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Self-Reckoning

If there were nothing to make a person turn to self-reckoning (hisab) other than shame at being presented before Allah and the disgrace of having the veil torn away from his secrets, man would throw himself from the mountaintops and not seek refuge in a building, nor eat, nor drink, nor sleep, except when necessary for preserving his life. This is how a person behaves when he sees the Resurrection, with all its terrors and hardships, with every breath he takes. In his heart he looks at the time when he will stand before the Compelling One, and when he takes account of himself it is as if he were being summoned to that presentation before Allah, and is being questioned in his death-throes. Allah said,

وَإِن كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ

Even though there be the weight of a mustard seed, yet will We bring it and sufficient are We to take account. (21:47)

One of the Imams said, 'Take reckoning from yourselves before you are called to reckoning. Weigh your actions with the scale of your own fear of shame, before they are weighed for you.'

Abu Dharr said, 'The mention of the Garden is death, and so is the mention of the Fire. What a wonder that a person's self lives between two deaths!'

It is related that Yahya (‘a) used to reflect for the entire night on the Garden and the Fire, so that his night was spent in wakefulness and he did not sleep. Then in the morning he would say, 'O Allah; whither can one flee? Where can one stay? O Allah, one can only flee to You.'

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