

بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ سَبْعًا

Shaykh Muhammad Sālih al –‘Uthaymeen HASTEN TO DO GOOD DEEDS BEFORE YOU ARE OVERTAKEN BY SEVEN AFFLICTIONS¹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

On the authority of Abu Hurairah who said that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said,

بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ سَبْعًا هَلْ تَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا فَقْرًا مُنْسِيًا أَوْ غِنًى مُطْغِيًا أَوْ مَرَضًا مُفْسِدًا أَوْ هَرَمًا مُفَنِّدًا أَوْ مَوْتًا مُجْهَرًا أَوْ الدَّجَالَ
فَشَرُّ غَائِبٍ يَنْتَظَرُ أَوْ السَّاعَةَ فَالسَّاعَةُ أَدْهَى وَأَمْرٌ

"Hasten to good deeds before being overtaken by seven (afflictions). Are you waiting for poverty that will make you forgetful? Or wealth that will make you oppressive? Or a debilitating illness? Or old age that will make you senile? Or sudden death? Or the Anti-Christ –the worst expected evil? Or the Hour; and the Hour is much more grievous and much more bitter (than all worldly afflictions)?"

Explanation

[Just prior to this hadith], the Prophet (ﷺ) has mentioned a number of hadiths which signify that it is from discretion and prudence for a person to promptly take the initiative to do good deeds. In this particular hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) has pointed out a number of situations that a person ought to be weary of by hastening to do good deeds. So he (ﷺ) said, **“Hasten to do good deeds before you are taken over by seven”**. He means seven encompassing things that man fears may befall him. From these seven is poverty about which he (ﷺ) said, **“Are you waiting for poverty which will make you unmindful [of devotion] or prosperity which will make you**

¹ Translated by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett from *Sharh Riyād as-Sāliheen* (93).

oppressive?” Man fluctuates between two states in regard to livelihood and sustenance. On occasions, Allah enriches a person by providing him with wealth, children, family, property, vessels, power and anything else associated with wealth. So when he sees himself in this state of richness, he starts to become oppressive and, refuge is sort with Allah, to have an inflated sense of self, conceitedness and an aversion to worshipping Allah, as stated by Allah:

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ ۖ إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ ۗ

No! [But] indeed, man transgresses. Because he sees himself self-sufficient. Truly, to your Lord is the return.

In other words, no matter how much you become self-sufficient and affluently elevated, your return is certainly to Allah. With our own eyes we observe how riches can lead to corruption—refuge is sought with Allah! A person who is impoverished, you may well find him humbled before Allah, repentant, broken spirited, free of any oppressive ways. However, when Allah imparts upon him wealth, he becomes haughty and his riches start to oppress him.

Inversely, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“poverty which will make you unmindful”**. Poverty is dire financial strait whereby a person has no wealth. Poverty can make a person neglectful of many advantageous matters because his preoccupation with seeking his livelihood can distract him away from important things. This is something all too often observed and for this reason it is feared that a person may fall into one of these two states: either **prosperity which leads to oppression** or **poverty which leads to negligence**. If Allah favours His slave with riches which do not oppress or with poverty which does not make him neglectful then he himself is well-adjusted, upright in his worship and upstanding in all of his affairs. This, and this alone, represents worldly happiness.

Worldly happiness is not determined by vast sums of money because it can overshadow [and mislead into wantonness]. Consider carefully Allah’s statement:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٩٧

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.

Allah did not say **“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, We will surely increase his wealth and bestow upon him riches”**. Rather, he states, **“We will surely cause him to live a good life”** either through lots of wealth or a lack of wealth. It has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) in a hadith qudsi that Allah said, **“Indeed, there are those amongst my slaves that if I were to make them wealthy, it would corrupt them, and there are those amongst my slaves that if I were to make them poor, it would corrupt them”**.² This indeed is the observable reality [of many people]. Poverty is good for some people and prosperity is good for others, but the Prophet (ﷺ) did warn against **prosperity which leads to oppression and poverty which leads to negligence**.

The third: He (ﷺ) said, **“a debilitating disease”**. Illness and disease wreak havoc on a person’s wellbeing and state of affairs. As long as a person is in a state of good health, you will find him in good spirits, open minded and companionable. However, when illness befalls him, he becomes troubled and miserable; his world becomes a place of confinement and he overwhelmed with grief. Due to his illness, you find him in a state of disarray. He is neither in a social frame-of-mind with the people and nor is he cheerful with his household because he is ill, fatigued and drained. A person cannot constantly be a state of good health since illness lies in wait for him at every corner. How many people rise in the morning healthy and energetic only to enter the evening feeble and sickly or the opposite?! It is incumbent upon the people to hasten to do good deeds, taking care to avoid such precarious situations.

The fourth: **“or old age that incapacitates [mentality and physically]”—i.e., senility**. When a person grows old and he is in the twilight of his years, for indeed he, as Allah states,

يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ ۝

...is reversed to the most decrepit [old] age...

² Reported by Abu Na’em in *al-Hilyah* (98/318).

You find this person, who used to be from the most intelligent of men, someone who has relapsed to being childlike. Actually, he is worse than a child because a child is yet to develop his faculty of intellect and so he is not cognizant of anything yet. The old person, however, once had intelligence and could understand many things but now he has been reversed to the most decrepit [old] age and this for him is the most difficult of things to bear. We ask Allah to protect all of us from reversing the process to a state when we become most decrepit because when a person reaches such a state, he grows weary and an inconvenience for others, so much so that even those who are closest to him wish that he would die because he becomes extremely disagreeable and greatly inconveniences them. Even if they do not wish this with their tongues, it is possible that they do so with their actions.

As for the fifth **“sudden death”**—i.e., that a person dies suddenly. Death does not inform a person of when he will die. A person could die without any prior notice. He could die in his bed whilst sleeping; he could die on his seat whilst working or die when he is on his way walking. When a person dies, his actions cease, as stated by the Prophet:

إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ : صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

When a son of Adam dies his deeds are discontinued, with three exceptions: charity, whose benefit is continuous; knowledge from which benefit continues to be reaped or a righteous child who supplicates for him.

So hasten to good deeds before death takes you suddenly and grants you no respite!

The sixth: **“Ad-Dajjāl who is the worst expected evil”**. The word ‘Dajjāl’ is a hyperbolic participle³ derived from the root word الدَّجَلُ which means lying and misrepresentation. He is a man who is sent by Allah at the end of times, who will ultimately lay claim to Allah’s Lordship by declaring he is a lord. He will remain on earth in his sedition for forty days—one day equal to a year, one equal to a month, one equal to a week and the rest equal to normal days. Allah will empower him with unprecedented feats of ability to the extent that he will command the heavens to rain and the earth to produce. He will have with him a garden and a fire, however they are inverse distortions, for the garden will be the fire and the fire will be the garden.

³ [TN]: In Arabic, it is called a صِيغَةٌ مُبَالَغَةٌ which is a pattern used for intensifying the manner and frequency of an action.

This man will be blind in one eye, with his eye looking like a floating grape. The letters كاف and فاء and راء (kāf, fā, rā) will be written between his eyes and every literate and illiterate believer will be able to read it. However, every hypocrite and disbeliever will not be able to read it even if he is literate. This is from the signs of Allah.

Allah will send Isā the son of Maryam against this man. For he will descend from the heavens and put an end to him by killing him, as stated in various hadith, at the gate of Ludd located in Palestine. The main point is that the Dajjāl is the worst expected evil because his sedition and ordeal will be catastrophic. For this very reason, we say in every single prayer:

لِّلّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ، وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيْحِ الدَّجَالِ
O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave, from the punishment of Hell-fire, from the trials of life and death and from the evil of the trial of the False Messiah.

Seeking refuge with Allah from the Dajjāl has been mentioned specifically because it will be the greatest trial and tribulation in the life of man.

The seventh **“The Hour”**, i.e., the Hour of Resurrection which entails the end of times. The Hour will be more grievous and more bitter [than anything], as stated by Allah:

بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ اَذْهَىٰ وَاَمْرٌ ۝۶

But the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.

The Prophet (ﷺ) has warned us of these seven afflictions and he instructed us to hasten to do good deeds in anticipation of these seven. So hasten, my Muslim brother, to do good deeds before it is too late! Right now, you are in the clutches of vitality, potency and power; however, a time might visit you when you are unable to carry out good deeds. So act now by disciplining yourself, for if you condition yourself to perform good deeds, it will become second nature and something easy to carry out and yield to. If, however, you become accustomed to being lazy and neglectful, you will fail to accomplish carrying out good deeds. We ask Allah to aid all of us in remembering Him, thanking Him and perfecting our worship of Him.