

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

The Witness of Time: A Reckoning with the Years

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

The Witness of Time

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 * 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.**

Time Does Not Celebrate, It Records

Dear brothers and sisters, when a year comes to its end and another begins, the world around us lights its fireworks and counts down with cheering, as though the passing of time were something to applaud. But the believer pauses at that same moment and grows quiet, because he understands a truth the world has forgotten. Time does not celebrate with us. Time records us. Every hour that slips by is being written down, every day is a page sealed and submitted, and every year that passes departs as a witness who will stand before Allah and testify, either for us or against us. So while others mark the turning of the year with noise, the believer marks it with reflection, asking himself the only question that matters: what did I do with the time that will never return? Allah Himself swore by time, and in that oath He announced the condition of all mankind.

وَالْعَصْرِ * إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ *

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

Sūrah al-‘Aṣr (103:1 to 3)

Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, may Allah have mercy on him, said that if people pondered only this short chapter, it would be enough to guide them. For Allah swears by time itself and then declares that every human being is in loss, sinking, drowning in the passing of his own days, except for the few who fill those days with faith, with good deeds, and with calling one another to the truth and to patience. Time is a capital, brothers and sisters, that is spent whether we invest it or waste it. The clock does not stop for the heedless. And on the Day of Judgement, we will be held to account for every moment of it.

لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا عَبْدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ عُمُرِهِ فَيَمْلَأُ عَنْهُ، وَعَنْ عِلْمِهِ فَيَمْلَأُ فَعْلَهُ، وَعَنْ مَالِهِ مِنْ أَيْنَ اكْتَسَبَهُ وَفِيمَ أَنْفَقَهُ، وَعَنْ جِسْمِهِ فَيَمْلَأُ أَبْلَاهُ.

The two feet of a servant will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his life and how he spent it, about his knowledge and what he did with it, about his wealth, how he earned it and how he spent it, and about his body and how he wore it out.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 2417 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ

Look at how the first question on that Day concerns time, our life and how we spent it. And the year that has just left us is part of that life. It will be questioned. So before Allah questions us about it, let us

question ourselves, for the one who takes account of himself in this world will find the reckoning light in the next.

The righteous before us lived with this awareness pressed against their hearts. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, may Allah have mercy on him, used to say that the son of Adam is nothing but a collection of days, and that whenever a day passes, a part of him has passed away with it. Imagine your life as a candle, brothers and sisters, burning steadily whether you are praying or playing, whether you are remembering Allah or scrolling through hours that leave no trace. The same flame that lights a page of Qur'ān burns away an idle afternoon, and both are taken from the one short candle you were given. The believer does not mourn the passing of time, but he refuses to let it pass for nothing.

We Were Created for a Mission, Not for Amusement

Part of the reason we waste our time, brothers and sisters, is that we have forgotten why we were given it. The world tells us that life is a stage for entertainment, that we are here to consume, to be amused, to chase pleasure until the show ends. But Allah lifts that illusion away with a single piercing question.

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ *

Did you think that We created you without purpose, and that you would not be returned to Us?

Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23:115)

We were not created for amusement, and we were not created to be left without return. We were created to know Allah, to worship Him, and to stand before Him. And the Messenger ﷺ drew a clear line between the one who lives by this truth and the one who lives in delusion, and he named the first intelligent and the second helpless.

الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَنَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ.

The intelligent one is he who takes account of himself and works for what comes after death, and the helpless one is he who follows his own desires and then merely wishes from Allah.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 2459 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

Notice that the helpless person is not described as one who does not believe in Allah. He believes, and he hopes in Allah, but his hope has no legs to stand on, for he follows his desires and then expects Paradise without ever working for it. Hope without action, brothers and sisters, is not faith. It is self-deception. The intelligent believer hopes in Allah and then rises and works for what comes after death, and that is the difference between the two at the turning of every year.

And Allah told us plainly the purpose for which He created us and gave us our years, leaving no room for confusion. He said that He did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Him. Worship here is not only the prayer and the fast, brothers and sisters, though these are its heart. It is the whole of a life turned toward Allah: honest work offered for His sake, kindness to a parent, patience in a trial, a smile given to a brother, a desire restrained out of fear of Him. The one who understands this turns his entire year into worship, so that even his sleep and his livelihood become acts that draw him closer to his Lord. And the one who forgets it spends a lifetime busy with everything except the one thing he was made for.

The Open Door at the Turn of the Year

Now let me give you the good news, brothers and sisters, for this khutbah is not meant to crush you under the weight of wasted years. The greatest gift Allah grants us with every new day and every new year is the gift of time still left to repent. As long as you are breathing, the door is open, and Allah has called to the worst of sinners with the most tender of invitations.

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

Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins.

Sūrah az-Zumar (39:53)

All sins, brothers and sisters, however many years they piled up, however heavy they grew. Allah does not merely accept the one who returns to Him, He rejoices at his return. The Prophet ﷺ gave us an image of that joy that should pull every wandering heart back home. Yet this open door has a closing time

لِلَّهِ أَفْرَحُ بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدِهِ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ سَقَطَ عَلَىٰ بَعِيرِهِ وَقَدْ أَضَلَّهُ فِي أَرْضٍ فَلَاةٍ.

Allah is more joyful at the repentance of His servant than one of you who, having lost his mount in a barren land, suddenly finds it again.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6309, Muslim 2747 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Yet this open door has a closing time that none of us can see, and the Messenger ﷺ warned us of the deadline so that we would not gamble with it.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْبَلُ تَوْبَةَ الْعَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يَغْرُغْ.

Indeed, Allah accepts the repentance of the servant as long as the soul has not reached the throat.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 3537 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

As long as the soul has not reached the throat. That is the only deadline, and it is a deadline whose hour is hidden from every one of us. So the wise believer does not say I will repent next year, or when I am older, or when life settles down. He repents now, in this hour, while the door is still open and the soul is still in its place.

The Disease of Delay

And here lies the great danger that steals years from us: the disease of delay, of always intending to change tomorrow. Allah paints for us a terrifying scene of the one who delayed until delay was no longer possible, the moment death arrives and the soul begs for a second chance that will not be given.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ * لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ *

Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back, that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.

Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn (23:99 to 100)

My Lord, send me back. Every soul that ever wasted its years will say these words, and not one of them will be sent back. We who are still here have been given exactly what they will beg for and be refused: more time. So let us not waste it as they wasted theirs. The Messenger ﷺ gave us a piece of advice that, if we truly understood it, would change how we live every single day.

اغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ: شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ، وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ، وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ،
وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ، وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ.

Seize five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your busyness, and your life before your death.

Source: al-Mustadrak (al-Ḥākim) **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Each of those five is a window that is open now and will one day close. The young imagine old age is far away. The healthy cannot picture sickness. The busy promise to worship when they are free, and the free waste their freedom until they are busy. Do not wait for the window to close, brothers and sisters. The deed you keep postponing to a better time may find that the better time never comes.

And the Prophet ﷺ urged us to run toward good deeds before the chance is gone, warning that the conditions of life can turn dark and confusing in an instant, so that the one who hesitates may lose his faith itself before he lost his life.

بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ فِتْنًا كَقِطْعِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ، يُصْبِحُ الرَّجُلُ مُؤْمِنًا وَيُمْسِي كَافِرًا، وَيُمْسِي مُؤْمِنًا وَيُصْبِحُ كَافِرًا.

Hasten to do good deeds before trials come like pieces of a dark night, in which a man is a believer in the morning and a disbeliever by evening, or a believer in the evening and a disbeliever by morning.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 118 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Change Begins Within

Many of us make resolutions at the turn of the year and abandon them within weeks, and then we wonder why nothing in our lives ever truly changes. Allah taught us the law of all real change, a law that never fails.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ *

Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves.

Sūrah ar-Ra'd (13:11)

Change does not begin with our circumstances; it begins within the heart. And the secret to lasting change is not a single burst of energy that fades, but consistency, the small deed held onto faithfully. The Prophet ﷺ was asked which deeds Allah loves most, and his answer overturns the way most of us think about worship.

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

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

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

So do not begin this year by promising to pray the whole night and read the entire Qur'ān in a week, only to collapse and abandon it all by the next month. Begin instead with a small and steady deed: two

units of prayer in the depth of the night, a single page of the Qur'ān each day, one act of charity each week. The river that never stops flowing carves the valley; the flood that comes once changes nothing.

This Year Begins at Home

And brothers and sisters, if we are honest, the change we most often neglect is the change closest to us, inside our own homes. We can be careful with our manners among strangers and careless with those we love, attentive to our work and absent from our families. But Allah did not place these spouses and these children in our care by accident, and the Messenger ﷺ reminded us that every one of us is a guardian who will be questioned.

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَمَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا.

Each of you is a guardian, and each of you is responsible for his flock. The leader is a guardian and responsible for his flock, the man is a guardian over his family and responsible for his flock, and the woman is a guardian in her husband's house and responsible for her flock.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 893, Muslim 1829 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

So let this year's true resolution be made inside our homes. Let it be character before grades, and faith before fame, and discipline before indulgence. Our children will not remember how many gifts we bought them, but they will carry forever the example of a father who guarded his prayer and a mother whose tongue was soft with the remembrance of Allah. We are raising either the believers of tomorrow or the heedless of tomorrow, and the year that has just begun is part of the time in which that is being decided.

And know, brothers and sisters, that every child is handed to us pure, leaning by its very nature toward its Lord, and what we pour into that child in these years is what will shape the soul for a lifetime. The Messenger ﷺ told us that every child is born upon the natural disposition, the fiṭrah, and that it is the influences around him that bend him one way or another. Our homes are the first and strongest of those influences. A year spent filling a child's heart with the love of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, with prayer made beautiful and the Qur'ān made familiar, is a year invested in a treasure that will keep giving long after we are in our graves, for a righteous child who prays for his parent is a charity that never ends.

A Year of Reading and Raising Believers

And brothers and sisters, let this be a year in which we return to knowledge, for the very first word Allah revealed to His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم was a command to read.

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ *

Read, in the name of your Lord who created.

Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96:1)

Our religion did not begin with a sword or a slogan, but with a word: Read. The knowledge most worth seeking is that which brings us closer to Allah and teaches us how to worship Him and how to treat His creation. The Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم made the path of knowledge a path to Paradise itself, so that every hour a believer spends learning his religion, teaching it to his children, or sitting in a gathering of remembrance, is an hour spent walking toward the Garden.

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ.

Whoever travels a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him by it a path to Paradise.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2699 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

So let a portion of this year be given to learning, even a little, a single beneficial lesson each week, a book of Sīrah read with our children, a circle of knowledge we commit to attending. A family that learns its religion together is a family that holds together when trials come.

A Year of Drawing Closer to the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم

And let this be a year, brothers and sisters, in which the love of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم grows in our hearts, for our faith is not complete without it. He himself told us where his place must be in the ranking of our hearts.

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his father, his child, and all of mankind.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 15, Muslim 44 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

And love of him is not a feeling we merely claim with the tongue. It is shown by following his way, by reviving his Sunnah in our homes, by living the supplications he taught us morning and evening, and by sending blessings upon him often. A heart that grows in love of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم across a year is a heart that has gained more than any wealth that year could bring.

A Year Through a Believer's Eyes

So let each of us look honestly at the year that has passed, not to drown in regret, but to take account like a merchant at the close of his books. Where did my hours go? How many of them were given to the screen that returned nothing, and how many to the worship that will meet me in my grave? Did my prayer grow stronger this year or weaker? Did I draw closer to the Qur'ān or further from it? Did I become softer with my parents or harsher? And then let us look forward and write a new account, asking Allah to make this coming year one in which time becomes a witness for us and not against us. For a new year is not a reset button that erases the past. It is a renewed covenant with Allah, and whoever begins it sincerely with Him will find that Allah is enough for him.

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

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.

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 khutbah we stood at the turning of the year and remembered that time does not celebrate with us, it records us, and that we will be questioned first of all about our life and how we spent it. We saw that we were created for a mission and not for amusement, that the door of repentance stands open until the soul reaches the throat, that delay is a disease, that real change begins within the heart and is built by consistency, and that this change must reach into our own homes. Now let us settle on what truly counts as success, and on a plan to carry it forward.

The Only Definition of Success

The world has a thousand definitions of a successful year. More money, a better title, a bigger house, more recognition. But Allah swept all of these aside and gave us the only definition that will still stand on the Day of Judgement.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۚ فَمَنْ ذُحِّجَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۚ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ *

Every soul will taste death. So whoever is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has truly succeeded. And worldly life is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.

Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:185)

That is the only success, brothers and sisters, to be saved from the Fire and admitted into the Garden, and everything else this world offers is, in the words of Allah, the enjoyment of delusion. The Prophet ﷺ taught us to hold this world lightly, to treat it as a place of striving and not of settling.

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ.

The world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the disbeliever.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2956 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

A Plan for the Year Ahead

So let us not leave this masjid with only feelings, but with a plan we can actually keep. Choose this year to guard the five prayers in their times, for that is the first thing we will be asked about after our life itself. Choose a daily portion of the Qur'ān, even a single page, so that the Book becomes a companion and not a stranger. Choose to repent each night before you sleep, closing each day's account before a new one opens. Choose one steady charity and one habit of remembrance to keep your heart among the living. And choose to think well of Allah through it all, for He has promised to be for us what we expect of Him.

And let this plan be small enough that you can actually keep it, brothers and sisters, for a modest plan held firmly for a whole year will carry you further than a grand plan abandoned in a month. Write down two or three changes, no more, and return to them each night. Ask yourself before you sleep what you did that day for the year that is recording you, and if the answer is little, let tomorrow be better. This is how a life is changed, not in a single dramatic leap, but in a quiet accounting repeated night after night until the soul itself is transformed.

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي.

Allah says: I am as My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 7405, Muslim 2675 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

Between Hope and Fear

Let none of us leave crushed by the years we have wasted, and let none leave careless about the years we have left. Fear should wake us from the sleep of delay, and hope should carry us to the open door of repentance. The believer walks toward Allah on both wings, fearing the deadline that is hidden and hoping in the mercy that forgives all sins. The years behind us we cannot recover, but the years ahead

are still in our hands, and a single sincere turning to Allah can make the rest of a life worth more than all of its beginning.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One who owns all our days. O Allah, forgive us our past years and our repeated sins, and accept our repentance before it is too late. O Allah, make the coming year a year of discipline, sincerity, and obedience. O Allah, rectify our hearts, our homes, our spouses, and our children, and make our children a source of ongoing charity for us. O Allah, protect us from heedlessness, from procrastination, and from hypocrisy, and make us consistent in our prayer, our Qur‘ān, and our character. O Allah, grant us steadfastness until death and a beautiful ending, and enter us into Paradise without reckoning and save us from the Fire. O Allah, forgive us and our parents and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ *

Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, You are the Bestower.

Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:8)

The Final Reminder

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

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يَعْظُمُ لَعَنُكُمْ 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