

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

- 1 Hasten to do good deeds before six events:
- 2 the Impostor,
- 3 the smoke,
- 4 the beast,
- 5 the rising of the sun from the west,
- 6 the general matter,
- 7 and one's private matter.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2947.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord's forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing.﴾ (3: 133)
- ﴿On the Day when certain of your Lord's signs do appear, believing will be of no avail to any human being who did not believe before, or who did not put its faith to good uses. Say: 'Wait if you will; we too are waiting'.﴾ (6: 158)
- ﴿When the Word comes to pass against them, We will bring forth to them out of the earth a beast which will say to them that mankind had no real faith in Our revelations.﴾ (27: 82)
- ﴿Wait, then, for the Day when the skies shall bring forth a kind of smoke which will make things clear. (10) It will envelope the people. Painful is this suffering! (11) [They will cry]: 'Our Lord! Relieve us from this suffering; for, indeed, we are believers'.﴾ (44: 10-12)

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 remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. The Prophet prayed for him that he would not forget what he learnt. 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) mentions some of the signs of the Last Hour which come all of a sudden. He orders his community to hasten to do good deeds before any of these signs appear.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges us to do good deeds before we witness six events that will preoccupy people and prevent them from doing good deeds. He particularly tells us to do such good deeds before the sun rises from the west, an event which closes the chance of doing a rewarded good deed or repentance being accepted.

2

The first of these events is the appearance of the Impostor. This would be the greatest trouble ever. The Impostor is a man of large stature with one blind eye. The word *kāfir*, which means ‘unbeliever’, is written on his forehead. He appears towards the end of time and claims to be God – yet his claim is very far from the truth. God will give him the power to do some miraculous things, to add to the severity of the test people will face. Thus, the Impostor will point to the sky and rain will fall, and point to the earth and it will bring forth its plants. He will point to barren land and its treasures will follow him. He will cut a man in two halves and stand between them, then he will call on the man and he will regain full life. There are other reports about him. Then Jesus, son of Mary, will return and lead the Muslim army and kill the Impostor.

The Prophet mentions the Impostor first because when he appears, the beads indicating the approach of the Last Hour will split, and the signs will occur, one after the other, until the Hour happens. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘The signs are beads held together by a string. When the string is split, those which it holds will follow each other’.⁽¹⁾

3

The second sign of the imminent approach of the Last Hour is the appearance of smoke which will cover the earth for forty days. Believers will be affected in a way similar to having a cold. It will be much harder for unbelievers and hardened sinners: it will go through their noses, pierce their ears and keep them short of breath. It is a breath from Hell. God says in the Qur’an: ‘Wait, then, for the Day when the skies shall bring forth a kind of smoke which will make things clear. (10) It will envelope the people. Painful is this suffering! (11) [They will cry]: “Our Lord! Relieve us from this suffering; for, indeed, we are believers”’. (44: 10-12)

4

The third sign is the beast that will be brought forth and will speak to people. God says: ‘When the Word comes to pass against them, We will bring forth to them out of the earth a beast which will say to them that mankind had no real faith in Our revelations’. (27: 82) Neither the Qur’an nor the Prophet’s hadiths give us further details about this beast and what it will look like. God knows best.

The beast will be brought forth shortly after the sun rises from the west. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘The first sign to appear is that the sun will rise from the west; and the beast coming out in mid-morning [to speak] to people. Whichever of these two comes first, the other will come shortly after’.⁽²⁾

1 Related by al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 8639.

2 Related by Muslim, 2941.

5

The fourth sign is that the sun will rise from the west, which is the opposite of its usual course as it rises from the east. In an authentic hadith: 'When the sun sets it runs until it reaches its destination beneath the Throne, where it prostrates itself. It requests permission to do so and it is granted. However, a time will soon come when it is about to prostrate itself but it is prevented, and it requests permission but it is denied. It is told to go back to whence it came. It is then that the sun rises from the west'.⁽¹⁾

6

Sign number five is resurrection, which the Prophet describes here as 'the general matter', because it applies to everyone without exception. When resurrection takes place, everyone will regret having fallen short of what is required. A believer will wish that he had done more deeds that please God, while an unbeliever will wish to go back in time and repent.

7

The last of the six signs is death, which the Prophet calls 'everyone's private matter'. He calls it a private matter because it concerns everyone on his or her own. As such, it is different from resurrection which occurs to all together.

God orders His servants to turn to Him in repentance of their sins and to do good deeds before they die. He says: 'Believers! Do not let your riches or your children make you oblivious of the remembrance of God. Those who do so will surely be the losers. (9) Give, then, out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to any of you, and then he says, 'My Lord, if You would grant me a delay for a short while, I would give in charity and be one of the righteous'. (10) God does not grant a delay to any soul when its term has come. God is fully aware of all that you do. (63: 9-11)



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3199; Muslim, 159.

Implementation

1

We should remember the Prophet's care, compassion and mercy and how he extended these to his community. He told them of the time when it will no longer be useful for an unbeliever to declare his acceptance of Islam. It is important for everyone to follow the Prophet's order and to hasten to do good deeds before the appearance of any of these signs.

2

The Prophet's companions learnt these hadiths which contain information that will be very strange to any human mind. However, as they were intelligent firm believers, they accepted the information given to them. Their acceptance was based on their knowledge that God's Messenger only said the truth, and that the One who sent him His message had complete and perfect knowledge. Every wise person who comes later will accept this information without question, and will not be ashamed of teaching others.

3

Every believer should be prompt in turning to God in repentance and seek His forgiveness of his sins, and should hasten to do good deeds before his time of life is over. God is much-forgiving: He opens His hands during the night so that a person who has committed sin during the day will turn to Him in repentance. He also opens His hands during the day so that a person who has committed sins during the night will turn to Him in repentance. He forgives all sins.

4

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned his community of the Impostor on several occasions, because he knew the great danger he represents.

5

An important task advocates of Islam and scholars should attend to is that they should give due importance to what happens to the Muslim community and to explain to them the trials that may befall them. They should educate them in what God wants them to do when new events take place. Their sermons, speeches and writings should not be far removed from what people face in life.



