

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī [7068] – Each Era Worse Than the Last



Commentaries by **Dārussalām**, **Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn** [d. 1421H], and **Ḥāfiẓ Ṣalāḥuddīn Yūsuf** [d. 1441H]

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❁ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī [7068] – Each Era Worse Than the Last ❁

Book 92: Afflictions and the end of the world

Chapter 6: No time will come but the time following it will be worse than it

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنِ الزُّبَيْرِ بْنِ عَدِيٍّ، قَالَ: أَتَيْتَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، فَشَكَّوْنَا إِلَيْهِ مَا نَلَقَى مِنَ الْحَجَّاجِ، فَقَالَ: «اصْبِرُوا، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِي عَلَيْكُمْ زَمَانٌ إِلَّا الَّذِي بَعْدَهُ شَرٌّ مِنْهُ، حَتَّى تَلْقُوا رَبَّكُمْ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ نَبِيِّكُمْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ»

It is narrated on the authority of az-Zubayr bin ‘Adī that he said: We went to Anas bin Mālik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and complained about the wrong we were suffering at the hand of al-Ḥajjāj. So, he [Anas bin Mālik] said: “Be patient till you meet your Lord, for no time will come upon you but the time following it will be worse than it. I heard that from your Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”

→ Commentary by Dārussalām (Sunan at-Tirmidhī):

This ḥadīth conveys the idea that each age before the approach of the Hour or the appearance of its signs will, as a whole, be better than the one that will follow it. Each succeeding age will be inferior to the preceding one, in terms of the decreased number of scholars endowed with depth of their scholarship and knowledge, and the uprightness of their actions and deeds. (1)

→ Commentary by Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ:

The author رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said regarding what he narrated from az-Zubayr bin ‘Adī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ that: They came to Anas bin Mālik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the attendant of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ – lived long, remaining alive until around 90H, which witnessed some trials and tribulations.

Therefore, they came to him complaining of what they were facing from Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī, one of the governors of the Umayyad rulers. He was known for tyranny and butchery; he was obdurate and a despot – and the refuge is with Allāh. He was the one who laid siege on Makkah while fighting

(1) [2206 (4/261), Sunan at-Tirmidhī, Dārussalām (Eng)]

‘Abdullāh bin Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. He shelled the Ka’bah with ballistas until he destroyed it downright or a part of it; he really harmed people.

So, they came to Anas bin Mālik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ complaining to him. Anas said to them: ‘Be patient’; he directed them to be patient concerning the tyranny of the leaders. This is because the leaders, at times, are empowered over the people because of the unjust attitudes of the people themselves, as Allāh – the Exalted – has said: **“And thus We do make the *ẓālimūn* (polytheists and wrong doers) *awliyā’* (supporters and helpers) of one another because of that which they used to earn.”** [Sūrah al-An’ām 6: 129]

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نُؤَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام)

When you see the leaders persecuting people regarding their wealth or bodies, or preventing them from calling to the path of Allāh – the Exalted, or similar matters, ponder on the condition of the people themselves. They are the ones who have strayed, so Allāh placed such leaders in authority over them.

It occurs in a saying, not a ḥadīth, that: ‘As you are, so will you be given rulers.’

It was said that one of the rulers of the Umayyad Dynasty, I think it was ‘Abdul Malik bin Marwān, gathered the prominent people when he heard that people were complaining about the regime. He assembled them and asked: ‘O you people, do you want us to be like Abū Bakr and ‘Umar to you?’ The people answered: ‘Yes, we want that.’ He then said: ‘Then, be like the people Abū Bakr and ‘Umar ruled over and then we will like Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.’ That is to say, the people are upon the ways of their leaders. When leaders subjugate the populace, in most cases, it is due to people’s own deeds.

One of the khārijī once approached ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and said: ‘What is wrong with people that they criticize you and they did not criticize Abū Bakr and ‘Umar?’ He replied: ‘That is because the men at the time of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا were me and people like me, and the men at my own time are you and people like you.’ That is, when people are unjust, unjust leaders are made to rule over them.

For this reason, Anas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ admonished: ‘Be patient.’ This is essential; it is compulsory for a person to be patient, there is always a solution for every

difficulty. Never think things will always come easy; sometimes, evil may come out of the blues in a surge, but it will never overpower good. However, it is incumbent on us to be patient and handle the issues with wisdom. We should not surrender or be rash; we should deal with the issues with wisdom, patience, and caution.

Allāh – the Exalted – says: **“O you who believe! Endure and be more patient, enjoin patience and guard your territory [namely your duties to your Creator], and fear Allāh so that you may be successful.”** [Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān 3: 200]

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران)

Therefore, if you want success, these are the causes and means; four things: ‘Endure and be more patient, enjoin patience and guard your territory [name your duties to your Creator], and fear Allāh so that you may be successful.’

Anas bin Mālik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ then said: **“A time will not come upon the people except that the one after it will be worse until you meet your Lord; I heard it from your Prophet, Muḥammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”** Meaning that, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said that: **“A time will not come upon the people except that the one after it will be worse.”** Worse is concerning the religion. This evil is not an all-encompassing evil; it could be evil in some situations and good in others and so on.

Nonetheless, every time people increase in opulence, each time they gain more wealth; they become exposed to evils. Opulence destroys man because when he looks at his affluence and luxury his body enjoys, he becomes unmindful of the pleasures of his heart. His greatest concerns become bringing delight to the body whose end is to the worms and malodorous odor.

This is a serious trial; this has harmed the people today. You will hardly find anyone (today) except that he says: ‘What about our mansion?’, ‘How about our car?’, ‘What about our interior decor?’, ‘How is our food?’, Even those who are involved in studying and teaching; some of them study to attain status or positions that will make them obtain worldly comfort as if man was not created for a greater purpose! Moreover, this world and its pleasure are only means; we ask Allāh to make you and us employ it as a means.

In synopsis, Shaykhul Islām ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said: ‘It is incumbent on the individual to employ wealth as the donkey is used as a ride and the toilet for

passing excreta.’ (2) These are those people who truly recognize wealth and its limitations. Therefore, do not make wealth your greatest concern; get on the back of your wealth otherwise, it will straddle you and this world will become your utmost concern.

Hence, we say, every time worldly pleasures are opened up to a people and they hanker after it, they lose from matters of the hereafter in proportion of what they got from the world. The Prophet ﷺ said: “By Allāh, it is not poverty that I fear for you.” That is, I do not fear poverty for you, you will soon attain worldly pleasures. “I rather fear that the worldly gains are showered upon you as it was showered upon those before you; and you will begin to hanker after it as they did hanker after it; and it will then destroy you as it destroyed them.” (3)

The Messenger ﷺ has indeed spoken the truth. This is what destroyed people today; rivalry regarding worldly affairs and their living as if they were created just for the worldly pleasures and not the pleasures created for them. So, they get busy with what is created for them away from the purpose of their creation; and *that is an inversion* (4) – we ask Allāh for wellbeing.

This ḥadīth covers the obligation of being patient with the rulers even if they oppress and transgress because you will soon stand with them without distinction before the King of kings; you will soon be their litigant on the Day of Resurrection if they oppressed you. Do not think that the persecutions people perpetrate on the earth will go away without recompense; the rights of the creature shall necessarily be avenged on the Day of Resurrection! Therefore, you will stand along with them before Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, and He will judge between you justly.

So be patient and hope for relief so that you can achieve rest of mind and steadfastness. Anticipating relief is itself worship; you worship Allāh therewith. Moreover, when you hope for a relief from Allāh, the Prophet

(2) See for context: Majmū’ al-Fatāwā by ibn Taymiyyah (10/663)

(3) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (3158, 4015 & 6425); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2961); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2462); and Sunan ibn Mājah (3997)

(4) Editor: This sentence’s translation [marked as italic] has been improvised by us and was not the same way in the edition by Dārussalām.

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “And know that certainly, success comes with patience, and relief comes after difficulties and that with every difficulty is ease.” (5)

This contains warning about bad times; that the times change, altering to become worse. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ once said to his companions: “Whoever lives long among you will see a lot of differences.” (6) I think that we, and our lifespan is shorter compared to those before us – are seeing serious differences. We have seen numerous differences during the past years and the present.

Someone I trust once told me that in this masjid, the central masjid, in the past, the first row gets filled up for the fajr prayer even before the adhān. The people used to come to the masjid to observe the late-night supererogatory prayers. But where are those observing the late-night prayers today except as Allāh wills? Few things have changed; you will find one of them as the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ described: “...like a bird that leaves its nest hungry in the morning and returns in the evening filled.” (7) When he wakes up in the morning he would say: ‘O Allāh! Provide for me’; his heart would be connected Allāh – the Mighty and Sublime – and Allāh provides for him, Conversely, majority of people today are neglectful of this, they rely on other than Allāh, and whoever relies on something will be left subservient to it.

Yes, in these later times, and all praise is due to Allāh, there is no doubt that Allāh – and free is He from all imperfections and Exalted is He – has opened the way for the youths – and I ask Allāh to increase His favor on them. Allāh opened the way for them, and they turn to Him. So, we find a big difference between these latter years of ours and the past years with respect to the youth. About twenty years ago, you would almost not find a young person in the masjid. On the contrary, majority of those in the masjid today are the young people, and all praise is due to Allāh. This is favor from Allāh, and praise is due to Him for that. One hopes for a brighter future for this.

You should understand that when the populace is upright, it would force the leaders to uprightness whatever the case may be. So, we pray for our brothers

(5) Musnad Aḥmad (2803) – Refer to the taḥqīqāt of Shaykh al-Albānī: Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (62 (1/29)); Shaykh Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt: Musnad Aḥmad (2803 (5/18-21)); Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (62 (1/53-54)); and Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir: Musnad Aḥmad (2804 (3/244-246))

(6) Sunan Abī Dāwūd (4607); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2676); and Sunan ibn Mājah (43)

(7) Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2344); and Sunan ibn Mājah (4164)

in other countries, those whom Allāh favored with righteousness and steadfastness on the truth, that Allāh rectifies their leaders.

In addition, we say: 'Be patient, your leaders shall become good and when the public becomes upright, the leaders will necessarily become upright.'

We ask Allāh to rectify the leaders of the Muslims for them and the people; He is indeed Bountiful and Generous. (8)

→ **Commentary by Ḥāfiẓ Ṣalāhuddīn Yūsuf رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ**:

This ḥadīth contains the prediction that with the passage of time, conditions will become from bad to worse with the result that rulers would become more and more cruel. In such circumstances, the remedy suggested here is that rather than making any effort to reform the rulers, one should try to reform oneself and worry to make one's own life in there Hereafter, and endure patiently the tyrannies perpetrated by the rulers. (9)

Takhrīj:

- Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2643 (4/273))
- Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2206)
- Musnad Aḥmad (12162 (19/205)) [Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12347 (19/351-352)) [Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12817 (20/204)) [Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12838 (20/216)) [Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt]
- Musnad Aḥmad (13753 (21/288)) [Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12101 (10/375)) [Aḥmad Shākir]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12287 (10/428)) [Aḥmad Shākir]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12753 (11/14-15)) [Aḥmad Shākir]
- Musnad Aḥmad (12774 (11/20-21)) [Aḥmad Shākir]
- Musnad Aḥmad (13688 (11/264)) [Aḥmad Shākir]
- Musnad al-Bazzār (7482 (14/47-48))
- Musnad Abī Ya'lā (4036-4037 (1/1133))
- Musnad Shihāb (903 (2/71))
- Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān (5952 (13/282-283))
- Al-Mu'jam aṣ-Ṣaḡḡir (528 (1/383-384))
- Kanzul 'Ummāl (38625 (14/254))
- Tārīkh al-Baḡhdād (8/169)
- Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (92)

(8) [92 (2/35-40), Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn, Dārussalām (Eng)]

(9) [92 (1/110), Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn, Dārussalām (Eng)]

- Al-Jāmi' aṣ-Ṣaḡhīr [Suyūṭī] (9937 (1/586))
- Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' (7576 (2/1257))

