



Preparing ourselves for the hereafter

Praise be to Allah who said: “And for those who fear the time when they will be standing before their Lord, there shall be two gardens (in Paradise).” [Surah al-Rahman:46]

May Allah bestow His peace and blessings on His prophet who said: “If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much. [*Sahih al-Bukhari* (4621, 6486, 7295) and *Sahih Muslim* (2359)] And may Allah be pleased with the Companions who wept upon hearing this hadith.

It is right for us to have fear of that day that we all have to face. That Day of Resurrection is a day of distress and deep regret. It is that long and ominous Day in which all humanity will stand before their Lord. On that day, fear will make the pregnant woman miscarry. People will be as if they are drunk but they shall not be drunk but the severity of Allah’s punishment will make them that way. On that day, fear will make the hair on the heads of small children turn grey.

We should seriously start to prepare ourselves for that day, since it is the crossroads on the long journey of our existence. From there, we will head either to Paradise or to the Hellfire. Those who enter paradise will dwell therein for all eternity in perpetual happiness and enjoyment, while those who go to Hell will face torture, and the inhabitants of Hell will find to their distress that they have eternal lives as well.

We must, however have an optimistic outlook regarding our Lord. His Mercy is truly vast for those who believe in Him and worship Him sincerely and it always takes precedence to His wrath. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has told us that Allah is more merciful to us than a devoted mother is to her newborn child. [*Sahih al-Bukhari* (5999) and *Sahih Muslim* (2754)]

The fear that we have of the Day of Resurrection should motivate us to be more devoted in worship and more ready to engage in good deeds. We should pray and fast more often and renew our efforts to make pilgrimage. We should be good to our



families and show kindness to our parents. There are many different ways to do good.

This same fear should help us to abstain from sinful acts and disobedience to Allah. This fear then will actually have a positive effect on us. It is not a negative fear that will make us inactive and despair of Allah's mercy.

The following activities are very helpful in helping a Muslim prepare for that dreadful day, "a day wherein they will be brought forth and nothing about them will be hidden from Allah." [Surah Ghafir: 16]

1. We should read the Qur'an and contemplate its meanings. We should consider its rulings and appreciate the good that it promises us as well as the warnings that it gives us.

2. We should read about the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). We should study how he conducted himself in obedience to Allah and how he abstained from overindulgence in worldly pleasures.

3. We should likewise read the biographies of the Companions and those who followed after them and look at how they strove to attain success in the Hereafter.

4. We should often contemplate the inevitability of death. We should be aware of the trials that follow in the grave and during the resurrection. We should visualize ourselves standing before Allah, the most scrupulous and Just of judges. We should think about the bridge that we will have to cross in order to attain salvation, a bridge from which many will slip and fall to their destruction. We should think about the joy that will be experienced by the people of Paradise and the suffering and sorrow of the inhabitants of Hell.

We need to always keep in mind that death can come to us at any moment. How do we wish to meet our Lord? Do we wish to do so in a state of grace and obedience or would we like to do so while engaged in sin? Ibn `Umar relates to us that the prophet



(peace be upon him) once put his hand on his shoulder and said to him: “Be in the world as if you are a wayfarer or a stranger passing through.” Because of this, Ibn `Umar would often say: “When night falls, do not look forward to the dawn and when day breaks do not anticipate the night. Take full advantage of your health before you succumb to illness and of your life before death overtakes you.” [*Sahih al-Bukhari* (6416)]

5. We need to seriously study to acquire Islamic knowledge. When we acquire more knowledge of our religion, we become more aware of Allah and more God-fearing. Allah says: “The only people who fear Allah from among His servants are those who possess knowledge.”

6. We should keep company with pious people, especially those who have good Islamic knowledge and those who are engaged in calling others to Islam. Likewise, we should avoid the company of sinful and dishonest people. Good company helps us to purify our hearts. We also find support in such people for our efforts to do what is right. Conversely bad company hardens our heart. Immoral people encourage us to do immoral things. Also when our hearts become hardened, we become far away from Allah and more attached to worldly things.

7. We should always keep in mind that this world is a transient place. Those who enjoy the pleasures of this world will not be able to take those pleasures with them. They have only their deeds to send before them. Allah says: “On the Day when every soul will find itself confronted with all that it has done of good and all that it has done of evil, and every soul will long that there might be a mighty space of distance between it and that evil. Allah bids you beware of Him. And Allah is full of pity for His servants.” [Surah Al Imran: 30]

No matter how great this world may seem to us, it is in truth quite insignificant. No matter how enduring it may appear right now, it is as fleeting as a night that must end at the next sunrise. Our worldly lives will come to an end at the grave.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “The life of this world compared to the Hereafter is as if one of you were to put his finger in the ocean and take it out again then compare the water that remains on his finger to the water that remains in the ocean.” [*Sahih Muslim* (2858)]

8. Lastly, we must spend more time in sincere supplication to our Lord. We should ask Him to make the Hereafter dearer to us and to make us less fond of the world. We should beseech Him to grant us Paradise with all of its delights and to spare us His wrath. Truly, Allah hears and answers our prayers.