

MĀLIK AND EARLY RENUNCIANT PIETY

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Piety is the prevalent tenor of early Islam. Our chief securely-dated evidence of the seventh century is the Quran, where fear of the Last Judgement is very prominent. Pleas for divine forgiveness and express hopes for entry into Paradise are so predominant in securely-dated inscriptions of the seventh century that Fred Donner has asserted that virtually no other features of the new religion can be made out.¹ The extant literary record of early Islam begins in the later eighth century. It certainly depicts the armies of the conquest period as actuated by piety. Recalling the army that conquered Egypt under ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, Abū l-Aḥwaṣ (‘Awf b. Mālik, d. late 7th cent.) said, ‘When a man went through the camp, he heard from its people a humming like that of bees. How can those think they are safe so long as these fear?’² Nomads are notoriously difficult to control, and it seems likely that pious example was important to securing the loyalty of the conquest armies to the early caliphs. The alternative motivation of tribal honour has certainly also left copious traces in the literary record. But

¹ F. M. DONNER, *Narratives of Islamic origins* (Studies in Late Antiquity and early Islam 14), Princeton, 1998, ch. 2; similarly, S. ORY, Aspects religieux des textes épigraphiques du début de l’Islam, *Les premières écritures islamiques*, dir. A.-L. DE PRÉMARE (Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée 58), Aix-en-Provence, 1990, pp. 30-39.

² IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *al-Zuhd wa-l-raqā’iq*, ed. Ḥ. R. AL-A‘ZAMĪ, Malegaon, 1386, repr. with different pagination, same ¶ nos Beirut, 1419/1998, no 98; WAKĪ‘, *al-Zuhd*, ed. ‘A. R. ‘A. J. AL-FARĪWĀ’Ī, Medina, 1404/1984, p. 389; AHMAD B. HANBAL, *al-Zuhd*, ed. ‘A. R. IBN QĀSIM, Mecca, 1357, p. 348 = repr. Beirut, 1403/1983, p. 418 (references to the latter edn henceforth in *italics*); IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. ‘A. KH. AL-AFGHĀNĪ, Hyderabad, 1386/1966 (1) and Bombay, n.d.-1403/1983 (2-15), vol. 13, p. 420 = ed. Ḥ. ‘A. AL-JUM‘A and M. I. AL-LUḤAYDĀN, Riyadh, 1425/2004, vol. 12, p. 301 (references to the latter edn henceforth in *italics*).

early propaganda for loyalty to contending leaders of the community evidently stresses piety over genealogy.³

The outstanding form of Islamic piety before the crystallization of classical Sufism in the late ninth century was about renouncing the world (*al-zuhd fī l-dunyā*) in favour of concentrating one's attention on the afterworld. In common with later Sufism, it encouraged physical austerities such as eating and sleeping little and ritual practices such as supererogatory prayer and quranic recitation. Less like later Sufism, it encouraged not the present enjoyment of God's presence but fear of the Last Judgement. Also less like later Sufism, it is not depicted in our sources as the characteristic activity of a spiritual élite; rather, renunciant quotations characteristically refer to 'worshippers', 'believers', and simple 'Muslims'. Our evidence of renunciant piety comes mainly from collections of sayings from the ninth to eleventh centuries, as for hadith. Just as with hadith, one suspects that quotations of seventh-century figures include a large degree of back projection from the eighth century. Back projection within the eighth century is worrisome, too, but it seems that we can make out major themes with considerable confidence. In about the last third of the century we can make out increasing disapproval of renunciant practice. I would characterize the disapprovers as calling to bring down austerity and ritual practice to such as the average Muslim could manage, now that conversion had made it impractical for most Muslims to live off tribute (the stipend that supported Muslims in the conquest period) while giving great parts of their days and nights to devotions. Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) of Medina seems unusually prominent among leading jurists in his disapproval. Among other things, Mālik is quoted against group prayer at entering or leaving the mosque, against raising the hands in supplication,

³ A theme of A. AFSARUDDIN, *Excellence and precedence: medieval Islamic discourse on legitimate leadership* (Islamic history and civilization: studies and texts 36), Leiden, 2002.

against reciting the Quran in the mosque, and against recitation of the Quran by a group in unison.⁴

Quranic recitation

The chief devotional activities named in the renunciant literature of the eighth to eleventh centuries are quranic recitation, supererogatory ritual prayer, and recollection (*dhikr*), meaning especially the repetition of pious phrases. For example, Abū l-Jawzā' (Basran, d. 83/702-3) made recitation a criterion of faithfulness, saying it was easier for a hypocrite to haul stones than to recite the Quran.⁵ Yazīd b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Shikhkhīr (Basran, d. 101/719-20?) would recite from the written copy till he was overcome.⁶ In the *Muwaṭṭa'*, Mālik relates some hadith about quranic recitation. On finding that people were reciting in loud voices as they performed the ritual prayer, the Prophet said, 'The one praying is talking with his lord, so let him regard how he addresses him. Let not one of you drown out another in reciting the Quran (*lā yajhar ba'dukum 'alā ba'd bi-l-Qur'ān*).'⁷ But most of this *bāb* is about which parts to recite aloud, which not. A later source quotes Mālik as discouraging quranic recitation outside the ritual prayer. 'Reading (the Quran) in the mosque from the copy was not part of people's original practice', he is quoted as saying. 'The first to introduce it was al-Ḥajjāj. I dislike that one read from the copy in the mosque.'⁸ Mālik disliked that a group should meet in the mosque after the dawn prayer to recite a chapter, saying it was an innovation.⁹ He opposed the practice of some Alexandrians whereby a group would meet and

⁴ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *al-Nawādir wa-l-ziyādat*, ed. 'A. F. AL-ḤULW, &al., Beirut, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 529-530. On Sunni unease with renunciant practice in the late eighth century, see further (provisionally) CH. MELCHERT, Baṣran origins of classical Sufism, *Der Islam* 83 (2006), pp. 221-240, esp. 229-234.

⁵ IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 14, p. 44 vol. 12, p. 450.

⁶ IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, col. 14, p. 42 vol. 12, p. 449.

⁷ MĀLIK, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, rec. YAḤYĀ, *al-ṣalāt* 46, *al-'amal fī l-qirā'a*, no 213; rec. ABŪ MUṢ'AB, *al-nidā'* 7, *bāb al-'amal fī l-qirā'a*, no 225.

⁸ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *K. al-Jāmi'*, ed. M. ABŪ L-'AJFĀN and 'U. BIṬṬĪKH, Beirut and Tunis, 1402/1982, p. 164. This is the last section of IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Mukhtaṣar al-Mudawwana*, not otherwise published. SAḤNŪN, *al-Mudawwana*, is not known to conclude with a book called *al-jāmi'*. Similarly, IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 529.

⁹ IBN RUSHD AL-JADD, *al-Bayān wa-l-taḥṣīl*, ed. M. ḤAJJĪ, &al., Beirut, 1404-1407/1984-1987, vol. 2, p. 17.

all recite the same chapter.¹⁰ Al-Nawawī (Syrian, d. 676/1277), arguing to the contrary for the Shāfi‘i school, cites this Prophet hadith report in favour of group recitation: ‘There does not meet a group (*qawm*) in one of the houses of God to recite the Quran and study it together but that perfect peace (*al-sakīna*) descends on them, mercy covers them, and God recollects them among those near him.’¹¹

Mālik disliked recitation of the Quran with tones (*al-qirā’a bi-l-alhān*), saying, ‘They took that up for the sake of eating by it.’¹² The practice was controversial, and Mālik was certainly not alone in disapproving of it.¹³ But Mālik’s cynical comment on eating by recitation (i.e. attracting alms) directs attention to persons who devote all their time to worship, which is to say renunciants of the world. There are certainly many strictures in the renunciant literature on living by one’s piety. For example, ‘Umar (d. 23/644) is quoted as saying, ‘Recite the Book of God (mighty and glorious is he) and beg from God (mighty and glorious is he) before there recite it many who beg by that means from the people.’¹⁴ Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif, a Kufan *qārī*’ (literally ‘Quran reciter’ but more loosely ‘renunciant’; d. 112/730-1 or after), said, ‘If we eat by religion, we begin with vinegar, whereas if we do not eat by religion, we begin with the fat.’¹⁵ There are also recommendations of self-reliance, in line with hadith. For example, Yūsuf b. Asbāṭ (Antiochene, d. 195/810-11) said, ‘I have heard that God (be he exalted) spoke to Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) by inspiration, “Do you know why I have chosen you for a friend? Because you give to people but take nothing from anyone.”’¹⁶ However, renunciant literature does not discourage supererogatory quranic recitation itself.

¹⁰ AL-‘UTBĪ (d. 255/869?), *al-Mustakhraja*, apud IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 298, vol. 18, p. 349.

¹¹ AL-NAWAWĪ, *al-Tibyān fī ādāb ḥamalāt al-Qur’ān*, ed. M. AL-ḤAJJĀR, Beirut, 1414/1994, p. 101; among other places, MUSLIM, *al-Jāmi’*, *al-dhikr wa-l-du‘ā* 11, *bāb faḍl al-ijtimā’ ‘alā tilāwat al-Qur’ān*, no 2699 (mainly Kufan *isnāds*).

¹² IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 529; IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 17, pp. 202-203.

¹³ See M. TALBĪ, *La qirā’a bi-l-alhān*, *Arabica* 5 (1958), pp. 183-189, and CH. MELCHERT, The controversy over reciting the Qur’ān with tones, forthcoming in *Journal of the International Qur’anic Studies Association*.

¹⁴ IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 10, p. 480 vol. 10, p. 221; AḤMAD, *Zuhd*, pp. 399-400 p. 477 (Basran *isnād*).

¹⁵ ABŪ NU‘AYM, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, Cairo, 1352-1357/1932-1938, vol. 5, p. 20, quoting a lost section of AḤMAD, *Zuhd*.

¹⁶ ABŪ NU‘AYM, *Ḥilya*, vol. 8, p. 242.

Supererogatory prayer

As for supererogatory ritual prayer, Mālik himself acquired the reputation, in time, of constantly praying by night.¹⁷ There seem to be contradictory reports as to whether he preferred *mudhākara* concerning jurisprudence, meaning to sit in a group recalling earlier legal opinions, or ritual prayer.¹⁸ To the contrary, the Medinese Abū Ḥāzim (Salama b. Dīnār, d. 140/757-8?) said, ‘People have become satisfied with knowledge (‘ilm) in place of works (‘amal), with words in place of deeds.’¹⁹ Mālik disliked that one should see a mark of prostration (*sajda*) on someone’s forehead. He cited a story by which the Companion Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 55/674-5?) once accosted a man with a mark of prostration on his forehead. He asked, ‘Since when have you converted?’ ‘Since such-and-such’ said the man. ‘I have converted since such-and-such’, said Sa’d, but do you see anything between my eyes?’²⁰ (Mālik is said to have avoided getting a mark on his forehead by praying on a kerchief he always carried with him.²¹) To the contrary, numbers of prominent Muslims were respectfully remembered by others as having marks of prostration on their foreheads. For example, Ibn Sa’d reports this detail of Khārīja b. Zayd (Medinese, d. 100/718-19?),²² Ṭāwūs (Yemeni, d. 106/725?),²³ Khālīd b. Ma’dān (Homsī, d. 108/726-7?),²⁴ Ḥakīm b. ‘Umayr (Damascene, *fl.* early 2nd/8th cent.),²⁵ and al-Zuhrī (Medinese, d. 125/742-3?).²⁶

¹⁷ AL-QĀDĪ ‘IYĀD, *Tartīb al-madārik*, ed. M. T. AL-ṬANJĪ, &al., Rabat, &c., 1966-1983, vol. 2, pp. 50-53. I have not found supererogatory prayer in earlier biographies; e.g. IBN SA’D, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā: al-qism al-mutammim li-tābi ‘ī ahl al-Madīna wa-man ba’dahum*, ed. Z. M. MANṢŪR (Silsilat iḥyā’ al-turāth 6), Medina, 1403/1983, pp. 433-444; IBN ABĪ ḤĀTIM, *K. al-Jarḥ wa-l-ta’dīl*, Hyderabad, 1360-1371, vol. 1, pp. 11-32; IBN ‘ABD AL-BARR, *al-Intiqā’ fī faḍā’il al-thalātha al-a’imma al-fuqahā’*, Cairo, 1350, pp. 9-47.

¹⁸ IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 246 (for prayer); AL-QARĀFĪ, *al-Dhakhīra*, ed. M. ḤIJĪ, &al., Beirut, 1994, vol. 13, p. 347 (for *mudhākara*).

¹⁹ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 324; ABŪ NU‘AYM, *Ḥilya*, vol. 3, p. 240, quoting a lost section of AḤMAD, *Zuhd*.

²⁰ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 540; IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 17, p. 402.

²¹ AL-QĀDĪ ‘IYĀD, *Tartīb*, vol. 2, p. 53.

²² IBN SA’D, *K. al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. E. SACHAU, &al., Leiden, 1904-1940, vol. 5, pp. 183-184 = *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Beirut, 1957-1968, vol. 5, p. 262. References to the latter edn henceforth in *italic*.

²³ IBN SA’D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 5, pp. 392-393 vol. 5, p. 539.

²⁴ IBN SA’D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, pt 2, p. 162 vol. 7, p. 455.

²⁵ IBN SA’D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, pt 2, p. 160 vol. 7, p. 452.

²⁶ IBN SA’D, *Qism*, p. 182.

Besides quranic recitation, supererogatory ritual prayer, and recollection, supplication (*du‘ā*) was a major activity of early renunciants. Here also Mālik seems to have been hostile. It is said that Mālik most strongly disapproved of standing to supplicate on entering the mosque and leaving it, saying it was an innovation.²⁷ He disapproved of supplication after finishing the Quran.²⁸ He disapproved of raising the hands in the course of supplication.²⁹ He quoted Abū Salama (presumably the Medinese b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, d. 104/722-3?) as rebuking a man for supplicating with raised hands, identifying it with Jewish practice, although he also quoted ‘Āmir b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr (Medinese, d. 121/738-9) as raising his hands in supplication after the ritual prayer and saying there was no harm in it.³⁰ Certainly, to the contrary, famous renunciants are recalled as raising their hands in the course of supplication, such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Shahr b. Ḥawshab (Syrian, d. 112/730-1).³¹ The Prophet himself is sometimes quoted as advocating it: ‘Your Lord is living and generous. He would be embarrassed, when his servant raises his hands to him, to send them back empty rather than filled with good.’³² Certainly, there was a major controversy over the raising of hands in the course of the ritual prayer³³; but Mālik’s position against raising the hands even in voluntary supplication seems harsh.

Mālik disapproved of extending the hands in the course of supplication, then wiping one’s face with them when finished.³⁴ By one report, the Prophet himself would always wipe

²⁷ IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 276-277.

²⁸ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 530.

²⁹ IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 274, vol. 17, p. 173, vol. 18, p. 99.

³⁰ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 530; IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 17, p. 132, vol. 18, p. 15.

³¹ IBN SA‘D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, pt 1, p. 121 vol. 7, p. 167 (al-Ḥasan); IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 10, pp. 286-287 vol. 10, p. 79 (Shahr).

³² ‘ABD AL-RAZZĀQ, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥ. R. AL-A‘ẒAMĪ (Min manshūrāt al-Majlis al-‘Ilmī 39), Johannesburg, 1390-1392/1970-1972, vol. 2, p. 251, vol. 10, p. 443 (Basran *isnād*); similarly, IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 10, p. 340 vol. 10, p. 119 (Kufan *isnād*); ABŪ DĀWŪD, *al-Sunan*, *al-witr* 23, *bāb al-du‘ā*, no 1488; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *al-Jāmi‘*, *al-da‘awāt* 104, no 3556; IBN MĀJA, *al-Sunan*, *al-da‘awāt* 13, *bāb fī raf‘ al-yadayn fī l-du‘ā*, no 3865. See also IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 10, pp. 377-379 vol. 10, pp. 145-146, two sections respectively disapproving and approving of raising the hands.

³³ See notably M. I. FIERRO, La polémique à propos de *raf‘ al-yadayn fī l-ṣalāt* dans al-Andalus, *Studia Islamica*, no 65 (1987), pp. 69-90.

³⁴ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 530, citing *al-Majmū‘a*, a work by the Qayrawani IBN BASHĪR (d. 260/873-4?), on whom see GAS, vol. 1, pp. 473-474; IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 18, p. 49.

his face with his hands after raising them to pray.³⁵ This was reportedly the practice of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as he supplicated in the course of his ritual prayer.³⁶ According to ‘Abd al-Razzāq (Yemeni, d. 211/827), ‘They say that those in the past would supplicate, then return their hands to their faces in order to return the supplication and blessing. I myself saw Ma‘mar supplicate with his hands to his chest, then return his hands and wipe his face with them.’³⁷

Of course, supplication was practised by more than the notably renunciant. Mālik is quoted as saying,

I dislike that people from all over should sit on the day of ‘Arafa in the mosques for supplication; those around whom the people gather on that day. They say *Allāh akbar* and supplicate. Let one avoid them. Staying at home is preferable to me. When it is time for the prayer, let him return to pray in the mosque.³⁸

We may infer a popular ceremony on 9 Dhū l-Ḥijja each year: as the pilgrims were supplicating on Mount ‘Arafa, Muslims elsewhere would gather in mosques to do the same. There is also an allusion to leadership, unfortunately imprecise. But there are only occasional indications of famous renunciants who performed special ceremonies on holy days. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī shaved his head every year at the Feast of the Sacrifice, when the pilgrims in Mecca shaved their heads.³⁹ For the most part, the extant renunciant literature stresses continual effort, not occasional. Although frequent pilgrimage is often mentioned, doubts about it also come up. For example, Jābir b. Zayd (Basran, d. 103/721-2) said, ‘I should prefer to give a dirham to an orphan or poor man rather than one pilgrimage after another.’⁴⁰ The example of sitting on the day of ‘Arafa evidently illustrates a popular piety that had developed

³⁵ TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmi‘*, *al-da‘awāt* 11, *bāb mā jā‘a fī raf‘ al-aydī ‘inda l-du‘ā*, no 3386 (Meccan/Medinese *isnād*).

³⁶ ‘ABDALLĀH B. AḤMAD, *Masā’il al-imām*, ed. Z. AL-SHĀWĪSH, Beirut, 1401/1981, p. 91.

³⁷ ‘ABD AL-RAZZĀQ, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 2, p. 253, referring to Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (Basran, transferred to Yemen, d. 153/770?).

³⁸ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 531, citing *al-Utbiyya*; IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 274; QARĀFĪ, *Dhakhīra*, vol. 13, p. 348.

³⁹ IBN SA‘D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, pt 1, p. 128 vol. 7, p. 176.

⁴⁰ ABŪ NU‘AYM, *Hilya*, vol. 3, pp. 89-90.

independently of the pious specialists of whom we read in the principal sources, somewhat like tomb visitation in subsequent centuries.

Other renunciant activities

Informal preaching (i.e. apart from the *khuṭba* on Friday) was a natural activity for renunciants. One term for it was *tadhkīr*, ‘bringing to mind’. ‘If ‘Alqama (Kufan, d. 62/181-2) saw people being gay, he would preach to them (*dhakkarahum*) about the days’ (i.e. the coming tribulation).⁴¹ However, when Mālik was asked about what ‘Umar had said to the Companion Abū Mūsā, ‘Remind us of our lord (*dhakkirnā bi-rabbīnā*)’, Mālik said, ‘I have never heard of this.’⁴² He dismissed those who presumed to reprimand people for talking after the noon prayer instead of engaging in supererogatory prayer or *dhikr* (i.e. repeating praises of God), citing the precedent of ‘Umar against it.⁴³ Lyall Armstrong has confirmed that *qaṣaṣ* was not just buffoonish ‘storytelling’ but preaching, engaged in by respected traditionists, jurisprudents, and renunciants.⁴⁴ In line with 20th-century scholarship, Armstrong stresses the connection between *qaṣaṣ* and hadith transmission, but he does observe its overlap with *dhikr* and *tadhkīr* and its practice by ascetics. Mālik opposed *qaṣaṣ*: ‘I have heard that Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, and Khārija b. Zayd would not sit for the preacher to the assembly (*qāṣṣ al-jamā‘a*).’ He maintained that earlier gatherings for *qaṣaṣ*, evidently approved by Companions, had concerned law (not exhortation).⁴⁵ Or he simply declared it an innovation.⁴⁶

Mālik seems to agree with much of the renunciant tradition when he is quoted as

⁴¹ IBN SA‘D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 6, p. 61 vol. 6, p. 90.

⁴² IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 529; cf. IBN SA‘D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 4, pt 1, pp. 80-81 vol. 4, p. 109. Compare the story by which Tamīm al-Dārī (d. 40/660-1?) asked ‘Umar for permission to preach. The caliph warned him, ‘It is like being slaughtered (*innahu ‘alā mithl al-dhabh*)’, but gave permission when Tamīm persisted: IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 1449.

⁴³ IBN RUSHD, *Bayan*, vol. 17, p. 210.

⁴⁴ L. R. ARMSTRONG, *The qaṣṣaṣ of early Islam* (Islamic history and civilization, studies and texts, 139), Leiden, 2016.

⁴⁵ IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 17, pp. 296-297.

⁴⁶ IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 18, p. 201.

saying, 'It is not meet to raise one's voice in the mosque, whether concerning *ilm* (knowledge, especially concerning law) or anything else. The people were forbidden to do that.'⁴⁷ 'Umar, on hearing a man's voice in the mosque, asked him, 'Do you know where you are?'⁴⁸ Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687-8) went to a group in the sacred mosque who were arguing with raised voices. He recounted to them what the youth had told the prophet Ayyūb about recollection of death, evidently silencing them.⁴⁹ Ibn 'Umar (d. 73/693?) said, 'O people, you are not supplicating someone absent or deaf.'⁵⁰ Qays b. 'Ubād (Basran, d. after 80/699) said, 'The Companions of the Messenger of God used to dislike raising the voice at funerals, in fighting, and in recollection.'⁵¹ Mujāhid (Meccan, d. 103/721-2?) 'heard a man raising his voice in supplication and so threw rocks at him.'⁵² Of course, strictures against loud supplication must have been provoked by loud supplication to begin with, and there are some approving reports of it. For example, Mālik's own shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir (Medinese, d. 131/748-9?), known for staying up nights in prayer, was asked why he raised his voice in supplication. Referring to an ill neighbor, he said, 'He raises his voice in tribulation, whereas I raise mine in praise.'⁵³

Also ambiguous is Mālik's opposition to wearing rough wool: 'There is no good in being known (*al-shuhra*). If one wears it some of the time and leaves it some of the time, I hope (it is all right). But I dislike his persisting in it until he becomes famous. There is coarse cotton for a similar price.'⁵⁴ This agrees with many sayings in the renunciant literature in favour of secrecy,

⁴⁷ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 536.

⁴⁸ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 405.

⁴⁹ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 1496.

⁵⁰ WAKĪ', *Zuhd*, p. 619. Similar words are also assigned to the Prophet; e.g. AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-jihād* 131, *bāb mā yukrahu min raf' al-sawṭ*, no 2992; *al-da'awāt* 50, *bāb al-du'ā' idhā 'alā 'Aqaba*, no 6384; *al-da'awāt* 67, *bāb qawl lā ḥawl wa-lā quwwa illā bi-'Llāh*, no 6409; *al-qadar* 7, *bāb lā ḥawl wa-lā quwwa illā bi-'Llāh*, no 6610; *al-tawḥīd* 9, *bāb wa-kāna 'Llāh samī'an baṣīran*, no 7386.

⁵¹ WAKĪ', *Zuhd*, p. 462; IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 247; IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 10, p. 530 vol. 10, p. 257.

⁵² WAKĪ', *Zuhd*, p. 616.

⁵³ IBN SA'D, *Qism*, p. 192; ABŪ NU'AYM, *Ḥilya*, vol. 3, p. 146.

⁵⁴ AL-BĀJĪ, *al-Muntaqā*, ed. M. 'A. IBN SHAQRŪN, Cairo, 1331-1332, vol. 7, p. 303; IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 18, pp. 431-432.

against display. For example, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī endorsed learning the Quran without one's neighbour's being aware, learning much jurisprudence without the people's being aware, and praying long at home without one's visitors' being aware.⁵⁵ He could be quoted both ways as to wool, reproaching wool wearers for outward humility and inward pride but also, among other things, holding up the Prophet's example of riding an ass, wearing wool, licking his fingers, and eating on the floor.⁵⁶ Mālik's own shaykh Ziyād b. Abī Ziyād (Medinese, d. 135/752-3), said to be among the *abdāl*, was notable for wearing wool.⁵⁷ Mālik's objection seems to be directed especially against the formation of a specialist corps of renunciants.

Mālik reportedly not only disliked trading in the mosque but also begging and weeping there. The early Māliki jurist Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 214/829) is quoted in agreement: 'They are not to be given anything in the mosque.'⁵⁸ It is not surprising that this contradicts early Kufan reports of almsgiving specifically in the mosque on 'Īd al-Fiṭr.⁵⁹ As for weeping, there are some reports in the renunciant literature expressing suspicion of public weeping as insincere. For example, the Companion Abū Umāma (d. 100/718-19) reproached someone for weeping and supplicating in prostration: 'If only this were in your house.'⁶⁰ Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī reportedly said in his session, when a man began to weep loudly, 'Satan is now making this one weep.'⁶¹ However, many more reports suggest that weeping in the mosque was laudatory. 'Umar's recitation of the Quran at the dawn prayer was reportedly inaudible from his weeping.⁶² From the mimbar in time of drought he raised his hands to pray

⁵⁵ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 140.

⁵⁶ IBN SA'D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, pt 1, p. 123 vol. 7, p. 169; IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 995.

⁵⁷ IBN SA'D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 5, p. 225 vol. 5, p. 305. For his being counted among the *abdāl*, see IBN ḤAJAR, *K. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Hyderabad, 1325-1327, vol. 3, p. 368.

⁵⁸ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 1, p. 536.

⁵⁹ 'ABD AL-RAZZĀQ, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 4, p. 113.

⁶⁰ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 156.

⁶¹ AḤMAD, *Zuhd*, p. 274 p. 334.

⁶² IBN SA'D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3, pt 1, p. 217 vol. 3, p. 301.

and wept. The people wept with him for a time, then he came down.⁶³ Abū Wā'il Shaqīq b.

Salama (Kufan, d. ca. 100/718-19) supplicated in the course of his prayer in prostration (loudly enough for his words to be quoted), then took to weeping till he could be heard from behind the mosque.⁶⁴

Renunciants were known of course for supererogatory fasting and eating little. Mālik was opposed to 24-hour fasting. He said, 'Leaving *wiṣāl* is preferable to me The Prophet forbade *wiṣāl*.' This is glossed as continuing to fast from *saḥar* to *saḥar* (early morning) or night to night.⁶⁵ There are occasional reports of renunciants' fasting continuously. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Nu'm (Kufan, d. bef. 100/718-19) would go 25 days without eating or drinking.⁶⁶ Al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Furāfiṣa (Basran, fl. 1st half 2nd/8th cent.) did not drink water for ten days; alternatively, did not eat, drink, or sleep for 20 days.⁶⁷ Indeed, Mālik confirmed that one of his own shaykhs, 'Āmir b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr (Medinese, d. 124/741-2?), would fast continuously (*yuwāṣilu*) the 7th, 17th, and 27th of Ramadan, each time going without food and drink for two nights and a day.⁶⁸ Reports are common of never eating to satiety, fasting alternate days, and (like 'Āmir b. 'Abdallāh) fasting certain days; for example, as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī fasted the days of the white ones (*al-bīḍ*; i.e. 13th-15th of each month), the four sacred months, and every Monday and Thursday.⁶⁹

On Mālik's hearing of people who stay awake the whole night,

He disliked that strongly and decried it. He said, 'One of them will not know what he recites and sleep during the prayer. Perhaps he will not pray the dawn prayer save overcome. "You have a good example in the Messenger of God" (Q. 33:21). The Messenger of God . . . would stay up barely a third of the

⁶³ IBN SA'D, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3, pt 1, p. 233 vol. 3, p. 322. Ten other examples of weeping in the course of preaching, mostly from the mimbar, are recounted by IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ, *al-Riqqa wa-l-bukā'*, ed. M. 'A. Ḥ. M. AL-SA'DĀNĪ (Maktabat Ibn Abī l-Dunyā), Cairo, n.d., pp. 41-44.

⁶⁴ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 300.

⁶⁵ IBN ABĪ ZAYD, *Nawādir*, vol. 2, p. 78, citing *al-Majmū'a* (IBN BASHĪR) and *al-Mukhtaṣar* (probably ABŪ MUṢ'AB AL-ZUHRI).

⁶⁶ ABŪ NU'AYM, *Hilya*, vol. 5, p. 69.

⁶⁷ ABŪ NU'AYM, *Hilya*, vol. 3, p. 108.

⁶⁸ AL-FASAWĪ, K. *al-Ma'rifa wa-l-tārīkh*, ed. A. Ḍ. AL-'UMARĪ, Medina, 1410/1989, vol. 1, p. 666; cf. IBN SA'D, *Qism*, p. 111.

⁶⁹ AḤMAD, *Zuhd*, p. 269 p. 329.

night or half of it. I prefer that a man, if he prays at night and sleep afflicts him, that he sleep till the sleepiness goes away, not praying when he feels that.'

Ibn al-Qāsim (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Egyptian, d. 191/806-7) said, 'He went back on that and said there was no harm in it if one was strong enough for it; if that did not harm his dawn prayer.'⁷⁰ There are many admiring reports of renunciants who wore themselves out by their strenuous routines of supererogatory prayer. Masrūq b. al-Ajdaʿ (Kufan, d. 63/682-3?) prayed till his thighs swelled up, so that his wife would sit behind him and weep for pity.⁷¹ It was said that the pious caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 101/720), 'when he had prayed the second evening prayer, would throw himself into his mosque and pray and weep until his eye overcame him. When he awoke, he would pray and weep until his eye overcame him. He was like that until morning.'⁷² Indeed, the Prophet himself is cited to the contrary of Mālik's characterization; for example, 'If the Prophet . . . stood or prayed till his feet were swollen, or his thighs, he would be asked about that. He would say, "Will I not be a thankful servant?"'⁷³ It is a recurrent feature of polemics over renunciation that the Prophet could be quoted both ways but telling that Mālik generally prefers to quote him against strenuous devotional regimes.

Significance

The significance of Mālik's disapproval of so much of contemporary renunciant practice is partly chronological, confirming a turn against it elsewhere in about the last third of the eighth century. Near the end of his life, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/804-5) began a *Kitāb al-Kasb*, largely a polemic against excessive austerity of living.⁷⁴ Sufyān

⁷⁰ IBN RUSHD, *Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 244.

⁷¹ IBN AL-MUBĀRAK, *Zuhd*, no 95; AḤMAD, *Zuhd*, p. 350 p. 420; IBN ABĪ SHAYBA, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 12, p. 407 vol. 12, p. 292; WAKĪʿ, *Zuhd*, pp. 387-388.

⁷² AḤMAD, *Zuhd*, pp. 298-299 p. 363.

⁷³ Among other places, BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-tahajjud* 6, *bāb qiyām al-nabī al-layl ḥattā tarima qadamāh*, no 1130; *al-tafsīr* 48, no 4836; *al-riqāq* 20, *bāb al-ṣabr ʿan maḥārim Allāh*, no 6471.

⁷⁴ See M. BONNER, The *Kitāb al-Kasb* attributed to al-Shaybānī, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001), pp. 410-427, and CH. MELCHERT, Al-Shaybānī and contemporary renunciant piety, *Journal of Abbasid studies* 6 (2019), pp. 1-36.

al-Thawrī (d. 161/777?) of Kufa and Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 198/814) of Kufa, then Mecca, are two notable critics of renunciant practice who were also major transmitters of renunciant sayings themselves. Sufyān al-Thawrī is said to have advocated a purely inward otherworldliness: ‘Renunciation of the world is shortness of hope, not eating what is rough or wearing a hood (‘*abāya*).’⁷⁵ Asked, ‘Can a man be a renunciant if he has wealth?’ he said ‘Yes, if, when he is tried, he is patient and, when given, is thankful.’⁷⁶ Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna told Aḥmad b. Abī l-Ḥawārī (Syrian, d. 230/844-5?) that the renunciant of the world was ‘He who, when he is blessed, is thankful, and when tried is patient.’⁷⁷ Such sentiments were also espoused by earlier figures than the Sufyāns. For example, the littérateur Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. 142/759-60?) said, ‘A rational man (‘*āqil*) does not rejoice in much wealth, nor does lack of it sadden him. Rather, his wealth is his reason and what has gone before of good works.’⁷⁸ The Prophet himself is quoted as saying, ‘Renunciation of the world (*al-zahāda fī l-dunyā*) is not forbidding the licit or squandering wealth. Rather, renunciation of the world is that you be no more sure of what is in your hands than what is in God’s hand and that you be more desirous of the reward for an affliction that befalls you than that it should be withheld from you.’⁷⁹ But quotations such as this are likely to be nothing more than back projection compared with quotations of the Sufyāns.

Mālik presents himself as speaking for the tradition of Medina. The bulk of Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā*’, is a collection of renunciant sayings by and about Followers (persons who met Companions but never the Prophet), arranged geographically. The section on renunciants of Medina (not counting an earlier section of the Seven Jurisprudents of

⁷⁵ WAKĪ‘, *Zuhd*, p. 222; IBN ABĪ SHAYBA *Muṣannaf*, vol. 14, p. 6 vol. 12, p. 456 (‘wearing wool’ rather than ‘a hood’).

⁷⁶ ABŪ NU‘AYM, *Ḥilya*, vol. 6, pp. 387-388.

⁷⁷ IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ, *Dhamm al-dunyā*, ed. E. ALMAGOR (Max Schloessinger memorial ser., texts, 6), Jerusalem, 1984, p. 46; ABŪ NU‘AYM, *Ḥilya*, vol. 7, p. 273.

⁷⁸ IBN AL-MUQAFFA‘, *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr*, ed. A. Z. BĀSHĀ, Alexandria, 1329/1911, p. 75.

⁷⁹ IBN MĀJA, *Sunan*, *al-zuhd* 1, *bāb al-zuhd fī l-dunyā*, no 4100; TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmi‘*, *al-zuhd* 29, *bāb mā jā’a fī l-zahāda fī l-dunyā*, no 2340; with *isnād* stopping at Abū Muslim al-Khawlānī (Syrian, d. early 60s/680s), AḤMAD, *Zuhd*, p. 18 p. 25.

Medina) comprises 14 names, as opposed to 45 in the section on Kufa, for example, and 56 in the section on Basra. This may be evidence that renunciant piety was weaker in Medina than elsewhere. Of these 14, on the other hand, just eight are mentioned as transmitters somewhere in the *Muwaṭṭaʿ*. Of the remaining six, four are in all of the Six Books and one is in five of them, so they are not missing from the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* because they were not remembered for hadith. Rather, as often, Mālik turns out on close inspection to speak for part of the Medinese tradition, not all of it.

Mālik's disapproval of renunciant practice, especially extravagant devotional régimes, also probably reveals incipient tension between the ideal of the jurists, a society of obedient Muslims, and of the especially pious, an élite devoted before all else to drawing close to God. According to Mālik's programme, the mosque would be dominated by study circles devoted to identifying the law, not chanting the Quran together, performing supererogatory prayers, and so on. Outstanding jurists and exemplars of piety were once largely the same. For example, most of the Seven Jurists of Medina are quoted for pious sayings in Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, all of them in Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*. However, jurisprudence and piety had evidently become more specialized pursuits in Mālik's time. If one arranges Mālik's 130 immediate sources in the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* (recension of Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā) in descending order from al-Zuhrī with 268 items and Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṣārī (d. 144/761-2?) with 219, one has to go down to 21st place to find one who had a special reputation in the area of piety, namely Abū Ḥāzim (nine items), of whom Ibn Saʿīd says, 'He was a worshipper and a renunciant (*ʿābid*, *zāhid*) who used to preach (*yaquṣṣu*) at dawn and after the afternoon prayer in the mosque of Medina.'⁸⁰ Mālik strongly endorsed the work of the jurists and their circles, imagining a time when there had been no competing Quran reciters and the like.

⁸⁰ IBN SAʿĪD, *Qism*, p. 332.

Mālik's positions are also consistent with a preference for a devotional life within reach of all Muslims. It was feasible to call for Muslims to stay up most of the night performing supererogatory prayers or reciting the Quran when the Muslims were a small élite at the top of society supported by tribute from the mass of non-Muslims below them. It ceased to be feasible when Muslims came to constitute a majority. Mālik does not explain his positions except by appeal to a legendary past. However, from two centuries after Mālik, the commentary of Abū l-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 474/1081) clearly articulates a policy of preferring what is required and no more. A famous example of opposition to excessive austerity is the Prophet's rebuke to a young man who had vowed not to speak, seek shade, or sit, as well as to fast.⁸¹ Al-Bājī explains that only some of what the man had vowed to do

could be obligatory because of a vow on account of being an act of obedience, mainly fasting. Some of these things were for what did not involve obedience, mainly standing in the sun and silence. Therefore, the Messenger of God . . . informed him of what of that was obligatory, for him to fulfil his vow, and informed him of what was not obligatory, for him to refrain from tiring himself by sticking to it.⁸²

Here is asceticism as a piety of obedience uncoupled from austerity. A voluntary fast was acceptable as resembling a required fast, but inventing a new form of self-deprivation was to usurp God's prerogative to lay down rules.

⁸¹ MĀLIK, *Muwaṭṭa'*, rec. Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā, *al-nudhūr wa-l-aymān* 4, *bāb mā lā yajūzu min al-nudhūr fī ma'ṣiyat Allāh*, no 1363; rec. Abū Muṣ'ab al-Zuhrī, *al-nudhūr wa-l-aymān* 8, *bāb mā lā yajibu min al-nudhūr fī ma'ṣiyat Allāh*, no 2214. Remarkd by I. GOLDZIEHER, De l'ascétisme aux premiers temps de l'Islam, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 37 (1898), pp. 159-169, at p. 165.

⁸² BĀJĪ, *Muntaqā*, vol. 3, p. 240.