



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF 5 BEFORE 5

AND ITS OBSTACLES

INTRODUCTION

The life in this world is so short that we have to really take advantage of several things in order to prepare ourselves for the Hereafter.

"He (Allah) will say: "What number of years did you stay on earth?" They will say: "We stayed a day or part of a day. Ask of those who keep account." 23: 112-113

We have been Warned by Allah:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do. And be not like those who forgot Allah (i.e. became disobedient to Allah) and He caused them to forget their own selves, (let them to forget to do righteous deeds). Those are the Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah)." 59: 18-19

Preparations for the Hereafter must start immediately today, this moment, this very second. There is no time to waste before the opportunity is taken away from us. Many of us at this moment alhamdulillah are given ample time to prepare for the hereafter. Once we leave this world, there is no chance to come back again into this world:

"And Allah grants respite to none when his appointed time (death) comes. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do." 63: 11

Many people are too absorbed in the dunya that they forget that one day we will be facing Allah in the Day of Judgment and be accountable for several things:

Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam warned us:

"The son of Adam will not pass away from Allah until he is asked about five things: how he lived his life, and how he utilized his youth, with what means did he earn his wealth, how did he spend his wealth, and what did he do with his knowledge." (Tirmidhi)

Many people will be regretful on the Day of Judgment:

“And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, “Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way.” 25:27

“Indeed, We have warned you of a near punishment on the Day when a man will observe what his hands have put forth and the disbeliever will say, “Oh, I wish that I were dust!” 78:40

How powerful their feeling of regret must be if the wishful thinking of this person is that they wish their creation was inanimate dust or soil rather than a human being with life. In another verse we are told:

“No! When the earth has been leveled – pounded and crushed. And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank. And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell – that Day, man will remember, but what good to him will be the remembrance? He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.” 89:21-14

BUT ALHAMDULILLAH we are still alive and we must strive hard in order not to be one of those who are regretful in the Hereafter

THE MAIN HADITH:

The Prophet SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam advised to:

“Take benefit of five before five: Your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you are preoccupied, and your life before your death”

(Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Al Hakim)

YOUTH

Islam defines “youth” as those who are below 40 years old. This is when people are busy on several fronts:

- Busy in studies
- Busy to build a career
- Busy in their early stages of marriage
- Busy to raise children

Youths are full of energy, vigour, enthusiasm and positive outlook. Therefore “youth” is the age of numerous trials and uncertainties. An individual is expected to

actively involve himself/herself in acts which focuses on the worship of Allah despite being busy with many trials. There is a du'a that Allah has Taught us:

"And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty (30) months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my off-spring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will)." 46: 15

We are familiar in a hadith in which 7 people will be shaded by Allah in the Day of Judgment in a time where there is completely no shade except this shade, and the sun would be brought close to the earth:

The Prophet SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam has told us that a young person who grew up with the worship of Allah, will be among the seven who are granted shade by Allah when there no shade but His. (Bukhari)

Many people who are young have this misconception that they will improve themselves and get closer to Allah when they get older, forgetting that they might not be alive to see tomorrow. That is why Prophet Muhammad SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam Reminded us to treat this world like a stranger:

On the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar (RadhiyAllahu 'anhuma), who said: The Messenger of Allah (SallaAllahu 'alayhi wasallam) took me by the shoulder and said,

"Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a wayfarer."

And Ibn Umar (RahiyAllahu 'anhuma) used to say, "In the evening do not expect [to live until] the morning, and in the morning do not expect [to live until] the evening. Take [advantage of] your health before times of sickness, and [take advantage of] your life before your death."

[Reported by Bukhari]

Brief Commentary

- This is a very important hadith as it governs how we should be in this life and how we should look at it. This life is a trial, and this hadith reinforces and guides a person in how to deal with the trials of this life
- Ibn Rajab said, " And this hadith is a foundation in having short hopes of this life, for the believer should not take this life as a home for him that he feels tranquil in. Rather, he should be in it like he is about to leave, preparing himself for his departure, and the advice of the Messengers ('alayhim assalam) and their followers are all in unison with this idea"

- We see in this hadith how the prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) used to nurture his followers and not just teach them academically
- Ibn Umar (RadhiyAllahu ‘anhuma) was young, yet he remembered exactly how the prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) relayed the hadith to him, and this is a testament to the teaching style of the prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam)
- Dunya (life) is derived from the word **دُنْيَا**, which is to be close/very lowly
- This is something that the prophets (‘alayhim assalam) used to teach their people. The prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) said, *“What is the dunya for me. An example of me and the dunya is that of a traveller who naps under the shade of a tree, then departs and leaves it”* [Reported by Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhi]
- Ibn Rajab said, *“And if the dunya to a believer is not a place of abode, nor a home, then a believer should be with regards to the dunya, in one of two states. Either he is like a stranger living in a land strange to him, and his main aim is to gather what he requires to return to his home, or like that of a traveller who does not stay in one place; his night and day is spent in travelling towards his homeland”*
- Qualities of a stranger
 - His main concern will be on focusing his efforts in getting to his homeland, Jannah
 - Is not content with residency in this life because it is not his home. This doesn’t mean he should be sad, but a believer’s apparent sadness (due to hereafter matters) is in fact his happiness. We are content with the decree of Allah, but are not content with staying in this dunya
 - Does not compete with others in worldly matters
 - Is not grieved over worldly matters, even loss of loved ones. Being sad due to losing someone you love is fine, but it shouldn’t affect our worship
 - Nurtures strong love and yearning for the hereafter, which is done by learning about it. This also decreases love for the dunya, so we should use this remedy when we feel attached to the dunya
- Ibn Rajab said, *“When Allah created Adam (‘alayhi assalam), he placed him and his wife in Jannah. Then, they were taken down from Jannah, and promised to return to it along with the righteous from their offspring. Hence a believer is always longing and yearning to return to his first (and original) home”*
- A wayfarer is more not at home than a stranger
- Scholars say the “or” here means but i.e. a wayfarer is a higher position than a stranger
- A stranger is a settler, so may buy things to settle, but a wayfarer only buys what is necessary to maintain himself
- A wayfarer is more concerned with taking the wrong path or getting lost, even if they were on the right path, so is more alert
- The statement of Ibn Umar (RadhiyAllahu ‘anhuma) is his explanation and understanding of the hadith

- The statement does not contradict high aspirations. It is saying we should not expect to live long, but we should plan for it, just in case we do live longer. Scholars say this is an example/ definition of asceticism
- Being ill acts as a barrier between us and doing good deeds so we need to take advantage of our health
- The prophet (SallaAllahu 'alayhi wasallam) said, *"Two blessings people are aggrieved by them, Health and free time"* [Reported by Bukhari]
- The thing that deceives people is free time. Productive people usually don't have a lot of free time, whilst unproductive people have a lot of free time which then causes them to procrastinate. Hence a believer should always try and keep himself busy so that he can also be productive
- The best way to deal with the trials of the dunya is with knowledge and righteous deeds

Benefits and Action points:

- Understand the reality of this life and that it is very lowly
- Do not seek to be a stranger, but it comes naturally to whoever is following teachings of the Quran and Sunnah correctly
- Living as if you will die tomorrow and having high aspirations are not contradictory, but are two different things. A believer should live as if he will die tomorrow but plan as if he will live for long
- Look at the ill people around you and take heed from their illness and focus on doing more good while you are still healthy
- Understand that your true home is Jannah and you are now here on a trip towards Jannah so ensure you follow the right path so you can reach your goal, and do not waste your time taking with you unnecessary items that will only slow you down and push you further away from home

One of the things that most people take for granted is their youth. When people are young, they are full of energy and are capable of doing so many things for the sake of Allah, but often we see that this energy is wasted in one way or another.

When people lose their youth, they inevitably find it harder to do those deeds and acts of worship that they found somewhat easier to do at a younger age. With old age, people find it harder to keep fard (obligatory) fasts, they may not be able to perform wudhu properly or to pray properly, and they may not have the energy to recite the Qur'an very often.

HEALTH

Many people are taking our health for granted. As in the youth, many people are not taking advantage of our good health to focus on our purpose in life, which is to worship Allah:

“And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).”
51: 56

Worshipping Allah will lead us to achieve Taqwa:

“O mankind! Worship your Lord (Allah), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become Al-Muttaqun” 2: 21

The good health that we have at this moment alhamdulillah is a Blessing of Allah which many of us are taking for Granted. We are advised to take advantage of our good health before we are overcome with illness or disability.

One example of where people are restricted from carrying out acts of ‘ibadah due to poor health, is fasting. When most people are young and have the health to fast, they don’t make the time or effort to keep nafl (non-obligatory/sunnah) fasts. Often we find that we struggle to keep our fard fasts during Ramadan, and we have no intention at all to keep the sunnah fasts during the rest of the year.

While we have our health, we often find ourselves making excuses for missing optional prayers – ‘I have class/lecture’ – for not making the time to recite or memorise the Qur’an – ‘I have an essay deadline tomorrow’ – or for not attending circles or talks at university or at the mosque.

We need to be aware of the fact that there is no guarantee of our good health. There are so many things that can happen that can leave us full of regret for not having taken advantage of what we had when we had it. What if something was to happen to you on your way home from university or work tomorrow? An accident that can leave you paralysed so that you cannot perform your prayers properly. You may develop health problems that stop you from fasting. You can lose your eyesight so that you cannot see or recite the Qur’an. Any of these things can happen at any time to any one of us.

WEALTH

Many people take their wealth for granted. The Qur’an itself has set many examples of those who are given wealth but they are not grateful to Allah and disobey Him completely:

- 2 people in surah al Kahf: one was given gardens and wealth and the other was given nothing by Allah;
- The Pharaoh in the time of prophet Musa (AS)
- Qarun
- People of Saba’ in Qur’an surah 34

Narrated Abu Huraira, that he heard Rasulullah sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam saying: Allah willed to test three who were a leper, a blind man and a bald-headed man.

So, he sent them an angel who came to the leper and said, "What thing do you like most?" He replied, "Good color and good skin, for the people have a strong aversion to me." The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given a good color and beautiful skin. The angel asked him, "What kind of property do you like best?" He replied, "Camels (or cows)." (The narrator is in doubt, for either the leper or the bald-headed man demanded camels and the other demanded cows.) So he (i.e. the leper) was given a pregnant she-camel, and the angel said (to him), "May Allah bless you in it."

The angel then went to the bald-headed man and said, "What thing do you like most?" He said, "I like good hair and wish to be cured of this disease, for the people feel repulsion for me." The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given good hair. The angel asked (him), "What kind of property do you like best?" He replied, "Cows." The angel gave him a pregnant cow and said, "May Allah bless you in it."

The angel went to the blind man and asked, "What thing do you like best?" He said, "(I like) that Allah may restore my eye-sight to me so that I may see the people." The angel touched his eyes and Allah gave him back his eye-sight. The angel asked him, "What kind of property do you like best?" He replied, "Sheep." The angel gave him a pregnant sheep.

Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones, and multiplied and brought forth so much that one of the (three) men had a herd of camels filling a valley, and one had a herd of cows filling a valley, and one had a flock of sheep filling a valley.

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a leper, went to the leper and said, "I am a poor man, who has lost all means of livelihood while on a journey. So none will satisfy my need except Allah and then you. In the Name of Him Who has given you such nice color and beautiful skin, and so much property, I ask you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination." The man replied, "I have many obligations (so I cannot give you)." The angel said, "I think I know you; were you not a leper to whom the people had a strong aversion? Weren't you a poor man, and then Allah gave you (all this property)?" He replied, "(This is all wrong), I got this property through inheritance from my fore-fathers." The angel said, "If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before."

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a bald man, went to the bald man and said to him the same as he told the first one, and he too answered the same as the first one did. The angel said, "If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before."

The angel, disguised in the shape of a blind man, went to the blind man and said, "I am a poor man and a traveler, whose means of livelihood have been exhausted while on a journey. I have nobody to help me except Allah, and after Him, you yourself. I ask you in the Name of Him Who has given you back your eye-sight to give me a sheep, so that with its help, I may complete my journey." The man said,

“No doubt, I was blind and Allah gave me back my eye-sight; I was poor and Allah made me rich; so take anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop you for taking anything (you need) of my property which you may take for Allah’s sake.” The angel replied, “Keep your property with you. You (i.e., the three men) have been tested and Allah is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions.”

[Sahih Bukhari: Volume 4, Book 56 Virtues and Merits of the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam) and his Companions Number 670]

We should all have some part of our wealth to invest in the hereafter. Helping the needy, providing for orphans etc. all these secure a spot for us in Jannah.

Allah has promised us that he will repay us more than whatever sum of money we spend for His sake:

Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.

(2:245)

We should give as much as we can in the way of Allah, and we are assured of the rewards for doing so by Allah:

‘The likeness of those who spend their money for Allah’s sake, is as the likeness of a grain (of corn), it grows seven ears, every single ear has a hundred grains, and Allah multiplies (increases the reward) for whom He wills, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures needs, All Knower’. 2: 261

When we have the wealth we should prioritise our holiday vacations and plan to perform Hajj or Umrah instead of going for holidays in other parts of the world. This wealth might be taken away from us, as there are 5 keys of the Unseen in the Qur’an:

“Verily, Allah! With Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things).”
31: 34

FREE TIME

Allah Swears by Time:

By Al-'Asr (the time).

Verily! Man is in loss,

Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience.

Qur'an surah 103

A lot of people are wasting their free time, especially now with the huge popularity of social media – twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. In addition, many people are also wasting time to play video games, especially when these games are getting more sophisticated and engaging.

Instead of utilising the free time to worship Allah such as reciting Qur'an, doing dhikr, many spend their time doing things that has no benefit in the Hereafter.

If we do not use our time effectively for something good, then we will definitely use it for something bad, which destroys our reward and our lives. For example, if you do not praise and mention Allah, you will be saying something else, perhaps backbiting or talking about your children, your work, your neighbours, your friends or your enemies. What counts for you is using the time for something useful, doing good deeds and saying good words.

Try to hold your own self into account at the end of each day. Ask yourself: What did I do today? What did I do that was bad today? You should repent for the bad things that you have done and said, and be sincerely determined not to do them again. As regards the good deeds that you did, then be determined to do them again, probably more often, and do them in a better way.

Our lives are judged according to what we did, and not according to how many years we lived. Life is very short. Death awaits us. We do not know when we are going to die, so we have to make sure that we do as many good deeds as possible before we pass into the next life. Once dead, we are unable to return to this life in order to repent from our bad deeds, or to do more good deeds. Time passes very quickly as Allah Says (what means):

"The Day they see it, (it will be) as if they had not tarried (in this world) except an afternoon and a morning." [79:46]

Allah also Says (what means): *"And on the Day when He shall gather (resurrect) them together, (it will be) as if they had not stayed (in the life of this world and graves, etc) but an hour of a day." [10:45]*

Time is very precious; if it goes by, you cannot make use of it again. YESTERDAY can never become TOMORROW. A time that has passed will never come back again.

When it is time for a person to die, he asks that his life be extended in order to do more good deeds, as Allah Says (what means): *{“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.” [Quran 35:37]*

Therefore we need to discipline ourselves and really plan our daily time table with a priority to please Allah before this free time is taken away from us.

The Prophet (SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said,

“There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) Health and free time for doing good.” (Bukhari)

LIFE BEFORE DEATH

Death is a certainty:

“Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).” 3: 185

When we are still alive, we have to take this opportunity to do good deeds, seek Allah’s Forgiveness for our shortcomings, and continue to make plenty of du’a for us to be Granted Jannatul Firdaus.

“...So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.” 18: 110

Many will regret when they see the punishments waiting for them in the Hereafter and will beg to Allah to return them back to this world>

“If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Lord, [saying], “Our Lord, we have seen and heard, so return us [to the world]; we will work righteousness. Indeed, we are [now] certain.” 32:12

Every night when we go to sleep, we enter a state where our soul leaves us. When we wake up, it is only because Allah has blessed us by returning our souls and granting us the opportunity to worship Him for at least one more day. Upon waking up in the morning, the Prophet (SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to say (and we are also encouraged to do the same):

‘Praise be to Allah who gave me life after death, and to Him is the final return.’ (Bukhari)

Often we do not fully appreciate how great a blessing it is to be given another chance. We become relaxed about death, and we don't fully comprehend or appreciate that at some point – and only Allah knows when – our life will be taken away from us for good, leaving no second chance, no opportunity to make up for the wrongs we have done, and no turning back time. We must not forget what a mercy life is. We should savour every moment and use it to our best advantage. This means pleasing Allah in order to achieve our ultimate goal – Jannah.

So, knowing the importance of the above hadith, what obstacles do we face and why are people still not preparing for face Allah, where they will only end up regretting in the Hereafter?

1. Attractions of the Dunya
2. Forgetting death is impending regardless of age/health
3. Shaytan
4. Wrong companions
5. Cultures
6. Fail to seek knowledge
7. Sins are turning the heart to be diseased and the heart eventually “dies”
8. Do not recite, understand or ponder over the Qur'an

CONCLUSION

Life is too short for us to waste. On many occasions the Angel of Death are passing by us to go to another person. One day the very same Angel of Death will stop just beside us and our time in this world will be over. Before that time comes, we should strive to ensure that we have made sufficient preparations for the Hereafter. The journey in the Hereafter is an extremely long journey. We make du'a that Allah will Grant us His Mercy and Ease our journey and Grant us all Jannatul Firdaus.