

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

Ten Days That Outweigh a Lifetime

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

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SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Ten Days That Outweigh a Lifetime

The greatest sale of your life arrives every year almost silently. Will it find you asleep, or ready?

WHY THIS MATTERS

A Season Louder Than Every Sale

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me ask you something honestly before we begin. When was the last time an advertisement made your heart race? When did a screen last flash *last chance, offer ends tonight, unbeatable price* and you felt that small tug of panic, that fear of missing out, that told you to act right now or be left behind? If you are anything like me, it happens far more often than we would like to admit. We live in a world drowning in superlatives. The best deal. The lowest price. The final hours. Our phones are crowded with promises, most of them exaggerated and nearly all of them forgotten within a week, and yet they somehow seize our attention and our devotion in a way that few things in our lives can.

We have been trained, quietly and thoroughly, by a thousand advertisements. We set alarms for sales. We queue outside stores before dawn. We refresh a page at the exact second a discount opens, terrified of losing a chance to save a little money on something we will barely remember owning. And here is the strange, almost painful truth I want to share with you today: the single greatest seasonal opportunity that exists for any human being, the days in which the smallest deed is multiplied beyond anything the rest of the year can offer, arrives every single year almost completely silently, and most of us let it pass without even noticing that it came.

There is no billboard for it. No push notification. No influencer counting down to it. It is announced only in the Book of Allah and in the words of His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. These are the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and I want you to imagine, just for a moment, that they are the greatest sale of your entire life, one where the currency is not dollars but deeds, and the profit is not a discount but forgiveness that you will be desperate for on the Day you stand before your Lord. How important are these days? Important enough that Allah, the Lord of the worlds, swore an oath by them. And when the King of kings swears by a thing, understand that He is pointing to its greatness, for He does not swear by the trivial.

وَالْفَجْرِ * وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ

By the dawn, and by the ten nights.

Surah Al-Fajr (89:1-2)

Ibn Abbas, Ibn az-Zubayr, Mujahid, and a host of scholars from the early and later generations all explained that the ten nights by which Allah swears here are the first ten of Dhul-Hijjah, and Ibn Kathir declared this the correct opinion. Imagine that, my dear brother and sister. Out of all the countless nights in the year, Allah singled out these ten and bound an oath to them. We honour the last ten nights of Ramadan, and rightly so, we pour ourselves into them. But here are ten full days that the Prophet ﷺ ranked above every other stretch of the year for the doing of good, and we are at genuine risk of sleeping straight through them, because no algorithm reminds us they are on their way.

THE SACRED FOUR

Why These Months Were Set Apart

To understand these ten days, we must first understand the month they crown, because Dhul-Hijjah is not an ordinary month. It is one of the four sacred months that Allah set apart from the very moment He created the heavens and the earth. Think about that timescale for a moment. Before there were oceans, before there were mountains, before the first human drew breath, the sanctity of these months was already written into the fabric of creation. Allah tells us this plainly.

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ
يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ذَلِكَ
الدين القيم فلا تظلموا فيهن أنفسكم

*Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the Register of Allah from the day He created the heavens and the earth, of which four are sacred. That is the upright religion, **so do not wrong yourselves during them.***

Surah At-Tawbah (9:36)

And the Prophet ﷺ did not leave us to guess which four they were. He named them for us with beautiful precision, so that no believer would ever be in doubt about the months his Lord had honoured.

إِنَّ الزَّمَانَ قَدِ اسْتَدَارَ كَهَيْئَتِهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ، السَّنَةُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا، مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ،
 ثَلَاثَةٌ مُتَوَالِيَاتٌ: ذُو الْقَعْدَةِ وَذُو الْحِجَّةِ وَالْمَحَرَّمُ،
 وَرَجَبُ مُضَرَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ جُمَادَى وَشَعْبَانَ

Time has come full circle to its form on the day Allah created the heavens and the earth. The year is twelve months, of which four are sacred: three consecutive, Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah, and al-Muharram, and Rajab of Mudar, which is between Jumada and Sha'ban.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 3197 and Sahih Muslim: 1679 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaquun Alayh (agreed upon)

Let me tell you how deep this sanctity ran. Even the pagan Arabs before Islam, a people steeped in idolatry, a people who buried their daughters alive and worshipped stones, even they honoured these months. When the sacred months arrived, they would lay down their weapons. The endless tribal wars would fall silent. The clash of swords would stop across the entire land, and a man who had a blood feud against your family could walk right past you in safety, because the time itself demanded reverence. Now let that settle in your heart. If people who did not even know Allah could feel the weight of these months in their bones, how much more should we, who know Him, who love Him, who pray to Him five times a day, fill these months with worship instead of wasting them?

That is why Allah closed the verse with a command that is easy to skim past: *so do not wrong yourselves during them*. The sacred months are a mercy, my dear brother and sister. They are a recurring season in which Allah opens the doors of reward wider than usual and asks us, simply, to walk through them. He did not have to give us a season like this. He did not owe us a discount on the path to Paradise. But out of His generosity He set aside these times, year after year, so that even the one who has fallen behind has a chance to catch up.

A Season to Lay Down Your Sins

But there is a second face to the sanctity of these months, and I would be doing you a disservice if I passed over it. Allah did not only tell us that good deeds are magnified in the sacred months. He warned that wrongdoing is graver in them too. Notice how, the moment He named the four sacred months, He immediately said, *so do not wrong yourselves during them*. The scholars explained that a sin committed in a sacred time carries a heavier weight than the very same sin committed at another time, just as a good deed in a sacred time is multiplied. The honour of the time adds to the gravity of what is done in it.

So understand this clearly: these ten days are not only a season to pile up good. They are a season to lay down evil, and the two go hand in hand. Let me ask you honestly, what is the use of a believer fasting the day of Arafah with his stomach empty while his eyes, his tongue, and his hands are full of the very sins he is begging Allah to forgive? What sense does it make to knock at the door of mercy with one hand while the other hand is still clutching the thing that closes it?

So let the arrival of these days be a summons to honest, private repentance. I want you to do something, and do it soon. Sit alone, somewhere quiet, put your phone away, and bring to mind the sins you have grown comfortable with. Not the dramatic ones. The quiet ones. The ones you no longer even notice. The glance you do not lower. The wealth that came from a doubtful source that you have made peace with. The tongue that is soft with strangers and sharp with your own family. The prayer that you rush through, or delay, or abandon when no one is watching. Name them, one by one. Feel the shame of them before Allah. And then resolve, sincerely, to leave them, and return to your Lord while the door is wide open and the reward is multiplied.

A house is not decorated while its floor is still covered in filth. You sweep first, then you build. Repent first, my dear brother, my dear sister, then add your new good on top. Clear away the old debt before you rush to earn new profit. This is why the people of knowledge placed repentance first among the deeds of the ten days, and it is where I am asking you to begin too.

Better Than Every Other Day of the Year

Now let me bring you to the very heart of the matter, to a statement the Prophet ﷺ made about these ten days that was so striking, so almost unbelievable, that his own Companions, the men who had left

everything to follow him, could not simply nod and accept it. They pressed him. They asked him to confirm it, because it sounded too enormous to be true.

مَا مِنْ أَيَّامٍ الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ فِيهِنَّ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ
هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامِ الْعَشْرِ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَلَا الْجِهَادُ
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: وَلَا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، إِلَّا
رَجُلٌ خَرَجَ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ فَلَمْ يَرْجِعْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ بِشَيْءٍ

*There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days. They said: O Messenger of Allah, **not even jihad in the path of Allah?** He said: Not even jihad in the path of Allah, except a man who goes out with his self and his wealth and returns with none of it.*

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 969 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Pause and sit with this exchange, because it is extraordinary. The Companions knew the immense rank of jihad. They knew that giving your very life and your wealth in the path of Allah was among the pinnacles of devotion. So when they heard that ordinary righteous deeds in these ten days were more beloved to Allah than that, they were astonished. *Not even that, O Messenger of Allah?* And he ﷺ confirmed it: not even that, save for the one exception, the one who gives everything and comes back with nothing at all, the martyr who keeps neither his life nor his wealth.

Do you understand what this means for you and me? It means that an ordinary deed done in these ten days, a fast, a prayer, a charity, a word of remembrance, even a kind word to your mother, is more beloved to Allah than almost the highest sacrifice a human being can offer in any other season of the year. The exact same prayer you pray every single day, prayed in these ten days, weighs more in the scale. The exact same dollar of charity, given now, is dearer to Allah than it would have been last week. Allah has

placed a multiplier upon time itself. He has, if you will forgive the image, marked down the price of Paradise for ten days. And the wise believer runs to trade in this market before it closes, while the heedless one scrolls past the announcement without even looking up.

THE GATHERING OF WORSHIP

Why These Days Contain Everything

The scholars asked a beautiful question: why, of all the seasons of the year, did Allah make these particular ten days the most beloved for righteous deeds? And Ibn Rajab, may Allah have mercy on him, gave an answer that opens the whole thing up for us. He explained that these ten days are unique because in them the great acts of worship gather together as they do at no other time of the year.

Think about it with me. In these days the Hajj is performed, the journey of a lifetime, the fifth pillar of Islam. In these days is fasting, for the Prophet ﷺ fasted their days. In these days the prayer is multiplied and the night is stood in. In these days charity flows generously, and at their very close stands the sacrifice, the offering of an animal for the sake of Allah. There is no other stretch of the calendar in which every one of these supreme acts of devotion comes together at once. It is as if Allah gathered the whole year's menu of worship onto a single ten-day table and said, come, taste a little of all of it. Allah Himself pointed to the remembrance that fills these days when He called them the known days.

وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنْ
بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ

*And that they may mention the name of Allah on **known days** over what He has provided for them of grazing livestock.*

Surah Al-Hajj (22:28)

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, explained that the known days mentioned here are precisely these ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. So Allah did not only swear an oath by them, He named them as the days set apart for His remembrance and for drawing near to Him through worship and through sacrifice. This

is the season the entire year quietly leans toward, and the believer who truly understands it does not let a single one of its hours fall idle. He treats each hour like a coin he refuses to drop.

THE CROWN OF THE TEN

The Day of Arafah and Its Impossible Bargain

And within these ten days sits a single day that towers above all the others: the day of Arafah, the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah, the day the pilgrims stand upon that vast plain, hands raised, begging their Lord for forgiveness. Now, most of us will not be on Hajj this year. So does that mean this day is not for us? Far from it. The Prophet ﷺ gave those of us at home a gift attached to fasting that single day, a gift whose scale should genuinely stop you in your tracks.

صِيَامُ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ أَحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ الَّتِي
قَبْلَهُ وَالسَّنَةَ الَّتِي بَعْدَهُ

*Fasting the day of Arafah, I hope from Allah, expiates the sins of **the year before it and the year after it.***

Source: Sahih Muslim: 1162 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Two years of sins, the one behind you and the one still ahead of you, lifted by a single day of fasting. Let me ask you plainly: where in all the glittering markets of this world is there a transaction like that? What sale gives you back two years of your life? And yet, how many of us will let the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah arrive and pass, eating and drinking exactly as on any other ordinary day, simply because no one reminded us it was here? Do not let that be you this year. Mark the day. Plan for it now. Tell your family the night before. The Prophet ﷺ used to fast the first nine days of this month, as his wives reported, and of them all, the day of Arafah carries this unmatched reward.

And I want you to consider what is actually happening on the earth on that day. While you fast quietly in your home, millions of pilgrims are standing together on the plain of Arafah, people of every colour and language and nation, dressed alike in two simple white cloths so that the rich cannot be told apart

from the poor, all of them raising the same words to the same Lord, hands open, eyes streaming, voices cracking, begging for forgiveness. It is the closest sight this world offers to the great gathering of the Day of Judgement. And it is on this very day that Allah draws near to His servants and frees more of them from the Fire than on any other day of the year.

Do you feel that, my dear brother, my dear sister? Even from your kitchen, even from your prayer mat thousands of miles away from Makkah, your fast and your du'a on that day join that great standing before Allah. You reach for the very same mercy that is descending upon that plain. Do not stand outside the most merciful day of the entire year with your arms folded. Step into it. Fast it. Raise your hands as they raise theirs. Ask for everything.

HOW THE BEST OF US LIVED THEM

The Ones Who Refused to Waste a Moment

So what did the people of knowledge actually do when these ten days arrived? Did they treat them like any other ten days on the calendar? Not at all. They poured themselves into worship with an intensity that should both inspire and gently shame us. It is reported that Sa'id ibn Jubayr, may Allah have mercy on him, one of the greatest students of Ibn Abbas, would exert himself so hard in worship when the ten days began that he would nearly overwhelm himself, as though he were a man trying to fit a whole year of striving into just ten days. Imagine that hunger. Imagine that seriousness.

And the Companions did not keep their worship hidden away in the corners of their homes. They filled the very streets and marketplaces with the remembrance of Allah.

كَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ وَأَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا يَخْرُجَانِ إِلَى
السُّوقِ فِي أَيَّامِ الْعَشْرِ يُكَبِّرَانِ وَيُكَبِّرُ النَّاسُ بِتَكْبِيرِهِمَا

*Ibn 'Umar and Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with them, would go out into the marketplace during the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, raising their voices in takbir, until the people in the market would **say it along with them.***

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari (chapter on the ten days) · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Picture it. Two of the most honoured Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, walking through a busy, noisy marketplace, not to buy and not to sell, but simply to fill the air with the greatness of Allah. Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar. And their voices were so full of conviction that the whole marketplace caught the sound, and traders and shoppers alike began to magnify Allah together. This, my dear brother and sister, is the spirit of the ten days. Worship spilling out of the mosque and into the street, into the ordinary places of life.

The Prophet ﷺ told us that these are days in which we should increase three things especially: the tahlil, saying *la ilaha illa Allah*; the takbir, saying *Allahu akbar*; and the tahmid, saying *al-hamdu lillah*, until, as the scholars beautifully put it, our tongues are wet with the remembrance of our Lord. So fill these days with dhikr. In your car in traffic. In your kitchen while the food cooks. On your walk, under your breath, at your desk between tasks. And do not be shy to raise the takbir aloud in your home, as the Companions did in the market, so that the remembrance of Allah returns to our homes and our streets and our children hear it.

The worship of these days is not the tongue alone. The righteous before us would shorten their sleep and lengthen their standing in prayer through these nights. They would fast the days even when the labour was hard and the summer was long. They would open their hands in charity wider than at any other time. They understood something we so easily forget: that a season of multiplied reward will not come around again for another whole year, and that the body which feels tired today will one day rest forever in the grave anyway, so why spare it now? This is not a call to burn yourself out, my dear brother, for our

religion is balanced and the Prophet ﷺ forbade us from burdening our souls beyond their strength. It is a call to simply lean in. Give these ten days a little more than you would give an ordinary ten. A little more of your night. A little more of your wealth. A little more of your tongue. Give it to Allah, knowing that in this season He hands it back to you multiplied beyond anything you spent.

THE STORY BEHIND THE SACRIFICE

The Legacy of Ibrahim and His Son

To understand why this blessed month closes with a sacrifice, we have to return to the story it commemorates, the story of Ibrahim, the friend of Allah, peace be upon him. After long, aching years of longing and du'a, he was finally granted a son, Isma'il, and he loved that boy the way a father loves the child of his old age, completely, tenderly, with his whole heart. And then, in this very season, Allah tested him with what may be the heaviest command a parent could ever be given. Ibrahim saw in a dream that he was slaughtering his own beloved son, and the dreams of the Prophets are revelation, they are a form of command.

Now watch how Ibrahim responded, because there is a lesson in every step. He did not hide the command. He did not wrestle with it alone in silence, sparing his son the weight of it. He turned to the boy himself and spoke to him.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي
أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ
سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*And when he reached with him the age of striving, he said: O my son, I have seen in a dream that I am sacrificing you, so see what you think. He said: **O my father, do as you are commanded.***

You will find me, Allah willing, among the patient.

Surah As-Saffat (37:102)

Look at the answer of the son. Just look at it. A young man is told that his own father has been commanded to slaughter him, and his very first concern is not his own life, not his own fear, but the command of Allah and his father's peace of heart. *Do as you are commanded. You will find me among the patient.* Both of them submitted entirely, the father laying his son down against the earth, the son surrendering his neck. And at the very last moment, when their submission was complete and proven beyond any doubt, Allah called out to Ibrahim that he had already fulfilled the vision, and He ransomed the boy with a great sacrifice, a ram sent down from Allah.

Do you see the mercy in it? They had been ready to give everything, and so Allah, in His wisdom and love, did not require it of them. He rewarded their willingness and turned their story into an act of worship for every believer until the end of time. This is what the sacrifice of Dhul-Hijjah truly carries. It is not about the value of the meat, for Allah has told us plainly that neither its flesh nor its blood reaches Him. It is about the taqwa of a heart that is willing to surrender to its Lord. When you offer your sacrifice this year, you are stepping into the footsteps of Ibrahim, declaring with your own hands that you too would give whatever Allah asked of you.

A MARK UPON THE BODY

The Sacrifice and Its Quiet Sign

The month itself is named for sacrifice, for it is the month of the udhiyah, the offering made in memory of Ibrahim and his son, peace be upon them, who submitted so completely. And the Prophet ﷺ taught the one who intends to offer a sacrifice a particular, gentle sign to mark these days upon his very body.

إِذَا دَخَلْتَ الْعَشْرَ، وَأَرَادَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يُضَحِّيَ، فَلَا
يَمَسَّ مِنْ شَعْرِهِ وَبَشَرِهِ شَيْئًا

When the ten days begin, and one of you intends to offer a sacrifice, let him not touch anything of his hair or his skin.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 1977 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

So from the sighting of the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah until the sacrifice is offered, the one who intends to sacrifice leaves his hair and his nails untrimmed. It is a small outward sign, a little thread that ties him, in a modest way, to the state of the pilgrim standing far away in Makkah. And every time he catches his own reflection through those ten days, he is reminded: this is not an ordinary week, this is a sacred season set apart for Allah. It is a gentle, bodily call to attention, a way of carrying the ten days with you so that you cannot quite forget what they are.

But the month asks of us a sacrifice far deeper than hair and nails. It asks the real question, the uncomfortable question: what are you actually willing to give up for the sake of Allah? Not just an animal once a year. What about the hours you pour, mindlessly, into your screen? What about the habit you know full well is dragging your heart down, the one you keep promising yourself you will quit next month? What about the wealth you cling to when you know someone near you is in need? The month of sacrifice looks each one of us in the eye and asks, quietly but seriously: what will you offer?

THE SUMMIT AND THE CELEBRATION

The Greatest Day and the Days That Follow

These ten days build steadily toward a summit, and that summit is the tenth day, the Day of Sacrifice, yawm an-nahr, which the Prophet ﷺ named as the greatest of all days in the sight of Allah.

إِنَّ أَكْبَرَ الْأَيَّامِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَوْمُ النِّحْرِ ثُمَّ
يَوْمُ الْقَرِّ

Indeed, the greatest of days in the sight of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, is the Day of Sacrifice, then the day of rest that follows it.

Source: Sunan Abi Dawud: 1765 · **Authenticity:** Sahih (graded by al-Albani)

It is the day the pilgrims complete the greatest rites of their Hajj, and the day believers across the entire earth gather for the prayer of Eid and draw near to Allah with their sacrifice. And the celebration does not simply switch off there. The three days that follow, the days of Tashriq, the eleventh, twelfth, and

thirteenth of Dhul-Hijjah, are themselves blessed. Allah commanded in His Book that we remember Him in these appointed days, and the Prophet ﷺ captured their whole character in a single beautiful sentence.

أَيَّامُ التَّشْرِيقِ أَيَّامُ أَكْلِ وَشُرْبٍ وَذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

The days of Tashriq are days of eating, drinking, and the remembrance of Allah.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 1141 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

See the wisdom of our religion in this, my dear brother, my dear sister. These are days of feasting, of family gatherings, of joy and laughter, and the Prophet ﷺ actually forbade us to fast them, precisely because they are a celebration that Allah has granted His people. Islam does not frown upon your happiness. It does not ask you to be miserable to be holy. Yet even in the middle of the eating and the drinking and the laughter, the remembrance of Allah is not set aside. The takbir continues after the prayers all through these days, so that our very celebration is wrapped in His remembrance. This is the balance our faith teaches: it does not force us to choose between joy and worship. It teaches us to remember Allah while we eat, while we laugh, while we sit with those we love, so that our happiness itself becomes a quiet form of gratitude to the One who gave it to us.

THE REAL SALE

The One the Whole World Will Miss

Let me bring you back, my dear brother and sister, to where we started, to that world of glittering, advertised superlatives. We will set an alarm for a sale that ends at midnight. We will stand in a queue outside a store before the sun comes up on the day the discounts drop. We will refresh a screen at the precise second a limited offer opens, our hearts racing, terrified of missing out. We have trained ourselves into a genuine frenzy over deals that, within a week, we will not even remember making.

And now here comes a season, offered not by a corporation but by the Lord of the heavens and the earth. A season in which a single day of fasting wipes away two full years of sins. In which an ordinary prayer outweighs jihad in the path of Allah. In which the smallest deed is multiplied beyond your ability to count. The offer is completely real. The One making it has never once exaggerated and never will. And

yet, most of us will let it pass without setting a single reminder, without telling a single family member, without changing a single hour of our week. What does that say about where our hearts truly are? Which marketplace do we actually believe in? Where is our real treasure?

So this year, I am asking you for something simple. Treat these ten days with at least the seriousness you would give to a good sale. Put them in your calendar before they arrive. Mark the day of Arafah in bold. Decide tonight, before you sleep, what you will fast, what you will give, and which one sin you will finally leave, and write it down somewhere you will actually see it. Tell your family, so the home fills with takbir and your children grow up knowing, in their bones, that these days are not like the others. And let that screen that usually steals your hours serve you for once: a reminder to make dhikr, a Quran open on the train, a charity sent with the tap of a finger. The deal of this dunya ends, and it leaves you holding something that breaks and is soon forgotten. The deal of these ten days ends, and it leaves you holding forgiveness that you will be desperate for on the Day you stand alone before Allah. Do not be the one who chased the smaller offer and slept straight through the greater one.

A REMINDER CARRIED HOME

You Are Never Too Far, Never Too Late

Before we turn to your plan, let no one leave this lesson thinking these days are reserved only for the pilgrims in Makkah. That is not true, and I do not want the shaytan to whisper it to you. The reward of the ten days is poured out upon every believer, wherever he stands: in this room, in your home, at your desk, on your commute, if only he fills them with the worship of his Lord. You do not need a plane ticket to Makkah to earn a share of the most beloved days of the year to Allah.

And let no one imagine, either, that this season simply falls upon the heedless like rain. It does not. It is seized by those who plan for it and rush toward it with their whole heart. The pilgrims have travelled across the world for these days, dusty, exhausted, dishevelled, hoping in nothing but the mercy of Allah. We can reach for that exact same mercy from right where we are sitting. And it would be a strange and painful kind of poverty to live for ten whole days right beside a treasure, and then to walk away at the end with our hands completely empty. So ask yourself honestly, as these days approach: which of these deeds is hardest for me, and which am I most tempted to neglect? Whatever your answer, there is a portion of these ten days waiting for you. The only real failure is to take none at all. Choose your share now, before the moon rises, and hold on to it tightly.

☰ Your Action Plan: Ten Days, Fully Alive

Don't just read — choose what you will act on before the moon of Dhul-Hijjah rises.

1 Repent and name one sin to leave

Sit alone tonight, put the phone away, and bring to mind one sin you have grown comfortable with. Feel the shame of it before Allah and resolve sincerely to leave it for these ten days and beyond. Clear the floor before you build.

TODAY

Make it last: once you begin today, keep it every day after — until it becomes a permanent habit for life.

2 Fast the day of Arafah (the 9th)

Fast as many of the first nine days as your strength allows, but do not miss Arafah. Fasting that single day is hoped to expiate the sins of the year before and the year after. Mark it in your calendar right now.

THIS MONTH

Make it last: once this first month is done, keep it for good as a permanent habit.

3 Keep your tongue wet with dhikr

Increase la ilaha illa Allah, Allahu akbar, and al-hamdu lillah in the car, the kitchen, and the corridor. Raise the takbir aloud in your home as the Companions did in the market, so your children hear it.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

4 Give a daily charity, some of it hidden

Give something every one of the ten days, even a small amount sent with a single tap, and let some of it be seen by no one but Allah. Small deeds in these days outweigh mountains of deeds outside them.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

🚩 The 10-Day Dhul-Hijjah Challenge

For all ten days: fast what you can and never miss Arafah, guard your five prayers with new care, stand even a few minutes of the night, give a daily charity, and keep the takbir on your lips from morning to night. Write your plan on a note where you will see it each day and tick each act off. Do not treat this as a one-off burst that ends with Eid. Let it be the year your worship found its rhythm, so that when the ten days close, the habits they built in you, the dhikr, the night prayer, the daily giving, quietly stay for the rest of your life.

Make it stick – and make it last

- ✓ **Write it down.** Put your chosen action on a sticky note on your mirror, desk, or fridge – somewhere you cannot miss it.
- ✓ **Print this plan** and tick each action off as you do it.
- ✓ **Set a daily reminder** on your phone or calendar so it never slips your mind.
- ✓ **Keep a one-line journal** each night – did I do it today? how did it go? – and watch your streak grow.

Don't aim for one good day or week – aim to keep it for life. A habit only counts once it outlives the challenge.