



Fortified and Fulfilled: Allah's Name As-Samad

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In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Grantor of Mercy.

Prelude

Each of us will encounter moments in our lives that remind us how inherently vulnerable we are as human beings. They may be moments of feeling paralyzed by our fears, beaten down by our weaknesses, or suffocated by our anxiety about the future. There may be an act of betrayal that causes us to realize just how fragile we actually are, or an imprudent decision we make that crushes our self-confidence for years, or a tragic event that erects a prison of depression around us. It is only in these moments, when the gift of desperation is delivered to our hearts, that we are reintroduced to the authentic version of ourselves; not the invincible image we choose to imagine in the mirror, or show in public, or are deluded to believe others see. It is in these moments, and through that reintroduction, that the arena is cleared to invite Allah's name *aṣ-Ṣamad* into our hearts and minds.

The meaning of *aṣ-Ṣamad*

Say, "He is Allah—the Uniquely One. Allah, *aṣ-Ṣamad* (the Eternal Refuge). He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent." (Qur'an 112: 1-4)

Aṣ-Ṣamad is among Allah's names of majesty and grandeur, rendering those who contemplate its meaning awestruck and filling them with reverence. It can also be included among Allah's names of beauty and grace, for it stems from a deep recognition of God's absolute perfection and fuels endless hope in His divine support. The origins of this name are the tri-letter verb *ṣa-ma-da* which usually denotes resorting to a superior¹ to compensate for an inferiority. Arabs would only say *ṣamad-tu* (I resorted to) when the pursuit of that person or object was for some need they could not independently fulfill. In early Arabia, a tribal chief would be referred to as *aṣ-Ṣamad* since finalizing a decision was dependent on his authority. A warrior was called *aṣ-Ṣamad* when he could withstand not eating or drinking

¹ *Ṣamada* and *ṣumūd* may at times entail the ability to withstand adversity; not seeking endurance externally but simply exhibiting it within oneself thereafter. Hence, Hans Wehr translates *ṣumūd* as "staying power" in his lexicon.

during battle, unlike the other fighters, because victory hinged on exhibiting this unique resilience. Therefore, at the core of Allah's name *aṣ-Ṣamad* is the idea that He is sought for His unique perfection; it is His distinct nature that makes Him the ultimate compensation for every deficiency.

This etymological dive helps us thread together the pearls when facing variant translations for *aṣ-Ṣamad* in English. Translators of the Qur'an chose a variety of terms to explain *aṣ-Ṣamad*, some of which highlight how Allah is inherently flawless, while others highlight how His creation intuitively seeks Him out to counteract a corresponding flaw they themselves, as created beings, possess. These interpretations are two sides of the same coin; were it not for Allah being the Absolute who never fails or lacks anything, He would not be uniquely longed for whenever a creature fails or lacks something. Therefore, *aṣ-Ṣamad* is the Eternally Sought (Pickthall) since it is natural that one who is finite anxiously turns to the Eternal (Yusuf Ali), the needy to the Self-Sufficient (Muhsin Khan), and the quivering to the Everlasting Refuge (Arberry).

The great Companion, Ibn 'Abbās (d. 687, may Allah be pleased with him), once defined *aṣ-Ṣamad* as, "The Master who is perfect in His mastery; the Honorable who is perfect in His honor; the Great who is perfect in His greatness; the Forbearing who is perfect in His forbearance; the Self-Sufficient who is perfect in His self-sufficiency; the Compeller who is perfect in His compulsion; the Knower who is perfect in His knowledge; the Wise who is perfect in His wisdom. He is the One who is perfect in every form of honor and mastery; He is Allah—the Glorified; this is His inherent quality which should only be attributed to Him."² Created beings may have some of these qualities, but not inherently nor fully. Whenever they exist in others, they have been partially and momentarily endowed by Allah. As for Allah (the Glorified and Exalted), He is *aṣ-Ṣamad*; Who has no cavity needing to be filled nor any reservoir needing to be refilled; Who never for a moment needs His creation, while every human and *jinn* needs Him at every moment; Who does not just outlive emperors and dynasties after they fall, but even the galaxies and universes once they perish. Ibn Manẓūr (d. 1311) reports all these

² Collected by Ibn Jarīr at-Tabarī in *at-Tafsīr* (24/736), Abu ash-Shaykh in *al-'Azama* (96), and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt* (98), with an authentic chain.

linguistic inferences and more in his lexicon, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, from the earliest authorities.³

The Qur’an enlightens humanity to understand that Allah’s uniqueness (*aḥadiyya*) and perfection (*ṣamadiyya*) necessitate that He has no point of emanation that would negate His eternality, nor any parent or child who resembles or inherits Him, nor any peers that are comparable to Him. Allah says in *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*, **“Say, ‘He is Allah—the Uniquely One. Allah, *aṣ-Ṣamad* (the Eternal Refuge). He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent.’”** (Qur’an 112: 1-4)

Imam Ibn Taymiya (d. 1328, may Allah bestow mercy on him) said about Allah not having any equivalent, “Even if the created being may be *ṣamad* from certain angles, the reality of *ṣamadiyya* does not exist in him, since he is subject to disunion and divisibility, and is also dependent on others—for everyone other than Allah is dependent on Him from every angle, while nobody is depended on for everything and is not dependent on anything except Allah (Blessed and Exalted be He).”⁴

The primordial anchor

An intriguing aspect of Allah’s name *aṣ-Ṣamad* is its infrequent mention in the Qur’an; it appears only in that single context in *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*. Perhaps this speaks to the fact that recognizing God as such is universal and instinctual, an integral part of every human’s nature and not reliant upon nurture. Geneticist Dean Hamer, the author of *The God Gene*, was among a wave of scientists who attempted to explain why belief in an unseen god seems to be hardwired in all human beings. But this inborn disposition does not end at believing in His existence, rather it includes us clinging to this supreme being with unexplainable confidence, one that many times only increases in strength with the severity of our trials. That phenomenon is called *ṣumūd*; the act of seeking out God with the realization that anchoring our optimism

³ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1994), 3:258-259.

⁴ Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah: Majma‘ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā‘at al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, 1995), 17:238.

elsewhere is futile. Humans do not need scripture to recognize at some level the pre-installed function of *ṣumūd*. Authentic scripture protects from a faulty perception of God that impairs that function, and also perfects and augments that realization of His *ṣamadiyya*. But in the depths of our sometimes very different worldviews, all people share a core conviction about God that will never cease to breach the crust of social and cultural conditioning. That core conviction is that God is *aṣ-Ṣamad*: the worthiest object of our *ṣumūd*.

Perhaps it is *ṣumūd* occurring in every atom of God's created universe that deems it redundant to repeat the name *aṣ-Ṣamad* in Qur'anic verses. Allah has surrounded the human experience with towering waves of vulnerability so that we never forget that He is *aṣ-Ṣamad* and flee to Him. When the rainfall becomes scarce and delays the farmer's crop, and all his ideas to improvise are expended, he is rattled by the thought of the season expiring before harvesting his family's livelihood that year. In that state of heightened desperation, he finds himself scanning the skies for a cloud each morning, whispering in earnest: O God. When the pilot announces that the plane's landing gear is stuck and we must brace for impact, people's dreams about life, family, and happiness almost instantly disappear. Their terror drives them to the only thing more certain in their hearts than their looming end, and so they scream from within: O God, please. When you stand by your loved one at the hospital bed, watching powerlessly the staggered lines on the monitor, your soul fights to remain hopeful. But then their pulse declines further, their breathing gets quieter, and your heart sinks like never before. It is then that you forget the nurse's name, and the doctor's face evaporates from your mind, and all you can utter in your brokenness is: O Allah, be with them.⁵ These are among the countless moments in life that force us to relearn that Allah is *aṣ-Ṣamad* and that, in reality, we have no option but *ṣumūd* to the only One truly in control. ***“Say, ‘In whose hand is the realm of all things—and He protects while none can protect against Him—if you should know?’”*** (Qur'an 23:88) A rhetorical question is presented in this verse as if to say: Why do you at times behave otherwise (equating others with God) when you know full well that Allah alone is the ultimate sanctuary?

⁵ Adapted from Dr. 'Ali al-Fīfī's bestseller, *لأنك الله* (*Because You are God*).

It is reported that Imam Ja‘far b. Muhammad (d. 765, may Allah bestow mercy on him) once said to a skeptic, “Have you sailed the seas?” He said, “Yes.” He said, “Tell me about the wildest thing that has happened to you [at sea].” The man said, “One day, powerful winds began to blow, destroying the ship and drowning its crew. I grabbed on to one of its planks, but I found myself tossed around by the violent waves and the plank was eventually lost. Somehow I was still delivered to the shore.” Ja‘far said, “Your reliance was upon the ship and sailors, and then on that plank. But when these things deserted you, did you surrender yourself to death or were you still hoping to survive?” He said, “No, rather I hoped to survive.” Ja‘far said, “Who did you hope in for survival?” The man fell silent. Ja‘far then said, “God is the One whom you were hoping in at that moment, and He is the One who spared you from drowning.” Allah (the Glorified and Exalted) captures for us this scene of instinctual *ṣumūd* repeatedly in the Qur’an; ***“And when adversity touches you at sea, forgotten are [all] those you invoke except for Him. But when He delivers you to the land, you turn away [from Him]. And ever is man ungrateful”*** (Qur’an 17:67).

When rationalist René Descartes embarked on his intellectual journey, he quickly realized that unbridled skepticism would drown him in uncertainty. Descartes then sought an anchor, a safeguard that would ensure that our existence is real, as are our senses that perceive, as are our minds that process. How can we dismiss the possibility of us being merely a figment of an alien’s imagination, and what guarantee is there that our thinking is not manipulated by evil demons? Descartes was driven to conclude that *ṣumūd* was a fundamental necessity here, or else every mode of thought, investigation, and analysis would be pointless. His “I think therefore I am” proposition was adrift without this anchor, and nothing qualified to ground it but *aṣ-Ṣamad* Himself. In Descartes’ framing, God cannot be a deceiver because deception is an imperfection, and since He has equipped us with the faculties to arrive at certain truths, then we should, in that case, pursue truth. He says,

...that the sun is of such and such a figure, etc., or which are less clearly and distinctly conceived, such as light, sound, pain and the like, it is certain that although they are very dubious and uncertain, yet on the sole ground that

*God is not a deceiver, and that consequently, He has not permitted any falsity to exist in my opinion which He has not likewise given me the faculty of correcting, I may assuredly hope to conclude that I have within me the means of arriving at the truth even here.*⁶

Without first conceding to our innate knowledge that *aṣ-Ṣamad* is the justification for our capacity to think straight, no rational arguments can follow. When a skeptic demands an explanation for God, when God is the explanation for us, they will never be able to escape circular reasoning and inconsistency. In this respect, God is *al-Haqq* (the Truth), beyond which no truth can be possible, and without which the polemical acrobatics of any philosopher are incoherent child's play. As Allah said, **“Say, ‘Allah.’ Then leave them in their [empty] discourse, amusing themselves”** (Qur'an 6:91). To counter a list of objections to faith, God instructs us in this verse to respond with just one word: Allah. It suffices on its own to silence life's biggest lies and exposes every pseudo-intellectual theory. Prudent thinkers realize it is their indispensable philosophical stronghold, their refuge against ideological disarray, and their guarantee that the trojan horse of fancy language will never breach their defenses and invade their worldview.

Devotion to *aṣ-Ṣamad*

Empty your heart of others

Our future will remain unknown to us, our resources will remain limited, our human nature will remain impatient, and hence Allah assured us that He is undoubtedly *aṣ-Ṣamad* so that we may lean on Him at every moment. He is not like those whose doors are open in the morning but closed at night. He is not like those who can defend you against smaller oppressors but only sympathize with you when it comes to tyranny's juggernauts. He is unlike those who are agitated by our incessant requests, or exploit us for asking, or shortchange us upon delivery, or leave us guilt-ridden for taking without returning the favor. We should, therefore, empty our hearts of all others, for belief in *aṣ-Ṣamad* necessitates clarity on where

⁶ Descartes, René, Elizabeth S. Haldane, and G R. T. Ross. *Philosophical Works: Rendered into English* (Cambridge: University Press, 1911), pp. 191-192.

we should turn when we aspire, how to escape the storms of confusion, and how to vanquish our insecurities with our heads raised high. ***“So flee to Allah. Indeed, I (Muhammad) am to you from Him a clear warner”*** (Qur'an 51:50).

Emptying our hearts of other than *aṣ-Ṣamad* is not about becoming antisocial or disengaging from reality and resigning to apathy. Rather, it is about depending on Allah—the truest Reality—as we engage the physical world; not forgetting from where helpful people get their existence, specialists get their competence, and those who stand with us in solidarity get their courage and kindness. It is about us pursuing scholars for guidance, jobs for income, friends for companionship, and righteousness for salvation, while locking our hearts only upon *aṣ-Ṣamad* to bring those to fruition. It is about *internally* recognizing that ***“the example of those who take allies other than Allah is like that of the spider who takes a home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew”*** (Qur'an 29:41). The spider's web is a pathetic shelter on the brink of collapsing when nudged by almost any object or wind. The entire creation is similarly vulnerable in the face of every event, whether we perceive it as such or not, while *aṣ-Ṣamad* is unshakeable and remains so in even the most turbulent days. Whoever recognizes that within themselves, while engaging whichever physical means Allah has placed at their disposal, has a guarantee to never be disappointed by the One who named Himself *aṣ-Ṣamad*.

Emptying our hearts of others is also not just about overattachment to people but also to the objects we assume are necessary for our happiness or wellbeing. It is Allah Who made the medicine effective, and so we will search for it, but trust that He can cure us without medicine if we cannot find it. It is Allah who made our homeland dear to us, so we will yearn for it, but are confident that He can make a foreign place just as dear if we cannot return home. When the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions were driven out of Mecca, the relocation to Madinah was grueling. The persecution of the Meccans had torn apart their families, expelling some and holding back others, and forced them to an unfamiliar place. Many of the Companions fell physically ill in the new climate and rumors began to spread that they were cursed. Others stood outside Madinah, reciting sorrowful poetry about the valleys of Mecca they longed for or staring at the horizon in hopes that their

detained loved ones would somehow appear in the distance. After a yearlong saga of heartache, the Prophet ﷺ began saying, **“O Allah, make Madinah as beloved to us as You made Mecca, or more intensely so.”**⁷ Here, the Prophet ﷺ exhibited great humility by not demanding a return to Mecca, and profound *ṣumūd* by recognizing that God could afford them the health and happiness they once had in Mecca anywhere. Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ marveled at how Lūṭ عليه السلام fearlessly confronted the hostility of his nation all by himself, and say, **“May Allah’s mercy be upon Lūṭ; he would seek refuge in a strong support,”**⁸ meaning with Allah. Lūṭ عليه السلام had no tangible means of support but knew in the depths of his soul that if you have *aṣ-Ṣamad*, you have all you need. **“If Allah should aid you, no one can overcome you; but if He should forsake you, who is there that can aid you after Him? And upon Allah let the believers rely”** (Qur’an 3:160).

Worship Allah Alone

Humans are compelled to stop at God’s door for their ambitions, but sincerity lies in also making God their ultimate ambition. The oft-forgotten mission of desiring God, not just desiring from God, is replenished by *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* through its very title (*ikhhlāṣ* = sincere devotion). Furthermore, its sole theme serves as the justifier for this; Allah’s uniqueness (*aḥadiyya*) and perfection (*ṣamadiyya*) necessitate His exclusive right to worship, and singling Him out in worship implies recognizing that about Him. Noncompliance with His exclusive right to worship implies not believing that He is uniquely perfect and that others also deserve a share of one’s devotional acts. As for those who concede to the reality of *aṣ-Ṣamad*, they see that veneration must be directed to Him Alone. Allah says, **“Say, ‘Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims.’ Say, ‘Is it other than Allah I should desire as a lord while He is the Lord of all things?’”** (Qur’an 6:162-164)

⁷ Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (1889, 5677) (Bayrūt: Dār Ṭawq al-Najjāh, 2002).

⁸ Al-Qushayrī, Muslim b. Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (151); (Bayrūt: Dār Ihyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah, 1955), and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (4537).

It is reported that when the Prophet ﷺ first met ‘Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn (may Allah be pleased with him), an elderly Bedouin, he said, **“How many gods do you worship today?”** He said, “Seven; six on earth and one in the heavens.” He said, **“Which of them do you depend on for your moments of hope and fear?”** He said, “The one in the heavens.”⁹ ‘Imrān soon embraced Islam, convinced that aṣ-Ṣamad, to Whom we resort in hope and fear, is the only One Who deserves lowering our heads to in prostration.

Worshipping God should never be reduced to only the outward rituals such as prayer and sacrifice; these are the necessary physical manifestations of *adoring God within oneself* which is what worship is all about. Consider how amidst establishing the necessary *qibla* (direction) one must physically face for a valid prayer, Allah says, **“And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing”** (Qur’an 2:115). Even outside of prayer, whenever our lives demand we turn our heads or send our limbs in a necessary direction, a believer always perceives aṣ-Ṣamad as the single most valid *qibla* of his or her heart. Not only is this wise and His due right, but it is also humanity’s greatest need; the need to love the Divine and feel loved by Him, which Allah created within every soul. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1350, may Allah bestow mercy on him) says about this,

In the heart, there exists an anxiousness that nothing can calm but drawing nearer to Allah. And over it looms a loneliness that nothing can remove but experiencing His company in private. And in there exists a sadness that nothing can dispel but the joy of knowing Him and genuinely devoting oneself to Him. And in there exists a worry that nothing can reassure but focusing on Him and fleeing from Him to Him. And in there flare the flames of regret, and nothing can extinguish them but becoming content with His commands, prohibitions, destiny, and patiently gripping on to all that until the time it meets Him. And in there exists a pressing demand; it will not stop until He alone becomes its greatest pursuit. And in there is a dire need; nothing will satisfy it except loving Him, constantly remembering Him, and

⁹ Collected in *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (3483) who graded it *hasan-gharīb*; Ibn Ḥajar graded its transmission *jayyid* (good) in *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* (2/384), and Ibn al-Qayyim graded it *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) in *al-Wābil aṣ-Ṣayyib* (199), while *al-Albāni* considered it *ḍa‘īf* (weak).

*being sincerely devoted to Him. And if a person were given this entire world and all it contains, it would never fulfill that need.*¹⁰

Finally, there is one particular act of ritual worship that beholders of *aṣ-Ṣamad* will naturally engage in, and that is *du‘ā’* (supplication). The Prophet ﷺ taught us that **“*Du‘ā’* is the [essence] of devotional worship”**¹¹ because *du‘ā’* is a testimony of one's inability and Allah's ability, and one's confidence that *aṣ-Ṣamad* can quench every physical, emotional, and spiritual thirst. Some people wonder why make *du‘ā’* when Allah knows the situation, missing that while He knows everything, He loves to hear us whisper to Him in supplication, for it demonstrates our certainty in His presence and our trust in His decision and timing. That is why the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Nothing is more honorable with Allah than *du‘ā’*”**¹² and that you should call upon Allah in prayer **“even for your sandal-strap when it rips.”**¹³ It is not about the object of the request, but the fact that Allah loves to witness your heart and tongue pulsating with *ṣumūd*, just as He hates the callous person who refuses to admit his needs or who turns to others for them but not to Allah.

In one of many prophetic supplications that relegate every last affair of this world and the next to Allah, *aṣ-Ṣamad*, the Prophet ﷺ would say, **“O Allah, rectify for me my religion which is the stronghold of my affairs. And rectify for me my worldly life in which is my living. And rectify for me my hereafter in which is my return. And make life an increase for me in every good, and make death a relief for me from every evil.”**¹⁴

Illustrating the power of invoking Allah's name *aṣ-Ṣamad* in particular, Miḥjan b. al-Adru‘ (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that Prophet ﷺ once heard a man say at the conclusion of his prayer,

¹⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madārij al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Na'budu wa Iyyāka Nasta'in* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-Arabīyya, 1996), 3:156.

¹¹ Collected in *Musnad Ahmad* (4/267, 271), *Sunan Abu Dāwud* (1479), *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (2969), *Sunan an-Nasā'i* (11464), and *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (3828) with an authentic chain of transmission.

¹² Collected in *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (2684) and graded *ḥasan* (acceptable) by al-Albānī.

¹³ Collected in *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (3973) and graded *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) by as-Suyūṭī in *al-Jāmi' aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* (7544).

¹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (2720).

“O Allah, I ask You by virtue of You being *al-Wāḥid* (the One), *aṣ-Ṣamad* (the Absolute), who does not beget nor is begotten, nor is anyone comparable to Him—that you forgive my sins for me—for certainly, it is You Who are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ يَا اللَّهُ بِأَنَّكَ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ، الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ، أَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي ذُنُوبِي، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Allāhumma inni as'aluka yā Allāhu bi-annak al-wāḥid uṣ-ṣamad, alladhī lam yalid wa lam yūlad wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan ahad, an taghfira ly dhunūbī, innaka antal ghafūr ur-raḥīm.

The Prophet ﷺ said upon hearing this, **“He has certainly been forgiven; he has certainly been forgiven; he has certainly been forgiven.”**¹⁵

Transcend morally

People bolstered by *aṣ-Ṣamad* and desirous of Him above all else become morally incorruptible so long as those two factors remain within them. They transcend the lower appetites which dissuade most humans from their values, such as the appetites for fortune, fame, comfort, and longevity. Carnal desires fail at diverting the people of *sumūd* from the right path and the threats of tyrants fail at bringing those who take cover with *aṣ-Ṣamad* to their knees.

When al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf arrested Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 714, may Allah bestow mercy on him) for speaking against his tyranny, he made many attempts to frighten and demoralize the leading scholar of that age. All these attempts failed miserably, though Sa'īd was ultimately executed, due to his unwavering conviction in Allah being *aṣ-Ṣamad*. While chastizing Sa'īd for his ‘insolence’ and open rebellion, al-Ḥajjāj said, “You are doomed,” to which Sa'īd responded, “It is [only] someone else who knows the unseen,” meaning only Allah knows the future. Al-Ḥajjāj then said, “By Allah, I will replace your world with a blazing fire,” meaning you will

¹⁵ Collected in *Musnad Ahmad* (4/338), *Sunan Abu Dāwud* (985), and *Sunan an-Nasā'i* (1225, 7618); narrated similarly in *Musnad Ahmad* (5/349) *Sunan Abu Dāwud* (1493, 1494) *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (3475), *Sunan an-Nasā'i* (7666) and *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (3857).

now be executed and go straight to Hell. Sa'īd retorted, "If I believed that this was in your control, I would not have worshipped anyone but you" and, "If you do this, you will ruin my worldly life and I will ruin your afterlife," meaning triumph will still be mine. When the executioner set Sa'īd b. Jubayr in place for beheading, he faced the *qibla* (direction of prayer) and recited, "***I have turned my face toward He Who created the heavens and the earth***" (Qur'an 6:79). This infuriated al-Ḥajjāj, but when he instructed them to turn his back to the *qibla*, Sa'īd simply recited, "***So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah***" (Qur'an 2:115). Al-Ḥajjāj finally instructed them to position him face-down, upon which he recited "***From it (the earth) We created you, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you another time***" Qur'an 20:55). He was then slaughtered from behind. When news of this exchange reached al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (d. 728, may Allah bestow mercy on him), he said, "O Allah; O Breaker of Tyrants, break al-Ḥajjāj," and within three days worms had infected al-Ḥajjāj's abdomen and killed him.¹⁶

When enviers of Imam Ibn Taymiya had him summoned before the sultan, he was told, "I have been informed that the masses listen to you and that you harbor a desire to usurp power [from us]." Ibn Taymiya responded to this charge of mutiny in a loud confident voice that could be heard by many of those present, "[You think] *I* would do that? By Allah, neither your kingdom nor that of all the Mongols is worth *fiṣayn* (two pennies) in my eyes."¹⁷ On a different occasion, Maḥmūd Ghāzān, the seventh ruler of the Mongol Empire, offered to rebuild Hiran for Ibn Taymiya and crown him its head of state. The Imam dismissed that proposal and made it clear that he had no interest in appeasing kings made of dust nor in being granted any of the dust beneath their feet.¹⁸

Just as a person who kneels to God does not bow before anyone else, they also are never enticed by material gains to be swayed from justice. They feel sufficed by Allah and are transformed by that into greats who can sacrifice in the shade of *aṣ-Ṣamad*, not pant after worldly offers, nor grovel at the feet of those offering

¹⁶ See: AbdulRaḥmān b. al-Jawzi, *al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wal-Umam*, vol. 7, years 95-136H.

¹⁷ Mar'ī al-Karmī, *al-Kawākib ad-Durriyya*, pp. 98-99 with adaptation.

¹⁸ Abu Bakr al-Bazzār, *al-A'lām al-'Aliyya*, p. 65.

them. Conscientious people see their own moral compromises as disgraceful and only compromise when no viable alternative seems possible. But when someone is acquainted with *aṣ-Ṣamad*, the dignified option is never absent.

Support others

Having strength to spare for bolstering others is another blessed byproduct of submitting to *aṣ-Ṣamad*. Being there for people physically, financially, emotionally, and intellectually is directly proportionate to the depth of our relationship with *aṣ-Ṣamad*, for only from Him can we find the resilience and surplus to help ourselves, then march onwards to uplift others around us, whether benefiting them during our lives or through the legacy we leave behind.

Imam al-Ghazālī (d. 1111, may Allah bestow mercy on him) writes, “Whomever Allah (Most High) appoints as the aim of His servants in their worldly and religious concerns, and facilitates on his hands and tongue the needs of His creation, then He has favored him with a share of that [divine] attribute’s meaning. It is [then] upon him to adopt the traits of leadership so that he can be *maṣmūd* (resorted to), and his door [can be] *maqṣūd* (sought out). Hishām b. ‘Urwa narrates from his father, that he said, ‘I lived to see Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda (may Allah be pleased with him) having an announcer who would call people to his home, and later lived to see his son Qays inviting others in a similar fashion.’”¹⁹ In other words, the generation of the Companions actualized the divine quality of *ṣamadiyya* as best as human beings can, by making themselves available for the unconditional service of others each day of their lives and instilling this virtue in their children as well.

The Prophet ﷺ also told us that **“The most beloved people to Allah are those most beneficial to people”**²⁰ and that **“if Allah wishes well for a person, He uses him [for good].”**²¹ Therefore, the characteristic of supporting others is not only made possible by our reliance on Allah, but also driven by our desire for the pleasure of Allah, and these two are the essence of *ṣumūd* as we earlier established.

¹⁹ Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Qurtūbī, *al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, 1/186.

²⁰ Collected by at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* (6026) and graded *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) by al-Albānī in *as-Silsila aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥa* (906).

²¹ Collected in *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (2142) and graded *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) by al-Albānī.

This explains why nobody could match the aid and healing extending by the Prophet Muhammad's life and legacy: because nobody invoked God for strength like he did, nor was anyone ever as passionate a seeker of God's pleasure as he was

صلى الله
عليه وسلم .

Conclusion

Life often whispers to us, and sometimes screams at us, that we have a Master upon the Throne and that all we seek rests with Him. Let us receive those messages while attentive and lock the compass of our hearts upon Him. Let us realize that He sometimes causes us to lose some things so that we find the greatest thing—*ṣumūd* to *aṣ-Ṣamad*—so that we may remember His name, realize His power, rediscover His house, and recall what life while loving Him is like. May we always turn to *aṣ-Ṣamad* for all our needs and never swerve from that to reliance on any of His creation.