

TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 2

AL-HASAN AL-BASRI

Imam of Basra, Master of Zuhd, and the Admonisher Who Shunned Civil Strife

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace."

SURAH AL-FURQAN 25:63

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who made His learned servants lamps for mankind. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family, his Companions, and the generation of the Tabi‘un who inherited his knowledge and character.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This second book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells of a Tabi‘i whose words have revived hearts for centuries. May his story make us more detached from this world and gentler in giving advice, and may this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook, in a **3D** illustration style, shows a Tabi'i scholar of Basra **drawn from behind, without a face** — because no true likeness of al-Hasan al-Basri exists, and the faces of the early scholars are not invented. He wears a simple robe of coarse wool and sits on a wooden bench facing **woven mats arranged in a semicircle**, as if waiting for the people to gather for a gathering of admonition.

Beside him are **an open copy of the Qur'an**, **wooden prayer beads** and **a clay water jug** — symbols of his life of zuhd and his circle of learning in the mosque of Basra.

The arches of the mosque look out onto **date palms** on the banks of the **Shatt al-'Arab** and a sky of **night gradually turning into dawn** — an image of his admonitions, which awakened heedless hearts.

Two gold lines at the bottom frame the author's name, while the image runs in full to the edge of the page.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = history note (reports from the books of history and biography); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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AL-HASAN AL-BASRI

The second book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** takes us to the city of ***Basra***, Iraq, to a Tabi'i whom Sulayman at-Taymi called ***"the shaykh of the people of Basra"***: ***al-Hasan al-Basri*** رحمه الله. He lived for almost ninety years, witnessing the age of the Companions, great civil strife and the tyranny of al-Hajjaj — yet he is remembered as the gentlest of scholars in his advice and the most detached from this world.

As in Series 1, the sources of this eBook are the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and ***the recognised books of biography***. Stories that are not established are marked and are not included as fact.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box. Information from the books of history and biography is placed in brown "History Note" boxes, so that readers can distinguish it from authentic Hadith.

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THE SERVANTS OF THE MOST MERCIFUL

SURAH AL-FURQAN 25:63

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمۡشُونَ عَلَى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ هَوۡنٗا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ ٱلۡجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُواْ سَلَٰمٗا ٦٣

And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/25:63

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 25:63

Allah praises His servants ***"who walk upon the earth easily"***, and ***"when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace"***. In his commentary on this verse, Imam Ibn Kathir quotes the words of ***al-Hasan al-Basri***:

"They are forbearing and do not behave ignorantly; and if others behave ignorantly towards them, they remain forbearing." Tafsir Ibn Kathir 25:63

Ibn Kathir also quotes al-Hasan's longer words about the believers: ***"The believers are a humble people… Fear has entered them as it has entered no one else, and their knowledge of the Hereafter has held them back from (drowning in) this world."*** And he said: ***"Whoever sees no blessing of Allah except in food and drink, his knowledge is little."*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 25:63

LESSON

These words are a portrait of al-Hasan himself: ***knowledge that gives birth to the fear of Allah***, gentleness towards the ignorant, and a vision that sees the blessings of Allah far beyond food and drink.

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BASRAH: A CITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ZUHD

Basrah was founded in the time of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه (around 14–17 AH) as a garrison city in southern Iraq, near the meeting of the Tigris and Euphrates. Within a short time it became one of ***the largest and richest cities*** in the Muslim world — a centre of trade, a port, and a gathering place for many Companions.

In Basrah lived Companions such as ***Anas ibn Malik***, ***‘Imran ibn Husayn***, ***Abu Bakrah*** and ***Ma‘qil ibn Yasar*** رضى الله عنه. From them arose the generation of Basran Tabi‘un known for ***Hadith, fiqh, the Arabic language*** and ***zuhd***.

WEALTH AND UNEASE

Yet Basrah’s wealth also brought ***luxury***, and its closeness to the centres of politics brought ***turmoil***. In the midst of a society ever busier with the world, the voice of al-Hasan arose — reminding people of ***death, reckoning and the Hereafter***. That is why his advice was so powerful: he spoke to a city that truly needed it.

According to the books of biography, al-Hasan grew up in ***Wadi al-Qura*** near Madinah, then moved to Basrah, where he lived for the rest of his life.

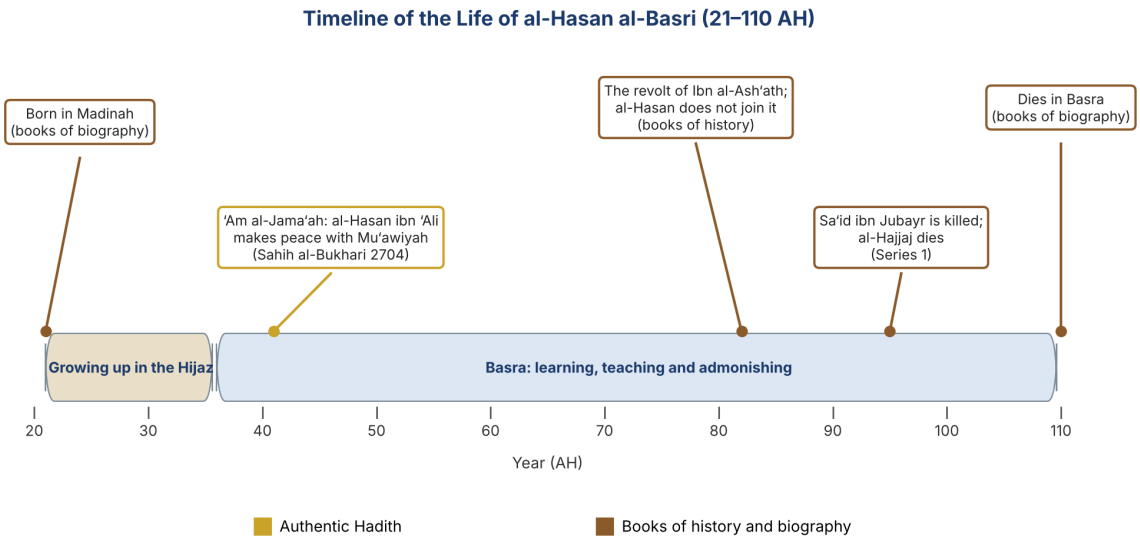


Figure 1: Timeline of the life of al-Hasan al-Basri (21–110 AH).

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WHO WAS AL-HASAN AL-BASRI?

His full name was ***al-Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan***, and his father's name was ***Yasar***. His kunyah was ***Abu Sa'id***. He was a mawla (client) of the Ansar, and was named after the city of Basra where he spent his life. According to the books of biography, he was ***born in 21 AH*** in Madinah, during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه, and ***died in 110 AH*** in Basra.

THE VERDICT OF THE SCHOLARS

Ibn Sa'd: "Al-Hasan was ***comprehensive in knowledge, learned, of high standing, a jurist, trustworthy, reliable, a devoted worshipper and an ascetic***." **Al-'Ijli:** "A trustworthy Tabi'i, a righteous man, ***a follower of the Sunnah***." **Adh-Dhahabi:** "He was ***of great standing, highly renowned, a leader in knowledge and practice***." **Ibn Hajar:** "***Trustworthy, a jurist, virtuous and well known***."

His students also praised him. **Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani** said: "My eyes have never seen a man ***more learned in fiqh than al-Hasan***." **Qatadah** said: "Al-Hasan was among ***the most knowledgeable of people about the lawful and the unlawful***." And **Yunus ibn 'Ubayd** said: "I never saw a man ***more truthful in what he said***, nor longer in sorrow, than him."

HISTORY NOTE: MURSAL AND TADLIS — THE HONESTY OF HADITH SCIENCE

The Hadith scholars also recorded technical weaknesses in al-Hasan's narrations. Ibn Hajar mentions that he ***often narrated mursal*** (saying "the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said" without naming the Companion in between) and ***practised tadlis***.

The scholars differed about his mursal narrations: 'Ali ibn al-Madini said that the mursal narrations of al-Hasan transmitted by trustworthy narrators are sound, while ad-Daraqutni said there is some weakness in them. This is the precision of Hadith science — ***even the narrations of a great imam are still weighed***.

REFERENCES:

Narrator index of al-Maktabah ash-Shamilah: al-Hasan al-Basri. https://shamela.ws/narrator/1389
Sunnah.com: narrator page of al-Hasan al-Basri. https://sunnah.com/narrator/1239

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FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

According to the books of biography such as ***Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'***, al-Hasan's father, ***Yasar***, came from the region of ***Maysan*** in Iraq and was a mawla of the Companion ***Zayd ibn Thabit*** رضى الله عنه. His mother, ***Khayrah***, was a mawla of ***Umm Salamah*** رضى الله عنها, wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

So al-Hasan ***grew up in a household close to the house of the Prophet*** ﷺ in Madinah. The books of biography mention that his mother sometimes went out on errands for Umm Salamah, and that Umm Salamah would look after the young al-Hasan.

WISDOM FROM HIS ORIGINS

Al-Hasan ***did not come from Arab nobility***; his family had even been slaves. Yet he became ***an imam of the ummah*** in his time. This proves the teaching of Islam that ***honour is measured by piety and knowledge***, not by lineage — as Allah says: "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (49:13).

HISTORY NOTE: ABOUT THE REPORTS OF HIS CHILDHOOD

Details about al-Hasan's childhood — such as being nursed by Umm Salamah or being supplicated for by 'Umar رضى الله عنه — ***are related in the books of biography***, but not all have strong chains. They are therefore mentioned with caution and not treated as certain fact.

REFERENCES:

Adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala', biography of al-Hasan al-Basri.

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FROM MADINAH TO BASRAH

Al-Hasan's life began in ***Madinah***, the city of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and ended in ***Basrah***, the city that became the field of his knowledge. The figure below shows the important places in his life.

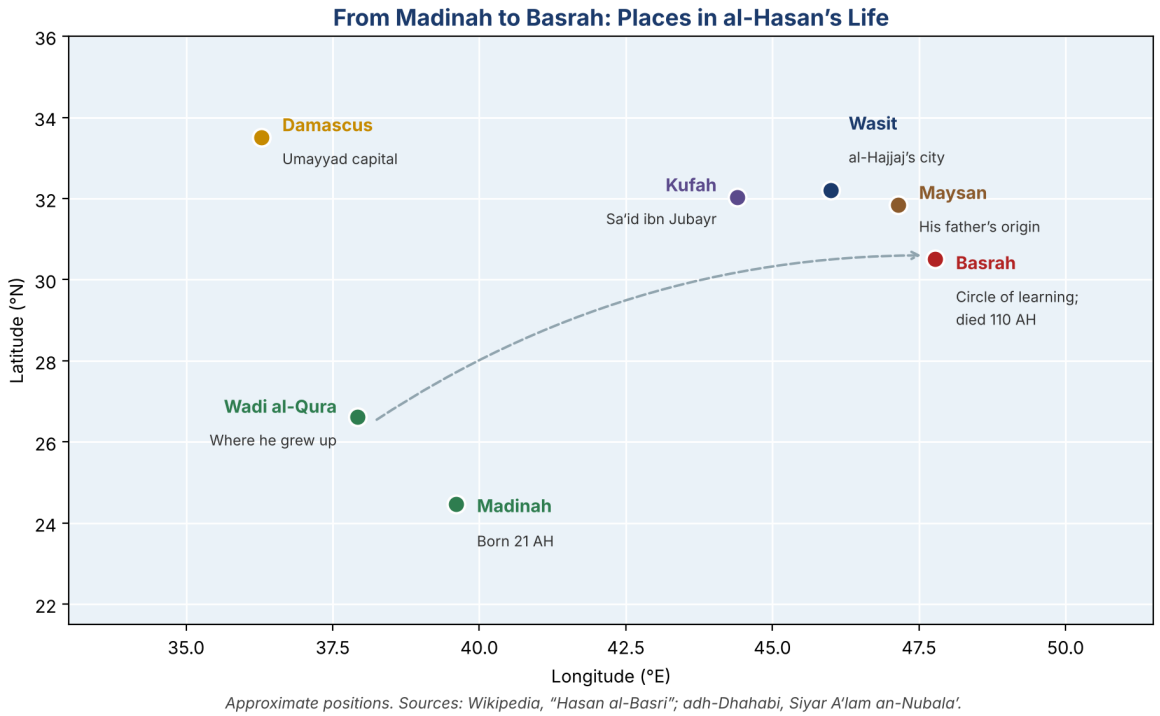


Figure 3: Places in the life of al-Hasan al-Basri (approximate positions).

Wikipedia states that his father came from ***southern Iraq***, and that his mother, ***Khayrah***, was a maidservant of Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_al-Basri

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A STUDENT OF THE COMPANIONS

Al-Hasan grew up while many Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were still alive, and he gained knowledge from them in Basra. One of the strongest proofs is the following Hadith — which not only tells of a great historical event, but also ***proves that al-Hasan truly heard from the Companion Abu Bakrah*** رضى الله عنه:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2704

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْحَسَنَ، يَقُولُ اسْتَقْبَلَ وَاللَّهِ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ مُعَاوِيَةَ بِكَتَائِبَ أَمْثَالِ الْجِبَالِ فَقَالَ عَمْرُو بْنُ الْعَاصِ إِنِّي لأَرَى كَتَائِبَ لاَ تُوَلِّي حَتَّى تَقْتُلَ أَقْرَانَهَا. فَقَالَ لَهُ مُعَاوِيَةُ ـ وَكَانَ وَاللَّهِ خَيْرَ الرَّجُلَيْنِ ـ أَىْ عَمْرُو إِنْ قَتَلَ هَؤُلاَءِ هَؤُلاَءِ وَهَؤُلاَءِ هَؤُلاَءِ مَنْ لِي بِأُمُورِ النَّاسِ مَنْ لِي بِنِسَائِهِمْ، مَنْ لِي بِضَيْعَتِهِمْ فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ رَجُلَيْنِ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ مِنْ بَنِي عَبْدِ شَمْسٍ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ سَمُرَةَ وَعَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَامِرِ بْنِ كُرَيْزٍ، فَقَالَ اذْهَبَا إِلَى هَذَا الرَّجُلِ فَاعْرِضَا عَلَيْهِ، وَقُولاَ لَهُ، وَاطْلُبَا إِلَيْهِ. فَأَتَيَاهُ، فَدَخَلاَ عَلَيْهِ فَتَكَلَّمَا، وَقَالاَ لَهُ، فَطَلَبَا إِلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ لَهُمَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ إِنَّا بَنُو عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، قَدْ أَصَبْنَا مِنْ هَذَا الْمَالِ، وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ الأُمَّةَ قَدْ عَاثَتْ فِي دِمَائِهَا. قَالاَ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْرِضُ عَلَيْكَ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَيَطْلُبُ إِلَيْكَ وَيَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ فَمَنْ لِي بِهَذَا قَالاَ نَحْنُ لَكَ بِهِ. فَمَا سَأَلَهُمَا شَيْئًا إِلاَّ قَالاَ نَحْنُ لَكَ بِهِ. فَصَالَحَهُ، فَقَالَ الْحَسَنُ وَلَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا بَكْرَةَ يَقُولُ رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ وَالْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ إِلَى جَنْبِهِ، وَهْوَ يُقْبِلُ عَلَى النَّاسِ مَرَّةً وَعَلَيْهِ أُخْرَى وَيَقُولُ «إِنَّ ابْنِي هَذَا سَيِّدٌ، وَلَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُصْلِحَ بِهِ بَيْنَ فِئَتَيْنِ عَظِيمَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ». قَالَ لِي عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا ثَبَتَ لَنَا سَمَاعُ الْحَسَنِ مِنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Musa said: I heard al-Hasan (al-Basri) say: By Allah, al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali رضى الله عنهما faced Mu‘awiyah with battalions like mountains. ‘Amr ibn al-‘As said: “I see battalions that will not turn back until they have killed their counterparts.” Mu‘awiyah — and by Allah, he was the better of the two men — said: “O ‘Amr, if these kill those and those kill these, who will look after the affairs of the people for me? Who will look after their women? Who will look after their dependants?” So he sent to him two men of Quraysh from Banu ‘Abd Shams, ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Samurah and ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amir ibn Kurayz, saying: “Go to this man, make him an offer, speak to him and make your request to him.” They went to him, entered upon him and spoke to him. Al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali said: “We, the sons of ‘Abd al-Muttalib, have received a share of this wealth, and this nation has been

steeped in its own blood." They said: "He offers you such and such, and requests and asks of you." He said: "Who will guarantee this for me?" They said: "We will guarantee it for you." Whatever he asked of them, they said: "We will guarantee it for you." So he made peace with him. Al-Hasan (al-Basri) said: **I heard Abu Bakrah say: I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the pulpit, with al-Hasan ibn 'Ali beside him; he would turn to the people at one time and to him at another, saying: "This son of mine is a sayyid (a noble leader), and perhaps Allah will make peace through him between two great groups of the Muslims."** (Imam al-Bukhari said:) 'Ali ibn 'Abdullah (Ibn al-Madini) said to me: ***"It is only through this Hadith that al-Hasan's hearing from Abu Bakrah has been established for us."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Musnadi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Abu Musa Isra'il, from al-Hasan al-Basri, from Abu Bakrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Peacemaking, Hadith No. 2704.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2704

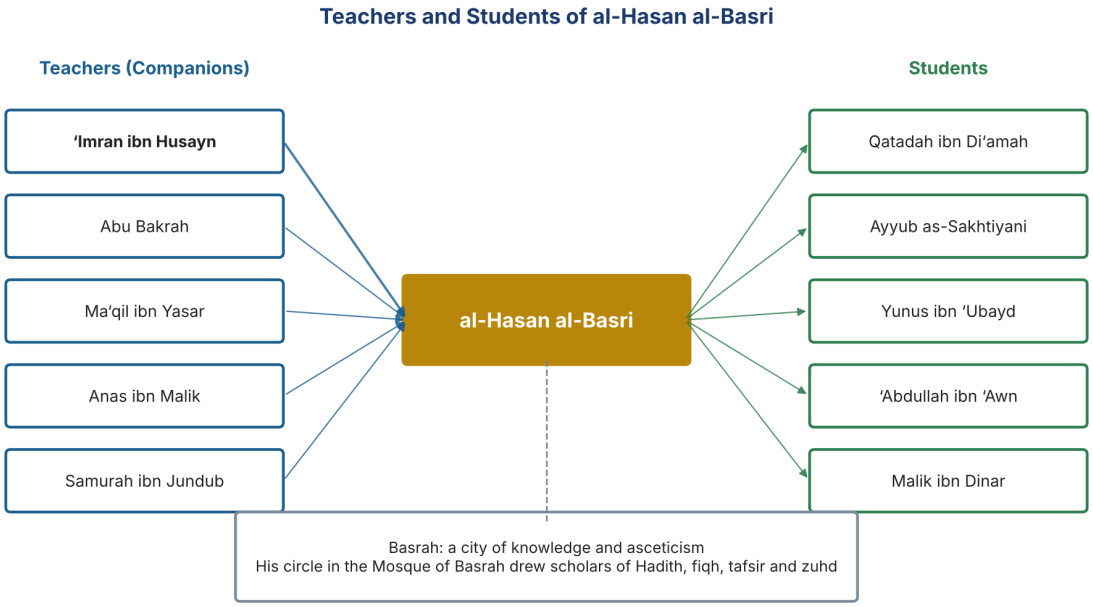
LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

This Hadith contains two lessons. ***First***, the prophecy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that his grandson, al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, would make peace between two great groups of this nation — which came to pass in 41 AH, known as ***'Am al-Jama'ah*** (the Year of Unity). ***Second***, the precision of Imam al-Bukhari and his teacher 'Ali ibn al-Madini: they did not accept that a narrator had heard from a Companion without proof.

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THE CIRCLE OF AL-HASAN AND HIS STUDENTS

Al-Hasan's circle in ***the Mosque of Basrah*** drew all kinds of people: scholars of Hadith came for narrations, jurists for rulings, exegetes for the meanings of verses, and ordinary people for ***advice that softens the heart***. The books of biography mention that his gatherings were full of ***remembrance of the Hereafter***, so that many wept on hearing him.



Simplified diagram based on the books of narrators (Tahdhib al-Kamal, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'). The real lists are much longer.

Figure 2: Some of the teachers and students of al-Hasan al-Basri.

From this circle came great imams of Basrah: ***Qatadah ibn Di'amah*** (exegete — Series 3), ***Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani*** (scholar of Hadith and fiqh), ***Yunus ibn 'Ubayd*** and ***'Abdullah ibn 'Awn*** (known for scrupulousness), and ***Malik ibn Dinar*** (ascetic). Each inherited one side of their teacher's knowledge and character.

A TEACHER WHOSE CHARACTER WAS INHERITED

Al-Hasan's students did not only memorise his words, but ***imitated his character***. Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani spoke of his understanding; Yunus ibn 'Ubayd spoke of his truthfulness; Qatadah spoke of his knowledge of the lawful and unlawful. This is the sign of a true teacher: ***his knowledge lives on in his students***.

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A MASTER OF THE LAWFUL AND THE UNLAWFUL

His student ***Qatadah*** said that al-Hasan was among those who ***knew best the lawful and the unlawful*** (chapter 3). This knowledge is not merely memorising rulings, but a sensitivity of the heart towards ***doubtful matters***, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 52

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّاءُ، عَنْ عَامِرٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ، يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «الْحَلاَلُ بَيِّنٌ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشَبَّهَاتٌ لاَ يَعْلَمُهَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَمَنِ اتَّقَى الْمُشَبَّهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ كَرَاعٍ يَرْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى، يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُوَاقِعَهُ. أَلاَ وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى، أَلاَ إِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ مَحَارِمُهُ، أَلاَ وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ. أَلاَ وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ».

TRANSLATION:

An-Nu'man ibn Bashir رضى الله عنهما said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between them are doubtful matters that many people do not know. Whoever avoids the doubtful matters has protected his religion and his honour… **Indeed, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart.**"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu Nu'aym al-Fadl ibn Dukayn, from Zakariyya ibn Abi Za'idah, from 'Amir ash-Sha'bi, from an-Nu'man ibn Bashir رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 52; also narrated by Muslim (No. 1599).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:52

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This Hadith links ***the lawful and the unlawful*** with ***the heart***. This was the character of al-Hasan's advice: he did not stop at outward rulings, but called people to ***purify the heart*** — for when the heart is sound, all one's deeds are sound.

CATEGORY	THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE
The clearly lawful	Takes it with gratitude.

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CATEGORY	THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE
The clearly unlawful	Avoids it completely.
The doubtful	Is cautious (wara') to protect his religion and honour.

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SHUNNING CIVIL STRIFE AND BLOODSHED

Al-Hasan himself narrated the Hadith that became his guiding principle when the ummah was struck by fighting between Muslims:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 31 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ، وَيُونُسُ، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، عَنِ الأَحْنَفِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ، قَالَ ذَهَبْتُ لأَنْصُرَ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ، فَلَقِيَنِي أَبُو بَكْرَةَ فَقَالَ أَيْنَ تُرِيدُ قُلْتُ أَنْصُرُ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ. قَالَ ارْجِعْ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «إِذَا الْتَقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا فَالْقَاتِلُ وَالْمَقْتُولُ فِي النَّارِ». فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا الْقَاتِلُ فَمَا بَالُ الْمَقْتُولِ قَالَ «إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَرِيصًا عَلَى قَتْلِ صَاحِبِهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays said: I set out to support this man (in the fighting between the Muslims), and Abu Bakrah met me and asked: "Where are you going?" I said: "I am going to support this man." He said: "Go back, for I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **'When two Muslims meet each other with their swords, both the killer and the one killed are in the Fire.'** I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, this is the killer, but what about the one killed?' He said: **'He was eager to kill his companion.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Mubarak, from Hammad ibn Zayd, from Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani and Yunus ibn 'Ubayd, from al-Hasan al-Basri, from al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, from Abu Bakrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 31. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2888).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:31

LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Abu Bakrah رضى الله عنه held al-Ahnaf back from joining the fighting between Muslims, and al-Hasan inherited this stance. For him, ***the blood of a Muslim was too precious*** to be shed in civil strife.

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HISTORY NOTE: AL-HASAN AND THE REVOLT OF IBN AL-ASH'ATH

According to the books of history and biography, when many of the qurra' joined ***the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath*** against al-Hajjaj (around 82 AH), al-Hasan ***advised the people not to join it***. He saw the tyranny of al-Hajjaj as a trial from Allah to be met with repentance, supplication and patience — not with the sword.

This was the difference in stance between him and Sa'id ibn Jubayr (Series 1). Both were great and respected scholars; yet it was al-Hasan's stance that was later adopted by most of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah, in line with the authentic Hadith on patience towards rulers (Sahih al-Bukhari 7054).

REFERENCES:

Sahih al-Bukhari 7054 (patience towards rulers). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7054

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ADVICE TO THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Shunning revolt did not mean keeping silent about injustice. Al-Hasan himself was present when a Companion admonished the governor of Basra, ‘Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, with the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7151

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا حُسَيْنٌ الْجُعْفِيُّ، قَالَ زَائِدَةُ ذَكَرَهُ عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، قَالَ أَتَيْنَا مَعْقِلَ بْنَ يَسَارٍ نَعُودُهُ فَدَخَلَ عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ مَعْقِلٌ أُحَدِّثُكَ حَدِيثًا سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ «مَا مِنْ وَالٍ يَلِي رَعِيَّةً مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، فَيَمُوتُ وَهُوَ غَاشٌّ لَهُمْ، إِلاَّ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ».

TRANSLATION:

Al-Hasan (al-Basri) said: We went to visit Ma‘qil ibn Yasar رضى الله عنه in his illness. Then ‘Ubaydullah (ibn Ziyad, the governor of Basra) came in. Ma‘qil said to him: “I will tell you a Hadith that I heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” He said: **“There is no ruler who is put in charge of Muslim subjects and then dies while deceiving them, except that Allah forbids Paradise for him.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Mansur, from Husayn al-Ju‘fi, from Za’idah, from Hisham ibn Hassan, from al-Hasan al-Basri, from Ma‘qil ibn Yasar رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Judgments, Hadith No. 7151. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 142).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7151

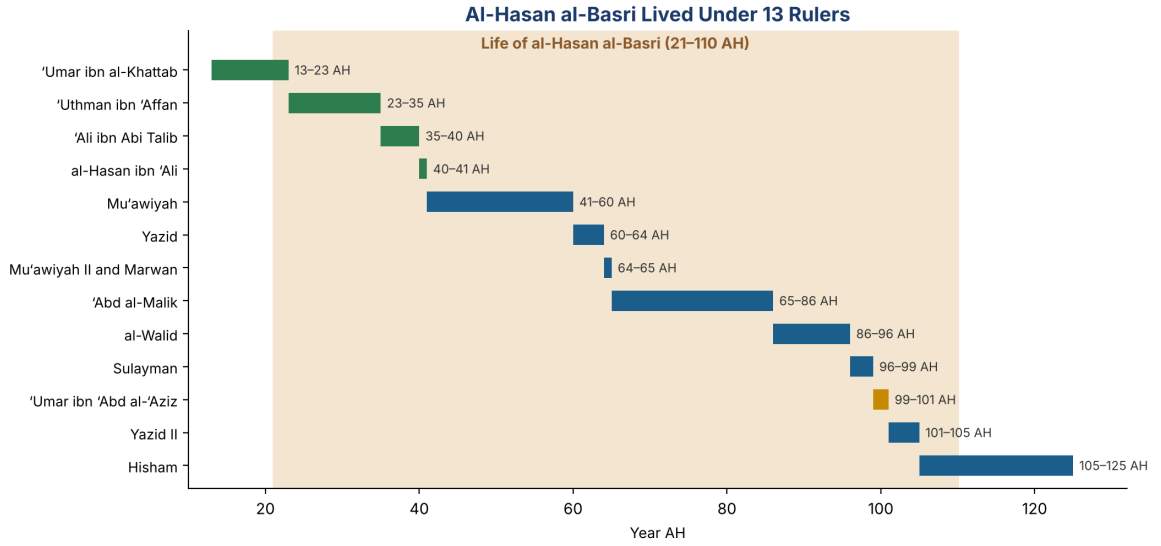
LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Ma‘qil ibn Yasar رضى الله عنه delivered his advice ***directly*** to the ruler, and al-Hasan transmitted it to the generations after him. This is the way of the scholars: ***sincere advice to those in authority***, without taking up arms and without dividing the ummah.

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LIVING UNDER 13 RULERS

Al-Hasan lived for almost ***ninety years*** (21–110 AH). In that time he witnessed the rule of ***the Rightly Guided Caliphs*** and most of the era of ***the Umayyads*** — just rulers and unjust ones.



Green: the Rightly Guided Caliphs; blue: the Umayyads; gold: 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. Approximate years. Sources: Wikipedia, "Umayyad Caliphate", "Hasan al-Basri".

Figure 4: The rulers during the lifetime of al-Hasan al-Basri (approximate years).

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HISTORY NOTE: AL-HASAN, AL-HAJJAJ AND ‘UMAR IBN ‘ABD AL-‘AZIZ

According to Wikipedia, al-Hasan ***criticised the building of Wasit*** by al-Hajjaj, so that al-Hajjaj was enraged and al-Hasan had to ***flee*** for his life.

By contrast, he was a contemporary of the famously just caliph ***‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz*** (99–101 AH / 717–720 CE), who ordered ***the first official collection of Hadith***. A letter of advice from al-Hasan to ‘Umar is reported, but some scholars consider its attribution ***spurious***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, “Hasan al-Basri”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_al-Basri
Wikipedia, “Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar_ibn_Abd_al-Aziz

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THE JUST RULER

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1827

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَزُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، وَابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ بْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنْ عَمْرٍو، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ دِينَارٍ - عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ أَوْسٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ يَبْلُغُ بِهِ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَفِي حَدِيثِ زُهَيْرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « إِنَّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَلَى مَنَابِرَ مِنْ نُورٍ عَنْ يَمِينِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَكِلْتَا يَدَيْهِ يَمِينٌ الَّذِينَ يَعْدِلُونَ فِي حُكْمِهِمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَا وَلُوا ».

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **“Indeed, the just will be with Allah upon pulpits of light, at the right hand of the Most Merciful, Mighty and Majestic — and both His hands are right hands — those who are just in their judgements, with their families, and in whatever they are put in charge of.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, Zuhayr ibn Harb and Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillah ibn Numayr, from Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah, from ‘Amr ibn Dinar, from ‘Amr ibn Aws, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Government (Kitab al-Imarah), chapter on the virtue of the just ruler, Hadith No. 1827.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1827

This Hadith is the scale for every leader: ***justice*** raises one’s rank with Allah, while injustice leaves a bad name in history.

ZUHD: THE WORLD AS A BRIDGE

SURAH AL-HADID 57:20

ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَا ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَا لَعِبٞ وَلَهۡوٞ وَزِينَةٞ وَتَفَاخُرُۢ بَيۡنَكُمۡ وَتَكَاثُرٞ فِي ٱلۡأَمۡوَٰلِ وَٱلۡأَوۡلَٰدِۖ كَمَثَلِ غَيۡثٍ أَعۡجَبَ ٱلۡكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُۥ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَىٰهُ مُصۡفَرّٗا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَٰمٗاۖ وَفِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٞ شَدِيدٞ وَمَغۡفِرَةٞ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرِضۡوَٰنٞۚ وَمَا ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَآ إِلَّا مَتَٰعُ ٱلۡغُرُورِ ٢٠

Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/57:20

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 57:20

Allah likens this world to vegetation that flourishes after rain: ***"then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris"***. This is the reality that filled the heart of al-Hasan throughout his life — just as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised Ibn 'Umar:

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6416

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ أَبُو الْمُنْذِرِ الطُّفَاوِيُّ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ الأَعْمَشِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مُجَاهِدٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بِمَنْكِبِي فَقَالَ «كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ، أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ». وَكَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ إِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلاَ تَنْتَظِرِ الصَّبَاحَ، وَإِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلاَ تَنْتَظِرِ الْمَسَاءَ، وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ لِمَرَضِكَ، وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ لِمَوْتِكَ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took hold of my shoulder and said: **"Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveller."** And Ibn 'Umar used to say: **"When evening comes, do not wait for the morning; and when morning comes, do not wait for the evening. Take from your health for your sickness, and from your life for your death."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ali ibn 'Abdullah, from Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman Abu al-Mundhir at-Tufawi, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Mujahid, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening the Hearts (ar-Riqaq), Hadith No. 6416.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6416

LESSON

Zuhd does not mean abandoning the world, but ***not letting the world rule the heart***. His student Yunus ibn 'Ubayd described him as the man of the longest sorrow — the sorrow of a traveller who always remembers his home in the Hereafter.

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TIME: A COLLECTION OF DAYS

Al-Hasan's most famous saying is about ***time***: man is only a collection of days (chapter 15). The Qur'an swears by time:

SURAH AL-'ASR 103:1–3

وَٱلۡعَصۡرِ ١

By time.

إِنَّ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ لَفِي خُسۡرٍ ٢

Indeed, mankind is in loss.

إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلۡحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلصَّبۡرِ ٣

Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/103:1-3

"Indeed, mankind is in loss", ***"Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 103:1

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6412

حَدَّثَنَا الْمَكِّيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ـ هُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي هِنْدٍ ـ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ». قَالَ عَبَّاسٌ الْعَنْبَرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا صَفْوَانُ بْنُ عِيسَى، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي هِنْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِثْلَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **“There are two blessings in which many people are deceived: health and free time.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Makki ibn Ibrahim, from ‘Abdullah ibn Sa‘id ibn Abi Hind, from his father Sa‘id ibn Abi Hind, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening of Hearts, Hadith No. 6412.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6412

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Health and ***free time*** are every person’s capital. Al-Hasan spent his days in knowledge, worship and advice — because he knew that every day that passes is ***a part of himself*** that will never return.

FOUR CONDITIONS (103:3)	DAILY PRACTICE
Believing	Renewing faith through knowledge and remembrance.
Doing righteous deeds	Guarding prayer, charity and character.
Advising one another to truth	Counselling with knowledge and wisdom.
Advising one another to patience	Strengthening one another in trials.

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REMEMBERING DEATH

SURAH ALI 'IMRAN 3:185

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۖ فَمَن زُحْزِحَ عَنِ ٱلنَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا مَتَٰعُ ٱلْغُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:185

"Every soul will taste death". Remembering death was a theme always alive in al-Hasan's circle, and that is what made his advice pierce the heart. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:185

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6514 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAYH)

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَزْمٍ، سَمِعَ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صلى الله عليه وسلم «يَتْبَعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلاَثَةٌ، فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ، يَتْبَعُهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ، فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ، وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Three things follow the deceased; two return and one remains with him. He is followed by his family, his wealth and his deeds. His family and his wealth return, and his deeds remain."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Sufyan (ibn 'Uyaynah), from 'Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn 'Amr ibn Hazm, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening the Heart, Chapter: The Agony of Death, Hadith No. 6514. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2960).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6514

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This Hadith is narrated by ***Anas ibn Malik*** رضى الله عنه — one of the Companions al-Hasan met in Basrah.

Family and wealth return; only ***deeds*** remain. That is why al-Hasan urged people to prepare their provision before it is too late.

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TEARS OUT OF FEAR OF ALLAH

The trait most often mentioned about al-Hasan is ***his sorrow and weeping*** out of fear of Allah. This was not sorrow for the world, but the sorrow of a servant who remembers the Hereafter — like those whom Allah will shade on the Day of Resurrection:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 660

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي خُبَيْبُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لاَ ظِلَّ إِلاَّ ظِلُّهُ الإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ، وَشَابٌّ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ، وَرَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَرَجُلاَنِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ اجْتَمَعَا عَلَيْهِ وَتَفَرَّقَا عَلَيْهِ، وَرَجُلٌ طَلَبَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ. وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ أَخْفَى حَتَّى لاَ تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا تُنْفِقُ يَمِينُهُ، وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Seven whom Allah will shade in His shade on the Day when there is no shade but His: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of his Lord; a man whose heart is attached to the mosques; two men who love each other for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting for His sake; a man invited by a woman of rank and beauty, who says: Indeed, I fear Allah; a man who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand spends; and a man who remembers Allah in solitude and his eyes overflow with tears."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from 'Ubaidullah ibn 'Umar, from Khubaib ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Hafs ibn 'Asim, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer, chapter on one who sits in the mosque waiting for the prayer, Hadith No. 660. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1031).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:660

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

One of those shaded by Allah is ***the one who remembers Allah in private and his eyes overflow***. Tears that come from ***knowledge and sincerity***, not to be seen by people, are the sign of a living heart.

HISTORY NOTE: WORDS OF WISDOM OF AL-HASAN

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The books ***Hilyat al-Awliya'*** by Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani and ***Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'*** by adh-Dhahabi collect many sayings of al-Hasan. Among the most famous: ***"O son of Adam, you are but a collection of days. Whenever a day passes, a part of you passes."***

Sayings such as this ***are related in the books of manners and asceticism***, not as Hadith of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They are placed in this box so that readers can distinguish them — yet their meaning agrees with the Qur'an's teaching on the brevity of worldly life.

REFERENCES:

Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliya'; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' — biography of al-Hasan al-Basri.

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REMEMBRANCE BRINGS THE HEART TO LIFE

SURAH AR-RA'D 13:28

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَطۡمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِۗ أَلَا بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطۡمَئِنُّ ٱلۡقُلُوبُ ٢٨

Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/13:28

"Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 13:28

The peace people seek in wealth, rank and entertainment truly lies in ***the remembrance of Allah***.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6407

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، عَنْ بُرَيْدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي لاَ يَذْكُرُ مَثَلُ الْحَىِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Musa رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **"The likeness of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not is like the living and the dead."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn al-'Ala', from Abu Usamah, from Burayd ibn 'Abdillah, from Abu Burdah, from Abu Musa (al-Ash'ari) رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Supplications, Chapter: The Virtue of Remembering Allah, Hadith No. 6407. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 779).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6407

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ likened one who does not remember Allah to ***a dead person***. Al-Hasan's circle was ***a circle of remembrance*** in the broad sense: remembering Allah, the Hereafter and the reckoning — until heedless hearts ***were brought back to life***.

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ALLAH LOOKS AT THE HEART

Al-Hasan wept in private, not in front of people (chapter 15). Hidden worship is a sign of ***sincerity***, for what Allah judges is the heart:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2564

حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرٌو النَّاقِدُ، حَدَّثَنَا كَثِيرُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ، حَدَّثَنَا جَعْفَرُ بْنُ بُرْقَانَ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ الأَصَمِّ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُوَرِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearance or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from 'Amr an-Naqid, from Kathir ibn Hisham, from Ja'far ibn Burqan, from Yazid ibn al-Asamm, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Righteousness, Joining Ties and Manners, Hadith No. 2564c.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2564c

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

People judge ***appearance and wealth***; Allah judges ***hearts and deeds***. Al-Hasan — the son of a former slave — became an imam of the Ummah because of his heart and deeds, not his lineage.

PEOPLE'S JUDGEMENT	ALLAH'S JUDGEMENT
Appearance	A sincere heart.
Wealth and rank	Righteous deeds.
Lineage	Taqwa (49:13).

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KNOWLEDGE THAT IS PRACTISED

Why was al-Hasan's advice so effective? His students gave the same answer: he ***practised what he preached***. Yunus ibn 'Ubayd described him as the most truthful of people in what he said. The Qur'an gives a severe warning to those who do the opposite:

SURAH AS-SAFF 61:2–3

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفۡعَلُونَ ٢

O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do.

كَبُرَ مَقۡتًا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَن تَقُولُواْ مَا لَا تَفۡعَلُونَ ٣

Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/61:2-3

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 61:2–3

Allah asks in reproach: ***"why do you say what you do not do"***, then declares: ***"Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 61:2.

A caller to Allah who ***first holds himself to account*** before calling others will be listened to, because his words come from the heart and are witnessed by his deeds. This was the secret of al-Hasan's circle: ***knowledge alive in action***.

A LESSON FOR US

Before advising others — children, students, friends or society — ask yourself: ***have I practised it?*** Knowledge that is not practised becomes a proof against oneself, while knowledge that is practised becomes a light for others.

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GUARDING THE TONGUE

The servants of the Most Merciful answer the ignorant with ***words of peace*** (chapter 1). Al-Hasan was known for a tongue that was ***truthful and gentle*** — as his student Yunus ibn ‘Ubayd testified.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6018 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAYH)

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الأَحْوَصِ، عَنْ أَبِي حَصِينٍ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلاَ يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not harm his neighbour; whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa‘id, from Abu al-Ahwas, from Abu Hasin, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Good Manners, Chapter: Whoever Believes in Allah and the Last Day Should Not Harm His Neighbour, Hadith No. 6018. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 47).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6018

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THE TRUE MUSLIM

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 10

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ بْنُ أَبِي إِيَاسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي السَّفَرِ، وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ، عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو - رضى الله عنهما - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ، وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The (true) Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe; and the (true) emigrant is the one who abandons what Allah has forbidden."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shu'bah, from 'Abdullah ibn Abi as-Safar and Isma'il (ibn Abi Khalid), from ash-Sha'bi, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Chapter: The Muslim Is the One From Whose Tongue and Hand the Muslims Are Safe, Hadith No. 10. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 40).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:10

LESSONS

The tongue can be ***a path to Paradise*** or ***a path to the Fire***. A caller to Allah must guard his tongue before advising others — ***speak good or remain silent***.

BROTHERHOOD AMONG MUSLIMS

Al-Hasan lived in an age of division in the Ummah. Yet he kept calling to ***brotherhood*** and away from enmity among Muslims:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 13 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ - رضى الله عنه - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم. وَعَنْ حُسَيْنٍ الْمُعَلِّمِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «لاَ يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"None of you (truly) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from Shu'bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه; and through a second chain from Husayn al-Mu'allim, from Qatadah.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 13. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 45).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:13

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BE SERVANTS OF ALLAH AS BROTHERS

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6065

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو اليَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «لاَ تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلاَ تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلاَ تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلاَ يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلاَثَةِ أَيَّامٍ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Do not hate one another, do not envy one another, and do not turn your backs on one another. Be, O servants of Allah, brothers.** It is not lawful for a Muslim to shun his brother for more than three days."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman al-Hakam ibn Nafi', from Shu'ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Manners (Kitab al-Adab), Hadith No. 6065; also narrated by Muslim (No. 2559).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6065

LESSONS

Both Hadith are narrated by ***Anas ibn Malik*** رضى الله عنه, the Companion who lived in Basrah. Envy, hatred and shunning are the poison of brotherhood; ***loving for your brother what you love for yourself*** is the cure.

THE POISON OF BROTHERHOOD	ITS CURE
Hating one another	Praying for your brother's good.
Envy	Being grateful for your own blessings.
Turning away and shunning	Being first to greet and reconcile.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about al-Hasan al-Basri circulate in lectures and books. The following table distinguishes what is established from what needs checking.

THE STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
Al-Hasan heard Hadith from Companions such as Abu Bakrah and Ma'qil ibn Yasar.	Established (Sahih al-Bukhari 2704, 7151).
He was graded trustworthy and a jurist by the Hadith scholars.	Established (Ibn Sa'd, al-'Ijli, adh-Dhahabi, Ibn Hajar).
Hadith that he attributed directly to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ without naming a Companion.	Mursal; the scholars differ on their strength (Ibn al-Madini and ad-Daraqutni).
He was nursed by Umm Salamah, the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.	Mentioned in the biographies; not included as certain fact.
His debates and meetings with Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah.	Not established; Rabi'ah lived after the time of al-Hasan. Not included.
Wasil ibn 'Ata' left al-Hasan's circle, giving rise to the Mu'tazilah.	Well known in the books on sects; the details vary.
Al-Hasan's letter of advice to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz.	Reported; some scholars consider its attribution spurious.

REFLECTION — GREATNESS WITHOUT EMBELLISHMENT

Al-Hasan al-Basri ***needs no invented stories*** to be honoured. The praise of his teachers, his students and the Hadith scholars is witness enough.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: Knowledge gives birth to gentleness. The servants of the Most Merciful answer the ignorant with words of peace (25:63).

Second: Verify the sources of knowledge. Al-Hasan's hearing from Abu Bakrah was accepted because there was proof (Sahih al-Bukhari 2704).

Third: Shun civil strife. The blood of a Muslim is too precious to be shed (Sahih al-Bukhari 31).

Fourth: Sincere advice to those in authority. Advising without rebelling (Sahih al-Bukhari 7151).

Fifth: Be a traveller in this world. This world is only a bridge to the Hereafter (57:20; Sahih al-Bukhari 6416).

Sixth: Bring the heart to life by remembering the Hereafter. Tears out of fear of Allah are the sign of a living heart (Sahih al-Bukhari 660).

Seventh: Practise before you call others. Saying what one does not do is greatly hated by Allah (61:2–3).

Eighth: A true teacher's character is inherited. Al-Hasan's students became imams by inheriting his knowledge and deeds.

Ninth: Value time. Man is only a collection of days (103:1–3; Sahih al-Bukhari 6412).

Tenth: Remember death. Only our deeds remain with us (3:185; Sahih al-Bukhari 6514).

Eleventh: Bring the heart to life with remembrance. One who does not remember Allah is like the dead (13:28; Sahih al-Bukhari 6407).

Twelfth: Guard the tongue and brotherhood. Speak good or remain silent (Sahih al-Bukhari 6018, 13).

Thirteenth: Choose what is established. The stories of the scholars are told with trustworthiness.

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CONCLUSION

Al-Hasan al-Basri رحمه الله died in Basra in 110 AH, leaving behind students who became imams after him. One of the most famous was the blind master of tafsir of Basra with a powerful memory — ***Qatadah ibn Di'amah***. In sha' Allah, he will be the subject of Series 3 of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**. And Allah knows best.

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GLOSSARY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Tabi'un	The generation who met and learned from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
Zuhd	Not letting the world rule the heart, even while possessing it.
Wara'	Great caution in avoiding the unlawful and the doubtful.
Mursal	A report in which a Tabi'i says "the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said" without naming the Companion in between.
Tadlis	A narrator reporting in a misleading way as if he heard directly.
Fitnah	In historical context: turmoil and fighting among Muslims.
Mu'tazilah	A theological school which, according to the histories of sects, began in Basrah in al-Hasan's time.
Shubhah	A matter whose lawfulness or unlawfulness is unclear.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Al-Hasan said a person is but a collection of days. How are we using today?

2. Why did al-Hasan choose not to join the revolt, yet still advise rulers honestly?

3. What is the difference between true zuhd and abandoning the world completely?

4. How can a teacher's character live on in his students?

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

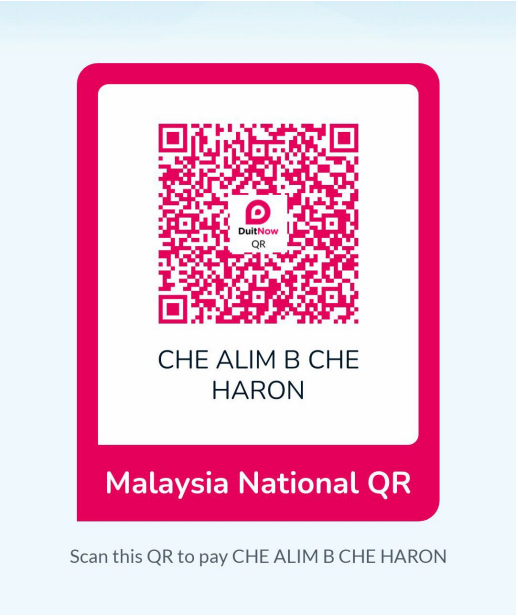
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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