

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

*The First Strike: Mastering Hardship
and Desire*

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

The First Strike: Mastering Hardship and Desire

The First Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَإِنَّ أصدقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from our sinful deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. To proceed: the truest speech is the Book of Allah, the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ, the worst of affairs are the newly invented matters, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي * وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي * وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي * يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي *

We praise Him, and we send blessings upon His noble Messenger. To proceed: I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed; in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. My Lord, expand for me my breast, and ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech.

Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:25 to 28)

Dear brothers and sisters, **assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.**

A Thread from the Opening of the Book to Its End

Dear brothers and sisters, when Allah began His Book, He began with the story of our father Ādam. It is fitting that this is the first story in the whole Qur'an, for in it Allah tells us how Ādam was hasty, and how that single hasty moment cost him the Garden for a time. Yet Allah forgave him, and we, his children, do not inherit his sin or carry his burden. We are the continuation of his journey, the journey of a soul that slips in a moment of haste and must learn to return. And then Allah speaks to the first nation in the Qur'an, the Children of Israel, and reminds them of His blessings upon them, and of the covenant: keep My covenant, and I will keep yours, and fear Me alone. Then, as the fruit of that covenant, Allah gives the instruction that will carry a believer through his entire life.

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ * الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ
مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ *

And seek help through patience and prayer; indeed, it is difficult except for the humble, those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that to Him they will return.

Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:45 to 46)

Brothers and sisters, all the way through, our journey to Jannah comes down to two great struggles: the struggle to be patient when life strikes us with hardship, and the struggle to hold ourselves back when our desires pull us toward what Allah has forbidden. And the strange truth that the Companions understood is that the test of ease can be heavier than the test of hardship. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, one of the wealthiest of the Companions, confessed it about himself.

And reflect on where Allah chose to begin. He opened His Book with the story of a single hasty moment, when our father Ādam, surrounded by every blessing, fixed his gaze on the one tree he was told to avoid and reached for it in a moment of forgetfulness. He did not see, in that instant, all the gardens that were already his; he saw only the thing forbidden, and he hastened. Is this not the very shape of our own falls, brothers and sisters? We too are surrounded by blessing upon blessing, and we too let a single impulse, a single unguarded moment, pull us toward the one thing we were warned away from. The whole struggle of the believer is to learn what Ādam's children are meant to learn from his story: not that we will never feel the pull, but that we can master the moment of the pull, return quickly to Allah as Ādam returned, and refuse to let one hasty instant decide our destination.

We were tested with hardship, and we were patient; then we were tested with ease, and we were not able to be patient.

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf

When you are struck by something painful, it is often easier to lose your appetite for this world and to turn your despair into a connection with Allah. But when the world opens all its doors to you and lays its pleasures before you, to restrain yourself then is a far harder thing. So let us speak of both, brothers and sisters, the patience of the one who is struck, and the patience of the one who is tempted, for both are won or lost in a single decisive moment.

Patience Is at the First Strike

When a trial comes, Allah does not leave us without a treatment. He told us that the believers are those who, the instant the blow lands, return their hearts to Him.

قَالَ
وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ
الصَّابِرِينَ * الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ *

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger, and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient, those who, when disaster strikes them, say: indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.

Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:155 to 156)

Notice, brothers and sisters, that the reward is tied to that first instant, the moment of shock. A person who has been preparing his heart all his life for that blow will find everything he has nurtured inside himself rise up to meet it in a beautiful opportunity that cannot be found anywhere else. This is why our Prophet ﷺ, when he passed a woman weeping uncontrollably at a grave and counselled her to fear Allah and be patient, and she pushed him away not knowing who he was, taught the principle that has guided the Ummah ever since.

إِنَّمَا الصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُولَى.

Patience is only at the first strike.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 1283, Muslim 926 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

You do not suddenly gather patience when a great tribulation arrives. You prepare for the shock in advance, and what you have been building inside yourself materialises in that instant in the words innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn, to Allah we belong and to Him we return. This is not to say there is no patience after a day, or a week, or a year, but that the very first strike carries a particular reward that the later hours do not. So when the trial lands, whether great or small, the first level of patience is simply to hold the tongue and the limbs from anything that would compromise your reward, for the bare minimum is silence and restraint. And above that bare minimum is the higher level, to channel

the pain toward Allah, seeking from Him the reward He has promised, until the wound itself becomes a door to His mercy.

Train at the Small Strikes

And here is a mercy, brothers and sisters, that we overlook every single day. These words, innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn, are not reserved for the graveside. There is a common idea in our communities that we say them only when someone has died, but this is a mistake. The Prophet ﷺ taught that whatever hurts or troubles a Muslim is a kind of calamity, even something as small as a lamp going out at night, and bearing it patiently with these words carries the promise of reward from Allah. So the believer has a thousand small opportunities a day to train the very muscle he will need when the great blow comes. The traffic that traps you when you are already late, the power that cuts out in the heat, the spilled cup, the broken plan, the careless word from someone you love, each of these is a small strike, and each is a chance to say, quietly, innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn, and then, when the relief returns, al-ḥamdu lillāh.

Think of it as training, brothers and sisters. A soul that has said innā lillāh a thousand times over spilled coffee and missed buses and minor frustrations has worn a groove into the heart, so that on the day a real calamity strikes, the tongue and the heart run straight to that familiar groove without even being told. But the one who meets every small discomfort with complaint and curses, who treats each minor inconvenience as an outrage, has trained himself for the opposite, and he should not expect to suddenly find dignity and patience at the hour of his greatest test. We become, at the moment of the great strike, whatever we practised at the small ones. So do not waste the small strikes. They are the gymnasium of patience, and Allah has scattered them through your day out of His mercy, to prepare you for the blows that matter most.

The Reward of the One Who Holds Firm

And the reward, brothers and sisters, is beyond imagining. Allah described the servants of the Most Merciful, those who held firm, and told us what their patience purchases for them.

أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا *

Those will be awarded the highest chambers of Paradise for what they patiently endured, and they will be received therein with greetings and peace.

Sūrah al-Furqān (25:75)

Think of where patience strikes in the heat of an ordinary week. It is in the middle of an argument, brothers and sisters. The hypocrite, who has no sense of the Hereafter, goes all out to win, saying the most hurtful things he can to inflict the most pain. But the believer thinks to himself, I could win a house in Paradise right now, so I would rather lose this argument than lose that house. And the Prophet ﷺ made that very trade a promise.

أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بَيْتٍ فِي رِبْضِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا.

I am a guarantor of a house in the outskirts of Paradise for whoever abandons argument even when he is right.

Source: Sunan Abī Dāwūd **Hadith No:** Abū Dāwūd 4800 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

And in that same heated moment, when the anger rises and the desire to strike back burns, the Prophet ﷺ gave us a weapon. He said of two men who were trading insults that he knew a word which, if the angry one would only say it, his rage would leave him.

إِنِّي لَأَعْلَمُ كَلِمَةً لَوْ قَالَهَا لَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ مَا يَجِدُ: أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ.

Indeed I know a word which, if he said it, what he feels would leave him: I seek refuge in Allah from Shayṭān, the accursed.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 3282, Muslim 2610 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

And if even that is hard in the heat of the moment, the Prophet ﷺ gave us the bare floor of restraint: when one of you becomes angry, let him be silent. If you cannot say something good, then say nothing at all, and protect yourself from a word you will regret forever.

Three Patiences That Carry a Believer

The scholars taught us, brothers and sisters, that patience is of three kinds, and a believer needs all three. There is patience upon obedience, the strength to keep doing what Allah commanded when the soul grows tired of it, to rise for Fajr, to guard the prayer, to keep the fast. There is patience away from sin, the strength to hold back from what Allah forbade when the desire burns, and this is the patience we struggle with most in an age that dangles temptation before us at every moment. And there is patience with the decree of Allah, the strength to bear what He has willed upon us of loss and pain without complaint against Him. So great is this quality that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him, weighed it against faith itself.

الصَّبْرُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الرَّأْسِ مِنَ الْجَسَدِ.

Patience is to faith what the head is to the body; and there is no faith for the one who has no patience.

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib

Look how the three are bound together. The one who has trained himself to be patient upon obedience has already learned to overrule his own comfort, and that same muscle is what holds him back from sin and steadies him under the decree. They are not three separate gifts handed to three different people; they are one strength, built in the small moments, that shows itself in whichever battle the day happens to bring. And every one of them, brothers and sisters, is won or lost at the first moment, before the tiredness becomes surrender, before the temptation becomes action, before the grief becomes complaint.

The Patience of Holding Back Desire

Now turn with me, brothers and sisters, from the patience of hardship to the patience of desire, for they are won in the very same way, at the very first moment. When the alarm sounds for Fajr, you are not fighting your bed so much as your phone and your own soul, and the desire to return to sleep is sweet. The Prophet ﷺ, by contrast, was described as leaping up for the prayer like a lion, while the hypocrites rise heavy and dragging their feet. If you do not conquer that first inclination the instant the call comes, there is a good chance the prayer is lost. The same is true of every desire. You say, I will have just one small bite, and once that first bite is taken, the whole plate is gone. You say, I will exercise later, and once you have said later, there is no exercise that day. The decisive battle is always at the beginning, before the soul has tasted the thing and shut off every voice of conscience to keep enjoying it. That is why the Prophet ﷺ taught that the moment you are reminded of Allah at the edge of a sin, you stop right there.

And Allah gave us a training ground for exactly this discipline, woven into the same verse that commanded patience and prayer, for the scholars explained that the patience mentioned there points to fasting. The Prophet ﷺ named fasting as the shield of the one who cannot yet restrain his desire.

يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وِجَاءٌ.

O young people, whoever among you is able to marry, let him marry; and whoever is not able, let him fast, for it is a shield for him.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 5066, Muslim 1400 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Consider what fasting does to a soul. You tell yourself you cannot drink the water in front of you because it is not yet time, and you cannot eat though you are hungry, because a reward awaits the one who holds back. That is delayed gratification trained into the body, brothers and sisters. The one who can master himself in the small matter of food and drink has learned the very skill he needs to master himself before every desire: to say to the soul, no, not now, and to mean it. Seek help through patience and prayer, and let the fast be the school in which you learn to conquer the first impulse.

How the Prophet ﷺ Conquered the First Moment

And no one mastered this first moment like our Prophet ﷺ. When the call to prayer came, he did not wrestle with himself the way we wrestle with our beds and our alarms. He was described as one who would spring to the prayer, hurrying to it, activated toward it, while the hypocrite rises heavy and reluctant, dragging his feet and asking, is it really time again? The Prophet ﷺ overcame the desire to sleep, the desire to rest after a hard day, the desire to linger over food, the moment the prayer was called, and he leapt toward it. Most of us live somewhere on the spectrum between the heaviness of the hypocrite and the eagerness of the Prophet ﷺ, and the work of a lifetime is to move ourselves, moment by moment, toward his end of it.

And he understood that desire is conquered by awareness, not by mere scolding. A young man once came to him and asked, openly, for permission to commit fornication, and the Companions rushed at him in anger. But the Prophet ﷺ drew the young man close and reasoned with his heart, asking him gently whether he would accept such a thing for his own mother, or his daughter, or his sister. Each time the young man said no, and the Prophet ﷺ told him that other people feel the same about their mothers and daughters and sisters. Then he placed his hand upon him and prayed that Allah purify his heart and guard his chastity, and the young man left with the desire emptied out of him. See the wisdom, brothers and sisters: the Prophet ﷺ did not crush the young man, he transported him, in a moment, to an awareness that dissolved the craving at its root. That is how the first impulse is won, by lifting the heart to something higher than the desire in front of it.

Those Who Restrained the Soul

For Allah has told us plainly who wins the Garden, and it is the one who feared standing before his Lord and reined in his own desire.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنْ أَهْوَىٰ * فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ *

But as for the one who feared the standing before his Lord and restrained the soul from its desire, then indeed Paradise will be the refuge.

Sūrah an-Nāzi‘āt (79:40 to 41)

There is a rule the wise have always known for disciplining desire and instant gratification, brothers and sisters: give up what you want now for what you want more. You restrain yourself from the pleasure in front of you because you do not want it to cost you your true destination. Paradise is the place where the believer can finally breathe, finally release, finally taste the gratification he delayed. If you can conquer the soul at that first impulse, you have eternal access to everything you were truly seeking. So when the impulse strikes, let two things move you: first, the fear of compounding your trial by falling into something that will harm you, and then the pleasure of the Paradise that Allah guarantees you instead.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

I say this statement of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Closing of the First Khutbah

The Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and all his Companions. O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad as You sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.

A Reminder Carried Home

Dear brothers and sisters, in the first khuṭbah we learned that the whole of our journey turns upon a single decisive moment. The patience of hardship is won at the first strike of the blow, when the heart returns to Allah with innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn before grief can drag it into complaint. And the patience of desire is won at the first pull of temptation, before the soul has tasted the thing and silenced the voice of conscience. Master that first moment, and you have mastered the course; lose it, and you are carried wherever the impulse drags you. Now let us look honestly at the world that is trying, every hour, to steal that first moment from us.

The Algorithm and the Burning Coal

We live in a world, brothers and sisters, that has made itself the enemy of restraint. There are devices in our pockets and apps upon them that have studied our souls more closely than we study them ourselves. They know what your nafs craves, sometimes better than you know it, and they feed you craving after craving: the next image, the next outrage, the next piece of drama, the next thing your lower self reaches for. They enslave a person to an endless feed, and when we become impulsive creatures who simply move to the next thing and the next without ever pausing to think, we have already lost the very battle this religion calls us to win. You know the feeling of agitation until you open your phone, the restlessness of an hour without checking it, the question gnawing at you of what you might have missed. That impulse is not a healthy one, and if we do not conquer it, we are led rather than leading, and the one who is led by his desires needs no devil to decorate sin for him, because he runs to every craving on his own. The Prophet ﷺ described our very days in a way we should take to heart.

يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ، الصَّابِرُ فِيهِمْ عَلَى دِينِهِ كَالْقَابِضِ عَلَى الْجَمْرِ.

A time will come upon people when the one who holds firmly to his religion will be like one grasping a burning coal.

Source: Sunan at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** Tirmidhī 2260 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

So how do we hold the coal without dropping it, brothers and sisters? We conquer the first impulse. We put a word of remembrance, or even a moment of pause, between ourselves and the reach of the hand, so that we are choosing and not merely being pulled. Replace one impulse this week. When the agitation rises and the hand goes for the phone, let it reach instead, just once, for the remembrance of Allah, and watch how the soul begins to return to your command rather than commanding you.

And understand the trap for what it is. These feeds are not neutral, brothers and sisters; they are engineered to defeat exactly the restraint our religion is trying to build in us. They study what holds your gaze and feed you more of it, training your soul to crave the next thing the moment the last one ends, until patience itself begins to feel unnatural and stillness feels like withdrawal. A soul fed this way for years does not suddenly find self-control at the moment of a real temptation, any more than a person who never trained finds strength at the moment he must lift. So the discipline of the first impulse is not only about the obvious sins; it is about reclaiming the very ability to pause, to choose, and to say not now, which the whole machinery of our age is working to take from us. Win it in the small thing, the idle scroll, and you are training the same muscle you will need in the large one.

The One Who Watches and to Whom We Return

But the truth is, brothers and sisters, that you cannot conquer that first moment when the soul seems to be dominating you, unless you become deeply aware of the One who is watching you and to whom you will return. This is the beautiful coherence of the Qur'an: the same passage that commanded patience and prayer named the people who could bear it, those who are certain they will meet their Lord and that to Him they will return. And the same Sūrah that promised Paradise named its people as those who feared the standing before their Lord and restrained the soul from desire. The fear of that standing and the certainty of that return are the strength that lets a person say no in the decisive moment. So when the first taste of a forbidden sweetness arrives, the first pull of the desire, try to transport yourself at once to the moment you will stand before Allah. Keep reminders of Him around you, keep your tongue moving with His remembrance, for the one who remembers Allah at the edge of the sin is given the strength to step back from it.

A Reward No Eye Has Seen

And do not imagine, brothers and sisters, that what you give up in those private moments is lost. Allah praised the ones who tore themselves from their warm beds in the depth of the night, who denied the

soul its sleep to stand and call upon Him in fear and hope, and He told us that the reward kept waiting for them is something no soul has ever even glimpsed.

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ * فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ *

Their sides part from their beds as they call upon their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend from what We have provided them. And no soul knows what comfort of the eyes has been hidden for them as a reward for what they used to do.

Sūrah as-Sajdah (32:16 to 17)

No soul knows what has been hidden for them. Every desire you denied in its first moment, every craving you refused to feed, every comfort you set aside to obey your Lord, Allah is storing for you in a place beyond imagining, hidden away precisely because it is too great to be shown here. This is why the believer is willing to lose the small pleasure now: he knows the One he is dealing with, and he trusts that what Allah keeps hidden is worth infinitely more than what the world offers in the open.

The Day You Read Your Own Book

And remember, brothers and sisters, why we store our deeds rather than spend their sweetness now. Look at the one who is given his record in his right hand on the Day of Judgement, after a lifetime of enduring the insults of the world, of holding back the desire to answer people in kind, of starving the cravings of the self. See how he is described.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَؤُلَاءِ مَقْرُوءَاتِي * إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيهِ

*

So as for the one who is given his record in his right hand, he will say: here, read my record. Indeed, I was certain that I would meet my account.

Sūrah al-Hāqqah (69:19 to 20)

In this life the believer hides his good deeds the way he hides his sins, because he does not want the sweetness of those deeds to be spent here. He wants the whole reward saved for the day he meets Allah, for the more it is tasted here, the less is stored there. But on that Day there is no more hiding. The one who held back, who delayed his gratification, who conquered the first impulse again and again, runs through the gathering calling out, here, read my book. Everything he denied himself in the moments of desire is now laid before him in his right hand. That, brothers and sisters, is the meaning

of giving up what you want now for what you want more. So control yourselves at the first strike of hardship and at the first pull of desire, and store the reward for the Day you will be most in need of it.

Picture the difference on that Day, brothers and sisters. In this world, when a person does a quiet good deed, he hides it from the eyes of others so that it stays pure and stored for him with Allah, and he carries his worship the way a man carries a treasure he does not wish to be seen. But on the Day of Judgement, the one who receives his book in his right hand does not tuck it away or speak of it in a whisper. He is not humbled by it; he is overjoyed by it. He goes through the gathering showing it to everyone he meets, the prayers, the fasts, the charity given in secret, all of it now revealed, because the moment he was saving it for has finally arrived. He held back the pleasure of his good deeds in the dunyā precisely so that he could taste them in full on the day it matters most. So do not measure what you give up against the small loss you feel today. Measure it against the right hand and the open book and the running through the gathering, and you will find that no desire you ever conquered was a loss at all.

A Plan for the First Moment

So let us leave with something we can actually hold to this week, brothers and sisters, for these are the small, repeatable habits that train the soul to win the first moment. Begin with the Fajr prayer, and resolve to rise the instant the alarm calls without negotiating with yourself, for if you conquer the soul there, at dawn, you have rehearsed the very skill you need at every other temptation of the day. Take up the fast that the Prophet ﷺ named our shield, even a day on Monday or Thursday, and let the hunger and the thirst teach your body to hear the word no and obey it. When anger flares, reach at once for the refuge the Prophet ﷺ taught, a‘ūdhu billāhi mina-sh-shayṭāni-r-rajīm, and if that is too much in the heat of it, fall back to silence and say nothing you will regret. When the hand drifts toward the phone out of restless habit, place a single breath of remembrance between the impulse and the screen. And when the blow of hardship lands, let your first words, before the grief can speak, be innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn. Five small disciplines, brothers and sisters, each of them a victory at the first moment, and together they reshape a soul.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One who sees us in every private moment. O Allah, allow us to control ourselves for Your sake, to restrain our souls from what You have forbidden, and to seek Your pleasure alone for the Hereafter.

O Allah, make us patient at the first strike of every hardship, and firm at the first pull of every desire, and let our restraint be stored for us on the Day we meet You. O Allah, forgive the believing men and the believing women, the living among them and those who have passed. O Allah, set right the affairs of this Ummah, unite the hearts of the Muslims upon truth, protect our families and our children, and keep our young ones firm upon faith in an age of trial. O Allah, relieve the distressed, heal the sick, settle the debts of the indebted, and grant safety and provision to our brothers and sisters who are oppressed and afraid in every land, for You are the All Powerful and they have none besides You.

O Allah, forgive us and our parents, and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, accept from us our prayers, our fasting, and our standing before You, and overlook our shortcomings and our sins. O Allah, make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts and the light of our chests, grant us beneficial knowledge and hearts that truly fear You, and let our deeds be sincere for Your Face alone. O Allah, see us through our hardships and our trials, and see us through our blessings and our ease, and let it all show in our return to You while You are pleased with us. O Allah, seal our lives with the best of deeds, and let the last of our words in this world be the testimony that there is no god but You. Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

The Final Reminder

Remember the command of your Lord, with which Allah closes the affair, the command of justice and excellence.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ *

Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and He forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and oppression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.

Sūrah an-Nahl (16:90)

So remember Allah, the Most Great, and He will remember you. Thank Him for His favours and He will increase you. And establish the prayer.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ