



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

AS 1441 AH IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE – ARE WE MORE PREPARED TO FACE ALLAH?

INTRODUCTION

We have been informed in an authentic hadith that our lifespan has been determined in our mother's womb:

On the authority of Abdullah ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), and he is the truthful and he believed, narrated to us:

Verily each one of you is brought together in his mother's womb for forty days in the form of a drop of fluid (nutfah), then it is a clinging object for a similar period. Thereafter, it is a lump looking like it has been chewed for a similar period. The angel is then sent to him and he breathes into him the spirit. He is also commanded to issue four decrees: to record his sustenance, his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be unhappy (by entering Hell) or happy (by entering Paradise).

By Allah, other than Whom there is no deity, verily one of you performs the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is but an arm's length between him and paradise, and that which has been recorded overtakes him, and so he acts with the actions of the people of the Hellfire and thus enters it; and verily one of you performs the actions of the people of the Hellfire, until there is but an arm's length between him and Hellfire, and that which has been written overtakes him and so he acts with the actions of the people of Paradise and thus he enters it. [Bukhari and Muslim]

So, we are actually closer to be brought to our next home - which is 6 feet under the ground. Every second the clock ticks - it brings us closer to that home. Everyone hates moving houses.... But this time no one will accompany us - only we alone will have to live there by ourselves.

Are we prepared for this? It seems not too long ago we were in Ramadan and now, the next chapter of our life will begin as we come closer to the next year in the Islamic calendar. Our deeds - good and bad - have been written down by Allah's

Angels. Some people are still deluded in thinking that we are still young and there are plenty of time to prepare.

- What is we were to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic which may end our lives?
- What is we were involved in the Beirut blast which shorten our lives?
- What is we were to be among those who died in the Air India tragedy yesterday?

No one knows when is our last breath and in which land we will die.

"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

Therefore as the Islamic Year 1441 AH is drawing to a close, the question that we all have to ask ourselves is:

ARE WE PREPARED TO FACE ALLAH?

We must first identify what are the factors which affect our preparations. Everyone's life is different. We face different trials and tests from Allah. We must immediately identify these factors that affect our preparations and overcome these so that we are able to focus on this preparation for the rest of our lives inshaAllah.

FACTORS AFFECTING OUR PREPARATIONS

1. Not seeking knowledge of the Deen
 - Purpose of life

The purpose of life is to worship Allah:

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

Allah also Reminded us of the purpose of worshipping Allah:

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

Therefore anything which may hinder or reduce our ability to worship Allah must be resolved immediately, as any delay will only further deteriorate our worship, and which will lead to the deterioration of our relationship with Allah.

- Tawheed
 - Read Qur'an
 - Understand hadiths
2. People think that death is not imminent
 3. Wrong priorities
 - Busy going on holidays than preparing for Hajj/Umrah
 - Money spent on purchasing clothes, games, cars, etc rather than for sadaqah jari'ah for eg. building mosques, plant trees, etc
 4. Attachment of dunya
 5. Shaytan
 6. Society and culture
 7. Wrong companions
 8. No Guidance from Allah
 9. Lack of taqwa
 10. When tested by Allah, failed to overcome these tests
 11. No istiqomah
 12. Did not remember Allah

HOW TO ENSURE THAT WE REMEMBER ALLAH?

- 1. Al Muhasabah**
- 2. Al Muraqabah**
- 3. Dhikrullah**

1. AL MUHASABAH

AL-MUHASABAH is taking account of one's own actions. It is when an individual pauses at the end of each day that has passed, in order to check himself and run through his achievements:

1. What has he done in the course of the day?
2. Why has he done it?

3. What has he omitted?
4. Why has he omitted it?

2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

I. Allah will call us into account on the Day of Judgment

It is very important to have the understanding that all of us, individually and collectively, will be under scrutiny and will have to face a day of Reckoning. We must not be like the hypocrites who do not learn lessons or take heed from calamities that befall them.

A. Surah Al Maidah 5: 105

"O, you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility upon] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided. To Allah is your return all together; and He will inform you of what you used to do"

B. Surah Al-Haqqah 69: 18

"That Day shall you be brought to Judgement, not a secret of you will be hidden."

C. Surah Al Baqarah 2: 284

"...Whether you show what is within yourself or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it."

D. Surah Al-Hashr 59: 18

"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."

The great Caliph `Umar bin Al-Khattab (r.a.) said:

"Call yourself to account before you are called to account."

II. In order to reach the level of Taqwa

The believer will never reach the level of Taqwa without making Muhasabah. This is the secret of success and the path to salvation. Muhasabah will lead to repentance and that will lead to Taqwa. The Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

"The intelligent person takes account of himself and acts for (that which will benefit after) death."

(At-Tirmidhi)

And Taqwa (consciousness and fear of Allah, piety and righteousness) is important because:

Surah al Hujurat 49: 13

*" ...The most honourable one of you in the sight of Allah is the one with the **most Taqwa**"*

3. HOW TO PRACTISE AL MUHASABA

I. One must have the following (inshaAllah)

- i. The light of wisdom- The light which Allah (SWT) has enlightened the hearts.
- ii. The ability to discern/recognise that whatever Allah (SWT) has provided for us can be both a blessing AND a trial.
- iii. Feeling of constant suspicion of oneself so that one will inspect oneself thoroughly

II. Constantly recognising and reminding oneself that shaytan is the enemy

A. Surah al Fatir 35: 6

"Certainly shaytan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy"

B. Surah an Nur 24: 21

"O, you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of shaytan. And whoever follows the footsteps of shaytan- indeed he enjoys immorality and wrongdoing."

III. Constantly correcting one's intention in relation to acts of worship and good deeds

"ACTIONS ARE BUT BY INTENTIONS AND EVERY MAN SHALL HAVE BUT THAT WHICH HE INTENDED. THUS HE WHOSE MIGRATION WAS FOR ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER, HIS MIGRATION WAS FOR ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER, AND HE WHOSE MIGRATION WAS TO ACHIEVE SOME WORLDLY BENEFIT OR TO TAKE SOME WOMAN IN MARRIAGE, HIS MIGRATION WAS FOR THAT FOR WHICH HE MIGRATED."

Narrated by al Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, At Tarmidhi, An Nasaie

Take note that II and III are closely related! Beware therefore of the 'disease' of showing off- the hidden shirk in which Rasulullah (SAW) described as *"more hidden than the creeping of ants."* [Narrated by Ahmad & al Hakim]

Also in the hadeeth narrated by **Muslim, at Tarmidhi & An Nasaie** where the matyr, qari (reciter of the Quran) & giver of charity will be dragged to the hell fire.

IV. Constantly ensuring that the deeds or acts of worship are done CORRECTLY, ONLY according to the Quran and sunnah.

V. Performing more voluntary acts of worship or deeds, example the sunnah prayers

4. WHEN TO PRACTISE AL MUHASABAH

Every evening before one sleeps, or at the most, once a week.

Take note:

- i. The obligatory duties, especially the obligatory prayers (did we do it on time? In full concentration? in congregation?)
- ii. voluntary acts of worship, eg the sunnah prayers(did we do the 12 raka'at voluntary prayers)
- iii. Have we done enough dhikr? (Remembrance of Allah)
- iv. Have we asked forgiveness from Allah?
- v. Have we read the Quran?
- vi. Are we going to learn any new verses of the Quran?
- vii. Shall we do voluntary fast?
- viii. Have we attended any religious talks to increase our knowledge?
- ix. Have we make any donations to charity...help the poor,etc

RIGOROUSLY KEEP ALL THESE INTO ACCOUNT!

InshaAllah with full sincerity to improve ourselves, we would be able to reach the level of TAQWA that would make us honourable in the eyes of Allah (SWT)

"Our Lord, verily it is You Who will gather mankind together on the Day about which there is no doubt. Verily Allah never breaks His promise."

[SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:9]

2. AL MURAQABAH

Muraqabah is knowing that Allah is watching over us. Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, says:

"And know that Allah knows what is in your minds, so fear Him." [Al-Qur'an 2:235]

"And Allah is Ever a Watcher over all things." [Al-Qur'an 33:52]

"And He is with you wherever you may be." [Al-Qur'an 57:4]

There are many other similar verses stating the same concept.

In the *hadith* of Jibril, when he asked the Prophet about *ihsan* (goodness and excellence), the Prophet replied, "*Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, but since we do not see Him we should know that He sees us at all times.*" [Bukhari and Muslim] The meaning of this *hadith* is the definition of *muraqabah*. Namely, the endurance of the servant's knowledge and his conviction and certainty that Allah is watching over his internal and external affairs. To have this knowledge and certainty at all times is called *muraqabah*. It is the fruit of the servant's knowledge that Allah is his Watcher, Over-seeing him, Hearing his utterances, and Observing all of his deeds at all times.

Al-Junaid said, "The one firm in *muraqabah* fears the waste of even a moment for other than his Lord." Dhun-Nun said, "The sign of *muraqabah* is to favor what Allah has sent down (of the revelation), to glorify what Allah has glorified, and to despise what Allah has despised."

Ibrahim Al-Khawas said, "*Muraqabah* is the sincerity of both the internal and external to Allah." It has been said that, "The best that man may cling to on this road to Allah is *muhasabah* (reckoning of the self), *muraqabah*, and governing his conduct with knowledge."

The people of true knowledge have unanimously agreed that having *muraqabah* for Allah in one's hidden thoughts is a means for it to manifest in the deeds and the behavior externally. So, whoever has *muraqabah* for Allah in secret and internally, Allah will preserve him in his actions and behavior, both internally and externally.

One of the finest definitions for *muraqabah* is the following: *muraqabah* of Allah is being on the way to Him at all times with overwhelming glorification, inciting nearness and urging joy. The overwhelming glorification is to have the heart filled with glorification of Allah. Such a state makes the servant unconcerned with glorifying others or paying attention to others beside Allah. A servant should always have this state, especially when he is remembering Allah. To be with Allah provides one with intimacy and love. If these are not associated with glorification, they may take one outside of the limits of servitude. Any love that is not associated with glorification of the Beloved One is a reason to distance him away from the Beloved and lose His respect.

The overwhelming glorification includes five components: walking towards Allah, constantly walking towards Him, presence within the heart for Him, glorification of Him, and being overwhelmed by His glorification to be concerned with others. The inciting nearness is the closeness to Allah that incites the servant to have these five components. This closeness makes him glorify Allah in a manner that he pays no attention to himself or others. The closer the servant becomes to Allah, the more he glorifies Him and the less mindful he will be for others. The urging joy is happiness and glorification. It is the delight one finds in this nearness. There is nothing in this world comparable in any way to the joy and happiness of the heart and the delight of the eye with Allah and His closeness. This is one of the states in Paradise. A

knowledgeable person said, "There are times when I would say that if the people of Paradise can be in a state like this, they are indeed living a good life." This joy, no doubt, urges him to be constant in walking to Allah and doing his best to seek Allah's Pleasure. If one didn't achieve this joy or even a portion of it, then one should doubt their faith and deeds. Faith has grace and sweetness. If one has not tasted it, then one should go back and achieve the true faith and its sweetness.

Ibn Abbas reported: I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, when he said to me, "Young man, I will teach you some words. Be mindful of Allah and he will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find him before you. If you ask, ask from Allah. If you seek help, seek help from Allah. Know that if the nations gathered together to benefit you, they will not benefit you unless Allah has decreed it for you. And if the nations gathered together to harm you, they will not harm you unless Allah has decreed it for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2516

3. DHIKRULLAH

Allah (swt) tells us in the Quran:

كَثِيرًا ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ تَذَكُّرًا وَآمَنُوا بِذِكْرِهَا

"O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance." (33:41)

Our Prophet (saw) also told us:

"He who remembers his Lord and he who does not are like the living and the dead." (Bukhari & Muslim)

Dhikr is an all-embracing term that, in addition to including the ritual acts of worship, covers an array of activities of the tongue and heart. It involves thinking of and making mention of Allah at all times and in every area of our lives. This is the worship that has no special time, but is performed constantly so that it permanently links up man's life with Allah and His service.

The importance of constant dhikr cannot be emphasized enough, particularly if we desire to be on the receiving end of Allah's attention, Grace and Mercy.

Allah tells us in the Quran:

"Then remember Me, I will remember you." (2:152)

Our Prophet (saw) told us that Allah has said:

"I am with My servant when he remembers Me and his lips move making mention of Me." (Bukhari) Our Prophet (saw) also said: "A man does nothing more calculated to rescue him from Allah's punishment than making mention of Allah." (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

In addition to our ritual acts of worship including the most frequent one i.e. salat-prayer, there are many other ways of remembering Allah. Of these, reading and reciting the Quran is the foremost. Allah refers to the Quran as 'Adh-dhikr' i.e. 'The Remembrance' or 'The Reminder' in as many as 55 places in the Quran. In Surah Saad, Verse 1, he tells us: "By the Quran, full of dhikr." And in verse 49: "This (the Quran) is no less than a dhikr for all the worlds". Reading, understanding, reflecting and pondering on Allah's words is the most effective way of remembering Him.

Dhikr also includes remembering Allah when one gets up in the morning, on starting to do anything, on eating, leaving the house, on entering various places and before performing so many other activities. Our Prophet (saw) has taught us the appropriate supplications for every occasion and if we can recite these with understanding, all our activities will, Inshallah, amount to His remembrance and worship. With a little effort these can be learnt; but if for any reason one cannot remember the appropriate one, then even saying Bismillah and being conscious of Allah amounts to dhikr and will be a source of barakah – blessing in everything we do.

When a man said: "O Messenger of Allah the ordinances of Islam are too many for me, so tell me something that I may cling to", he (saw) replied: "Your tongue will continue to be supplied by making mention of Allah." (Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah) There are so many ways of remembering Allah, taught to us by our Prophet (saw). When we glorify Him by saying Subhanallah (How perfect is Allah), when we praise Him by saying Alhamdulillah (All praise is for Allah), when we magnify Him by saying Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest), all this is dhikr. When we say Astaghfirullah (I seek Allah's forgiveness), when we say La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah (There is no power nor might except with Allah), all this is dhikr. Our Prophet (saw) also said: "(There are) Two words, (which are) light on the tongue, heavy on the Scale and beloved to The Most Gracious: "SubhaanAllaahi wa bihamdihi. Subhaan Allaahil azeem." (How perfect Allah is and I praise Him. How perfect Allah is, The Supreme.)

We have also been taught the prescribed dhikr for the mornings and evenings. Allah tells us in the Quran regarding prayers and dhikr:

"So glorify Allah when you come up to the evening and when you enter the morning. And His are all the praises and thanks in the heavens and the earth; and in the late afternoon and when you come up to the times when the day begins to decline." (30;17-18)

This morning and evening dhikr should also include seeking Allah's protection from Satan's machinations and whisperings and all those things that can harm us. Our Prophet (saw) said:

"The devil is encircling the heart of the son of Adam, when he mentions Allah, he withdraws; but when he is neglectful, he makes evil suggestions." (Bukhari)

When we supplicate to Allah earnestly, this is also dhikr. Dhikr can be done anywhere and at anytime. Allah tell us in the Quran:

“Men who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation.” (3:191).

Ablution is not a prerequisite for dhikr and dhikr can be pronounced with the tongue or done silently. However, when one is saying it, one must not do it with a careless and inattentive heart and try to be conscious of what one is saying.

Dhikr is not only to remember and mention Allah when one is on one's own but also when one is amongst people i.e. in assemblies. Our Prophet (saw) told us that that Allah said:

“I am present when My servant thinks of me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me inwardly I shall remember him inwardly and if he remembers Me in people, I shall remember him among people who are better than they.” (Bukhari & Muslim) Our Prophet (saw) also said: “People will not sit remembering Allah without the angels surrounding them, mercy covering them, peace descending on them and Allah mentioning them among those who are with them.” (Muslim)

Gatherings where people assemble to learn and teach religion and to remember Him are greatly encouraged and valued in Islam. Allah has angels who go about seeking those who remember Allah. Our Prophet (saw) said:

“When you come upon the pastures of Paradise, feed on them.” When asked what the pastures of Paradise were he replied that they were circles where Allah is remembered. (Tirmidhi)

Even when people come together for social purposes, it is important to remember Allah in some way. Our Prophet (saw) said:

“People who arise from an assembly in which they do not remember Allah will be just as if they had got up from an ass's corpse and it will be a cause of grief to them.” (Abu Dawud).

There are many prescribed ways of dhikr that are acceptable and praiseworthy in our religion. It is important to remember that dhikr must be done in these prescribed ways as Allah tells us:

“And celebrate His praises as he has directed you.” (2:198)

Thus creating one's own ways of dhikr for e.g. reading something or reading something for a specific number of times, unless there is evidence of it in the Quran and the Sunnah, is to be avoided as it may result in the wastage of one's good deeds.

Dhikr is a means of blessings and reward from Allah and also results in peace of mind. Allah tells us in the Quran:

“Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.”(13:28)

It is vital for our salvation that we remember Allah at all times, both in private and when amongst people. The men and women who remember Allah have been

specially mentioned in the Quran amongst the categories of people that are dear to Allah. We have been told about them:

“And for men and women who engage much in Allah’s remembrance. For them has Allah prepared forgiveness and a great reward.” (33;35)

1. Abu Ad-Darda’ (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said:

“Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions, the purest in the sight of your Lord, which raises your rank to the highest, which is better for you than spending gold and silver, better than meeting your enemy so that you strike at their necks and they strike at yours?” They replied: ‘Yes, indeed,’ and he said: ‘It is the remembrance of Allah.” (At-Tirmidhi)

SPECIAL STATUS

2. Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said:

“Allah says, “I treat My servant as he hopes that I would treat him. I am with him whenever he remembers Me:

if he thinks of Me, I think of him; if he mentions Me in company, I mention him in an even better company. If he draws near to Me a hand’s span, I draw near to him an arm’s length; and if he draws near to Me an arm’s length, I draw closer by a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

3. Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said:

“The similitude of someone who remembers his Lord and someone who does not is like that of the living and the dead.” (Al-Bukhari)

The Prophet’s Advice

4. Abdullah ibn Busr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that one of the Prophet’s Companions said, “O Messenger of Allah. I am overwhelmed by the so many injunctions of Islam. So tell me something to which I may hold fast.”

The Prophet replied, **“Keep your tongue wet with the remembrance of Allah.”** (At Tirmidhi)

Abundant Forgiveness

5. Abu Hurairah also reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

He who says, ‘Subhan-Allahi wa bihamdih’ (Glory and praise be to Allah) one hundred times a day, his sins will be obliterated even if they are equal to the extent of the foam of the sea. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Why It Is Important to Study Quran Collectively

6. Zaid ibn Harithah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

Whosoever says:

‘Astaghfirullah al-`Azeem al-ladhi la ilaha illa howa Al-Hayy al-Qayyum wa atubu illayh

(I ask forgiveness of Allah, the Magnificent, than Whom there is no deity, the Living, the Sustainer of existence, and I turn to Him in repentance,)

his sins will be forgiven even if he should have run away from the battlefield (while he was engaged in fighting for the Cause of Allah, which is a grave sin in Islam). (Abu Dawud and authenticated by Al-Albani)

Huge Reward

7. Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet said:

“Whoever prays Fajr Prayer in congregation, and then sits and remembers Allah until the sun rises, then (after a while) prays two *rak`has*, he will gain a reward equal to that of making perfect Hajj and `Umrah. [The Prophet repeated the word “perfect” thrice.] (At-Tirmidhi)

8. Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said:

He who repeats after every prayer:

Subhan Allah (Glory be to Allah) thirty-three times,

Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah) thirty-three times,

Allahu Akbar (Allah is Greatest) thirty-three times;

and completes the hundred with:

La ilaha illallahu, wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu, wa

Huwa `ala kulli shai'in qadir

(There is no true god except Allah. He is One and He has no partner. His is the sovereignty and His is the praise, and He is Omnipotent)

Will have all his sins pardoned even if they may be as large as the foam on the surface of the sea.” (Muslim)

Easy Opportunity

9. Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

He who utters ten times:

La ilaha illallahu, wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahulmulku wa lahulhamdu, wa Huwa `ala kulli sha'in qadir

(There is no true god except Allah. He is One and He has no partner. His is the sovereignty and His is the praise, and He is Omnipotent),

he will have a reward equal to that for freeing four slaves from the progeny of Prophet Isma`il. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Words That Allah Loves

10. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet said:

“There are two statements that are light on the tongue, heavy on the scales, and beloved to the Most Merciful:

Subhana Allahi wa bihamdih

Subhana Allahi Al-`Azeem

(Glory and praise be to Allah,

Glorified is Allah, the Most Great.)” (Al-Bukhari)