

IMAM MUḤAMMAD IBN AL-ḤASAN AL-SHAYBĀNĪ
ON EARNING A LIVELIHOOD:
SEVEN EXCERPTS FROM HIS *KITĀB AL-KASB*

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Muḥammad al-Shaybānī and his *Kitāb al-Kasb* are introduced, and then seven translated excerpts from the work are presented to illustrate the classical Islamic understanding of the role and purpose of earning a living and of work in general.

Keywords: Muḥammad al-Shaybānī; *Kitāb al-Kasb*; Earning a livelihood; communal solidarity; wealth; agriculture; commerce.

The Author of *Kitāb al-Kasb*¹

He is the *mujtahid*² Imam, the great jurisconsult of ‘Irāq, Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farqad al-Shaybānī. His father was of the people of Ḥarastā (a town or suburb to the east of Damascus, Syria), and emigrated to ‘Irāq, where Muḥammad was born to him in Wāsīṭ (ca.131/748). His father then took him to Kūfa and raised him there. From an early age he manifested profound intelligence and exemplary character, and he was a strong, healthy and handsome boy.

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1. Much of this section on the life and works of al-Shaybānī is based on Shaykh ‘Abdul al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda’s introduction to his excellent edition of the *Kitāb al-Kasb*, which is in turn based on, among others, Imam al-Kawtharī’s biography of Imam al-Shaybānī, *Bulūgh al-amānī fī Sīrat al-Imām Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī*, and earlier classical biographical dictionaries, such as al-Dhahabī’s *Sīyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*. See Abu Ghudda (ed.), *Kitāb al-kasb* (Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbu‘āt al-Islāmiyya, 1417/1997) (henceforth “Abū Ghudda”), 11 ff.
 2. One qualified to exercise independent *ijtihād* or competent to “infer expert legal rulings from foundational proofs within or without a particular School [of jurisprudence]”; see the glossary in Gibril Fouad Haddad, *The Four Imams and Their Schools: Abū Ḥanīfā, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad* (London: Muslim Academic Trust, 2007), 451–452 and 458.

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He learned the Qurʾān and Arabic language, attended classes on hadiths, and, when he was fourteen years old, began studying with Imam Abū Ḥanīfa. He remained with him for four years, receiving instructions in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and hadith, after which he completed his education in *fiqh* under the guidance of Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), may Allah have mercy on them all. He also learned from other great scholars of the time in Kūfa, Baṣra, Madina and al-Shām (Syro-Palestine), including Imam Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) in Kūfa, Imam al-Awzāʿī (d. 157/774) in Syria and Imam Mālik (d. 179/795) in Madīnah, with whom he studied for three years.³

Eventually he became the foremost juriconsult of ʿIrāq after Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf, his scholarly accomplishments became widely known, which attracted many gifted and accomplished students to him from far and wide. Among some of his more prominent students were Imam Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī (founder of the Shāfiʿī legal school), Asad b. al-Furāt al-Qayrawānī (d. 213/828) (liberator of Sicily and documenter-compiler (*mudawwim*), of the Mālikī legal school), and Shaykh Saḥnūn (d. 240/854) (the narrator-compiler of the *Mudawwanah*), and many others. He was also, indirectly, a great influence on Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 855/241) (founder of the Ḥanbalī legal school), for he was once asked, “From whence did you acquire these legal subtleties?” whereupon he replied, “From the books of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan.”⁴ Among his prominent students too were Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838), the celebrated author of *Kitāb al-Amwāl* (*Book of Wealth*), an early work on what we might now term as macro-economics or public finance.⁵

Imam Muḥammad passed away in 189/804 in Ray, Persia.⁶ It is reported that he was seen weeping on his death-bed. When asked the reason, he said, “What if Allah Most Exalted makes me stand before Him and asks, ‘Muḥammad! What brought you forth to Me? Jihād in My way? Or the pursuit of My good pleasure?’ What can I reply?”⁷ Someone dreamt of Imam Muḥammad after he passed away and asked about his condition, whereupon he said that he was forgiven because of his learning.⁸

He left behind a legacy of many valuable and well-received scholarly

3. The version of Imam Mālik’s *al-Muwattaʿ*³ narrated by Imam al-Shaybānī has been translated beautifully into English; see *The Muwattaʿ of Imam Muḥammad*, trans. ʿAbdussamad Clarke and Mohammed ʿAbdurrahīmān (London: Turath Publishing, 2004).

4. Translated as *Reliance of the Traveller* by Nuh Ha Mim Keller (Beltsville, Maryland: Amana: 1997), 1077 x257.

5. Ugi Suharto, *Kitāb al-Amwāl: Abū ʿUbayd’s Concept of Public Finance* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2005), 34–35, and 213 n. 39.

6. Keller, *Reliance*, 1077 x257. Ray is at the outskirts of present-day Tehran.

7. Haddad, *Four Imams*, 15.

8. *Ibid.*

works,⁹ largely in the field of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* based on the principles laid down by Imam Abū Ḥanīfā. These include *Kitāb al-mabsūṭ* or *Kitāb al-aṣl*,¹⁰ *al-Jāmiʿ al-saghīr*,¹¹ *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*,¹² *al-Siyar al-saghīr*,¹³ *al-Siyar al-kabīr*,¹⁴ *al-Ziyādāt*,¹⁵ and *Ziyādāt al-ziyādāt*.¹⁶ He also compiled a book of traditions, *Kitāb al-āthār*,¹⁷ in which he narrated mostly from his main teacher, Imam Abū Ḥanīfā, and from about twenty other teachers.¹⁸ *Kitāb al-kasb*, recently translated into English, is considered to be the last work he wrote before he passed away.¹⁹

Perhaps one of the reasons for the wide appeal of the *Kitāb al-Kasb*²⁰ (and also perhaps of his other works) is the fact that the author was no ivory-tower, armchair jurisconsult, but one who was concerned about grounding his

9. A lucid overview of his corpus of writings is given in the editor's introduction to Ḥasan b. Maṣṣūr Awzjandī al-Farghānī Qāḍī Khān, *Sharḥ al-Ziyādāt* (of al-Shaybānī), ed. Qāsim Ashraf Nūr Aḥmad (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turath al-ʿArabī, 2005), 51–58.

10. Ed. Abū al-Wafā' al-Afghānī, 5 vols. (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1990).

11. See the commentary on it by Imam al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Mānara al-Bukhārī al-Hanafī, *Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-saghīr*, ed. Ṣalāḥ ʿAwwād Jumūʿa ʿAbdullāh al-Kubaysī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2006).

12. Abū al-Wafā' al-Afghānī (ed.), (Hyderabad: Lajnah Iḥyā' al-Maʿārif al-Nuʿmāniyya, 1937).

13. Edited, translated and annotated by Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi as *The Shorter Book on Muslim International Law: Kitāb al-Siyar al-Ṣaghīr by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1998).

14. See al-Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, 4 vols. (Hyderabad, 1916–1917); see also Majīd Khaddurī's useful and detailed study, *The Islamic Law of Nations: al-Shaybānī's Siyar* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), 41–57.

15. See the commentary on it by Ḥasan b. Maṣṣūr Awzjandī al-Farghānī Qāḍī Khān, *Sharḥ al-Ziyādāt*, ed. Qāsim Ashraf Nūr Aḥmad (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turath al-ʿArabī, 2005).

16. See the commentary on it by Imam al-Sarakhsī, *al-Nukat: Sharḥ Ziyādāt al-Ziyādāt li al-Shaybānī*, ed. Abū al-Wafā' al-Afghānī (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, n.d.).

17. *The Kitāb al-Āthār of Imam Abū Ḥanīfā, Narrated by Imam Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī*, trans. Abdussamad Clarke (London: Turath Publishing, 2007).

18. Further details are in the editor's introduction to Muḥammad al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Kasb (al-Iktisāb fil-rizq al-mustaṭāb)*, ed. Aḥmad Jābir Badrān (Cairo: Markaz al-Dīrasāt al-Fiqhiyya wal-Iqtiṣādiyya, 2004) (henceforth "Badrān"), 72–83. See also Haddad, *Four Imams*, 15. A critical account, though dated, of his life and works is Khaddurī, *Islamic Law of Nations*, 22–40 passim.

19. See Suhayl Zakkār (ed.), *Risāla fīl-kasb* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1997), 18.

20. Badrān, 141–142.

legal conclusions not only in textual evidence (*muṣūṣ*) but also in the everyday realities of political, social and commercial life. It is reported of him that he used to go out to visit the dyers (*ṣabbāghūn*) in order to be able ask them personally about their work and their transactions among themselves. Shaykh al-Kawtharī documented this report in his biography of Imam Muḥammad, *Bulūgh al-Amānī*, and commented in admiration:

Look at this great *mujtahid*, how he did not make do with what he possessed of knowledge of the Book and the *Sunnah*, and the opinions of the Companions and Followers, and others of the jurisconsults of all the lands....but rather saw himself to be in need of being familiar with the manners of transacting (*wujūh al-ta'āmul*) among the practitioners of the trades (*arbāb al-ṣinā'āt*), and the difference between the manners of the old custom (*al-'urf al-qadīm*) and those of the fresh new custom (*al-'urf al-ḥadīth al-tarī'*), that his words might be secured from errors in any aspects that pertain to the explication of the rulings of the Divine Law (*al-Shar'*).²¹

Kitāb al-Kasb

*Kitāb al-Kasb*²² (= *The Book of Earning a Livelihood*) is, in itself,²³ a small booklet expounding on the imperative of earning a livelihood for those who are able to do so, and the various juristic and ethico-moral dimensions in respect thereof. The book is dictated along the traditional (*āthārī*) rather than strictly juristic (*fiqhī*) approach to the topic, and hence each legal position expounded on is supported by adducing one, two or more Prophetic hadiths or reports (*āthār*) and narratives (*akhbār*) from the Companions and the Followers, as well as relevant verses from the Holy Qur'^{ān}.²⁴

The book was narrated and transmitted from the author by his student Muḥammad b. Samā'a al-Tamīmī,²⁵ and it is this narration and transmission

21. Abū Gludda, 47–48; Badrān, 140–141.

22. Full English translation with notes by Adi Setia, *The Book of Earning a Livelihood* (Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM, 2011).

23. That is, if considered apart from the much more lengthy commentary of Imam al-Sarakhsī in which it is embedded. Abū Gludda (21) says that the original text of the *Kitāb al-Kasb* is not extant, and that what we now have is a version that is embedded in its commentary by al-Sarakhsī, who, unfortunately, does not differentiate between the original text and his commentary on it.

24. Zakkār, *Risāla*, 27.

25. He is the learned Imam, Qāḍī of Baghdād, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Samā'ah b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Tamīmī al-Kūfī, student and companion of Imam Abū Yūsuf and Imam Muḥammad al-Shaybānī. He was born in 130/747 and passed away in 233/848, and thus lived to the ripe old age of 103 years (Abū Gludda, 60, 65–66; and Badrān, 168–169 n. 2).

which formed the basis of the commentary (*sharḥ*) on it by the learned and erudite Imam al-Sarakhsī.²⁶ His commentary exhibits a remarkably nuanced commonsensical and rational approach toward balancing the different juristic interpretations of the traditions and reports with a meticulous care to present as objectively as possible the views of opposing legal positions before embarking to refute them and to argue for the accepted Ḥanafī legal position. I personally find this lovely blending of traditional and rational argumentation (*al-istidlāl wal-iḥtijāj bil-manqūl wal-ma'qūl*) to be very intellectually appealing, thereby keeping at bay much of the inevitable tedium that tends to set in during the careful, measured pace of translating a classical Arabic text, or any serious, scholarly text for that matter.

One major difficulty noted by many scholars who study al-Sarakhsī's commentary on the *Kitāb al-Kasb* is the fact that it is quite a delicate task to tease out al-Shaybānī's original wordings from the much more profuse wordings of the commentator himself. That task of teasing out and disembedding one from the other will definitely warrant a careful separate study and research in itself, which obviously I have not attempted to undertake here. However, in most cases, whenever al-Sarakhsī starts a sentence by, say, the words "He says (*qāla*)," we can be quite confident that the sentence is attributable to al-Shaybānī himself, and it is thereby put in quotation marks in the translation to differentiate it from the other sentences of the commentator. Other aspects of the commentary, such as the rebuttal of the Karrāmites, clearly point to issues and controversies that only arose during the time of al-Sarakhsī (d. 483), who flourished some two and a half centuries after the passing away of al-Shaybānī.²⁷

Although many readers would deem the *Kitāb al-Kasb* to fall under the purview of the formal discipline now known as economics, al-Sarakhsī actually informs us that Imam Muḥammad wrote it to expound on the meaning of asceticism or detachment from the world (*al-zuhd*). He originally planned to write a long work of one thousand chapters or sections on the topic, but due to a sudden illness which overtook him, he only managed to complete a small

26. He is the Grand Imam Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Sahl Abū Bakr al-Sarakhsī (of Serakhs in present-day Turkmenistan), student of Imam Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Azīz al-Ḥalwānī, and author of the thirty volume work on Ḥanafī jurisprudence, *al-Mabsūṭ*. He passed away in Fergana (in present-day Uzbekistan) in 483/1090. For more on him, see Keller, *Reliance*, 1093 x319; see Abū Ghudda, 59–60, and Badrān, 166–167 n. 1.

27. Abū Ghudda, 21. Al-Sarakhsī has embedded his commentary on the *Kitāb al-Kasb* in his encyclopedic fiqh compendium *al-Mabsūṭ*, and it constitutes a book (*kitāb*) of its own in volume thirty of the *Mabsūṭ* (That is, vol. 30, 269–321 of the edition prepared by Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Shāfi'ī, and published in 31 volumes in Beirut by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2001).

portion of it, which is the *Kitāb al-Kasb*. It was his first composition on the subject of prudence (*al-waraʿ*) and abstinence (*al-zuhd*), and the manner in which such praiseworthy character traits are to be steadfastly safeguarded from corruption through the unavoidable vexations, tribulations and temptations of working for one's livelihood.

Here we have a work that explains how economic discipline can and should find its meaning and purpose within the ambit of spiritual discipline. Shaykh ʿAbdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda, Allah be well-pleased with him, considers this operative embedding of prudence and abstinence into the every-day mundaneness of earning a living to be a grand idea on the part of Imam Muḥammad:

This is a lofty and subtle thinking (*fikrat ʿāliya daqīqa*) on the part of Imam Muḥammad, for he has embarked on expounding on the crux of abstinence and prudence (*raʿs al-zuhd wal-waraʿ*), which is wholesome livelihood (*ṭīb al-maksīb*). Allah's is his achievement and with Allah is his reward (*li-Ilāhi darruh wa ʿalā Allāhi ajruh*).²⁸

Thus one closes the book and comes away with the profound realisation that the operational test of true abstinence and prudence—or true inner worth and spiritual discipline in general—lies in the way one conducts oneself through the every-day trials, tribulations, temptations, worries and vexations of working for one's sustenance, whether by trading in goods and merchandise, working for a wage, or practicing a craft.

Earning a Livelihood as a Service to Communal Solidarity

In a nutshell, a person is prudent and abstinent when he takes care to work in a wholesome enterprise (*al-kasb al-ṭayyib*) in order to provide for his needs and the needs of his family and dependents, and, if there is surplus, to provide therefrom for the poor and needy in his community, while at the same time, avoiding the illicit, the abhorred, and the questionable, and turning away—as far as possible—from materialistic covetousness, and from indulging in an overtly opulent lifestyle that one may avoid casting rancour into the hearts of the poor. Only then can his whole life be a life of solidarity with the poor, and of total worship in humble devotion to his Creator, to Whom he shall be returned, and to Whom he shall be accountable for all the blessings and enjoyments bestowed on him in temporal earthly life. Hence in this regard, earning a livelihood in relation to the devotional life is as the ritual purification (*al-ṭahāra*) in relation to the canonically prescribed prayers (*al-ṣalāt*)—the one is seen to be dependent on the other, and the two are thereby integrated into a seamless whole.

We may extend and expand on this reflection to come to the necessary

28. Abū Ghudda, 20.

insight that observing personal, individual worship (*‘ibadāt*) is not sufficient in order for a person to live a fully Islamic life—or to realise Islam as a complete way of life—unless at the same time he takes care to cultivate the interpersonal transactional relationship (*mu‘āmalāt*) required to support it; thus the inextricable linkage between *farḍ ‘ayn* (individual duty) and *farḍ kifāya* (communal duty), and between personal devotion and social relation, so nicely alluded to by Imam Muḥammad al-Shaybānī with his statements, “In earning a livelihood there is the meaning of cooperation in acts of devotion (*fīl-kasb ma‘nā al-mu‘āwana ‘alā al-qurab*),”²⁹ and “Permissible earning is in the category of cooperation in acts of devotion and obedience (*al-kasb al-ḥalāl min bāb al-mu‘āwana ‘alā al-qurab wal-tā‘āt*).”³⁰ Hence, in order to observe *‘ibāda*, we need to cultivate an appropriate *mu‘āmala* to support and nurture it; the one simply cannot do without the other.³¹

Translated Excerpts from Al-Shaybānī on Earning a Livelihood

There are quite a few published editions of the *Kitāb al-Kasb*. I surveyed four of them, namely the one embedded in Imam al-Sarakhsī’s encyclopedic thirty-volume *fiqh* compendium, *Kitāb al-Mabsūt*, the one prepared by Dr. Suhayl Zakkār, the one by Dr. Aḥmad Jābir Badrān, and the one by Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda.

I find the last two to be the most reliable, but Abū Ghudda’s edition is clearly the basis for the later Badrān edition, which quite openly acknowledges its indebtedness to the earlier edition, especially with regard to the collation of a number of different manuscripts, and hadith documentation.³² Although in the end I opted for Abū Ghudda’s edition on which to base my translation—not least because he was a well-known, authoritative scholar of hadith and *fiqh* (and also because I had already started to use it before coming across Badrān’s edition)—readers may occasionally find in the Badrān’s edition useful, informative annotations to the text not found in the Abū Ghudda’s edition.

Shaykh Abū Ghudda has meticulously documented and evaluated all the prophetic traditions narrated in the *Kitāb al-Kasb*, except for the very few which he could not trace in the standard, published sources. In my translation, I have omitted repeating in to Abu Ghudda’s detailed documentation and evaluation of these traditions and reports, and limited myself to only mentioning the source of a tradition in general, such as Muslim or al-Bukhārī or al-Ṭabarānī, while referencing to Abū Ghudda’s detailed documentation in the footnotes

29. *Ibid.*, 136.

30. *Ibid.*, 164.

31. See Adi Setia, “*Mu‘āmala* and the Revival of the Islamic Gift Economy,” *Islam & Science* (Summer 2011), 67–88.

32. Badrān, 148–149.

for the benefit of more serious and scholarly readers who may want to pursue the sources of the hadiths further by directly consulting his Arabic edition of *Kitāb al-Kasb*.

I have also found myself benefitting immensely from Shaykh Abū Ghudda's other annotations to the text, and have gladly made use of them in my translation with proper referencing to the relevant page or pages and footnotes in his edition. In the relatively few places in the text where he was silent, and where I deem annotations to be warranted in order to render the text more understandable to readers, I have rendered those annotations myself, but on the whole I have left the translation lightly annotated.

To render the translation more readable I have omitted the use of square brackets altogether, and only used round brackets throughout. Bracketted transliterated Arabic terms indicate terms or words already found in the original Arabic text, while bracketted English words or terms are my own to render the whole sense of the sometimes terse and pithy expressions in the original more accessible to readers, but I should hope that I have kept these to the barest minimum.

Excerpt 1: The Ranks of Earning and Their Legal Rulings (*Marātib al-kasb wa aḥkāmuhā*)³³

Earning is of several ranks. (The first is) the level (of earning) which is indispensable for everyone. This means that earning by which a person can lawfully strengthen his spine (*mā yuqīmu bihī ṣulbuh*) is individually incumbent on everyone, for the discharge of the obligatory duties (*iqāmat al-farā'id*) cannot be attained except by it; and that by which the discharge of the obligatory duties are attained is (in itself) obligatory. If he thereafter does not strive to earn more than what is necessary, he is at liberty (*fī sa'atin*) in respect thereof, because of the statement of the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, "Whoever enters upon morning in peace over his flock (*sirb*) and healthy (*mu'āfan*) in his body, having food for his day, it is as though the entire world has fallen into his possession."³⁴

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said to Ibn Ḥubaysh,³⁵ may Allah be pleased with him, advising him, "A morsel (*luqmah*) with which you assuage your hunger, and a piece of cloth (*khirqah*) with which you conceal your shame³⁶ (*saw'ah*), and if there is (also) for you a shelter (*hinn*) which shelters you, then (all) that is good; and if there is for you a riding animal

33. Abū Ghudda, 121–131.

34. Narrated by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah and al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab al-mufrad* (Abū Ghudda, 122 n. 1).

35. Abū Ghudda (122 n. 2–3) discusses in some detail on the actual identity of this Companion.

36. That is, private parts of the body.

(*dābba*) which you ride, then it is most excellent (*fa bakhin bakhin*).³⁷

This is when he is not in debt (*dayn*),³⁸ but if he is in debt, then it is mandatory on him to earn an amount that pays off his debt, because paying off debts is incumbent on him as a personal duty (*mustahaqqun ‘alayhi ‘ayman*), (for) the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Debts are to be paid off (*al-dayn maqdiyy*),”³⁹ and by earning this is attained.

Likewise if he has dependants like a wife and small children, then it is personally obligatory for him to earn an amount that is sufficient for (up)keeping) them (*qadr kifāyatihim*), because providing (*al-infāq*) for his wife is incumbent on him (*mustahaqq ‘alayh*), (for) Allah Most High says, *Keep those women in the manner you live, according to your means* (*al-Ṭalāq*: 6) which means, “provide for them according to your means,” and this is in the reading (*qirā’ah*) of Ibn Mas‘ūd, may Allah be pleased with him.

Allah Most Exalted, Most Glorious, says, *And it is the responsibility of the father to provide them*⁴⁰ *with food and clothing properly. No soul is burdened beyond its capacity* (*al-Baqara*: 233). He, Most Exalted, Most Glorious, says, *And let one whose provision is limited spend of what Allah has given him* (*al-Ṭalāq*: 7). This duty is most surely fulfilled with earning. The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “It is sinful enough for a person to neglect those whom he is responsible to support.”⁴¹ Hence safeguarding oneself (*al-taharruz*) from committing sins (*al-ma’āthim*) is an obligation.

The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Verily, your soul has a right over you, and your family has a right over you, so give to each right owner (*dhī haqqin*) his right.”⁴² However the obligation to the latter is lower (in degree) than to the former,⁴³ for the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says “...then (feed) those whom you support.”⁴⁴ If he earns more than that which he stores for himself and for his dependants, then he is at liberty to do so, for it is narrated that the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, had food for his dependants stored up for a year, after he had (earlier)

37. Narrated in *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*, and by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Awsaṭ* (Abū Ghudda, 123 n. 2).

38. That is, this level of earning should suffice for a person when he is not indebted to anyone.

39. Narrated by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah (Abū Ghudda, 123 n. 3).

40. That is, to provide for the mothers and children.

41. Narrated by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim (Abū Ghudda, 124 n. 4).

42. Narrated by al-Bukhārī and al-Tirmidhī (Abū Ghudda, 124 n. 5).

43. That is, you are first obliged to provide for yourself and then for your family or your dependants.

44. That is, begin with feeding your own self and then those who are depending on you for provisions. Narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and by Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī in *Masā’il al-Imam Aḥmad* (Abū Ghudda, 125 n. 1).

forbidden that,⁴⁵ according to a narration that he, may Allah bless and give him peace, said to Bilāl, may Allah be pleased with him, “Give away O Bilāl, and do not fear any decrease from the Owner of the Throne (*al-‘arsh*).”⁴⁶ The later (hadith) abrogates the earlier.

If he has impoverished elderly parents (*abawān kabīran mu‘sirān*), he is obliged to earn enough to provide for them because providing for them is a binding duty on him even if he is destitute as long as he is able to earn. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said to a man who came to him and said, “I wish to fight in the path of Allah (*al-jihād*) with you.” He said, “Do you have parents?” He said, “Yes.” The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, said, “Return to them and fight,”⁴⁷ that is, earn and provide for them.

Allah Most High says, *And keep company with them courteously in this world (Luqmān: 15)*. It is not keeping courteous company to leave them both to die starving when he is able to earn; however, this is lesser than the previous case in obligation, because of what has been narrated in a hadith that a man said to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and give him peace, “I have one *dīnār* with me.” The Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless and give him peace, said, “Spend it on yourself.” He said, “I have another one.” The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, said, “Spend it on your dependants.” He said, “I have (yet) another one.” The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, said, “Spend it on your parents (*wāliḍayka*).”⁴⁸

As for non-parents among the unmarriedable kin (*dhaw al-rahīm al-maḥram*), it is not obligatory for a person to earn to provide for them, because providing for them is not a binding duty on him except in the case of one who is affluent (*illā bi i‘tibār ṣifat al-yasār*), but it is recommended (*yundab*) to earn and provide for them, strengthening the ties of kinship (*ṣilat al-rahīm*); and this is something recommended (*mandūb*) by the Law. The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “There is no good in one who does not like (to have) wealth in order to thereby connect ties with his kinfolk, and to thereby honor his guest (*ḍayf*), and to thereby be beneficent to his friend (*al-ṣadīq*).”⁴⁹

The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, said to ‘Amr b. al-‘Ās, may Allah be pleased with him “I desire for you a desire of wealth (*arḡhabu laka ragħbatan min al-māl*),” until he said (the words), “The most excellent virtuous wealth (*al-māl al-ṣāliḥ*) is for the virtuous man who renews relations with his

45. Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim (Abū Ghudda, 125–126 n. 2).

46. Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī (long discussion in Abū Ghudda, 127 n. 1).

47. Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim (Abū Ghudda, 128 n. 1).

48. A hadith similar in meaning but different in wording is narrated by Abū Dāwūd (Abū Ghudda, 128 n. 3).

49. Narrated by Ibn Ḥibbān (Abū Ghudda, 129 n. 1).

kinfolk.”⁵⁰ The severing of kinship is prohibited as supported by the statement of the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, “Three things are suspended by the Throne (*al-Arsh*): blessings (*al-ni‘ma*), trust (*al-amāna*) and kinship (*al-rahīm*). Blessings say, ‘I was shown ingratitude and not appreciated’; trust says, ‘I was betrayed and not nurtured’; and kinship says, ‘I was severed and not joined.’”⁵¹

The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “The joining of (bonds) of kinship prolongs (one’s) lifespan, while the severing of kinship takes away blessing from (one’s) lifetime.”⁵² And the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says in what he narrated from his Lord, Most Exalted, Most Glorious, “I am the Benevolent (*al-Rahmān*), and these are the wombs (*wa hiya al-rahīmu*); I derived for them a name from my name, so whoever joins (ties of) kinship, I shall join him, but whoever cuts (ties of) kinship, I shall cut him (off).”⁵³

There is something in the neglect to provide for kinfolk which leads to the severance of kinship (*qaṭī‘at al-rahīm*); hence it is recommended to earn in order to provide for them.

Excerpt 2: Permissibility of Earning to Amass Wealth though Safety Lies in Not Doing So (*Jawāz al-kasb li jam‘ al-māl ma‘a kawn al-salāma fīl-ımtinā‘ min dhālika*)⁵⁴

Thereafter the matter becomes broadened (*muwassa‘*) for him, so if he wishes he earns and amasses wealth, and if he wishes he desists (from doing so), for some of the (pious) Predecessors (*al-salaf*), may Allah Most High be merciful to them, amassed wealth and some did not, and thus we know that both ways are permissible.

As for accumulation (*al-jam‘*), this is due to what was narrated from the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, (that he said), “Whoever seeks what is permissible (*halāl*) of the world with temperance (*muta‘affifan*) shall meet Allah Most High with his face like the moon (*al-qamar*) on the night of the full moon (*al-badr*); and whoever seeks it with conceit (*mufākhiran*) and excess (*mukāthiran*) shall meet Allah Most High while He is angry at him.”⁵⁵ This

50. Narrated by al-Ḥakim in *al-Mustadrak* and Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* (Abū Ghudda, 129, n. 2).

51. Al-Suyūṭī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḡhīr* traced it to al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab al-ı̄mān* (Abū Ghudda, 130, n. 2).

52. Narrated by al-Quḍā‘ī in *Musnad al-Shihāb* (Abū Ghudda, 130 n. 3).

53. Al-Haythamī in *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id* says it is narrated by al-Bazzār in *Kashf al-astār* (Abū Ghudda, 130–131, n. 4).

54. Abū Ghudda, 131–136.

55. Narrated by Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Hilya* and al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab al-ı̄mān* (Abū Ghudda, 131, n. 1).

shows that accumulating wealth in a moderate way is allowed. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, used to say in his supplication, “O Allah, render my sustenance most bountiful during my old age and toward the ending of my lifespan.”⁵⁶ And so it was, for it was accrued for him, toward the end of his life, forty lactiferous sheep (*shātan ḥalūbatan*), Fadak,⁵⁷ and a share in Khaybar.⁵⁸

As for abstaining from amassing wealth, this way is also permissible because of the narration (*ḥadīth*) of ‘Ā’isha from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and give him peace, “If there were for the progeny of Ādam two dales (*wādiyan*) of gold, he would wish to (add to) that a third one, and the belly of Ādam’s progeny will not be filled up except by dirt (*al-turāb*); and Allah relents to those who repent.”⁵⁹ It was said (by some), that this (hadīth) was among what was recited in the Qur’ān in the chapter of Yūnus (Jonah), during the second or third bowing (of the prayer, *al-rukū‘*), then its recitation was abrogated (*īntasakhat tilāwatahu*) and (only) the narration remained (*baqiyat riwāyatahu*).⁶⁰

The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Perished be wealth!” And in a narration, “Perished be the owner of gold and silver.”⁶¹ The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “The accumulators (*al-mukthirūn*) are destroyed except he who says, “Thus and thus (*hākadhā wa hākadhā*),”⁶² that is, he gives away in charity (*yataṣaddaq*) in every respect. The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Satan says, ‘The owner of wealth shall not be saved from me with respect to three things: either I will render it attractive in his eyes and so he will amass it unlawfully, or either I shall render it despicable in his eyes and so he will give it away unlawfully, or either I shall render it lovable to him and so he will retain what is due to Allah from it.’”⁶³

In this there is clarification that abstaining from amassing wealth is safer, and there is no blotch (*‘ayb*) on those who choose the path of safety.

56. Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Awsaṭ* (Abū Ghudda, 132 n. 1).

57. A rich and prosperous garden oasis to the north of and near Khaybar; on its surrender to the Muslim army following the capture of Khaybar, see Martin Lings (Abū Bakr Sirāj al-Dīn), *Muḥammad, His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noorden, 1983), 267–268.

58. An oasis about two hundred and fifty kilometer from Madina.

59. Narrated by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* (see long discussion in Abū Ghudda, 133 n. 1).

60. See long discussion in Abū Ghudda, 133 n. 1.

61. Narrated by Imam Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* (Abū Ghudda, 134 n. 1).

62. Narrated by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and Aḥmad (Abū Ghudda, 135 n. 1).

63. Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī, Muslim, al-Nasā’ī and al-Tirmidhī (Abū Ghudda, 135 n. 2).

Excerpt 3: In Earning There is the Meaning of Cooperation in Acts of Devotion (*Fil-kashb ma‘nā al-mu‘āwana ‘alā-l-qurab*)⁶⁴

(Imam) Muḥammad, may Allah have mercy on him, then explains that in earning there is the meaning of cooperation (*al-mu‘āwana*) on acts of devotion (*al-qurab*) and obedience (*al-tā‘āt*),⁶⁵ regardless of the nature of the earning.⁶⁶ He says to the extent that in the (work of the) ropemaker (*fattāl al-ḥibal*),⁶⁷ the maker of jugs (*al-kizān*)⁶⁸ and earthen jars (*al-jirār*), and the work of the weavers (*al-hawaka*), there is cooperation on acts of devotions and obedience (to Allah), for it is not possible to perform the prayer except by (first performing the ritual of) purification (*al-tahāra*), and this requires a jug (*al-kūz*) with which to pour water; a leather bucket (*dalw*) and rope (*rishā*) with which to draw water (from the well), and requires the covering of (one’s) nakedness (*al-‘awra*) for performing the prayer which is only possible by the work of the weavers (*al-hawaka*).⁶⁹

Thus we know that all of that are among the means of cooperation (*asbāb al-tā‘āwun*) on rendering obedience (*iqāmat al-tā‘āt*), and this (fact) was indicated by ‘Alī, may Allah be pleased with him, in his statement, “Do not revile the world, for the most excellent mount of the believer is the world to the hereafter (*la tasubbū al-dunyā, fa ni‘ma maṭiyyat al-mu‘min al-dunyā ilā al-ākhirah*).”

Abū Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, when a man asked him about the best of deeds after belief, said, “Praying and eating bread.” The man looked at him as one taken aback (*kal-muta‘ajjib*), and so he said, “If it were not for bread, Allah Most High would not have been worshipped.” This means that by eating bread, a person is able to keep body and soul together, and is thereby enabled to render (religious acts) of obedience.

Excerpt 4: Permissibility of Lowly Earnings (*Ibāḥat al-makāsib al-dāniya*)⁷⁰

The legal position of the vast majority of the jurists (*jumhur al-fuqahā*), may Allah Most High have mercy on them, is that all the (different types of) earnings (*al-makāsib*) are the same with respect to permissibility (*al-ibāḥah*).

Some of the ascetics (*al-mutaqashshifa*) said, “It is not allowed to undertake

64. Abū Ghudda, 136.

65. That is, helping one another toward piety and devotion to Allah.

66. That is, so long as it is permissible (*ḥalāl*).

67. Literally, twiner of ropes.

68. Jugs of clay or tin.

69. That is, covering one’s nakedness requires cloth which is produced by the weaving of the weavers.

70. Abū Ghudda, 136–140.

earnings that are considered to be lowly (*al-danāʿa*) in the custom of the people (*ʿurf al-nās*) except when in dire circumstance (*ʿinda al-ḍarūra*),⁷¹ due to the statement of the Prophet, blessing and peace be on him, “It is not for the believer to demean (*yudhill*) himself.”⁷² The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, (also) says, “Verily, Allah Most High likes noble things (*maʿālī al-umūr*), and He dislikes inferior ones (*safsāfahā*).”⁷³ The inferior (*al-safsāf*) is that which demeans a person due to its baseness (*khissa*).

Our argument (*hujja*) for that⁷⁴ is the statement of the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, “Among the sins are sins that cannot be expiated (*yukaffir*) (even) by fasting and prayer (*al-ṣalāt*).” And it was said (to him), “And what will expiate them, O Messenger of Allah?” He said, “Vexations (*al-humūm*) in earning a livelihood (*al-maʿīsha*).”⁷⁵ The Prophet, may Allah Most High bless and give him peace, (also) says, “Seeking the permissible (*ṭalab al-ḥalāl*) is like the battling of the warriors. Whoever retires in the evening worn out (*bāta wāniyan*) in seeking the permissible, retires as one who is forgiven.”⁷⁶ The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “The best of actions (*afḍal al-ʿmāl*) is earning to provide for dependents,”⁷⁷ without differentiating between the various types of earning.

(Even) if there was nothing in earning except abstinence (*al-taʿaffuf*) and independence (*al-istighnā*) from asking (*al-suʿāl*), it would (still) have been recommended, for the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Asking⁷⁸ is the worst resort of the servant (*al-suʿāl akhīr kasb al-ʿabd*),”⁷⁹ that is, he remains in his debasement (*yabqā fī dhillatih*) until the day of resurrection.

71. That is, when one is hardpressed to earn a living and there is only lowly work available.

72. Narrated by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad (Abū Ghudda, 137 n. 1).

73. Narrated by al-Kharāʿī in *Makārim al-akhlāq*, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Ḥākim, and al-Bayhaqī (Abū Ghudda, 137 n. 2).

74. That is, for permissibility of lowly earnings.

75. Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī, al-Haythamī, Abū Nuʿaym (Abū Ghudda, 137 n. 3).

76. Al-Suyūṭī in *al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr* traces this hadith to al-Bayhaqī in *Shuʿab al-īmān*, and it is also found in *Kanz al-ʿummāl*; Abū Ghudda confirms it to be a weak hadith (71–72 n. 3).

77. Narrated by Ibn Lāl and al-Daylamī as documented in al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḡhīr* (Abū Ghudda, 138 n. 1).

78. That is, begging.

79. That is, asking or begging from people should be the last (*ākhir*) resort after all else fails, like trying but failing to find work, or being debilitatingly handicapped; it can also mean that asking and begging from people is the most debased (*akhīr*) form of work for a person. Abū Ghudda says that this is a *marwūf* hadith which is only linked up to a Companion, namely, Qays b. ʿAṣim al-Minqarī al-Tamīmī (see long discussion in Abū Ghudda, 138–139 n. 2).

The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, said to Ḥakīm b. Hizām, may Allah be pleased with him, or (he said) to someone else, “An earning in which there is diminishment in status (*naṣṣ al-martabat*) is better for you than that you ask from people, regardless of whether they give you or refuse you.”⁸⁰

Moreover, the disparagement (*al-madhamma*) in the custom of the people is not connected to earning (as such) but to betrayal of trust (*al-khiyāna*),⁸¹ breaking promises (*khulf al-wa‘d*), swearing false oaths (*al-yamīn al-kādhība*),⁸² and to the meaning of miserliness (*ma‘nā al-bukhl*).

Excerpt 5: Types of Earnings (*Anwā‘ al-makāsib*)⁸³

Earnings are four types: hired employment (*al-ijāra*),⁸⁴ commerce (*al-tijāra*), agriculture (*al-zirā‘a*), and craftsmanship (*ṣinā‘a*). All these are equally permissible according to the vast majority of the jurists, may Allah Most High have mercy on them.

Excerpt 6: Agriculture is Not At All Reprehensible⁸⁵ (*al-Zirā‘a laysat madhmūma muṭlaqan*)⁸⁶

Some⁸⁷ say that agriculture is reprehensible due to what was narrated that the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, saw something of the implements of plowing (*ālāt al-ḥirātha*) in the house of a people, and he said, “None of these enters a people’s house except that they become debased (*mā dakhala ḥādḥā bayta qarwmin illā dhallu*).”⁸⁸ The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, was asked about the statement of Allah, the Great the Sublime, *If you obeyed those who scoff, they would turn you back on your heels* (*Āl ‘Imrān*: 149): “Is it (about) (*al-ta‘arrub*)?” He said, “No, but it is agriculture (*al-zirā‘a*).”⁸⁹ *Al-ta‘arrub* is dwelling in the desert (*suknā al-bādiya*) and abandoning emigration

80. A *mawqūf* hadith actually linked to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him (Abū Ghudda, 139 n. 1).

81. Also breach of faith or deception.

82. Also false swearing or lying under oath.

83. Abū Ghudda, 140.

84. That is, to allow oneself to be hired to do a job or to render a service in return for a fee, wage, or payment.

85. That is, not demeaning or looked down upon.

86. Abū Ghudda, 140–146.

87. Probably in reference to some jurists.

88. Narrated by al-Bukhārī (see long explanation of this hadith in Abū Ghudda, 140 n. 1).

89. *Mawqūf* hadith, linked up to ‘Alī, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm and documented in *al-Durr al-Manthūr* (Abū Ghudda, 142 n. 2).

(*tark al-hijra*).⁹⁰

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “When you buy and sell on credit (*tabāya‘tum bil-‘īna*), and pursue the tails of oxen (*adh-nāb al-baqar*), you shall become (so) lowly until you are coveted (by your enemies, *yutma‘ fī-kum*).”⁹¹

Our argument for this⁹² is what was narrated that the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, “farmed in al-Jurf.”⁹³ The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Seek sustenance in the bowels of the earth (*khabāyā al-ard*),”⁹⁴ meaning (seek sustenance by) farming. The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, (also) says, “The farmer (*al-zāri‘*) is trading (*yutājir*) with his Lord.”⁹⁵ The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, used to own Fadak and a share (*sahm*) in Khaybar, and his food (*qūl*) toward the end of his lifetime was from there.⁹⁶

‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to own a piece of land in Khaybar called Thamghā.⁹⁷ Ibn Mas‘ūd, al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, and Abū Hurayra,

90. Reference here is to the life of the bedouin.

91. Actually a *marfū‘* hadith, narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and al-Dūlābī (Abū Ghudda, 142 n. 4). A *marfū‘* hadith is a hadith which is linked back to the Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace. As explained by Abū Ghudda (143 n. 4), *al-‘īna* is that a person sells to another a merchandise on credit up to a certain term, and then the seller buys from the buyer the same merchandise in cash at a spot price that is lower than its credit price. By this transaction the buyer on credit obtains ready money for selling the same thing in cash back to the original seller, but what the former has owed to the latter is more than the ready money he received. So on the one hand the original buyer gets ready money, and the original seller gets more profit by selling on credit rather than in cash. This is also a roundabout way to lend money on interest, hence Abū Ghudda says, “This is a stratagem among the stratagems of usury (*ḥīlah min ḥiyal al-ribā*)!” See also the definition in Sa‘dī Abū Jayb, *al-Qāmūs al-Fiḥī: Lughatan wa Iṣṭilāḥan* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), 270; and in Muḥammad ‘Imārah, *Qamūs al-muṣṭalahāt al-iqtisādiyya fīl-ḥadārat al-Islāmiyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1993), 399–400. “Pursuing the tails of oxen” refers to farming and plowing the land, that is, agricultural activities.

92. That is, for saying that agriculture is not at all lowly or reprehensible.

93. Narrated by Ibn Zabālāh; according to Nūr al-Dīn al-Samhūdī in *Wafā’ al-wafā bi-akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā*, al-Jurf or al-Juruf is a place in Madina, about three miles in the direction of Shām (Syria) (Abū Ghudda, 80 n. 1).

94. Narrated by Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq*, al-Dāruquṭnī in *al-Afrād*, al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ayb al-īmān* (Abū Ghudda, 143 n. 2).

95. Abū Ghudda (143 n. 3) says he has not come across this hadith.

96. See long exposition in Abū Ghudda, 132–133 n. 2.

97. Narrated by al-Bukhārī (Abū Ghudda, 144 n. 2).

may Allah be pleased with them, used to own agricultural lands (*mazāriʿ*) in al-Sawād.⁹⁸ They farmed those lands and paid their land tax (*kharāj*). Ibn ʿAbbās, may Allah be pleased with them both, used to have farmlands in al-Sawād and other places.

The interpretation (*taʿwīl*) of the narrated traditions (*al-āthār al-marwiyya*)⁹⁹ is that these refer to the situation when all the people become preoccupied with agriculture and turn away from fighting in the path of Allah (*al-jihād*) so much so that their enemies covet them.¹⁰⁰ All this (meaning) is narrated in the previously mentioned hadith of Ibn ʿUmar, may Allah be pleased with them both, who said, “...and you abstain from fighting in the path of Allah (*qaʿadtum ʿan al-jihād*), and you become debased (*dhalaltum*) until you are coveted (by your enemies).”

But as for when some of them occupy themselves with *jihād* and some with farming, then in the vocation of the farmer there is assistance for the fighter (*al-mujāhid*), while in the vocation of the fighter there is defence (*dafʿun ʿan*) of the farmer. The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “The believers are as a building (*bunyān*); parts of which fortify the other.”¹⁰¹

Excerpt 7: Is Commerce Superior Or Farming? (*al-Tijāra afdal am al-zirāʿa*)¹⁰²

Thereafter, our teachers (*mashāyikh*), may Allah Most High have mercy on them, disagree on (the relative merits of) commerce and farming. Some of them say that commerce is superior because of the statement of Allah Most High, *And others traveling the land seeking the bounty of Allah and others fighting for the sake of Allah* (*al-Muzammil*: 20). The meaning of “traveling the land” is commerce, and Allah gives precedence to it in mention over *jihād*, which is the hump peak of the religion (*sanām al-dīn*) and the way of the Messengers (*summat al-mursalīm*).

Because of this, ʿUmar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Indeed, that I die between the flanks of my camel (*bayna shaʿbatay rahlī*)¹⁰³ while traveling the land seeking the bounty of Allah is more to my liking than to be killed fighting for the sake of Allah.”¹⁰⁴ The Prophet, may Allah bless and give

98. By *al-Sawād* is meant the Sawād of Iraq (*Sawād al-ʿIrāq*). The term *sawād* refers to every place on which there are farms and villages, or to rural agricultural regions in general.

99. That is, the preceding Prophetic hadiths and traditions of the Companions which apparently disparage involvement in farming and agriculture.

100. That is, have plans for attacking, raiding and conquering them.

101. Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim (Abū Ghudda, 146 n. 1).

102. Abū Ghudda, 146–148.

103. That is, to die on the camel saddle.

104. Narrated in al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Durr al-manthūr*, and in *Kanz al-ʿummāl* (Abū

him peace, says, “The trustworthy merchant (*al-tājir al-amīn*) is with the noble virtuous people (*al-kirām al-barara*) on the day of Resurrection.”¹⁰⁵

Most of our scholars, may Allah Most High have mercy on them all, are of the view that farming is superior to commerce because it is of wider benefit (*aʿammu nafʿan*). For through the vocation of farming is produced that by which a person fortifies his backbone¹⁰⁶ and derives strength to render obedience (to Allah). The Prophet said, “The best of people is he who is most beneficial to people (*khayr al-nāsi man huwa anfāʿu lil-nās*),”¹⁰⁷ hence to be occupied with what is more generally beneficial is superior.

(Farming is also better) because charitable giving (*al-ṣadāqa*) in farming is also more manifest, for the people, animals (*al-dawābb*) and birds (*al-ṭuyūr*) inevitably (*lā budda*) partake of what is earned by the farmer, and all that is (counted as) charity for him. The Prophet, may Allah bless and give him peace, says, “Never does a Muslim plants (*gharasa*) a tree (*shajara*), and a person or animal or bird partakes of it, except that it becomes for him a charity.”¹⁰⁸ And in a narration (*riwāya*), “What the *ʿāfiya* eat of it becomes for him a charity.” The *ʿāfiya* are birds which go out searching for their sustenance and then return to their nests (*awkār*).

When it is in the custom of people (*ʿādat al-nās*) to belittle earning that is lacking in charitable giving (*al-taṣadduq*) like the vocation of weaving (*al-ḥiyāka*) even though it partakes of assisting in the performance of the prayer, then we know that earning which involves more charitable giving is superior.

As for the interpretation of what they have commented (*taʿallaqū*)—(with regard to the fact that) it has been narrated from Makhūl and Muḥāhid, may Allah Most High have mercy on them both, that the meaning of “traveling the land (*al-ḍarb fīl-arḍ*)” refers to the quest for knowledge (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*)—we say concerning it that that is superior, for (Imam) Muḥammad, may Allah Most High have mercy on him, has (already) pointed to that in his statement, “The quest for earning is obligatory just as the quest for knowledge is obligatory.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore the comparison of this with that is proof that (the dictum) “the quest for knowledge is obligatory” is higher in rank than the other.

Ghudda, 72 n. 1).

105. Narrated by Ibn Mājah, al-Ḥakīm in *al-Mustadrak*, al-Tirmidhī (Abū Ghudda, 146 n. 4).

106. That is, gives strength to his body.

107. Narrated by al-Quḍāʿī in *Musnad al-Shihāb* (Abū Ghudda, 102 n. 1).

108. Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and al-Tirmidhī (Abū Ghudda, 147 n. 2).

109. That is, at the beginning of section 2; see Setia, *Book of Earning a Livelihood*, 6.