

Anas ibn Mālik narrated, saying:

1

As I was with the Prophet, coming out of the Mosque, a man met us near the shaded area of the mosque. He said: 'Messenger of God, when is the Last Hour?'

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'What have you prepared for it?'

3

The man appeared to hesitate.

4

He then said: 'Messenger of God, I have not prepared much in the way of fasting, prayer or charity,

5

but I love God and His Messenger'.

6

The Prophet said: 'You are with those you love'.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7153; Muslim, 2639.

#### From the Qur'an

﴿Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He it is who sends down rain; and He knows what the wombs contain; whereas no one knows what they will earn tomorrow, and no one knows in what land they will die. God alone is omniscient and takes cognisance of all things.﴾ (31: 34)

﴿Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (3: 31)

﴿All who obey God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these!﴾ (4: 69)

﴿Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, and the property you have acquired, and the business in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God shall make manifest His will. God does not provide guidance to the transgressors'.﴾ (9: 24)

#### The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār, was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and his devout mother took him to the Prophet to be his servant. He took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, and he took part in the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He gave numerous fatwas and narrated many hadiths. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

#### Summary

One companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him about the timing of the Last Hour. The Prophet drew his attention to what is more important than knowing its timing, which is known only to God. This is preparing for it. The man said that he did not do much by way of preparation, but he loved God and His Messenger. The Prophet told him that this was sufficient to ensure that he would go to Heaven and be a companion of the Prophet there, if he was true in his love.



# Message and Meaning

1

Anas ibn Mālik narrates that he was with the Prophet as they were leaving the mosque when they were met by a man close to its wall where there is shade. The man asked the Prophet about the timing of the Last Hour. Some reports suggest that he was the bedouin who earlier urinated in the mosque.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not give him an answer to his question, but drew his attention to what is of greater importance, asking him: What have you prepared for it? Have you volunteered much in the way of worship so that you will be ready for its inevitable coming?

The Prophet's purpose was to draw attention to what is required of Muslims, namely, preparing for the time when they face the reckoning of their deeds and that they ensure they have done what secures them entry into Heaven. No one is required to know the timing of the Last Hour. Besides, no one knows its time except God, Mighty and Exalted.

3

The man humbly hesitated, realizing that his good deeds did not amount to much and he acknowledged that he fell short of what is required; yet he was asking a question he should not have asked.

4

The man acknowledged that he had not done much by way of preparation. He did not do many voluntary acts of worship, which would draw him closer to Heaven and distance him far from Hell. He simply stuck to the obligatory duties which every Muslim must do. His response might have been a matter of humility, underrating his good deeds, or thinking that whatever he did fell short of what was possible. He might also have thought that all this would count less than his sincere love of God and His Messenger, which is superior to all good action.

5

The man realized that his best deed which would benefit him on the Day of Judgement was his love of God and His Messenger. Such true love should also be demonstrated in practical obedience.

6

The Prophet told him that if his love was sincere and he fulfilled its requirements, he would join those he loved. This means that he would be with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions in the highest Paradise. God says: All who obey God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these! (4: 69) Hence Anas said: 'I love God, His Messenger, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and I hope to be with them, even though I fall short of what they did'.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3688; Muslim, 2639.



# Implementation

1

Neither Anas nor his family had any reservations against Anas serving the Prophet (peace be upon him), even though Anas was a free person, not a slave. Service was at the time a matter for slaves, not sons of distinguished families. His mother took him to the Prophet so that he would be his servant. A Muslim may observe social habits and traditions, and may try to prevent people's gossip about his actions, but he will not allow these to prevent him from doing what would bring him good returns in both the present life and the next.

2

Anas was keen to stay close to the Prophet and to serve him, despite being young. Some hadiths mention that he might even have played with other boys at times. This shows that training a young person to do good work should not deprive him of the chance to occasionally play with children of a similar age.

3

The man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the time of the Last Hour, but the Prophet did not answer his question. He drew his attention to a different aspect which is of more benefit to the questioner, which is doing the proper preparations for its arrival. This method is known among linguists as 'a wise man's style'. This invites a person to give an answer that gives information that is greater or more important than what the questioner is seeking, so as to alert the questioner to what he has missed. A similar case is that of one of his companions who asked the Prophet if it was permissible to perform the ablution with sea water. He referred to the sea and said: 'Its water is absolutely pure and its dead animals are lawful to eat'.<sup>(1)</sup> The Prophet's answer makes it clear that it was perfectly proper to perform the ablution with sea water, but added further information saying that the flesh of dead sea animals are permissible to eat. Advocates of Islam should be aware of what people need, wise in what they say and what answers they give. They should not feel pressed by people's questions. Rather, they should speak to people about what benefits them both in their lives and religion. They should avoid what causes trouble and what is useless.

4

The Prophet turned his questioner's thinking from what should not be of concern to him, or from questions that cannot be answered, such as the exact time of the Last Hour, to that whereby he could focus on practical matters. This he did by asking the man about his preparation for the Last Hour. Imam Mālik disliked speaking about non-practical matters and he mentioned that earlier scholars focused on what was practical. Indeed most of people's arguments, particularly those that participate in a common project, concern non-practical matters. Therefore, it is better to move on and ask what is useful, such as: what shall we do next?

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 69.



5

The Prophet's question, 'What have you prepared for it?' should be the focus of every Muslim's attention as he plans his course in life. He should take stock of his actions every day, asking himself: how will I be meeting God? Will He be pleased or displeased with me?

6

To love God and His Messenger (peace be upon him) is not a matter of idle words or emotions. It is a feeling that fills one's heart and makes him eager to please the loved one by obeying him. It develops and strengthens until it takes priority over one's relatives, property, children and all other people. Whoever claims to love God and His Messenger should look within himself for evidence confirming such love. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Some people claim to love God, the Exalted. Therefore, God tests them with the Qur'anic verse that says: "Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'". (3: 31)

7

No matter how deeply you indulge in sin, let it never detract from your glorification of God and your love of Him and His Messenger. None of us can attain the position of the prophets (peace be upon them all) in Heaven. Theirs is a superior position due to their great merit, sustained efforts, sincere belief and determination to do God's bidding, despite all the trials they went through. However, we can be with them in the life to come through truly loving and respecting them, following their practices, and ensuring that we love them better than we love anyone else. This is the good news for everyone who is ready to make the effort. Hence Anas said in comment about the Prophet's saying to the man who said that he loved God and His Messenger: 'Having embraced Islam, nothing delighted us more than the Prophet's words: "You are with those you love"<sup>(1)</sup>.

8

Endeavour to strengthen your love of God and His Messenger through the right means such as your frequent remembrance of God and praying to Him to grant peace and blessings to the Prophet. Keep your feeling of their love alive in your heart through reminding yourself of their great favours and your determination to make obeying them your top priority. Whenever you see or hear of someone seeking to please his loved ones, endeavour to make your love of God and His Messenger greater. God says: 'Yet there are people who worship beings other than God, giving them a status equal to His, loving them as God alone should be loved; whereas the believers love God more than all else'. (2: 165)

1 Related by Ahmad, 12032.

