

Aspects of Ethics In Kitāb Al-Wā'iz: A Textual Study

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Abstract

This paper is a textual study of *Kitāb Al-wā'iz* which covers a translation (*tarjamah*) of the entire book and an exegetical study (*sharh*) of some parts of it that touch ethics and morality. The problem of immorality is rampant among Nigerian Muslims while the book which is, according to the compiler, a source of moral instruction for the people of this land, exists in Arabic language, whereas the lingua-franca of the target audience is English language. The aim of the study was therefore to translate the book, analyze some aspects of it that bother on morality and ethics and exegetically apply them to some contemporary behavioural problems. The objective is to make its lessons reach a larger audience. Using the Qur'an and *Sunnah* as the major tools to analyze this material, the researcher used both the historical and analytical method in this research which is qualitative and exegetic in nature. After a brief biography of Al-Ilory, a translation of *Kitāb Al-wā'iz* and

an exegetical analysis of the aimed areas of the book was done in the paper. On the whole, it was found that *Kitāb Al-wā'iz* can be regarded as a potential builder of an ideal personality and a model for an ideal society.

Introduction

Man's intellect needs guidance through perpetual admonition from the divine messages and philosophical thoughts. The Qur'an, *hadith* and other books that are explaining the divine messages are the sources of moral guidance in Islam. During the Prophetic era, the Qur'an and *hadith* were the only existing sources of wisdom to the Muslims. The Qur'an is the unrevised Divine Book that contains only the words of Allah, while *hadith* on the other hand means the record of the statements, actions and confirmations made by Prophet Muhammad. Attempts to write books of sermons and wisdom started in the Abbasid period

due to the fact that Islamic scholarship flourished at its best, the emergence of great Muslim philosophers, the need to curb mixing of the ideal Islam with negative aspects of the incoming cultures and the establishment of *Baytul Hikmah* in the 8th Century, among other reasons. In Nigeria, books such as *Tanbihul ghafilin*, *Duratum Nasihin* and *Adab Dunya Waddin* are some popular ones among many books from which early and present day scholars extract lectures, ordinary sermons and Friday Jum'ah sermon. Some of them went ahead to compile a commentary to some of those books, such as *Labaidul Hikam* which is Shaykh Abdullatif Al-Kabari's commentary (*Sharh*) to Zamakhshary's *Nawabighul Kalmi*. One of such scholars who are compilers of wise sayings and analysts of the wisdoms from the divine messages was Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory, as demonstrated in *Kitāb Al-wā'iz*. It is said by one of the eldest living students of Shaykh Adam Al-Ilory that what motivated his teacher to compile this book was his interest in creating Islamic awareness i.e. *al-wa'y al-islami*¹. It must be acknowledged that even though the book is attributed to Al-Ilory as a compiler and corrector, the zeal of the League of Imams and scholars in Yorubaland, in which Al-Ilory was a leading figure, was a reason for the compilation of the book as indicated by author in the preface.

¹ Dr. Yusuf Jumah, interview by Mubarak Yusuff, March 13, 2013, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin.

Al-Ilory (d. 1992) and *Kitāb Al-wā'iz*

Shaykh Adam was born in 1917 to the family of Abdul-Baqi son of Habibullah son of Abdullah from Omoda area of Ilorin. He acquired basic Islamic knowledge from his father. He traveled to acquire knowledge from scholars within and outside Nigeria. He visited cities of remarkable Islamic civilization such as Makkah, Madinah, Sudan and Cairo. He met and interacted with the likes of Shaykh Mahmud Abul-Aynayn, Al-Imam Hasan Albana, Shaykh Muhammad Al-Amin, Shaykh Alawy Maliki among others. He became a highly active member of the Muslim World League through his relationship with foreign scholars who admired his erudition. He established his prominent school of Islamic training in Abeokuta in 1952 before moving it to Agege area of Lagos in 1959. He was honoured with an award of excellence by Al-Azhar University in 1989 and died in 1992.

While more information on Al-Ilory's biography can be easily obtained in various published works², knowing how he came about *Kitāb Al-wā'iz* is necessary

² For more on the biography of Al-Ilory, see: M.O. Opeloye, "Markaz-Ma'had Institutional Relations" (Riyadh: The Nigerian Center for Arabic Research, 2012), p. 68. Also see: S. Reichmuth, "Shaykh Adam As I Come to Know Him - Memories of An Islamologist" (Riyadh: The Nigerian Center for Arabic Research Riyadh Office, 2012), p. 14. Also see: I. A. Abubakri, "A'mal Al-'Allamat Al-Ilory" (Cairo: Annahar Press, 2004), p. 5.

in this research. To know this, here is what Al-Ilory wrote in the preface to the book:

And this is part of the religious lessons that we met scholars of this land of ours reading it on Friday nights and days. It has been part of what ingrained belief and good behaviour in the minds of our forefathers and our fathers. Our fathers used to write it on leaflets of three, four or more pages. Shaykh Umar bn Muhammad Abi-Bakr Al-Kubawi used to stop people from reading them (the lessons), as mentioned by Shaykh Muhammad Ballo in his book *'Infaqul Maysur*. That was because of what it contained among the weak traditions of the Prophet and some that were falsely attributed to the Prophet. However, the weak traditions can be used in encouragement, warning and good deed except when it is contrary to a direct injunction, and then it is no longer useful. But when it does not contradict as such, and it is part of what can be useful for good preaching, then there is nothing bad in applying it. And when my brothers, the workers in the field of preaching and guidance, requested from me that I should correct those papers so as to be beneficial to the people, I answered their call and I corrected what could be corrected in it and I erased the falsely attributed traditions to the Prophet and it now remains the weak traditions that there is no problem in leaving them.

To Allah belongs the success.

المصحح The corrector.³

It is evident from the preface that the production of this booklet was a revolutionary and corrective measure by Al-Ilory to establish usefulness out of a material that has been formerly condemned. Al-Ilory's statement in the preface on the occurrence of condemnation of this material is evident in *Infāq Al-Maysūr*. As a little child, I

³ This is the translation of the preface page. See: A. Al-Ilory, "Kitāb al-Wa'iz" (Lagos: Ath-thaqafatul Islamiyyah Press, nd), p. 2.

once held a copy of this material named *Arba'at Jawāhir Wa Al-Isti'ādhat min Qadri As-Sū'*, but later lost it. It was written on some old rectangular papers in the 'ajami lettering style. Later, during my undergraduate research, I learnt from my supervisor, Prof. Badmas O. Yusuf (a student of Al-Ilory) that it is the same old material (*Arba'at Jawāhir*) that Al-Ilory turned to *Kitāb al-Wa'iz*.

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Apart from the tens of books, he originally authored various subjects of Islamic civilization, *Kitāb Al-wā'iz* was not the only booklet compiled and corrected by Al-Ilory. *Al-Fawāqih As-Sāqitah* and *Al-Maqtū'ah Al-Adabiyyah* are among his compilations that are quite famous throughout West Africa. This intellectual contribution justifies his inclusion in the Dictionary of Authors where it was written that:

آدم عبد الله الإلوري (1992م-1412هـ) باحث مؤرخ داعية، أحد علماء نيجيريا العاملين.. يكتب بالعربية الفصحى بأسلوب مشوق وصياغة منقنة ويلم بالآداب العربية، ويرتاد في كتاباته معالم التاريخ الإسلامي والحضارة الإسلامية⁴

Translation:

Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory (d. 1992) is a researcher, a historian and a caller (to the path of Islam). He is one of the dutiful Nigerian scholars. He writes in classical Arabic language with admirable literacy style and perfect construction acumen. He is well-known with Arabic Literature. He mostly focuses on Islamic History and

⁴ M. Ramadan, "Takmilat Mu'jam Al-Mu'allifin" (Beirut: Dar al-Hazm Press, 1997), p. 9.

Civilization in his writings.

The Content of *Kitāb Al-wā'iz*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

قال الواعظ: أربعة جواهر من بني آدم يزيلها أربعة أشياء، أما الجواهر قال الواعظ فالعقل والدين والحياء والعمل الصالح، أما الأشياء الأربعة فالغضب والحسد والطمع والغيبة، فالغضب يزيل العقل، والحسد يزيل الدين، والطمع يزيل الحياء، والغيبة يزيل العمل الصالح.

أربعة أخرى: سيأتي على الناس زمان لا يعرفون العلماء إلا بثوب جميل، ولا يسمعون القرآن إلا بصوت حسن، ولا يعبدون الله إلا في شهر رمضان، ولا يخرجون الزكاة إلا بالرياء والسعة.

قال الواعظ: أربعة يدخلون النار بغير عمل ذنب الجاهل الذي لا يسئل العلماء آية من القرآن أو مسئلة من الدين حتى مات، ورجل له مال ولا ينفع المسلمين بماله، ورجل له علم يبخل بعلمه، ورجل رأى منكر ولم يغيره.

قال الواعظ: من ادعى أربعة بغير أربعة فدعواه كاذبة من ادعى حب النبي وهو يكره الفقراء والمساكين فهو كاذب، من ادعى حب الجنة ولم يتصدق بماله فهو كاذب، من ادعى خوف النار ولم ينته عن الذنب فهو كاذب، من ادعى حب الله وهو يكره العلماء فهو كاذب.

قال أيضا: إن الجنة لتشتاق إلى أربعة أقوام: الأول من أطمع جائعا لوجه الله لا يريد جزاء ولا شكورا، الثاني من ألبس عريانا لوجه الله لا يريد جزاء ولا شكورا، الثالث من صام رمضان إيمانا واحتسابا، الرابع من قرأ القرآن تقربا إلى الله أو من بكى على نفسه سرا من خشية الله.

قال الواعظ: الغرباء أربعة في أربعة أمكنة القرآن في قلب الفاسق غريب العالم بين الجهلاء غريب المسجد بين أقوام لا يصلون غريب الزاهد بين أبناء الدنيا غريب.

قال الواعظ: من أراد أربعة فالأربعة تكفيه من أراد صاحباً فالثلاثة يكفيه ومن أراد مؤنسا فالقرآن يكفيه ومن أراد كنزا فالقناعة تكفيه ومن أراد واعظا فالموت يكفيه ومن لا تكفيه هذه الأربعة فالنار تكفيه.

قال الواعظ: الصوفي أربعة أحرف الصاد وهو الصفاء في القلب والصدق في القول الواو وهو الوفاء

في الوعد والورع في العيش والفناء هو الفناء في الله والفقر والباء هو اليقين ومن لم يستكمل هذه الأشياء فليس صوفيا.

قال الواعظ: يأتي على الناس زمان يحبون خمسة وينسون خمسة يحبون المال وينسون الحساب ويحبون الموت وينسون الحياة ويحبون الدنيا وينسون الآخرة يحبون القصور وينسون القبور ويحبون الذنوب وينسون العقاب.

قال الواعظ: علامة أهل الجنة سبع أن يكون وجهه مليحا ولسانه ذاكر وقلبه خاشعا ويده سخية وصلاته صحيحة وصومه كاملا ويسلم على كل مسلم يلقاه وعلامة أهل النار سبع أن يكون وجهه عبوسا ولسانه بذينا وقلبه قاسيا ويده بخيلة وصلاته سقيمة وصومه ناقصا ولا يسلم على كل مسلم يلقاه.

قال الواعظ: سبعة بيوت لا ينزل الله رحمته فيها إلا بعد التوبة الأول بيت فيه امرأة عاصية زوجها ومطلقة غير متزوجة الثاني بيت فيه شارب الخمر الثالث بيت فيه ولد عاق لوالديه أو عبد أبق من سيده الرابع بيت فيه خائن الأمانة الخامس بيت لا يذكرون الله ورسوله فيه السادس بيت فيه اللهو والعبو السابع بيت فيه الزانية.

قال الواعظ: إذا كان يوم القيامة يوتي بالموت على صورة الكلب فيوقف بين الجنة والنار فيقول الله تعالى يا أهل الجنة يا أهل النار هل تعرفون ما هذا فينطقون إليه فيعرفونه فيذبح بين الجنة والنار ثم ينادى يا أهل الجنة اخلدوا ولا تموتوا أبدا ويا أهل النار اخلدوا فلا تموتوا أبدا.

قال الواعظ: عليكم بمجالسة العلماء لتسمعوا الحكمة فإن الله يحيي القلب الميت بنور العلم كما يحيي الأرض بماء المطر.

قال الواعظ: روى عن النبي حديثا مقطوع السند وقالوا كان رسول الله ذات يوم في مجلس يسبح الله فيه فإذا به يسمع صوتا يقول اللهم إني أعوذ بك من نزول القدر السوء حتى لقيه صاحب الصوت فإذا هو جبريل فقال له النبي كيف تستعيز بالله من نزول القدر السوء، وأنت ملك من ملائكة الله المقربين عليك حساب ولا عقاب ونحن بنو آدم أولى بالاستعاذة من القدر السوء فقال جبريل كيف لا أستعيز بالله من نزول القدر السوء أما رأيت إبليس كان يعبد الله في السماء ألف سنة ثم رأيت بعد ذلك صار عدو الله وعدو رسل الله وأنبيائه وعدو الصالحين كلهم أجمعين وماذا فعل ذلك غير القدر السوء. قال النبي صدقت زدي في ذلك يا جبريل. قال رأيت هاروت وماروت ملكين من خيار ملائكة الله الكرام ثم صارا معلقين بين السماء والأرض يخرج الريح من دبرهما

ويدخل في فهمها إلى يوم القيامة فمادام فعل ذلك القدر السوء. قال صدقت يا جبريل فزدني غير ذلك قال جبريل إني رأيت أباك آدم وزوجته حواء كانا في الجنة أربعين الف سنة يا كلون من طعام الجنة ويشربون من شراب الجنة ويلبسون من لباس الجنة رأيت بعد ذلك هما صارا من أهل الدنيا لا يأكلون الا بعد شق النفس فمادام فعل ذلك غير القدر السوء قال صدقت يا جبريل قال جبريل رأيت بلعام ابن باعورا عالما من علماء بني اسرائيل فهذ عطاه الله الاسم الاعظم قد عليه على النبي موسى بن عمران وقومه في وقعوا في النية فلعنه النبي موسى فصار كلبا يمشي مع كلاب الوحش ومادام فعل ذلك غير القدر السوء قال صدقت يا جبريل فزدني غير ذلك. قال جبريل رأيت كيش إبراهيم كان يرعي في الجنة أربعين ألف سنة يأكل من ثمار الجنة ويأكل زيتونها ويشرب من مياهها ثم رأيت بعد ذلك مذبحا في الدنيا مطبوخا في قذح الدنيا والناس يأكلون لحب ويرمون عظامه في مزابل الدنيا وكلاب الدنيا يأكلون عظامه فمادام فعل ذلك غير القدر السوء. قال النبي اللهم إني أعوذ بك من نزول القدر السوء.

قال الواعظ: لا تقتخر بالعلم ولا بالعبادة ولا بالمال ولا بالأدب ولا بالوالد ولا بالولد ولا بالزوج ولا بالزوجة ولا بالمنزلة. وإن كنت عالما فلا تساوي بلعام بن باعورا فقد علمه الله الاسم الاعظم فدعا به على موسى وقومه فتحيرا في النية أربعين سنة ثم أخرج الله منه علمه في يوم واحد فصار كلبا. وإن كنت عابدا فلا تساوي برصيص وكان ببرى ذوي ولأنت والعاهات بدعوة منه وبلمس يده ونزع الله منه العبادة يوما واحدا. وإن كنت غنيا فلا تساوي قارون وكان له ثلاثون ألف بغلة تحمل مفاتحه التي تعجز الرجال وقد ابتلغته الأرض يوما واحدا وصار يتجلجل فيها حتى يوم القيامة. وإن كنت صاحب الوالد فلا تساوي نوحا فلم ينقذه أبوه يوم نزول الطوفان وكذلك يوم القيامة. وإن كنت ولدا فلا تساوي إبراهيم فلم ينقذ أباه في الدنيا والآخرة. وإن كنت صاحب زوجة فلا تستوي مع أسية بنت مراحم امرأة فرعون فلم تنقذ زوجها عند الغرق في اليم. وإن كنت صاحبة زوج فلا تساوي امرأة نوح وامرأة لوط فلم ينقذهما زوجها عند الغرق والعذاب. وإن كنت صاحب منزلة فلا تستوي مع إبليس وكان رئيسا من رؤساء الملائكة كان في الجنة أربعين ألف سنة ثم صار مطرودا من منزلته فالعياذ بالله من نزول القدر السوء.

قال الواعظ: سئل الواعظ يوما هل شيء في الدنيا أفضل من النبي قال نعم الصلاة أفضل من النبي لأن النبي يخدم الصلاة والصلاة لا تخدم النبي ثم قالوا هل شيء أفضل من الصلاة قال نعم القرآن أفضل من

الصلاة، لأن الصلاة تصلح بالقرآن، ثم قالوا أي شيء أفضل من القرآن قال نعم التعلم أفضل من القرآن لأن القرآن لا يعرف إلا بالتعلم وقالوا هل شيء أفضل من التعلم قال نعم النكاح أفضل من التعليم لأن بالنكاح يولد من يتعلم ثم قالوا هل شيء أفضل من النكاح قال نعم الرزق لأن النكاح لا يحصل إلا بالرزق ثم قالوا هل شيء أفضل الرزق قال نعم صحة البدن لأن من كان مريضا لا يتحرك لا يأكل ولا يشرب ثم قالوا هل شيء أفضل من صحة البدن قال نعم سلامة البلد من الفتن والحروب لأن البلد إذا لم يكن سالما فلا يشتغل أحد بحوائج الدنيا ولا بأمور الدين قال تعالى: فإذا طمأنتم فأتيموا الصلاة إن الصلاة كانت على المؤمنين كتابا موقوتا

تم الكتاب⁵

Translation of *Kitāb Al-wā'iz*

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The preacher said:

There are four jewels in the descendants of Adam that can be erased by four things. The four (jewels) are the intellect, the religion, the modesty and the good deed. The four things (that can erase the jewels) are anger, envy, greed and backbiting. Anger erases the sense, envy erases the religion, and greed erases modesty while backbiting erases the good deeds.

Another four:

A time will come upon the people when the scholars will not be known except by beautiful cloth, the Quran will not be heard except by sweet voice, Allah will not be worshipped except in the month of Ramadan, and *Zakat* will not be giving except to be seen and heard.

The preacher said:

Four sets of people will enter the Hell

⁵ Al-Ilory, "Kitāb al-Wā'iz" p. 3-8.

without any sinful deed: an ignorant that will not ask the scholars about a verse of the Quran or a matter about the religion till he dies, and a man that has wealth but will not help the Muslims with his money, and a man who possesses knowledge but he is stingy with his knowledge, and a man who saw an abominable situation and did not change it.

The preacher said:

Whosoever claims four things without four things, his claim is false. Whoever claims to love the Prophet (ﷺ) and hates the poor ones and the needies then he is a liar. Whoever claims to love the paradise and does not give alms with his wealth then he is a liar. Whoever claims to fear the Hell and does not desist from committing sin then he is a liar. Whoever claims to love God and hates the scholars then he is a liar

He also said:

Surely, the paradise will open for four sets of people. First, one who feed a hungry man for the sake of Allah, he does not expect any reward or gratitude. Secondly, one who covers a naked person for the sake of Allah; he does not expect reward or gratitude. Thirdly, one who fasts in the month of Ramadan in good faith and seeking rewards (from Allah). Fourthly, one who reads the Qur'an as a means of moving closer to Allah or one who cries over himself secretly because of the fear of God.

The preacher said:

The strangers are four in four places. The Qur'an in the heart of a licentious person is a stranger. The scholar among

ignorant people is a stranger. The mosque among people that do not pray is a stranger. The ascetic person among the children of the world is a stranger.

The preacher said:

Whoever wants four things, four things are enough for him. Whoever wants a friend, Allah is sufficient for him. Whoever wants a companion, the Quran is sufficient for him. Whoever wants a treasure, contentment is sufficient for him. Whoever wants a preacher, death is sufficient for him. Whosoever these four is not sufficient for, hell fire will be sufficient for him.

The preacher said:

As-Sufi contains four letters, *Sad* for *Aş-şafa* i.e. purity of the mind and *Aş-şidq* i.e. Truthfulness of the statement. *Waw* is for *Al-wafa* i.e. fulfilment of promise and *wara'* i.e. devoutness of life *Fa'* is for *Al-fana* i.e. annihilation into God and *faqr* i.e. poverty. *Ya'* is for *Yakin* i.e. certainty. Whosoever does not complete all these things is not a *Sufi* i.e. Gnostic.

The preacher said:

A time will come on the people when they will love five (things) and forget five (things). They will love property and forget accountability. They will love life and forget death. They will love the life and forget the hereafter. They will love mansions and forget the graves. They will love sins and forget the punishment.

The preacher said:

The signs of the people of paradise are seven: that his face is nice, his tongue reciting *dhikr*; his mind fears Allah, his

hand are generous, his prayer is sound, his fasting is perfect and he greets every Muslim he comes across. And the signs of the people of Hell fire is seven, that his face is frown, his tongue is obscene, his mind is stiff, his hand is stingy, his prayer is sick, his fasting is imperfect and he does not greet all the Muslims he comes across.

The preacher said:

Seven houses, God will not cause His mercy to enter into them except after repentance. Firstly, a house in which there is a woman that disobeys her husband or a divorcee that refused to get married. Secondly, a house in which there is a drunkard. Thirdly, a house in which there is a boy that is disobedient to his parent or a slave that runs away from his master. Fourthly, a house in which there is a betrayer of trusts. Fifthly, a house in which Allah and His messenger are not remembered. Sixthly, a house in which there are (materials of) amusement and play. Seventhly, a house in which there is a fornicator.

The preacher said:

When it is the Day of Resurrection, death will be brought forth in form of a ram, and will be stopped between the Paradise and Hell, then Allah will say O you people of Paradise! And you people of Hell! Do you all know what this is? Then they will glimpse at it and recognize it, and then it (the ram) will be slaughtered between the Paradise and the Hell. Afterwards the people of Paradise will be called upon, 'O you people of Paradise! Stay eternally and do not die, and O you people of Hell! Stay eternally and do not die.

Behold! Make sure that you sit with the scholars so that you can listen to the wisdom, for Allah revives the dead heart with the light of knowledge and

wisdom, just as He revives the earth with rain.

The preacher said:

It was reported from the Prophet (ص) in a transmission of a broken chain, they said that: The messenger of Allah was one day in a sitting where he was glorifying Allah, when he started hearing a voice saying "O Allah: I seek refuge with you from the of evil destiny, until he (the Prophet) met the source of the voice. It was Jibril. Then the Prophet said to him how will you be seeking refuge with Allah against bad destiny and you are an angel among the angels of Allah who are closer (to Allah) neither accountability nor punishment is (to be meted) on you, and we human beings are most worthy of the seeking of refuge from the bad destiny?". Then Jibril said "Why should I not to seek refuge with Allah against the bad destiny? Haven't you seen Iblis? He used to worship Allah in the heaven one thousand years, then you saw how he became afterwards, an enemy of Allah and enemy of the messengers of Allah and His Prophets and enemy of the righteous ones in totality. What could have made him to become so apart from bad destiny?" The Prophet (ص) said "you have spoken the truth. Give me another (example) apart from that O Jibril". He (Jibril) said: "you have seen Harut and Marut, two angels among the respected special angels of Allah. Then, they became hanged between the heaven and the earth, with air coming out of their anus and entering back through their mouth until the Day of Judgment. What could have caused that except bad destiny?" He (the Prophet) said "you have spoken the truth O Jibril. Add more for me: Jibril said "Verily, I saw your father Adam and his wife Hawwa. Both are in the Paradise for forty thousand years eating out of the Paradise food and drinking out of the Paradise water and wearing out of the Paradise dresses. You

saw afterwards that both became people of the world who will not eat except after hard work. What could have caused that except bad destiny?" He (the Prophet) said: you have spoken the truth. Add more for me. He said: Have you seen Bal'am the son of Ba'ura, a scholar among the Israelite people. Allah gave him one of His Greatest names and he used it against prophet Musa son of Imran, and his people till they fall into confusion, then Prophet Musa cursed him and he became a dog walking around with the wild dogs. What could have turned him to that apart from bad destiny?" He said: you have spoken the truth. Add more for me. Jibril said: "You've seen Ibrahim's ram. He used to be reared inside the Paradise for forty thousand years, eating from the fruits of the paradise, eating from the olive of the Paradise and drinking from the waters of the Paradise. Afterwards, you've seen it been slaughtered here on earth and people are eating out of its flesh and throwing away its bone into the dustbin of this world and the dogs of this world are eating its bones. What could have made him became that apart from bad destiny?" Then the Prophet (ص) said: O God: I seek refuge with You against bad destiny.

The preacher said:

Do not be proud of knowledge, worship, property, modesty, father, child, husband, wife and position. Even if you are a scholar, you cannot be equal to Bal'am son of Ba'ura who Allah had given the knowledge of a particular name of Allah with which he cursed Musa and his people and they became stranded for forty years. Afterwards, Allah removed the knowledge out of him in a single day and he became a dog. And if you are a worshipper, you cannot be equal to *Barsis*. He used to deliver those with sickness and deformity with a prayer from him and with just a torch of his hand, then Allah

took away worshipping from him in a single day. If you are a wealthy one you cannot be equal to Qarun. He had thirty thousand donkeys that convey his keys (keys of his ware house) which men could not carry. Then the earth swallowed him in a single day and he became someone wondering about inside it till the Day of Resurrection. And if you are from a (good) father, you cannot be equal to the son of Nuh. His father was unable to deliver him when *Tufan* flood descended and also on the Day of Resurrection (he may not be able to deliver him). And if you have a (good) son you cannot be equal to Ibrahim. He is unable to deliver his father in this world and in the hereafter. And if you are a husband of a good wife, you cannot be equal to Asiyah, daughter of Mazahim, the wife of Fir'awn. Her husband was unable to deliver her when he was drowned in the sea. And if you are the wife of a good husband, you cannot be equal to the wife of Nuh and that of Lut. Both of them (Nuh & Lut) were unable to deliver their wives in time of drowning and punishment. And if you have a high post, you cannot be equal to Iblis. He was a leader among the leaders of the angels. He was in the paradise for forty thousand years. Afterwards, he became chased out of his rank. May Allah grant us refuge against bad destiny.

The preacher was one day asked:

Is there anything in the world that is more valuable than the Prophet (ص) He said: "Yes", prayer is valuable than the Prophet because the Prophet served the prayer and prayer did not serve him. Then they said: Is there anything more valuable than prayer. He said yes, the Quran is more valuable than prayer because prayer is performed with the Quran. Then they said, is there anything more valuable than the Quran? He said Yes, learning is more valuable than the Quran because the Quran cannot be

known except through learning. Then they said, is there anything more valuable than learning? He said yes wedding is more valuable than learning, because wedding will produce who will learn. Then they said, is there anything more valuable than wedding? He said Yes sustenance, because wedding cannot be done except with sustenance. Then they said, is there anything more valuable than sustenance? He said Yes, Health, because the unhealthy one cannot move around and can neither eat nor drink. Then they said, is there anything more valuable than health? He said yes, that the town be free from disturbances and wars, because when a town is not peaceful no one will be busy neither with the needs of the world nor with the issues of the religion. Allah says: “And when you are free from danger perform *salat*. Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours”.

Discussion of Ethics and Morality in *Kitāb Al-wā‘iz*

The term *ethics* (originating from the Greek word *ethos*) refers to the philosophical study of the concepts of moral right or wrong or a system that contains a body of moral dictates. Morality (originating from the Latin word *mos*) refers to an individual’s perspective of what is right and wrong.⁶ For instance, religion and law are the two popular sources of ethics while the sources of morality are individual’s experience and genetic heredity. An immoral person can win a Nobel Prize for being very cooperative in terms of ethics of their particular profession or society, while a morally upright person can

⁶ K. Rajiv, “Moral, Ethics, Conduct, Misconduct and Professional Misconduct for an Advocate” (Pradesh: BFC Publisher, 2023), p. 17.

be fired for not mastering and following the ethics of an organization. However, being bound by some ethical dictates can instill some lessons into a person and improves his morality level.

In this book under study, three passages are related to the aim and interest of this paper. They are passages 1, 5 and 13.

Exegesis of Passage 1

In passage 1, intellect, religion, modesty and good deeds were stated as four virtues in man which can be destroyed by another four bad traits respectively, which are anger envy greed and backbiting. Al- Ilory wrote (as translated):

The preacher said: There are four jewels in the descendants of Adam that can be erased by four things. The four (jewels) are the intellect (*al-‘aql*), the religion (*ad-din*), the modesty (*al-haya’*) and the good deed (*al-‘aml assalih*). The four things (that can erase the jewels) are anger (*al-ghadab*), envy (*al-hasad*), greed (*attam’*) and backbiting (*al-ghibah*). Anger erases the sense, envy erases the religion, and greed erases modesty while backbiting erases the good deeds.⁷

The element of morality here is that intellect is a natural source of morality. It is an endowment from God to humans. It can vary in its degree and specific functions due to genetic variations. The Qur’an mentioned the special intellectual endowment Allah gave to Prophets Dawud and Sulayman (Q21:79). Anger is a hindrance of intellect, and therefore an immoral act since it gives a

⁷ Translation of: Al-Ilory, “Kitāb al-Wa‘iz” p. 3.

holiday to one's intelligence which is a source of moral. This is why the Prophet, Peace be upon him said to a man: "do not be angry".⁸

The ethical implication of the passage is that religion is a source of ethics. Modesty is a moral conduct which is not only taught by Islam in theory, but practically instilled into its adherents through a consistent ethics. For instance, the proper dressings to Salat, silence in the mosque and abstinence during fasting are some of the religious ethics that instill the morality of modesty into a practicing Muslim. Q29:45 reads "verily Salat keeps one away from indecency and evil..."

In the course of this research, it was found that this saying is contained in Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalāni's book named *Al-Isti'dād li Yawm Al-Mī'ād*, where it was ascribed to 'Ali bn Abi Tālib who is a well-known sage in the earliest Islamic era. Passage number 4 in *Kitab Al-Waiz*, which highlights the signs of some false claims, is also obtainable in the said Ibn Hajar's compendium and ascribed to Hātim Al-Asamm, another popular sage in the earlier Islamic period.⁹

Exegesis of Passage 5

Al-Ilory wrote (as translated):

The preacher said:

⁸ Hadith 639 in Riyad As-Salihin. See: S. An-Nawawi, "Riyād As-Sālihīn" (Cairo: Dar Al-Ghad Al-Jadid, 2002), p. 210.

⁹ Al-Asqalani, "Al-Isti'dād li Yawm Al-Mī'ād" (Baghdad: Dar At-Tarbiyah, nd), p. 58-59.

Surely, Paradise is yearning to receive four sets of people. First, one who feed a hungry man for the sake of Allah, he does not expect any reward or gratitude. Secondly, one who covers a naked person for the sake of Allah; he does not expect reward or gratitude. Thirdly, one who fasts in the month of Ramadan in good faith and seeking rewards (from Allah). Fourthly, one who reads the Qur'an as a means of moving closer to Allah or one who cries over himself secretly because of the fear of God.¹⁰

The act of feeding is an important aspect of kindness that directly affects humanity. Feeding programs have been the hope of millions of people in war zones of the world where people are displaced from their homes and cut-off from their sources of livelihood. The institution of Zakah and Sadaqah are part of the giving systems in Islam. Part of the ethics of giving in Islam is that no show-off. *Riyā'* (showing off) consumes the reward of one's good deeds, according to various verses of the Qur'an. When this major ethical teaching becomes part of man, he will abstain from the immoral act of showing off in terms of any good thing he does. The ill effect of showing off is that it is dangerous for the giver, in terms of the safety of lives and properties. It also saves the collector from embarrassment. Likewise, fasting and reading the Qur'an are sources of both ethics and morality.

Exegesis of Passage 13

Al-Ilory wrote (as translated):

The preacher said:

¹⁰ Translation of: Al-Ilory, "Kitāb al-Wā'iz" p. 11.

it is incumbent upon you to sit with the scholars so as to listen to wisdom, because Allah brings dead hearts back to life with the light of knowledge and wisdom just as He brings the earth back to life with the rain water.¹¹

Wisdom embodies both ethics and moral. An ethical person is a source of ethics to others who emulate him and a morally upright person is a source of moral education. Therefore, the sages who possess wisdom are sources of ethics and morals for those who sit with them. Ethics and Morals are largely acquired through an informal system of education, such as mingling with the elderly sages and moral educators. The Islamic system of transferring morals relies not only on oral tradition but most importantly sitting with the *ulamā* to listen to them and learn from their behaviour at first hand. It is easy to deduce that value education in Islam rely so much on the intern method looking at two areas:

(a) The Prophet peace be upon him mandates every Muslim to spread the message of Islam even if it by a single verse. This makes everyone a caller to the value system and a moral educator. The Prophet said: “relate from me to another person even if it a verse”.¹²

¹¹ Translation of: Al-Ilory, “Kitāb al-Wā‘iz” p. 5.

¹² Hadith 1380 in Riyad As-Salihin. See: An-Nawawi, “Riyadh As-Salihin” p. 347.

(b) Muslims are encouraged to sit around those who are better than them and keep good companions. In a sound hadith, the Prophet said:

Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, "The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one blowing the bellows. The owner of musk would either offer you some free of charge, or you would buy it from him, or you smell its pleasant fragrance; and as for the one who blows the bellows (i.e., the blacksmith), he either burns your clothes or you smell a repugnant smell". [Al- Bukhari and Muslim].¹³

The comparison of wisdom and knowledge to a light that revives a dead heart can mean that the absence of morals and ethics in the heart of a man makes him to loose a life in his living, and he can therefore do anything no matter how bad, unethical or immoral. The advent of ethics and morals changes the living of a man. He behaves more politely and becomes more humane. This translated into a healthier and safer society where lives and feelings are seen, considered, valued, dignified and respected. This is the essence of light in Suhrawardi’s Philosophy of Illumination. Suhrawardi argued that knowledge by perception and definition is not has valid as knowledge by presence and intuition.¹⁴ This shows that sitting with the sages with a conscious mind can have an immense enlightenment and illumination.

¹³ Hadith 363 in Riyad As-Salihin. See: An-Nawawi, “Riyadh As-Salihin” p. 141.

The passage explained here (13th saying in *Kitab Al-waiz*) is found to be a hadith in *Muwatta* of Imam Mālik.¹⁵

Summary and Conclusion

The passages in *Kitāb al-Wa‘iz* can be given the following topics:

- 1- Four Jewels of man
- 2- Four Signs of the End
- 3- Four Men in the Hell
- 4- Four Sets of Liars
- 5- Four Inhabitants of the Paradise
- 6- Four Strangers in Four Places
- 7- The Four Satisfactory Assets
- 8- The True Sufi
- 9- Five Signs of the End of Time
- 10- The People of Paradise
- 11- Homes of No Mercy
- 12- The Death of Death
- 13- Sitting amidst the scholars
- 14- Seeking Refuge against Evil Destiny
- 15- Do not Be Proud
- 16- Comparison of Greater Values

After the translation of the whole book, passages 1, 3 and 13 were exegetically discussed. From the foregoing analysis and discussions, it has been found that *Kitāb al-Wa‘iz* is a book that teaches how to build an ideal personality who will be ethically and morally upright. It is thought in *Kitāb al-Wa‘iz* that an ideal personality is

¹⁴ M. Razawi, “Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination” (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), p. 101-103.

¹⁵ Hadith 1950 of *Muwatta*. See: Imam Malik, “*Muwatta*” (Beirut: Risalah Press, 2013), p. 767.

he who is intelligent, religious, modest, kind, truth seeking, truth spreading, truth telling, generous, god-fearing, cautious of God and kind in relating with people.

From the translated content of the book, it can be deduced that the book teaches the following moral and ethical lessons:

| Islamic moral and ethical thoughts | Passages |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Asceticism and selflessness (moral) | 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 |
| Devotion to worship (ethics) | 5, 10, 14, 16 |
| Giving glad tidings (ethics) | 5, 10, 12 |
| Warning against wrath of God (ethics and morals) | 3, 11, 12 |
| Enlightenments (ethics) | 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 14 |

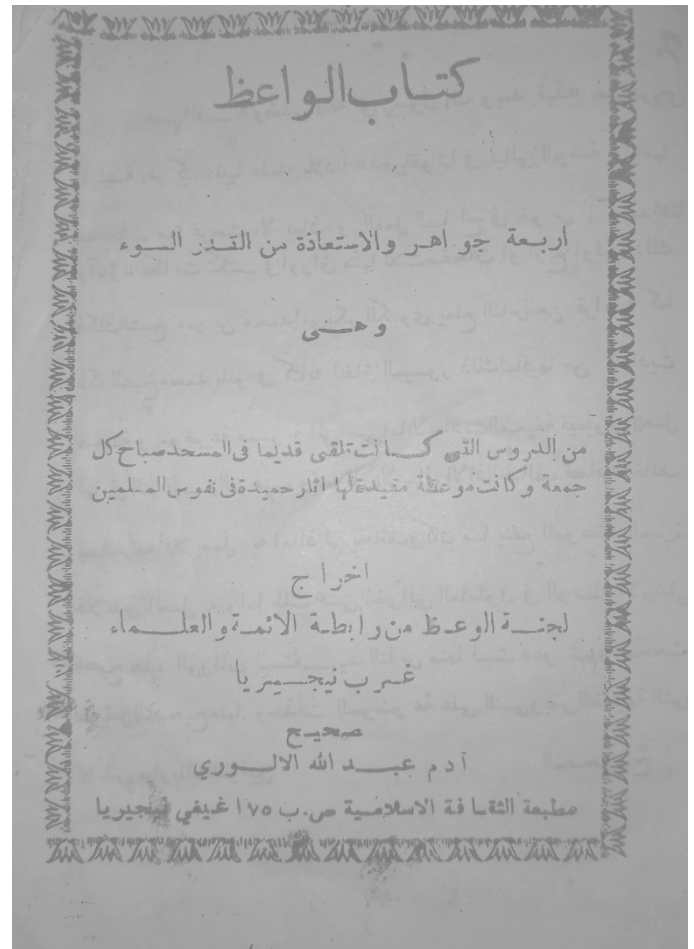
The content of this book makes one to accept the statement of Al-Ilory’s in the preface when he described it as an instiller of faith and good deeds. Unfortunately, *Kitāb al-Wa‘iz* is gradually going into extinction. The available copies seen at Idi-Ape market of Islamic texts are rarely readable as the texts have faded. I therefore recommend that the management of Al-Ilory’s press company should consider producing a new edition of the booklet so that its content can cater for the ethical deficiencies in our society.

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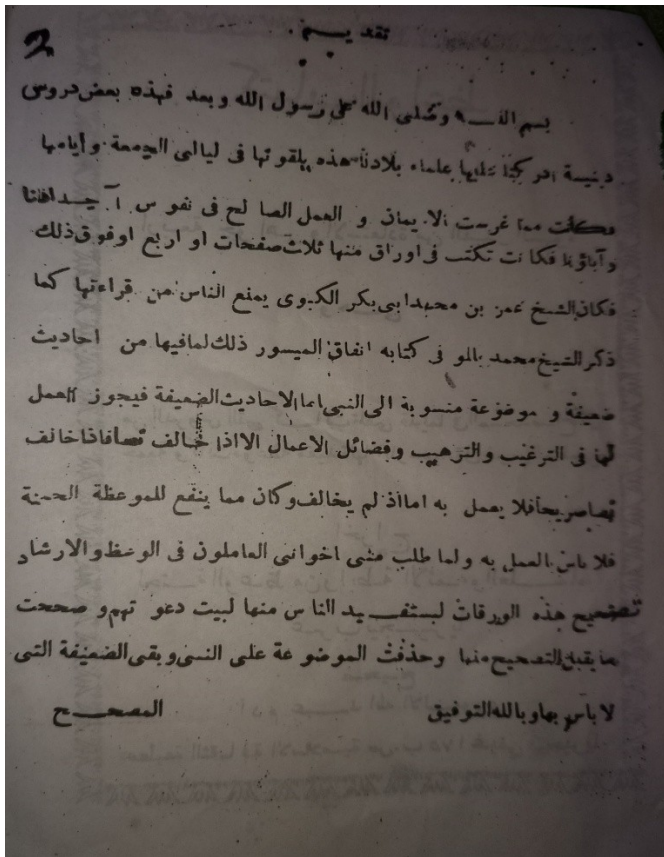
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Appendices

Appendix 1.0: Cover page of Kitāb al-Wā'iz



Appendix 2.0: Preface page of Kitāb al-Wā'iz



Appendix 3.0: First page of Kitāb al-Wā'iz's content

