

## The Last Days

In despair Sarah wept saying, "Oh! I didn't know that those were her last days or that that was to be our last meeting with her! Had I only known...", her tears choked her. Saliha, the friend who had brought her the sad news, was brave enough to have carried the message. She offered condolences to her friend and stretched her cold and shaking hand in comfort, to Sara. She said, "It would not have made any difference. She kept it to herself and suffered in silence, patiently awaiting her end. She tolerated the horrors of waiting death. What could you have done, had you known?"

Sarah said, "I would have learnt much from her, I would have learned lessons that would have helped me to find my way in life. I would have said farewell to her, and have assured her of my undying love and respect. Oh! I am lost since her departure..."

Saliha said, "She knew how much you appreciated her friendship, which is why she left you her writing."

Sarah dried her tears and said wonderingly, "Her writing?"

Saliha said, "It seems to be her diary ...I've come to give you this precious trust."

She opened her handbag and got out the diary. Sarah took it and noticed on the cover the Holy Qur'anic verse: ***We are Allah s and to Him we shall return.***

On the first page she read:

...So, my life will come to an end soon. It is a matter of just a few days. Only yesterday was I informed of this fact. Anyway, it is the end, but I am not thinking of the end so much, as I am thinking of the beginning, and the incidents that have filled the space between the beginning and the end. Those incidents will strongly affect the end.

They indicate the end, as it says in the Qur'anic verse:

***"Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light.."***  
***(Al-Baqarah 2: 257)***

Thus, I must review my past deeds and call myself to account, in order to know what is awaiting me. Light or Darkness, joy or sadness, chains or freedom...

In fact, I am seriously thinking of the beginning. What was the beginning? When and where should I start? Should I start at my childhood? Oh, no. I don't want to write my life story that takes the time of whoever reads it. I shall express the feelings of one who stands at the crossroads of this life and the hereafter. My childhood has nothing to do with that. It has nothing to do with what is waiting for me now! Childhood is a break in man's life, before he is required to perform his responsibilities. Yet, childhood signifies many meanings. I have heard and read about childhood. They say it is the happy joyful world of hopes and wishes.

They say it is the time when a child gains the necessities for a life that will give him satisfaction. They say this and more. Though I have read about childhood, I have never realized the meaning of my childhood as defined by others. My childhood was a stage in life; I crossed it with no weapons of knowledge or faith.

Hence I suffered a lot and was bewildered at the conflict between my inner self and the tiny body, between my great responsibility, which was ahead of me, and the limited range of my thinking. Childhood means nothing to me but a fruitless expanse of frozen time. So I won't put those days of childhood on trial. I will start with the early days of youth and girlhood.

What is youth to me? It is a film full of images; some are dull and heavy, some are light and bright. It is a theatre where one's story is told; the story of someone searching for perfection; one who looked all around for the thread that would lead to it. I tried to understand life. I was never satisfied with its outward face. I dived deeper to reach my aim. I came to understand, through this universe, that there is a mighty Power with firm laws that regulates its movements.

That is why it is so wonderful, so magnificent. I strived to understand people, but faced amazement, hesitation and disappointment most of the time. How often I returned home crying and broken-hearted; but, it was not always like that. Thank God! Through experience I gained more knowledge and more understanding of human nature and personal habits. I persisted in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

Where did I find it? It was in Islam, in my Qur'an that is the message from Heaven. I felt so thirsty that I hurried to this spring. This was my early youth which I intend to record in this diary... I shall write down its hours whether of happiness or sadness, satisfaction or disappointment. I will consider my life's course and whether or not it was on the right path. I must tell the truth, whatever that may be. I am now standing at the doors of other world. What was my reaction to incidents and events in those past days? What was my reaction to faith and belief in Allah the Almighty? Hiding, or running away from the truth won't help. I am on my way to stand in front of a Just Judge. There is no room for denial or lying. The Qur'anic verse says:

***“On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did...” (Al-Nur, 24:24)***

I need to be frank and put myself on trial. I must be serious in calling myself to account, for haven't I known that death is the certain end of every human being? It is written on every person clearly as a necklace on a young girl's neck. Did I not hear that Imam Ali (A.S.) said, "**Oh people! you are chased by death...!?**" Then it is not only I who should call myself frankly to account. Everyone should know that he is created to achieve perfection through the worship of Allah the Almighty. When one dies, one will reap what one has sown. Oh, you who think you are safe, be careful! You will not be spared.

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