



# صفة المؤمن والمؤمنة

CHARACTERISTICS  
OF THE BELIEVING MAN  
AND WOMAN

Dhūn-Nūn al-Miṣrī



وَأَنْتَ لَعَلَىٰ خَلْقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And you (O Muḥammad) are truly (a man) of  
outstanding character [68:4]

إِنَّ خَيْرَكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا

The best amongst you are those best in character  
(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)

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العالم الزاهد الواعظ أبي الفيض ثوبان بن إبراهيم الإخميمي

المعروف ب: ذي النون المصري

المتوفي سنة ٢٤٦هـ

قدس سره

## Characteristics of the Believing Man and Woman

Compiled by

The great scholar, ascetic, advisor

Abū al-Fayḍ, Thawbān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ikḥmīmī

Famously known as Dhūn-Nūn al-Miṣrī

Passed away: 246 Hijrī

May his secret be sanctified

Characteristics of the Believing Man and Woman

1<sup>st</sup> Edition – 2022

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Translation & typesetting | Mohammad Zakariya ibn Ismail

Cover & design | Ariful Hazam

Editor | Mawlānā Ebrahim Noor

Calligraphy | [freeislamiccalligraphy.com](http://freeislamiccalligraphy.com)

Contact | [asaluka.mzg@gmail.com](mailto:asaluka.mzg@gmail.com)

*For my late Shaykh, guide, and mentor  
Shaykh Yusuf ibn Sulayman Motala*

نور الله مرقدہ

*Who was an embodiment of the contents of this book*

*The pain of separation increases with every passing day.....*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلٰی سَیْدِنَا وَحَبِیْبِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلٰی اَهْلِ بَیْتِهِ وَاَزْوَاجِهِ وَصَحَابَتِهِ اَجْمَعِیْنَ



My friend, Dr Zakariya Goga, has translated this small booklet which contains the advice of Dhūn-Nūn al-Miṣrī رحمه الله (d 246AH/825CE). He was regarded as one of the greatest Sufis of Egypt. His heritage stemmed from Africa and was of dark-skinned complexion. His father moved the family to Egypt and settled there until the end of his life.

Dhūn-Nūn al-Miṣrī رحمه الله in his earlier years of adulthood was not particular involved with the science of *Taṣawwuf*.<sup>1</sup> He narrates himself, “Once I was on the outskirts of Egypt and a small bird fell from the tree. I noticed the bird was blind. Suddenly the ground split open and two small bowls appeared. In one was sesame seeds and in the other water. The bird ate the sesame seeds and then drank from the bowl of water. I said to myself, “This is enough for me, I repent”. I then clung on to the door of Allāh ﷻ until Allāh ﷻ accepted me.”

He went on to become one of the greatest Sufis of his time. He also studied Ḥadīth under the great Imām Mālik رحمه الله as well as

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<sup>1</sup> The science of purification of the soul and deeper understanding of spiritual teachings of Islām

narrating *Ḥadīth* from other great scholars such as Layth ibn Sa‘ad, Ibn Lahi’a, Fudayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ, Salm al-Khamwās, Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah and others ﷺ. Although some have said that his narrations are regarded as weak, he did however narrate *Ḥadīth*.

He was deeply engrossed in the science of *Taṣawwuf* and was one of the first Sufis to speak about concepts such as *Wajd*<sup>2</sup>, *Maqām*<sup>3</sup> and *Tawḥīd*<sup>4</sup> from the understanding of the Sufis and their perspective. Being from the ahl-ullāh (the people close to Allāh) his discourses of wisdom are filled with *Ma‘rifah*<sup>5</sup>. As the tradition of the Prophet ﷺ states, “*When a person develops asceticism in the world, Allāh grows wisdom in his heart and causes his tongue to utter words of wisdom. Allāh grants him further insight into the lowly aspects of the world, it's diseases and cures. Allāh then takes him safely from here to Paradise.*”

So, these ahl-ullāh are ascetics and deep worshippers of Allāh ﷻ. Their words of wisdom have lots of beneficial advice as well as beneficial admonitions. Dhūn-Nūn al-Miṣrī ﷺ would often admonish his congregation and because of these, many people would benefit immensely from this as well.

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<sup>2</sup> Spiritual ecstasy

<sup>3</sup> States or Ranks

<sup>4</sup> The Oneness of Allāh ﷻ

<sup>5</sup> Experiential knowledge of Allāh ﷻ

Someone asked him, “How did you recognise your *Rabb*<sup>6</sup>?”. He replied, “I recognised my *Rabb* through my *Rabb*, if it was not for my *Rabb*, I would have not recognised my *Rabb*.”

These are the souls who committed themselves to their *Rabb* until they acquired His *Ma‘rifah*.

*Mā-shā-Allāh*, my friend, Zakariya, has translated this small booklet which is full of advice in reference to the character traits of the believers. I hope and pray that Allāh ﷻ makes it beneficial for readers. May Allāh ﷻ accept and reward the compiler as well as the translator. May Allāh ﷻ allow his efforts to continue further. May Allāh ﷻ grant him enabling grace to do more and more for this *ummah*. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all enabling grace to do what is beneficial for the *ummah* and that which can be a treasure for us in the next world.

Shaykh Abdul-Raheem Limbada (Ḥafīzahullāh)

Shaykh-ul- Ḥadīth, Tafseer-Raheemi | Bolton

1<sup>st</sup> Rajab 1443 | 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

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<sup>6</sup> Lord

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلٰی سَیْدِنَا وَحَبِیْبِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
ﷺ

Abū al-Fayḍ, Dhūn-Nūn, Thawbān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ikhmīmī al-Miṣrī ﷺ said:

*The Defining Characteristics of a Male Believer are:*

- ✦ Gladness is shown on his face, yet his sadness remains hidden in the heart
- ✦ Vastly generous to others, yet preferring simple meagre things for himself
- ✦ Distant from all that is blameworthy, yet participates with all that is good
- ✦ Does not harbour hatred, nor jealousy
- ✦ Does not over burden people, nor swear at them
- ✦ Does not find fault, nor backbite
- ✦ Dislikes fame and being honoured
- ✦ His worry and concern are both deep and meaningful
- ✦ Remains in long periods of silence and stillness
- ✦ Deep in remembrance, forever patient and grateful

- ✧ Guided by reflection and joyful at his state of neediness
- ✧ Easy going and soft in disposition
- ✧ Immensely modest, deeply dignified and seldom criticises
- ✧ Does not lie, nor uncovers the secrets of others
- ✧ When he laughs, he doesn't laugh like fools
- ✧ When angry, he does not transgress limits
- ✧ His laugh is a smile, his inquiry results in learning, his acts of consideration of things results in understanding
- ✧ Deeply rooted in knowledge, yet incredibly forbearing
- ✧ Confidently resolute and extremely merciful
- ✧ Not miserly, nor acts in haste
- ✧ Never dissatisfied when sustenance is tight, nor haughty when basking in wealth
- ✧ Not oppressive when ordering others, nor unjust with his knowledge of affairs
- ✧ His intentions are more resolute than stone and his intimate friendship is sweeter than honey
- ✧ He is not a coward, nor is he anxious in disposition
- ✧ He is not harsh, nor exceeds the limits with arrogance
- ✧ He is not excessive in speech, nor inquisitive of the affair of others
- ✧ Graceful in disagreement and generously accepts others points of view
- ✧ When angry, remains just and easy-going with his demands
- ✧ He is not extreme in his views, nor behaves like a tyrant

- ✧ Sincere in his love, firm in his promise and gentle in admonition
- ✧ Compassionate, easy to reach and forbearing
- ✧ Forbearingly carries the burden of others and does without unnecessary excess
- ✧ Pleased with Allāh ﷻ and objects to his own caprice
- ✧ He is not harsh towards those who harm him, nor does he pry into matters of no concern
- ✧ He would not reciprocate an insult with an insult in return
- ✧ If his request is not answered he does not anger
- ✧ He does not rejoice at the affliction of others, nor does he backbite about anyone
- ✧ Immense in grace and vastly open hearted
- ✧ Serene temperament and undemanding with others
- ✧ Truthful of tongue and abstains from covetousness
- ✧ Light in possessions, yet willingly gives without recompense
- ✧ Scrupulous with the prohibited and careful with the doubtful
- ✧ Greatly thankful during times of affliction and profoundly patient when afflicted
- ✧ Abundant in his goodness and scarcely he is evil
- ✧ If asked, he gives and when oppressed, he forgives
- ✧ When he is prevented from anything, he is resourceful and with those who cut him out of his life, he strives to join ties again
- ✧ His heart is in a state of trial, yet he prefers what his Lord prefers

- ✧ Softer than cream, sweeter than honey in its wax, firmer than a rock
- ✧ Remorseful of those who are deeply engrossed in this world; their preoccupation with matters of this world result in them not being able to take benefit from his spiritual state
- ✧ Constantly orders with what is truth and prohibits with truth
- ✧ Angry only for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and hurries to what pleases Him ﷻ
- ✧ Impressionable with his knowledge; his far-fetched hopes are dispelled from his conscience through succumbing to the reality of his finite existence
- ✧ He knows well the fragility of his youth and value of his soul
- ✧ He loathes exalting himself and loathes giving himself arrogant self-respect
- ✧ He imposes upon himself everything humble and every type of effort
- ✧ He supports the religion, assists the believers and is a benefactor for the poor
- ✧ Praise does not ruin his intellect, nor does covetousness blind his heart
- ✧ Anger does not overtake his forbearance, nor ignorance blind his knowledge, nor does his resoluteness quiver during periods of idleness
- ✧ Eloquent in speech and practices what he preaches
- ✧ Deeply rooted in knowledge and endowed with a good sense of faculties

- ✧ He is not foul mouthed, nor unwise
- ✧ Secretive without harming anyone, resourceful without wastage
- ✧ Vast in general knowledge with little ignorance in general matters
- ✧ He does not seek out other people's faults, nor does he defame anyone
- ✧ Gentle in character and travels easily around the Earth
- ✧ Supportive towards guests and those who are oppressed
- ✧ He does not expose the secrets, or hidden faults of others
- ✧ Afflicted often with adversities, yet complains little
- ✧ Should he see good in anyone, he makes mention of it; should he know something evil, he hides it
- ✧ He covers faults and entrusts secrets
- ✧ Views mistakes as nothing and overlooks faults
- ✧ He does not deeply examine advice and then leave acting upon it, nor does he pay any attention to the oppression of fools and incline towards them
- ✧ Trustworthy and balanced in disposition
- ✧ God-conscious and pure
- ✧ Clever and grateful
- ✧ Maintains long periods of silence when alone but not during discourse with others
- ✧ Accepts excuses and boasts of the goodness of others
- ✧ Holds a good opinion of others and is more concerned about his own faults

- ✦ He loves for the sake of Allāh ﷻ by virtue of his deep knowledge and understanding
- ✦ He hates for the sake of Allāh ﷻ by virtue of his integrity and resolution of faith
- ✦ He is never so elated to ruin his soul, nor is his intellect ruined should he face sadness
- ✦ His gatherings are a spectacle and seeing him is a proof of the truth of Islām
- ✦ His knowledge purifies his character from being unreasonable, just as fire purifies iron from rust
- ✦ He does not elucidate his favours, nor does he feel secure due to the blessings he has
- ✦ He is a reminder for the heedless and a teacher for the ignorant
- ✦ Neither does he anticipate calamities, nor fears them
- ✦ In his estimation, every effort of others is more righteous than his and every soul is more righteous than him
- ✦ Aware of his faults, preoccupied with his concerns and he is not concerned with much aside from his Lord
- ✦ Present when with others, yet prefers solitude
- ✦ Assumed to be close to others, yet a stranger
- ✦ Loves Allāh ﷻ and constantly strives to gain His ﷻ pleasure
- ✦ He does not take revenge for the sake of himself, and he does not befriend anyone should it displease his Lord

- ✧ He mixes with the people of remembrance, sits with the people of truthfulness, and prefers to remain with the people who are upon truth
- ✧ Assists the wayfarer and is a father to the orphans
- ✧ Guardian for the widows and gentle with the poor
- ✧ Hopeful with every affliction and hopeful with every difficulty
- ✧ Soft and cheerful
- ✧ Never sulky, nor eavesdropping
- ✧ Beloved and truthful
- ✧ Suppresses rage and always smiling
- ✧ His gaze is a glance, and he is dignified in all his actions
- ✧ Quickly scopes his area of residence, paying attention to the needs of the people and even his stillness is actual movement
- ✧ He has a known reality on Earth, yet his true reality is unknown to his family; and he is hated, fuelled by jealousy, by his peers
- ✧ An intercessor for those in need.

*May Allāh have mercy on such a man*



## *The Defining Characteristics of a Female Believer are:*

- ✧ Engages with her Lord wholeheartedly and reflects on her shortcomings with Him ﷺ
- ✧ Insightful of her spiritual blemishes
- ✧ Soft in voice and often silent
- ✧ Easy going and forgiving in speech
- ✧ Overtly modest and far from foul speech
- ✧ Vast in being open hearted and enormously patient
- ✧ Not divisive in behaviour and ever so grateful
- ✧ Harbours no enmity towards anyone and remains free from defects
- ✧ Shy, yet dignified
- ✧ Pleasing, intelligent, honourable, and virtuous
- ✧ Soft in disposition, friendly and comforting
- ✧ Never lies and pure from ostentation
- ✧ Abandons all that is disliked and has no longing for this temporal world
- ✧ Calm and collective, yet determined and resolute
- ✧ Secretive and deeply timid
- ✧ Does not waste time in useless pursuits, folly, and play
- ✧ Far from being manipulative and meticulous with her actions
- ✧ Merciful of heart and sincerely loving towards others
- ✧ When she is rebuked, she gracefully restrains herself

- ✧ When she is asked to carry out a task, she acts with due diligence
- ✧ Dislikes fame, pride, and wastage
- ✧ Aversion to what is disliked in action and abhors haughtiness or boasting
- ✧ Is not inclined to what beautifies women, such as eyeliner or cosmetics
- ✧ Content with little and veils her passions
- ✧ Merciful with her family and gentle with her husband
- ✧ Graceful towards her husband and singles out love for him
- ✧ Composes herself for her husband and not quick to chatter
- ✧ At times, she leaves her affairs in preference for him and absolves her opinions on matters for his
- ✧ Has confidence of her security with him and protects his honour in his absence
- ✧ Showers him with absolute love and prefers him over her own parents
- ✧ She never discloses his faults nor his private affairs
- ✧ Beautifies his affairs and seeks out his happiness
- ✧ She never becomes dry in character during periods of difficulty, nor makes him feel dejected during periods of poverty
- ✧ Rather, she increases in showing love during periods of poverty and destitution
- ✧ She greets his anger with forbearance and patience
- ✧ With his dealings she responds with love and gratitude

- ✦ If he wrongs her, she forgives. If he prefers certain matters over her, she is patient
- ✦ She tries to please him when he is angry and remains serene during periods of his displeasure
- ✦ Remains aloof from the world when he is absent and longs for his presence
- ✦ She understands what Allāh ﷻ has made mention about his rights and aims to fulfil his rights with honour
- ✦ And by virtue of this, she recognizes her need for him and does not depend on anyone other than him
- ✦ He is for her a set of ears and a mind, and she is for him a set of eyes and a heart.

*May Allāh have mercy on such a woman*



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