



[Seize the Opportunity to Do Good Deeds](#)

Be Victorious in Life to have Peace in the Hereafter

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a garden wide as the heavens and the earth is prepared for those who guard themselves for Allah, those who spend of that which Allah has given them in ease and adversity, and those who control their anger and those who pardon the faults of the people. And Allah loves those who excel. And those who when they do a shameful deed or have wronged their own selves remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults. And who is there to forgive one's faults save Allah? And who do not knowingly repeat the wrong that they did. It is they who will receive the reward of forgiveness from their Lord and the gardens beneath which rivers flow, and abide therein forever and a blessed reward for the workers of goodness. (Surah al-Imran)

Then again He reveals in the Holy Qur'an in Surah al-Yunus:

And if each soul that oppressed anyone had all that is in the earth, it would offer it as a ransom. They will, each of them, feel remorse within when they see the punishment. But the matter will be judged between them justly, and they will not be treated unjustly. And all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. Surely without a doubt, the promise of Allah is also true, but most of them do not know.

Often we are faced with decisions we have to make, and choices that affect us in our day to day lives, whether we are in pursuit of some particular thought, idea or issue, or some action. Whenever a beneficial opportunity arises, or an opportunistic opportunity, it is seldom that we ignore the moment and decide to pass up whatever advantage or profit it entails. This is human nature. Everyone realizes that in choosing a particular path to follow, we have to live with all the consequences of that decision whether the consequences are good or bad. What we decide to pursue in life and how we decide to pursue it then becomes the issue of the most paramount significance.

It's fine to have a goal, but how will you reach that goal? It's fine to have a talent, but how will you maximize that talent? What are you telling yourself? "Oh, I can't really reach the epitome of that talent." It can be a child in school or taking piano lessons, or an adult in a business, or even a highly trained professional who doesn't feel full confidence in their ability, forgetting that Allah (swt) has told us that He is not going to test us with trials beyond our ability. He will be the assistant/*madad* for us. This is the case when we understand the repercussions of our choices last for eternity. That's the case with our choosing to live as Muslims, following the guidance of Allah (swt) and the Prophet (sal), and choosing to live in *tariqah*, following the example and guidance of our *shuyukh*. We have to understand what it means to seize the opportunities in front of us in the moment/*waqt*.

To be truly successful, or as Allah puts it in the Qur'an – victorious in this life, so we are at peace and victorious in the Hereafter – each of us decides how to best live our lives, and yet Allah (swt) has informed us of the best way. The question is will we pay attention, or will we be so arrogant and so immature to think that just because we have mature bodies, even aged bodies, that somehow we have achieved a level of maturity that we should have achieved in our teenage years and our early 20's, if we were really attentive. Allah says:

We gave a Book for an inheritance for those whom We chose from among Our Own servants. But of them, it is he or she who makes their soul to suffer a loss, and of them it is he or she who takes a middle course. Of them, it is he or she who is foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah's permission. This is a great excellence.

Gardens of eternity wherein there are bracelets of gold and pearls, and their dress therein shall be silk.

And they shall say, "All praises be to Allah who has made grief depart from us. Most surely, our Lord is forgiving, a multiplier of rewards, Who has made us a light in a house, abiding forever out of His grace. Toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict us."

And as for those who disbelieve, for them is the fire of hell. It shall not be finished with them entirely so that they should die; nor shall the chastisement thereof be lightened to them; thus do We retribute even every ungrateful one. They shall cry within for help, "O our Lord! Take us out! We will do good deeds, other than those which we used to do." "Did we not preserve you alive long enough so that who would be mindful in it should mind? And there came to you a warner. So therefore taste, for the unjust there is no helper."

(35:32-37)

Should we not seize the opportunity and bounty of Allah in giving us the chance to do good works and good deeds, now in our lives? Or do we wish to be among those crying and screaming on the Day of Judgment because we missed the opportunity? The opportunity to do a good deed is even just to make someone a little happy. I'll go back to my example: study well in school if you are a child, and do a good deed for yourself and for the teacher. Or learn that piece of music (sings 'Happy Birthday' to one in the congregation whose birthday it is) so it sounds beautiful to the ears of those who hear it *and* to you. What happens often is we feel we don't have the time. We let the time determine our selections. In the world we live in, we try to multi-task. But multi-tasking

definitely lowers quality; there is no question. There have been studies that show that. It lowers quality and also brain power.

What happens with us is we use time as an excuse. Or we have something else in mind that we want to do next; so we put a negative charge on what we are having to do now. That's why the parents have to say things like, "Clean up your room. Wash your dish off. Did you get your studying done? Did you practice piano?", trying to teach prioritizing when we know all along that the child knows how to prioritize. It's the same thing we do in business and work. People can be very adept in doing their work in a good way and getting things done, but will make sloppy mistakes in doing it. They have a good reputation of getting the work done, but the good reputation is sullied by the quality of the work. Or, it causes in someone to be exhausted and pressured and under all kinds of strain, so the work comes with a taint on it. The opportunity is there, but it is not taken in a proper way.

This is what Allah (swt) is talking about when He talks about balance. It is to have the confidence, not arrogance, to take the time and not waste it. Wasting time is, at the end of a life, the worst thing you can do—wasting precious time Allah (swt) has given. So, we want to seize the opportunity to do good works. This is the way you guarantee your place. This is the way you fulfill your life. This is the way you accept who you are and what you are, understanding that there is no second chance. The tremendous terror and magnitude of the Day of Judgment may be witnessed from *hadith*. We don't like to talk about these things. All the other *imams* on Friday are talking about the punishments in hell; we like to talk about the positive stuff. But we cannot deny what's in the Qur'an and the Hadith.

Ones who do not worship Allah, in order to escape from overwhelming punishment, will be prepared to sacrifice anything – family or wealth or anything dear to them. Yet, it won't be accepted from them, because they have to face their rightful recompense by the

Justice of Allah (swt). In other words, you cannot buy Allah. You cannot say, “Okay I did all these bad things here. You can take my job, all my wealth, my family. Fine. This is my penance to You.” No, it doesn’t work that way. Ibn Malik used to say that the Prophet (sal) said,

The disbeliever will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and asked: “Supposed you had as much gold as filled the earth. Would you offer it to ransom yourself from punishment?” And he will reply, “Yes!” Then it will be said to him, “You were asked for something much easier than that: to accept Islam and the way of Islam, but you refused.”

You might think, “Is he only talking to Muslims? What is the real Islam?” In the previous ‘*āyat*, we were told it is to perform good deeds, to balance your life, to do what you know is the right thing to do, to establish good habits. In connection with this Hadith, Allah (swt) says in Qur’an: **“And if each soul that does wrong had all that is in the earth, it would seek to ransom it. And they feel remorse within them when they see the doom, but it has been judged between them fairly, and they are not wronged.”** Based on these texts, Allah (swt) instructs the believer to hasten toward forgiveness, toward honorable actions, toward goodness, that He has prepared for His pious and righteous servants in the Hereafter. Allah says: **“Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for gardens whose width is the heaven and the earth prepared for the righteous.”** Just for being quick to repent [we are rewarded].

The concern of the Prophet (sal) to guide his *ummah* through trials and tribulations of this world is shown in the following *hadith* of Abu Hurayra (ra): **“The Prophet (sal) said, ‘Take the initiative to do good work, as there will be turmoils like a dark night where a believing person wakes up a believer and ends his day as a non-believer. Or, he ends his day as a believer, but wakes up as a non-believer. He sells his faith for the gains of the worldly life.’”** So when? Now. What to do? Seek out doing the good deeds. Create

order and balance in your life. Just before I came down I had the news on. They had a segment about a man who wrote a book on health. He said, basically, that it's not all the supplements. The body is a very complex system and it is order in your life that keeps you healthy. You go to sleep the same time every day. You eat your meals at the same time every day. This is the way to fight inflammation. As soon as you break your pattern, the body reacts to it and it becomes inflamed. There is no one magic pill you are going to take. Certainly, there are supplements that can help people, but inflammation is the killer. Inflammation is also getting upset and angry, and anything that has to do with fire. You have to start when you are young to deal with it.

Abu Hurayra says to take this initiative to do good works. The mercy of the Prophet (sal) superseded the situation described in this *hadith* by providing a solution to the ones who had faced times of hardship. You don't want to go to bed a believer and wake up a non-believer. It doesn't mean just to believe in Islam. It means you believe in what is true and good and compassionate. Ibn Umar (ra) narrated, ***“The Prophet (sal) took hold of his shoulder and said, ‘Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler.’”*** The Companions would heed his advice and the guidance of Allah, and express their understanding eloquently, even as it was said by Ibn Umar (ra) and Ali ibn Abu Talib (ra), commenting on the previous *hadith*: ***“If you survive to the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning. And if you survive to the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening. And take from your health for your sickness, and take from your life for your death.”*** This is beautiful!

If you have built a body of health, then your sickness will be overcome by what is in your bank account. But if you keep creating inflammation, conflict, and difficulty for yourself, then you won't have anything to take from. If you do good deeds in your life, then those are the deeds that follow you to Jannah and the *barzakh*. This simply means that you should do good deeds. When you are healthy and alive, before you become sick and die, you should be doing good deeds and being in balance. Again, Imam Ali said, *“The world*

of this life is departing, and the Hereafter is arriving. Each of the two has its own children. So you should be the children of the Hereafter, and do not be the children of this world. Today there is action, good or bad deeds, but no accounts. And tomorrow, there will be accounts, but there will be no deeds to be done.” It is all accomplished here, and we shouldn't take this lightly and think it is only a message for the big people. The children should hear this, and interpret it as best as they can.

Each of us has the choice to seize whatever opportunity present itself: to learn something new, to create a beautiful photograph, to create a beautiful poem, to create a beautiful picture, to make your impression on the world by creating something fulfilling, loving and kind. It doesn't end. I can still write a poem at my age, and my daughter writes beautiful poetry and takes beautiful photographs. It's more than just that; it's the intention to do that. We have these opportunities that present themselves in front of us, whether for our *dunya* or our *akhirat*. When the time comes, this is what will be speaking to us. The when for tomorrow is now; the when for the Hereafter is today. Do you understand? Allah, being truly the most just, will reward us accordingly. When? When it's time for the reward. Concerning this, Allah said:

Whoever desires a quick passing (the transitory enjoyment of this world), We readily grant him what We will for whom We will like. Then afterwards, We have appointed for him hell, he will burn, disgraced and rejected, far away from Allah's mercy. Whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with the necessary effort for it (when? –now), does righteous deeds and is obedient (now) when he is a believer, then such are the ones whose striving shall be appreciated, thanked and rewarded.

We should strive toward obedience to Allah (swt), and the goodness of Islam before death approaches us, and the Day of Judgment comes upon us before it is too late. Regarding this, Allah (swt) says: **“Verily therein is indeed a reminder for one who**

has a mindful heart or gives listening ear while they are heedful.” Not a mindful mind. The actions that come from the heart are different than ones that come from the mind. And for one who hears... hears what? Hears what is in the Qur'an, and what the Prophet (sal) said. If this reminder fails to affect our hearts and fails to impact our lives so that we submit to the guidance and instruction of Allah and the Prophet and our *shuyukh*, then we should know that Allah (swt) knows our inner motives and what our hearts truly desire.

What does it mean, “He knows”? You form things in your life that give out signals. Just like in nature, each animal gives out a special signal, and there are predator animals who pick up on those signals. So too, we form in our life certain signals. ‘Allah knows our motives’ means that everything that manifests Allah’s Presence responds to us. If you are walking down the street and you see someone that looks very threatening, you don’t have to know anything about them; you feel threatened by them. If you see someone very happy, exuding happiness, and they greet you; you don’t have to know anything about them. Just their demeanor tells them how you are going to respond to them. “Have a nice day!” Allah says: **“If they do not respond to you O Muhammad, then know that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more astray then one who follows his own lusts without guidance from Allah? Verily, Allah guides not people who are wrong doing.”**

There is no more time to waste. We need to act immediately and seize the moment, the golden opportunity, holding to the golden chain to change ourselves, to change our families. It’s never too late. Allah has blessed us with life and health and wealth, even before the Day of Resurrection comes upon us. When I say it’s never too late, it isn’t; but we have to reflect. As the children get older, they have to participate in the changing more than when they were younger, and we can demand it of them. We can train them. It says in the Torah, *“Train a child in the way they should grow.”* Allah tells us in Qur’an: **“The Day of Resurrection draws near. None but Allah can avert it, advance it or**

delay it. Do you then wonder at this recitation of Qur'an? And you laugh at it, and you weep not, wasting your precious lifetime in pastimes and amusements. So fall you down in prostration to Allah and worship Him alone." You can take the literally and fall to the ground, or you can do the good deeds and be in the Presence of Compassion and Mercy, Love and Tolerance and Understanding and Patience, etc.
inshā'a-Llāh. Asalaamu aleykum.