

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

*Worldly Life and the Afterlife:
Where Is Your Heart?*



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Worldly Life and the Afterlife: Where Is Your Heart?

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 أَصْدَقَ 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.**

A Test, Not a Destination

We live in a world that pulls at us from every direction toward the dunyā: toward more wealth, more status, more pleasure, more of everything that glitters and fades. The advertisements, the screens, the conversations around us all whisper the same message, that this life is the prize and we had better grab as much of it as we can before it slips away. But the intelligent believer, brothers and sisters, knows a truth that the world has forgotten: that this life is a test and not the destination, a bridge and not a home, a field in which we plant for a harvest we will only gather after we die.

It is related that a wise man, at the end of his life, gave his son a piece of counsel that cuts through all our confusion. He told him to involve himself in this world only to the measure of the time he would actually spend in it, and to prepare for the Hereafter to the measure of the time he would spend there. He told him to keep working for Paradise until he had complete certainty that he had been saved from the Fire, and to avoid anything that would drag him toward it. And then he said something that has silenced the soul of every honest listener for centuries. He said, my son, if one day you truly wish to disobey Allah, then go ahead, but find a place where Allah cannot see you. The son understood at once that there is no such place, that the eye of Allah is upon him in the darkest room and the loneliest hour, and so the sin he imagined he could hide was never hidden at all. There is a story of a teacher who handed each of his students a bird and a knife and told them to go and slaughter it where no one could see them. They all returned having done it, except one, who came back with the bird alive. When asked why, he said, you told me to do it where no one could see, and I could find no place where Allah does not see. That student understood the whole of the religion in a single moment.

Weigh the wisdom in that counsel, brothers and sisters, for it is built on simple arithmetic that we somehow refuse to do. How long will any of us live in this world? Sixty years, perhaps eighty, perhaps far less, no one knows. And how long is the life that comes after? Forever, without end. Yet we pour our energy, our anxiety, our planning, and the best hours of our days into the few short years, and spare only the leftover scraps for the eternity. If a person were told he would spend one night in a hotel and then the rest of his life in a house he was building, only a fool would furnish the hotel room lavishly and leave the house a bare shell. And yet that is precisely how most of humanity lives, brothers and sisters, lavishing everything on the night's lodging and neglecting the eternal home. The believer simply does the arithmetic and lets it govern his choices.

This World Is Passing, the Next Endures

Allah Himself draws the comparison for us again and again, weighing the two abodes against each other so that no honest heart could prefer the lesser. He says plainly which is better and which is lasting.

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا * وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى *

But you prefer the life of this world, while the Hereafter is better and more lasting.

Sūrah al-A‘lā (87:16 to 17)

Better, and more lasting. The dunyā may glitter, but it is neither better nor lasting, and Allah named it for what it truly is, a fleeting enjoyment that deceives the one who trusts it.

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ *

And the life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.

Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57:20)

The enjoyment of delusion, brothers and sisters. It promises permanence and delivers an ending. It promises satisfaction and leaves the heart thirstier than before. And no one understood the true size of this world better than the one whom Allah could have given the whole of it, our Prophet ﷺ, who chose instead to live with almost nothing in it, and who described his own relationship to the dunyā in an image we should carry with us for the rest of our lives.

مَا لِي وَلِلدُّنْيَا، مَا أَنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا كَرَكَابٍ اسْتَظَلَّ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ، ثُمَّ رَاحَ وَتَرَكَهَا.

What have I to do with this world? I am in this world only like a rider who shades himself under a tree, then moves on and leaves it behind.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī (from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd) **Hadith No:** 2377 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

A traveller on a long journey stops in the heat of the day to rest a moment in the shade of a tree, and then he rises and continues on his way. He does not unpack his life beneath that tree. He does not build a house around it or quarrel over who owns its branches, because he knows he is only passing through. That, the Prophet ﷺ told us, is what this whole world is: a patch of shade on a journey to Allah. How strange, then, that so many of us spend our entire lives decorating the shade and forget that we are travelling.

The Ones Who See Only the Surface

And yet most people live as though this shade were the destination, because they see only the outward shell of this life and are blind to what lies beyond it. Allah described them exactly.

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ *

They know only the outward appearance of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter.

Sūrah ar-Rūm (30:7)

They are experts in the surface, masters of the markets and the prices and the trends, and yet utterly heedless of the one reality that will matter when everything else is taken from them. And from this heedlessness grows a particular kind of slavery, the worst slavery of all, in which a person becomes the servant not of Allah but of his own wealth. The Prophet ﷺ named this servant and pronounced his ruin.

تَعِسَ عَبْدُ الدِّينَارِ وَعَبْدُ الدِّرْهِمِ وَعَبْدُ الْقَطِيفَةِ وَعَبْدُ الْخَمِيصَةِ، إِنْ أُعْطِيَ رَضِيَ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطَ سَخَطَ.

Wretched is the slave of the dinar, the slave of the dirham, the slave of fine cloth and luxurious garments. If he is given, he is pleased, and if he is not given, he is enraged.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī **Hadith No:** 2887 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Look at how the Prophet ﷺ diagnosed this person. His pleasure and his anger, his whole inner weather, rise and fall with money. Give him and he is happy, withhold from him and he rages, because his heart has made the dinar and the dirham its master. The believer is meant to own wealth, brothers and sisters, not to be owned by it, to hold it in his hand and not in his heart. Wealth itself is not evil, and the Prophet ﷺ praised righteous wealth in the hand of a righteous man. The danger is attachment, the slow surrender of the heart to a thing that cannot follow us into the grave.

The Dunyā in the Palm of Our Hand

And we must be honest, brothers and sisters, that no generation before us has been pulled toward the dunyā as relentlessly as ours, because we now carry it in our pockets. The same device that can open the Qur'an opens an endless scroll of other people's wealth, other people's holidays, other people's bodies and homes and successes, each one carefully staged to make our own provision look small. We have built a culture that worships the new, that measures a person by what he owns and what he displays, that turns even our worship into something to be performed for an audience. We line up before dawn for a sale and cannot find ten minutes for the dawn prayer. We research a purchase for hours and give not a moment's thought to the purchase of our own salvation. The surface of the dunyā has never glittered so brightly, nor been so close to the eye.

So the believer in this age must fight a battle the early Muslims never knew, the battle for his own attention. Every hour you pour into the glittering surface of the world is an hour subtracted from the

only life in which you can plant for the next. The Prophet ﷺ warned that when a people grow so attached to their fields and their trade that they abandon the call of their faith, Allah sends upon them a humiliation He will not lift until they return to their religion. That is the price of letting the dunyā grow large in the heart: not only loss in the Hereafter, but weakness and lowliness in this life too. So guard your gaze and your hours from the things that inflate this world in your eyes, and ask yourself honestly, when you reach for that screen out of habit, whether you are tending your shade or forgetting your journey.

A Garden Beyond Imagining

Now lift your eyes from the passing shade to what Allah has prepared for those who chose Him over it. The Prophet ﷺ described a reward so far beyond our experience that language itself runs out before it.

أَعَدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ، وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ، وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ.

I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has never crossed the heart of any human being.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 3244, Muslim 2824 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

No eye has seen it, no ear has heard of it, no heart has even imagined it. Every beauty we have ever beheld in this world, every pleasure, every joy, is less than a drop beside the ocean of what awaits the believer there, and it is a place where the suffering of this life is utterly absent.

لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ *

No fatigue will touch them therein, nor will they ever be removed from it.

Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15:48)

No exhaustion, no grief, no illness, no fear, no death, and never to be removed from it. Reflect on those last words, brothers and sisters, never to be removed. The deepest ache of every joy in this world is that it ends. The holiday ends, the gathering ends, the years of health end, the life itself ends. But the joy of Paradise carries no ending within it, and that alone makes it a different thing in kind from anything the dunyā can offer. We are choosing, every day, between a pleasure that is poisoned by its ending and a pleasure that never ends at all.

And there is something the dunyā can never sell at any price, brothers and sisters, no matter how much of it a person gathers. It cannot sell him a peaceful heart, for how many of the wealthiest lie awake at night, anxious and empty, surrounded by everything and at rest in nothing. It cannot sell him a good ending, for death comes to the rich and the poor alike, and the fortune a man spent his life

building stays behind at the edge of the grave and does not follow him in. And it cannot sell him the pleasure of Allah, which is the one thing worth having. These, the only treasures that last, are bought with a currency the dunyā does not accept: with faith, with worship, with sincerity, with good deeds done for the sake of Allah. So the one who spends his whole life accumulating what cannot enter the grave, and neglects what alone will benefit him there, has made the worst trade a human being can make, exchanging a fortune that lasts forever for a handful of dust that he must drop at the threshold of his tomb.

How Many Sell the Eternal for the Passing

And still the deception of wealth pulls at the heart, until a person stops even asking whether what he grasps is lawful. The Prophet ﷺ foretold an age in which this would become the norm, and we are living in it.

لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يُبَالِي الْمَرْءُ مَا أَخَذَ مِنْهُ، أَمِنَ الْحَلَالِ أَمْ مِنَ الْحَرَامِ.

A time will surely come upon people when a person will not care how he acquired his wealth, whether from what is lawful or from what is unlawful.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī **Hadith No:** 2059 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Is this not our age exactly, brothers and sisters, when the only question many ask of an opportunity is whether it is profitable, never whether it is permitted? The believer who has weighed this world against the next does not live this way. He holds himself to the boundaries of the ḥalāl even when the ḥarām would make him richer, because he knows that wealth gained through the anger of Allah is not a gain at all but a debt that will be collected on the Day of Judgement. And the Prophet ﷺ gave us the single phrase that should govern our entire relationship with this world.

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ.

Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveller passing through.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī **Hadith No:** 6416 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

A stranger does not sink his roots into a land that is not his. A traveller passing through carries only what he needs and keeps his eyes fixed on his destination. Ibn ‘Umar, who narrated this, would add: when you reach the evening, do not expect to see the morning, and when you reach the morning, do not expect to see the evening; take from your health for your sickness, and from your life for your death. This is not a call to abandon the world, brothers and sisters, but to pass through it as one who is going somewhere, holding it lightly, using it as provision for the road, and never mistaking the inn for home.

Looking Back from the End

There is a way to see this world clearly that the Prophet ﷺ and the righteous after him used again and again, and it is to look at our present life from the vantage point of its end. Picture the moment, brothers and sisters, when you are lying in your final illness, the doctors have done what they can, and your family is gathered around you knowing what you all know. In that moment, what will you wish you had done more of? Not one person, in the honest clarity of that hour, has ever wished he had spent more time at the office, or accumulated a larger pile of wealth, or chased one more promotion, or won one more argument over money. The things that consume our days shrink to nothing as the end approaches, and the things we neglected, the prayers we rushed, the charity we withheld, the Qur'an we left closed, the family we did not cherish, the repentance we kept delaying, suddenly stand before us as the only things that ever mattered.

So the intelligent believer does not wait for that hour to gain its clarity. He brings the clarity forward into today. He asks himself now what he will wish for then, and he begins to do it while he still has the strength and the time, for the regret of the deathbed is the most useless regret of all, arriving exactly when nothing can be done about it. This is what the Prophet ﷺ meant when he praised the one who calls his own soul to account and works for what comes after death. He has simply moved the reckoning forward, judging himself in this world before he is judged in the next, weighing his deeds while he can still add to them. The dunyā loses its grip on the heart that has learned to look at it from the edge of the grave, for from there its glitter is exposed for what it always was, a patch of shade on a road that leads somewhere far more lasting.

How the Best of People Held the World

If we want to see this teaching lived rather than merely spoken, we look to the Prophet ﷺ and those around him, for they had the truest understanding of what this world is worth. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, once entered upon the Prophet ﷺ and found him lying on a simple mat of palm fibre that had pressed its marks into his blessed side. 'Umar looked around the room and saw almost nothing in it, and his eyes filled with tears. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him why he wept, and 'Umar said, O Messenger of Allah, Khosrau and Caesar live amid their silks and their gardens, and you are the Messenger of Allah, and this is all you have. And the Prophet ﷺ answered with words that should reorder every heart in this masjid. He said, are you not pleased, O 'Umar, that for them is the world, and for us is the Hereafter? He who could have commanded the treasures of the earth chose to pass through it with almost nothing, because his heart was fixed on what endures.

The Companions inherited this vision and lived by it, and one of the most piercing descriptions of these two abodes comes from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him.

The world is departing and turning its back, and the Hereafter is arriving and coming forward, and each of the two has its children. So be among the children of the Hereafter, and do not be among the children of the world. For today there is action and no reckoning, and tomorrow there will be reckoning and no action.

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him

Today there is action and no reckoning, and tomorrow there will be reckoning and no action. Sit with that, brothers and sisters. This life is the only chance we will ever have to act, to pray, to give, to repent, to mend what we have broken, for once death comes the door of action is shut forever and only the accounting remains. Every day that passes is a day of working subtracted from a fixed and dwindling number, and not one of us knows how many remain. The children of the Hereafter spend their days planting; the children of the world spend their days decorating a house they are about to leave.

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.

The Two Departures

Dear brothers and sisters, there comes a moment that will arrive for every single one of us in this masjid, a moment we cannot delay or bargain away: the moment the soul leaves the body. And the Prophet ﷺ described that moment for us in detail, so that we would prepare for it while we still can. He told us that when the believing servant is about to leave this world, angels with faces bright as the sun descend to him, bearing a shroud and a fragrance from Paradise, and the Angel of Death says gently, O good soul, come out to the forgiveness and pleasure of Allah, and the soul flows out as easily as a drop of water slips from the lip of a jug. They wrap it in that heavenly fragrance, sweeter than musk, and carry it up through the heavens, and at every gate the angels ask, whose beautiful soul is this, and it is welcomed until it reaches its Lord.

But he ﷺ also told us of the other departure, the one we must labour our whole lives to avoid. When the wicked soul is about to leave, dark and terrible angels descend with a coarse cloth, and the Angel of Death says, O foul soul, come out to the anger and wrath of Allah, and the soul is torn from the body as painfully as a thorn is dragged through wet wool, and a stench rises from it worse than any corpse, and no gate of heaven opens to it. This narration is preserved for us as an authentic hadith, reported by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd from al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib, may Allah be pleased with him. Two souls, two departures, and the difference between them is not the wealth they leave behind, for both leave it all behind, but the life they lived and the Lord they served. Which departure, brothers and sisters, are we preparing for with the choices of our days?

And the same hadith continues into the grave, which the Prophet ﷺ told us is the first stage of the journey of the Hereafter. The believer, after he is questioned and answers with the faith he lived by, has his grave widened for him as far as the eye can see, a window opened to his place in Paradise, and a beautiful companion brought to keep him company until the Day he is raised. But the one who lived

heedless of Allah, when he is questioned, can only stammer, I do not know, and his grave is constricted upon him until his ribs are crushed together, and a window is opened to his place in the Fire, so that he begs, my Lord, do not let the Hour come. The Prophet ﷺ described all of this not to frighten us into despair but to wake us while waking still benefits us, for the grave is not the end of the story, it is the first night of a journey that never ends. And every soul will lie in it according to the life it spent above it. The wealth we spend our days chasing will not visit us there. Only our deeds will keep us company in that narrow place.

Not to Flee the World, but to Pass Through It

Now let no one misunderstand the message of this khutbah. Islam does not ask us to abandon the world, to neglect our work, or to despise the provision Allah has spread out for us. Allah Himself commanded us to walk the earth and seek our sustenance.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذُلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

✱

It is He who made the earth tame for you, so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision, and to Him is the resurrection.

Sūrah al-Mulk (67:15)

Notice how Allah ends even the command to earn: and to Him is the resurrection. Work, walk the earth, eat of His provision, He says, but never forget where you are walking to. The believer earns and trades and builds, but he does it all as a means to the Hereafter, not as an end in itself. He works for the dunyā as one who is leaving it, and works for the ākhirah as one who is going to it forever. And when the heart begins to drift, when the world starts to grow large in our eyes, Allah calls us back with one urgent word.

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

So flee to Allah. Indeed, I am to you a clear warner from Him.

Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51:50)

Flee to Allah. We flee from danger, and the greatest danger is a life poured entirely into a world that is about to end. So the practical work of this week, brothers and sisters, is simply to put the dunyā back in its proper place. Guard your prayers as the appointment that matters more than any other. Give from your wealth in charity, sending it ahead to the only account that will still be open after death. Seek beneficial knowledge, help the people around you, keep your earnings within the ḥalāl, and take

from your healthy days something for the day you will lie in the grave. Use the world, do not let it use you. Be the rider who rests in the shade and then rises and moves on.

And let each of us carry home one honest question, the kind that changes a life when it is answered truthfully. If my soul were taken tonight, in the state I am in right now, which of the two departures would be mine? When I look at how I spend my hours and my money, where is my treasure truly stored, in the bank of this world or the bank of the next? What is the one habit of attachment, the one love of the dunyā, that I know is pulling my heart down, and am I willing to begin loosening its grip this week? The believer does not wait for the deathbed to ask these questions, for on the deathbed it is too late to change the answers. He asks them now, while there is still action and no reckoning, and he lets the answers reshape his days. A single hour of this honest accounting is worth more than years of heedless living, because it turns a traveller who had forgotten his destination back toward the road.

The Greatest Joy of All

And what is the summit of the reward, the joy above every joy of that eternal home? It is not the rivers, nor the gardens, nor the mansions, beautiful as they are. The Prophet ﷺ taught us, and Allah declared in His Book, that the highest gift of Paradise is to look upon the Face of Allah Himself.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ * إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ *

Faces, that Day, will be radiant, looking toward their Lord.

Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75:22 to 23)

The people of Paradise, the Prophet ﷺ told us, will be given no gift more beloved to them than the sight of their Lord, so that all the delights of the Garden will be forgotten in that moment of gazing upon Him. That, brothers and sisters, is what we are choosing when we choose the ākhirah over the dunyā: not merely an escape from the Fire, but the nearness of Allah and the vision of His noble Face. And against the weight of that, what is a life spent chasing the shade of a passing tree? Allah summed up the whole matter of success and failure in a single verse, and with it we should weigh every ambition of our lives.

Imagine it, if the heart can stretch that far. Every pleasure of this world reaches us through a veil, dimmed and mixed with worry, and even at its sweetest it is haunted by the knowledge that it will pass. But there, the believer will look upon his Lord directly, with no veil and no ending and no fear, and the scholars said that this single moment will make every hardship he ever endured in the path of Allah feel as though it never happened. The man who lowered his gaze for Allah, who guarded his wealth from the ḥarām, who stood in prayer when sleep was sweeter, who gave when giving was hard, will find in that gaze the full payment for all of it and infinitely more. This is the prize, brothers and sisters. Not the mansions and not the rivers, beautiful as they are, but the Face of the One we were made to worship. Will we really sell our share of that for a few years of chasing things that rust and rot and are buried without us?

قَالَ
فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ *

So whoever is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has truly succeeded. And the life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.

Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:185)

Success, in the final accounting, is one thing and one thing only: to be saved from the Fire and admitted to the Garden. By that measure, a man may gather every fortune of this world and die a failure, and a poor man may leave the world with empty hands and be among the greatest of winners. So measure your life by the verse, brothers and sisters, and not by the markets. Do not sell the eternal Hereafter for this short and deceiving life.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One in whose hand is this world and the next.

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرَ هَمِّنَا وَلَا مَبْلَغَ عِلْمِنَا، وَاجْعَلِ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُنَا وَمَقَرُّنَا.

O Allah, do not make this world our greatest concern, nor the limit of our knowledge, and make the Hereafter our true home and final abode.

O Allah, make us of those who prefer what endures over what perishes, who pass through this world as travellers and store their treasure with You. O Allah, grant us a good ending, and let the soul of each of us leave to Your forgiveness and pleasure, and gather us in the Garden, gazing upon Your noble Face. O Allah, set right the affairs of this Ummah, relieve the oppressed and the suffering, and forgive us and our parents and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. 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

So leave this place today, brothers and sisters, with one resolve above all others: that you will be a traveller in this world and not a settler in it, holding the dunyā in your hand and never in your heart, and storing your true treasure with the One to whom you are returning. 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