



O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, miserliness, decrepitude and the torment of the grave

Zayd ibn Arqam (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, miserliness, decrepitude and the torment of the grave. O Allah, grant me piety and purify my soul as You are the best to purify it. You are its Guardian and Master. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that is not beneficial, and from a heart that does not fear (You), and from a soul that does not feel content and from a supplication that is not answered."

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

Seeking refuge with Allah is an act of worship of the heart that is to be dedicated solely to Allah, the Almighty. Incapacity and laziness are two inseparable companions that cut off the roads to goodness in this world and the Hereafter. They represent helplessness, disinterest, and negligence. If what prevents man (from worshipping) is the result of his own doing, this is "laziness". This is why Allah, the Almighty, describes the hypocrites as follows: {...and when they stand up for prayer they stand up sluggishly} [Sūrat An-Nisā': 142], because this is due to their weak faith and their diseased hearts. Laziness only emanates from a diseased soul. However, if the impediment is not the result of man's own doing and its reason is an actual inability, this is "incapacity" - and we seek refuge in Allah from it. "Miserliness" is holding on to money and being unwilling to spend it in the way of good and to benefit. It is the inclination of the soul to love wealth, collect it, hoard it, and refrain from spending it in the ways that Allah commanded. "Decrepitude" refers to the senile stage of someone's life, when he becomes weak in mind, strength, and resolve. He becomes unable to do the good deeds that could earn him the good in this world and the good of the afterlife. Allah, the Almighty, says (what means): {He whom we bring unto old age, We reverse him in creation (making him go back to weakness after strength)} [Sūrat Yā Sīn: 68] "...and the torment of the grave": the torment of the grave is true, and this is unanimously agreed upon by Ahl As-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. Allah, the Almighty, says (what means): {...and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected} [Sūrat al-Mu'minūn: 100]. The grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hellfire. For this reason, it is a Sunnah to seek refuge from the torment of the grave in each prayer and it is also due to the enormity and terror of this torment. "O Allah, grant me piety...": let me comply with (Your) commands and avoid (Your) prohibitions. Another explanation says that piety here is the opposite of wickedness, as in the verse: {And He inspired it (with discernment of) its wickedness and its righteousness} [Sūrat

Ash-Shams: 8] "...and purify my soul": i.e. cleanse it from vice. "You are the best to purify it": i.e. there is no Purifier for it but You and no one is able to purify it but You, our Lord. "You are its Guardian...": the One who supports it and looks after it. "...and Master": the One who owns it and bestows blessings on it. "O Allah, I seek refuge in You...": I seek protection from You. "...from knowledge that is not beneficial": this is knowledge that does not realize any benefit, or knowledge that a person does not act upon and it thus becomes an argument against him on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The Qur'an is an argument either in your favor or against you." Knowledge that is not beneficial does not discipline the inner morals and is thereby not reflected in outward deeds which would entail the most perfect rewards. "...a heart that does not fear (You)": a heart that does not feel submission when Allah, the Almighty, is mentioned and when His words (the Qur'an) are recited is a hardened heart. He (the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked Allah to make his heart submissive to its Creator, eager to obey Him and prepared to receive the light. If the heart is not like this, it is a hard heart from which one must seek refuge. Allah, the Almighty, says (what means): {Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened} [Sūrat Az-Zumar: 22] "...a soul that does not feel content": that is because it is keen on attaining the pleasures of this perishable world, feels greed and gluttony, and has hopes for a long life. "...and from a supplication that is not answered": i.e. I seek refuge in Allah from any reasons that would make my supplication rejected and unanswered due to being deprived of Allah's mercy or subjected to His wrath. The rejection of a supplication is a sign of the rejection of the supplicant; as opposed to a believer whose supplication is not rejected. The believer's supplication is answered in this world, Allah wards off affliction from him in equivalence to his supplication, or it is saved for him to be answered in the Hereafter. Hence, the prayer or supplication of a believer is never lost or wasted, contrary to that of the disbeliever. Allah, the Almighty, says (what means): {...but the supplication of the disbelievers is only in vain.} [Sūrat Ghāfir: 50]

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