

## The Nightly Litany of a Youth

‘Abūyah ibn Rib‘ī says, “A youth from among the Helpers [*Ansār*] of Medina went to see ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās. After that, he started visiting ‘Abbās frequently, who held him in high esteem. Some people told Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘This youth that you have made close to yourself is only nine years old with excessively bad habits.

Every night he opens graves in the cemetery.’ Ibn ‘Abbās, surprised, said, ‘Inform me when you see him going to the graveyard.’ One night, when they saw that youth going to the cemetery, they informed Ibn ‘Abbās. He went and hid in a place where the youth could not see him. The youth hit his fist on a grave and said, ‘Woe on me! When I am alone in the tomb and the earth has become my bed it will tell me, ‘You are not welcome. You should not be here.’

Woe on that which came out of my heart! Woe upon me when I see the prophets and the angels in a queue! Who will save me from the justice of Allah on the Day of Resurrection? Who will save me from those charged with punishing and torturing the sinners? Who will save me from the punishment of hell? I have disobeyed Him who is not supposed to be disobeyed! I have broken my promise every time I made one! I have been unfaithful in my covenant with Him!’

The youth wailed bitterly while repeating these words. When he came out of the cemetery, Ibn ‘Abbās came forward and embraced the youth. He told him, ‘How wise of you to reveal your sins to graves!’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Saduq, *Al-Amālī*, majlis 53, hadīth 11; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 6, p. 131, hadīth 24.

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