

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

Every Breath Is Being Recorded

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

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SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Every Breath Is Being Recorded

The world celebrates the passing of time; the believer stops and asks what he did with the hours that will never return.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Time Does Not Cheer For You, It Writes You Down

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me begin with a scene you already know well. A year comes to its end. The clock in the corner of the world starts ticking down loudly, the fireworks are prepared, the crowds gather, and at the stroke of midnight the sky explodes in colour and the whole earth seems to cheer. And in the middle of all that noise, have you ever noticed something strange? Have you ever stood there and felt, deep inside your chest, that something is off? That the world is applauding the very thing it should be grieving?

Because here is a truth the world has completely forgotten, and it is a truth the believer must never forget. **Time does not celebrate with you. Time records you.** Every hour that passes is not a party. It is a page. It is being written down, sealed, and submitted. Every single day of your life is an envelope that closes at sunset and is delivered to a place you cannot reach to edit it. And every year that departs from you does not simply vanish into the past. It rises. It rises as a witness that will one day stand before Allah and testify, either *for* you or *against* you.

So while the whole world marks the turning of the year with music and countdowns, I want you and me, tonight, to mark it differently. Not with noise, but with a quiet, honest question. The only question that really matters. Not "what did I gain this year?" but "what did I do with the time that will never, ever come back?" Allah Himself thought this question so serious that He swore an oath by time, and in that oath He announced the condition of every human being who has ever lived.

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.*

Surah Al-Asr (103:1-3)

Look at how short that surah is. Three verses. You can recite it in the time it takes to draw one deep breath. And yet Imam al-Shaff'i, may Allah have mercy on him, said that if people did nothing but reflect deeply on this one small chapter, it would be enough to guide them. Think about that. He is telling you that the entire secret of a successful life is folded into these three lines. Allah swears by time itself, and then He drops a verdict on all of humanity: every human being is losing, sinking, drowning in the passing of his own days. That is the default. That is where the current is carrying every one of us right now, this very moment, as you read these words.

And then, out of that drowning ocean of humanity, Allah lifts out the survivors. Four things save them. They believe. They act on that belief. They call one another to the truth. And they hold one another up with patience. That is it. That is the lifeboat. Everyone else, no matter how rich, no matter how famous, no matter how celebrated on that midnight countdown, is quietly going under.

THE FIRST QUESTION

Your Feet Will Not Move Until You Answer

Let me make this real for you. On the Day of Judgement, when you and I are standing there, barefoot, exposed, waiting to move forward, the Prophet ﷺ told us something that should make every one of us sit up straight. He told us that our feet will not even be allowed to move until we have answered for how we spent our time.

لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا عَبْدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ عَمَلِهِ
فِيمَ أَفْنَاهُ، وَعَنْ عِلْمِهِ فِيمَ فَعَلَ، وَعَنْ مَالِهِ مِنْ أَيْنَ
اِكْتَسَبَهُ وَفِيمَ أَنْفَقَهُ، وَعَنْ جِسْمِهِ فِيمَ 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: Jami at-Tirmidhi: 2417 · **Authenticity:** Hasan Sahih

Did you catch the order? The very first thing you will be asked about is not your prayer, not your charity, not your fasting. It is your life and how you spent it. Because your prayer, your charity, your fasting, all of it happens *inside* your time. Time is the container that holds every other deed. And the year that has just slipped away from you is a piece of that life. It will be questioned. Every idle hour of it, every wasted afternoon, every night lost to a screen that gave you nothing back, all of it is waiting to be read out.

But my dear brother, my dear sister, here is the mercy in this. You get to be questioned twice. You can wait until the Day of Judgement and be questioned by Allah in front of all of creation, or you can question yourself now, tonight, quietly, in the privacy of your own heart. And the beautiful thing is that whoever takes account of himself in this world will find the reckoning light and easy in the next. The one who audits his own books before he sleeps has nothing to fear when the great audit comes.

The righteous who came before us lived with this awareness pressed against their hearts like a hand on the chest. Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, used to say something I want you to carry with you: he said that the son of Adam is nothing but a bundle of days, and that whenever a day passes, a part of *you* has passed away with it. You are not losing time. You are losing *yourself*. Every day that ends takes a slice of you with it into the grave.

Imagine your life is a single candle. Just one. And it was lit the day you were born. Now here is the thing about that candle: it burns at exactly the same rate whether you are praying or scrolling, whether you are reciting Qur'an or arguing on the internet, whether you are visiting your parents or wasting an entire Sunday doing nothing at all. The same flame that lights up a page of the Qur'an is the same flame that burns away an empty afternoon. Both are taken from the one short candle you were given, and no one can hand you a second one. The believer does not weep because the candle is burning. He knows it must. What he refuses to do is let it burn for *nothing*.

YOUR PURPOSE

You Were Made For A Mission, Not For A Show

Now let me ask you honestly: why do you think we waste so much of our time? It is not usually because we are evil people. It is because, somewhere along the way, we forgot *why* we were given the time in the first place. The world has been whispering a story into our ears since the day we were born, and the story goes like this: life is entertainment. You are here to consume. You are here to be amused, to chase pleasure, to be comfortable, to enjoy the show until the lights go out. And if that is the story you believe, then wasting time is not a sin at all. It is the whole point.

But Allah reaches into that comfortable, sleepy story and shakes us awake 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?*

Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:115)

Read that verse again slowly, because Allah is speaking directly to you. Did you think this was all a joke? Did you think you were placed on this earth for amusement, to be left alone, with no return, no reckoning, no meaning? No. You were created to know Allah, to worship Him, and one day to stand before Him. That is the mission. That is the reason the candle was lit at all.

And the Messenger ﷺ drew a line, a very clear line, between two types of people. The one who understands this mission and lives by it, and the one who lives inside the delusion of the show. And listen to what he named them, because the names are shocking.

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: Jami at-Tirmidhi: 2459 · **Authenticity:** Hasan

Now here is what I want you to notice, because it will surprise you. The helpless person in this hadith is not a disbeliever. He is not an atheist who denies Allah. No. He believes in Allah. He even hopes in Allah. He fully expects Paradise. But his hope has no legs to stand on, because he follows his desires wherever they drag him and then simply *wishes* to be forgiven, wishes to enter Paradise, without ever lifting a finger to work for it.

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me say this as gently and as clearly as I can. Hope without action is not faith. It is self-deception. It is the man who tells you he will become a doctor while he refuses to open a single book. The intelligent believer is different. He hopes in Allah *and then he gets up and works* for what comes after death. That word, and then, is the whole difference between the two men. And at the turning of every year, each of us has to ask which one we have been.

Now, what does it actually mean to work for what comes after death? Allah told us plainly. He said He did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Him. But do not shrink worship down to only the prayer mat and the fasting month. Yes, those are its beating heart. But worship is so much bigger than that. Worship is your whole life turned toward Allah. It is the honest hour you put in at your job when you offer it for His sake. It is the patience you show when you bite your tongue with a difficult parent. It is the smile you give a tired brother at the masjid. It is the desire you walk away from, quietly, when no one is watching, only because you fear Him. The one who understands this turns his *entire year* into

worship, so that even his sleep and his salary become steps toward his Lord. And the one who forgets it spends a whole lifetime frantically busy with everything except the one thing he was actually made for.

THE GOOD NEWS

The Door Is Still Open, And He Is Waiting

Now, I do not want you to close this lecture feeling crushed. That is not the point of any of this. If all I have done is make you feel the weight of your wasted years, then I have only done half my job, and honestly the worse half. Because the greatest gift Allah gives you with every single new day, and with every new year, is not a scolding. It is an *invitation*. It is the gift of time still left to come back to Him.

As long as you are still breathing, my dear brother, my dear sister, the door is open. It does not matter how far you have wandered. It does not matter how many years you feel you have thrown away. Listen to how Allah calls out to the very worst of sinners, and notice the tenderness in every word.

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ
رَحْمَةِ 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 Forgiving, the Merciful.*

Surah Az-Zumar (39:53)

All sins. Not most of them. Not the small ones. *All* of them, however many years they piled up, however heavy and dark they grew, however ashamed of them you are right now. And do not miss the words He uses to call you. He does not say "you sinners." He says *my servants*. Even in the middle of your rebellion, He still claims you as His own. That is the mercy you are running from when you delay coming back.

And He does not merely tolerate your return. He does not simply accept it with a cold nod. He *rejoices* at it. The Prophet ﷺ gave us an image of that joy so that no wandering heart could ever feel too far gone to come home.

لَلّٰهُ اَفْرَحُ بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدِهِ مِنْ اَحَدِكُمْ سَقَطَ عَلَىٰ بَعِيرِهِ وَقَدْ
اَضَلَّهُ فِيْ اَرْضٍ فَلَآءِ

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

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6309 and Sahih Muslim: 2747 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Picture the man in that hadith. He is alone in an endless empty desert. His camel, which carries all his food, all his water, all his hope of survival, has run off and vanished. He has lain down under a tree to die. And then, out of nowhere, he opens his eyes and the camel is standing right there in front of him. Imagine the explosion of joy in that man's chest. He is so overwhelmed the Prophet ﷺ tells us in another narration that he blurts out the wrong words: "O Allah, You are my servant and I am Your Lord!" He is so happy he cannot even speak straight. And Allah tells us: His joy at your return is *greater* than that. That is who is waiting for you at the other side of your repentance.

THE DEADLINE

The Door Has A Closing Time You Cannot See

But my dear brother, my dear sister, here is the sober part, and I would be betraying you if I hid it from you. This open door has a closing time. And the closing time is hidden from every single one of us. The Messenger ﷺ told us exactly where the deadline falls.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْبَلُ تَوْبَةَ الْعَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يَغْرِغِرْ

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

Source: Jami at-Tirmidhi: 3537 · **Authenticity:** Hasan

As long as the soul has not reached the throat. That is the only deadline. And notice, it is not a date on a calendar. It is not your seventieth birthday. It is a moment whose hour is completely hidden from you. You do not know if it is fifty years away or fifty minutes. The healthy young man who plans to repent "later" has no contract guaranteeing him a "later." So the wise believer never says, "I will repent next year, when I am older, when the kids are grown, when life settles down." He repents *now*, in this very hour, while the door is still open and the soul is still resting safely in its place.

THE DISEASE

The Sickness of "Tomorrow"

And now we come to the great thief. The quiet, polite, well-mannered thief that has stolen more years from more believers than any open sin ever did. It is not alcohol. It is not gambling. It is one word: *tomorrow*. The disease of delay. The endless, comfortable intention to change, always tomorrow, always next month, always after this one last thing. Allah paints a terrifying scene of the person who delayed until delay finally ran out, the exact moment death arrives and the soul suddenly begs for a second chance it will never receive.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ *
لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ
قَائِلُهَا *

*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.** No! It is only a word he is saying.*

Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:99-100)

My Lord, send me back. Do you know how many souls have said these exact words? Every single soul that ever wasted its years has cried them out at the end. And do you know how many of them were sent back? Not one. Not a single soul in the history of creation has ever been granted that request. And here is the point I want to burn into your heart tonight: you and I are alive right now holding the very thing they are begging for and being refused. We have the time. We have the "later" that they screamed for. So the only question is whether we will waste it exactly as they wasted theirs.

The Messenger ﷺ, out of pure love for us, gave us a piece of advice that, if we truly understood it, would rearrange the way we live every single day of our lives.

اَغْتَنِمْ 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-Hakim): 7846 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Look at how the Prophet ﷺ understood the human heart. Every one of those five is a window that is wide open right now and that will one day slam shut, often without warning. The young man cannot imagine ever being old, so he wastes his youth. The healthy person cannot picture themselves in a hospital bed, so they take their strength for granted. The busy person keeps promising, "I will worship properly when things calm down," and the free person, the one who has all the time in the world right now, wastes his freedom completely until suddenly he is buried in responsibilities and looks back and wonders where all those empty hours went.

Do not wait for the window to close, my dear brother, my dear sister. The good deed you keep politely postponing to a "better time" may discover that the better time never arrives. And the Prophet ﷺ warned us that life can turn dark and confusing in an instant, so quickly that the one who hesitates may lose his very faith before he loses his life.

بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ فِتْنًا كَقَطْعِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ، يُصْبِحُ
الرَّجُلُ مُؤْمِنًا وَيَمْسِي كَافِرًا، وَيَمْسِي 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: Sahih Muslim: 118 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

HOW CHANGE WORKS

Real Change Starts Inside The Chest

Now let me talk to you about resolutions, because I know exactly what happens. Every year, at this turning point, millions of us make grand promises. We are going to pray every prayer on time. We are going to finish the whole Qur'an. We are going to wake up for tahajjud every single night. And within three weeks, sometimes within three days, the whole thing collapses, and we are left feeling worse than when we started, quietly convinced that we are just the type of person who cannot change. And then next year we do it all over again. Why? Why does nothing ever truly stick?

Allah gave us the law of all real change. It is a law that never fails, and once you understand it, you will stop looking in the wrong place.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ

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

Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:11)

Change does not begin out there, with your circumstances, with your job, with the people around you. It begins in here, in the heart. And the secret to lasting change is not a single dramatic explosion of energy that burns bright for a week and then dies. The secret is consistency. The small deed held onto faithfully, day after day. The Prophet ﷺ was asked directly which deeds Allah loves the most, and his answer completely 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: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6464 and Sahih Muslim: 783 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Even if they are few. Allah is not impressed by the flood that crashes through the valley once and is gone by the afternoon. He loves the small, steady stream that keeps flowing quietly, year after year, until one day you look and it has carved a canyon through solid rock. That is the model. So do not open this year by swearing you will pray the entire night and read the whole Qur'an in a week, only to burn out and abandon everything by the second month. Begin instead with something small and unbreakable. Two rak'ahs in the depth of the night. One single page of Qur'an every day. One small charity every week. The river that never stops carves the valley. The flood that comes once changes nothing.

This Year, Begin Where It Matters Most

And now, my dear brother, my dear sister, let me point to the place we most often neglect, the change that is closest to us and yet the hardest to make. It is not out in the world. It is inside our own homes. Let me be honest with you, because I need to be honest with myself too. How many of us are on our very best behaviour with strangers and colleagues, careful, patient, smiling, and then we walk through our own front door and become short, cold, distracted, and harsh with the very people we love the most? How many of us give our full attention to our work and give our families only the exhausted leftovers?

Allah did not place that spouse and those children in your care by accident. And the Messenger ﷺ reminded us that every single one of us is a guardian who will be interrogated about the flock in his care.

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، الْإِمَامُ 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, the man is a guardian over his family, and the woman is a guardian in her husband's house, and each is responsible for their flock.*

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 893 and Sahih Muslim: 1829 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

So let this year's real resolution be made inside the walls of your home. Let it be character before grades. Let it be faith before fame. Let it be discipline before indulgence. Because I promise you this: your children will not remember how many toys you bought them or which holiday you took them on. But

they will carry with them for the rest of their lives the image of a father who never missed his prayer, and the memory of a mother whose tongue was always soft and always moving with the remembrance of Allah. We are raising, right now, in these very years, 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 outcome is being decided.

And know this, my dear brother, my dear sister: every child is handed to you pure, tilted by its very nature toward its Creator. The Prophet ﷺ told us every child is born upon the fitrah, the natural disposition, and it is the influences around them that bend them one way or the other. And your home is the very first and by far the strongest of those influences. A year spent filling a small heart with the love of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, with prayer made beautiful instead of a burden, with the Qur'an made familiar and warm, is a year invested in a treasure that will keep paying you long after you are lowered into your grave. Because a righteous child who prays for you after you are gone is a charity that literally never ends.

RETURN TO KNOWLEDGE

A Year That Begins With The Word "Read"

And let this be a year, my dear brother, my dear sister, in which we come back to knowledge. Do you know what the very first word Allah ever revealed to His Messenger ﷺ was? It was not a command to fight. It was not a slogan. It was not even a command to pray. It was a single word.

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ *

Read, in the name of your Lord who created.

Surah Al-Alaq (96:1)

Read. Our entire religion began with that word. Not with a sword, not with a banner, but with a page. And the knowledge most worth seeking is the knowledge that brings you closer to Allah, that teaches you how to worship Him correctly and how to treat His creation kindly. And here is the incredible reward the Prophet ﷺ attached to it: he made the very path of seeking knowledge into a path leading straight to Paradise.

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: Sahih Muslim: 2699 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

So every hour a believer spends learning his religion, teaching it to his children, or simply sitting in a gathering of remembrance, is an hour spent physically walking toward the Garden. Let a portion of this year be given to learning, even a small portion. One beneficial lesson a week. A book of the Prophet's ﷺ life read out loud with your children on a weekend. One study circle you commit to attending, no matter what. A family that learns its religion together is a family that holds together when the trials come. And they will come.

LOVE OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

A Year To Fall Deeper In Love With Him

And let this be a year, above all, in which the love of the Messenger ﷺ grows deeper inside your heart, because our faith is simply not complete without it. He told us himself, in words that leave no room for negotiation, exactly where he must sit 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: Sahih al-Bukhari: 15 and Sahih Muslim: 44 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

But hear me carefully, because this love is not a feeling you simply announce with your tongue and then forget. It is not enough to say "I love the Prophet ﷺ" and then live a life that looks nothing like his. Real love is proven by following. It is shown by reviving his Sunnah in your home, by living the morning and evening supplications he taught us, by sending blessings upon him constantly throughout your day. A heart that grows in its love for the Messenger ﷺ across a single year has gained something more valuable than any promotion, any house, any wealth that the year could ever have offered it.

THE ONLY SUCCESS

What Actually Counts As A Good Year

So let us be brave enough to look honestly at the year that has passed, not to drown in regret, but the way a merchant sits down at the end of the year and opens his books. Where did my hours actually go? How many of them did I hand over to a screen that gave me nothing back, and how many to the worship that will one day meet me alone in my grave? Did my prayer grow stronger this year or weaker? Did I move closer to the Qur'an or further away? Did I become softer with my parents this year, or harsher?

And here is the thing: the world will hand you a thousand definitions of a successful year. More money. A better job title. A bigger house. More followers, more recognition, more applause. But Allah swept every single one of those definitions off the table and gave us the only one that will still be standing on the Day of Judgement.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ^{قُلْ} فَمَنْ زُحِرَ 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.*

Surah Ali Imran (3:185)

That is it. That is the only success. To be pulled back from the edge of the Fire and let into the Garden. Everything else this world can offer you is, in the exact words of Allah, the enjoyment of delusion. It looks solid. It looks like the real thing. But it dissolves the moment your soul reaches your throat. So hold this world lightly. The Prophet ﷺ taught us to treat it as a place of striving, not a place to sink our roots and settle forever.

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

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

Source: Sahih Muslim: 2956 · Authenticity: Sahih

TWO WINGS

Walk Toward Him On Fear And Hope Together

So please, do not walk away from this lecture crushed under the weight of the years you feel you have wasted. But also, please, do not walk away careless about the years you still have left. The believer is a bird

that flies to Allah on two wings, and it needs both to fly. One wing is fear, and it is the fear that wakes you from the comfortable sleep of "tomorrow" and pulls you out of bed for fajr. The other wing is hope, and it is the hope that carries you through that open door of repentance and refuses to let you despair no matter how far you have fallen.

Fear the deadline, because it is hidden and it is coming. But hope in the mercy that forgives *all* sins, because He promised you He would. The years behind you, you cannot recover. That page is written and sealed. But the years ahead of you are still, right now, sitting in your hands, unwritten. And a single sincere turning back to Allah can make the rest of a life worth more than the whole of its beginning. Think of the man who spent sixty years heedless and one year devoted; that final year can outweigh all the rest. So let this be a renewed covenant with Allah, not a reset button that pretends the past never happened, but a fresh promise made to the One who owns every one of your days. And know that Allah has told us He will be for us exactly what we expect of Him.

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: Sahih al-Bukhari: 7405 and Sahih Muslim: 2675 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

A REMINDER CARRIED HOME

How A Whole Life Is Actually Changed

So let me gather all of this into one thing you can carry home in your pocket tonight. Time does not celebrate you, it records you. You were made for a mission, not a show. The door of repentance is wide open and He is joyful to see you walk through it, but it closes at a moment you cannot see. Delay is the polite thief that steals more faith than any open sin. Real change begins in the heart and is built not by dramatic leaps but by small, steady deeds held onto faithfully. And the first place that change must land is inside your own home.

And here is the mechanism, the actual engine, of how a whole life gets transformed. It is not one heroic all-nighter of worship. It is a quiet accounting, repeated night after night after night, until the soul itself is slowly, gently reshaped. Before you sleep tonight, ask yourself one honest question: what did I do

today for the year that is recording me? And if the answer is "little," do not despair and do not quit. Just let tomorrow be a little better. That is how the canyon gets carved. Not in a flood. In a single steady stream that simply refuses to stop. So let us make our plan small enough that we can actually keep it for an entire year, because a modest plan held firmly will carry you infinitely further than a magnificent plan abandoned in three weeks.

☰ Your Action Plan: Redeem The Time

Don't just read — choose what you will act on this week. Keep it small enough to keep for a whole year.

1 Close your day's account before you sleep

Before you lie down, spend two minutes asking: what did I do today for the life that is recording me? Then make sincere istighfar and repent, so no day's account carries over into the next.

EVERY NIGHT

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

2 Anchor one small, unbreakable deed

Choose a single page of Qur'an a day, or two rak'ahs in the last third of the night. Keep it tiny on purpose. The steady stream carves the valley; the one-time flood changes nothing.

DAILY

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

3 Guard the five prayers in their times

This is the very first thing you will be asked about after your life itself. Treat the times of salah as the fixed skeleton around which your whole day is built.

DAILY

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

4 Invest one hour a week in your home and in knowledge

Sit with your family, read a book of the Prophet's ﷺ life aloud, or attend one study circle. Fill your children's hearts with love of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ before the world fills them with something else.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

🚩 The 7-Day Witness Challenge

For the next seven nights, before you sleep, write one line in a notebook answering a single question: "What did I do today for the year that is recording me?" On the nights the answer is little, do not quit, simply let the next day be better. Seven honest nights will show you the shape of your days more clearly than a whole year of drifting, and by the end you will have built the one habit that quietly transforms an entire life: the habit of holding yourself to account before you are held to account. Do not stop at seven. Let this nightly reckoning become a companion for the rest of your life, so that when your feet finally stand before Allah, you have already answered the question a thousand times.



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.