

The biography of Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘, Basran ‘*âbid*’ (‘worshipper’; d. 120/737-8?), from Abû Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahânî (d. Isfahan, 430/1038), *Ḥilyat al-awliyâ’ wa-ṭabaqât al-aṣfiyâ’*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘âdah & Maktabat al-Khânjî, 1352-7/1932-8), 2:345-57. Translation and notes (in *italics*) by Christopher Melchert.

< Abû ‘Amr and ‘Uth. ibn M. al-‘Uthmânî < Ism. ibn ‘A. < Hârûn ibn Ḥumayd < Sayyâr < J. < Mâlik ibn Dînâr: ‘Among the *qurrâ’* are some with two faces: when they meet kings, they enter with them into whatever they are up to, whereas when they meet the people of the hereafter, they enter with them into whatever they are up to. Therefore, you should be among the *qurrâ’* of the Most Merciful. Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ was one of the *qurrâ’* of the Most Merciful.’

The qurrâ’ (sing. qâri’) are literally ‘reciters’, mainly of the Qur’an. But qur’anic recitation was such a regular activity of the earliest Muslim renunciants that the name came to be practically a synonym for ‘renunciant’ (zuhhâd, sing. zâhid; nussâk, sing. nâsik).

Abû Ḥâmid ibn Jabalah < M. ibn Ish. < Hârûn < Sayyâr < J. < Mâlik ibn Dînâr: ‘There are three sorts of *qurrâ’*: a *qâri’* for the Most Merciful, a *qâri’* for the world, and a *qâri’* for kings. O you, I consider Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ a *qâri’* for the Most Merciful.’

< M. ibn J. < ‘Al. ibn Nâjiyah < Naṣr ibn ‘Alî < Sufyân < Mâlik ibn Dînâr: ‘The princes have their *qurrâ’*, the rich have their *qurrâ’*, and Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ is one of the *qurrâ’* of the Most Merciful.’

< Aḥ. ibn J. ibn Mâlik < ‘Al. ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal < M. ibn J. al-Warkânî < Abû Shihâb al-Ḥannâṭ ‘Abd Rabbih ibn Nâfi‘ < Layth ibn Abî Sulaym < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘When a servant approaches God with his heart, God approaches him by means of the believers’ hearts.’

< Aḥmad ibn M. ibn Sinân < Abû al-‘Abbâs al-Sarrâj < Abû Yaḥyâ Ṣâ‘iqah < ‘Al. ibn M. < Sallâm ibn Abî Muṭî‘: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ used to, when he prayed the sunset prayer, stick to the *qiblah* (direction of Mecca) praying. A weaver who was near him told me [346] that he would say in his prayer, “I ask you forgiveness for every bad standing place, bad sitting place, bad entrance, bad exit, bad work, bad speech, and bad intention; I ask you forgiveness for, so forgive me. I repent of it, so turn me”

The Arabic becomes very obscure at this point, and textual corruption seems likely.

< Aḥ. ibn J. ibn Ḥamdân < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Naṣr ibn ‘Alî < al-Aṣma‘î < Sulaymân al-Taymî: ‘There is no one else with whose record I should like to meet God save Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’.

Sulaymân al-Taymî (d. 143/760-1) was another prominent Basran worshipper.

< ‘Al. ibn M. < Aḥ. ibn Naṣr < Aḥ. ibn Kathîr < Shabâbah < Abû al-Ṭayyib Mûsâ ibn Bashshâr: ‘I accompanied Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’ from Mecca to Basra. He would pray all night. Sometimes he would pray in the litter, sitting, gesturing with his head. He would order the driver ahead of him to raise his voice so that no one would mind him. Often, at blackest night, he would get down to pray. Then, when it was morning, he would wake up his comrades one after another, coming to each and saying, “Prayer, prayer”. When they got up, he would tell us, “The water is near, so perform the minor ritual ablution. If it is far away and there is only a little water with you, perform the ritual ablution with dust and leave this for the lips.”’

Islamic law calls for three forms of ritual ablution before performing the ritual prayer. The major (ghusl) involves covering the body with water, the minor (wuḍû’) washing the hands to the elbows, the head, and the feet to the ankles, while tayummum imitates the minor but with patting the ground instead of taking up water.

< M. ibn ‘Ar. ibn al-Faḍl < [‘Abd] Allâh ibn M. ibn ‘Az. < Ish. ibn Ibr. < Ḥammâd ibn Zayd < Hishâm ibn Ḥassân: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’ was asked, “How are you, Abû ‘Abd Allâh?” He said, “My term is near, my hope is far, my work is bad.”’

< AM ibn Ḥayyân < Aḥ. ibn al-Ḥu. < Aḥmad al-Dawraqî < Ibr. ibn ‘Ar. ibn Mahdî < Naṣr < ‘Abd al-Wâḥid ibn Zayd: ‘I saw Ḥawshab when he had come to Mâlik ibn Dînâr. He said, “Abû Yahyâ, yesterday, I dreamt as if a crier were crying, ‘O people, the departure, the departure!’ I did not see anyone set out except for Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’.” Mâlik cried out and fell down unconscious.’

Mâlik ibn Dînâr (d. ca. 130/747-8), who has been responsible for several endorsements of Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’ before this, was another Basran renunciant and

worshipper.

Maḍar (Naṣr?) said, ‘Al-Ḥasan used to call Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ the ornament of the *qurrâ’*.’

This refers to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî (d. 110/728), the most famous of all Basran renunciants. It is remarkable that Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘’s biography so seldom intersects with al-Ḥasan’s.

< M. ibn ‘Umar ibn Sâlim < ‘Abd al-Kabîr ibn ‘Ar. ibn al-‘Adawî < . . . ibn Yazîd al-Asqâfî < Muslim ibn Ibrâhîm < Ism. ibn Muslim [347] al-‘Abdî < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘The Qur’an is the orchard of those who know. Wherever they alight in it, they alight in a quiet retreat (*nuzḥah*).’

< my father < Aḥmad ibn Abân < AB ibn ‘Ubayd < M. ibn Yaḥyá ibn Abî Ḥâtim < Yaḥyá ibn Ḥurayth < Yûsuf ibn ‘Aṭîyah < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘I have met men such that the man could have his head next to his wife’s head on one pillow and the pillow under his cheek be soaked from his tears without his wife’s being aware of it. I have met men such that one of them could be in the row (of men praying) and the tears flowing down his cheeks without those beside him being aware of it.’

Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ probably refers to himself. Early renunciants wept first to think of their past sins, second to think of the terror of Judgement Day to come.

< M. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ibr. in his writing < M. ibn al-‘Abb. < M. ibn Nu’aym < ‘Az. ibn Abân < ‘Imrân ibn Khâlid < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘A man might weep for twenty years without his wife’s knowing of it.’

AB ibn Mâlik < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < ‘Ul. al-Qawârîrî < Ḥammâd ibn Zayd: ‘We went in to Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ in his death illness to visit him. Yaḥyá the Weeper asked permission to enter. They said, “Abû ‘Abd Allâh, this is your brother Abû Salamah at the door.” He said, “Who is Abû Salamah?” They said, “Yaḥyá.” He said, “Who is Yaḥyá?” They said, “Yaḥyá the Weeper.” He knew it was Yaḥyá the Weeper. He said, “The worst of your days was when you became known by your weeping.”’

< AB ibn Mâlik < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Hârûn ibn Ma‘rûf < Ḍamrah < Sayyâr <

Ibn Shawdhab: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ attended a meeting in which there was weeping. When they had finished, they went to the meal. Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ turned away and sat down. They said, “Abû Bakr, won’t you come to the food and eat?” He said, “Does only he who wept eat?” He was rebuking them for eating after weeping or along with weeping.’

< Aḥmad ibn Sinân < Muḥammad ibn Ishâq < Hârûn ibn ‘Abd Allâh < Sayyâr < Ja‘far: ‘It used to be that if I detected any hardness of heart in myself, I would take a look at Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘. When I saw the face of Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘, I reckoned that his was the face of a woman who has lost a child.’

[348] < Aḥ. ibn M. ibn Sinân < M. ibn Ish. < Sa‘dân ibn Yazîd al-‘Askarî < al-Haytham ibn Jamîl < Makhlad ibn al-Ḥu. < Hishâm ibn Ḥassân: ‘When someone said to Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘, “How are you, Abû ‘Abd Allâh?”, he would say, “What do think of a man who every day finishes one more stage on the way to the hereafter?”’

< ‘Al. ibn M. ibn J. < M. ibn Ibr. ibn Shabîb < Sul. ibn D. al-Shâdhakûnî < J. ibn Sul. < someone who sat with Wahb ibn Munabbih: ‘I saw the Messenger of God . . . in a dream. I asked him, “O Messenger of God, where are the *abdâl* of your nation?” He gestured with his hand toward Syria. I asked, “O Messenger of God, is there none of them in Iraq?” He said, “On the contrary: Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’.”’

The abdâl (‘substitutes’) are the subject of a number of hadith reports. For example, when it was proposed that ‘Alî should curse the people of Syria, who would not recognize his caliphate, he replied that the Prophet had said the abdâl would be in Syria. ‘They are forty men. Whenever a man dies, God installs another in his place. By means of them, rain is caused to fall and victory over their enemies is accomplished.’

< AM ibn Ḥayyân < Aḥ. ibn al-Ḥu. al-Ḥadhdhâ’ < Aḥ. al-Dawraqî < AD < ‘Umârah ibn Mihrân al-Ma‘walî: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ said to me, “How I am pleased by your home.” I asked him, “What pleases you about my home?” It was by the cemetery. He said, “They make troubles (seem) small and remind you of the hereafter.”’

< ‘Al. ibn M. < Aḥ. ibn Naṣr < Aḥ. ibn Kathîr < Sa‘îd ibn ‘Âmir < Abû ‘Âmir < a friend: ‘When too many people had come to visit Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ (in his illness), I

went in and there was one group standing and others sitting. He turned to me and said, "Tell me what will make those dispense with me. I am to be taken by the forelock and my feet tomorrow and thrown into the Fire." Then he recited this verse: "The wrongdoers will be known by their appearance, for they will be taken by their forelocks and feet" (Q. 55:41).'

< 'Al. ibn M. < Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥu. < Aḥmad ibn Ibr. < Sa'îd ibn 'Âmir < Ḥazm < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi': 'O brothers, do you know where I shall be taken? God, than whom there is no god save him, will take me to the Fire or else God will forgive me.'

< AB M. ibn 'Al. al-Maqtûlî < Ḥâjib ibn AB < Aḥ. ibn Ibr. < 'A. ibn Ish. < Ibn al-Mubâarak < Sufyân [349]: 'Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' was told, "I love you in God (be he exalted)." He said, "May he love you who has loved me for his sake. O God, I take refuge with you from loving for your sake when you hate or despise me."

< my father < Ibr. ibn M. ibn al-Ḥ. < Ibr. ibn Sa'îd al-Jawharî < 'Al. ibn 'Îsâ < M. ibn 'Al. al-Raddâd Abû Yahyâ: 'Muḥammad ibn Wâsi', on awaking, would strike his backside with his hand. When he was asked about that, he said, "By God, I am afraid of being turned into a monkey."

Q. 7:163-6 describes some Jews who were turned into monkeys for disregarding the Sabbath.

< Abû Ḥâmid ibn Jabalah < M. ibn Ishâq < Hârûn ibn 'Al. < Sayyâr < J.: 'Mâlik ibn Dînâr and Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' met. Mâlik said, "I envy the man who, along with his religion, has enough to sustain him and is pleased with his Lord (mighty and glorious is he)." Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' said, "I envy the man who, along with his religion, has nothing in the world yet is pleased with his Lord." The people went away thinking that Muḥammad was the stronger of the two.'

< Aḥ. ibn J. ibn Ḥamdân < 'Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Sufyân ibn Wakî' < Ibn 'Ulayyah < Yûnus < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi': 'If sins had a smell, you would not be able to approach me for the foulness of my smell.'

< Aḥ. ibn J. < 'Al. ibn Aḥmad < 'Al. ibn Şandal < Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyâd: 'Mâlik ibn Dînâr said, "It's either obedience to God or the Fire." Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' said, "It's

either God's forgiveness or the Fire.”

< Aḥ. ibn J. < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Abû ‘Amr al-Azdî Naṣr ibn ‘A. < Ziyâd ibn al-Rabî‘ < his father: ‘I saw Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ pass by displaying an ass of his for sale. A man said, “Will you vouch for its being satisfactory?” He said, “If I found it satisfactory, I wouldn’t sell it.”

Disapproval of commerce for encouraging sharp practice is a fairly regular theme of early renunciant sayings. Almost as often, one reads of renunciant traders’ unconventional bargaining.

< AB ibn Mâlik < ‘Al. ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal < ‘A. ibn Muslim < Sa’îd ibn ‘Âmir < J.: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ was told, “If only you spoke, Abû ‘Abd Allâh.” He said, “Praise be to God: this is a good public appearance.” Then he said, “If you are good, he is forgiving to the penitent” (Q. 17:25), then fell silent.’

One’s public appearance (‘alâniyah) comes up most often where there is concern that it be no different from inward reality (sirr). Here, Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ is pleased that his public appearance is not that of a blabbermouth setting himself up for dispenser of wisdom.

< AM ibn Ḥayyân < Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥu. < Aḥ. ibn M. < M. ibn Aḥ. < [350] Makhlad ibn Ḥu. < Hishâm: ‘Mâlik ibn al-Mundhir, who was prefect of police for Basra, bade Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘, “Sit as judge.” Muḥammad refused. He persisted, but he (still) refused. He then said, “Sit or I will whip you 300 lashes.” Muḥammad told him, “If you do it, you have been given the power to; but it’s better to be laid low in the world than laid low in the hereafter.” One of the commanders bade him do something else, which he refused. He said to him, “You are stupid.” Muḥammad said, “I have been called that since I was little.”

Reluctance to serve as judge (qâḍî) is a regular theme of early biographies. Unlike the opinion (fatwâ) of a jurisconsult, the decision of a judge had immediate consequences in the world; for example, if he pronounced a couple validly married, they were married. Presumably, then, the otherworldly penalty for making a mistake was so much the greater than for giving a private legal opinion. Judges also drew attention to themselves and were

identified with the ruling power, both of which renunciants preferred to avoid.

< Abû Mas‘ûd ‘Al. ibn M. ibn Aḥ. < Abû al-‘Abb. al-Harawî < Abû Ḥâtim al-Sijistânî
< al-Aşma‘î: ‘A son of Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’s injured a man. Muḥammad told him,
“Have you injured him when I am your father and bought your mother for only 100
dirhams?”’

< Aḥ. ibn M. ibn Sinân < Abû al-‘Abb. al-Sarrâj < al-‘Abb. ibn Abî Ṭâlib < ‘Al. ibn
‘Îsâ al-Ṭufâwî < M. ibn ‘Al. al-Raddâd Abû Yaḥyâ: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’ looked at a son
of his waving his hand. He said to him, “Come! Woe betide you. Do you know whose
son you are? I bought your mother for 200 dirhams. As for your father, my God not make
many of his like among the Muslims” or something like this.’

< M. ibn Aḥ. ibn Abân < my father < AB ibn ‘Ubayd < M. ibn al-Ḥu. < Zayd ibn
al-Ḥubâb < M. ibn Ḥawshab < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’: ‘The best gains are the alms tax on
bodies (*zakât al-abdân*). May God have mercy on whoever eats what is pure and feeds
(people) what is pure.’

*It was a major concern of early renunciants to eat only what was pure; that is,
usually, to avoid food that had been acquired by dubious means, had been grown on wrongly
expropriated land, and so forth.*

< Abû Mas‘ûd ‘Al. ibn M. < M. ibn Aḥ. ibn Sul. < Abû Ḥâtim al-Sijistânî < al-Aşma‘î
< al-Abaḥḥ < al-Battî < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’: ‘The debauchery of the debauchee can be
recognized in his face.’

< Sul. ibn Aḥ. < ‘Uthm. ibn ‘Umar al-Ḍabbî < ‘Amr ibn Marzûq < ‘Umârah ibn
Mihrân < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi’: ‘Whoever loathes himself for the sake of God, God will
preserve him from his loathing.’

< my father < Abû al-Ḥ. ibn Abân < AB ibn ‘Ubayd < al-Ḥ. ibn Kathîr al-‘Anbarî <
Khuzaymah, AM: ‘A man said to Muḥammad ibn [351] Wâsi’, “Advise me.” He said, “I
advise that you be a king in this world and the hereafter.” He asked, “How can I do that?”
He said, “Renounce this world.”’

< my father < Abû al-Ḥ. ibn Abân < ‘Al. ibn M. < M. ibn Yaḥyâ ibn Abî Ḥâtim < D.

ibn al-Muḥabbar < Sul. ibn al-Ḥakam ibn ‘Awānah < Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’: ‘He said, “There are four things that harden the heart: one sin after another, much associating with women and their talk, exchanging insults with a stupid person, you saying (something) to him and he saying (something) to you, and sitting with the dead.” He was asked, “What is sitting with the die?” He said, “Sitting with any voluptuary rich man or tyrannical ruler.”’

< my father < Aḥmad ibn M. ibn ‘Umar < AB al-Umawî < M. ibn Bashîr < Sa‘îd ibn ‘Āṣim: ‘A preacher (*qâṣṣ*) was sitting near the mosque of Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’. One day he said, as he rebuked those sitting with him, “How is it that I see hearts that do not fear, eyes that do not shed tears, and skins that do not creep?” Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’ said, “O slave of God, how is it that I see people who have committed a sin in your eyes? When recollection comes from the heart, then it will penetrate other hearts.”’

That is, rather than blame his audience for failing to react, the qâṣṣ ought to blame himself for preaching insincerely.

< M. ibn Aḥ. < my father < ‘Al. ibn Ubayd < M. ibn al-Ḥu. < Khâlîd ibn ‘Amr < Khulayd ibn Da‘laj < Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’: ‘Whoever eats little understands, makes to understand, and becomes pure and tender. If there is much food, its possessor becomes too heavy for much of what he seeks.’

< M. ibn Aḥ. < my father < ‘Al. ibn ‘Ubayd < M. ibn al-Ḥu. < D. ibn al-Muḥabbar < ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Ziyād: ‘I heard Mâlik ibn Dînâr say to Ḥawshab, “Never go all night satiated, and leave food when you (still) desire it.” Ḥawshab said, “This is what the physicians of the people of this world prescribe.” Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’ was listening to their talk. Muḥammad said, “Yes, and what the physicians of the way of the afterlife prescribe.” Mâlik said, “Well done, well done: a medicine for faith and the world.”’

< my father < Abû al-Ḥ. ibn Abân < AB ibn ‘Ubayd < M. ibn al-Ḥu. < Abû ‘Umar al-Ḍarîr < M. ibn Bahrâm: [352] ‘Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’ fasted perpetually but concealed it.’

Muḥammad ibn Wāsi’ probably fasted (that is, avoided food and drink by daylight) every other day, never growing accustomed to one régime or the other. However, hadith

also defines 'perpetual fasting' as just three days a month.

< AB ibn Mâlik < 'Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < my father < M. ibn Muṣ'ab < Yaḥyá ibn Sulaym < 'Az. ibn Abī Rawwâd: 'I saw an ulcer on Muḥammad ibn Wâsi's hand. He saw what had bothered me. He said, "Do you know how this is a blessing for me?" I said nothing. He said, "Inasmuch as it was not put on my eye, on the tip of my tongue, or on the end of my penis. This is insignificant."'

< AB ibn Mâlik < 'Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < 'Alī ibn Muslim < Sayyâr < al-Ḥârith ibn Nabhân: 'I heard Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' say, "O comrade, my comrades are no more." I said, "God have mercy on you, Abû 'Abd Allâh. Haven't the youths taken up fasting by day and keeping vigil at night and fighting the holy war?" He said, "Indeed, but brother", and he spat, "pride has spoiled them."'

< AB ibn Mâlik < 'Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < J. ibn M. al-Ras'anî < al-Nufaylî < Khulayd ibn Da'laj < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi': 'Gnawing on cane and eating dust is better than approaching the ruler.'

< 'Al. ibn M. < Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥu. < Aḥ. ibn Ibr. < Hârûn ibn Ma'rûf < Ḍamrah < Ibn Shawdhab: 'Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' was fighting infidels with Yazîd ibn al-Muhallab in Khurasan. He asked to be excused to make the pilgrimage, and he gave him permission. He asked, "Shall we give any orders on your account?" He said, "Will you order the whole army (to go on pilgrimage)?" He said, "No." He said, "Then I have no need of it."'

< 'Al. ibn M. < Aḥ. ibn al-Ḥu. < Aḥ. ibn Ibr. < Ghassân ibn al-Mufaḍḍal < Sa'id ibn 'Âmir: 'Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' went in to Bilâl ibn Abī Burdah, so he invited him to eat with him. He refused, making excuses. Bilâl was annoyed. He said, "I think you dislike our food." He said, "Do not say that, prince, for by God, we like your cucumbers better than our sons."'

Bilâl ibn Abī Burdah (d. late 120s/mid-740s) was qadi for Basra.

< 'Al. ibn M. < Aḥ. ibn al-Ḥu. < Aḥ. ibn [353] Ibr. < Abû Aḥ. al-Marwazî < 'Alī ibn Bakkâr < Makhlad: 'Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' was with Qutaybah ibn Muslim in a military expedition, he being the governor of Khurasan. The Turks were attacking, so he sent to the

mosque to see who was there. He was told, “There is no one there but Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘, raising his fingers.” Qutaybah said, “I prefer that one’s fingers to thirty thousand horses.””

Qutaybah ibn Muslim (d. 96/715) oversaw the subjugation of Khurasan and Transoxania during the last ten years of his life.

< Aḥmad ibn J. ibn Ḥamdân < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < my father < ‘Ar. < Ḥammâd ibn Zayd: ‘We used to sit with Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘. He would say, “O God, we take refuge with you from every provision that distances us from you. Purify us of every evil. Do not give darkness power over us.” Then he would fall silent for a while. Then he would repeat it.’

< my father < Abû al-Ḥ. Aḥ. ibn M. ibn Abân < AB ibn ‘Ubayd < ‘Umar ibn Abî al-Ḥârith < an old man of B. ‘Uqayl < Ḥayyân ibn Yasâr: ‘Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ used to say, “O God, if the abundance of my sins has stamped my face, give me to whom you like of your creation.”‘

< Aḥ. ibn J. < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Hârûn ibn Ma‘rûf < Ḍamrah < Ibn Shawdhab < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘A (little) prayer suffices (when it goes with) a little scrupulosity (*wara’*).’

Wara’ is above all precaution, avoiding anything with even the smallest probability of being wrong; for example, to lose a coin, go back and find it on the way, then refuse to take it up, since one could not be sure that this was precisely the coin lost and not another.

< Aḥ. ibn J. < ‘Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < my father < Wakî‘ < M. ibn Bahrâm < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘Pure wealth will not come save by four means: trading in what is licit, inheritance by written testament, a free gift from a brother Muslim, or a share in the booty along with the Muslims (having fought under) a righteous leader.’

The stipulation of a righteous leader is surprising, since later Sunni dogma was that one should participate in the holy war whether one’s leader was righteous or reprobate, against the Shi‘ah and Khawârij, who held that one should participate only under a fully legitimate leader.

Wakî' < s.o. else: 'His son said to him, "You will not always be with us." He ordered some bread and salt and began to eat. Then he said, "Do you think that I am content with this and accept it? Shall I help them, spend time with them, or draw close to them?"'

His son wanted to ensure that the family had some support after his father was gone, but Muḥammad would not be drawn into seeking wealth by associating with the mighty of the world.

< AB ibn Mâlik < 'Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Sufyân ibn Wakî' < my father: 'I have heard that Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' was wanted for the judgeship but he refused. His wife rebuked him for it, saying, "You have dependents and you are needy." He said, "So long as you see me patient with vinegar and vegetables, don't tempt me in this matter.'"

< AB ibn [354] Mâlik < 'Al. ibn Aḥ. ibn Ḥanbal < Hârûn ibn Ma'rûf < Ḍamrah < Ibn Shawdhab: 'One of the commanders in Basra distributed alms among the *qurrâ*' of the people of Basra. He sent (alms) to Mâlik ibn Dînâr, who accepted, whereas Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' refused. He said, "O Mâlik, have you accepted the ruler's rewards?" He said, "He said for me to ask those who sit with me. They said, 'O Abû Bakr, buy slaves with it and set them free.'" Muḥammad said to him, "I beseech you by God: is your heart disposed toward him now as it was before he rewarded you?" He said, "O God, no." He said, "Do you see what has come over you?" Mâlik said to those sitting with him, "Mâlik is only an ass. God is worshipped only by the like of Muḥammad ibn Wâsi'."

< M. ibn 'Alî ibn Ḥubaysh < 'Al. ibn Şâliḥ al-Bukhârî < Sul. ibn Shaykh < 'Utbah ibn al-Minhâl al-Baṣrî al-Azdî: 'Bilâl ibn Abî Burdah said to Muḥammad ibn Wâsi', "What do you say of judgement and predestination?" He said, "O commander, God (mighty and glorious is he) will not ask his servants on the Day of the Resurrection about judgement and predestination. He will ask them only about their works.'"

< 'Uthm. ibn M. al-'Uthmânî < Aḥ. ibn 'Az. al-Jawharî < Zak. ibn Yaḥyâ < al-Aṣma'î < Ḥammâd ibn Zayd: 'Muḥammad ibn Wâsi' came to a man on another's behalf. He said to him, "I have come to you concerning something I have already lifted up to God. If God permits it to be taken care of, you will take care of it and be praiseworthy. If God does not

permit it to be taken care of, you will not take care of it and be excused.”“

Early Muslim renunciants, especially Basran, were major advocates of free will, while the Umayyad dynasty and later Sunnism were predestinarian. Here, Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ sounds weakly predestinarian.

< al-Ḥ. ibn ‘A. al-Warrâq < al-Haytham ibn Khalaf al-Dawraqî < Ibr. ibn Sa‘îd < Yûnus ibn M. < Abû Sa‘îd al-Mu‘addib < Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘: ‘The kings have no friends, nor the envious any self-sufficiency. Beware of guiding someone who is pleased with his own opinion, for he will not accept your opinion.’

There follow eight hadith reports with Muḥammad ibn Wâsi‘ in the isnâd; that is, the chain of transmitters going back to the Prophet. In only one does he transmit directly from a Companion to the Prophet, otherwise from a Follower (tâbi‘) of the next generation.