

The Last Ten Days and Deeds Are Judged by Their Endings

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. To proceed:

Half of the month of Ramadan, the month of mercy, has already passed. How quickly it has gone by for both the diligent and the negligent alike! However, the diligent ones, through their good deeds, leave behind lasting effects that will be their treasure when they meet their Lord. When they meet their Lord and Master, they will be happy and joyful.

(وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ * ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ)

Some faces, that Day, will be bright, Laughing, rejoicing at good news.

[Surah Abasa: 38-39]

This is unlike the negligent. The least of their situations is that they have abandoned what could bring them closer to their Lord, if they haven't already spent their lives doing things that distance them and invite the anger of their Creator.

How great will be the loss of those who wage war against Allah through disobedience—by seeing and hearing forbidden things, consuming unlawful wealth from usury and bribery (known by names like "tip," "tea money," "qaat money," and so on), oppressing others, worshipping through innovations in religion, and defending those innovations and their people under the guise of custom, habit, and pleasing society and people.

:The day will come when they will wish to return to this world to mend their ways, as Allah says
"وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِحُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۖ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَن تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ
فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ"

(And they will cry out therein, 'Our Lord, remove us; we will do righteousness - other than what we were doing!' But did We not grant you life enough for whoever would remember therein to remember, and the warner had come to you? So taste [the punishment], for there is not for the wrongdoers any helper.) [Surah Fatir: 37]

How severely will the negligent person—like the one who is fanatically attached to religious innovations and their people, or the one who is heedless of Allah's obedience—blame the devil who misled him, due to his own willingness to follow.

As Allah says:

"وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَّ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ"

And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, 'Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves. I cannot be called to your aid, nor can you be called to my aid. Indeed, I deny your association of me [with Allah] before. Indeed, for the wrongdoers is a painful punishment.' [Surah Ibrahim: 22]

O seekers of Paradise! Push yourselves and drive your souls towards what will ensure their salvation.

O seekers of Paradise! A temporary, troubled rest makes you miss out on the everlasting, blessed, and pure rest that is free from all worries. So make your ultimate goal that great rest when you meet your Lord, as He, glorified, said about the people of His pleasure and Paradise:

"وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ"

(And they will say, 'Praise to Allah, who has fulfilled for us His promise and made us inherit the earth [so] we may settle in Paradise wherever we will. And excellent is the reward of [righteous] workers.' [Surah Az-Zumar: 74])

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said in Madarij as-Salikeen (2/166):

"No one undertakes an immediate hardship except for a delayed reward. The soul is naturally inclined to love immediate gratification, and the special quality of the intellect is to contemplate consequences and consider outcomes.

The wise people of every nation have agreed that comfort is not achieved through comfort itself. Whoever accompanies ease will part with ease and will find hardship at the time of ease in the abode of ease. Indeed, rest is proportionate to the effort endured.

Great determinations come from those with great resolve... and generous deeds come from the generous.

What is small seems huge in the eyes of a petty person... and what is huge seems small in the eyes of the great."

O seekers of Paradise! Strive against your souls to increase in acts of obedience. Increase your recitation of Allah's speech, the Quran, give in charity, and perform the night prayer. These are but a few short days.

Among the greatest ways to spend one's wealth is on that which gives people true life—the life of

divine revelation, the life of the Book and the Sunnah, understood through the way of the righteous predecessors. This includes supporting the call to Tawhid (monotheism) and the Sunnah. As Allah said:

"أَوْمَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَخْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ"

(And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom?), [Surah Al-An'am: 122] This is the very purpose for which the Messengers and Prophets were sent.

Indeed, it is fitting for a believer to be apprehensive and fearful that he might anger Allah, and thus incur His wrath, becoming one of those about whom Allah said:

"يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ"

(The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet.) [Surah Ar-Rahman: 41]

Woe to us! Who will save us from that situation if Allah decrees this judgment upon us? Where is the escape, the refuge, when Allah says:

"وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَأُخِذُوا مِنْ مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ"

(If you could but see when they are terrified but there is no escape, and they will be seized from a place nearby.) [Surah Saba: 51]

O Allah, we implore You by that which is worthy of You, to have mercy on our weakness, for You are the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Make us among Your righteous servants with whom You are pleased, those whom You settle in Your Paradise, the abode of Your mercy, as You said—and Your word is truth— "فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ" (They will be in the mercy of Allah, abiding eternally therein.) [Surah Aal-Imran: 107] So, O Allah, there is no escape from Your wrath and painful punishment except to You.

"قُلْ إِنِّي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ * فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ"

Say, 'Indeed I am to you a clear warner.' 'So flee to Allah.' [Surah Adh-Dhariyat: 50-51]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said in Madarij as-Salikeen (1/469):

"The reality of 'fleeing' is escaping from one thing to another, and it is of two types: the flight of the blessed and the flight of the wretched. The flight of the blessed is to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. The flight of the wretched is from Him, not to Him. As for fleeing from Him to Him, that is the flight of His close friends (Awliya'). Ibn Abbas said regarding the verse 'So flee to Allah': 'Flee from Him to Him, and act in obedience to Him.' Sahl ibn Abdullah said: 'Flee from everything other than Allah to Allah.' Others said: 'Escape from the punishment of Allah to His reward, through faith and obedience.'"

I urge myself and my brothers and sisters to repeatedly read and reflect on what Allah mentions in His Book at the end of Surah Az-Zumar, while remembering and being certain that we are undoubtedly one of these two groups. So, I wonder, which of the two groups are we? O Allah, what will our state be in Allah's prior knowledge?

Allah said at the end of Surah Az-Zumar: "وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ" (And every soul will be fully compensated for what it did; and He is most knowing of what they do.) [Surah Az-Zumar: 70]

Look at your deeds and review them. Did you combine sincerity and following the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? Did you achieve Tawhid, avoid all innovations, and remain patient in doing so despite opposing customs, traditions, and what various deviant groups call you to? Did you equip yourself with worship by performing obligations, avoiding prohibitions, and undertaking the recommended and diverse Sunnah acts?

Then Allah said:

"وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا ۗ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ (71) قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ فَبئسَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ"

(And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups until, when they reach it, its gates are opened and its keepers will say, 'Did there not come to you messengers from yourselves, reciting to you the verses of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?' They will say, 'Yes, but the word of punishment has come into effect upon the disbelievers.' [To them] it will be said, 'Enter the gates of Hell to abide eternally therein, and wretched is the residence of the arrogant.') [Surah Az-Zumar: 71-72]

I seek refuge with Allah from being among them. I ask Him, by His mercy and grace, to protect us from their ways. How great their loss, how immense their calamity, and how terrifying their situation!

Then Allah said:

"وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ (73) وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُوهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ ۗ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ"

(But those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in groups until, when they reach it while its gates have been opened and its keepers say, 'Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter it to abide eternally therein,' [they will enter]. And they will say, 'Praise to Allah, who has fulfilled for us His promise and made us inherit the earth [so] we may settle in Paradise

wherever we will. And excellent is the reward of [righteous] workers.!) [Surah Az-Zumar: 73-74]

Our God and Master! Enter us, by Your mercy and grace, into Paradise, the abode of the successful and God-fearing, to settle therein wherever we will. Protect us from entering the gates of Hell, the abode of the losers.

Indeed, the one who sincerely advises himself knows that from the causes of salvation is righteous deeds. Allah said:

"وَنُودُوا أَن تِلْكَمُ الْجَنَّةُ أُوْرِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ" (And they will be called, 'This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.')

And that Allah, in His justice, does not treat the righteous and the wicked equally, nor the one who acts in obedience to Him and the one who acts to incur His wrath. Allah said:

"أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ"

(Then will We treat the Muslims like the criminals?) [Surah Al-Qalam: 35] And He said: "أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَن نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ"

(Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.) [Surah Al-Jathiyah: 21]

So flee, flee! Seek salvation, salvation from the Fire by performing acts of obedience. Among the righteous acts of obedience is the I'tikaf (spiritual retreat) during the last ten days of Ramadan, so that the heart may be purified and reformed. Whoever has fallen short in the past days of Ramadan should make up for it in these final days. And whoever has done well in the past should increase their efforts, for deeds are judged by their endings.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in Zad al-Ma'ad (2/82):

"Since the soundness of the heart and its steadfastness on the path of journeying to Allah depends on its focus on Allah and gathering its scattered state by turning completely to Allah—for the heart's scattered state is not mended except by turning to Allah—and since excess in food and drink, excess in intermixing with people, excess in speech, and excess in sleep only increase its scattering, distract it in every direction, cut it off from its journey to Allah, or weaken or hinder it, the mercy of the Mighty, the Merciful necessitated that He prescribe for His servants fasting, which eliminates excess food and drink and purges the heart of the mixtures of desires that hinder it from its journey to Allah. He prescribed it in a measure of benefit such that the servant benefits from it in this world and the next, and it neither harms him nor cuts him off from his immediate or future interests.

And He prescribed for them I'tikaf, whose purpose and spirit is the heart's focus on Allah, its

gathering upon Him, seclusion with Him, and cutting off from preoccupation with creation to be preoccupied with Him alone, glorified. This is so that remembrance of Him, love of Him, and turning to Him become its replacement for everything else. All concerns become for Him, and all thoughts become of His remembrance and of reflecting on how to attain His pleasure and what brings one near to Him. Thus, his comfort becomes with Allah instead of with creation, preparing him for comfort with Him on the day of loneliness in the graves, when there is no comforter for him nor anything to delight him besides Him. This is the greatest purpose of I'tikaf.

Since this purpose is only fully achieved with fasting, I'tikaf was prescribed in the best days of fasting, which are the last ten days of Ramadan. It is not reported that the Prophet ﷺ ever performed I'tikaf while not fasting. Rather, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "لَا اِعْتِكَافَ إِلَّا بِصَوْمٍ"

(There is no I'tikaf except with fasting.)" [Reported by Abu Dawud and others, with some discussion]

Then Ibn al-Qayyim continues: "The Prophet ﷺ used to perform I'tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan until Allah took his soul. Once he missed it, so he made it up in Shawwal. He also performed I'tikaf once in the first ten days, then the middle ten, then the last ten, seeking Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Decree). Then it became clear to him that it was in the last ten days, so he continued his I'tikaf until he met his Lord. He used to order that a tent be pitched for him in the mosque, where he would seclude himself with his Lord. When he intended to perform I'tikaf, he would pray Fajr and then enter his place of retreat. Once he ordered a tent to be pitched, and his wives also ordered their tents to be pitched. When he prayed Fajr and saw those tents, he ordered his tent to be taken down, and he postponed his I'tikaf to the first ten days of Shawwal. He used to perform I'tikaf for ten days each year, but in the year he passed away, he performed I'tikaf for twenty days. Jibril used to review the Quran with him once every year, but in that year, he reviewed it with him twice. When he was in I'tikaf, he would enter his tent alone, and he would not enter his house during his I'tikaf except to answer the call of nature. He would put his head out of the mosque into Aisha's house, and she would comb his hair and wash it while he was in the mosque, even while she was menstruating. Some of his wives would visit him while he was in I'tikaf. When she got up to leave, he would get up with her to see her off, and that was at night. He did not touch any of his wives while in I'tikaf, neither by kissing nor otherwise. When he was in I'tikaf, his bed would be placed for him in his place of retreat. When he went out for a need, he would pass by a sick person on his way but would not stop to inquire about him. Once he performed I'tikaf in a Turkish tent, and placed a mat at its entrance. All of this was to achieve the purpose and spirit of I'tikaf, contrary to what the ignorant do—making the place of I'tikaf a place for socializing, a means to attract visitors, and engaging in lengthy conversations among themselves. This is one thing, and the prophetic I'tikaf is another. Allah is the Granter of success."

I ask Allah to make us among the blessed in this life and the Hereafter, and to place us, in His prior knowledge, with the Prophets and Messengers, the best of His creation, in the highest Firdaws, the abode of His honor and grace.

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