

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

Preparing for the New Islamic Year

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam

DELIVERED BY

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ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Preparing for the New Islamic Year

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 * وَيسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي * وَأَحْلِلْ 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.**

Another Year, Another Reminder

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has blessed us with the arrival of another Islamic year. And a new year, brothers and sisters, is not merely the turning of a calendar or the changing of a number. It is a reminder, sent from Allah, that our time in this world is limited, that the days allotted to us are being spent one by one, and that our meeting with Him draws closer with every breath we take. Time is among the greatest of all the blessings Allah has given us, and it is also, of all His blessings, the one we waste most carelessly. The days pass quickly, the months disappear, the years seem to fly by, and a person looks back and wonders where it all went. It is no accident, then, that Allah opens one of the shortest and most powerful chapters of His Book with an oath sworn upon time itself.

وَالْعَصْرِ * إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ
وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ *

By time, indeed mankind is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous deeds and advise one another to truth and advise one another to patience.

Sūrah al-‘Aṣr (103:1 to 3)

Imām ash-Shāfi‘ī, may Allah have mercy on him, said that if people reflected only upon this one surah, it would be enough to guide them. By time, Allah swears, mankind is in loss, all of them, every single one, drifting toward ruin as the hours of their lives drain away, except the few who fill their time with four things: faith, righteous deeds, calling one another to truth, and bearing patience together. This surah teaches us a truth that cuts against everything the world tells us: that simply living longer is not success. A long life spent in heedlessness is not a gain, it is a longer loss. Real success belongs only to the one who uses his time for īmān, for good deeds, for truth, and for patience. And so the new year asks each of us a simple, piercing question: of the time Allah has given me, how much have I spent in profit, and how much in loss?

Reflect for a moment, brothers and sisters. Last Muḥarram feels recent, and yet an entire year has passed, and many of the people who stood with us in these rows last year are no longer alive today. Their time has ended. Their deeds are sealed. Their opportunities are finished, and their accounts are closed. But Allah, out of His mercy, has allowed us to witness another year, and that is both a gift and a responsibility. So the believer turns to himself and asks: what have I sent forward for my ākhirah this year? Have I grown closer to Allah, or further away? Has my prayer improved? Is my heart more attached to the Qur'an than it was? Have I become better toward my parents, my spouse, my children? Have I left the sins that anger my Lord, or am I carrying the very same load into a new year?

The Blessing We Squander Most

Of all the blessings Allah has given us, brothers and sisters, time is the one we treat with the least care, and our age has made the squandering of it easier than ever before. A person can pick up a device intending to glance at it for a moment and surface an hour later with nothing gained, the hour simply gone, dissolved into an endless scroll he will not remember tomorrow. Multiply that by the days of a week, the weeks of a year, and a believer may find that he has poured weeks of his fixed and dwindling life into a void, while his prayer stayed weak, his Qur'an stayed closed, and his parents stayed uncalled. The Prophet ﷺ warned us that there are two blessings most people are cheated out of, health and free time, because we only realise their value once they are gone, when the health has become sickness and the free time has become the busyness of regret.

And the cruelty of wasted time is that, unlike wasted money, it can never be earned back. A lost dirham may be replaced by another dirham, but a lost hour is gone into eternity, recorded as it was spent, and it will meet us again on the Day we are shown our deeds. This is why the new year is such a mercy: it is a milestone Allah places in our path to make us stop and feel the passage of time that we would otherwise let slip by unnoticed. The believer who is shaken awake by it asks not only what he did this year, but what he did with the hours of it, and resolves that the year ahead will hold less of the emptiness and more of the things that will still matter when he is lying in his grave. For the hours are the very fabric our lives are woven from, and to waste them is to waste the life itself.

Look to What You Have Sent Forward

This is exactly the accounting Allah commands us to perform, in a verse that the scholars called the verse of self-reckoning.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ *

O you who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul look to what it has sent forward for tomorrow. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is fully aware of what you do.

Sūrah al-Ḥashr (59:18)

Tomorrow, here, means the Day of Judgement, brothers and sisters. Allah commands every soul to stop and look honestly at what it has prepared and sent ahead for that Day, the way a traveller checks his provisions before a long and dangerous journey. Notice that Allah surrounds this command with taqwā on both sides, fear Allah at the beginning and fear Allah at the end, as if to say that this self-examination must be wrapped in the consciousness of the One who sees everything. A new year is the natural moment for this accounting. Businesses close their books at the end of a financial year and tally their profit and their loss; how much more does the believer, whose true business is his Hereafter, need to close the books on his soul and ask what he has truly earned.

A Year that Begins with Sacrifice

And it is no coincidence that the Islamic year begins not with a festival of feasting, but with the memory of one of the greatest events in our history: the Hijrah of the Prophet ﷺ from Makkah to Madīnah. The very calendar we live by is counted from that migration, and that tells us something profound about what our faith asks of us. The Companions who made that journey, may Allah be pleased with them, left behind their homes, their wealth, their businesses, their comfort, and sometimes even their families, all for the sake of preserving their faith. Islam, the start of our year reminds us, is not merely a belief held quietly in the heart. It demands sacrifice, commitment, and transformation. And yet the Prophet ﷺ taught us that the Hijrah is not only a journey of the body across the desert.

وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

And the true migrant is the one who abandons what Allah has forbidden.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr) **Hadith No:** 10 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

The migration that earned the Companions their honour was outward, but the Prophet ﷺ opened its meaning so that every one of us, in every age, can make a Hijrah of our own. Every believer needs a personal migration: from sins to obedience, from heedlessness to remembrance, from laziness in worship to consistency, from attachment to the dunyā to preparation for the ākhirah. This is the Hijrah the new year invites. And how many of us, brothers and sisters, enter a new year carrying the exact same sins, the same habits, the same spiritual weaknesses we carried the year before, with no migration at all? A new year that produces no inner change is a number on a calendar and nothing more. The believer makes it the start of a real journey away from what displeases Allah.

And notice what this kind of Hijrah asks of us, for it is harder in one way than the Hijrah of the Companions. They left a place, and once they had crossed the desert the journey was complete. But the migration from sin is a road we walk every single day, leaving the same forbidden thing behind us each morning, refusing to return to it each night. It has no single arrival; it is a direction we choose again and again. Yet it shares with their Hijrah the same heart: that a believer is willing to give up what is comfortable and familiar for the sake of what Allah loves. The Companion left his house and his trade; you may have to leave a habit you enjoy, a friendship that drags you down, an income that is not clean, a screen that swallows your nights. It will cost you something, as their Hijrah cost them everything. But the One you are migrating toward is worth infinitely more than anything you leave behind.

Take Account Before You Are Brought to Account

The leader of this self-reckoning was ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, whose words on this subject every believer should write upon his heart.

Take account of yourselves before you are taken to account, and weigh your deeds before they are weighed against you. For the reckoning will be lighter upon you tomorrow if you reckon with yourselves today.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him

This honest self-accounting is part of true faith, brothers and sisters, and the new year is the moment to do it. So ask yourself, truthfully, in the quiet of your own heart: what habits are distancing me from Allah? What sins do I keep repeating, year after year, without ever truly repenting? Am I spending my time in ways that please my Lord, or in ways I would be ashamed to present to Him? And the hardest question of all: if I were to die tonight, in the state I am in right now, would I be satisfied with the condition of my relationship with Allah? These questions sting, and they are meant to. For the one who answers them honestly today, while there is still time to change the answers, is the one who has understood what a new year is truly for.

How the Righteous Reckoned with Themselves

This self-accounting was not a mere slogan for the best of the believers; it was the daily labour of their souls. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the same man who commanded it, would strike his own foot at night and take himself to task for the day that had passed, asking what he had done. It is related that some of the early Muslims kept account of their words and their deeds the way a careful merchant keeps account of every coin, knowing that the tongue alone can earn or lose a fortune in the sight of Allah. They understood that the soul, left without reckoning, drifts naturally toward its desires, and that the only way to keep it on the straight path is to stop it regularly and demand an answer: where are you going, and what have you sent ahead?

And there is a wisdom in why they were so severe with themselves, brothers and sisters. They knew that there are two reckonings, one we choose and one that is imposed, and that the two are inversely related. The one who reckons with himself honestly in this world, who weeps over his own shortcomings and corrects them before he sleeps, will find his reckoning before Allah light and swift on the Day of Judgement. But the one who never pauses to examine his own soul, who races through his years without ever asking the hard questions, will face the full and heavy reckoning on the Day when there is no longer any chance to fix what is found. The wise believer chooses the lighter of the two reckonings. He brings the courtroom forward into this life, judges himself today while the verdict can still be changed, and so meets Allah with his accounts already in order. A new year is simply a louder call to do what the righteous did every single night.

The Door of Return Is Open

And the greatest way to begin a new year, brothers and sisters, is with sincere tawbah, with turning back to Allah. Now Shayṭān, who wants nothing more than for you to stay exactly where you are, will whisper to the heart that it is too late. You have sinned too much. You have tried before and failed. You cannot change. People like you do not change. But every one of those whispers is a lie, because the

mercy of Allah is greater than every sin a human being could ever commit, and He Himself calls out to the very people who feel they have gone too far.

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ
الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ *

Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Sūrah az-Zumar (39:53)

All sins, brothers and sisters. Not some of them, not the small ones only, but all of them, for the one who returns to Allah in sincere repentance. And Allah did not only leave the door open, He described Himself reaching out His hand, day and night, waiting for His servant to turn back.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيءُ النَّهَارِ، وَيَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِالنَّهَارِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيءُ اللَّيْلِ،
حَتَّىٰ تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا.

Indeed, Allah stretches out His hand by night so that the one who sinned by day may repent, and He stretches out His hand by day so that the one who sinned by night may repent, until the sun rises from its place of setting.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2759 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Imagine that, brothers and sisters: the Lord of the worlds, in His majesty, extending His hand all through the night and all through the day, waiting for you to come back, and this door remains open until either the soul reaches the throat in death or the sun rises from the west at the end of time. Neither of those has happened yet. So perhaps this year can be the year someone finally starts praying consistently. The year someone leaves a secret sin he has carried in shame for too long. The year someone reconnects with the Qur'an, repairs a broken family tie, and sincerely returns to Allah. Do not let Shayṭān cheat you out of that return.

No One Is Beyond Return

And if Shayṭān still whispers that your sins are too many, brothers and sisters, let me remind you of a man the Prophet ﷺ told us about, whose story should kill that whisper forever. There was a man among those before us who had killed ninety-nine people. The weight of it sat on him, and he went searching for a way out, asking about the most knowledgeable person on earth. He was directed to a worshipper, and he asked him whether there was any repentance for a man who had killed ninety-nine souls. The worshipper, with more zeal than knowledge, told him no, there is no repentance for

you, and so the man killed him too, completing one hundred. Imagine the state of that soul, one hundred murders upon his record, and still something in him would not stop searching for Allah.

He asked again for the most knowledgeable person, and this time he was directed to a true scholar, and he put the same question to him: is there any repentance for a man who has killed one hundred people? And the scholar said, who could possibly stand between you and repentance? Then he told him that the land he lived in was a land of evil that would only drag him back, and instructed him to migrate to a distant land of righteous people and worship Allah there. The man set out, making his own Hijrah toward Allah, and he died on the road, partway between the two lands. The angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed over his soul, and Allah commanded that the distance be measured, and the man was found to be even slightly closer to the land of righteousness he was striving toward, and so the angels of mercy took him. A killer of a hundred, forgiven, because he turned and took even one step toward Allah. Brothers and sisters, after a story like that, how can any of us ever say our sins are too great, or that it is too late to begin? The door is not merely open. Allah Himself leans toward the one who takes a single step in His direction.

The Month of Allah

And there is a special mercy in the very month that opens our year, for Muḥarram is one of the four sacred months Allah set apart, and the Prophet ﷺ honoured it with a name he gave to no other month, calling it the Month of Allah. He told us that its fasting carries a particular rank.

أَفْضَلُ الصَّيَامِ بَعْدَ رَمَضَانَ شَهْرُ اللَّهِ الْمُحَرَّمِ، وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الْفَرِيضَةِ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ.

The best fasting after Ramadan is in Allah's month of al-Muḥarram, and the best prayer after the obligatory prayer is the prayer of the night.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 1163 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

The best fasting after the fasting of Ramadan itself is in this opening month of the year, and the Prophet ﷺ gave special weight to one day in it above the rest, the day of 'Āshūrā', the tenth of Muḥarram.

صِيَامُ يَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ أَحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَهُ.

Fasting the day of 'Āshūrā', I hope from Allah, expiates the sins of the year that came before it.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 1162 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Look at the mercy of Allah, brothers and sisters. One sincere day of fasting can become a means of forgiveness for an entire year of minor sins behind you. What a way for Allah to open the new year, washing the page clean before the new chapter even begins. And the Prophet ﷺ would also fast the

ninth alongside the tenth, distinguishing the practice of the Muslims. So the new year arrives carrying a gift in its very first month, and the wise believer reaches out and takes it, beginning the year forgiven and renewed.

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

I say these words of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness; indeed He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

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.

Resolutions of Emotion, or of Action?

Dear brothers and sisters, in the first khutbah we saw that the new year is a reminder of our dwindling time, that Allah swore by time that mankind is in loss, and commanded every soul to look at what it has sent forward. We saw that the year begins with the Hijrah, calling each of us to a personal migration from sin to obedience, and that the door of repentance stands open day and night, with the gift of Muḥarram and ‘Āshūrā’ to wash the page clean. But here is the danger, brothers and sisters: a new year so easily produces only emotion, a warm feeling of resolve on a Friday that has evaporated by Monday. A new year should not merely stir our feelings. It should produce action.

We see this clearly in the world around us at the turn of every year. People make grand resolutions, the gyms fill with new members in the first weeks, the planners are bought, the promises are made, and within a month or two the gyms have emptied again and the planners gather dust, because the resolutions were built on a passing emotion and not on a real plan. The believer is warned by this. If people will pour such energy into resolutions for their bodies and their wealth and abandon them so quickly, how much more carefully must we guard our resolutions for our souls, which actually matter for eternity? The difference between the resolution that lasts and the one that dies is rarely sincerity, for almost everyone is sincere on the first day. The difference is that the lasting one is small enough to keep, tied to a clear plan, and renewed daily before Allah. So let our new-year change be real change: not a flood of promises that drains away, but a few firm commitments we will still be holding when the next Muḥarram comes.

Renew Your Prayer

So let the resolutions be concrete. Begin with the prayer, for it is the first matter we will be questioned about on the Day of Judgement, and the Prophet ﷺ described it as the very line between faith and its abandonment.

العَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ.

The covenant between us and them is the prayer; whoever abandons it has disbelieved.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī and Musnad Aḥmad (from Buraydah) **Hadith No:** Tirmidhī 2621

Authenticity: Ṣaḥīḥ

If your prayer has grown weak, brothers and sisters, let this be the year it is renewed, prayed on time, prayed with presence of heart, prayed in the congregation wherever you can reach it. For when the salah improves, so much of the rest of life improves with it, since it is the rope that ties the servant to his Lord. Allah taught us where to turn for strength in this struggle, commanding us to seek help through patience and through prayer. The one who builds his prayer first finds that the strength to fix everything else flows from it.

And do not wait, brothers and sisters, until you feel ready, until the heart is soft and the mood is right, for that day may never come on its own. The heart softens through the prayer, not before it. The person who waits to feel spiritual before he prays will wait forever; the person who prays will find the feeling grow within the prayer itself. So begin where you are, with the prayer as it is, weak and distracted if that is all you have today, and Allah will build upon the little you bring Him. The new year is not asking you to become a saint overnight. It is asking you to take the next prayer more seriously than the last, and then the one after that, until the rope between you and your Lord, that may have frayed to a thread, is woven thick and strong again.

Reconnect, Leave Sin, and Build Character

Then reconnect with the Qur'an, which is guidance and healing and light, for even a small but consistent portion read each day will transform a heart over the months of a year. And here is the key the Prophet ﷺ gave us for every good resolution, the secret to making change last beyond the first burst of enthusiasm.

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

The most beloved of deeds to Allah are the most consistent of them, even if they are few.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6464, Muslim 783 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Do not begin the year by vowing to read a whole juz' a day and abandoning it within a week. Begin with a page, every day, and never let it drop. A small deed held firmly for a year outweighs a mountain of enthusiasm that collapses by February. Then turn to the sins, for every one of us knows privately what is harming his own soul, the lying, the backbiting, the ḥarām relationship, the addiction, the arrogance, the wasted hours, the tongue that wounds others. Real spiritual growth begins the moment our excuses end. And work on your character, for true religiosity is not only ritual; it shows itself in honesty, mercy, patience, humility, and kindness toward people, and the Prophet ﷺ taught us that nothing will sit heavier on the believer's scale than good character. Build these slowly and steadily, and you will not recognise yourself by the year's end.

And here is a piece of advice, brothers and sisters, for the one who feels overwhelmed by all of this, who looks at the long list of what needs fixing and despairs of where to start. Do not try to change everything at once, for that is the surest way to change nothing. Choose one sin, the single one you know in your heart is doing you the most harm, the one that sits heaviest on your conscience, and make this the year you leave that one thing for the sake of Allah. Just one. Pour your effort into that single Hijrah, guard it, fall and rise and guard it again, and beg Allah for help against it. If you do only that, if you walk out of this year having truly abandoned one beloved sin for your Lord, you will have done something immense, something the angels will have recorded and Allah will have seen. And often, brothers and sisters, when a person pulls out the one root that was poisoning the whole garden, he finds the rest of his faith begins to bloom on its own.

We May Not See Another

And let none of us assume that we are guaranteed to see the close of this year, brothers and sisters, much less the next. Our graves are not dug according to our age. The young return to Allah and the old return to Allah, the healthy and the sick, the rich and the poor, and not one of us knows the hour appointed for him. The only thing that will follow us into that grave is our deeds. Allah reminds us that this dunyā, with its fading wealth and its declining health and its vanishing status, is not the lasting thing, for the Hereafter is better and more enduring, and the Prophet ﷺ told us to live in this world as though we were travellers passing through. So begin this year as a traveller readies himself for the road, with sincere tawbah, with stronger worship, with better character, with more of the Qur'an and more of the remembrance of Allah, and with a clearer preparation for the meeting with Him.

Think of those who sat in these very rows last Muḥarram and are now beneath the earth. Not one of them knew, this time last year, that it would be his last. They made their plans for a year they did not live to see, and the only thing that travelled with them into the grave was whatever they had already sent forward. We will join them, brothers and sisters, sooner than we imagine, and someone will sit in our place next year and be reminded that we are gone. The question is not whether that day comes, but what we will have prepared for it when it does. So let this new year not be a year we merely survive, ticking off its months in heedlessness, but a year we invest, filling it with the deeds we will be

overjoyed to find waiting for us when we arrive. A believer does not fear the passing of the years; he fears only to meet Allah empty-handed, and the new year is his chance to make sure that he does not.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One in whose hand are our years and our days.

O Allah, do not let this year pass except that You are pleased with us. O Allah, make this new year a year of mercy, forgiveness, guidance, and closeness to You, for us and for the whole Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ. O Allah, grant us a true Hijrah from all that displeases You, accept our repentance, and wash away the sins of our past years. O Allah, fix our prayer, attach our hearts to Your Book, and beautify our character. O Allah, have mercy upon our parents as they raised us when we were small, relieve the suffering of the oppressed in every land, and let the last of our deeds be the best of them. 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, the command of justice and excellence with which Allah seals the affair.

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-Naḥl (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