at the societal level. It is insufficient to exclusively focus on the constituent element of the society (i.e., the individual) to perfect the final result, but indeed the final construction needs to be beautified and maintained as well. Due to

this, Ibn Abi Al-Dunya wisely distributed his effort throughout his works on both levels, the individual and the societal. This distribution is based on each level's need and requirement within which it functions best.

At the societal level, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā incorporated thirteen (13) of his works that directly dealt with purification of the soul. In chapter two, the approaches and methods set by Islam for the purification of the soul were discussed. Furthermore, the selected books in this chapter are not categorized, but are merely placed one after the other in an alphabetical order. The reason behind this is due to the small number of books that need to be analyzed. Also, almost all of the selected books fall into the category of social dealings and interaction, such as: financial, behavioural, moral, familial and social. Thus, the methodologies used in studying the books are descriptive and inductive. The given data is studied and analyzed to frame the efforts made by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in the field of purifying the soul at the societal level.

4.3.1 *Al-Ikhwān* [Brotherhood]

This book deals with the vital topic of brotherly rights and relations and the pure brotherly love for the sake of Allah. All Muslims in the world are brothers and sisters by the unity of Islam. However, love and harmony among people is only granted by Allah (SWT), He grants it to whom he wishes: "If they intend to deceive you, God is enough for you: it was He who strengthened you with His help, and with the believers, and brought their hearts together. Even if you had given away everything in the earth you could not have done this, but God brought them together" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Anfāl 8:62–63)¹⁵⁹. As an indication for the importance of brotherly love, it is sufficient to know that it is considered one of the most significant aspects in building societies and it is by the love of the companions among them and to him that the Prophet (SAW)

was able to build the first Islamic society. On the other hand, the absence of this quality among Muslims will negatively influence the unity of the Ummah and when the unity is affected it weakens the Muslims and makes them an easy prey for their enemies. The Qur'an summarizes this principle in the following āyah: "Hold fast to God's rope all together; do not split into factions. Remember God's favour to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace" (Al-Qur'an. Āl-ʿImrān 3:103)¹⁶⁰.

The brotherly love referred to in this book is one that is based on the love of Allah and love for His sake, and not for the sake of worldly benefits or to achieve certain personal needs: "On that Day, friends will become each other's enemies. Not so the righteous" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Zukhruf 43:67)¹⁶¹. It is this type of love that nurtures the society and benefits the Ummah. The best example given in this context is that when the Prophet (SAW) established between *Al-Muhājirīn* (immigrants who migrated from Makkah) and *Al-Anṣār* (the supporters who welcomed and supported the Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims when they migrated to Madīnah). *Al-Anṣār* supported the immigrants who were new to Madīnah, homeless and homesick. They shared everything with them; their homes, food, job, money and even their wives (i.e., those who had two wives would ask their immigrant brother to choose whom he liked to marry and the Anṣār man would divorce her and introduce her as a wife to the immigrant). It was such a wonderful and ideal bond established by the Prophet (SAW) that the whole world had never seen before. Thus, without this brotherly bond the Prophet Muḥammad's mission would have been hindered and maybe even stopped. It is in times of crisis and hardship that this type of bond is more apparent. Moreover, brotherhood is considered the highest rank of bonds, even higher than friendship. The Prophet (SAW) said, "If I were to take a best friend, I would have taken him (i.e., Abū

Bakr) as a best friend, but the Islamic brotherhood is better” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb Al-Nabī: Bāb Qawl Al-Nabī law Kuntu Muttakhidhan Khalīlan: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās: #3457).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in this book first sheds light on the significance and status of brotherhood. Then, he gives examples of intimacy among brothers and the rights of each brother upon the other. He started the book with a significant Hadith that points out that the most cemented bond of faith is love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allah (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1988: 35). He pointed out many of the rewards granted by Allah for those who have formed the bonds of brotherhood. For instance, they will be under the shade of Allah’s throne on the Day of Judgment, a day in which there is no shade but His (p. 39). The same is emphasized in the Hadith of the seven types of people who will be under the shade of Allah’s throne: “Seven (people) will be shaded by Allah by His shade on the Day of Resurrection when there will be no shade except His shade. (They will be)...two men who love each other for Allah’s sake” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Ḥudūd: Faḍā’il man Taraka Al-Fāwāḥish: #6806). The two Hadiths stress on the condition for these rewards, which is a love for Allah and not for anyone or anything else. Moreover, those in brotherhood will be upon podiums of light on the Day of Judgment and they will be admired by the Prophets and the martyrs (p. 48). Also, brotherhood for the sake of Allah obliges the love of Allah (p. 50).

Furthermore, those who love for the sake of Allah are among the Muslims who tasted the sweetness of faith (p. 61). The Hadith is also narrated by Al-Bukhārī (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Īmān: Bāb Ḥalāwat Al-‘Imān: #16). This shows that brotherhood is very much connected to the belief of the Muslim and that it is not only the true love that provides all of these promising rewards, but it is the sincerity to

Allah and the ties of the belief that counts. The Prophet (SAW) insists that the Muslim who loves his brother for the sake of Allah to tell him that he loves him (p. 115). This shows first the importance of love for the sake of Allah. Also, it indicates the significance of acquainting others of that love, which allows that love to grow and to have its positive sequences in real life.

Moreover, another Hadith is found in this book that points out to the element of faith involved in brotherly love: “Souls are like recruited troops: Those who are alike in qualities are inclined to each other, but those who have dissimilar qualities, differ” (p. 129). The Hadith refers to the rule mentioned in the Qur’an, which says: “Corrupt women are for corrupt men, and corrupt men are for corrupt women; good women are for good men and good men are for good women” (Al-Qur’an, Al-Nūr 24:26)¹⁶². This meaning is emphasized as well by another Hadith narrated in this book stating that a man is upon the religion of his friend and, thus, one should look at whom he befriends (p. 86). Due to this principle, the Prophet (SAW) advised Muslims to keep as close friends only those who are faithful (p. 92). Opposing this advice will cause a consequence that is mentioned in the Qur’an: “Woe is me! If only I had not taken so and so as a friend, he led me away from the Revelation after it reached me” (Al-Qur’an, Al-Furqān 25:28–29)¹⁶³.

4.3.2 *Al-Ishrāf fī Manāzil Al-Ashrāf* [traits of nobles]

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā sheds light on the traits and noble characters of the honourable. He aims through this book to encourage the Muslims to follow such exemplars and gain the most benefit of imitating their good characteristics. The practical value of this book lies in the live examples it provides. Indeed, it is thought that reading through the life of nobles and righteous people has a significant effect on

the receiver. It helps the reader to gain interest and enthusiasm and it awakens the hidden abilities to work hard from the knowledge that others were able to do it.

The need of the society for good role models is important. It is the nature of the human being to imitate and be a follower as not all people are meant to be leaders: “Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, so from their guidance take an example” (Al-Qur’an. Al-An‘ām 6:90)¹⁶⁴. Also in the following āyah, which points out the bad examples that people may follow as well: “Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following (Al-Qur’an. Al-Zukhruf 43:23)¹⁶⁵. Hence, there are two types of models in people’s life: the good and the bad. The Qur’an urges people to follow the good exemplar if they seek success in both lives: “The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and remember Him often” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ahzāb 33:21)¹⁶⁶. On the other hand, the Qur’an warns people about following the negative role models as it leads to failure in both lives: “And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Woe is me! If only I had not taken so and so as a friend, he led me away from the Revelation after it reached me” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Furqān 25:27–29)¹⁶⁷.

However, people a leadership qualities are usually the least: “People are just like camels, out of one hundred, one can hardly find a single camel suitable to ride” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Riqāq: Bāb Raf‘ Al-Amānah: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar: #6498). According to Al-Khattābī (Ibn Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī, 2001: 11/343), this Hadith indicates that most people are incompetent, whereas the nobles, who are more competent to lead and stand as role models, are very few in number similar to the number of camels to ride. Also, it is not necessarily for the role model to be an example of every aspect in life. The role model could be an example in scientific

matters, religion, good manners or life skills. He could also be an exemplar in more than one aspect. The only one that is a good role model for people in every aspect of life is the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). This crucial and sensitive point was not missed by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā who referred to it when he mentioned in this book some good traits of people that are known for their evil acts at some point of their lives, such as: Al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf Al-Thaqafī and Yazīd Ibn Mu‘āwiyah. This is to convey a significant message to the reader saying that everyone except the Prophet (SAW) has a good and bad side that the Muslim has to watch out for and therefore be fair and selective (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1990: 124–125).

As we have seen in all of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's books, he starts with a Hadith, which he believes has a special effect and it conveys an important message the reader needs to know. The first and second narrations refer to a man who does not find anything to give as alms, so he tells the Prophet (SAW) that he considers his honour (*‘ird*) as his alms and that anyone who hurts him and reaches his honour in a bad way, he forgives him considering that as alms (pp. 101–103). Considering this way of giving charity as one of the nobles' traits is one of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's deep understanding and creative introduction to the topic in hand. These two narrations were chosen as well because they hold the element of forgiveness. And forgiveness means to have a pure heart towards others that is empty from enmity and animosity, This characteristic was named by the Prophet (SAW) as *al-ḥāliqah* (i.e., razor): “By the One in whose hand my soul is, you will not enter paradise until you submit. You will not submit until you love one another. Extend the greeting to one another and you will love one another. Beware of hatred, for it is the razor. I do not tell you that it

shaves the hair, but it shaves away the *Dīn*”¹¹² (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Al-Adab Al-Mufrad. Bāb Al-Taḥāb bayna Al-Nās: Abū Hurayrah: #260). Being pure from the inside towards people is also among the characteristics of the inhabitants of paradise: “But the righteous will be in Gardens with springs. Enter them in peace and safety! And We shall remove any bitterness from their hearts: [they will be like] brothers, sitting on couches, face to face” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ḥijr 15:45–47)¹⁶⁸.

Furthermore, among the traits of nobles mentioned in this book is humbleness and altruism (pp. 336–337), good expectation from others (p. 203), generosity and spending in the way of Allah (p. 204), not being shy to say the truth or say that they do not know something (p. 223), they praise Allah and thank him a lot for His blessings (p. 234) and pure sincerity to Allah (SWT) (p. 326). Thus, it is important to note that Islam does not introduce good models for people by way of mere admiration and imagination. On the contrary, Islam introduces these good role models to be good examples for people to follow and to be a living portrait that positively influences the heart of each person.

4.3.3 *Iṣṭināʿ Al-Maʿrūf* [Art of making good]

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā aims at going far beyond the traditional ways of performing the good. He includes various narrations to highlight the amount of creativity that could be used in the field of giving and performing the good deeds. Thus, giving, performing or doing the good is considered good! But, yet it is far beyond the goodness of *Iṣṭināʿ Al-Maʿrūf* (literally means to make the good). This is because the term *Iṣṭināʿ* refers to meanings like: to overdo good, to pretend doing good even if you do not have the urge to do so, to offer doing good to others and to

¹¹² Hadith Ḥasan (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*: #197).

ask for good. The main theme of the book introduces creativity in performing good deeds. Thus, spreading goodness is a positive behaviour and a blessing from Allah to the society.

The Qur'an mentioned in more than one place that the Prophets (SAW) have always carried this behaviour with them through helping others and removing the troubles from them: "He said, 'What is the matter with you two?' They said, 'We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take their sheep away; our father is a very old man. He watered their flocks for them, withdrew into the shade, and prayed, 'My Lord, I am in dire need of whatever good thing You may send me'" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:23–24)¹⁶⁹. And when Prophet Yūsuf (AS) was put into jail the prisoners knew him as the one who did good: "Inform us of its interpretation; indeed, we see you to be of those who do good"¹¹³ (Al-Qur'an. Yūsuf 12:36)¹⁷⁰. As for the Prophet (SAW), there are numerous incidents where he was asked for help and he never turned anyone away; child or grown up, women or men: Anas reported that a woman had a partial derangement in her mind, so she said, "Allah's Messenger, I want something from you." He said, "Mother of so and so, see on which side of the road you would like (to stand and talk) so that I may do the needful for you." He stood aside with her on the roadside until she got what she needed (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Faḍā'il: #2326).

Furthermore, the Qur'an urged Muslims to be good and do the good for others: "Do good, for God loves those who do good" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Baqarah 2:195)¹⁷¹, also in the following āyah: "And do good that you may succeed" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Ḥajj 22:77)¹⁷². Thus, doing good things for others is basically due to the purity and mercy of the doers of good. For this reason, the Prophet (SAW) considered doing good as a

¹¹³ Translation based on Al-Mehri, A. B. 2010. *The Qur'ān: With Surah Introductions and Appendices, Saheeh International*. United Kingdom: Birmingham.

type of alms: “Enjoining, all that is good is a charity” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb Kullu Ma‘rūfin Ṣadaqah: Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh: #5675). On the other hand, those who refuse to do good to others and seize it against people who are in need for it will be punished on the Day of Judgement: The Prophet (SAW) said, “There are three types of persons to whom Allah will neither speak to them on the Day of Resurrections, nor look at them, they are...and a man who forbids others to use the remaining superfluous water. To such a man Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Today I withhold My Blessings from you as you withheld the superfluous part of that water, which your hands did not create’” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Tawhīd: Bāb man Ra’ā ana Ṣāhibā Al-Ḥawḍ wa Al-Qirbah Aḥaqqu bi-mi’ah: Abū Hurayrah #2240).

Moreover, those who do good will gain a number of benefits at the religious, psychological and societal levels. For example, those who do the good will be rewarded by Allah by easing their needs: “And whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfil his needs” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Ikrāh: Bāb Al-Muslim Akhū Al-Muslim lā Yazlimhu wa lā Yuslimhu: ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar #2442). That is because rewards depend on the kind of deed and Allah says in the Qur’an: “Shall the reward of good be anything but good?” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Raḥmān 55:60)¹⁷³. Moreover, good doers will not only be granted the previous reward, but also some additional beyond that too. For instance, one may receive the same reward of freeing a slave for doing certain kind of good: “Whoever gives someone some milk or silver, or guides him through a strait, then he will have the reward similar to freeing a slave”¹¹⁴ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Ṣilah: Bāb mā Jā’a fī Al-Minḥah: Al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib: #1957). And in another Hadith narrated by Abū

¹¹⁴ Hadith Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ Gharīb (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #1957).

Hurayrah that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said that he saw a person enjoying himself in Paradise because of the tree that he cut from the path, which was a source of inconvenience to the people (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Ṣilah: Bāb Faḍl Izālat Al-Athā 'an Al-Ṭarīq: #1914). Also, doing the good protects against evil death: "Indeed charity extinguishes the Lord's anger and it protects against the evil death"¹¹⁵ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Zakāh: Bāb mā Jā'a fī Faḍl Al-Ṣadaqah: Anas Ibn Mālik: #664).

The pursuit of doing good is a reason for social interaction, harmony and mercy among people and a cause for receiving Allah's mercy and blessings: "You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, like the similitude of a single body. If any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness and fever with it" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb Raḥmat Al-Nās wa Al-Bahā'im: #6011). In addition, doing good deeds usually leaves the soul tranquil and pleased because of the happiness and pleasantness one finds on the faces of those he has helped.

This book of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā consists of two parts regarding the art of doing good deeds, which will be discussed here. The other part talks about nearly the same topics of another similar book of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's being, *Qaḍā' Al-Hawā'ij*, which will be discussed and analyzed later in this chapter. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started this book with a rewarding and very promising Hadith for those who do good (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 2002: 18). Although the Hadith is considered *ḍa'if*, but other sound narrations of almost the same content have been mentioned earlier in discussing the topic of this book.

¹¹⁵ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (first part of the Hadith) (*Da'if Al-Tirmidhī*: #664).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions in this book another reward other than the ones mentioned above. That is to say that he who does good by way of relieving someone from hardship, easing the affairs of the one who is indebted and concealing the faults of a Muslim; Allah (SWT) will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection, He will make it easy for him in this worldly life and in the hereafter and will conceal his faults in the world and in the hereafter. Allah helps His slave as long as he helps his brother (pp. 24–25). Furthermore, another type of doing good is mentioned as directed by the Prophet (SAW) not to lessen any good, such as: talking to others with a happy face or pouring water for those who are in need of it (pp. 34–36). Interestingly, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā devoted a whole section on narrations that talk about laughter and those with a joyful personality (pp. 37–46). It could be because he wanted to convey a message that being joyful to others rather than being gloomy is actually considered a kind of doing the good since it spreads happiness and gives some relief to people when they are upset or in a bad mood. Thus, this is again one of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's special views he gained through his personality and life and educational experience. Examples on doing the good and the virtuous went farer than what had been pointed out. That is, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā quotes a narration by 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abbās saying that seeing your clothes on your friend is even better than seeing it on yourself, and to see your friend riding your animal is better than you riding it (p. 64). Thus, this is a very high degree of doing good known as altruism.

4.3.4 *Iṣlāh Al-Māl* [restoration of wealth]

Iṣlāh Al-Māl means to restore or preserve wealth. It does not mean to keep it without benefiting from it, but to learn how to manage it and spend it in the right way that Islam has clarified for us. Preservation of wealth is one of the five *maqāṣid* (i.e.,

over-riding objectives) of *Shari'ah*. It is also among the injunctions of the Qur'an: "Do not entrust your property to the feeble-minded. God has made it a means of support for you" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Nisā' 4:5)¹⁷⁴. In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā focuses on wealth, which is a vital tool for living. He gives a detailed view of all aspects of wealth. He starts his book by introducing the legal ways to earn money, how to maintain it and the proper ways to spend it to attain goodness in this life and the afterlife. The book also considers the psychological aspect of purifying the soul through earning, spending and investment.

Furthermore, the significance of this book is that economics is being so central to the survival of modern society. Everything is often compared and measured to the indicator of economy. Thus, "a close thorough reading of the *Iṣlāh Al-Māl* will provide for the discerning reader with an integrated view of both the tangible and intangible dimensions of wealth as understood and cultivated during the epoch when the civilization of Islam lived through its 'golden' age (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 2016: 7–8). Therefore, this book provides the raw material and foundation for a theory of Islamic finance and economics and helps in the search for true wealth and its re-discovery.

Moreover, the link between wealth and purification at both the individual and societal level is clear. Wealth is known to be as a *fitnah* for human beings as referred to many times in the Qur'an and Sunnah: "Be aware that your possessions and your children are only a test" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Anfāl 8:28)¹⁷⁵ and as stated in the following saying of the Prophet (SAW): "Indeed there is a fitnah for every Ummah, and the Fitnah for my Ummah is wealth"¹⁷⁶ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bab 26 ma ja'ā anna Fitnata Hathihi Al-Ummah fī Al-Māl: Ka'b Ibn 'Iyād: #2336). But at the same time human beings are born with the nature of loving wealth:

¹⁷⁴ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ Gharīb (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*: #2336).

“But when He tries him through the restriction of his provision, he says, ‘My Lord has humiliated me.’ No indeed! You [people] do not honour orphans, you do not urge one another to feed the poor, you consume inheritance greedily, and you love wealth with a passion” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Fajr 89:16–20)¹⁷⁶. This āyah indicates that when people are tested with wealth many of them fail to pass this test. Hence, the misuse of money may lead to corruptions that directly affect the process of purification and the integrity and unity of the society. Besides, wealth is needed for almost everything in life and peoples’ livelihood is dependent on it. So, the misuse of it surely interrupts the healthy growth and harmony of the society.

On the other hand, wealth could be a winning cause for entering paradise. Also, Islam urges Muslims to earn money: ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Āṣ said, “the Prophet (SAW) sent for me. He commanded me to put on my clothes and arms and come to him. I did that and came to him while he was doing wuḍū’. He looked at me and then lowered his eyes. then he said, ‘‘Amr, I want to put you in charge of an army and Allah will give you booty. I will give you a correct portion of the spoils.’ I said, ‘I did not become a Muslim out of the desire for property. I became Muslim out of the desire for Islam and so that I would be with the Messenger of Allah.’ He said, ‘‘Amr! Sound property is very excellent for a sound man!’”¹¹⁷ (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*. Bāb Al-Mal Al-Ṣāliḥ lil-mar’ Al-Ṣāliḥ: #299). In this Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) directs ‘Amr to the correct understanding of wealth and that it is not discarded in Islam although it is considered a means of a living and not an aim, but it is the way it is used and the intensions that count when wealth is involved. It is the way of Islam to teach its followers how to manage things that are of two sides rather than suppressing it,

¹¹⁷ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*: #299).

similar to how it deals with sex and many other issues. This method indeed is much more ideal for the leading personality of the Muslim.

Furthermore, wealth is considered a source of power, which the Ummah needs at all times: “The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Qadar: Bāb fī Al-Amr bi Al-Quwwah wa Tark Al-‘ajz: #2664). Strength in this Hadith includes all aspects of life: the physical, mental, spiritual, faith and wealth. For example, the support of ‘Uthmān to Al-‘Usrah army, as he was wealthy at that time and Muslims were in desperate need for help to prepare their army. Islam urges Muslims to earn money to live in dignity and avoid poverty, which is considered a non-stable state for the human being that one should avoid. Spending money in the cause of Allah is also a path to paradise: “Those who spend their wealth in God’s cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. God gives multiple increase to whoever He wishes: He is limitless and all knowing. Those who spend their wealth in God’s cause, and do not follow their spending with reminders of their benevolence or hurtful words, will have their rewards with their Lord: no fear for them, nor will they grieve” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:261–262)¹⁷⁷. Whereas on the opposite side: “Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered (Al-Qur’an. Al-Anfāl 8:36)¹⁷⁸.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā divided this book into two parts: The first part deals with the lawful acquisition of wealth, the virtue of wealth, organization of livelihoods, real estate, commercial dealings and manual work. The second part focuses on moderation in wealth, food and clothing, inheritance and the problem of abundant wealth and

poverty. The Hadith Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose to start his book with is concerned with lawful earning of wealth and that those who earn their wealth in the rightful way will have their money blessed by Allah, and those who do not do that will be deprived from His blessings, similar to the one who eats but never gets full (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, n.d.: 137). Then he points to the warning that for every single piece of money earned, the person shall be asked on the Day of Judgment how he earned it (pp. 156–157). Another warning is pointed out to in a Hadith, narrated by Al-Bukhārī, mentions a type of punishment through a snake after death while the person is in his grave (pp. 158–159).

Then, the book talks about the virtue of wealth and that sound money is ideal for a sound man (p. 164). Also, there is no problem in earning a lot of money and becoming rich, but one has to have *taqwah* as a pre-condition to that (pp. 164–165). More than that some of the righteous considered richness an excellent tool that helps in religion (p. 172). Furthermore, the book moves to restoration of wealth and starts that section with a Sound Hadith that includes a clear prohibition of wasting one's wealth, mentioning it with other great sins such as, burying baby girls alive and disobeying mothers (p. 199). As for the benefits of being wealthy, the book mentions a Hadith in which the Prophet (SAW) urges Muslims to increase the soup when they are cooking to share it their neighbours (p. 221). Thus, poor people may not be able to do so, but the average and wealthy can and it is a way of thanking Allah for His *rizq*.

Rewardingly, an honest trustworthy Muslim merchant will be upgraded in paradise with the martyrs due to his honesty and sincerity: "The trustworthy, honest Muslim merchant will be with the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection" (p. 245). The book focuses on other topics such as, being moderate in spending, food and drinking. Actually, being moderate and avoiding the waste of wealth is an Islamic moral virtue.

It aims at teaching Muslims not to waste and to honour whatever Allah (SWT) blesses them with: The Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd when he was performing ablution, and he said: "What is this extravagance?" He said: "Can there be any extravagance in ablution?" He said: "Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river"¹¹⁸ (Hadith. Aḥmad. *Musnad Aḥmad*. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr: #7065). This is because, many people think that having a good amount of wealth is a sufficient reason to spend it the way they liked even if it was considered a total waste. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā talked about moderation in detail in this book and this was a clever point he did not miss because the people in his time needed to be reminded and reacquainted with these values in order to avoid falling into the sin of wasting, which leads to being attached to the worldly life.

4.3.5 *Al-Amr Bi Al-Ma'rūf Wa Al-Nahī 'An Al-Munkar* [enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong]

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā introduces a significant character by which this Ummah was described as the best of the other nations: "[Believers], you are the best community singled out for people: you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in God" (Al-Qur'an. Āl-Imrān 3:110)¹⁷⁹. Through enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong the society may be kept on the right track that Allah has set for it. It shows the unity of the society and the Ummah, which cares about each other and favours the good as well as rejects the evil for everyone. Keeping pace on the track of guidance may not be achieved at all times and ups and downs do occur. Due to this, advice is always needed for the Ummah to stay alive.

¹¹⁸ Hadith Ḥasan (*Al-Silsilah Al-Ṣaḥīḥah*: #7/860)

Thus, the importance of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil in the society lies in taking the hands of the sinful people to show them the correct path and direct them to the good. Due to this, Allah (SWT) has praised this Ummah for having this character that helps in keeping it alive and revives its soul whenever it is down: The Prophet (SAW) said, “Allah will raise for this community at the end of every hundred years one who will revive the religion for it”¹¹⁹ (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Malāḥim: Bāb mā Yudhkar fī Qarn Al-Mi’ah: Abū Hurayrah: #4293). Moreover, Allah (SWT) has commanded this Ummah to afford from them a group of people to take the responsibility of this blessed duty: “Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones” (Al-Qur’an. Āl-‘Imrān 3:104)¹⁸⁰.

On the other hand, if the Ummah ignores this duty, then, the ending scene will not be pleasant as it is clarified in the following Hadith: The Prophet (SAW) said, “The example of the person abiding by Allah’s order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, ‘Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from troubling them. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Sharikah: Bāb hal yuqra’u fī Al-Qismati wa Al-Istihāmi fīhi: Al-Nu’mān Ibn Bashīr: #2361). This Hadith shows that if the Muslims of the Ummah ignore enjoining the good and forbidding what is wrong when they face it or meet a

¹¹⁹ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Abū Dāwūd. *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*: #4291)

situation that requires it, then this will affect the whole Ummah and cause it to drown, if not in real water then it will drown by its own faults. Furthermore, another Hadith that urges Muslims to practice *Al-Amr bi Al-Ma'rūf wa Al-Nahī 'an Al-Munkar* is the following Hadith: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed." A man said, "O Allah's Messenger (SAW)! I will help him if he is oppressed, but if he is an oppressor, how shall I help him?" The Prophet (SAW) said, "By preventing him from oppressing (others), for that is how to help him" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Ikrāh: Bāb Yamīni Al-Rajuli li-Ṣaḥibihi innahu Akhuhu ithā Khafa 'alayhi Al-Qatla aw Naḥwah: Anas Ibn Mālīk: #6952).

The opening Hadith of this book underlines the importance of coping with each other and practicing *Al-Amr bi Al-Ma'rūf wa Al-Nahī 'an Al-Munkar* with reference to the punishment of not doing so: Abū Bakr read this āyah, "O you who believe, care for yourselves; he who goes astray cannot harm you when you are rightly-guided." Then he said: "People put this āyah in its improper place, but I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: 'If people saw the oppressor and took no action towards him or towards the acts of disobedience to change it, Allah will soon punish them all'" (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1997: 37). In another Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) warns Muslims not to be afraid of people to say the truth if they surely know it is the truth: "Let not fear of the people prevent one of you from saying the truth if he knows it" (p. 50).

Moreover, changing that which is wrong when it is seen or encountered is of three degrees: The best is by hand, if this is not possible then by speech and if this is also not possible then by one's heart and this is the least of faith: "He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he cannot, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he cannot, then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith" (p. 51). This is alluded to as well in the

following āyah: “As He has already revealed to you [believers] in the Scripture, if you hear people denying and ridiculing God’s revelation, do not sit with them unless they start to talk of other things, or else you yourselves will become like them” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nisā’ 4:140)¹⁸¹. The Muslims will be even asked on the Day of Judgement by Allah why he did not abhor the evil from his heart when he saw it (p. 53). Another punishment mentioned in the book for not practicing *Al-Amr bi Al-Ma’rūf wa Al-Nahī ‘an Al-Munkar* due to the fear from people is that one will lose the obedience of his dependents (p. 57). The book also states that the evil act that deserves the punishment of everyone is the act that is done in public and not in privacy, which needs to be changed and abhorred (p. 102).

Furthermore, the book points out some ethics while practicing this duty. For example, it should be done in secret if possible; otherwise it turns into a scandal (pp. 99–100). This ethic is the Prophet’s (SAW) way of correcting or advising others: ‘Ā’ishah (RA) narrated that when the Prophet (SAW) was informed of anything of a certain man, he would not say: “What is the matter with so and so that he says?” But he would say: “What is the matter with the people that they say such and such?”¹²⁰ (Hadith. Abī Dāwūd. *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb fī Ḥusn Al-‘Ishrah: #4790). This Hadith indicates that the Prophet (SAW) used to convey the advice or warning to the sinful person, but without letting everyone knowing the issue which is a very gentle and decent method. Such an ethic is also advised to be used with the parents, especially in not pushing them hard towards change, but to be gentle and forbearing with them (p. 83). Also, the Muslim should be a good example of doing the good and avoiding the bad before advising others about what to do and what not to do (p. 63): A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown in Hell-Fire

¹²⁰ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Abī Dāwūd. *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: #4788).

and his intestines will pour forth in Hell and he will go around along with them, as an ass goes round the mill stone. The denizens of Hell would gather round him and say: O, so and so, what has happened to you? Were you not enjoining us to do what was reputable and forbid us to do what was disreputable? He will say: Of course, it is so; I used to enjoin (upon people) to do what was reputable but did not practise that myself. I had been forbidding people to do what was disreputable, but practised it myself.” This meaning is as well manifested in the following āyah: “How can you tell people to do what is right and forget to do it yourselves, even though you recite the Scripture? Have you no sense?” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:44)¹⁸².

4.3.6 *Al-Ḥilm Wa Dham Al-Fuḥsh* [forbearance and the castigation of obscenity]

Ḥilm denotes the virtue of self-mastery and patience, rational behaviour, and may also refer to the faculty of reason (*al-‘aql*) itself. It is used most frequently to describe an individual’s forbearance and control of anger when in a position of power, and this is often the context presumed in ethical discussions or praise (Hefter, 2017). Therefore, it is understood that *ḥilm* is a type of social intelligence that allows the individual to control his anger and not manifest it, even if it is justified, in different situations and under various types of pressure. This means those who acquire *ḥilm* have a better control over themselves than those who cannot practice it. Thus, being able to control oneself leads to many virtues such as, patience, bearing people of different ages and different backgrounds, being able to make better decisions far from anger, being calm and not hasty, managing one’s temper, being forgiving, gentle, etc.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, in this book, sheds light on the virtue of *ḥilm*, which is among the beloved traits to Allah (SWT): The Messenger of Allah said to Ashajj, of

the tribe of ‘Abd Al-Qays: “You possess two qualities which are liked by Allah: forbearance and deliberateness” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Imān: Bāb Al-Amru bil-Imān billahi wa Rasūlihi wa Shara’i’ Al-Dīn wa Al-Du‘ā’i ilayhi: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās: #126). Forbearance governs the other requisite virtues such as temperance, compassion and modesty. It manifests itself throughout the Muslim’s life in every ethical dilemma or circumstance. It is considered to be the most praiseworthy characteristics that an individual can attain, but not less difficult to acquire: “but only those who are steadfast in patience, only those who are blessed with great righteousness, will attain such goodness” (Al-Qur’an. Fuṣṣilat: 41:35)¹⁸³.

On the other hand, anger, which is the opposite of *ḥilm*, is among the most undesirable characteristics of a person. The nature of people is that they may say or do things in times of anger that they may not mean or even approve of. Furthermore, it is during this state that people are the most vulnerable to the evil suggestions of Satan. Knowing this fact, the Prophet (SAW) advised the man who came to him asking for an advice, saying: “Do not become angry.” The man asked (the same) repeatedly, and the Prophet (SAW) said: “Do not become angry” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb Al-Ḥathar min Al-Ghaḍab: Abū Hurayrah: #6116). *Ḥilm* also reinforces the process of soul purification in the way that it helps suppress one’s wrath and enables people to understand and accept each other in a better way. Hence, it is for this reason that *ḥilm* is such an exceptional and priceless characteristic and its reward is equally great.

The first Hadith Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose to start his book with indicates that good manners are not acquired by a day and night, but are gained through failing many times and struggling with oneself until that manner becomes steady and is established deeply inside its holder: “There is no forbearance except for the one who

stumbled, and there is no wisdom except for the one who has experience” (‘Aṭā, 1993: 14–15). The next Hadith refers almost to the same meaning and, thus, emphasizes on the necessity of making an effort to acquire good behaviours: “Verily, knowledge only comes by learning, and forbearance only comes by cultivating forbearance” (pp. 16–17).

On pages (32–33), Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā refers to the Prophet’s (SAW) saying to Ashajj that he holds the quality of forbearance, which Allah likes. Such a Hadith encourages Muslims to acquire this quality as to become nearer to their Creator by performing what He (SWT) likes and is pleased with. Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā stated in his book the saying of Ibn ‘Abbās that reads: “Forbearance is among the qualities that pleases Allah. And it combines for its bearer an honour in his life and in the hereafter. Have you not noticed that Allah (SWT) has characterized His Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS) with *ḥilm*: “For Abraham was forbearing, tender-hearted, and devout” (p. 51). Thus, all these narrations provided by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā urges Muslims to make effort and acquire this good characteristic to be granted success in life and the pleasantness of Allah (SWT).

4.3.7 *Dham Al-Baghī* [castigation of transgression]

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā’s books are of two kinds: he either writes in the field of *takhliyah* (purification) or in the field of *taḥliyah* (beautification) based on the method of ‘purification before beautification,’ which summarizes the process of purification. Thus, this book deals with the stage of *takhliyah*. Oppression is among the actions that Allah (SWT) has stressed on its total prohibition: Abū Dhar reported Allah’s Messenger (SAW) as saying that Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, said: “My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit

oppression against one another” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Ṣilah wa Al-Ādāb: Bāb Taḥrīm Al-Zulm: #2577). At the same time, Allah (SWT) Has taken to Himself to be merciful: “Your Lord has taken it on Himself to be merciful” (Al-Qur’an. Al-An‘ām 6:54)¹⁸⁴ and the Prophet (SAW) is the Prophet of mercy: “It was only as a mercy that We sent you [Prophet] to all people” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Anbiyā’ 21:107)¹⁸⁵ and this Ummah is a one to which mercy is shown: “This people of mine is one to which mercy is shown. It will have no punishment in the next world, but its punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed”¹²¹ (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*: Kitāb Al-Fitan wa Al-Malāḥim: Bāb mā Yurjā fī Al-Qatl: Abū Mūsā Al-Ash‘arī: #4278).

Thus, Muslims are commanded to follow the Prophet Muhammad’s (SAW) characteristics and to be as Allah (SWT) commanded them to. As stated in more than one Hadith: “Mercy is taken away only from him who is miserable”¹²² (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb fī Al-Raḥmah: Abū Hurayrah: #4944) and in: “The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on the earth, He Who is in the heaven will show mercy to you”¹²³ (Hadith. Abī Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb fī Al-Raḥmah: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr: #4943). All these Qur’anic āyahs and Hadiths urge Muslims to deal with people with mercy and compassion and to avoid oppression and injustice. Allah (SWT) has forgiven a prostitute woman and let her enter paradise for being merciful towards a thirsty dog. On the other hand, He (SWT) placed another woman in hellfire for being cruel and evil towards a cat that she locked in a place with no

¹²¹ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*: #4278).

¹²² Hadith Ḥasan (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*: #4942).

¹²³ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*: #4941).

food and water until it was dead. If this was towards animals, then how would the punishment be for humans.

Unfortunately, this undesirable sinful behaviour is practiced by many people except those who hold onto faith and perform good deeds. These people are the ones the Qur'an referred to and still they are few in number: "Many partners treat each other unfairly. Those who sincerely believe and do good deeds do not do this, but these are very few" (Al-Qur'an. Sād 38:24)¹⁸⁶. Furthermore, the sequences of this sinful act are very harmful to the individual and the society. If people deal with each other on the basis of anger and oppression, it creates hatred and animosity among them. They will lose trust in each other and will not be able to further their daily dealings to make their living. The unity, peace and harmony of the society will be greatly affected and torn apart.

As it is the habit of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in his works, he started this book with a Hadith that catches the eye of the reader and leaves a positive influence. It is a warning Hadith that informs the listener that the punishment of oppression is hastened for the person who practices it in life before being punished for it in the hereafter due to its horribleness: "There is no wrong action which Allah is swifter to punish in this world- in addition to the punishment which He has prepared for the wrongdoer in the Next World- than cutting off ties of kinship and injustice" (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1988: 47–48, 56). Among the Hadiths mentioned in the book, there is one in which the Prophet (SAW) informs his companions not to practice oppression: "Allah has revealed to me that you should be humble towards one another and should not wrong one another" (p. 52).

It is worth noting that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, through his educative sense and experience, considered being arrogant and trespassing to be among the undesired evil

behaviours that are categorised under oppression and inequity (pp. 54, 91): Related by Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr that he commented on the following āyah: “We grant the Home in the Hereafter to those who do not seek superiority on earth or spread corruption: the happy ending is awarded to those who are mindful of God¹²⁴,” he said: “transgression.” Also, among the bad deeds that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā considered in his book as a type of oppression is disgracing others for a sin (pp. 85–86). Moreover, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā also mentions boasting under transgression because it includes the element of trespassing (p. 90). According to Khalaf (1988: 9–10), transgression is of two kinds: boasting and oppression, and under these two main categories are many other types.

4.3.8 *Al-Ṣamt Wa Ādāb Al-Lisān* [silence and ethics of the tongue]

This is one of the lengthiest books written by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā. It consists of seven hundred and fifty-nine (759) narrations. It is considered a masterpiece, as it is the first book to be written on a significant topic as the tongue in a separate book. It is due to its importance and influence on people that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā decided to give it that big attention. While the tongue may be a small organ compared to the other organs of the body, it is the most influential of all. Through the tongue, a person may be placed in the bottom of hellfire and by that same organ one may be granted a high rank in paradise. Due to this, the Prophet's advice to his companion Mu'āth Ibn Jabal was to watch his tongue if he wants to enter paradise and avoid hellfire: “Shall I not inform you about what governs all of that? I said: ‘Of course O Messenger of Allah!’ So he grabbed his tongue and said: ‘Restrain this.’ I said: ‘O Prophet of Allah! Will we be taken to account for what we say?’ He said: ‘May your mother grieve your loss

¹²⁴ Al-Qur'an. Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:83.

O Mu‘āth! Are the people tossed into the Fire upon their faces, or upon their noses, except because of what their tongues have wrought”¹²⁵ (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. Kitāb Al-‘Imān: Bāb Ḥurmat Al-Ṣalāh: #2616).

Another Hadith narrated by Abū Sa‘īd Al-Khudrī reads: On ‘Eīd Al-Fiṭr or ‘Eīd Al-Aḍḥā Allah’s Messenger (SAW) went out to the Muṣallā. After finishing the prayer, he delivered the sermon and ordered the people to give alms. He said: “O people! Give alms.” Then he went towards the women and said: “O women! Give alms, for I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-Fire were you (women).” The women asked: “O Allah’s Messenger! What is the reason for it?” He replied: “O women! You curse frequently, and are ungrateful to your husbands” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Zakāh: Bāb Al-Zakāh ‘ala Al-Aqārib: #1462). This Hadith indicates as the one before it that sins of the tongue are serious and that it effects the life of the individual and the settlement of the society to such an extent that it leads sometimes to hellfire, which is the worst end any Muslim could face.

Due to this, purifying the tongue from such fatal sins is obligatory. Since faults of the tongue take the individual and the society away from the correct path to paradise and brings them nearer to hellfire, indeed purifying the tongue also lies in the heart of the purification process of the soul. On the other hand, guarding one’s tongue against saying anything wrong or bad, making use of the grace of silence, being far from backbiting and talebearing, keeping secrets and promises and saying the truth; all these behaviours if made available will enhance the process of purifying the soul and allowing the Muslim to be closer to his Creator and the people.

Furthermore, the topic of the book is an illustration of the Hadith: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep silent” (Hadith.

¹²⁵ Hadith Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ (Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*. #2616).

Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb Ikrām Al-Ḍayf: Abū Hurayrah: #6018). Thus, the grace of silence is that when it is practiced for a good reason. It does not mean to keep silent and stop talking in order to prevent falling into sins. Rather, there are many situations where keeping silent causes the person to accumulate sins similar to when talking in a bad manner. Therefore, talking or keeping silent is governed by a number of things. This meaning is referred to in the previous Hadith that linked talking with good otherwise silence is preferred.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose to start the book with topics dealing with guarding one's tongue from faults and the grace of silence (pp. 173–232). In this section, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentions numerous Hadiths on being cautious with what one says and that this is considered one of the reasons for escaping from hellfire and entering paradise. A very significant correlation was made in one of the Hadiths between the heart and the tongue and linked to faith as well (pp. 182–183): “The faith of a servant is not upright until his heart is upright, and his heart is not upright until his tongue is upright”¹²⁶ (Hadith. Aḥmad. *Musnad Aḥmad*. Anas Ibn Mālik: #13071). This Hadith indicates the importance of the heart to the whole body, not only physically but also spiritually. The heart works as the port where all actions stem, whether good or evil. If the heart is good, then the actions will be good and the speech will be rightfull too and vice versa. In other words, what is done through the organs of the body is usually reflected in the heart and on that basis the link between the heart and the tongue is made in this Hadith.

The book also mentions various shortcomings of the tongue such as, castigation of dispute (pp. 271–286), extremism (pp. 287–292) and quarrels (pp. 293–298). It also talked lengthy about *ghībah* and *namimah* (i.e., backbiting and talebearing) (pp. 299–

¹²⁶ Hadith Ḥasan (Al-Targhīb wa Al-Tarhīb: #2554).

388) although Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā has already devoted a separate book for them that will be analyzed and discussed later in this chapter. More faults of the tongue were stated to alert the reader of their negative sequences. Among them was to stop practicing evil and foul deeds and that Allah (SWT) dislikes them, but it is the Satan who urges people to do it (pp. 399–411): “Satan threatens you with the prospect of poverty and commands you to do foul deeds” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2: 268)¹⁸⁷. The book even mentioned narrations stating certain phrases that should not be said (pp. 413–415), such as: The Prophet (SAW) said: “None of you should say, ‘What Allah wills and what you will,’ rather let him say, ‘what Allah wills and then what you will’” (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1996: 413). This Hadith also refers to the importance of showing respect when dealing with Allah (SWT).

Interestingly, the book mentioned some good forms of speech to point out the positive characteristics of the tongue and urge the reader to acquire them. These features include: keeping secrets (pp. 449–454), saying the truth and the grace of it (pp. 469–476) and keeping promises (pp. 477–482). Then, Ibn Abi Al-Dunya concluded the book with a section that summed up all that was mentioned in the previous sections (pp. 557–624). He also stated a warning Hadith that is sufficient for the reader to beware of every word spoken as the sequences could be devastating: “One of you may speak a word that pleases Allah, and not know how far it reaches, but Allah will record for him as pleasure, until the day he meets Him. And one of you may speak a word that angers Allah, and not know how far it reaches, but Allah will record against him his anger, until the Day of Resurrection” (p. 234).

4.3.9 *Kitāb Al-‘Iyāl* [the book of family]

Kitāb Al-‘iyāl is another interesting book of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā. It holds a significant status in the field of social relations. Islam has given great attention to the topic of family as well as a high level of priority in many aspects. Even the Satan is focused on breaking the relations among the family, as he clearly knows the disastrous results of that on the family itself and the society. The Prophet (SAW) said: “Iblīs places his throne upon water; he then sends detachments (for creating dissension); the nearer to him in rank are those who are most notorious in creating dissension. One of them comes and says: ‘I did so and so.’ And he says: ‘You have done nothing.’ Then one amongst them comes and says: ‘I did not spare so and so until I sowed the seed of discord between a husband and a wife.’ The Satan brings him near to him and says: ‘You have done well’” (Hadith. Muslim. *Kitāb Ṣifāt Al-Qiyāmah wa Al-Jannah wa Al-Nār: Bāb Taḥrīsh Al-Shayṭān wa Ba‘thihi Sarayah*: Jābir Ibn ‘Abdullah: #2813). Thus, the corruption of the family leads to the corruption of the society and a good family makes a good society. Hence, the role of the family unit to the society is like the role of the heart to the body.

It is easy to realize the importance of a family in Islam by knowing that a family is constituted from individuals and at the same time it is actually the family that develops these individuals who become families in the future and build up the society. Due to this, purification of the soul among family members is essential. The more the souls of the family members are purified, the more good individuals that are produced and inserted into the society. Indeed, many of the ill-mannered individuals in the society were found to receive poor or improper family training. Purification at the family level involves every aspect that organizes the life of the family. Starting from the Islamic criteria for choosing a husband or a wife, who both make up the main

pillars of the family, to the rights of children to be named honourably, brought up decently and be taught what is needed for the life of this world and the next and to provide them with love and security. Islam has regulated everything, the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of each member of the family. All, but to ensure the security of the family and to provide its members the stability and necessities for continuation and prosperity.

Corresponding to the importance of the topic of this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā made a great effort to provide a thorough understanding of the role of each member of the family. He discussed all the main aspects, rather than focusing on some of the required aspects to raise a healthy, positive and interactive family. The book examines religious, financial, social, emotional, sexual, educational and moral aspects of the family. It devotes separate sections to boys and girls to shed light on their differentiations and separate needs at some points. It also studies the different stages of childhood starting from very early stages before pregnancy up until the teenage years. It consists of thirty-five subtopics on different family matters. It is clear that when Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā wrote this book he intended to discuss its different subjects by giving attention to both the major and minor details so that it would be clear to the reader and easy to grasp the importance and sensitivity of building, raising and managing a family.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's focus in this book was on the whole family but more on children. He chose to start with the financial matters being part of the children's rights and pointing out to the responsibility of the father to secure a good living for the siblings (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā', 1997: 97–99): "It is sufficient sin for a man that he

neglects him whom he maintains”¹²⁷ (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Zakāh: Bāb fī Şilat Al-Raḥim: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr: #1694). He also refers to social rules, such as priority (pp. 99–9101), as in the following Hadith: “The best charity is that which is practiced by a wealthy person. And start giving first to your dependents” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Zakāh: Bāb lā Şadaqah Ilā ‘an Ḥaḥ Ghinā: Abū Hurayrah: #1426). This Hadith also indicates that the priority of the family is not limited to the financial matters, but it involves other aspects such as education and teaching them good manners and *da‘wah*: “Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire fuelled by people and stones” (Al-Qur’ān. Al-Taḥrīm 66:6)¹⁸⁸.

Among the rules, as well, is to bear the financial responsibility gradually according to the degree of kinship (pp. 101–103). For example: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Give charity.” A man then said: ‘Allah’s Messenger (SAW) I have a Dinar.’ He then said to him: ‘Give it to yourself as *ṣadaqah*.’ The man again said: ‘I have another one.’ The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ‘Give it to your children as *ṣadaqah*.’ He said: ‘I have another one.’ He said: ‘Give it to your wife as *ṣadaqah*.’ The man again said, ‘I have another one.’ The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ‘Give it to your servant as *ṣadaqah*.’ He said, ‘I have another one.’ The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ‘You know better to whom you should give it’” (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1997: 101–102). Thus, Islam does not ask the father to spend more than he could on his children expenses alike the Hadith mentioned in (p. 100), which is based on the following āyah: “And let the wealthy man spend according to his wealth. But let him whose provision is restricted spend according to what God has

¹²⁷ Hadith Ḥasan (Şaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd: #1692).

given him: God does not burden any soul with more than He has given it after hardship, God will bring ease” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ṭalāq 65:7)¹⁸⁹.

Furthermore, the book dedicated more than one section to dealing with the financial and social rights of wives and the proper way to treat them. In Islam a wife is to be treated gently and nicely, taking into consideration pointing out to their sensitive souls and emphasizing the respect of their full rights regardless of their weakness and sensitivity (pp. 282–288). He even set sections that involved jurisprudential issues such as, what is the amount of money can the wife take from her husband without his knowledge (pp. 301–303). Then, he moves to the rights of the wife towards her husband, such as answering him when he calls her to bed, not fasting without taking his permission, not allowing anyone he dislikes or disapproves of to enter his house and to take his permission before leaving the house (pp. 304–317).

Ibn abī Al-Dunyā dedicated in this book a section that dealt with raising daughters, how to treat them nicely (pp. 135–147) and the proper way to prepare for their marriage (pp. 148–163). He also shed light on educating children (pp. 338–339) and teaching them the Qur’an (pp. 225–227). He mentioned jurisprudential issues concerning children such as, the testimony of children (pp. 353–354), pilgrimage for children (pp. 355–359) and the ruling of a child’s urine (pp. 365–367). Ibn abī Al-Dunyā did not forget to mention the orphans in his book and so he set two separate sections for the topic in order to direct the attention of the reader toward the needs of this class of children (pp. 340–352).

4.3.10 *Al-Ghībah Wa Al-Namīmah* [backbites and talebearing]

The Prophet (SAW) described the meaning of *ghībah* in the following Hadith: Abū Hurayrah reported that Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said: “Do you know what is

backbiting?” They (the Companions) said: Allah and His Messenger know best. Thereupon He said: “Backbiting implies your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like.” It was said to him: What is your opinion about this if I actually find (that shortcoming) in my brother which I made a mention of? He said: “If (that shortcoming) is actually found (in him) what you assert, you in fact backbite him, and if that is not in him it is a slander” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Şilah wa Al-Ādāb: Bāb Taḥrīm Al-Ghībah: #2589). Whereas, *namīmah* means to tell some people what others have said about them in order to cause trouble or dissension among them: The Prophet (SAW) said: “Should I inform you what slandering is? It is a tale-carrying, which creates dissension amongst people” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Şilah wa Al-Ādāb: Bāb Taḥrīm Al-Namīmah: ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd: #2606). Allah has forbidden both *ghībah* and *namīmah*: “And do not spy on one another or speak ill of people behind their backs: would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? No, you would hate it” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ḥujurāt 49:12)¹⁹⁰ and “[And] the scorner, going about with malicious gossip” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Qalam 68:11)¹⁹¹.

Ghībah and *namīmah* are considered among the shortcomings of the tongue. The tongue is one of the greatest blessings of Allah (SWT). It is small but does deeds of great significance and is able to do deeds of great damage at the same time. Through the tongue, true faith unfolds and infidelity emerges; its extent is endless. Islam is very cautious when dealing with the society. It forbids any behaviour that negatively influences the unity of the society and breaks down its ties. The abovementioned negative impact are the results of destructive bad behaviours, like *ghībah* and *namīmah*. It raises a torn society full of selfishness, animosity and hatred.

These behaviours do not support the growth of a healthy, leading society. They do not

help in purifying the society, but rather they distort its purity through their associated negative outcomes. Allah (SWT) wants people to be supportive and to act like one body in order to achieve, advance and be creative, instead of wasting time and effort in backbiting and gossiping with no beneficial outcomes.

This time, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started the book by mentioning three shortcomings of the tongue before talking about *ghībah* and *namīmah*: extremism, disputing and quarrelling. The reason behind this seems to be for acquainting the reader to what extent the tongue can be harmful and to direct his attention to the fact that falling into one shortcoming of the tongue may lead the person to fall into other shortcomings as they are many and integrated. As is his habit, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started the part that deals with *ghībah* with a warning Hadith that clearly indicates the prohibition of *ghībah* (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1993: 43): “All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honour” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Ṣilah wa Al-Ādāb: Bāb Taḥrīm Zulm Al-Muslim: Abū Hurayrah: #2564).

Then, he provides the reader with the safe exit from such a sinful behaviour, which is to perform *tawbah* and get the forgiveness from the person who *ghībah* was committed against (p. 46). The second part of this process is very important and without it *tawbah* may not be complete, because *ghībah* is the kind of sin that is related to people’s rights. Due to this, it is not sufficient to only repent to Allah (SWT), as the rights of people should be restored as well. However, if it was impossible to keep in touch with the person whom he slandered or if informing him or her results in hostility, hatred or termination of the relationship, then he could instead ask forgiveness of Allah and supplicate for him (pp. 131, 133) and mention the good qualities of the person in the same places he slandered them (p. 132).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā then mentions the punishment for *ghībah* in the hereafter (pp. 47–48), but before that comes the punishment inside one's grave (pp. 60–61). Hence, the punishment for committing *ghībah* is continuous during one's life; during the life in the grave and in the hereafter, let alone the bad consequences one receives from practicing *ghībah* during this life.

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā gives a description of *ghībah* and what it means in detail (pp. 80–85). After that he mentions the exceptional cases allowed in Islam, which are not counted as *ghībah*: Those who expose (openly) their wrong doings (pp. 89–90), the oppressor, the deviant and those who innovate in religion (p. 91). *Ghībah* is also not counted if the name of the person talked about is not mentioned (p. 91). Also, in cases of marriage it is allowed to mention the flaws of a person because it is not appropriate to hide such important information from anyone who asks about a person for the purpose of marriage due to its religious and social importance. Thus, if a Muslim hears someone practicing *ghībah*, he should try to defend his brother (the one who *ghībah* is being made about) otherwise he should leave the place where the *ghībah* is happening (pp. 97–105).

As for *namīmah*, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started first with a warning Hadith, which states that those who practice *namīmah* shall not enter paradise (106): “The tale-bearer shall not enter Paradise” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Imān: #105). He then mentions the punishment of a tale-bearer in his grave and in the hereafter (pp. 115, 119). He further refers to an important point about *namīmah* and the sinful acts in general. That is, the one who practices *namīmah* and those who listen to it and start talking about it and using the same story are the same in fault (pp. 113–114). The last rule of good manners Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā wanted to focus on is the avoidance of disgracing anyone for their sins (p. 129). This is because such a behaviour leaves undesirable feelings in

the heart of the sinful and it may lead to opposing results leading the sinful to become hopeless regarding receiving forgiveness and thus encourages him to further his evil doing.

4.3.11 Qaḍā' Al-Ḥawā'ij [fulfilling the needs of others]

This book of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā contains a very interesting topic that has a significant social value. It reflects on the value of collaboration among people and within which selfishness fades away. It also highlights the value of living with people rather than living alone and that people, inevitably, need each other as the Qur'an mentions: "And We have raised some of them above others in rank, so that some may take others into service" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Zukhruf 43:32)¹⁹². Collaborating and fulfilling the needs of each other is an Islamic value that the Qur'an pointed out to in more than one place, for example: "Help one another to do what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility" (Al-Qur'an. Al-Mā'idah 5:2)¹⁹³. According to Al-Sa'dī (2000: 1/218), it means to help one another in what is good, which is a comprehensive term that includes anything that Allah loves and is pleased with of apparent and inner actions related to Allah's and people's rights. Thus, fulfilling the needs of others is not limited to physical and financial needs, it also involves emotional and spiritual aspects. It even expands to fulfilling the needs of others such as providing knowledge and scientific needs, opinions, advice and counselling and benefiting people through social upliftment.

Being able to fulfil the needs of others is a blessing from Allah because it returns with lots of rewards to the obliging person. It is also a sign that such a person holds good inside and that Allah wants to use him to assist others in order to reward him and be pleased with him: "Whoever speaks for a good cause will share in its

benefits and whoever speaks for a bad cause will share in its burden: God controls everything” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Nisā’ 4:85)¹⁹⁴. It is also narrated by Abū Burdah Ibn Abū Mūsā that his father said: Whenever a beggar came to Allah’s Messenger (SAW) or he was asked for something, he used to say (to his companions), “Help and recommend him and you will receive the reward for it; and Allah will bring about what He will through His Prophet’s tongue” (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Zakāh: Bāb Al-Taḥrīd ‘alā Al-Ṣadaqah wa Al-Shafā‘ah fīhā: #1432).

Helping and fulfilling the needs of others helps in the process of purifying the soul at the societal level. That is, it helps to get rid of some undesired behaviours that negatively affect the bonds of society such as, selfishness, hypocrisy, loneliness and hatred feelings. Instead, lending assistance to others helps to acquire good behaviours that help people to live in peace and harmony. It is a means for the unity of the society: The Prophet (SAW) said: “A faithful believer to a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, reinforcing each other” (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Ṣalāh: Bab Tashbīk Al-Asabi‘ fī Al-Masjid: Abū Muṣā Al-Ash‘arī: #481). It is also a source of safety and support: The Prophet (SAW) said: “The believer is the believer’s mirror, and the believer is the believer’s brother who guards him against loss and protects him when he is absent”¹²⁸ (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb fī Al-Naṣīḥah wa Al-Ḥiyāṭah: Abū Hurayrah: #4920). It is among the most favourable good deeds to Allah and a safety for the Muslim on the Day of Judgement: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Prophet (SAW) said: “The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to the people. The most beloved deed to Allah is to make a Muslim happy, or to remove one of his troubles, or to forgive his debt, or to feed his hunger. That I walk with a brother regarding a need

¹²⁸ Hadith Ḥasan (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*: #4918).

is more beloved to me than that I seclude myself in this mosque in Medina for a month...Whoever walks with his brother regarding a need until he secures it for him, then Allah the Exalted will make his footing firm across the bridge on the day when the footings are shaken”¹²⁹ (Hadith. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā. *Qaḍā’ Al-Ḥawā’j*: #36).

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā started this book with a Hadith that states the reward of doing good to others and that it is considered as a charity and it prevents from evil ending at death (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1993: 10–13): “Good works protect from evil fates. Charity in secret extinguishes the wrath of the Lord, maintaining family ties increases life span, and every good deed is charity. The people of good in the world are the people of good in the Hereafter, and the people of evil in the world are the people of evil in the Hereafter. And the first to enter Paradise are the people of good”¹³⁰ (Hadith. Al-Ṭabarānī. *Al-Mu’jam Al-Awsaṭ*. Um Salamah: #6086). This Hadith is very rewarding and it urges the reader to be among those who do good and fulfil the needs of people. Doing good is a reason for Allah’s favour (pp. 14–15): “Allah has certain people whom He has favoured with His blessings to benefit people. He keeps His blessings with them as long as they exert them for the benefits of others, but if they prevent them from people, He takes his blessings off them and gives them to others”¹³¹ (Hadith. Al-Ṭabarānī. *Al-Mu’jam Al-Awsaṭ*. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar: #5162).

Those who do good to others when they are in need or in a crisis Allah will help them when they are in need on the Day of Judgment (pp. 33–34): “A Muslim is the brother of a fellow-Muslim. He should neither commit oppression upon him nor ruin him, and he who meets the need of his brother, Allah will meet his needs, and he who relieves a Muslim from hardship Allah will relieve him from the hardships to which

¹²⁹ Hadith Ḥasan (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Targhīb wa Al-Tarhīb*: #2623)

¹³⁰ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Targhīb wa Al-Tarhīb*: #890).

¹³¹ Hadith Ḥasan (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Targhīb wa Al-Tarhīb*: #2617).

he will face on the Day of Resurrection, and he who did not expose (the follies of a Muslim) Allah would conceal his follies on the Day of Resurrection” (Hadith. Muslim. Kitāb Al-Bir wa Al-Ṣilah wa Al-Ādāb: Bāb Taḥrīm Al-Zulm: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar: #2580). This Hadith also shows that concealing other people’s faults is a form of helping and doing good to them. Fulfilling the needs of people is no less important than worshipping Allah. It is actually a form of worship and it is sometimes preferred over non-obligatory religious duties. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā refers to this through a narration by Al-Ḥasan, in which he says that fulfilling the needs of people is more preferable to him than praying one thousand *rak‘ah* and in another narration more than two months of *i‘tikāf* (pp. 41–42).

The second part of the book talks about encouraging people to ask others for help when they need it, but it should be sought from noble and good people (pp. 48–52). He also pointed out to the necessity of thanking people after receiving help or good from them (pp. 60–62): The Prophet (SAW) said: “He who does not thank people is not thankful to Allah”¹³² (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb fī Shukr Al-Ma‘rūf: Abū Hurayrah: #4813). This Hadith indicates that being thankful should be a habit in that those who are not thankful to people they will probably not be thankful to Allah who granted and blessed them with all the good. Another form of fulfilling people’s needs is to give respite to someone who is in straitened circumstances or grant him remission (pp. 76–77).

4.3.12 *Mudārāt Al-Nās* [politeness to people]

Mudārāt al-nās is more than being polite to people. More precisely, it means to tolerate people from different backgrounds and beliefs and to be able to get along with

¹³² Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd: # 4811)

all people without being harsh to them or humiliating or harming oneself. It is important to note here that *mudārāh* is different than *mudāhanah*, in which the latter usually means to get along with a hypocrite, for example, and to show him your approval to what he believes in or says without any denial. On the contrary, *mudārāh* is an Islamic manner that serves a great purpose to individuals and to the whole society. Hence, it is considered among the good manners the Muslim should acquire. It includes many things such as, being patient with the ignorant while educating him and being patient with the hypocrite when denying his actions without being harsh, but to direct him gently and calmly. This manner is actually taken from the Qur'an when Allah (SWT) commanded His Prophet Moses (AS) to go to Pharaoh and call him to the Oneness of Allah: "Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has exceeded all bounds, Speak to him gently so that he may take heed, or show respect" (Al-Qur'an. Taha 20:43–44)¹⁹⁵. This is Allah's command when dealing with the opposed such as Pharaoh who placed himself as god to his people and not only practiced evil deeds far worse than hypocrisy.

Furthermore, practicing *mudārāh* results in harmony among people. Also, it is a great tool that helps in *da'wah* (i.e., calling to Allah). It teaches the individual to be patient when dealing with others, be they children, youths or elders, ill-mannered or ignorant, ...etc. This means that by practicing *mudārāh*, the individual is acquiring many skills and good behaviours in order to adapt with the differentiation kinds of people around him. This, with no doubt, eventually reflects to the whole society because it is directly related to social skills and learning to live the best way with the other without ignoring the necessity of benefiting and advising each other. Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one. People asked, 'O Allah's Messenger (SAW)! It is all right to help him

if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?’ The Prophet (SAW) said, ‘By preventing him from oppressing others’” (Hadith. Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Maḏālīm: Bāb A‘īn Akhāka Ḍāliman aw Maḏlūman: Anas Ibn Mālīk: #2444). This, indeed, helps in the purification of the society as a whole because it includes dealing with the other and it is not limited to the individual himself.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā discusses how to deal with people with politeness and according to each one’s state, status, etc. Once more, this book is the first of its kind to be composed as a separate book on such a vital topic. It is a very sophisticated book that leads to meaningful and quality social relationships. The topics that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā chose to deal with in this book are: politeness with people and showing patience towards their harm, ingratiation to people, politeness through smiling and easiness, relations with good manners, politeness through lenience and good speech, being cautious with people to prevent their harm, reconciliation among people, politeness of husbands to their wives and politeness of wives to their husbands.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā devoted a lot of effort in this book. He introduced the topic in detail and arranged them into subtopics. He started the book, as it is his habit, with a very important Hadith that urges people to keep in touch with each other and not to stay lonely (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, 1998: 21). It is the nature of a human being to be social and live a social life. Indeed, even science has proved that social life is much healthier than loneliness. It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “The believer who mixes with people and bears their annoyance with patience will have a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people

and does not put up with their annoyance”¹³³ (Hadith. Ibn Majah. *Sunan Ibn Majah*. Kitāb Al-Fitan: Bāb Al-Ṣabr ‘alā Al-Balā’: #4032). This Hadith indicates that receiving some harm or hurt does not mean to stop or to lock oneself at home. Actually, it is impossible to escape from annoyance since one is mixing with people no matter how good and gentle one is. However, it is his reaction to the annoyance that makes the difference and this indeed benefits the individual in many ways and results in benefits to the society (p. 42). In other words, it is very easy to claim one’s ability to control his temper, but it is the situation and incidents that speak louder and clearer. This notion is made clear in the narration of ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Āṣ who narrated that a clement is not the one who forbears those who are clement with him and be ignorant with the ignorant, but it is he who forbears those who forbear him and those who are ignorant with him (p. 26). The same applies to the narration on page (27).

Another example for *mudārāh* mentioned in this book is the following Hadith that indicates that one sometimes needs to be gentle to avoid harm (pp. 32–35): narrated by ‘Ā’ishah that a man asked permission to enter upon Allah’s Messenger (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) said: “Admit him. What an evil brother of his people or a son of his people.” But when the man entered, the Prophet (SAW) spoke to him in a very polite manner. (And when that person left) I said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger (SAW)! You had said what you had said, yet you spoke to him in a very polite manner?’ The Prophet (SAW) said: “O ‘Ā’ishah! Have you ever seen me speaking a bad and dirty language? The worst people are those whom the people leave (undisturbed) to be away from their evil (deeds)” (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb lam yakun Al-Nabī Faḥishan wa la Mutaḥāḥishan: ‘Ā’ishah #6032). Another example similar to this Hadith is stated on page (36).

¹³³ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Majah*: #3273).

However, if a person is obliged, for a reason, to live with another person that is annoying, he should exercise forbearance with him and practice *mudārāh* in that case (pp. 36–37). Furthermore, the book states a very important rule shared by ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (RA) when dealing with different people. That is to keep in touch with people by one’s good manners and to discontinue with them when their actions are not in compliance with the *Sharī‘ah* (pp. 37, 38). Another rule of *mudārāh* is exemplified by the Prophet’s (SAW) clement and not seeking revenge for personal matters unless Allah’s limits were trespassed (p. 39). When those who practice *mudārāh* come across people of ill speech they pass by with dignity (pp. 39–40): “And those who, when they see some frivolity, pass by with dignity” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Furqān 25:72)¹⁹⁶

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā goes on to list different techniques and ways to practice *mudārāh*. Thus, being polite and nice to people is considered as *mudārāh*. And from that comes many rules such as, to love for people what one loves for himself (p. 45), to expect good from others (p. 50), to meet people and speak to them with a smile on the face (pp. 57, 59) and to be good mannered when dealing with them (p. 69). He focused on putting things right between people, clarifying out its reward (pp. 117–120): The Prophet (SAW) said: “Shall I not inform you of something more excellent in degree than fasting, prayer and almsgiving (sadaqah)?” The people replied: ‘Yes, Prophet of Allah!’ He said: “It is putting things right between people, spoiling them is the shaver (destructive)”¹³⁴ (Hadith. Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kitāb Al-Adab: Bāb Iṣlāḥ That Al-Bayn: Abū Al-Dardā’: #4921). Ibn Abi Al-Dunya ended this book with two vital subtopics that talk about the husbands dealing politely and nicely with their wives and the wives dealing in politeness and respect with their husbands. He gave examples from the Prophetic house and how the Prophet (SAW) dealt with his

¹³⁴ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*: #4919).

wives and treated each one of them fairly and gently especially when jealousy took place (pp. 122–128, 139, 141). As for the wives he provided narrations that introduce the characters of a polite and loving wife who is a man's wife in this wordly life and among the inhabiting wives of Paradise (pp. 147–148). To conclude, in the essence, *mudārāh* encourages the Muslim to practice good manners and helps him to acquire many of the good behaviours. In turn, good manners strengthen faith and all of the three help in the purification process of the soul.

4.3.13 *Makārim Al-Akhlāq* [the noble qualities of character]

One of the purposes of sending prophets is to ensure purification for humans. The historical record shows that the sending of messengers to various communities coincided with moments of excessive immorality or deviation from the truth. It is at such moments that the process of purification is most needed. It is related on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “I was sent to perfect good character”¹³⁵ (Hadith. Aḥmad. Musnad Ahmad. Abū Hurayrah: #8939). Ibn Al-Mubārak (Al-Khaṭīb Al-Baghdādī, 1996: 1/122) comments on the essential need for morals to purify the soul when he said: “we are in need of many good manners more than we are in need of many Hadith.” Notably, Ibn Al-Mubārak lived during the period of the Islamic Golden Age, to which this thesis has referred earlier. This indicates the continuous and desperate need for ethics at all times. Moreover, good manners in Islam are the basis for every doing, and good manners are the basis for every benefit (‘Abd Al-Raḥmān, 2000: 188). According to Al-Shāṭibī (1997), “The *Shari’ah* in its entirety only creates noble morals” (p. 2/124). In addition, Purification of the soul is a prerequisite for proximity to Allah (SWT). Indeed, the whole point of

¹³⁵ Hadith Ṣaḥīḥ (Shu‘ayb Al-Arna’ūt: #2/381).

morality and spirituality is to purify one's soul. It is only when this is achieved that the soul starts shining, receiving and reflecting the radiation and light from Allah (SWT).

Purification is of cardinal importance in both the spiritual and social development of a person. Thus, social involvement requires good manners, which may not be achieved without a continuous pursuit of purification. As noted by Miskawayh (quoted in; Al-Sha'ār, 2015: 199) that "Virtues are not non-existences; they are actions and deeds which are manifested when one participates and lives with other people." Thus, Human virtues and the corresponding aptitudes in the soul that secure its happiness are many. Furthermore, Miskawayh (quoted in; Al-Sha'ār, 2015: 199) also discuss the responsibility of a person to refine his individual human nature, and he also relates matters of reforming moral character (known in Arabic as *tahthīb*) to the soul. He provides rules for the preservation of morality to acquire for ourselves a character by virtue of which actions cultivated from us are all good. The way to this end is to know the soul, its essence, the purpose of its existence and perfection.

The link between purifying the soul and ethics is deep, solid and interrelated. As a matter of fact, good morals help the individual to succeed in the process of purifying the soul. Thus, without ethics, purification may not take its place. Moreover, ethics should be adjusted according to the boundaries of Allah (SWT). That is, every moral shall not exceed the limits that Allah (SWT) has drawn for it through his Messengers and Prophets (SAW). Picken (2011: 151), states a quote from Işlāhī (2000), which refers to the link between purification and good morals:

Tazkiyah deals with all the apparent and hidden aspects of ourselves. It critically judges all the powers and the capabilities of which we are constituted, discusses all our emotions and feelings and corrects and reforms them; it takes stock of all the

variegated and multifaceted ties that we are bound with, and creates an order in and regulates them all under a particular principle and regulations. Our thoughts, our apprehensions, our inclinations, our movements, our eating and drinking, our engagements, entertainments and interest, the daily routines of our lives, in short, no department and nothing that touches our lives is outside the pale of *tazkiyah*.

Furthermore, every soul holds the desire to ascend to the good. And the ascent to the good consists in the soul's ability to see the good. Such vision is impossible without the purification of the soul. Thus, it is by means of moral virtue that the soul begins to ascend. Virtue is required for the soul to turn away from the body and its affections and begin its interior trek toward the good. Purification turns the soul to the intelligible realm. The purification of moral virtue is critical to the soul's pursuit of the good because the impurified soul is incapable of seeing the good. However, moral virtue is a process of purification that aims at something beyond its self. It is a prerequisite for achieving the good. In short, a person who lacks moral virtue cannot achieve the good.

In this book, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā made great efforts in introducing the topic of good manners in detail. On page (27), Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā clearly states his own view of composing this book. He says that all the manners mentioned in this book, are from the Prophetic teachings and that he intends by writing it in a book to benefit the Muslims. So that the one on the right track keeps steadfast and the delinquent one wakes up from his inattentiveness and negligence to correct the direction of his route. He finally says that it is said that there is not a single good manner or behaviour but linked to religion. Then, Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā mentioned numerous of sound Hadiths and other narrations to convey the message he intended through his book. From the beginning of the book, he stated a Hadith that links between faith and good manners:

The Messenger of Allah was asked who is the most honourable among people? He said: “The ones most mindful of Allah” (Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, n.d.: 18). This Hadith resembles the āyah in the Qur’an: “In God’s eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him” (Al-Qur’an. Al-Ḥujurāt 49:13)¹⁹⁷. This indicates that good manners are linked to faith and faith directly influences the status of the person’s purification of the soul. In other words, every Muslim individual should have proper faith to have good manners to react decently to the other constituents of the society to achieve peace and harmony.

Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā continues to provide more Hadiths and narrations that encourage good manners and vice versa. He states the supplication of the Prophet (SAW) asking Allah to grant him good manners and keep him away from bad manners (pp. 19–20). And that Allah (SWT) is the most generous, He loves generosity and good manners (p. 19). Generosity should be among the traits of every Muslim as well (p. 20). Due to this, the Prophet (SAW) advised His companions more than once to acquire good manners (p. 23). Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā carries on to mention different forms of good manners. He talked about forgiveness being a character of the noble ones (p. 28), about modesty and that it is part of faith (p. 35), decency and covering up other people’s faults when addressing people (p. 36). He spoke about the virtue of truth and that a believer can only be truthful (pp. 45–46). Being brave and fearless in battles and in rights is also part of good manners (pp. 59–61, 63). He talked a lot about ties of kinship (p. 71), the punishment of the one who breaks it (pp. 72–73), examples of being dutiful to mothers (pp. 77–78) and children (p. 85). Honesty is also among the good manners (pp. 88–89, 92), good friendship and healthy relationships with friends based on respect and true love for the sake of Allah (SWT) is a good manner as well (pp. 92–97). Also, keeping good relations with neighbours and the reward of

that compared to the punishment of those who act bad towards their neighbours (pp. 101-106). To reward people for the good they introduce, which was one of the many good qualities of the Prophet's character (pp. 109, 111). To be generous with people and give to those who ask is also mentioned with examples from the Prophet's life (SAW) (p. 114) and the righteous people (pp. 124–139).

To sum up this important character that highly influences the life and afterlife of the Muslim it is good to note that nobleness and good manners with oneself is to try to improve oneself with elevated manners and good behaviour. It is honesty and self-respect, so that one does not show people a good image of himself and when he is alone, he takes the liberty to do whatever his whims tell him. It is to have a clean inner self and a clean outer self as well. On the other side, Good manners with others is to treat people with kindness, to smile in their faces, to speak nicely to them and to forgive their mistakes and small foolish acts. One gains respect from people through kindness and generosity, not through fear. The Prophet (SAW) said: "The most evil among people is the one whom people leave or try to please for fear of his wickedness" (Hadith. Al-Bukhārī. Kitāb Al-Adab: 'A'ishah: #6032). Nobleness to the Creator is being truthful, sincere and faithful in one's belief, to remember that Allah (SWT) is watching him in his movement and while resting. When the Muslim knows that, he will be careful in his actions and sayings so that he does not violate any of the Islamic teachings, or any of the Islamic laws.

When one requires the trait of nobility, they will avoid hurting others or infringing on their rights no matter how big or small the hurt might be. He will be generous and brave. He will not put himself in the place of doubt or suspicion. He will not put himself in a place where people will start questioning his honesty or integrity.

He will keep his image in a sublime and lofty position, and he will not put himself in a

mean or lowly place where people criticize him. Then, nobleness is to be content with what one has. He does not look toward what other people have and does not envy them for their possessions. When one is noble, he is helpful and supportive and does not spare time or money to help someone who is in distress or trouble. Thus, when one is noble, he is forgiving. He does not remember all the little misgivings of his friends and he does not meet evil with evil, but he meets evil with good and generosity.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, purification of the soul at the societal level is discussed through Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā's works. His works that are related to the topic of this chapter were selected and discussed to link each title of the books with the purification of the soul at the societal level and in what way it helps in the process of purification. Then, the contents of each book was analyzed to introduce the contributions of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in purifying the soul at the societal level through his works. In this chapter, thirteen books were discussed and analyzed according to the methodology mentioned earlier. The discussion and analysis of this chapter found that Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā managed to introduce most of his works in a fulfilling manner, applying all of his experiences and knowledge with his sense of creativity. In Addition to his method in introducing each topic from all of its aspects, he focused on areas where he felt his society was in need of the most. He was also concerned with clarifying and rectifying important concepts that may have been distorted or misunderstood. Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā used repetition as well among his methods to convey the intended message. By repeating the idea or meaning mentioned in the narration and by stating different narrations that may introduce the information from a different angel or even add to it

or clarify an unclear previous point. Thus, the next chapter discusses the creativity of Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in introducing purification at the individual and societal levels through his works. It also introduces the methodology Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā used in his works that contributed to the understanding of purification of soul at both levels as well.

