

LIFE IS A FADING SHADOW



Hameed

By
**Abdul-Malik bin Muhammad
Ibn Abdul Rahman Al-Qasim**
Translated by
Jalal Abualrub



الدنيا ظل زائل

**Life is a
Fading Shadow**

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Supervised by:
ABDUL MALIK MUJAHID



Head Office:

DARUSSALAM

P.O. Box 22743, Riyadh 11416, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Tel: 00966-1-403 3962/404 3432 Fax: 00966-1-402 1659

E-mail: darussalam@naseej.com.sa

Branches:

DARUSSALAM

50, Lower Mall, Lahore, Pakistan. Tel: 0092-42-724 0024/723 2400

Fax: 0092-42-735 4072

DARUSSALAM PUBLICATIONS

P.O. Box. 79194, Houston, TX 77279, USA. Tel: 001-713-722 0419

Fax: 001-713-722 0431

E-mail: sales@dar-us-salam.com **Website:** www.dar-us-salam.com

DARUSSALAM

572-Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn, New York 11217, USA. Tel: 001-718-625 5925

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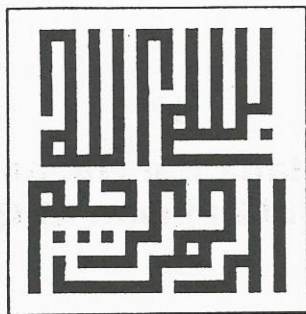
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In the Name of Allâh,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Publishers Note

All the praises and thanks are due to Allâh, the *Rubb* of the worlds, and may Allâh exalt the mention of the Prophet Muhammad, the chosen, the trustworthy, and the mention of his Household and all of his Companions.

We are presenting this book '*Life is a Fading Shadow*' which is compiled by the well-known scholar Abdul Malik bin Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman Al-Qasim. The compiler has produced in this book a good collection of excerpts from the writings of the Imams of this Muslim *Ummah*.

As is clear by the name of the book, it is based on the fact that the life of the world is nothing but a passageway, so a Muslim should strive for the destination in the Hereafter.

We are captured by the charms of this world and happen to indulge in the worldly affairs so much that we forget our main obligation and ultimate destination. This book is a good endeavor to remind of this absolute fact and turn us from the deceptions of satanic intuitions.

May Allâh help us all to perform our duties well and in a perfect manner so that in the Hereafter we may be able to attain success. — *Amin!*

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager
Darussalam

Introduction

All thanks are to Allâh, Who made this life a transient passageway and the Hereafter an everlasting life, and may Allâh's peace and blessings be on the most honorable of all Messengers and Prophets, our Prophet Muhammad.

When one contemplates how eager the people of this life are to live and enjoy it and strive hard with delight to collect its temporary possessions, one feels amazed and astonished. Do they consider this life the ultimate goal and the only life to live? They act as if they were created to collect material possessions and strive hard to earn life's riches. They have forgotten a Day during which they will go back to Allâh.

'Life is a Fading Shadow,' is a booklet in which we collected the thoughts that those¹ who were before us gave to the life of the world, those who were certain that it was a passageway that ends with the lasting journey to Reckoning and the Day of Judgment. This book is a reminder of the Hereafter and the ultimate destination. It should provide those who travel this journey with sufficient provision. We ask Allâh to make our hearts, statements and actions sincere for the sake of His Honorable Face.

**Abdul Malik bin Muhammad
bin Abdul Rahman Al-Qasim**

¹ From our *Salaf*: the Companions, the second and third generations of Islam, and the scholars of Islam who followed their righteous path and way.

Reality of the Worldly Life

Allâh said describing this life:

﴿ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَّعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴾
[غافر: ٣٩]

“Truly, this life of the world is nothing but a (quick passing) enjoyment, and verily, the Hereafter that is the home that will remain forever.” (40:39)

Allâh also warned against the trial that one's wealth and children represent:

﴿ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾
[الأنفال: ٢٨]

“And know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and that surely, with Allâh is a mighty reward.” (8:28)

Allâh disallowed one from longing for the wealth and material riches that other people have:

﴿ وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ﴾
[طه: ١٣١]

“And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), the splendor of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby.” (20:131)

There are many *Âyat* (Verses) in the Qur'ân that admonish this life. Rather, most of the Qur'ân contains references that belittle this worldly life and discourage people from indulging in it, while calling them to the Hereafter. Therefore, we do not need to repeat these Verses since this subject is amply mentioned in the Qur'ân.¹

¹ *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 3, p. 216

Here is the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ described the significance, he placed on this life when he said:

«مَالِي وَلِلدُّنْيَا! إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا: كَمَثَلِ رَاكِبٍ قَالَتْ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ، ثُمَّ رَاحَ وَتَرَكَهَا».

“What have I to do with this life? The parable of me and this life is the parable of a rider who rested in the shade of a tree and then departed.” (This *Hadith* was collected by Ahmad bin Hanbal, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Al-Hakim, and Al-Albani¹ rendered it authentic)

The Messenger ﷺ also encouraged preparing for the Hereafter and in taking provisions from this life for the

¹ Shaikh Muhammad Nasir Ad-Din Al-Albani, one of the great scholars of Islam and the most distinguished scholar of *Hadith* in our time. His scientific works in-defense of the *Sunnah*, *Hadith*, analogy, and criticism of *Hadith* collections with regards to their authenticity, or lack of it, were spread over half a century of blessed books and articles and thousands of lectures recorded on tape-recorder. He died this year after a long illness and his loss was felt throughout the Muslim World, which saw his over 200 books transferred to its various parts and beautify just about every library and personal collections of Islamic books. May Allâh grant him his mercy for his services to Islam in general and the knowledge of *Hadith* and *Fiqh* in specific, and give his students and students of knowledge everywhere the patience in their moment of grief and the dedication to continue his honorable mission. Indeed, there is no other scholar who lived in our time who was instrumental in resurrecting the knowledge of *Hadith* and *Sunnah* more than Al-Albani did. But, he died and joined his great friend and brother, the scholar of Islam Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz bin Baz who also died this year. It is a sign of the imminence of the Hereafter that Allâh takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars. May Allâh reward them for their efforts and join them together in Paradise, like brothers facing each other on thrones.

Last life, especially since this life occupies its inhabitants: Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said:

«كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا: كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ، أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ».

“In this life, be like a stranger or a passerby.” (*Al-Bukhâri*)

Moreover, when realizing how eager people are for this life and their vitality in collecting its passing delights, one should remember the Prophet's statement:

«إِذَا رَأَيْتَ اللَّهَ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - يُعْطِي الْعَبْدَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى مَعْصِيَةِ مَا يُحِبُّ، فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ اسْتِذْرَاجٌ».

“If you see that Allâh the Exalted and Most Honored gives the slave from (the splendor) of this life what he likes, even though he is a sinner, then know that it is Allâh's gradual punishment.” (*Ahmad and Al-Baihaqi*).

Those who are fond of this life, with its passing enjoyment, and work hard to collect its processions, will be too busy to worship and obey Allâh and to fulfill their Islamic duties and responsibilities perfectly and on time. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«اَقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ، وَلَا يَزْدَادُ النَّاسُ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا حِرْصًا، وَلَا يَزْدَادُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بُعْدًا».

“The Last Hour has drawn near, yet people are ever becoming eager for this life and drawing away from Allâh.” (*Al-Hakim*)

It is permissible to collect wealth from pure and lawful resources and spend it lawfully and without extravagance; this is an act of worship with which the Muslim draws close to Allâh. If one collects the riches of this life from

unlawful resources and spends his wealth on unlawful means and ways, then it is the worst provision that will accompany him to the Fire.

Yahya bin Mu'adh said:

"I do not order you to abandon this life, but to abandon sin. Disinterest in this life is a virtue, but abandoning sin is a religious obligation. Surely, you are more in need of establishing the obligations, than collecting virtues and minor good deeds."

Dear Muslims, this life, in which the son of Adam dwells, has obvious riches and delights such as clothes, foods, drinks, etc. All these aspects provide the necessary provisions and sustenance for one's journey back to Allâh. Mankind needs these provisions, but just in the right amounts and from lawful resources; such are the praised believers who take from this life what they are allowed and permitted. Those who take more than what is necessary, in greediness, will become among the admonished ones. Indeed, even though greed collects wealth, it turns what is essentially useful into the harmful that busies one from seeking his benefit and earning what is useful in essence. This is just like a man in a caravan – who travels in the desert; he brings his animal to the water resource and takes good care of its drinking, food and covering it with garments or adornments of various colors. He does all this, while unaware that the rest of the caravan has already left him and departed on its way. This man will end up all alone in the desert and fall prey to wild beasts. We should also assert that one is ordered to take from this life what is necessary for his survival; one's body and means of livelihood are necessary for him to sustain his life. The middle and best way, is the safest way: taking the necessary provisions for one to continue the journey through this life. If what one takes from this life is a part of what

he desires but lawful and from lawful resources, then giving the heart what it desires in this case helps it fulfill its need and satisfy its right.¹

‘Aun bin Abdullah said:

“Both this life and the Hereafter are in the heart just like the two sides of a scale: whichever is heavier will outweigh the other.”²

No doubt, those who obey Allâh and fulfill His Orders with regards to this life, will enjoy great goodness; giving charity, spending on his rightful needs, helping spread Islamic knowledge, building mosques, and so forth. For this type, this life’s possessions become a blessing from Allâh, Who directs them to spend their wealth in a way that benefits them in the Last Life. In contrast to this better mannerism, Al-Hasan was once asked about, who will be screaming in horror the most on the Day of Judgment, meaning from Allâh’s torment. He said:

“A man whom Allâh had granted bounties, which he used in the disobedience of Allâh.”³

It is a fact that mankind covets money and collecting gold and silver. From the time they are born until they die, people strive to amass wealth, until their life reaches its end and conclusion. They should realize that life goes through a circle of deprivation and abundance, from wealth to poverty, from happiness to sadness. Change is the core of this life and this is the way Allâh created it, until the Day when He decides that this life ends and is terminated. In this context, we can understand this wisdom from ‘Umar رضي الله عنه:

¹ *Mukhtasar Minhâj Al-Qâsidin*, p. 211

² *Tazkiyatun-Nufus*, p. 129

³ *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*, p. 47

“*Zuhd* (modesty) in this life brings comfort to the heart and the body.”¹

Also, Al-Hasan said about our *Salaf*, the companions in this case:

“I met some people who would not feel elation at anything that they earn in this life, nor grieve for anything in it that they do not acquire.”²

This indeed is the true *Zuhd* in this life, which Imam Ahmad described:

“*Zuhd* towards this life pertains to having short hopes.”³

This is why the believer should not take this life as a permanent dwelling and residence or feel secure in it, but rather, should be ready to travel at short notice.⁴

This is the correct understanding and beneficial knowledge for this life, and it explains this statement from Yahya bin Mu‘adh:

“How can I not love a life in which I have my provision, earn my livelihood and live to perform acts of obedience on account of which I earn Paradise?”⁵

This is the type of people who are enjoying a good life, not those who live in palaces and fortified castles, but ignore the acts of worship and obedience to Allâh, they are not Muslims at all. Abdullah bin ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما said:

¹ *Tarikh Umar*, p. 26

² *Az-Zuhd*, by Imam Ahmad, p. 230

³ *Madârij-us-Sâlikin*, vol. 2, p. 11

⁴ *Jâmi‘ul-‘Ulum Wal-Hikam*, p. 3780

⁵ *Tazkiyatun-Nufus*, p. 128

“This life is like Paradise for the disbeliever and like jail for the believer. The example of the believer when his soul departs his body, is the example of a man who was in jail and was released from it, so he goes about in the earth and travels all around it.”¹

O mankind! Be aware that the arrows of death have already been targeted towards you, so beware of them. Yet, here you are erecting the bows of prolonged hopes before you, so beware of them, as well. The lures and tests of life are surrounding you from every direction, so erect a barrier between you and them. Do not be deceived by your current easy life, for it is bound to vanish, its dwelling will end in departure and its string is bound to be pulled back and become short.²

Hence, those who think about the serious consequences of life will take heed and prepare themselves. Certainly, those who are aware of the length of their journey will prepare adequately for traveling.³

The Hereafter

Anas bin ‘Iyâd said:

“I saw Safwân bin Salaim; if he was told that tomorrow will be the Day of Resurrection, he would not have much more acts of worship to perform than what he already had performed.”⁴

However, it is a fact that mankind spends this life in heedless play and commit sins and errors again and again.

¹ *Sharh As-Sudur*, p. 13

² *Al-‘Âqibah*, p. 69

³ *Said-ul-Khâtir*, vol. 6, p. 231

⁴ *As-Siyar*, vol. 5, p. 366

This is amazing, since they know that this life will soon depart and the Hereafter will arrive in its place. Still, they busy themselves with the departing life and ignore the eminent, everlasting life, as if the latter will not arrive at their residence and reach their area. They dispute with each other in acquiring the delights of this life. So many of them lose their religion in the process or forget their children, and enviousness and hatred have flourished between them as a consequence. 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz said in a speech that he gave:

“This life is not your permanent residence, for Allâh has written that it is bound to end and its people depart it. There are many people who build and establish what is minute and bound to perish. There are many dwellers, who feel ease but will soon depart their dwellings. Therefore, may Allâh grant you His Mercy, prepare for the journey using the best means that are available to you. Provide yourself with adequate provisions, and surely, the best provision is *Taqwa* (fear from Allâh). Since this life is not a permanent dwelling or an everlasting home, then the believer should be either a stranger living in a strange land, dedicating his attention to going back to his homeland. Or, the believer should be like a traveler who does not remain in any particular area. Rather, he travels by night and day towards his place of residence.”¹

Al-Fudail bin 'Iyâd gave good thought to the value of this life when he said:

“You will not fully control your heart, until and unless, you become disinterested concerning whoever eats up this life!”

¹ *Jâmi'ul-'Ulum Wal-Hikam*, p. 379

Bilal bin Sa'd reminded us of our imminent destination:

"People of *Taqwa*! You were not created to perish, but to be transferred from one stage to another. You were transferred from (your father's) loins to wombs, then from wombs to this life, then from this life to graves, then from graves to the Stand (Great Gathering on the Day of Resurrection) and then from the Stand to eternal dwelling, either in Paradise or the Fire."¹

This is why Al-Hasan Al-Basri said:

"Stay away from the busying aspects of life, and surely, life has abundant busying aspects. Every man who indulges in an aspect of life that fills his time, then that door he opened will open ten more doors of busying aspects for him."²

Also, Ibn As-Simâk said:

"If life lures one to taste its delights because his heart covets life, the Hereafter will make him taste its bitterness because his heart turned away from it."³

The Foundation of Every Good

Dear Muslims, know that the basis of all types of goodness is founded on knowing that what Allâh wills, occurs, and what He does not will, never occurs. This knowledge should make you certain that whatever good deeds are performed, were performed by His bounty, so that you thank Him for them and beg Him not to discontinue them from you. This knowledge should also direct you to feel certain that committing sins occurs because of Allâh not helping those

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 5, p. 91

² *Az-Zuhd*, by Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak, p. 189

³ *Shadhrâtudh-Dhahab*, vol. 1, p. 304

who commit them and a form of punishment from Him. You should therefore beg Him to prevent you from committing sins and never abandon you reliant on your self with regards to performing the good deeds and abandoning sins. (but help you by His Grace to obey Him and abandon what He has prohibited).¹

Among the signs that one covets this life is that one loves the people who covet this life, prefers them and ignores the duty of forbidding the evil they commit. Sufyân Ath-Thauri said:

“I know that a man loves this life when I see him greet its people often!”²

As for the poor who is righteous and does not beg people, you see that people do not talk to him. And if they have to greet him, they do so from far away for fear that his poverty might be contagious. If they ask him about his condition, they ask with a grim face and in true disinterest in his condition. But when a man of position or wealth in this life comes, they stand to greet him and welcome him with open arms, even though he might not be among those who pray. His actions might be evil, wicked, and have stench that accompanies them, yet he is welcomed from the heart because he owns dirhams and dinars! In contrast, the righteous poor person, who if he swears that Allâh does something, Allâh might fulfill his vow for him, is not important enough to be considered present or absent. But he who might not weigh more than the wing of a mosquito with Allâh, is given heartily welcomes. This is life! Abdullah bin ‘Aun said:

¹ *Al-Fawâ'id*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 127

² *Hilyatul-Auliya'*, vol. 7, p. 37

“Those who were before us¹ would leave for this life what remained with them after taking care of their Hereafter. You, on the other hand, leave for your Hereafter what remains after taking care of your life.”²

The life of this world is short, and the most rich in it are still poor. Death is about to strike you and bring the smell of the wind of estrangement, even before you depart this life, and make known to you the imminent orphaning of your offspring. Therefore, wake up from your sleep of heedlessness and thoughtlessness, and remove love of this life from your heart. Surely, when the slave closes his eyes and perishes, he will wish that he is given respite, but his request will be denied.³

Any day, this life will come to an end and the Hereafter will commence, and what seemed far away will suddenly become near. What you used to see as the past, will become you in the eyes of those who remained alive after you. You might die all of a sudden or after an illness. You will then be carried away to your grave; these are constant reminders and types of death that strike all around you. Yet, you persist in your sleep and take joy in your thoughtlessness! Abu Hâzim said:

“He who discovers the true reality of life, will not feel delight in time of ease or feel grief for a hardship.”

Also, ‘Ali رضي الله عنه said:

“Whoever has six qualities, will leave no path to

¹ In reference to the Companions and the second and third generations of Islam who are called *‘As-Salaf As-Salih*, the best people as the Prophet ﷺ described them.

² *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 101

³ *‘Iddatus-Sâbirin*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 329

Paradise and away from the Fire, but will have taken it. They are: 1. He knows Allâh and obeys Him. 2. He knows the devil and disobeys him. 3. He knows Truth and follows it. 4. He knows Falsehood and stays away from it. 5. He knows life and avoids it. 6. He knows the Hereafter and seeks it.”¹

In this context, we understand this wisdom from Al-Fudail bin ‘Iyâd:

“Entering this life is easy, but departing from it is very hard. (He means being delivered from its lures and danger to Allâh’s mercy and forgiveness)”²

Yes, departing this life pertains to stopping breathing and experiencing hard moments during which the soul is taken out of its body. And even if the moment of death is easy, and it is not easy, running after the facades of this life and acquiring its riches still bring depression and confusion. Therefore, be among the people of the Hereafter and do not be among the people of this life. Habib bin Muhammad always said to his wife:

“If I die today, ask so-and-so to wash my body and do this and that.” People asked her, “Why did he say that, has he seen a vision?” She said, “This is what he says everyday.”³

Dear Muslims, if people are satisfied with this life’s riches, then be truly rich by relying on Allâh. If people feel delight in the aspects of this life, then be delighted by being close to Allâh. If they feel that they have the company of their loved ones, then make Allâh your companion. If they

¹ *Al-Ihyâ’*, vol. 3, p. 221

² *Al-Ihyâ’*, vol. 3, p. 224

³ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 320

welcome and seek closeness to their leaders and chiefs, so that they earn might and status with them, then know Allâh and seek the means of approach to Him, and you will earn the ultimate might and elevated status.¹

‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz said in a speech he gave:

“There is a provision for every journey, so take the best provision- *At-Taqwa*, from this life to the Hereafter. Be just like those who have just witnessed Allâh’s torment, so that you feel fear (from His torment) and eagerness (for His forgiveness). Do not have prolonged hopes because your hearts will become hardened and you will submit to your enemy (Satan). Verily, Allâh did not give reason to have prolonged hopes to he who might not live to see the night after the morning or to see the morning after the night, surrounded by traps of death that might overcome him between these two times. Only those who feel safe from Allâh’s torment and the horrors of the Day of Resurrection should feel assured and secure (and none should feel this way in this life). As for he who attends to a concern only to find that other concerns strike him, how can he feel safe?² I seek refuge with Allâh from ordering you to do what I forbid for myself, for if I do, my trade will fail and my poverty will be utterly exposed on a Day, during which only truth and sincerity will avail.”³

Reliance

Muhammad bin Abu ‘Imrân said:

¹ *Al-Fawâ'id*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 152

² The believer feels safe from Allâh’s torment when he enters Paradise and its doors are closed behind him for ever

³ *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah*, vol. 9, p. 283

"A man asked Hâtim Al-Asamm, 'What is the foundation of your firm trust in Allâh?' Hâtim said, 'Four qualities: I knew that my sustenance would not be eaten by anyone other than I, so my heart felt secure. I knew that others would not perform my righteous work, so I am busy performing it. I knew that death comes all of a sudden, so I rush to (fulfill my religious duty) before it strikes. I knew that I will never be absent from Allâh's Eye, wherever I may be, so I always feel shy from Him.'" (and so stay away from what he had prohibited)

Moreover, Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak said:

"O son of Adam! Prepare for the Hereafter and obey Allâh, as much as you need Him, or make Him angry, as much as you can bear the Fire! All praises are due to Allâh, we can never sufficiently praise Him as He should be praised, only He can do that Himself. We often disobey Him because of our ignorance and He pardons us with His Mercy."

Al-Fudail bin 'Iyâd said about the believer:

"In this life, the believer feels sadness and grief,¹ directing his attention at taking enough provision (for the Hereafter). He who feels like, in this life, then his efforts will be directed at collecting what benefits him when he returns home; he does not compete with the residents of the area where he

¹ He feels sad as if in a jail, eager to depart this life and fly free in the Paradise of his Lord. Also, Allâh tests him with various trials and hardships to erase his sins and elevate his status with Him. Surely, one feels grief for the pain and suffering he experiences, but only the believer observes patience and awaits Allâh's reward for his suffering.

lives,¹ among whom he is a stranger. He lives in the midst of their might, but it does not grieve him that he is not mighty among them.”²

Furthermore, Muslims should be aware of the tireless efforts of Satan and their own lusts and desires in this life, for they will lure them away from their religion, beautify sin in their eyes and hinder them from the path of truth to the path of wickedness. Wuhaib bin Al-Ward said:

“Beware of cursing Satan in public and being his friend in secret!”

This life is a race track

This life is just like a race track where the horses and their riders vie to reach the finish line before the others. This is the same case with the people of this life, but they are unaware that they are in a race, because they are engaged in heedlessness. They forget all about the Day of Reckoning and do not prepare for its imminent coming. Yet, their life terms are ever decreasing and drawing them closer to the end. Al-Hasan said:

“You wish you could live as long as Noah (عليه السلام) lived, even though Allâh’s Order (death) strikes at someone’s door every night!”³

Also, Abu Hâzim, Salamah bin Dinâr said:

“If modest provisions are enough for you in this life, then what is barely enough will suffice you. If what is sufficient for you does not sustain you, then nothing will.”⁴

¹ In reference to those who are content in this life and feel that their stay in it will be prolonged.

² *Jâmi‘ul-‘Ulum Wal-Hikam*, p. 379

³ *Az-Zuhd* by Al-Hasan Al-Basari

⁴ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 4, p. 65

We often witness those, who own much in this life, depart it with a mere shroud, just as the case with those who own nothing in this life. All of them become equal when they are laid into the hole of the grave and disappear inside it. The grave then becomes either a garden in Paradise or a hole in the Fire.

What part of life should the Muslim avoid and which was criticized in the Qur'ân? Abu Safwân Ar-Ra'îni was asked this question and he replied:

“Every aspect of life that you covet for the sake of this life, is criticized. Every aspect of this life that you love for the sake of the Hereafter, is not included in the chastised aspects of life.”¹

Also, ‘Ali رضي الله عنه described this life in these word:

“Its allowed aspects lead to being reckoned and its forbidden aspects lead to the Fire.”

It was reported that Allâh revealed to Prophet Dawûd (David) عليه السلام, “O Dawûd, I look at the old in the morning and evening of everyday and say to him, ‘My slave! You have become old, your skin became thinner, your bones became weaker and your coming to Me has drawn near, so be shy from Me, for I am shy from you!’”²

Verily, there are only Days

And regarding the days of this life, Al-Hasan said:

“O son of Adam! Life is only days, so if your day passes, your life becomes shorter.”

People rush to earn this life, fearing poverty and wishing to collect its wealth, as if their stay in it is eternal and

¹ *Tazkiyatun-Nufus*, p. 128

² *Az-Zuhd Al-Fâ'i*, p. 42

everlasting. They fear poverty, but do not fear the Reckoning; they fear hunger, but do not fear the Torment and Punishment. Yahya bin Mu'âdh said:

“Poor is the son of Adam, if he fears the Fire as he fears poverty, he will enter Paradise.”¹

But our *Salaf*, righteous ancestors, treated this life at its worth, as Al-Hasan Al-Basri described it. He said:

“By He in Whose Hand is my life! I met people who were as disinterested in this life as they were in the sand they walked on.”

Al-Fudail described the difference between days as:

“Yesterday passed, today there is in action and tomorrow is a hope.”²

The nights and days are stages (of a journey)

Therefore, dear Muslims, the stages of this life consist of days and nights during which one travels persistently to reach the ultimate destination. If you are able to collect enough righteous provisions for each of these stages, then do so, because the journey will surely end suddenly. Therefore, rush to collect enough provisions for your journey in this life and be aware that it ends before you are adequately prepared. One of our *Salaf* wrote to one of his friends:

“My brother, you might think that you will reside, even though in reality you continue traveling, driven to death which is headed towards you. Meanwhile, life's term is being shortened while you are traveling and what you have spent of your life will not be

¹ *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 4, p. 170

² *Jâmi'ul-Ulum wal-Hikam*, p. 381

returned to you until the Day of *At-Taghâbun* (The Day of Judgment when some people will lose themselves and some others will win their eternal happiness).”¹

Since there are righteous travelers who accompany us on our journey through life, we should know how do they combine modesty and living in this life? ‘Ali bin Al-Fudail said:

“I heard my father say to Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak, ‘You order us to be modest and collect what is sufficient to live, yet we see you buy merchandise (because he was a merchant)!’ He said, ‘O Abu ‘Ali, I do so to preserve my face and keep my honor (from begging) and to use it in the service of my Lord.’ Al-Fudail said, ‘O Ibn Al-Mubarak, this is a good mission, if it is fulfilled.’”

Indeed, the delights of this life, if they were collected from lawful resources and spent modestly on lawful resources, add beauty to the life of the world. This is especially the case if one spends a part of his wealth on charity, helping the distressed and supporting the needy, the orphans and the widows.

Sufyân said:

“Beware of Allâh’s anger with regards to three: beware that you fall into shortcomings concerning what He has commanded you. Beware that He sees you while you are feeling discontent concerning the provision He has granted you. Beware of feeling dismay at your Lord if you seek a procession of this life, but cannot acquire it.”

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 8, p. 427

Surely, Allâh divides provision in this life and one should only feel content with his provisions, whether they were substantial or minute, and regardless if one acquires the delights of life or not. One is required to feel content with his share and not to feel distressed about it. Also, one should avoid comparing himself to those who are wealthier than he is, but compare himself instead to the righteous believers and worshippers of Allâh. Allâh's Statement offers all these meanings in this comprehensive, yet eloquent *Âyah*:

﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ﴾

﴿وَرَزَقْنَاكَ مِنْكَ خَيْرًا وَأَبْقَىٰ﴾ [طه: ١٣١]

“And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), the splendor of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby.” (20:131)

Ibrahim Al-Ash‘ath said:

“I heard Al-Fudail saying, ‘The slave’s fear from Allâh is as substantial as his knowledge in Him, and his disinterest in this life is as substantial as his interest in the Hereafter.’”¹

A wise man once said:

“Everyone (a believer) who hears about Paradise and the Fire, would spend the next hours obeying Allâh, remembering Him, praying to Him, reciting the Qur’ân or giving charity.” A man asked him, “I cry a lot (it means fear from Allâh).” The wise man said, “It is better for you to smile while admitting your error,

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 8, p. 426

than cry while feeling pride in your (good) actions, for the latter's deeds will not be ascended higher than his head."¹

The man asked him for advice and he said:

"Leave this life to its people, just as they left the Hereafter to its people. Be like a bee in this life, if she eats, she eats pure food and if she feeds, she feeds pure food, and if she falls on something, she does not break or fracture it."²

Dear Muslims, those who remember death will see this life little in their eyes and will see clearly, because the seal that hindered their sight will be removed. The life of this world is short, no matter how substantial the treasures you collect in it. Surely, all this will end when death strikes and puts an end to enjoyment and delight. Al-Hasan said:

"Death has exposed the reality of this life and did not leave chance for the wise person to delight in it."³

The Insignificance of this worldly Life

Why should anyone covet this life if this is its true reality? Abu 'Ubaidah An-Nâji said:

"We visited Al-Hasan Al-Basri just before he died and he said to us, 'Welcome and may Allâh greet you with the *Salâm* (in Paradise). I ask Him to allow us to reside in the dwelling of eternity (Paradise), your visit is good if it was sincere and you observe patience afterwards. Do not hear the reminder (death) with your ears and

¹ Because the believer's accepted good deeds are ascended to Allâh by the angels, while the rejected acts do not go higher than one's head.

² *Al-Fawâ'id*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 153

³ *Târikh Baghdad*, vol. 14, p. 444

talk about it (without acting on it), for those who saw Muhammad ﷺ, witnessed his tremendous vitality when the flag was raised to him.¹ He did not engage in placing bricks over bricks, or pillars next to pillars (building mansions and palaces for himself). May Allâh grant His mercy to someone who lived modestly, ate little, wore modest clothes, acted with humbleness, striving in worshipping, cried for the error, ran away from the punishment and sought the mercy, until the end of his life came while he was like this.”²

Abu Kabshah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا أَرْبَعَةٌ نَفَرٍ: عَبْدٌ رَزَقَهُ اللهُ مَالًا وَعِلْمًا، فَهُوَ يَتَّقِي فِيهِ رَبَّهُ، وَيَصِلُ فِيهِ رَحِمَهُ، وَيَعْلَمُ اللهُ فِيهِ حَقًّا، فَهَذَا بِأَفْضَلِ الْمَنَازِلِ. وَعَبْدٌ رَزَقَهُ اللهُ عِلْمًا، وَلَمْ يَرْزُقْهُ مَالًا؛ فَهُوَ صَادِقُ النَّيَّةِ، فَيَقُولُ: لَوْ أَنَّ لِي مَالًا لَعَمِلْتُ بِعَمَلِ فُلَانٍ، فَهُوَ بِسَيِّئِهِ فَأَجْرُهُمَا سَوَاءٌ.

“People are of four types in this life: A slave whom Allâh has granted wealth and (religious) knowledge, so he fears his Lord with what he has, gives to his kith and kin and knows Allâh’s rights on his wealth, and this is the best grade. And a slave whom Allâh gave knowledge but not wealth, so his intention is sincere and he says, ‘If I had money, I would have done just like so-and-so (the first type),’ he will be judged

¹ It means that when the Prophet ﷺ was sent as Allâh’s Final Prophet and Messenger, and he acquired knowledge in Allâh and the Hereafter, he dedicated his entire life to obeying Allâh and spreading his Message. No man in history ever worked miracles and transformed the world as Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did, only in a span of twenty-three of the most wonderful and righteous years the world has ever seen.

² *Tabaqât Ash-Shâfi‘iyah*, vol. 6, p. 78

according to his intention and their reward is the same. And a slave whom Allâh gave wealth, but not knowledge, so he is confused and spends his wealth without knowledge; he does not fear his Lord regarding it, nor gives to kith and kin, nor knows Allâh's Rights on his wealth. This is the worst grade. And a slave whom Allâh did not grant wealth or knowledge, yet he says, 'If I had money, I would have done just like so-and-so (the third and worst type of people). So he will be judged according to his intention and their evil burden will be the same."¹

Therefore, this life is like a farm that one plants and keeps for the Hereafter. It should be filled with acts of worship and obedience to Allâh, collecting as much righteous sustenance and provisions for the Last Life. Al-Fudail said:

"Allâh placed all the evil in one house and made coveting this life as its key, and placed all the goodness in a house and made *Zuhd* (modesty, or disinterest) in this life as its key."²

When the man reaches the age of forty

Abdullah bin Dawûd narrated that our *Salaf* used to sleep a part of the night and then stay up to pray, recite the Qur'ân and invoked Allâh for forgiveness, so that they spend their life in the best manner and in preparation for their Hereafter.

In contrast, people laugh and delight in living, unaware of their approaching fate. They build this life (or their homes) in the path of catastrophic floods; but they ought to rush to

¹ This *Hadith* was collected by Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi, who rendered it of the *Hasan, Sahih* type (refer to *Tuhfat-ul-Ahwadhi, Sharh Jâmi' At-Tirmidhi* 6:1615); Shaikh Al-Albani رحمه الله rendered the *Hadith* authentic.

² *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 4, p, 257

perform good deeds before their life ends. They should know that there are those (the angel of death and his angel aids) who count their breaths and prepare to meet them, so why laugh and delight? Abdullah bin Tha'labah رضى الله عنه said:

"Do you laugh, when your shrouds might already have been sewn by the tailor?"¹

Also, Yahya bin Mu'adh said:

"Life is the dwelling of busying affairs, while the Hereafter is the dwelling of horrors. The slave will still be busy, while the horrors await him, until he settles down and ends up either in Paradise or the Fire."²

Dear Muslims, contemplating this life should alert you that it is but a journey that started from the intimacy between the father and the mother, passing through this life and ending in the grave. After the grave, there is the Gathering and then the permanent residence, hopefully in the Dwelling of Peace that is free from all shortcomings and is indeed the everlasting life. We were captured by our enemy (Satan) and were brought down to earth.³ Therefore, we should try our best to free ourselves and firmly march forth towards our old Dwelling.⁴ Know that traveling on the journey of life pertains to the breaths that one takes, which lead him or her through life just like a sailing ship. But in this case, the ship of life is sailing while one sits idle in it unaware that his life is passing rapidly.

¹ *Al-'Āqibah*, p. 88

² *Az-Zuhd*, by Al-Baihaqi, p. 248

³ In reference to Satan's role in expelling Adam and Eve from Paradise down to earth.

⁴ Paradise, where Adam and Eve lived before they were sent down to earth.

Man needs sufficient provisions on his journey through life, but the only sufficient provision to the Hereafter is *Taqwa* (fear from Allâh). Therefore, one should strive hard and be patient while observing *Taqwa*.¹ Otherwise, he will cry, when it is time to leave, "My Lord, send me back," but it will be said to him, "No." The heedless should therefore wake up from his lazy trek through the stages of life. This especially should be the case, since as he travels, Allâh shows him His signs,² Allâh brings fear to His slaves by these signs, to keep them from deviating from the Straight Path and correct religion. He whose means of journeying deviate him from the Straight Path, even though he witnesses the Signs of Allâh that make him afraid, should rush to return to Allâh by abandoning what made him deviate from the Path, all the while feeling remorse for his errors.³

In spite of all this, the fact is that the people of this life are just like the description that Ar-Rabi' bin Khaitham gave them. He said:

"We have become weak and sinners, eating our provisions and awaiting our fate."⁴

Shamit bin 'Ajlân described the people of this life, in their constant rush to acquire its riches, in that:

"They are confused as if they are drunk; the rider among them is in a rush and the dismounted among them is running. Neither the rich nor the poor among them feels contentment."⁵

¹ Struggling against his own desires and worshipping Allâh by fulfilling His Commandments and staying away from what He has prohibited.

² Such as death of other people, various hardships and afflictions of life, health problems, and so forth.

³ *'Iddatus-Sâbirin*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 330

⁴ *Sifatus-Sâfwah*, vol. 3, p. 67

⁵ *Sifatus-Sâfwah*, vol. 3, p. 346

In contrast, he who prepares for the Meeting with Allâh and spends his time doing what will benefit him in the Hereafter, will surely feel happy on a Day when neither wealth nor offspring will avail one. A Day when the various records of deeds will fly over, the hearts will shake in horror and the inner selves will feel confused. You will see people and think that they are drunk; they will not be drunk, but Allâh's torment is severe. Surely, he who uses this life as a path to direct him to the Hereafter and Paradise, as vast as the heavens and earth, then his path is the Path. He will be directed to the Dwelling of Peace by the Mercy and good Pleasure of Allâh. As for those who want this life, it will fade away the moment they breathe their last breath. During these terrible moments, life will abandon them and run away. The difference between them and the former type is that the righteous people like this life, but prefer the Hereafter to it. This is why Allâh made their path to the Hereafter easy for them and helped them surmount all hurdles and difficulties. Muhammad bin Al-Hanfiyah said:

“Every aspect with which one does not seek Allâh's Face Alone, is bound to diminish.”¹

One morning, a man asked Al-Fudail bin 'Iyâd how he was, and Al-Fudail disliked this question that people often asked, but said that he is in good health. The man asked again how he was, and Al-Fudail said:

“What is it that you are asking about, matters of this life or the Hereafter? If you are asking about matters of this life, then know that this life has deviated us and took us far away. If you are asking about matters of the Hereafter, then what do you think of he whose errors have increased, whose righteous works decreased

¹ ‘*Hilyatul-Auliya*’, vol. 3, p.176

and whose life is nearing its end. He who has not yet prepared for his return to Allâh, nor for death, nor humbled himself in anticipation for its coming, nor worked hard before it comes, nor beautified himself for its imminence,¹ but has instead beautified himself for this life.”²

Many of us today have become just like what ‘Auf bin Abdullah described. He stated: “Those who were before you³ would leave for this life what remained with them after taking care of their Hereafter. You, on the other hand, leave for your Hereafter what remains after taking care of your life.”⁴

If you witness what people do in their life at present times, you would be amazed. They are active and energetic in giving and taking for the sake of this life. If one of them wanted to buy an insignificant thing, he might spend hours in preparation of his purchase, yet, would pray very fast and would not perfect the prayer’s obligations and cornerstones. He might race with the *Imam*, the leader of the prayer, and pray without the necessary humbleness and calmness in the prayer. He, like many others, would be concerned about this life, but would not feel anxious if he did not participate in the hours and days during which there are recommended or required acts of worship. He spends the days giving and taking, playing and joking, acting as if the days and the months that he is wasting will be given back to him later on. In contrast, Bundâr said that he accompanied Yahya bin

¹ By performing good deeds and staying away from all types of evil.

² ‘*Hilyatul-Auliya*’, vol. 8, p. 86

³ In reference to the Companions and the second and third generations of Islam who are called *As-Salaf As-Salih*, the best people as the Prophet described them.

⁴ *Sifat-us-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 101 & *Tadkiratul-Huffâz*, vol. 1, p. 299

Sa'd (the renowned scholar of *Hadith*) for around twenty years and did not witness him disobey Allâh once.¹

Yahya bin Mu'adh said:

“Son of Adam, you seek (the splendor of) this life just like he who cannot do without it, but seek the Hereafter just like he who does not need it. However, you have been sufficed with regards to this life even if you do not seek it, but you will only earn the Hereafter if you vigorously seek it. So contemplate your affairs.”²

This is why it is amazing that a slave of Allâh would believe in the Dwelling of Everlasting Life, yet work hard for the life of passing enjoyment. Those whom Allâh loves will be protected from the lures of this life, only taking what is barely sufficient for them in it. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَخْلُقْ خَلْقًا أَبْغَضَ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا، وَإِنَّهُ مُنْذُ خَلَقَهَا لَمْ يَنْظُرْ إِلَيْهَا».

“Verily, Allâh did not create a creation less preferred to Him than this life; He did not look at it ever since He created it.”

When ‘Ali رضي الله عنه was asked to describe this life, he said:

“What should I describe to you of it? Those who live comfortably in it, feel safe and secure; those

¹ *Mawârid-uz-Zamân*, vol. 3, p. 276

² Yahya bin Mu'adh is admonishing those whose only concern in this life, even though Allâh has destined for them their provisions in it. Therefore, they should not let greed guide them, but work modestly and feel content that they alone will eat their provisions. He is also admonishing them because of their haste to collect this life's riches, even though they will only earn what was destined to them. Yet, they ignore the Hereafter which must be their primary goal in living.

who fall ill, feel grief; those who become poor, feel sad; and those who become wealthy, fall into trials; its allowed aspects await reckoning and its disallowed aspects lead to the Fire.”

The description of this worldly life

Yunus bin ‘Ubaid also described this life when he said:

“This life is just like a sleeping man who saw a dream in which he disliked some things and liked some things. Then He woke up from his sleep.”¹

Shamit bin ‘Ajlân said:

“There are two types of people who are tormented in this life. A man who was given wealth and is busy with it, and a man who was deprived of this life’s riches, so he follows its riches with his heart, and his inner self is nearing demise out of sorrow for his being deprived.”²

And when a man admonished this life, ‘Ali رضي الله عنه said to him:

“This life is a truthful dwelling for those who are truthful in it, a dwelling of safety for those who understand its true reality and a dwelling of richness for those who take (righteous) provisions from it.”³

Many people criticize and admonish this life and admit that it lures people into becoming tyrants and disobedient to Allâh. Yet, they do not realize that this is the only life during which they can earn righteous provisions to sustain and direct them to Paradise, with its elevated status and grades. Al-Awzâ’î said:

¹ *‘Iddatus-Sâbirin*, p. 355

² *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 347

³ *Adabud-Dunya Wd-Din*, p. 134

“Use the bounties that you enjoy to become stronger in running away from the Fire Allâh has kindled, which leaps up over the hearts. You are in a temporary dwelling in which you are given fixed terms. You are a generation that came after previous generations that enjoyed the fruits and splendor of this life. They were taller than you and had stronger bodies. They built the earth more than you built it; they built on top of mountains and moved stones. They went about the earth with might and strength. However, the days and nights brought an end to their term in life, erased their trace, emptied their homes and removed them from people’s memory. So, do you hear a sound from any of them or a whisper? They felt safe on account of their hoping to live longer, a legacy of a heedless people and a morning that brought them sorrow and remorse.”¹

Abstinence in this worldly life

Dear Muslims, seeking the Hereafter is only perfected when one feels disinterest in this life, especially with regards to two aspects. First, one should contemplate the quick passing of this life and its imminent demise, decrease, insignificance and the pain, depression and grief that competing for this life brings. All this will end and produce more remorse and sorrow. Surely, seekers of this life will always feel concern before and after they earn it and grief and sorrow after they lose it. Second, contemplate the Hereafter, its certain coming and nearness, its eternity and everlasting life, the honor of the delights and joys that it has, and the difference between its grades and what we have in this life. Verily, the Last Life is just as Allâh has described it:

﴿وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾ [الأعلى: ١٧]

¹ *Ash-Shukr*, p. 15

“And the Hereafter is better and more lasting.”

Indeed, it has everlasting and perfect delights.¹ Verily, everything except Allâh, is created and perishable and every delight is bound to perish, except the delight of Paradise. We ask Allâh to make us among the dwellers of Paradise who live under its shade which is spread all around to their right and their left.

Dear Muslims, Fakhr Ad-Daulah, ‘Ali bin Rukn, who was one of the kings of Buwaih dynasty, said:

“I collected enough wealth for my children and their army to suffice for them for fifteen years to come.”

When he died in the area of Rai, in Iraq, the keys to his treasures were with his sons who did not attend to his funeral, prompting some people to look for a suitable shroud for him. They finally bought a modest shroud for him from the Masqul’s caretaker, while his sons and soldiers disputed among themselves until his corpse disintegrated. They had to throw ropes at his corpse and pull it from a distance, because of the stench, until it fell apart on the stairs of the castle. This occurred to Fakhr Ad-Daulah, even though he had left a legacy of two million dinârs, eight hundred and fifty-six thousand dirhams and tremendous amounts of jewels, gems, pearls, diamonds and gold. These precious stones were worth a million dinârs, for there were around fourteen thousand pieces of them! He also left tremendous amounts of silverware, furniture, weapons and carpets.²

All praises are due to Allâh, he was a king who owned all this wealth, yet when he died they could not find a shroud to cover him with, except what they could find with the caretaker of a mosque.

¹ *Al-Fawâ'id*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 123

² *Shadharât Adh-Dhahab*, vol. 3, p.124

Abu Ad-Dardâ' said:

"He who feels that he is in need of this life, then he has no life."¹

Also, Al-Hasan said, while describing the life of the present world:

"This life is good for the believer. He works little² in it and takes enough provisions with him to Paradise. This life is bad for the disbeliever and the hypocrite, for he wastes his nights in it and the only provisions he collects from it, is being directed to the Fire."³

We should also assert that in this life, the believer strives hard to obey Allâh and endure life's trials and hardships. Al-Hasan said:

"In this life, the believer is just like a prisoner who strives hard to free his neck; he never feels safe until he meets Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored. (For then he would know if Allâh accepted his good deeds from him and designated him among the people of Paradise.)"⁴

Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said:

"Everyone in this life is a guest whose wealth is a loan he took; the guest is bound to leave and give back what he took as a loan."

This is an honorable call from Abu Hâzim, Salamah bin Dinâr:

"The marketplace of the Hereafter is not popular

¹ 'Hilyatul-Auliya', vol. 1, p. 210

² Meaning the acts of worship are easy to practice, by Allâh's Grace and Mercy.

³ Jâmi'ul-Ulum wal-Hikam, p. 360

⁴ Jâmi'ul-Ulum wal-Hikam, p. 269

now. Hence, buy from it when it is like this before there comes a day when its merchandise would become expensive (or scarce), for then, you will not be able to buy little or much of it.”¹

Surely, the Hereafter, in which the Day of Resurrection will commence, is the Day of Judgment and Reckoning. On that Day, the sun of recompense will rise and eliminate the chance to perform good deeds. We are still living under the sun of performing deeds before the recompense commences. Therefore, let us perform as much good work as we can in this life, before its sun sets. Let us use our life before it expires and prepare ourselves for the Reckoning before its Day starts.

The *Salaf*, the Companions and the second and third generations of Islam, are our example in the way, they lived modestly and were disinterested in the splendor and beauty of this life and its palaces and mansions. For instance, the second Caliph ‘Umar رضى الله عنه gave the Muslims speeches from the *Minbar* (the podium) wearing an outer cloak that was mended twelve times. In contrast today, if someone’s clothes were torn, he would not even go to the mosque or attend the *Jama’ah*, so that people would not see his torn clothes.

‘Eisa (Jesus) عليه السلام, said to his disciples:

“Live as transients, not as builders.”

It was also reported that he said:

“Who would build a house on top of the sea’s waves? This is the parable of life, so do not take it as a permanent residence.”²

¹ ‘*Hilyatul-Auliya*’, vol. 3, p. 242

² *Jâmi‘ul-Ulum wal-Hikam*, p. 379

When Masruq bin Al-Ajda' passed by a pile of garbage while walking with his nephew in the city of Kufah in Iraq, he said to him:

"Should I show you life, this is life! They ate it up and finished their provisions, wore it until it became worn out, rode on it until they made it tired, and shed each other's blood, violated each other's rights and cut the relations of the womb in it."¹

In contrast, the righteous believers live just as Al-Hasan described them:

"May Allâh grant mercy to some people who used this life as if it was a loan; they gave it back to He Who has entrusted it to them and went away with a light weight (or burden)."²

This is the life that we covet, this is its end and the value of the treasures that we collect in it.

This worldly life is a dream

A man wrote to his brother:

"This life is just like a dream, while the Hereafter is the time of waking up, and between them there is death. Therefore, we are in the midst of a dream, and peace be to you."

Therefore, dear Muslim, consider what has already passed of your life and you will feel as if it was a dream, years that passed as fast as a blink of an eye. These years have passed with their happiness and sadness, sweetness and bitterness, but the Reckoning remains. Dirâr bin Murrah said:

"*Iblis* (Satan) said, 'If I win three things from the

¹ *'Hilyatul-Auliya'*, vol. 2, p. 97

² *Al-Ihya'*, vol. 3, p. 221

son of Adam, I will have earned what I wanted from him: if he forgets his sins, thought high of his actions and became fond of his opinion.”¹

Also, one of the *Salaf* said:

“Beware of the life of the world, because it is a magician more skilled than Hârut and Mârut². They could cause a separation between a husband and his wife, but this life separates between the slave and his Lord.”³

Abu Ad-Dardâ’ رضي الله عنه said:

“Everyone falls short of his wisdom and knowledge sometimes. If this life brought him an increase in money, he becomes happy and elated. Meanwhile, the nights and the days keep decreasing his life term, but he does not become sad on account of this decrease. What good will the increase in wealth bring,

¹ *Sifatus-Safwah* vol. 3, p. 116

² Allâh said:

﴿وَاتَّبِعُوا مَا... تَوَكَّلُوا بِمَلَكُوتِ﴾

“They followed what the *Shayâtîn* (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime of Sulaimân (Solomon). Sulaimân did not disbelieve, but the *Shayâtîn* (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Hârût and Mârût, but neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, “We are for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this magic from us).” And from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between man and his wife, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allâh’s Leave. And they learn that which harms them and profits them not. And indeed they knew that the buyers of it (magic) would have no share in the Hereafter. And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their ownselves, if they but knew.”(2:102)

³ *Tasliyah Ahlil-Masâ’ib*, p. 248

when the life-term is ever decreasing?”¹

Surely, many among mankind feel depressed and anxious in their pursuit of the riches of this life, but few of them grieve for losing the better part of their life (without doing good) and their nearing of death. Many of them forget the years of their life that have passed and the days that ended, but rarely forget anything from this life, as if their ultimate mission is to be dedicated to this life and its delights and riches. Yahya bin Muâdh said words that show amazement of this imbalance that mankind fall into. He said:

“I am amazed at he who grieves when he suffers a loss in wealth; why does he not grieve for the loss in his life term, as well?”

Yes, many grieve when they become old because they think that this is the only life they will ever live, so they grieve for its delights and their inability to enjoy them as they used to. They do not grieve for the years that have passed from their life without them obeying Allâh and doing righteously good. They grieve for loss in wealth, but they do not grieve that they are drawing closer to Reckoning and then Recompense, if they believe in them at all. To this type among mankind, we present a precious wisdom from Al-Hasan, about the value of one's wealth. Al-Hasan said:

“He whose wealth increases, his sins increase, and he whose speech multiplies, his lies multiply. He whose conduct becomes harsher, torments his own self.”²

The Attaining Happiness

We collect money to live comfortably, build palaces to dissipate loneliness and travel to forget our troubles. We

¹ *As-Siyar* vol. 19, p. 483

² *Kitâb-us-Samt*, p. 85

spend what we have in pursuit of happiness, but this is not the true happiness that we should pursue. There are many people who use their wealth to buy happiness for themselves, but the true happiness is earned through fulfilling Allâh's obedience and aids in drawing close to Him. The true happiness comes while one pursues a Dwelling that only contains joy without grief, the Dwelling of everlasting delights that never end. Wahb bin Munabbih said:

"The example of this life and the Hereafter is the example of two rival wives, if you make one of them happy, the other gets angry."¹

This is why Al-Hasan Al-Basri said about this life:

"I am amazed at those who were ordered to take provisions (fear from Allâh) and were told that the journey will commence soon (to the Hereafter), yet they play."

'Ali رضي الله عنه also described the value of wealth and having many offspring as:

"Goodness is not achieved when your wealth and offspring increase. Rather, goodness is achieved when your good deeds increase and your wisdom grows. There is no goodness in this life except for two types of people: a man who has committed mistakes so he rushes to repent from them, and a man who rushes to perform righteous good deeds. Certainly, acts of righteousness never bring a decrease, for how can the acts that Allâh accepts ever cause loss?"²

When life comes to one with its riches and splendor, he should remember this statement from Al-Hasan who said:

¹ *Hilyatul-Auliya'*, vol. 4, p. 51

² *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 1, p. 321

“By Allâh! Anyone among mankind who earns abundance in his life but does not feel afraid that he is being tried and tested, then his deeds will decrease and his opinion will become obsolete. Whenever Allâh withholds this life’s splendor from a Muslim slave, who thinks that he is allowed to excessively indulge in its delights, then know that he is being deprived because his good deeds have decreased and his opinion became obsolete.”¹

Dear Muslims, know that the days of this life are just like a dream or a fading shade. If life brings joy for a day, it brings sadness for several days. If it brings comfort for a little time, it brings distress for months and years at a time. If it brings delight, it deprives of it for a long time. Whatever the slave earns in it of comfort, it hides for him its folds of evils. Hind bint An-Nu‘mân said:

“We used to be among the mightiest people who had the strongest dynasties. One day, the sun sat, and we became the most humiliated among people. Whenever Allâh fills a home with delight, He next fills it with tears.”

A man asked her about the details of what happened to them, when the King of Persia deprived them of their kingship and imprisoned her father until he died, after he used to be king of Iraq under control of Persia. She said:

“One day, we woke up and whereas all the Arabs would come to us for their needs, by nightfall all the Arabs felt pity for us.”

Also, it was reported that long before they lost their might, her sister Hurqah bint An-Nu‘mân was found crying. When

¹ *Hilyatul-Auliya*’, vol. 6, p. 272

she was asked why she cried, she said:

“I saw my family enjoying might and delights and remembered that rarely is a house filled with joy, but will soon become filled with grief.”

Further, Ishaq bin Talhah said that when he visited ‘Hurqah one day, he asked her about the tales of the kings and the lessons that should be drawn from their fate. She stated:

“What we enjoy today is better than what we experienced yesterday. I read in early books that no household live in joy but will suffer tears later on, and that time will not show them a day that they like, without hiding another day for them that they will dislike.”¹

Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz said in a speech he gave:

“You were created to remain for ever, but will be transferred from one life to another. O Allâh’s slaves, you now live in a life that contains food, but often brings pain in the throat while swallowing it, and contains drinks, but you often choke while drinking. This life does not bring you a delight that comforts you, but takes away another delight, that you hate to lose. Therefore, work for the Life to come where you will end up for eternity.”²

The gatherings of this worldly life

We mentioned before that Al-Hasan said that our *Salaf* were as disinterested in this life as they were with the sand that they walked on. This is what he saw in his time, so what if he lived to see our time and witness the ugly way

¹ ‘*Iddatus-Sâbirin*, p. 326

² *Al-Ihyâ*, vol. 3, p. 288

people compete with each other to collect the temporary delights of this life? They have severed the ties of kinship and lost friends while pursuing wealth. They often talk about so-and-so and the wealth they collected and the might they earned. People only talk about matters of this life when they meet, its riches and traits, and rarely mention Allâh in these meetings, yet are lively with backbiting and calumnies. They do not talk about the ties of kinship that were severed, or about ignoring relatives for a long time, eating up orphan's wealth, lying, or giving false witness, and so forth. They do not talk about the small hole in the ground that they will end up in and the horrors they will surely experience afterwards. Al-Hasan said:

“Amazing is he who laughs, even though the Fire is in front of him, and feels elation, while death is awaiting him!”¹

Do not ask if you should work to earn a living in this life, for Islam requires you to do so. But heed to this advice while earning your livelihood. A man beseeched Sufyân Ath-Thauri, ‘Advise me.’ Sufyân said:

“Work for this life as much as your stay in it will be and for the Hereafter as much as your stay in it will be, and peace be to you.”²

Therefore, Dear Muslims, compare this life and its quick passing to the eternity of the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ said that the average age of his *Ummah* (Muslim nation) is between sixty and seventy years, for those who did not die before reaching these ages. As for the Hereafter, the length of a day in it is:

﴿وَلَا يَأْتِي يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ﴾ [الحج : ٤٧]

¹ *Tanbihul-Ghâfilin*, vol. 1, p. 212

² *Hilyatul-Auliya*, vol. 7, p. 56

“And verily, a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you reckon.” (22:47)

This is the life eternal. So work for the Hereafter, as well as, earning your livelihood and what sustains you in this life. We ask Allâh to make us all among those who obey Him, whom He grants Paradise by His Mercy. We ask Him to direct us to succeed in earning His Good Pleasure.

Dear Muslims, he who wants to know how highly regarded he is by his employer, should look at the work assignments he gives him and the responsibilities he assigns to him.¹ Therefore, let us contemplate our grades with Allâh and in what types of work He leads us to succeed in, in this life. If we are working in His service and obedience, then by Allâh, this is the path of safety and deliverance. Otherwise, we should rush to repent to Allâh before death comes to us. We should be shy from our Creator and Sustainer, Who created us in the best shapes and gave us the various apparent and hidden bounties and favors.

Shaddâd bin ‘Amr said:

“The Hereafter is a true promise in which the Al-Able King will rule Alone. This life is a present delight from which the righteous and the wicked eat. Verily, he who hears and obeys (Allâh) will not be subject to blame, unlike he who hears and disobeys. Therefore, do not consider this life significant, for it does not leave anyone in it, intact. Also, do not reject all aspects of this life, for the good of the Hereafter is only achieved through this life.”

Also, ‘Ubaid bin ‘Umair said while he was warning us against this life and its grief directs to later on.

¹ *Al-Fawâ'id*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 68

“Every slave whose wealth increases, then his reckoning will increase, as well. Every slave whose following increase, then his devils will increase, as well. Every slave who gets nearer to the authorities, will draw himself farther from Allâh.”¹

Masruq summed up all these wisdom when he said:

“The believer’s trait is his hole in the ground,” in reference to the grave.

The enjoyment of deceptions

Dear Muslims, Allâh made this life a passing enjoyment and a deceiving delight, and made the Hereafter the dwelling of punishment or reward. He also adorned this life and made it seem beautiful with the various lures and desires:

﴿زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْرُ الْمَقَابِلِ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٤]

“Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world’s life; but Allâh has the excellent return (Paradise with flowing rivers) with Him.” (3:14)

Allâh stated that He has adorned this life with the seven types of characteristics that He mentioned in the *Âyah* and which are the ultimate goal of those who prefer this life. He first mentioned women, who are this life’s greatest lure and trial, then mentioned the offspring who fulfill men’s

¹ It does not mean the righteous believer who sincerely advises the Muslim authorities to follow Allâh and the *Sunnah*, but those who associate with the tyrants to achieve positions or traits of life.

manhood and elevate their status and social rank. Allâh then mentioned gold and silver which are the capital that buys the desires and lusts of all types and kinds. Allâh also mentioned the branded horses, which represent the means of transportation, which bring status and might to their owners and are the means with which they defeat their enemies or escape from them. Allâh next mentioned the cattle that people ride on and use for food, clothes, skins and furniture. The seventh trait that Allâh mentioned is the tilted land that provide food for mankind and their animals, as well as, producing various types of fruits and medicines.

Allâh stated next that all of these are the pleasures of this life. He then increased His slaves' eagerness to the pleasure of the Last Life and assured them of its everlasting and eternal existence by His Will:

﴿ قُلْ أُوْنِبْتُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٥]

“Say: ‘Shall I inform you of things far better than those? For *Al-Muttaqûn* (the pious) there are Gardens (Paradise) with their Lord, underneath which rivers flow. Therein (is their) eternal (home) and *Azwâjun Mutahharatun* (purified mates or wives). And Allâh will be pleased with them. And Allâh is All-Seer of the (His) slaves.” (3:15)

Next, Allâh mentioned those who deserve the pleasure of the Last Life, those who are worthy of it as:

﴿ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامِنَا فَاعْفُ عَنَّا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝ الصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ ۝ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٦-١٧]

“Those who say: ‘Our Lord! We have indeed believed, so forgive us our sins and save us from the punishment of the Fire.’ (They are) those who are patient, those who are true (in Faith, words, and deeds), and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allâh. Those who spend (give the *Zakât* and alms in the way of Allâh) and those who pray and beg Allâh’s Pardon in the last hours of the night.” (3:16,17)¹

Dear Muslims, contemplate the wisdom of ‘Umar رضى الله عنه,

“Woe to he to whom this life represents his hope and the sins are his deeds, whose appetite is tremendous, whose wisdom is minute, who has knowledge in this life but is ignorant in the Hereafter.”²

Also, ‘Umar رضى الله عنه wrote to Abu Musa Al-Ash‘ari رضى الله عنه these precious words:

“You will not achieve the best deeds dedicated to the Hereafter better than by observing *Zuhd*³ in this life.”

Furthermore, it was reported that Abu ‘Hazim said:

“If the way to enter Paradise is by abandoning all what one loves in this life, Paradise will still be worth the price. What about it if one might enter Paradise by leaving one part out of a thousand parts of what one loves in life? What about it if one might be saved from the Fire by enduring one part out of a thousand parts of what he hates to endure in life?”⁴

¹ ‘*Iddatus-Sâbirin*, p. 209

² *Al-‘Âqibah*, p. 90

³ Spending modestly on your needs and giving generously to charity in Allâh’s Cause.

⁴ *Tanbihul-Ghâfilin*, vol. 1, p. 85

These are indeed jewels of wisdom that require tremendous effort and hurrying to perform good deeds, all the while remembering the Day of Return to Allâh.

Al-Hasan said:

“He among mankind who will receive the least reckoning on the Day of Judgment, is he who reckons his own self in the life of the world for Allâh’s sake. He who contemplate his intentions and actions; if whatever he has intended is for Allâh’s sake, he persists in it, otherwise he refrains from doing it. Verily, reckoning on the Day of Judgment becomes heavy for those who were hasty in this life and did not hold themselves accountable. They will find that Allâh has counted their deeds, including what equals an atom.”

He recited Allâh’s statement:

﴿يَوْتِلْنَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا
وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظِلُّ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا﴾ [الكهف: ٤٩]

“(They will say): ‘Woe to us! What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it with numbers!’ And they will find all that they did, placed before them, and your Lord treats no one with injustice.” (18:49)

When one remembers that this world is a farm and remembers when the harvest will be reaped, one will realize that this matter is rather serious. He who plants a seed today will see its harvest on a Day the length thereof is fifty thousand years. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling, and every pregnant female will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allâh. It is a Day when the records of deeds will

fly all around and end up in one's right or left hand. Salmân bin Dinâr said:

"Whatever you would like to accompany you in the Hereafter, plant it today, and whatever you hate to accompany you in the Hereafter, then abandon it today."¹

Surely, the life of the present world is the dwelling of action, but when the sun sets for the last time and the sun of the Day of Judgment rises, there will be the Dwelling of Reckoning and Recompense. Consequently, we must adequately prepare ourselves for the coming of the Last Life.

Dear Muslims, Yahya bin Mu'âdh said in his will and testament:

"The night is long, so do not make it shorter by excessive sleeping. The day is pure, so do not stain it by your sins. Be like a passerby in this life, realizing that leaving comes after a little rest and that moving along comes faster than the respite."

Also, Shamit bin 'Ajlân said:

"Whoever saw death in front of his eyes will not be bothered by having a difficult or an easy life."²

Moreover, Muhammad bin Sauqah said:

"If we were only tested with these two characteristics, we would deserve the punishment: one of us becomes richer and he delight, even though Allâh did not witness from him a delight like it before with regards to a religious blessing he earned. One of us suffers a loss and he grieves more so than whatever Allâh witnessed

¹ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 2, p. 166

² *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 342

from him of grief for a loss he suffered in his religion.”¹

Indeed, if one of us is cheated out of a small amount of money, or suffers a loss from his wealth, he feels sadness and grief. However, how many among us who grieve when they miss the prayer? In fact, the latter type of loss will be soon forgotten and disregarded.

Muhammad bin Wâsi‘ asked:

“If you see a man crying in Paradise, would you not be amazed at his crying?” He was answered in the affirmative. So he asked them again, “What is more amazing is he who laughs in this life, while utterly unaware where his final destination will be!”²

Sa‘id bin Mas‘ud said:

“If you see the slave feel content when his wealth increases and his Hereafter decreases, then know that he is the cheated one who is being toyed with his own face, but is unaware of what’s happening to him.”³

This is life, a dwelling of deceiving delights, so beware of it. Verily, the wishes of this life are false, its hopes are a mirage. Its living is full of grief, its essence is full of impurities and you will always be in danger in it, either suffering a loss of a bounty or the coming of a disaster, or a painful affliction or utter demise by death.⁴

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه said:

“You have not been truthful to yourselves, you wish for what you cannot reach, collect what you cannot consume and build what you cannot inhabit forever.”

¹ *Hilyatul-Auliya’*, vol. 5. P. 4

² *Al-Ihya*, vol. 3, p. 137

³ *Mukâshafatul-Qulub*, p. 157

⁴ *Hilyatul-Auliya’*, p. 157

He has said the truth. Many among us today collect what they cannot possibly consume in a lifetime and build what they cannot inhabit all the time or forever. Abu Muhriz At-Tafawi said:

“When I was still young, I complained to our servant of the difficult times I was experiencing at the time, and she said to me, ‘Young man! Hold to the might of feeling contentful so that you can save yourself from the disgrace of need. Know that often, what has become little will again become whole as it used to be.’ Ever since she said that, I felt the blessing of feeling contentful.”

Indeed, contentment is a blessing and a mighty treasure.

The disgrace of this worldly life

Shu‘aib bin Harb said:

“Whoever seeks the life of the present world should prepare himself for humiliation. Whoever prepares himself for humiliation, he lets himself loose and does not hold it by its bridle to any limit. In this case, the lawful and unlawful will become the same to him, and so will acceptance and rejection; he will run after money and rush behind this life’s splendors.”

Also, Abu Hâzim said:

“I wish that one of you would be as protective of his religion as he is protective of his shoes!”

Allâh, the Lord of the worlds Who created everyone and everything made the Hereafter the dwelling of Reckoning and Recompense. He ordered that the present life of the world be the dwelling of endurance, striving hard and earning good deeds. We should assert that one’s striving in this life does not only pertain to the deeds that are solely

dedicated to the Day of Return, but also to permissible matters of livelihood that direct to the good of the Hereafter. Therefore, this life is like the farm and the path that one uses to reach the Hereafter.¹

We should understand that there is a price that we pay to earn the Hereafter. As Yahya bin Mu'adh said:

“Abandoning excesses in life is hard, but abandoning Paradise is harder. Know that the bridal-money of Paradise requires abandoning this life,”²

In reference to abandoning excessiveness and extravagance. Dear Muslims, have we paid this required the bridal-money? Or are we still engaged in heedless play in this life, even though we know that after every delight there is grief and after every bounty there is distress? We mentioned before that Abdullah bin Mas'ud said:

“For every happiness, there is a moment of grief that follows it; and every house that was filled with joy, will one time be filled with sadness.”³

The portion of this worldly life

One of our *Salaf* said:

“O son of Adam, you need your share from this life, but more so, you need your share in the Hereafter. If you take care of your share in this life first, you will lose your share in the Hereafter and will soon lose your share in this life, as well. If you take care of your share in the Hereafter first, you will also win your share in this life and enjoy it perfectly.”⁴

¹ *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 2, p. 69

² *Tanbihul-Ghâfilin*, vol. 1, p. 85

³ *Tasliyah Ahlil-Masâ'ib*, p. 15

⁴ *Fadâ'il-udh-Dhikr*, by Imam Ibn Al-Jauziyyah, p. 19

Al-Hasan Al-Basri wrote to Caliph 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz:

"This life is temporary and not permanent; Adam was sent down to it as punishment. Therefore, O Leader of the Faithful, beware of this life and know that the best provision pertains to abandoning excessive indulgence in it and that wealth pertains to being deprived of its splendor. This life always has its victims. It brings disgrace to those who are mighty in it and poverty to those who collect it with greed. Its parable is poisons: when one unknowingly eats the poison, he will die as a consequence. Therefore, be like a wounded man who nurses his wounds for a while for fear of extended repercussions and endures the bitterness of the medicine so that his illness is not prolonged. Beware of this deceiving life, for it cheats and lures people with its beauty. Life lures with its false adornments and deceives with its hopes. It has beautified itself for those who seek it in marriage and became just like the beautiful bride at whom the eyes stare, whom the hearts adore and the inner self covets. However, life kills all of its husbands. Yet, its current husbands do not take a lesson from the fate of her ex-husbands whom it killed, nor do the latter advise the surviving former against its danger. However covets life, satisfies his desire from it and becomes further deceived by his excessive indulgence in its affairs. He becomes a tyrant who forgets the Return (to Allâh), until his feet are removed from this life, and consequently, his sorrow increases and his grief intensifies. He departs this life without sufficient provisions and is introduced to the Last Life without having a firm foundation to rely on. Beware of this life, O Leader of the Faithful! Even when you feel more delight in it as ever before, you should be more aware of it as ever before. Whenever

owners of life's splendor feel comfortable in this life, it is followed with an affliction. What seems delightful in this life is connected to hardships, and whatever is thought as permanent, is bound to vanish. The joys of this Life are mixed with sadness. Whatever leaves it never comes back and whatever is to come is unknown, so awaiting for it does not avail. Its wishes are unreal, its hopes are false, its core is impure and its essence is encompassed by grief. Verily, the son of Adam is always in danger from this life while still in it. Life was offered to your Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with its keys and treasures, but he refused to accept it. He dislike to covet what Allâh does not prefer, or to elevate what His King has made lowly. It is Allâh Who kept life's splendor away from the righteous as a test for them and gave its abundance to His enemies as a trial from Him. It was reported that Allâh the Exalted and Most Honored said to Moses عليه السلام, 'If you see riches coming, say, 'This is on account of a sin for which the punishment is sent sooner rather than later.' If you see poverty coming, say, 'Welcome, O sign of the righteous.'"¹

Dear Muslims, this life is unfolding before you, meanwhile the Hereafter is rushing towards you with its horrors. When death approached Salmân Al-Fârîsi, he cried. He was asked why he cried and he replied:

"I do not cry in grief or eagerness for this life, but because the Allâh's Messenger has recommended that one of us should only collect what is sufficient as provision for a traveler. However, we did not implement his order."

¹ *Iddatus-Sâbirin*, p. 331

After Salmân died, what he left behind was counted and it was only a little more than ten dirhams.¹

This life is an extended mirage and a dark night. The seeker of life is just like one who drinks from the sea, the more he drinks the more thirsty he becomes.² Seeking this life's possessions does not end at a certain limit, except when one feels contentful with what Allâh has given him and lives modestly. This way, one will be able to use the rapidly passing nights and days in the obedience of Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored. Mâlik bin Dinâr said:

“People of this life (everyone except the faithful Muslim believers) have departed it without tasting its most delightful part.” When asked what life's most delightful part is, he said, “Knowing Allâh, the Exalted.”³

Dear Muslims, if you witness the way the righteous die, you will see that they feel calm and do not grieve, except for their feeling fear that Allâh might not have accepted their good deeds from them. As for those who spend their life seeking life and all that it has to offer them of its splendor, whether from lawful or unlawful resources, they become distressed and anguished when they die.

Abu Ad-Dardâ' said:

“Three things stop me from liking to be under the belly of the earth rather than on its surface: brethren who visit me and utter the best types of speech, just as the most delightful fruits are picked; having dust stick to

¹ *Ath-Thabâtu 'Indal-Mamât*, p. 93, and *Adab-ud-Dunya wad-Din*, by Al-Mawardi, p. 119

² *As-Siyar*, vol. 5, p. 263

³ *Madârijus-Sâlikin*, vol. 2, p. 233

my face when I perform *Sujud* (prostration) for Allâh the Exalted and Most Honored; and going out in the morning or the evening for the sake of Allâh the Exalted and Most Honored (to participate in *Jihâd*).”¹

This statement demonstrates true and sincere eagerness for what Allâh has and using the time one has in this life in the best, most righteous manner. Wuhaib bin Al-Ward said:

“*Zuhd* in this life pertains to avoiding feeling sorrow for whatever of its splendor that you have missed or feeling joy for whatever of its splendor that Allâh has granted you.”²

Three days

When you think about the days of this life, you will realize that they are three types. There is a day that has passed, and so there is no hope that you could amend it. There is a day that you are now living and should use beneficently, and a day that you do not know if you will live to see, for you might die before it comes. In this life, your dedication should be directed at your Hereafter, for the only part of your life that will remain is the asset that you keep for your Hereafter.³

Therefore, do not keep what should be yours away from you (do not waste the chance to entering Allâh’s Paradise), nor covet what you know for sure you will leave behind you. Instead, take sufficient (righteous) provisions for the long and hard journey ahead.⁴

¹ *Az-Zuhd*, p. 198

² *Hilyatul-Auliya’* vol. 8, p. 140

³ The righteous good deeds that please Allâh, all the while avoiding all what angers Him.

⁴ *Hilyatul-Auliya’*, vol. 2, p. 138

Make your seeking some aspects of this life based on your need, make your thoughts concentrated on drawing lessons, and rush to ensure your Hereafter. Perform the deeds of someone who is preparing to travel, for death gradually directs you to a day which you will never miss.¹ Al Hasan said about those who own much of this life and seek it vigorously, who are respected by people even though they might not pray if they are Muslims:

“By Allâh, this life will not remain with him, nor will he remain in it. He has neither earned safety from its danger nor from its repercussions, or from the reckoning to come. He will leave it in a mere shroud.”²

‘Ali رضي الله عنهما wrote to Abdullah bin ‘Abbas رضي الله عنه:

“Man feels sad when he does not acquire what was not destined of him, but delights at earning what would not have missed him. You, Abdullah, should feel delight for what you have performed for your Hereafter, grieve for the part of your life you wasted and feel disinterest in whatever splendor you acquire in this life. Dedicate your vitality at what will come after death (perform the actions that will ensure your safety from Allâh’s torment by His Mercy).”

The grief of those who are alive

It was said that one should feel sad and distressed for these five things: first, for the sins one committed, especially since one is unsure if his sin was forgiven. Therefore, he should feel sadness and grief for the sins he committed. Second, he performed good deeds, but does not know if Allâh accepted them from him. Third, he knows how he

¹ *Adab-ud-Dunya wad-Din*, p. 122

² *Hilyatul-Auliyâ*, vol. 2, p. 144

spent whatever part of his life that has passed, but does not know how he will spend the rest of it. Fourth, he knows that Allâh has prepared two dwellings, but he does not know to which one he will be taken. Fifth, he does not know if Allâh is pleased or angry with him. Those who have these five concerns on their mind will not feel eager to laugh.¹ Ibrahim At-Taimi said:

“Not much time has passed between you and the people,² life came to them with its splendor, but they ran away from it. You, however, followed it even though it did not come to you.”³

Abu Dhar Al-Ghifâri said, while standing next to the Ka‘bah:

“O people! I am Jundub Al-Ghifâri, come to a kind and sincere brother.”

When the people gathered around him, he said to them:

“If one of you wanted to travel, would he not prepare enough provisions sufficient for the journey?” They said, “Yes.” He said, “Then know that the journey to the Day of Judgment is your final destination, so take with you sufficient provisions.” They asked him about the provisions they should take. Abu Dhar said, “Perform a *Hajj* in preparation for the major incidents to come, fast during a hot day in preparation for the length of Resurrection and pray two *Rak‘ah* in the darkness of the night in preparation for the loneliness of the graves. Say a good word or refrain from uttering an evil word in preparation for a mighty Day. Give from your money in charity so that

¹ *Tanbihul-Ghâfilin*, vol. 1, p. 213

² In reference to the Companions of Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ.

³ *Sifat-us-Safwah* vol. 3 p. 90, & *As-Siyar*, vol. 5, p. 61

you are saved from the severity of what's to come. Make this life one of two audiences, one through which you seek the lawful sustenance and one during which you seek the Hereafter. Reject the third type, which will harm you and will not benefit you. Make your money of two types, a dirham that you spend on your family from lawful resources and a dirham that you spend in preparation for your Hereafter."

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said about the companions and leaders of the second generation of Islam, the *Tâbi'in*, and he was one of them:

"I met some people who would not rejoice at the splendor of life when it came to them, nor dedicate their attention to any part of it that went away from them. This life was as worthless in their eyes as dust. One of them lived for fifty or sixty years during which he only owned the clothes that he wore, did not have a barrier between his body and the floor when he slept, and did not ask his family to cook a dish of food for him. When night came, they would be standing and then laying their foreheads on the floor (in *Sujud*), with tears running down their cheeks. They begged their Lord to free their necks (from the Fire). Whenever they performed a good deed, they appreciated Allâh for it and asked Him in supplication to accept it. Whenever they committed an error, they felt sad and begged Allâh to forgive it for them, may Allâh's mercy and pleasure be on them. By Allâh! They were not saved from the repercussions and evil consequences of sins, except through Allâh's forgiveness."¹

Also, Abu Ad-Dardâ' رضي الله عنه said:

¹ *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 4, p. 239

“I love poverty in humbleness to my Lord, the Exalted and Most Honored, I love death in eagerness to meeting my Lord, the Exalted and Most Honored, and love illness as an eradicator for my sins (for the illnesses that Allâh tests His believing slaves with erase their sins and elevate their grade with Him).”¹

In contrast, most people search for every type of lust and delight they can attain in this life, even though this life is truly insignificant. However, it is a transient dwelling that leads to the Hereafter and then to either Paradise or the Fire. Therefore, rush to perform the deeds that will last until the Hereafter, such as, the good deed that the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in this *Hadith*,

«خُوسِبَ رَجُلٌ مِّمَّنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، فَلَمْ يُوْجَدْ لَهُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ شَيْءٌ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ كَانَ يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ، وَكَانَ مُوسِرًا، فَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ غِلْمَانَهُ أَنْ يَتَجَاوَزُوا عَنِ الْمُعْسِرِ، قَالَ اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - نَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِذَلِكَ مِنْهُ، تَجَاوَزُوا عَنْهُ».

“A man who lived before you was reckoned and found not to have performed any good, except that he used to associate with people, and he was wealthy, and would order his servants to forgive the indebted their debts. Allâh the Exalted and Most Honored said, ‘We are more worthy of forgiving, so forgo his errors.’” (*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*).

Al-Hasan described what should be occurring on the Day of Judgment:

“Tomorrow, everyone will direct his full attention to what concerns him.² Verily, he who intends to do

¹ *Az-Zuhd*, p. 217

² (Each person will be totally concerned about his own safety, so much so, that one would wish that he is ransomed with all mankind and saved from the Fire.)

something will keep it in mind. He whose Hereafter is lost, will have lost this life, as well, and he who prefers the life of the world to the Hereafter, will have no life or Hereafter.”¹

In this context, we could understand this statement from ‘Umar bin Ayub who said that Abu Ash-Sha‘tha, (Jabir bin Zaid) said to him:

“‘Umar, in this life, I only own a donkey.”²

This makes his reckoning easier on the Day of Judgment and lightens his burden while traveling on the journey to the Hereafter. How much do we own in this life and how light is our load?

From one abode to another

Dear Muslims, one of our predecessors said:

“I am amazed at he who knows that death is certain, yet he rejoices. I am amazed at he who knows that the Fire is true, yet he laughs. I am amazed at he who witnesses how life changes the condition of its people, yet he feels safe in it. I am amazed at he who knows that Predestination is true, yet he tires himself.”³⁴

We spend this life in joy and play, but this is not what we were created for. We mentioned that Bilâl bin Sa‘d once said, while reminding us of our imminent destination:

¹ *Hilyatul-Auliya’*, vol. 2, p. 144

² *Hilyatul-Auliya’*, vol. 3, p. 89

³ He is agitated, vigorously seeking this life’s riches, even though he will only earn what was destined for him. Allâh requires one to seek his means of livelihood, modestly and from lawful resources. He also requires one to fulfill the various rights on him towards Allâh and towards his family, relatives and mankind in general.

⁴ *Mukâshafatul-Qulub*, p. 157; and *Al-Ihyâ’*, vol. 3, p. 224

“People of *Taqwa*! You were not created to perish, but to be transferred from one stage to another. You were transferred from (your father’s) loins to wombs, then from wombs to this life, then from this life to graves, then from graves to the Stand (Great Gathering on the Day of Resurrection). and then from the Stand to an eternal dwelling, either in Paradise or the Fire.”¹

Surely, we have passed through various stages of this life, up to the present time. We only await the last stage to come, the grave, but instead of preparing for its coming, we delight in living and forget our fate. We forget the tremendous horrors to come in the life eternal. Abu Bakr Al-Marwadhi said:

“I visited Ahmad bin Hanbal and asked him how he was and he replied, ‘Like he whose Lord has ordered him to fulfill the obligations, whose Prophet ﷺ commands him to practice the *Sunnah* and the two angels² demand that he corrects his actions. However, his heart seeks fulfillment of its desires and *Iblis* lures him to commit evil sins. Meanwhile, the Angel of Death is waiting to capture his soul and his children demand that he spend on them.’”³

This is the life that we intimately seek and fight with each other on its account, forgetting that it is the farm which is harvested in the Hereafter and from which we should collect the acts of obedience and worship. One of our predecessors said that, to him, liar or insane is he who claims that he hates this life.⁴ He said these words because he knows that people

¹ *As-Siyar*, 5:91

² One to the right to record the good deeds and one to the left recording the evil deeds

³ *Manâqibul-Imam Ahmad*, p. 355

⁴ *Said-ul Khâtir*, p. 212

are of two types: one who seeks life's splendors and riches, so how can he claim to hate this life? Another type uses this life in his pursuit of the Hereafter, so how can he claim to hate the farm in which he plants seeds that produce their fruits in the Last Life? This by no means indicates that the latter type rejoices in this life, even though they do not hate it. Siyâr Abul-Hakam said:

“Rejoicing in this life and feeling grief in anticipation for the Hereafter are never combined in one's heart. If one of them resides in the heart, the other departs it.”¹

Also, a wise man once said:

“How can someone rejoice in this life when his day consumes a part of his month, and his current month consumes a part of his year, and his current year consumes a part of his life? How can one rejoice when his life is passing through its stages towards its end, whereto his life will end in his death?”²

These are precious words of wisdom for those who have lively hearts, those who know that this life is the dwelling of tests and trials and is filled with sadness, tiresome and grief.

Dear Muslims, think about the Day of Resurrection and abandon excessive sleep and laziness. Evaluate your deeds, because He Who will hold you responsible for them is Mighty in Power. Know that the Day of Resurrection will witness grief and tears, especially when one's deeds are weighed on the *Mizân* (the scale), for afterwards a part of mankind will go to Paradise and a part to the Blazing Fire. A part of mankind will be elevated to the high grades and a part will fall down to the lowest lows. The only thing that separates you and this fate is for people to announce that so-

¹ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 13

² *Jâmi'ul-'Ulum wal-'Hikam*, p. 381

and-so has died. O you, who has a heart but allowed it to die, who had time but allowed it to pass, know that the most valuable possessions you have are your heart and time. If you waste your time and ignore your heart, you will lose all (religious) benefits. Therefore, if you cry for a loss you suffered, then cry for your wasted time, and if grieve for losing someone to death, then grieve for the death of your heart.¹ It is a sad fact that we waste our time and days in this life, in our constant and greedy pursuit of the traits and splendor of this life, as if we do not do this, our life will end.

The determination of the believer

The believer dedicates his attention to the Hereafter, and anything that he faces in this life reminds him of the Last Life. Surely, one will dedicate his attention to whatever busying affairs one engages in. For instance, if craftsmen enter a house, the furniture maker will examine the furniture in that house, the carpenter will examine the final touches of the roof, the builder will examine the walls and the tailor will admire the curtains. In contrast, when the believer sees darkness, he remembers the darkness of the grave. When he experiences pain, he remembers Allâh's punishment and when he hears terrible noise, he remembers the blow in the Trumpet (for the commencement of the Hereafter). When he sees people asleep, he remembers the dead in their graves. When he witnesses a delight, he remembers the delight of Paradise. Therefore, his attention is all directed at what's to come, and this makes him busy from whatever there is of life's splendors.²

Abdullah bin Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said:

¹ *Az-Zuhd al-Fâ'ih*, p. 414

² *Said-ul Khâtir*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 521

“While the nights and days pass, you will suffer loss in your life term, but your deeds will be fully recorded. Death comes all of a sudden, and he who has planted goodness, will soon harvest delights; while he who has planted evil, will soon harvest sorrow. Surely, for every farmer, the harvest comes from the seed that he has planted. Verily, he who is slow¹ will not become faster on account of his wealth, while a miser will not attain more than what was destined for him. He who was given a bounty, then Allâh has given it to him, while he who was saved from an evil, Allâh has saved him from it. Verily, the chiefs are those who fear Allâh, and the leaders are those who have knowledge in the religion; sitting with them offers sure benefit.”²

There are those who live modestly in this life and sacrifice their comfort in return for earning Allâh’s eternal delights in the Dwelling of His Honor. For instance, Abu Ad-Dardâ’ رضي الله عنه said:

“I used to be a merchant before Islam, but when Islam came I tried to practice the acts of worship, as well as, being a merchant. When I could not combine both, I dedicated myself to worship (of Allâh) and abandoned trade.”

Of course, this does not mean that the Muslim should abandon working to earn a living and sustain himself. Rather, this indicates that one’s dedication should be to the worship of Allâh, not running after the delights and traits of life. Islam encourages Muslims to work and earn their livelihood and considers it a type of *Jihâd*. When Muslims work, they combine good intention with sincerity

¹ With regards to rushing to perform acts of obedience to Allâh.

² *As-Siyar*, Vol. 1, p. 497

to Allâh and honesty in whatever they do. In this context, we should understand this statement from Abdullah bin Mas'ud رضى الله عنه, "He who seeks this life, adversely affects his Hereafter; and he who seeks the Hereafter, adversely affects his life. So sacrifice the dwelling that perishes in return for the dwelling that remains."

However, it is a fact of life that most of mankind is fond of this life, busying themselves and talking only about it. Even our social life has become hostage to material considerations. I once realized that suddenly, no one visited my neighbor anymore, even though he was a government official who owns a large house with a delightful garden. I discovered that my neighbor had recently retired and those who visited him before, were surely seekers of this life, not true friends who loved him for Allâh's sake. This is a social disease that has spread because of the flourishing of materialism. If one from this type talks about life, he might complain of how materialistic it has become. But this type practice materialism when they associate with socially elevated people for the purpose of gaining material benefits:

﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْثَنَّهُمْ فِيهِ﴾ [طه: ١٣١]

"And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), the splendor of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby." (20:131)

The everlasting eternity

Dear Muslims, contemplate the everlasting life in Paradise, where there are only delights and no sadness, joys without end and where the believers are given whatever they wish and more. Paradise, where there are delights that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard the like of them, nor a

heart ever imagined. These delights will never perish or spoil, not even when millions of years and tens of millions of years have passed. The Hereafter is the Life Eternal, which will come after one spends his term in the life of the present world. And how significant is a life term that rarely surpasses a hundred years, a third of which is spent when one is a child and thirty years after, and if, one reaches the age of seventy spent in weakness and feebleness? A half of what is left of one's term is spent in sleep, and some of it is spent in eating, drinking and working to earn a living. Only a small part of it is spent in the acts of worship, so is it worth it to buy the Life which is eternal with the little time one spends in worship? Verily, those who do not rush to accept this trade have been cheated in their minds and truly have imperfect faith in Allâh's Promise.¹

Indeed, our life term in this life is rather short, and its delights are rather temporary, just as Abu Hâzim, Salamah bin Dinâr described it. He said:

“Whatever has passed of this life is just like a dream and whatever is left of it is just a hope.”

Dear Muslims, listen to this precious wisdom:

“We sought four traits, but did not achieve them because we did not seek them from their rightful resources: we sought richness in money, but richness is in contentment. We sought comfort in the abundant, but comfort is really in having little. We sought honor in good mannerism², but honor lies in the *Taqwa*.³

¹ *Said-ul Khâtir*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi p. 452

² But not for the Sake of Allâh.

³ i.e. fear from Allâh. This way, one's mannerism and all of his actions will be performed for the sake of Allâh and to save one from His Fire. Surely, Allâh elevates in honor those who fear Him and perform righteous good deeds, all the while staying away from all types of sins.

We sought delight in food and clothes, but delight is in modesty and Islam.”¹

What do you seek of these traits and what do your eyes and heart covet of them? ‘Ata Al-Khurâsâni once said:

“I do not recommend you to take care of your life, for surely, you indeed take care of your life for which you are eager and protective! I recommend you to take care of your Hereafter, so take provisions from the perishable life to the Life Eternal. Consider yourselves having departed this life, and by Allâh, you will surely depart it. Consider yourselves having tasted death, and by Allâh, you will surely taste it. Consider that you have already arrived at the Hereafter, and by Allâh, you will surely arrive at it.”²

It was reported that Shaqiq Al-Balkhi said:

“People utter three statements that they have incorporated in their life: they say that they are Allâh’s slaves, yet they work as free men do. This contradicts their statement. They say that Allâh provides them with sustenance, yet their hearts are never content except by collecting the traits of this life and earning its splendor. This contradicts their statement. They say that there is no escaping death, yet they work as if they will never die. This contradicts their statement.”³

Ibrahim At-Taimi said:

“In my heart, I imagined myself in Paradise eating from its fruits, drinking from its water and embracing its virgin women. I also imagined myself in the Fire, eating from its

¹ *Tanbihul-Ghâfilin*, by Nasr As-Samarqandi, p. 128

² *Sifatus-Safwah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, vol. 4, p. 151

³ *Mukâshafatul-Qulub*, p. 35

Zaqqum (a horrible tree in Hell, and refer to 37:62 in the Qur'ân), drinking from its puss and being chained in its chains and fetters, so I asked myself, 'What do you wish for?' It said, 'I want to be returned to the life of the world so that I perform righteous deeds.' I said, 'You are still where you wish to be, so work.'"

The worldly life is fleeing

'Ali رضي الله عنه said in a speech he gave:

"Verily, the life of the present world has almost faded away and is near its end. Verily, the Hereafter has started its trek and has almost arrived. Verily, the track is set up today, whereas the race will be conducted tomorrow, to Paradise. Even though the awaited end is death, you are still enjoying a respite and after that there is an appointed fixed term that leads to horrors. He who works (righteous deeds) during the days of respite, before his term ends, then his work will benefit him and his hopes and wishes will not harm him. He who does not work during the days of respite, before his term ends, then his hopes will harm him and his works will grieve him."¹

Yahya bin Mu'âdh described the condition of mankind in this life and also in the Last Life when he said:

"From life, we will not attain all of our hopes and wishes; and for the Hereafter, we are not collecting good deeds; and on the Day of Judgment, we do not know what will happen to us!"²

¹ *Al-'Âqibah fî Dhikri Al-Maut wal-Âkhirah*, by Imam Abu Muhammad, Abdul Haqq Al-Ashbilli, p. 64

² *Hilyatul-Auliya' wa Tabaqâtul-Asfiyâ'*, by Al-Hâfiz Abu Na'im, 10:56

To continue, on man's delight in the riches of this life, regardless of how man earns these riches, Abu Hâzim, Salamah bin Dinâr said these words of wisdom:

"Allâh's favor that He deprived me of much of this life's splendor, is greater than what He has given me of it. This is because I saw those whom He gave substantial wealth, and they were destroyed on its account.^{1,2}

Do we fear that life comes to us with its splendor and delights, or do we delight in such eventuality? Dhun-Nun Al-Misri said:

"The body's weakness comes from illnesses, while the heart's weakness comes from sins. And just as the body does not taste the delight of food when it is ill, the heart does not taste the delight of worship when it is sinful."

Dear Muslims, contemplate this eventuality: if you were granted abundant wealth in this life, will you preserve your humbleness in the prayer? Will you remember Allâh often in heart and words? Will you practice the voluntary acts of worship as often as you have done in the past? Is it not better for you then that you only have what suffices for your needs? Know that there were many among our *Salaf* who were not granted wealth and only had what sufficed for their basic needs, yet they lived in the bounty from Allâh. They did not have much to worry about and used their time to worship Allâh and obey Him. They sought the good of the Hereafter, feared the Fire and loved Allâh's Good Pleasure. Mudâ bin 'Eisa said:

¹ They became tyrants, spent their wealth in the disobedience of Allâh and cut the relations of the womb on its account.

² *Hilyatul-Auliya'*, vol. 3, p. 233

“Whoever seeks something, pursues it; whoever fears something, escapes from it; and whoever loves something, prefers it more than anything else.”

The Companions of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ taught us best how to use the nights and days in the life of the present world. For instance, a man said to Mu‘âdh bin Jabal, “Teach me.” Mu‘âdh said, “Are you going to obey me if I do?” The man said, “I am eager to obey you.” Mu‘âdh said, “Fast and break the fast¹, pray² and sleep, earn your living from lawful resources, do not die except in the state of Islam and beware of the supplication of those who suffered injustice because, as the Prophet ﷺ stated, ‘There is no barrier between Allâh and the supplication of those who suffered injustice.’”³

Also, Salmân Al-Fârisi said:

“Three characteristics amazed me and made me laugh, and three characteristics saddened me and made me cry. As for the former three, they are: he who greedily wishes to acquire the things of life, even though death is pursuing him; a heedless person, even though he is not left without being watched; for nothing escapes Allâh’s Perfect Watch and one who laughs, even though he does not know if the Lord of all that exists is angry or pleased with him. As for the three that saddened me until I cried, they are: missing the company of Muhammad ﷺ and the loved ones, in reference to the companions who died before and

¹ Meaning, fast some days voluntarily and do not fast at other days, because the Prophet ﷺ prohibited fasting all the days.

² A part of the night, in reference to voluntary prayer at night, i.e., *Qiyâm-ul-Lail*.

³ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 1, p. 496

after the Prophet died, during the lifetime of Salman al-Farisi, the stance before Allâh the Exalted, and not knowing if I will be ordered to Paradise or the Fire.^{1,2}

As for the scholars of Islam who came after the Companions, Abu Dawûd As-Sijistâni described Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal as such:

“I never heard Ahmad bin Hanbal mention the matters of the life of the present world.”

Further, Hammad said to Dawûd At-Tâ'i:

“O Abu Sulaimân, you are content with the little provisions you have.” He said, “Should I tell you about he who accepted less than what I accepted for myself, he who accepted this entire life instead of the Hereafter?”³

And when Harim bin Haiyân was asked to make a will and testament, he said:

“My inner self has been truthful with me! I do not have wealth to make a will and testament for, so I recommend you in my will to recite the last Âyat in *Sûrat An-Naml*,”⁴ which is chapter 27 in the Qur'ân.

This is the type of people whom Bishr bin Al-Harith described when he said:

¹ He says this, even though he was one of the greatest companions of the Messenger of Allâh, who spent his life as a Muslim in defense of Islam, obedience of Allâh and His Apostle and teaching Islam. He was also a great scholar of Islam and among those whom the Prophet loved and cared for.

² *Al-‘Âqibah*, p. 64

³ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 141,

⁴ *As-Siyar*, vol. 4, p. 48

“Every person who loves this life hates to meet death, while those who are disinterested in this life would love to meet their Lord.”¹

It is a fact, however, that life has thrown its arrow at our inner selves and raised its flag inside our hearts. We spend the nights and the days engaged in matters of life, thinking about how to collect more money and eagerly attending the meetings or appointments that are connected to life's splendor. Rarely do we leave any room in our hearts for matters of the Hereafter. How many among us rush to prayer when they hear the *Adhân*, the call to prayer? Look at the streets when it is time to pray, and you would find them full of those rushing to acquire the things of this life, and away from the Hereafter. Sa'id bin Abdul-Aziz said:

“He who has done good, should hope for the reward. He who has done evil, should not be shocked at receiving the punishment. He who has acquired might unjustly, then Allâh will justly bring disgrace to him. He who has collected wealth unlawfully, then Allâh will justly bring poverty to him.”

Also, Al-Hasan Al-Basri said:

“The *Faqih* (who has knowledge in the religion), is he who is disinterested in this life, eager for the Last Life, has knowledge in the religion, often worships his Lord, refrains from breaching the honor of Muslims and from unjustly acquiring their wealth and sincerely advises them.”²

Know that wealth does not determine happiness or bring comfort in life. There are many wealthy people who increase

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 10, p. 476

² *Mukhtasar Minhâjil-Qâsidin*, by Imam Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, p. 21

in sadness and grief, as their wealth increases. Only a few of them are comfortable because they spend on their needs without extravagance and use their money to protect their honor from needing people's help. They never complain and always use their wealth in Allâh's obedience. I know of some wealthy people who, if they wish to pay the *Zakat* due in their wealth, would sustain several thousand families. Yet, they often complain to me that they feel distressed and alone, for their life is void of happiness and full of various troubles and concerns. I also know of a man whose job is to call to the *Adhân* in the mosque, he is not wealthy and lives in a house owned by the mosque that he works at. He has many children to support, yet, all praise is due to He Who grants contentment to whom He wills, he is content and works in the obedience of Allâh. Surely, Allâh uses whom He wills in His service and brings whomever He wills closer to His Mercy.

A wise man said:

"I am amazed at he who grieves when he suffers a loss in wealth; why does he not grieve for the loss in his life span as well? I am amazed by he from whom the life of the present world is fading away and to whom the Hereafter is drawing closer, yet busies himself in the fading life and ignores the coming Life."

The emptiness of the Heart

Surely, when the heart does not contemplate Paradise and the Fire, hoping in the former and running away from the latter, the heart succumbs to feebleness, its resolve becomes weaker and its exuberance fades away. Whenever the heart becomes stronger in its pursuit for Paradise and in performing its deeds, one's resolve becomes firmer, his exuberance stronger and his dedication greater.¹

¹ *Madârijü As-Sâlikin*, vol. 7, p. 220

Dawûd At-Tâ'i once said:

“Consider the life of the world like a day during which you fasted, and then broke your fast by the approaching of death.”¹

The approaching worldly life

This is how they valued this life, with all its splendor, characteristics, delights lusts and desires. Mâlik Ad-Dâri said that Caliph ‘Umar رضى الله عنه, placed four hundred dinars in a cloth and said to his servant:

“Take this money to Abu ‘Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah رضى الله عنه, then wait a little while in his house to see how he spends it.” Umar’s servant went to Abu ‘Ubaidah and said to him, “Leader of the Faithful says to you that you should spend this money on your needs.” Abu ‘Ubaidah said, “May Allâh keep relations with him and grant him mercy.” Abu ‘Ubaidah said to his servant, “Take this seven dinars to so-and-so, and this five to so-and-so, and this five to so-and-so...” until he gave away all the money that was given to him by ‘Umar رضى الله عنه. Umar’s servant went back to him and told what had happened, and found that ‘Umar رضى الله عنه had prepared another amount for Mu‘âdh bin Jabal رضى الله عنه. ‘Umar رضى الله عنه said; “Take this money to Mu‘âdh bin Jabal and remain in his house for a little while to see how he spends it.” Umar’s servant took the money and went to Mu‘âdh, saying to him, “Leader of the Faithful says that you should spend this money on your needs.” Mu‘âdh asked Allâh to keep relations with ‘Umar and grant him mercy, then said to his servant, “Take this amount for the house of so-and-so, and this amount for the

¹ *Sifat-us-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 134

house of so-and-so, ..." His wife came along and said to him, "By Allâh, we are poor too, so give us some money." Mu'âdh رضى الله عنه had only two dinars left, and he gave the money to his wife. Umar's servant went back to 'Umar رضى الله عنه and told him what happened. 'Umar رضى الله عنه commented, "They are brethren, similar to each other."

Such are the people who live and die enjoying comfort and peace of heart, like the righteous man who was asked, "Do you have a will and testament." He said, "What should I give away? By Allâh, I own nothing and have no debts to collect or to pay back." This is the content life that leads to tranquillity and peace of heart.¹

Abdullah bin Khubaiq said:

"Do not feel sorry, except for something that will harm you tomorrow (on the Day of Judgment), nor delight in something that will make you sorry tomorrow. The best type of fear is that which prevents you from committing sins, lengthens your grief for what you have missed,² and directs you to contemplate the rest of your life."³

Dear Muslims! Know that excessive engagement in the affairs of this life is easy, but disassociating from them is very hard. Soon afterwards, death will approach and bring with it an end to every type of delight and joy. Death, as hard as it is, is easier than the horrors that follow it. Al-Hasan said:

¹ *Adabu Ad-Dunya wad-Din*, by Al-Mawardi, p. 120

² The days and months of your life you wasted without worshipping Allâh and staying away from what He has prohibited.

³ Thinking about death, the Day of Judgment, Paradise, the Fire, and so forth.

“Allâh the Exalted has ordained the acts of obedience, and helps one perform them, and has forbidden the acts of disobedience, and helps one avoid them. Work as much as you feel able to endure the blazing Fire, and know that you have no excuse if you end up in it!”¹

Remember these words from At-Taimi:

“Two things prevented me from enjoying life’s delights: remembering death and remembering the Stand before Allâh.”²

The worst of people in grief

Sufyân Ath-Thauri said:

“Three from among mankind will feel the greatest sorrow on the Day of Judgment. They are: a man who had a slave, and on the Day of Judgment the slave brought forward better deeds than him; a man who had wealth but did not give charity from it, and those who inherited it from him gave some of it to charity; and a scholar who did not benefit from his knowledge, but taught others who benefited from it.”

This is the life, which we excessively delight in and offer the excuse that Allâh is the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. We forget that He is also the Most Powerful, Able to exert retribution on His enemies. Yahya bin Mu‘âdh said, while supplicating to Allâh:

“If You forgive, then surely, You are the Best of those who have mercy. If You punish, then surely, You are never unjust.”³

¹ *Az-Zuhd Al-Fâ’ih*, p. 95

² *Al-‘Âqibah*, p. 39

³ *Az-Zuhd Al-Fâ’ih fi Dhikri man Tanazzaha ‘anidh-Dhunubi*

We ask Allâh to let our path, in this life, end in the Garden of Eden. We beg Him to make us among those who take sufficient provisions from this life, for the dwelling of everlasting delights and constant shade. We ask Allâh to make us and our parents and relatives in the grades encompassed by His Mercy, those who shall have no fear, nor ever grieve. May Allâh's peace and blessings be on Muhammad and on his Companions and progeny. Allâh said:

﴿وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلٌ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتٌ
الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْنَدِرًا ۝ أَلَمَالٌ وَالْبَنُونَ
زِينَةُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ۝﴾
[الكهف: ٤٥، ٤٦]

“And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water (rain) which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, and becomes fresh and green. But (later) it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allâh is Able to do everything. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds¹ that last, are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope.” (18:45,46)

wal-Qabâ'-ih, Muhammad bin Yusuf Al-Jazri, p. 41

¹ Good righteous deeds: Five compulsory prayers, deeds of Allâh's obedience, good and nice talk, and remembrance of Allâh with glorification praises and thanks.

الدنيا ظل زائل

Life is a Fading Shadow is a very enlightening booklet concerning the life of this world. This world is nothing but a passageway. About this fact here are the opinions of our *Salaf*.

Ali رضي الله عنه described this life in these words:
“Its allowed aspects lead to being reckoned and its forbidden aspects lead to the Fire.”

Al-Hasan said:
“O son of Adam! Life is only days, so if your day passes, your life becomes shorter.”

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said about this life:
“I am amazed at those who were ordered to take provisions (fear from Allah) and were told that the journey will commence soon (to the Hereafter), yet they play.”



DARUSSALAM

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