

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 The Last Hour shall not arrive until knowledge has been withdrawn;
- 2 Earthquakes increase;
- 3 Time draws closer;
- 4 Temptations will be prevalent;
- 5 Homicide – which is murder, murder – increases;
- 6 And your wealth becomes plentiful, too plentiful.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1036.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿If only, when the misfortune decreed by Us befell them, they humbled themselves! Rather, their hearts were hardened and Satan made their deeds seem goodly to them. (43) Then, when they had clean forgotten what they had been reminded of, We threw open to them the gates of all good things, until just when they were rejoicing in what they had been granted, We suddenly took them to task; and they were plunged into utter despair.﴾ (6: 43-44)
- ﴿We never send signs for any purpose other than to give warning.﴾ (17: 59)

The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Şakhr al-Dawsī, emanating from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He migrated to Madinah and endured much trouble on the way. His slave ran away. He used to say: 'What a long and hard night! Yet it saved me from the land of unbelief'. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet nicknamed him Abu Hurayrah because he saw him carrying a cat in one of his sleeves. He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith about some of the minor signs of the Last Hour. These are: knowledge becomes scarce, earthquakes increase, time draws closer, temptations will be prevalent, killing increases and wealth becomes too plentiful.



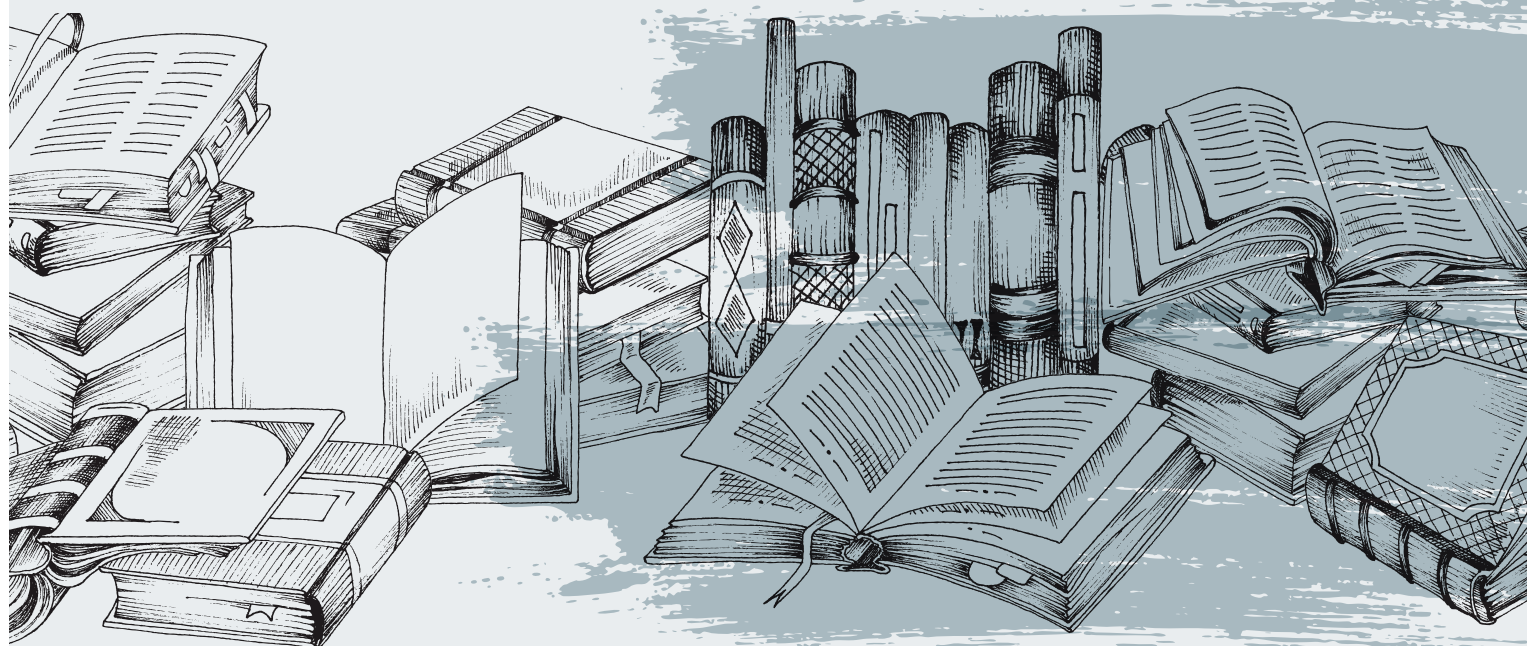
Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions several of the minor signs of the approach of the Last Hour. The first of these is that knowledge is withdrawn and becomes scarce. This will happen as many scholars will die and there will not be enough pursuing knowledge to carry on with their heritage.

2

Another sign is that earthquakes will increase and affect all regions of the earth. It is common knowledge that earthquakes cause destruction, which varies according to the magnitude and depth of such quakes.



3

Yet another sign is that time will draw closer. People will have shorter lives and markers for the passage of time will become shorter. Thus, time will move quicker towards the Day of Judgement, as God will determine all this by His will. This is akin to a hadith which quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'The Last Hour will not arrive until time has drawn closer: a year will be like a month; a month like a week; a week like a day; a day like an hour; and an hour like the burning of a weed'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2332.



4

Another sign is that temptations become prevalent. The Prophet says: 'Hasten to do good deeds before troubles come thick like patches of night darkness, when a man may be a believer in the morning and becomes an unbeliever in the evening, or may be a believer in the evening, then become an unbeliever in the morning. He sells his faith for some worldly gain'.⁽¹⁾

The Prophet also mentions that strife will increase in intensity in the period leading to the Last Hour, so that a believer will wish for death because of the hard troubles he encounters on account of his faith. The Prophet says: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, the world shall not end until a man will pass by a grave and throw himself over it saying: "I wish I was in place of the dweller of this grave". This is not for any religious reason, but rather because of his distress'.⁽²⁾

5

Along with increased temptations, another sign of the Last Hour appears, which is increased killing. People will consider it lightly, or its causes will increase. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned that the unlawful killing of a Muslim is one of the seven worst sins. God, Mighty and Exalted, gives a very stern warning against it. He says: 'He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering'. (4: 93)

6

The last sign mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that wealth will be plentiful, so that all or the great majority of people will be well off. A rich person may not find someone who will accept his zakat. The Prophet says: 'Give *ṣadaqah*. There will come a time when a man will walk around [offering] his *ṣadaqah*, but the one who is offered it will say to him: "Had you come yesterday, I might have taken it. Today, I have no need for it". He will not find anyone to accept it'.

1 Related by Muslim, 118.

2 Related by Muslim, 157.

Implementation

1

This hadith provides evidence confirming the Prophet's status as God's Messenger. He tells us in this hadith several signs, and some of these have actually happened. It behoves us that whenever we see evidence of this in our lives we should feel proud of our faith and do whatever strengthens that belief.

2

The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us about the trials and troubles that will occur towards the end of time serves as a directive to every Muslim to have good knowledge and insight, so that he avoids being exposed to such troubles. Whenever one hears of such trouble, one should take stock and do whatever is necessary to fulfil what God requires.

3

One of the signs of the Last Hour is the withdrawal of knowledge and the increase of ignorance. Many ignorant people who are devoid of Islamic knowledge will even give fatwas, ignorantly attributing their views to God. It is very important to distance oneself from such people. As Muslims, we should be careful in our choice of whom to learn our religion from. We need not fear such ignorant people, nor unwisely try to check them. This is an aspect of the test God sets for us.

4

Muslims should work hard to acquire Islamic knowledge and ensure that it is preserved. Islamic scholarship will continue to decrease, which means that the need for it will always increase.

5

If you experience or hear of an earthquake, let that be a reminder to you of the Day of Judgement.

6

If shorter life is one of the signs of the Last Hour, everyone should hasten to turn to God in repentance and increase one's good deeds, before death comes all of a sudden, or time provides less chances to perform acts of voluntary worship.

7

Every Muslim should hold on to his faith and not succumb to temptation and desire. It is advised that he resists these as strongly as he can. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Temptations are held before hearts, one by one, like a straw mat. A heart which takes one will have a black spot and a heart which rejects one will have a white spot until there are two types of heart: one is white and solid like al-Şafā which will not be shaken by any test as long as the heavens and earth endure, and the other is black with little whiteness, like an overturned cup which neither distinguishes what is good nor rejects what is evil, except what it may fancy'.⁽¹⁾

8

An aspect of the Prophet's guidance is to seek God's refuge from all temptation. Zayd ibn Thābit narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Seek God's shelter from all temptation: apparent and discreet'.⁽²⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 144.

2 Related by Muslim, 2867.



One cause of increased killing is that it will be taken too lightly, for various reasons including: weakness of faith, irrational zeal in the defence of oneself, community or country, unlawful competition for wealth or women, careless attitudes towards lethal weapons, and the frequent watching of violence in films and games by youngsters. It is incumbent on individuals and society to combat all these.



That wealth becomes plentiful and people lead comfortable lives are not indicative of good times. The Prophet's time was the best period in human history, but such affluence was not prevalent. We should endeavour to make our time one of reform and good conduct.



