

Surah Al-Hujuraat

Para-26



It is the desire of every person to be successful in this world. And we have to admit that success is not an accidental thing which might happen just by chance. We need to have some basic qualities in order to be successful at any job, in any field. There have been many books written on the subject of personal development and success, but our knowledge is incomplete and Allah is the one who knows everything. So in order to discover the complete truth, we should turn to Him and see what guideline He has given us in the Quran, which we should follow, to become better individuals as well as to create an environment of mutual trust and brotherhood in the society. Surah Al-Hujuraat is all about character building. On one hand it teaches us manners worthy of true believers, and on the other hand it points out some of our harmful habits, which we take so lightly, without realizing what harm we are doing to our faith and our lives.

But before we go into the detail of our manners towards people, we must know how to behave towards Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w), because that is the foundation of our faith:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ {1}

O believers! Do not put yourselves ahead of Allah and His Rasool. Fear Allah; surely Allah hears all and knows all.

It is a clear warning for all of us, who claim to have belief in Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w), that we should never put our own ideas, our theories and our own intellect ahead of Allah's commands or the teachings of His Messenger (s.a.w). We should fear Allah and remember that this intellect of ours is also His own gift and He gave it to us so that we should use it to understand His words and His absolute authority over us. Not that we become arrogant and come up with self created theories so that we can distort the laws of Allah.

Sometimes it happens that we do have faith in Allah and in His commands, but our outward manners are not respectful. This is also wrong and so Allah is warning us here:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ
بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ {2}

O believers! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud when talking to him as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds should come to nothing while you do not even perceive it.

The companions of the Prophet (s.a.w) were being taught the proper manners that they should not even raise the volume of their voices in front of the Prophet (s.a.w) and the same rule applies to us when we hold a class of Hadith, in which we should be most respectful in the way we talk. Sometimes we see people engaged in hot arguments about a Hadith, or say that Hadith is just confusion or things like that.....how terrible it is that shaitan keeps us deceiving that such and such thing is so trivial and not a sin, but see how disrespect can cause someone to lose all his good deeds. So we have to be very careful.

The Bedouins living around Madinah, who were mostly illiterate, had embraced Islam but they did not realize that they had to learn and

mould themselves according to the etiquettes of true believers. So most of them remained in their places and did not seek to come to Madinah to learn from the Prophet (s.a.w) and His companions. On some occasions, however when they had to come to Madinah, they did not know any manners to talk to the Prophet and so they used to shout outside his door to come out to them and attend to their needs:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنَ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ {4}

Those who call out to you, O Muhammad, from outside the private apartments, most of them lack common sense.

This is a common attitude even today that people do not realize that the religious scholars are to be respected and given time and privacy to do the work which is beneficial to the whole community. Everyone wants them to be their private counsellors, whom they can call at any time of the day, or even night.....and they should attend to their call immediately.....It is all done due to ignorance but we should learn to be respectful if we are really Muslims.

Now another important thing is being highlighted in the next Ayat that mostly these illiterate Bedouins would come with their personal disputes and give exaggerated accounts of the injustices done by others. So the Muslims of all times are being cautioned that if someone comes with such complaints then they should not be hasty in decisions but should look at the other side of the picture too, before taking any action.....otherwise they might regret it later when they find out the complete truth:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِبْحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ {6}

O believers, if an evildoer comes to you with some news, verify it (*investigate to ascertain the truth*), lest you should harm others unwittingly and then regret what you have done.

Everybody wants that his opinion should be given preference and so the Muslims in Madinah would insist that the Prophet (s.a.w) should follow their advice, which at times would have been disadvantageous to them if it had been followed. So it is a lesson for us too that when we read a Hadith and we don't understand its benefit then we should believe that the Messenger of Allah always taught us what was beneficial for us and our own intellect can be wrong or misguided but the Prophet (s.a.w) spoke from divine inspiration and wisdom. Therefore, instead of finding fault, we should be grateful for the favours of Allah on us:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ {7}

And know that Allah's Rasool is among you. If he were to follow you in most affairs, you would certainly be in trouble. Allah has endeared this faith to you and beautified it in your hearts, making unbelief, wrongdoing, and disobedience abhorrent to you. It is they who are rightly guided

Really if we think about it, isn't it the greatest favour on us that Allah has made the faith dear to us and has made it so beautiful in our hearts.....otherwise if something has to be done without love then what an awful burden it becomes, which has to be carried anyway. And the other great blessing Allah has bestowed upon us is that he put hatred in our hearts for disbelief, transgression and disobedience; otherwise how could we stop ourselves from these evils? So if, by the grace of Allah, we are on the straight path, then we should be thanking Allah day and night, and not be arrogant:

فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ {8}

(it is) through Allah's grace and blessing. Allah is Knowledgeable, Wise.

Islam is a religion of brotherhood and unity. Muslims as a nation have a great responsibility from Allah that they have to spread the message of Allah to the whole world. This cannot be achieved if they keep fighting each other over every little disagreement. So the Muslims are being taught here, that if any two groups among the muslims start fighting then the rest of them should neither be indifferent to it nor just turn on the TV and watch the news for how many got killed today, but should play an active role in making peace between them:

وَإِن طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسَطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ {9}

If two parties among the believers fall into mutual fighting, make peace between them. Then if one of them transgresses against the other, fight the one who has transgressed until he returns to the commands of Allah. Then, if he returns, make peace between them with justice and be fair; for Allah loves those who are fair and just.

But notice here that Allah is warning us not to exceed our roles of peacekeepers and start any favouritism or unfair use of resources. Because the real motive is not to win any war or get any favours but to be the agents of peace and unity among Muslims. Why is it so important? Allah says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ {10}

The believers are brothers to one another, therefore, make reconciliation between your brothers and fear Allah, so that you may be shown mercy.

We take these words lightly because for most of us, we have been hearing them since childhood, but seldom seen in practise. So unconsciously we think that these are mere quotations to be used in essays and speeches. But now we read the same things in the Quran and know that it is Allah Himself who is opening our eyes to the fact that we Muslims are all like brothers, like one big family.....irrespective of our status, or origin. The best demonstration of this brotherhood is on Hajj where Muslims from all over the world gather together as one people and bow down to one Allah. But for peace to prevail among these brothers it is important that every individual takes it as his own responsibility to strengthen the relationships between Muslims. This deed is better in reward than even prayers and fasting and charity:

A companion of the Messenger (s.a.w), Abu Dardaa (r.a) narrated that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) said, "Shall I inform you of that which is better than fasting, praying and charity?"

They said, "Why not, O Messenger of Allah!"

He said, "To reconcile between yourselves (otherwise) the mischief between yourselves is something that shaves (eliminates religion)"

So ask yourself: do I really think of other Muslims like my brothers. Would I treat my own brother, like I treat others?

Next Allah highlights for us the basic evils which sour our relationships. These are some highly destructive habits which we have developed over time due to our ignorance and indifference to the importance of character building and nurturing mutual relationships. The first one is to humiliate people and making fun of them. So Allah is addressing all those who believe:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا
نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا
بِالْألقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ {11}

O believers! Let no men laugh at other men who may perhaps be better than themselves; and let no woman laugh at another woman, who may perhaps be better than herself. Do not defame *through sarcastic remarks about one another*, nor call one another by *offensive nicknames*. It is an evil thing to be called by a bad name after being a believer, and those who do not repent are the ones who are the wrongdoers

The root cause for this behaviour is pride in one's own self. If we constantly look down on people and think them to be inferior to us then we will express that arrogance in our comments. But before we start humiliating anybody, in our thoughts or openly, we should think that maybe that person is much more superior in Allah's eyes than us. It is considered to be just a harmless way to have fun, to mock others and to call them names but notice that Allah calls it a sin for which we can only be forgiven if we do Taubah..... sincere repentance.

Then there is this other disease of being suspicious of everybody. How can we love our brothers if we have this negative feeling of mistrust? It will definitely lead you to being curious about others lives and activities, and finally talking against them to whoever is willing to listen. That is why the next Ayat deals with all three of these interlinked evils:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا
وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرَهُتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ {12}

O believers! Avoid immoderate suspicion, for in some cases suspicion is a sin. Do not spy on one another, nor backbite one another (to say something about another behind ones back that if one hears it, dislikes it). Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would abhor it. Fear Allah; for Allah is the Acceptor of repentance, Merciful

We all know that it is Haram to eat pork and we will not touch it, but is the flesh of our own dead brother Halal? Aren't we constantly eating it in our daily conversation? Just like a disease has to be eradicated from its root, similarly we have to begin with opening up our minds to the fact that we are all equal in the sight of Allah. Being born into a rich family, or an educated family, or being an Arab or Indian, or whatever nationality, or the language we speak or the colour of our skin.....these are all things which we didn't choose for ourselves...it was just Allah's plan:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ {13}

O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might get to know one another. Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous. Allah is All-Knowledgeable, All-Aware.

If we want honour then we should fear Allah and develop a strong bond with Him because that's the thing which is most valued by Allah. Most of us know these principles but then why don't we act accordingly? Why do we respect wealth and status more than Allah consciousness? The problem is that mostly we see everything from a worldly perspective and take our faith for granted. For a majority of

us so called Muslims, our faith is nothing except for a few words that we have uttered or a set of beliefs which we have inherited from our ancestors, or a few rituals that we might or might not perform.....But how many of us have really accepted Allah as our Lord and Islam as our religion at a conscious level?

The same thing was hindering the Bedouin Arabs from entering completely into the religion of Islam:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {14}

The Bedouin Arabs say: "We have believed." Tell them: "You have not believed; rather say 'We have become Muslims;' for faith has not yet found its way into your hearts. If you obey Allah and His Rasool, He will not deny you the reward of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

We call ourselves believers but have ever tried to find out what is the true definition of a believer?

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ {15}

The true believers are those who believe in Allah and His Rasool, then never doubt; and make Jihad (*exert their efforts*) with their wealth and their persons in the cause of Allah. Such are the ones who are truthful *in their claim to be the believers*.

Remember that the way to Jannat is not an easy one. It's easy enough to quote this definition but doing Jihad with the nafs and with one's wealth is not quite such a smooth ride. There are going to be rough spots along the way too. And when difficulties arise then what should be our attitude? That we go around showing our wounds to everyone? Making it look like we have done some favour on

others? The fact is that it is Allah's favour on us that He has given us this guidance and saved us from the darkness of ignorance.

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَّا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {17}

They think they have conferred upon you a favour by embracing Islam. Tell them: "You have conferred upon me no favour by accepting Islam. It was Allah Who has conferred a favour upon you in guiding you to the true faith; admit this, if you are men of truth.

Why is Allah reminding us about this favour on us? Because sometimes people start thinking themselves as superior due to being religious. They want that they should be given special attention and special favours due to it. But we should all remember that our true status in Allah's eyes has not been revealed to us in this world. No one can think of himself as free from the punishment of Akhirah. So we should keep striving towards Allah's obedience, always remembering the fact that none of our thoughts, words or deeds escapes Allah....He knows everything about us whether its apparent for all to see or we keep it hidden from the whole world:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ {18}

Surely Allah knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is watching all your actions."

Surah Al-Jumu'ah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

You must have heard a lot of people saying that although they believe in the religion of Allah, but these days it has become virtually impossible to adhere to this way of life. "After all we have to live in society and look at where the world is going. How can we go back to the teachings of 1400 years ago while everyone is moving forward?"

When I hear this excuse, my mind always turns to the fact that when Allah sent His Quran with its eternal message and appointed His Messenger (s.a.w) to be the best example for the whole of mankind for all times to come, didn't Allah know that a time would come when the majority would ridicule this concept of following the traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w) and insist that Islam has to be modified according to the requirements of this modern world? Is the development of the people and the world, a surprising thing for Allah? No of course not...His knowledge is complete and all encompassing and He knows all the past, present and future issues of this world and its inhabitants. Still if He sent the Quran and declared it to be our guide regardless of time and space then surely it must have the completeness and timelessness, which if cannot see, then it is our own lack of comprehension or the cover of a lot of prejudice which has been piled up on our hearts through the propaganda of all anti Islamic forces. The only way you can really see the true picture is to recognize that your opinions are not entirely original. The ideas that you have about things are just a summary of all that you have been reading or listening or an essence of all your observations through life. If you have been living mostly with staunch believers of Allah and hearing His praises and watched people worshipping Him, then there will be a natural tendency in you to believe in Allah and to worship Him alone. On the other hand if you have been listening to a lot of anti Islamic stuff, then your faith will be shaky too. This human tendency to follow the trends and to be influenced by the environment is something which we cannot take lightly. That is why all these last Surahs have this fundamental message of unity among believers. The more we stay close to one another the more will be the strengthening of our faith, and the easier it will be to follow the right way of life.

Allah's religion and His laws are eternal and the whole universe is a manifestation of this fact. Look at the creation of Allah...everything is working tirelessly and perpetually in a most efficient way. The night and the day, the coming and going of seasons, life and death...all are the signs of Allah's perfection...

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ {1}

All that is in the heavens and earth declares the glory of Allah, the King, the Holy, the Mighty, the Wise

If we contemplate on the amazing miracles in the universe, we recognize the absolute power of Allah and immediately you feel the softening of the heart when you think of how Allah has made so many things for us and given us so many blessings both in our own creation as well as the outward blessings like food and water and shelter. Our hearts bow down in gratitude for all his favours which we need for our existence, but we never think of the ONE BIG FAVOUR without which our whole existence would have been meaningless...Allah reminds us of that in the next verse:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ {2}

It is He Who has raised among the unlettered people a Rasool (messenger) of their own, who recites to them His revelations, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom, though prior to this they were in gross error,

We have to understand that although material blessings are important because they are essential for our survival in this world; but the spiritual blessing of Islam brought to us through our beloved Prophet (s.a.w) is the most valuable gift from Allah. It was the miracle of the Quran and Sunnah which transformed the unlettered Arabs into great intellectuals and leaders of the world. But this miracle did not happen by itself. You can read the History and see how our beloved Prophet (s.a.w) and His blessed companions went through unimaginable trials and sacrifices to uphold the religion of Allah... until at last Allah gave them victory. It is a history of persistent hard work and perseverance in the face of all sorts of hardships. Therefore if today we want to rise back to our honourable status in the world as the chosen nation, then we have to get out of our comfortable illusions and self created theories and remind ourselves that we are the representatives of Allah's message in this world. To serve this purpose we need to apply the four step program for education and self development as stated in the above ayah:

1) **Reading of Quran**....correct reading of Allah's words makes the desired impact on the heart so we need to put in a serious effort to learn the tilawah in the same way as taught to us by the Prophet (s.a.w).

2) **Self purification**...it would be a fruitless exercise to paint from the outside while the inner self is corrupt due to years of neglect. Therefore a proper training is needed to get rid of the bad characteristics and develop good habits and attitude.

3) **Learning the Quran**... Reading is the first step but it should be closely followed by the understanding of the verses. Knowledge is the key to guidance.

4) **Learning the wisdom and knowledge of Hadith**... This would teach us how to put our knowledge into practise; in other words we have to learn the practical implementation of Islam.

These days with the advancement in science and technology, it has become so easy to acquire this knowledge. There is a world of resources and as they say, everything is just a click away! But even with all the ease of availability, only those can get it who really want to be guided and out of those who get this knowledge only those can really benefit from it who act upon it...

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ {4}

That is the grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He pleases. Allah is the Lord of mighty grace.

If you give a valuable gift to someone and he throws it to one side, not caring for its worth; what would you call such a person except that he is crazy...similarly if we don't value the magnificent treasure of Quran and Hadith, then we are equally senseless in Allah's eyes. Allah gives the example of the nation who was given the guidance of Torah but they did not implement it in their lives:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ {5}

The example of those who were given the Taurāt, but then they failed to carry out their obligations, is that of a donkey who is carrying books *and does not know what is in those books*. Bad is the example of those who deny the revelations of Allah. Allah does not guide the wrongdoers

Although this verse has been revealed in the context of the Jews, who prided themselves to be the recipients and scholars of the Torah, while their lives were totally devoid of its teachings; but in fact it is warning for us, that if we also ignore the real purpose of Quran then just being the bearers of this great book will not make us great in Allah's eyes.

Why don't we feel the need to act upon the Quran? Is it because we are so sure of our salvation? The Jews too had this false pride that they were the favourites of Allah and the Paradise had been reserved only for them. So Allah is asking them that if their claim is true then why are they so much afraid of death?

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
{6} وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ {7}

Say: "O you, the Jews! If you claim that you are the favourites of Allah to the exclusion of other people, then wish for death if what you say is true." But, because of what their hands have sent before *them for the Hereafter*, they will never wish for death. Allah knows these wrongdoers very well

We as Muslims are also affected by this contradiction. On one hand we think that we will definitely be going to Jannah because we read the kalimah and we are the nation of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and on the other hand we prefer this world over the hereafter and live like we are going to be here forever... Allah says:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ {8}

Tell them: "The death from which you are running away, will surely overtake you: then you will be sent back to Him Who knows the unseen and the seen; and He will tell you all that you have been doing.

"Running from death" does not necessarily mean physically avoiding it but it also refers to the mental detachment from the fact that our life is going to end. We make so many plans for this life which might or might not happen yet we prepare for those things wholeheartedly. On the contrary we are totally carefree about the one and only thing which is most certain and will happen to all of us; and that is death. We avoid this reality so much that we don't even want to hear about it... How often do we think about the possibility of death when we lie down to sleep and ask Allah for forgiveness because it might be the last chance to do so? How many times before we hurt someone do we think that this might be the last chance that we are both alive so I should open my heart for him before it is too late? The more you think about death as something hanging in the air and waiting to catch you, the more likely it is that you will give up all your negative ideas about Allah or Allah's religion or Allah's creatures. This positive attitude will enable the believers to join together with forgiveness and acceptance of each other. Although the five daily prayers teach us unity and brotherhood but this lesson is specially reinforced in the Friday prayer:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {9}

O believers! When the call for Salah (*prayer*) is made on Friday (*the day of congregational prayers*), hasten to the remembrance of Allah and cease your business. That is better for you if you but knew

This ayah is a great reminder of the importance of the Friday prayer, and it also gives the formula for balance in our deen and duniya...(the religious and worldly affairs) This again, is a question on which there is a lot of confusion, as to what is more important; deen or duniya? Allah is teaching us the correct balance that the priority for an action is to be decided according to the time. It means that when it is time for the Prayer then you stop all other activity and get to the masjid. But then as soon as the prayer is over then get back to your jobs:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ {10}

When you finish the Salah, then disperse through the land and seek the bounty of Allah (*go back to your normal business*). And remember Allah greatly, so that you may prosper.

Notice the difference between the two commands: when you go to masjid you leave your business behind but when you go back to your businesses then don't leave Allah behind...rather remember Him even more. It shows that our real purpose is to worship Allah but to do other jobs is just a necessity; and so, while we are busy in the tasks of this world we should remember Allah a lot so that we might not forget the real objective of our existence.

Now compare this to our own attitude...aren't we doing just the opposite? While in duniya we totally forget Allah, and when we are in worship we still keep remembering the worldly affairs. This is our weakness but we have to keep trying and shift our focus to the actual goal. Allah gives the example of some people in Madinah who were still in the early years of their education in Islam. It was Friday and they were in the masjid attending the sermon of the Prophet (s.a.w). When they heard the coming of a caravan that had brought food and other stuff, they rushed to the sound of its drum because there had been a drought in the city and no food was available locally...

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ { 11 }

Those who are still weak in Imān (faith), when they see some bargain or some sport they rush to it and leave you standing. O Prophet declare to them that what Allah has in store for them is far better than any sport and bargain, and Allah is the best provider.

Even though these people had gone to fulfil a rightful need yet Allah is reminding us that no need is so urgent that you neglect your worship for it...because after all who can fulfil our needs except Allah and how can we expect to be fulfilled when we neglect the one who is the provider of everything...??

Look around yourself and observe the dissatisfaction written on the faces of people. They might have all the luxuries of this world but they are unfulfilled...why? The reason is that they have forgotten Allah and His obedience. Our hearts cannot find peace without it. So remember Allah greatly and remember the message of this Surah...which is to recognize the beautiful gift of Islam and to use it in our lives and also enrich the lives of all the others with its beauty. May Allah help us to act on what we have learned...Ameen

Surah Al-Mulk

This is one of the most important Surahs of the Quran; So much so that our beloved Prophet (s.a.w) used to recite it every night before going to sleep. So obviously there must be some very important things in Surah Al-Mulk which we need to remind ourselves every night... a time when we are about to enter into a state of unconsciousness and we don't know whether we will come out of it or not.

The very basic fact of our life is that Allah has ALL the goodness and He has ALL the control over everything whether big or small:

{1}

Blessed be He in Whose hands is the Kingdom of the universe and has power over all things.

For us this is a most powerful Ayah because it liberates us from the worship and fear of others. When every night we will remind ourselves that the ultimate goodness is only in Allah then we will naturally love Him instead of others and also when we remind ourselves that He is in control of all big and small things of our life and our world then we will fear only Him and no one else. We will not be so much bothered about people's expectations or standards but our worry will get diverted into one question only: what does Allah want us to do? How does He want us to live? Why did He give us this cycle of life and death? Allah answers this question in the following Ayah:

{2}

The One Who created death and life, so that He may put you to test, to find out which of you is best in deeds: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving.

If our life is a test and our result depends on beautiful deeds, then we must constantly remind ourselves that any action becomes beautiful in Allah's eyes when it is done purely for the sake of Allah, and done according to the way of our Prophet (s.a.w).

Only in obedience can we find peace and tranquillity. Just look at the skies and see how they are in complete submission to their Creator and Master...

{3}

The One Who created the seven heavens, one above another; you will not see any flaw in the creation of the Compassionate. Look once again, do you see any flaw?

The signs of Allah are spread everywhere but we are too much involved in our own affairs. No one has time or concern to seriously think about the hereafter. Allah says that when the disbelievers will be thrown into fire the guardians of hell will ask them... did the warners not come to them?

{8}

(The fire will be) As though bursting with rage. Every time a group is plunged therein, its guards will ask: "Did not a Warner come to you?"

They will confess their biggest error that instead of taking advice, they used to prove the warners as the misguided ones:

{9}

They will answer: "Yes indeed, a Warner did come to us, but we rejected him and said, Allah has revealed nothing - you are merely in gross error."

The fact is that when you don't want to face the reality then even your senses stop working. The ears don't hear and the hearts don't think...

{10}

They will further say: "Had we only listened or used our intelligence, we would have not been among the inmates of the blazing fire."

In this world we never want to admit our faults. But in the hereafter everyone will recognize their sins. The problem is that it will be of no use then:

{11}

Thus shall they confess their sin; so away from the mercy of Allah will be the dwellers of hell.

Faith is valuable only when you believe with your heart, even when you cannot see:

{12}

As for those who fear their Rabb, although they have not seen Him, shall have forgiveness and a great reward.

But Allah is warning us here that if you just make claims of faith and your heart does not believe then remember that He knows everything:

{13}

Whether you speak in secret or aloud, surely He is aware of all that is in the breasts.

We make claims that we have surrendered our lives for Allah. But do we even realize what it is to surrender? Look at the earth... and its submission:

{15}

It is He Who has made the earth subservient to you, to walk through its tracts and eat of His provided sustenance. To Him is the return at resurrection.

In this earth we will be buried and from the same earth we will be raised again. But most of us forget death and resurrection and then go about the earth living in a fool's paradise. Allah wants us to come out of our arrogance and realize that the same earth which Allah has made so subservient for us can be the means of our punishment:

{16}

Do you feel secure that He Who is in heaven, will not cause the earth to cave in beneath you and start shaking suddenly?

And as we look at the peaceful sky we should remember that disobeying Allah, who created this magnificent sky, is not a casual thing as we think. If He orders the sky it can send a rain of stones on us; then where will we find shelter?

{17}

Or do you feel secure that He Who is in heaven will not send against you a violent tornado, then you shall know how was My warning!

If today we think that it is so unlikely to happen then we can look into the history of the previous nations and see how they were rooted out of this world due to their misdeeds;

{18}

Those who have gone before them likewise disbelieved, then see how terrible was the way I rejected them?

And if we don't have time or concern to go into the details of the past then even looking at the birds in the sky can be a means of awareness for us. Have you ever noticed how they open and spread their wings and fly so effortlessly in the air? Who is holding them against the gravity of the earth?

{19}

Do they not observe the birds above them spreading their wings and folding them? None could hold them except the Compassionate (Allah); surely it is He Who watches over all things.

And just as the birds are being held in the air by the Compassionate Allah, similarly we are being held tightly to this earth by the same Allah. Otherwise if he wills he can stop giving the earth its gravity and we would all be scattered into this endless atmosphere. Do we think anyone other than Allah can save us?

{20}

What force is there that can help you besides the Compassionate? In fact, the unbelievers are suffering from delusion.

Or if he stops giving us food, who will nourish us?

{21}

Or who is there that can provide you if He withholds His provision? Yet, they persist in rebellion and aversion from the truth.

These simple truths are coming to my heart like totally new discoveries... why? Simply because we have taken everything for granted and have stopped thinking beyond the obvious. So generation after generation people blindly follow the trends of their families and friends and still think that they are on the right track...

{22}

Just think, who is rightly guided: he who walks with his face bent down, or he who walks properly on an even path?

Allah gave us all the senses, all the faculties with which we should have recognized him and He gave us such sensitive hearts but what have we done?

{23}

Say: "It is He Who has brought you into being, gave you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding: yet you are seldom thankful."

Allah gave us an appointed time in this world and we have free choice what we want to do. Whether we believe in Him or not, whether we obey Him or not... one day all of us are to be gathered in front of him:

{24}

Say: "It is He Who has multiplied you in the earth, and before Him you shall all be assembled."

This whole surah is about changing our thoughts. Mostly we live in an automatic way. We move around our things, we do our work, even acts of worship... and we hardly think of Allah. We forget that each breath that comes, it is with His permission. Each drop of water that we drink is from his mercy... do we give thanks?

{30}

Say: "Have you ever considered that if all the water you have, sink down in the ground, who is it, that will bring you the clear-flowing water?"

So let Surah Al-Mulk be a regular part of our life so that daily it should strike your heart in such a way that we start looking at life with the eyes of the heart. And love Allah more than any other thing and fear Him more than all other things. This feeling will InshaAllah lead to the most beautiful deeds which will make us beautiful in the eyes of Allah... InshaAllah.

Surah Al-Alaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

It is a common misconception that being religious makes a person inactive and incompetent because people think that religion isolates a person from the world of knowledge and progress. Especially about Islam people have this negative view that it does not encourage one to be knowledgeable. However the fact is that Islam is the most modern religion which began with the subject of knowledge in its very first lesson...

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ {1}

Read! In the name of your Rabb Who created

Most of us recognize these opening verses of Al-Alaq because they were the very first revelation of Allah to His Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). But unfortunately very few of us have remembered to apply it in our lives. Although we do act on the first word “Iqra” which means to learn... but this learning is incomplete unless it connects us with Allah. This incomplete knowledge might give us some temporary benefits of this world... but how can we worship Allah without knowing about Him and His commands? And how can we strive for the success of the hereafter if we don't know anything about it? What excuse will we give Allah that we didn't have any time to learn about Him... the one who gave us life and gave us time? Who are we anyway... remember what is our origin?

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ {2}

- created man from a leechlike mass.

Some people recognize this emptiness in their lives and so they make sincere efforts to learn about Allah and His Quran but then they start to feel superior to others. It is a most destructive trick of the devil and we should always be alert not to fall in its trap. It is understandable that knowledge and understanding gives a lot of honour to a person but we should remember that the real honour belongs only to Allah because only His knowledge is complete...

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ {3}

Read! Your Rabb is the Most Gracious

Anybody who has experienced the transformation from ignorance to knowledge must have felt the sweet satisfaction which accompanies awareness... I myself am witness to this miracle. There was a time when I had no clue what the Quran was all about and my only knowledge of Allah and religion was from observing different people and listening to their views... and really it was most confusing because they didn't seem to be worshipping the same Allah and it seemed like everyone was following some God of their own. And so I used to feel so lost and confused... until finally Allah led me to the knowledge of Quran and it felt like cool refreshing rain being showered on my heart. I thought it was the biggest miracle of my life... but I didn't know that it was just the first part of the miracle... the second part was even sweeter when Allah guided me to use the pen to spread His message. Because when I started writing I began to understand things which I had never thought before:

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ {4} عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ {5}

(Allah is the one) Who taught by the Pen, taught man what he knew not.

Therefore it is Allah's most wonderful blessing on man that He not only created him but also taught him to read and write so that he might strive towards the greatest heights of success. But it is a human weakness that as soon as anyone becomes successful, they begin to think that they are now totally independent and that they don't need any other support. And so they even neglect Allah...

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيْطَغَىٰ {6} أَنْ رَأَهُ اسْتَعْتَضَىٰ {7}

Nay! Indeed, man transgresses all bounds, in thinking himself to be self-sufficient.

It is a big mistake to think that we can survive without being obedient to Allah... but an even greater mistake is to stop other people from Allah's obedience:

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ {9} عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ {10}

Have you seen the one who forbids...; Our servant from offering Salah (*prayer*)?

Although these people are supposedly very educated, but they use their intellect in a negative way by finding faults with the Quran and Hadith and discouraging other people from following Allah's commands... but this act of theirs makes them so senseless that they don't even realize the basic fact that Allah is watching them:

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ {14}

Does he not know that Allah is observing all things?

Although these verses were being revealed to the disbelievers of Makkah but in them is a great warning for all the arrogant oppressors that they are in the grip of Allah...

كَأَلَّا لَيْنٌ لَّمْ يَنْتَهُ لَنْسَفَعَا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ {15}

Nay! Let him know that if he does not stop, We will drag him by the forelock

And now we come upon the last verse which is specifically meant for the beloved Messenger of Allah but it also has a great assurance for the believers... Allah is telling us not to follow the desires of any oppressors but to fear only Allah. Because only Allah is worthy of obedience and worthy of being feared:

كَأَلَّا لَا تُطِغُهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ﴿١٩﴾

Nay! Do not obey him! Prostrate yourself and bring yourself closer to your Rabb.

SubhanAllah! Such a powerful verse which reflects the love of Allah for His Prophet (s.a.w) and also for all the believers... Normally when we fear someone, it drives us away from that person but Allah's fear is such an emotion which takes us closer to Him. Because we know Him to be our best protector and our guide... thus Allah created for us this act of prostration through which we can feel the comfort of His closeness several times a day. We normally take salah as a duty, but Allah made it obligatory on us, so that we should have no chance to deprive ourselves from this spiritual experience even for a single day of our lives. We need it for our faith and we need it for our remembrance of Allah and His Love.

All thanks and Praise to Allah for guiding us to it... May He keep us steadfast on it too. (ameen)

Surah Az-Zilzaal

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Our life is nothing but a passage of time in which each and every second is like a gem with which we are supposed to buy the best deeds. But we have to decide and act in that very instant when the gem is given to us... because if we don't use it then it just slips out of our hands... wasted... gone... never to be returned again. I am sure if we could see time going by, we would have been extremely conscious about it but since it is an unseen treasure we just let it go by and don't even realize what a loss it is... And so when we waste time we are actually wasting our life... and even if we cannot instantly see the consequence of this loss, and feel like everything is just going so well... there is going to come a time very soon when we are going to be shaken out of our false security by a massive jolt which will move apart the whole world...

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا {1}

When the earth will be shaken to her utmost convulsion

In fact this earthquake will be so mighty and powerful that it will cause the earth to spill out everything that is hidden in it:

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا {2}

And the earth shall bring out all her inner burdens

It is human nature that even though we know that every living person has to die, still we are shocked when we hear any news of death. And the first words which come to mind are: "what happened?" If one person's death can be so heartbreaking then imagine how shocking it will be when the whole world will be broken apart...

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا {3}

Man shall say: "What is happening to her?"

But the real shock will be when the earth will start to speak. We are so used to the fact that people keep talking and there is nothing strange in it. But imagine if the walls of your house start talking about you? And blurt out all the embarrassing events which they have witnessed but which you don't want anyone to hear about? Well the same thing is going to happen on a

much larger scale when not just a group of people but the whole world will be listening to the tales being broadcast by the earth...

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا {4} بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا {5}

On that Day she shall report whatever had happened *on her*, for your Rabb shall have commanded her *to do so*.

After the judgement has been announced people will be taken to their final destination... either heaven or hell... which is nothing but a reflection of our true intentions and a consequence of our actions:

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ {6}

On that Day men shall proceed in sorted out groups to be shown their '*Book of Deeds*.'

Although we should aim high and dream of big things to do for the sake of Allah but remember that every journey, no matter how long, is just a combination of countless small steps. So we cannot ignore the steps... each one of them is leading us either to heaven or to hell. Therefore we should remain constantly alert to use any opportunity of goodness, however small it might appear. Giving someone an encouraging smile, putting a small coin in the charity box, removing some harmful thing out of the way... we never know which action might save us from the fire of hell...

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ {7}

Then, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it there

Similarly every little sin for which we don't feel guilty nor do we ask for forgiveness, is going to add to our punishment. These acts of disobedience which have become a routine and therefore seem inconsequential... do have a very painful outcome which will be shown to us very soon...

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ {8}

And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it there.

This is the essence of the purpose of our existence. We have to live each moment with a conscious mind. And the test becomes harder because we have not been told how many days, hours, minutes and seconds do we have before we run out of time. Saying

Alhamdulillah (all praise and thanks to Allah) takes a second but we cannot delay saying it, because we don't know for sure whether we will be alive in the next moment or not. So be thankful when you have the opportunity to do so. Saying *Astaghfirullah* (*I seek forgiveness from Allah*) also takes a moment... so when you realize that you have done something wrong then don't delay in asking Allah's forgiveness... just do it before the time runs out.

May Allah help us to remember this lesson at all times... and may we make full use of our time and life... ameen

Surah Al-Kafirun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Islam is a religion that cannot be imposed on any individual. Rather the word “Islam” itself means submission. Therefore, to be a Muslim means that you consciously and willingly submit yourself to Allah... accepting Him to be the one and only being worthy of worship. True belief in Islam will automatically be reflected in one’s lifestyle; and makes a person clearly distinct from those who worship other things besides Allah. But then this manifestation of Islam often makes others quite uncomfortable because it exposes their own lack of faith. Therefore they try to prove that it is the same whether you act on your religion or not... The question is: don’t they realize how ridiculous it is to say that you believe in Allah but don’t believe in His commands?

The fact is that each and every person is worshipping one thing or the other. Therefore it is an impossibility that you believe in one Allah and then you worship other things as well... In order to declare this fact, Allah revealed this surah to our Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings be upon Him) in which Allah commanded him to make it very clear to the non-believers that Muslims do not worship any other thing besides Allah:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ {1} لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ {2}

Say: O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship

These days we hear a lot of stuff about creating a global village; So we have adopted the ways of the world without caring whether they are in accordance with our religion or not. Our first priority should have been Allah’s pleasure and if this had been the case then we would be very very careful of what we are taking from other cultures because they do not worship whom we worship so naturally their priorities cannot be the same as ours...

Fourteen hundred years ago our Prophet (s.a.w) said the same thing to those who claimed to believe in Allah, but instead of worshipping Him, they chose to worship idols...

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ {3} وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ {4}

And you will not worship that which I worship. And I shall never worship those gods whom you worship

The basic reason due to which there is so much misunderstanding about religion is that on one hand we have “learned” to believe in Allah, but on the other hand we want to please other “gods”. A majority of people think of their culture and traditions as more important than any other thing... so they follow it “religiously”. Some others believe their self interest to be most important, so they are known as bold and courageous who can break the customs if it does not suit them... but for a Muslim, the most important thing is to obey Allah at all times... to seek Allah’s pleasure and to avoid His anger... this is their all time concern and every other thing becomes secondary... Obviously the reward for a believer is going to be totally different to those who did not make Allah their No-1 priority...

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ {6}

To you be your religion, and to me mine.

As human beings it is our nature to seek rewards for everything that we do. We always do things to achieve something. That is why Allah made it so clear to us that different ways lead to different ends... so we must choose our destination sensibly and adopt the way which leads to it. May Allah give us the wisdom to make the right choice... ameen

Surah Al-Ikhlâs

Although we have a firm belief that our Lord is one and only Allah... only He has the right to be worshipped... yet we do not always follow His commands and thus we become distanced from the purity of faith. The devil uses our weakness to further put barriers between us and the real truth... and so we become attracted to other things besides Allah and this involvement leads to shirk i.e. associating partners with Allah. Even if we think that our faith is pure yet we can all see that in our lives we give more importance to other things than Allah and so our way of life is not purely Islamic... but this is such a harmful thing; even though apparently it seems quite alright to adapt to the changing world... some people even call it enlightenment or progress... but if you read the Quran and Hadith, it becomes very clear that to Allah the only acceptable religion is the religion of Purity... the religion of Tauheed. So at the end of our journey Allah is once again reminding us of our real destination:

{1}

Say: He is Allah the One and Only

Like a majority of Muslims, we learned this surah in the earliest years of our childhood but sadly it was thought enough to just memorize the words of Quran and read them without understanding or thought. So we spend our whole lives reciting this beautiful surah without actually knowing that we are declaring our faith... Allah wanted us to know Him and to be eternally devoted to Him with all our heart and soul but how could our hearts feel any warmth of love without any knowledge? What a waste of life to keep running after other “gods” who could neither give us anything nor satisfy our yearning hearts... the hearts which can only be satisfied with the perfect adoration of a perfect Allah:

{2}

Allah is the Self-Sufficient (independent of all, while all are dependent on Him)

In one word “As-Samad” Allah has given us His complete introduction... because it encompasses all the qualities of power, strength and eternal perfection. We keep searching for our “ideal” not realizing that our ideal can be none other than Allah... because no one has the level of completeness and perfection which Allah has. All through the history of the

world, people kept trying to prove the false notion that Allah has a son or daughters... but the fact is that He is so complete that he does not require any parent or any offspring:

{3}

He begets not, nor is He begotten

The beauty of Quran is most apparent in this surah because in such few words it presents to us the complete truth without any falsehood, without any imperfection at all. Our heart seems to glow with the light of the following words which prove beyond doubt that Allah is most unique and incomparable... nobody is like Him and He is like no one:

{4}

And there is none comparable to Him

What a freedom it is to feel the comfort of being Allah's slave. What more honor than to be under the direct care and supervision of the most magnificent Lord? It makes us feel so grateful to Allah that He blessed us with this pure Book which taught us to nurture this pure faith... but at the same time this surah also fills us with a sense of awesome responsibility that we have to be very very careful in all our actions because the pure faith demands pure worship... complete obedience with proper humility and respect... and of course love and adoration for the most perfect Allah... may Allah help us remember it at all times... ameen.

Surah At-Tin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The ending surahs of the Quran speak to us like someone giving the last minute instructions before saying goodbye... the journey through Quran is going to end soon but when you reach the end you will find that it is just the beginning of another journey... And so we need to have very clear concepts before we embark upon the next voyage of life.

The surah begins with some oaths and they are like key words reminding us of very important people and incidents...

وَالْتِّينِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ {1} وَطُورِ سِينِينَ {2} وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ {3}

By the fig and by the olive, by the mount of Sinai and by this city of peace

What does the fig and olive bring to mind? Palestine... which was the blessed land where Allah sent Prophet Esa (a.s) and mount Tur reminds us of Prophet Musa (a.s). And the city of peace is none other than Makkah, where Allah sent the last Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w). These places became sacred to us because Allah sent His revelations to His Messengers. And they were all human beings... not angels. So it means that Allah gave the most honour to Mankind because He assigned them the most honourable job of being His representatives:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ {4}

We have indeed created man in the best stature

But if human beings do not fulfil the role which Allah assigned to them, and give more importance to other things besides Allah; then in other words they are choosing a lower status than whatever object they choose to worship...and so they become lowest than the low:

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ {5}

Then We abase him to the lowest of the low

The choices which human beings make in their lives, determines their true status. If they worship only Allah, then they rise above all other things and attain the highest status in Allah's eyes:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ {6}

Except those who believe and do good deeds - for they shall have a never ending reward.

What could be simpler or clearer than this message? But still there are people who don't want to submit in front of Allah and accept their mistakes; even though they don't really have any solid proof...

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ {7}

So, what causes them to disbelieve you concerning the Day of Judgment?

These people are living in deep self deception. They think that just like they win the arguments over here with loud criticism and baseless accusations against Islam and its followers; they will win the best place in Jannat as well? Well the fact is that ONLY Allah will have the power of decision on the day of recompense...

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ {8}

Is not Allah the best of all Judges?

May Allah help us to remember that any power or ability that we have in this world is from Allah and it is only a temporary phase to test our obedience to Him. If we accept His greatness and power, then He will make us more powerful and honourable. But if we think that our own logics and arguments are superior to His commands then this is going to lead us nowhere but everlasting humiliation and torment... May Allah save us from His anger and punishment... ameen.

Surah Qaf



We all know, how important it is for us to develop our characters according to the real Islamic spirit, if we want to be in the category of true believers. But we see that despite all the Knowledge we have, our sense of responsibility towards Allah's rights as well as our behavior towards other people is not quite what it should be. What is the reason for not practicing what we know? this question often comes up in everybody's mind and Alhamdulillah after you study Surah Qaf, you will come to understand that although we say we believe in Allah and the day of Judgment, yet we think of our death and the Hereafter as a remote thing and that is why our actions, even in the way of Allah, lack the vigor, optimism, urgency, or the momentum which otherwise characterizes the fulfillment of our worldly interests. When we unconsciously imagine life to be a never ending cruise and don't remember where we are going to end up, then naturally our attitude towards Allah's commands will be non-serious. Therefore Surah Qaf is a reminder of death and our rebirth into that other unseen world, which gives the spark that we need to come back to the right track.

So let's begin our journey of enlightenment with the first Ayat, which reminds us of the greatness of Quran:

{1}

Qāf. By the Glorious Qur'an

The Quran is guidance for the whole of mankind yet only those benefit from its knowledge and inspiration who truly recognize the great beauty and magnificence of the Quran. But what is our attitude if someone warns us through this Book? Are we ready to listen and accept the truth? No one wants to admit that they might be wrong in their thinking. It was the same attitude due to which the disbelievers of Makkah denied the Prophet (s.a.w). They could not digest the fact that someone from amongst themselves was warning them against their centuries old beliefs and customs:

{2}

But they wonder that there has come to them a Warner from among themselves. So the unbelievers say: "This indeed is very strange"

Another hindrance was their lack of acceptance of life after death. They simply didn't want to believe in this concept and thus tried to Prove it as an impossible fantasy:

{3}

That after we are dead and have become dust we shall be raised to life again, such a return is far from reason."

They did say that they believed in Allah but they had no idea of His magnificent power and all-encompassing knowledge. So Allah tells them:

{4}

We know all that the earth consumes of their bodies, and we have a Book which keeps records of everything.

Have we ever imagined this as something which will eventually happen to us.....that our bodies will decompose and become dust.....and then on the day of resurrection Allah will gather all the dust from wherever it might have blown or sunk or washed away by some river or sea.....to make it into a complete human being. How awesome it is

to visualize.....and that if we all see ourselves for what we really are.....helpless creatures who don't even have any control over their own existence.....then how can we be arrogant? How can we ignore Allah if we truly grasp our own reality?

But the problem is that we don't want to admit the truth and look for it in places where it does not exist. Thus our whole lives are spent in a cycle of never ending confusion and doubts:

{5}

Nay! But these people deny the truth when it comes to them, and they are Confused.

Allah says is it so difficult for you to recognize me? Has none of you ever seen the sky.....surely you don't have to make an educational trip abroad to see the signs of Allah's Power:

{6}

Have they never looked at the sky above them, and marked how We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it?,

And look at the earth.....

{7}

And the earth, how We have spread it out and set upon it mountains and caused to grow in it every kind of beautiful vegetation.

If Allah could bring to life a dead earth and could grow all sorts of vegetation in it then how can it be difficult for Him to re-create Human beings from the same earth? But this obvious truth becomes apparent only to those who turn to Allah and want guidance:

{8}

All these things are eye-openers and a reminder for every servant returning to Allah.

Usually it's our negative thinking which prevents us from accepting any goodness. And then we develop a series of doubts about the religion and even those who follow the religion. Allah reminds us that He knows what goes on in our hearts and minds:

{16}

We created man, We know the prompting of his soul, and We are closer to him than his jugular vein.

We also know that our book of deeds is being compiled, in which all our actions are being recorded with the minutest details, by the two angels.....our constant companions- about whom we seldom give any thought:

{17}

Besides this direct knowledge, We have assigned to everyone two scribes (guardian angels), the one seated on his right and the other on his left

If we believe that they are constantly looking at us, won't we think twice before committing any wrong act? And just think that it's not only our deeds but every single word that we utter is being written down by them:

{18}

Not a single word does he utter but there is a vigilant guardian ready to note it down.

It is only this awareness which can make us careful of how we behave. If I know that the reports of these two angels, watching over me, will determine my destination in the real life of the

Hereafter, then naturally I will always be on my best behaviour, even when I am alone. But the problem is that most people don't want to talk or even think of death. Isn't it ironic that we go on avoiding the one thing which is the only certainty of this life.....all the rest of the events of life might happen or they might not.....they are just possibilities; but death is certainly going to meet everyone of us.....

{19}

**When the agony of death will bring the truth before his eyes, they will say:
"This is what you were trying to escape!"**

Our concept of the hereafter has been blurred in our minds due to the glamour of this world and our deep involvement with our day to day affairs. But when we will be raised on that day and brought before our Lord, then our vision will become so clear.....there will be no more "confusion".....the reality will be fully exposed:

{22}

It will be said: "You were heedless of this, but now We have removed your veil, so your eyesight is sharp today!"

The reports will be there so nobody will be able to deny whatever thoughts they had thought, whatever words they had said, and whatever acts they had committed.....good or bad. And thus Allah will order punishment for the wrong doers:

24,25,26

The sentence will be: "Throw into hell every stubborn disbeliever

Every opponent of good, and every doubting transgressor

who set up other gods besides Allah. Throw him into severe punishment."

Look at the above Ayat and analyse the crimes for which these people will be thrown into the fire. The first one is Kufr i.e. disbelief. And it also means ingratitude. So it means that even if we believe in Allah, it could be a serious sin to be unappreciative of His greatness and His blessings on us. This forms a root cause for all other sins. The person who appreciates and is grateful for Allah's blessings cannot act arrogantly or be disobedient. So our heedlessness is a form of "Kufr" when we don't appreciate Allah's Magnificence as being our Creator and Master. We forget our status as His slaves and want to live according to our own choice. This indifferent attitude makes people act rebelliously against Allah's religion and then they also stop others from following the right way. Thus they create doubts in the true message of the Quran and Hadith and finally there comes a stage where they start looking up to other ideals and idols besides Allah.....which is shirk. Surely these crimes can only end in the blazing fire of Hell.

Mostly we blame the devil that he distracts us from the path of Allah's obedience. The fact is that he does not have any control on us except if we ourselves are ready to follow his deceptive advices. Thus on the day of judgment he will say to Allah:

{27}

His companion will say: "Our Rabb! I did not mislead him. He himself had gone far astray."

Just read on and imagine the horrors of Hell:

{30}

On that Day, We shall ask the hell: "Are you full?" And the hell will answer: "Are there any more?"

Sometimes people make jokes about heaven and hell due to their non-serious attitude and say things like, "if the majority is going to

be punished then how are they going to fit in?" Allah is telling us here that it is so tremendously huge that it will keep on asking for more, like a live monster.

May Allah save us from this torture and guide us to work for the endless serenity of Paradise. What a striking contrast it is:

{31}

Paradise shall be brought close to the righteous, which will no more be a distant thing

How merciful and Kind is our Rabb...He could have thrown us all into the fire because none of us can ever come up to the standards of perfection. We are full of weaknesses yet Allah has promised to reward all those who fear Allah and try their utmost to live a life of Allah's obedience:

{32}{33}

and it will be said: "Here is what you were promised. It is for every penitent faithful person,[32] who feared the Compassionate (Allah) without seeing Him and will come before Him with a devoted heart."

This is such a clear message and it penetrates to every sensitive heart. But even if you feel that your heart is not receptive to it, you should keep listening to it attentively and one day Insha'Allah the heart will also respond:

{37}

Surely in this there is a lesson for every person who has a heart, or who listens while he is present (in mind).

The other thing is that we should not listen to the negative comments of those who don't believe in the truth of Islam, because our ears are passages to our hearts.....our thoughts and feelings are affected by whatever we hear. So Allah comforted the Prophet (S A W) and all the believers that they should do Sabar and not respond to such negative propaganda. Instead we should seek comfort in prayers:

{39} {40}

Therefore, O Prophet, bear with them in patience whatever they say, and keep on glorifying your Rabb before sunrise and before sunset.[39] And glorify Him during a part of the night and after the prostration (prayers).[40]

It is our responsibility to spread the message of Allah and to try and bring people to the right way. But we should remember that our duty is just to convey the right thing to others in the most pleasant manner; and if they reject it then it is their own choice. Allah says:

{45}

We know very well what these unbelievers say. You (O Muhammad) are not there to compel them to believe. So remind with this Qur'an every such person who fears ~~My~~ Warning

So obviously the thing to do is to establish prayers in our life and secondly to keep reminding ourselves and others of the message of Quran. The fear of the hereafter together with prayers and understanding the message of Quran can really make us change from within. And this is what real character building is all about. May Allah help us to become the true representatives of Islam in this world, who might have such a fear of Allah's warnings that we should act on what we believe, and what we say or write, Ameen.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Surah Luqman

This Surah tells us how a wise man named Luqman teaches his son the important lessons of life. Allah had catered for this need of ours children in the Quran, that is knowing how to guide our children.....an all important question of all times.

But when we study this Surah in detail, I realized that the Quran provides a complete solution to all problems. Its teachings are not selective. Rather it lets you view things in a full-fledged scenario and for that you need to study it as a whole and not in bits and pieces. Selective study does have a benefit to the extent of motivating you and inspiring you with a trust and confidence in Allah, but only the complete study of this book, gives you the realistic knowledge and guidance with which you can analyze and deal with the situations in your life in a comprehensive way.

That is why Allah says:

{2}

These are verses of the Book of Wisdom

{3}

Guidance and a mercy for the “MOHSININ” (doers of goodness)

Now one might ask: who are these Mohsinin, for whom the Quran is a guidance and mercy. A Mohsin is a person who does beautiful deeds for the pleasure of Allah and works to the level of excellence. But aren't we all “excellent” people in our own definitions?

Let's analyze ourselves in the perspective of the following Ayat which tells what kind of people are really the “excellent ones” in Allah's eyes:

{4}

Those who establish “SALAH” (Islamic prayer) and give “ZAKAH” (obligatory charity) and they have “YAQEEN” (certainty) of the hereafter.

Have we established prayer in our life? It doesn't refer to the casual reading of Namaz once in a while. Establishing prayer means that your whole routine revolves around it. The prayers become the nucleus of your life and they have to be offered with the right intention, in the right way, on the right time. And the rest of your jobs will fit in accordingly.

Next check up on your Zakat. Are we giving this obligatory charity on a regular basis? Occasional giving of Sadaqah (voluntary charity) cannot be counted as a substitute for it.

And the third and most important characteristic of these excellent people is that they have Yaqeen in the hereafter. What is Yaqeen ? It is the highest level of faith. When you are so convinced about the coming of an event that you can't sit still anymore and your whole being gets up to prepare for it. It is a total conviction in the Hereafter, which motivates these people into thinking, planning and working for that Day on which nothing else will benefit us except our good deeds.

So what is the reward for these people who live their lives in complete obedience to Allah and for whom the Quran is a guidance and mercy?

Allah says these are the ones who will be guided and these are the ones who will succeed at the highest level.

{5}

These are on true guidance from their Lord, and these are the ones who will attain success

What a great blessing it is to achieve this kind of everlasting success. But then, if it is so simple then what stops us from acquiring this status of being the excellent slaves of Allah? Why aren't we all moving in this direction?

Don't we have the Quran and Sunnah?

Is there any lack of knowledge?No.

Don't we have faith in Allah?..... Yes we do. Aren't we Muslims!

And do we believe in the hereafter?..... Of course!

So that means we are all committed in the obedience of our Lord?.....No

Why?

The reason is that we have created a whole culture of addictive entertainment around us that has stripped us off all sense of responsibility towards our religion. Take a look around your house and see what are the things on which we have spent the most money and which take up most of our

free time. Theater TVs and DVDs, sound systems, play stations, the latest movies, the latest fiction, the latest games.....all worthless stuff. We are drowning in a sea of trivialities and we don't even realize what poison we are feeding into our own minds and also in the innocent hearts of our children day and night. After getting all this dose of cheap relaxation and enjoyment who would want to read the Quran, who is going to get up from a video game to read the Namaz? Even if you do so, how can you focus your mind on Allah's presence when your mind is still playing the tune of the song you had been listening to.

It might seem that I am just voicing my own opinions against this era of "advanced enlightenment" but in fact this is what Allah is telling us, right in this Quran, in this very Surah.

Listen:

{6}

Among the people there are some who purchase idle talks (i.e. music, singing etc) so that they may lead people astray from Allah's path without any knowledge, and take it (invitation to the right way) as a mockery; for such people there will be a humiliating torment.

Allah is telling us here about those who purchase; spend money on Lahwal-Hadees. First of all we need to understand what this word means. Lahwal-Hadees means anything trivial and unimportant which occupies one to such an extent that it makes one forgetful about the important things. In today's scenario we see that the same thing is happening, especially our younger generation. They have lost touch with reality, living constantly in a dream-world of movies and songs and video games. In the name of relaxation they are being constantly led away from the true path of success. The very least damage of lahwal-Hadees is that it captivates the mind in such a way that religion becomes boring, Quran seems too heavy; teachings of the

Prophet becomes irrelevant. And then Allah says that these people start making fun of religion and humiliate people who try to follow it. Why? Because their sense of judgment is so impaired through the constant exposure to immodesty and un-Islamic things. What will be the ultimate result? They are going to face a humiliating torment in the Hereafter.

Now some people go to the other extreme and declare that TV is haram (unlawful) or computer and CD-s are haram. It is important to understand that Islam is not against technological advancement, therefore these objects in itself are not haram but the material you are watching or using should be pure and purposeful. The same technology if used with Allah-consciousness can lead one towards greater success both in this world and the hereafter.

And then Allah says that those who believe in Allah's guidance (i.e. stay away from harmful distractions) and do good deeds (lead a purposeful life) for them are gardens of delight in which they will abide for ever and ever. It is a promise of Allah and it is true.....

{8}

(As for) those who believe and do good, they shall surely have gardens of bliss,

This is a decision we have to take now, when there is still time:

Do we want everlasting delight of success for a life that's never going to end or are we willing to give that up for the sake of a few moments of enjoyment and forgetfulness? The choice is ours. And it should be based on wisdom. Next Allah tells us about a learned and wise man named Luqman, whose wisdom was well known among the Arabs, whose proverbs and wise sayings were cited in their daily conversation, and who was often quoted by their poets and orators.

Allah says:

{12}

And certainly we gave wisdom to Luqman, saying: Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Worthy of all Praise.

This Ayat teaches us two things. First, that wisdom is a gift from Allah and secondly, that the core of wisdom is thankfulness towards Allah. How simply Allah has given us the key to satisfaction and happiness.

“Whosoever gives thanks does so for his own good”

Imagine the attitude of a grateful person who appreciates all that he has got and compare it with someone who is bitter and resentful all the time. Can their hearts be on the same level of satisfaction? Gratitude brings peace of heart and it spreads to those around you. You can create a whole atmosphere of tranquility and happiness through gratitude.

Luqman advised his son about some very important things in life. And his advice is so comprehensive that Allah has honored it by giving it a permanent place in the Quran. We can also learn from here the values which we should convey to our children too.

The first thing to teach is oneness of Allah so that from the very beginning our children should understand that there is no one equal to Allah. So that their first and foremost bond is with Allah and they should not give the same status to any other being.

{13}

And when Luqman said to his son while he advised him: O my son! do not ever commit shirk (associating anyone else with Allah); most surely committing shirk is the worst iniquity--

After this Allah reminds us that He has enjoined on man, to be dutiful and good to his parents. So this is the second lesson we must teach our children, but in a practical way by being grateful to our own parents for what they have done for us. Because if we are not genuinely grateful to our parents, then our outward show of kindness will be deprived of sincerity and will not be of much value.

{14}

And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents-- his mother bears him with weakness upon weakness and his weaning takes two years-- saying: Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual destination.

But you cannot follow their ways if they want you to be disobedient to Allah. Still you should be courteous to them but follow only that person who calls you to Allah's obedience.

{15}

And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to Me, then to Me is your return, then will I inform you of what you did--

Next Luqman tells his son that not even the smallest thing or deed is insignificant in Allah's eyes. He will bring it to light, because Allah is well aware of all things to their finest details. So we should live a careful life with a sense of accountability for every little thing that we say or do.

{16}

O my son! surely if it is the very weight of the grain of a mustard-seed, even though it is in (the heart of) rock, or (high above) in the heaven or (deep down) in the earth, Allah will bring it (to light); surely Allah is Knower of subtleties, Aware;

Notice the loving way in which Luqman talks to his son. Giving advice doesn't mean you have to be harsh. Children respond to love. So he calls him "my son" and gives him the most comprehensive advice in the following words:

{17}

O my son! keep up prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage;

And he reminds his son that he should always be kindly attentive towards people, because, even after doing all acts of worship, there is no allowance

for pride. Don't start thinking that just by being a religious person you can look down on people.

{18}

And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster;

Now why is gait so important? It is the outward reflection of your inner feelings and your perception about yourself. So it should be moderate, just like your voice.....

{19}

Be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; surely the most hateful of voices is braying of a donkey.

What a short, simple yet complete program for the grooming of our children in the Islamic way. First create an atmosphere free from idle things. Then talk to them in a loving way and focus on their beliefs as well as behavior and personality.

It makes us feel so grateful to Allah, that He has blessed us with such a miraculous Book; so easy to understand and easy to follow. The only thing is that we have ourselves created such a void between ourselves and this guidance by going further and further away from reality and creating such pastimes for ourselves and our children that we don't have any time to sit and think and reflect upon the Quran and its teachings. Allah is calling us to His love:

{22}

And whoever submits himself wholly to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he indeed has taken hold of the firmest thing upon which one can lay hold; and Allah's is the end of affairs.

It should makes use so sad that when there is so much bliss in surrendering to Allah and so much confidence in his support..... then why do we deprive ourselves.
Allah says:

{23}

And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you; to Us is their return, then will We inform them of what they did surely Allah is the Knower of what is in the breasts.

Allah is The Great. There is no way we can describe Him because there is no one like Him. We know Him through his creation and through His qualities and attributes which are endless.....

{27}

And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the (writing of) the words of Allah (His wonderful signs and creations) would not come to an end; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.

Our problem is that when we face calamities we call out to Allah but when He brings us back to safety then we forget His favors.

{32}

And when a wave like mountains covers them they call upon Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, but when He brings them safe to the land, some of them follow the middle course; and none denies Our signs but every treacherous, ungrateful one.

How can we do it if we really believe in Him? Aren't we afraid of the punishment of Allah?
Allah says:

{33}

O people! Have fear of (the punishment of) your Lord and dread the day when a father shall not avail for his son, nor shall the child avail for his father; surely the promise of Allah is true, therefore let not this world's life deceive you, nor let the chief deceiver (Satan) deceive you concerning Allah.

We only have a limited time on this earth to come back to Allah and make repentance but we go around as if we are here forever. This fear of consequence, this Yaqeen in the Akhirah (life of the hereafter) is the important ingredient missing from our lives. That is why at the end of this Surah, once again Allah reminds us of the Hour of Judgment. It can happen any time. And for those who waste their time in laziness and put every important thing for tomorrow, Allah says that no one is aware what he will earn tomorrow, and when and where he will die, and how soon his time will be over.....

{34}

Surely Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the hour, and He sends down the rain and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows what he shall earn on the morrow; and no one knows in what land he shall die; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.

This is an amazing Ayat which gives us the subtle warning that stop worrying about those things which are not in our hands anyway and for which we are not going to held accountable. It has raised several questions in my mind. For instance:

Instead of worrying about when the Qiyamat is going to arrive, why don't we focus on what we have prepared for that day?

Instead of forecasting the weather all the time, and predicting rain, why don't we make use of the sunny day and work as much as possible?

Instead of going and having ultrasounds to find out the sex of the child, which we can't change anyway, why don't we learn our duties as parents and prepare ourselves of the responsibility that Allah is going to bestow upon us?

Instead of worrying about TOMORROW why don't we live our TODAY, that we have in our hands now, in the obedience of Allah?

Instead of being afraid of death all the time, which is inevitable anyway, why don't we focus on how we are living our lives?

Surely Allah is the all-knower and aware of all things.....

Surah Al-Kauthar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The life of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was full of hardships and trials. Most of the people didn't want to accept faith and neither did they want others to accept it. That is why they started tormenting the believers and tried to make life impossible for the Prophet (s.a.w). So he had to leave his home, his country, his wealth... On top of it there were the heartbreaking incidents in his personal life which he had to face one after the other... the death of his father even before he was born, then the death of his mother at such a tender age of 6... And after two years his grandfather who cared for him so much, also died... how difficult it must have been to have been raised up as an orphan... can we even imagine? But there must be something that gave him so much hope and optimism... there must be something which gave him so much courage and strength in the face of all difficulties... and that was his pure faith and constant relationship with Allah. Therefore at a time when he faced one of the most heart-breaking tragedies of his life, which was the death of his beloved son, Qasim, Allah sent this beautiful surah which gave him the most delightful glad tidings:

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ {1}

O Muhammad, surely We have granted you **The Kauthar** (countless blessings)

The word "kauthar" is the name of a river in Paradise from which the Prophet (s.a.w) will give water to his loyal followers on the day of judgement. But in its broader meaning it refers to the vast magnitude of blessings and goodness bestowed on the Prophet (s.a.w). It made me feel so good to understand from this promise of Allah all the pain and sadness which our beloved Prophet went through was only temporary and the rewards which he got were timeless and endless. Therefore this surah has good news for all those who are working for the sake of Allah that even if they seem to be surrounded by the most impossible hurdles, they should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah... because for them are the ultimate blessings of Allah. And this is a promise for which we should be extremely grateful to Allah... so how should we express this gratitude?

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ {2}

Therefore, offer Salah (prayer) to your Rabb and sacrifice.

So it means that praying salah is the best expression of appreciation and gratitude for Allah's blessings. Along with it we should make some sacrifice too... like giving something in the way of Allah. These acts connect us more and more deeply with Allah and so our hearts find peace and security even though the whole world might be against us and our faith... Even when we seem to be overpowered with the attacks of the disbelievers, our hearts have this conviction that Allah's support is with the righteous people and who ever dares to have enmity and hatred against Allah's Prophet (s.a.w), will face the ultimate destruction:

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ {3}

Surely your enemy is the one who will be cut off from the root.

On one hand this surah gives us assurance of Allah's support and blessings but it also makes us think what kind of a relationship we have with our Prophet (s.a.w)? Just a verbal claim of love is not enough when our life style reflects total isolation from his blessed example. We must ask ourselves:

How much do we know of his life?

What is our effort towards creating any bond of love and familiarity with him?

So what kind of friends are we?

And if we are not his friends then what is our status in Allah's eyes?

May Allah give us the wisdom to mend our ways before our time is up. We must make it our priority to learn about our Prophet (s.a.w) and follow his teachings and earn Allah's pleasure... InshaAllah.