

Surah Alam-Nashrah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

This surah seems to be a sequel of the previous one because it has the same comforting message... making one realize the enormous blessings of Allah. Primarily these soothing words were being addressed to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) but at a secondary level, we, the ordinary followers of faith, can extract a glimpse of the same assurance from Allah which He had sent to His beloved Messenger (s.a.w). It is a well known fact that the road to paradise is not a bed of roses... on the contrary Allah is going to test us at every step with various hurdles and setbacks to judge our level of faith and commitment. Although we understand this reality but still, being human beings, we sometimes begin to lose hope... Thus Allah has revealed these beautiful words to reassure us that just as he had opened our hearts to understand His Quran, similarly he will open up the doors which appear to be closed on us...

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ {1}

O Prophet! Have We not expanded your breast for you?

The opening of the heart is the first step towards success because unless we are whole heartedly convinced of the benefit of a project we can never truly work to our utmost capacity. Thus we should be extremely thankful to Allah if we feel complete conviction in His religion. Surely the heaviest burden is the feeling of being lost... not knowing where to go.

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ {2} الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ {3}

And relieved you from the burden which had weighed upon your back

Before Islam, our Prophet (s.a.w) used to feel so sad at the state of people's lives... their ignorance, their aggression, their total lack of direction. He wanted to change all that but He himself didn't know the true religion... until finally Allah relieved the burden of uncertainty from His heart and filled it with the conviction of His message. And due to this He became known in the whole world. Even today, after all these centuries, He is the most well known personality, known for His truth and sincerity, for his courage and character, for his mercy and forgiveness for even the worst enemies... the most successful person in the history of mankind...

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ {4}

And exalted your fame

The disbelievers made life miserable for the Messenger of Allah and His followers but they could not turn them away from their true faith. Similarly today if we have to face problems due to following our religion then we should remember that the pain is soon followed by ease...

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا {5} إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا {6}

Surely with every difficulty there is relief. Surely with every difficulty there is relief.

Why should we hesitate to bear a temporary hardship if it is to bring everlasting peace and pleasure? This life is nothing but a test and it will pass away so quickly anyway... so our focus should be on the life of the hereafter which is never ever going to end. The only way to succeed there is to work hard for it...

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ {7}

Therefore, when you are free *from your daily task*, devote your time to the labour *of worship*

But all our actions should be focused on making Allah happy. Because if He is not happy then nothing is of any use at all... and if He is happy with us then it is the greatest success which will bring the greatest joy and security that we yearn for...

وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ {8}

And turn all your attention towards your Rabb.

I recently read an advertisement which addressed its clients in the following words:

“Making you our Number-1 priority has made us Number-1”

And I thought to myself that if we understand this concept so well for our worldly interests then why can't we understand that if we want to be successful then we have to make Allah our number-1 priority. We want everything from Him and yet we don't want to give Him anything? Think on it...

Surah Al-'Asr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The biggest asset, which Allah has given to each and every individual, is time... twenty four hours a day, no more no less... whether you are rich or poor, young or old, living in the east or in the west... the amount of time given every day for every person is the same. And it is a treasure which keeps going out of our hands... slipping away into a place from where we cannot bring it back. So the only way to avoid losing this treasure is to use it... every moment is like a jewel and we must buy a good deed with it... this is the test of life... to buy the most deeds, the best deeds, most pure in intention and excellent in their quality... But who is going to tell us whether we are buying the right things with our time or are we just collecting worthless trash?

وَالْعَصْرِ {1} إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ {2}

By the time through the ages! Surely mankind is in loss

It is such a deception that instead of asking Allah for the true guidance, we have formed our own opinions about life and think them to be enough as our guiding principles. But if our ideas and principles don't match with Allah's commands then what will we gain at the end of the day? That is why Allah is warning us in very clear words that if we don't turn to Him for guidance then it is the greatest loss which we are inflicting on ourselves... So only those people will be saved from this loss who have the following qualities:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds;

What does faith have to do with success or failure? Is being a good person not enough? But if you think about it, what good can be in a person who denies the Creator and Sustainer? Can an ungrateful person who takes everything and then denies the Provider be called a good person? The fact is that faith in one Allah is the root of all goodness. And it is the only motivation for us to be consistently obedient to Allah and to be unconditionally good to people. But we cannot remain steadfast on our faith and good deeds unless we make a conscious effort to spread this goodness to others too...

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ

And advised one another to the truth

Human beings cannot survive in isolation... we can never be entirely independent, neither for our worldly needs nor for our spiritual growth. So that's why Allah has made it a requirement upon us that if we want to save ourselves from loss then just being good in our own spirit and character is not enough. Rather we will have to cultivate this goodness of faith and good deeds all around us.

And finally the thing which ensures our safety is patience... the journey to paradise is tough and we cannot reach our destination without patience and perseverance. So we must help each other to stay determined and focused...

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ.....

And advised one another to patience.

Thus faith, good deeds, and helping each other... are the ultimate keys to success. May Allah guide us and help us... ameen

Surah Al-Burooj

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Throughout the history of mankind, we can see that whenever people have spoken out against the injustice of a system, those who are benefitting from that injustice will try and suppress the voice of truth. And then they don't stop at any limit... suppression turns into oppression and consequently leads to physical torture and even bloodshed. Although the one in power thinks that he can do anything he wants with the oppressed and weak people, but the fact is that they are in the direct grip of Allah and are preparing a pit of fire for themselves with their own deeds.... but they don't know it and they don't even want to be told or reminded of any consequence of their terrible sin. Surah Al-Burooj is a warning for all such criminals who torture the believers... and it begins with the oath of Allah's most magnificent creation: the sky with its numerous stars and galaxies... and also the day when all of this will be destroyed...

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ {1} وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ {2}

By the heaven and its constellations! By the promised *Day of Judgment!*

When Allah takes oath, it is a matter of great importance because He doesn't need any oath to prove His words... so any news which begins with an oath becomes even more worthy of attention...

وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ {3}

By the witnesses and that which is being witnessed!

This refers to an incident where a large number of Muslims were burnt alive because they had accepted the true faith. When some people commit such acts of cruelty they think they have gained a victory over the helpless people. But the fact is they have earned a severe punishment from Allah which will last forever and ever...

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ إِنْ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ {10}

Those who persecute the believing men and believing women and do not repent, shall receive the punishment of hell, wherein they shall have the punishment of conflagration.

Sometimes it happens that people do believe in the truth of Islam but they are afraid of what people will say or do to them. Therefore Allah is reassuring us that no matter what consequences you might face in this life, Success is only for the believers who act according to their belief:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ هُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ {11}

As for those who believe and do good deeds, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow; which will be the greatest success.

It is a part of our test from Allah that He has given us a free choice whether to believe in Him or not, whether to obey him or not... it is up to us. He gives all the blessings of life to all the people whether they are believers or not.... so on one hand people mistake the free choice as a sign of being free from all responsibility and on the other hand they think of the blessings of life to be a sign of approval from Allah for whatever they are doing. The truth is that both these things are given as a test... we have to use this free choice to become obedient slaves of Allah otherwise the consequences are going to be unbearable:

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ {12}

Surely, the seizure of your Rabb is very severe

Sometimes we try our utmost to be obedient to Allah but the shaitan and the nafs together make us so weak that we commit mistakes... even blunders! And then one starts to feel hopeless but Allah comes to our rescue... with these beautiful words:

وَهُوَ الْعَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ {14}

He is the Forgiving, the Loving,

Although these attributes of Allah are meant to make us even more alert and obedient to Allah because they create such a strong feeling of love and devotion for the one who loves us so much and forgives us so many times; but alas we have used the same words as a sort of escape from our responsibility. Even if someone else reminds us about our mistakes we are ready to use this excuse: "surely this little thing doesn't matter... Allah is forgiving so he will forgive me"... Allah wants us to come out of these self deceptions so He asks:

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ {17} فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُودَ {18}

Have you not heard the story of the warriors? of Fir'on (*Pharaoh*) and of Thamüd?

The examples of these prosperous and powerful nations have been mentioned so clearly in the Quran. What is the lesson that we learn from it? That Allah will never forgive disbelief and arrogance.... but those who don't want to accept the truth will continue to deny it:

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ {19}

Yet the unbelievers persist in denying *the truth*,

Hiding from the truth cannot change the truth... Allah's decisions are eternal:

وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ {20}

Although Allah has encircled them from all around.

The biggest truth in this world is the Quran and all the confusions and debates about religion originate from not having a direct relationship with our true source of knowledge. So if we want to come out of our problems then we will have to turn back to the pure truth...

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ {21} فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْمُودٍ {22}

Surely this is a Glorious Qur'an, inscribed on an Imperishable Tablet.

Surah Al-Fat'h

Para-26

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the sixth year after their migration to Madinah, The Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) along with fourteen hundred companions, proceeded on a journey to Makkah with the intention of performing Umrah. But the disbelieving Quraish stopped them at Hudabiya and refused to let them enter Makkah. After that, there followed some negotiations between them, which resulted in an agreement, which later became known as the famous pact of Hudabiya. Apparently almost all of the clauses of this treaty were in favour of the Quraish. According to it, the Muslims were to go back to Madinah without doing Umrah, and so they were bitterly disappointed and heartbroken. Anyone who has ever been stopped en route a long awaited journey and forced to go back, can understand the pain they were feeling of apparent defeat and humiliation at the hands of the disbelievers. So with heavy hearts they returned back, but even before they reached Madinah, Allah's revelation came upon them, giving them the most unexpected good news, that through this incident Allah had blessed them with a clear victory:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا {1}

O Prophet, Surely We have granted you a manifest victory

Apparently there was no sign of any victory yet but it was a great assurance from Allah that the treaty of Hudabiya was in fact a great conquest for the Prophet (s.a.w) and His followers. And that is exactly the way it turned out eventually, as one of the clauses of this pact was that there will be no war between the Quraish and the Muslims for the next ten years. Thus the Muslims had a peaceful

environment which enabled them to preach and spread Islam throughout Arabia, with such speed and spirit that within two years the number of people who embraced Islam was far more than the previous nineteen years. Moreover it was due to this treaty that when the Quraish violated it two years later, it open the way for the Prophet (s.a.w) to conquer Makkah. Similarly, the other things about the treaty, which seemed to be against the interests of Muslims, eventually proved to be a blessing in disguise; thus Allah completed his favour and blessings on the Believers:

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا {2}

so that Allah may forgive your past as well as your future sins, and may perfect His blessings upon you, and keep you on the Right Way,

Allah is always on the side of those who believe in Him and sacrifice their personal interests in His way. At some point in time it may appear that things are going against us but we should never doubt Allah's help. Some things may be difficult to accept but if one remains patient and keeps going on the straight path, he will find success..... just round the corner:

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيمًا {3}

and that Allah may bestow on you His mighty help. [3]

Why does Allah put us through these tests? Why don't things always go as we plan? It is because these tests and trials increase us in our faith and our level of goodness. We become strong and work even harder for the sake of Allah. Routine life makes us dull and getting everything to our hearts desire makes us arrogant and self-centred. These are not the qualities which Allah wants in us so He makes us go through these difficult times for our self purification:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ
جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا {4}

It was He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers, so that they may add more faith to their Faith. To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the earth. Allah is All-Knowledgeable, All-Wise. [4]

The believers' ultimate goal is the Hereafter and not the benefits of this world anyway:

لِيُدْخِلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا {5}

so that He may admit the believing men and believing women into the gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein forever and remove their ills from them; and that is the highest achievement for men in the sight of Allah. [5]

So whatever takes us to this beautiful end is a blessing; whether it's something good that happens to us and we do shukr and get reward, or something bad happens on which we do sabar and get reward. Life is an ever changing test; the only thing that should never change is our commitment with Allah and His Messenger.

لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا {9}

So that you, O people, may believe in Allah and His Rasool, and that you may help him and honour him and glorify Allah morning and evening. [9]

Before the actual agreement at Hudabiya had taken place, The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) had sent Hazrat Usman (r.a) to Makkah as an ambassador of peace, so that he might convince the Quraish about the harmless intentions of the Prophet and his companions to do Umrah only. The Makkans did not accept it and thus he got delayed in returning back. A rumour broke out that Usman (a.s) had been killed. Now the killing of an ambassador was a serious crime and not something to be overlooked; so the Prophet (s.a.w) took oath from all

his companions that they will take revenge for Usman's blood and will not return to Madinah without doing so. Now we have to understand the situation to grasp the enormity of this oath. They were so far from home, so few in number, unarmed, and right into the hands of their worst enemies.....yet they did not hesitate in doing the right thing, even if their own lives were at stake. This sincerity of their commitment and firmness made Allah so pleased with them that it became known as the "bay'at-e-Rizwan"the oath for Allah's pleasure. Thus Allah pays tribute to these true and fearless heroes in the following verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ تَكَثَفَ إِنَّمَا
يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمِنْ أَجْرٍ أَعْظِيمًا

{10}

Surely those who swore allegiance to you O Prophet, indeed swore allegiance to Allah Himself. The Hand of Allah was above their hands. Now, the one who will break his pledge, will break it at his own peril, and the one who will keep his pledge that he has made with Allah, shall soon be given a great reward by Him. [10]

A majority of us read about these things and say: yes, we also want to serve Allah in this way; but when the time comes to sacrifice some of our comforts, some of our interests, then we lag behind. And the problem is that we don't even recognize our mistakes; rather we make excuses and this makes us fall back even deeper into our state of negligence. This is the same attitude which was displayed at that time by the Bedouin Arabs who had entered Islam but were not ready to sacrifice anything for it:

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا
يَقُولُونَ بِالسِّنْتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ
أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا {11}

The Bedouin Arabs who stayed behind will soon say to you: "Our goods and families kept us occupied, so please ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Tell them: "Who can intervene on your behalf with Allah if it be His will to do you harm or He pleases to do you good? Allah is well aware of your actions.[11]

See how it angers Allah that we say something which we don't actually feel in our hearts. Lying or pretending is something that has become such a common disease that we hardly ever notice it ourselves. But we should remember that we cannot harm anyone else with our lies and pretence except our own self. Whoever wishes to please Allah and gain the rewards of Paradise will have to prove the truth of his claims....like these brave companions of the Prophet (s.a.w) about whom Allah says:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا {18}

Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and He rewarded them with a speedy victory,[18]

The reason why they had taken upon this journey in the first place, despite the unfavourable circumstances, was that Allah Himself had revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w), in a dream in which he had seen that the believers were doing all the rites of the Umrah. Now, when they returned home without having fulfilled this long awaited desire, the people started speculating on why the Prophet's dream had not come true? Some believers asked the Prophet about it, to which he replied that in the dream he had not been told the specific time of its

fulfilment. And since according to the treaty of hudabiya, the Quraish had promised that they will let them do Umrah next year in peace then it meant that the dream was truly a revelation from Allah. The following ayat refers to the same promise:

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُؤُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ
مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا {27}

Indeed Allah has in all truth shown the vision to His Rasool, that, Allah willing, you shall enter the Masjid-al-Harām (Ka'bah) fearless and secure to perform Umrah or Hajj and some having their heads shaved and others having their hair cut, for He knows what you do not know. So, He granted you a near victory before the fulfillment of that vision.[27]

Belief in the Prophet is crucial for our deen. How can we be Muslims if we don't believe or follow the one who conveyed to us the message of Allah? Therefore Allah reminds us:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ
وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا {28}

It is He who has sent His Rasool with Guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may exalt this religion over all other religions: and sufficient is Allah as a witness.[28]

And finally we come to the end of this magnificent Surah. The last Ayat is a tribute to the Prophet (s.a.w) and his blessed companions. And it shows how much Allah valued their faith and commitment. Let us see this Ayat in detail as it covers several points. But as we read it, we should think about our own level of faith and compare it with theirs; because they are the ideals which we should follow if we want to reach Paradise.

It starts with a clear declaration that Muhammad (s.a.w) is the Messenger of Allah:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Muhammad, is the Rasool of Allah

It clearly means that we have to recognize this true status of the Prophet (s.a.w) and respect and honour him accordingly. Next Allah says that the companions of the Prophet are firm against the non believers and gentle and merciful among themselves:

وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ

and those with him are strong against the unbelievers and compassionate to each other among themselves.

How do they spend their days?

تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا

When you see them, you will find them making Raküh (*bowing down*) and Sajüd (*prostrate in prayers*), and craving for the blessings from Allah and His good pleasure.

A balanced life style....acts of Allah's worship side by side with earning the goodness of this world, but their ultimate goal is always to attain Allah's appreciation.

Allah says you can see the effects of their worship on their faces:

سِيَمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ

They have the marks of Sajüd (*prostration*) on their foreheads, the traces of their prostration.

It means that their whole attitude shows their humble nature. It is not just the mark on their foreheads but is evident in all their actions. They have been mentioned in Torah and the Bible.....

ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ

فَاسْتَعْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ

This is their similitude in the Taurāt (Torah); and their similitude in the Injeel (*Gospel*): they are like the seed which puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it,

then becomes thick and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers of the seed, so that through them He may enrage the unbelievers.

What a beautiful description it is.....how the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w) grew in faith and maturity....like tiny little sprouts coming out of seeds, soft and weak in the beginning but with time they grow strong and stand firm.

And finally the most important thing that we should all seek is the forgiveness of Allah and His great rewards:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Yet to those of them who will believe and do good deeds, Allah has promised forgiveness and a great reward. [29]

So next time when you send peace and blessings on the Prophet (s.a.w) or hear about the golden period of the Muslims, remember this Surah and think how we can take some practical steps in our own lives that would bring us close to their example. How important it is to tell this story to our children. Make them proud of their glorious past and create in them a longing to follow these ideals. But first we need to absorb this message in our own hearts. May Allah make it easy for us to come out of ignorance and find the true path of success. Ameen.

Surah Al-Haaqqah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Everyone is facing some kind of test in this world but these tests become easy when we realize that the biggest test is to be saved on the day of Judgement. But we are so trapped in the visible world that even those who believe in the hereafter seldom think of it. The other thing is that our belief in the hereafter is not based on facts and we have mostly assumed that we will all go to Paradise because we are so good. So let us put aside our individual ideas and theories and “see” the real picture of that unseen world which Allah has preserved for us in the Quran...

الْحَاقَّةُ {1} مَا الْحَاقَّةُ {2}

The Haaqqah! What is the Haaqqah?

This word, Haaqqah, means something which proves the absolute truth; and something which is definitely going to happen. Hence it refers to the day of judgement. Although it is our belief that one day we will all be standing before Allah to get the result of our deeds, but many people have rejected it... why? Because they thought they were beyond Allah's control. So Allah tells us what happened to them:

فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ {5} وَأَمَّا عَادُ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ {6}

As for Thamüd, they were destroyed by the Thunderbolt. As for 'Ad they were destroyed by a furious windstorm

These were great nations. They built grand houses and lived luxurious lives. They thought they were in full control of their affairs but they didn't realize that disbelieving in Allah and disobeying His commands, is not a joke...

فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ أَخْذَةً رَابِيَةً {10}

And disobeyed the Rasools of their Rabb, so He gripped them with a tight grip.

We shudder to think of the punishments which destroyed them completely from the face of the earth. Like the example of Pharaoh whose whole nation was drowned in the sea along with him. But remember that it was just a glimpse of Allah's anger which he showed in this world, as a lesson to others. So imagine what will be the torture for the disbelievers in the hereafter, when even this peaceful earth and the sky will all be crushed into fragments...

وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً {14}

And the earth with all its mountains will be lifted up and crushed into pieces with a single stroke

Nothing will remain except a flat surface on which Allah will gather all of the mankind of all generations...

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ {18}

That shall be the day when you will be brought *before your Rabb*, and none of your secrets shall remain hidden.

How scary it is, to be exposed in front of all the people! In this world we pretend to be good to others and only Allah knows our real picture; but on the Day of Judgement only those people will be happy who have no contradiction in their characters. Their hearts are as good as their deeds. That is why they will happily show their book of deeds to others:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَذَا مَا أقرُّوْا كِتَابِيهِ {19}

Then he, who will be given his Book of Deeds in his right hand, will say: "Here it is, read my Book of deeds!"

Sometimes we see people who are unconditionally good to others, and doing great things for the pleasure of Allah, and we wonder how can they be so consistent? What is the secret of their perseverance? The answer is that they have an overwhelming remembrance of accountability:

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيهِ {20}

I knew that I would certainly face my reckoning."

Their lives might have been difficult but now they have no worries at all... just pleasure and enjoyment...

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ {24}

We shall say to him: "Eat and drink to your heart's content; this is a reward for what you did in the days gone by."

And what will happen to those who lived a life of their own choice, not caring for Allah's commands, nor listening to the warnings about the hereafter:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتِ كِتَابِيهِ {25}

While he, who will be given his Book of Deeds in his left hand, will say: "Woe to me, would that I had not been given my Book of Deeds

All his life he kept running after money and power but he will soon realize that nothing is going to help him on that day:

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيهِ {28} هَلَّكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ {29}

My wealth had availed me nothing, and my authority has gone away from me."

But his realization will be of no use now... Allah will order his angels to throw him into the fire:

خُذُوهُ فَعَلُّوهُ {30} ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ {31}

We shall say: "Seize him and put a chain around his neck, then cast him in the blazing fire,

We forget that Allah has a right on us; and His right is to be obeyed, to be worshipped. Today many people proudly claim to have no belief in Allah. Or they say they believe in Allah but there is no need to be so "extremist" by following all the rituals. The fact is that they have no idea of the Might of Allah...

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ {33}

Certainly he did not believe in Allah, the Most High

We don't realize that Allah could have given the poor people everything, or even more than us, but their poverty is a test for us... to see whether we are arrogant or humble. There are people who stuff themselves with lavish foods and treat their servants worse than animals... what is the use of this pride for a limited period of time which will result in eternal humiliation?

وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينِ {36}

And nor will (the disbelievers) have any food except the pus from the washing of wounds,

Allah is not cruel. These punishments are only for those who committed crimes against Allah with their own free will. No one forced them. Nor were they ignorant:

لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ {37}

None will eat it (the discharge of wounds) except the sinners.

So what is the lesson for us here? For me it is a strong reminder that I have to give up all acts of disobedience, all bad habits and all negative attitudes which are against the pleasure

of Allah. Because these warnings are meant for all of us and Quran is meant for guidance; and it is not just some poetry to enjoy:

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ {41}

It is not the word of a poet - little is it that you believe

Some people claimed that the Prophet (s.a.w) had himself written the Quran. But Allah says that even if the Prophet (s.a.w) had added some of the content from his own choice, then Allah would have put a stop to it:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ {44} لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ {45}

Had he (*Muhammad*) invented false statements concerning Us, We would certainly have seized him by his right hand

These verses are an open proof of the seriousness of Quran. But only those take lesson from it who truly fear Allah:

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذْكُرَةٌ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ {48}

Surely this *Qur'an* is a reminder to the God-fearing.

If others don't agree with this truth then don't let that dampen your spirit. Present to them the message and then leave the rest to Allah. For you it is enough that you should continue to proclaim the purity of Allah... not just in words, but in thoughts as well as actions:

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ {52}

So glorify the name of your Rabb, the Most High.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah Bani Israel

(Para-15)

Today's surah begins with the reference to Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.) night journey and ascent to the heavens.

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي
بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ { 1 }

Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts, so that We may show to him some of Our signs; surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

It seems appropriate to share with you all a short account of this miraculous journey, as described in the authentic Hadeeth of Prophet (s.a.w), So as to refresh our memories of it and also to get a feeling of increased faith in the Power of Allah, and the truth of His messenger(s.a.w) :-

Al-Isra Wal Mairaj (the night journey and ascension)

It was during the 10th year of the Prophethood that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam) was to be given one of the greatest and most uplifting honors by Allah. This was a miraculous night journey. On that special night, the Angel Gabriel came to Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam) and woke him from his sleep. Gabriel then made him mount what looked like a dazzling white creature named Al-Buraq. Soon with lightening speed Muhammad was transported to Masjid Al-Aqsa, the distant place of prayer in Jerusalem. There, Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam) was met by an assembly of earlier prophets who gathered behind him as he led them in prayer.

From there, Gabriel took him and they ascended through the seven heavens to witness the unseen mysteries of the universe and to see some of the greatest signs of Allah. Then Gabriel ascended with Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam) through each subsequent heaven, meeting different Prophets as he went. Adam, Yahya, Eisa, Idrees, Yoseph, Haroon, Musa, peace be upon them all. Until finally they reached the seventh heaven. There was a man sitting on the throne at the gate of the immortal mansion. 'Never have I seen a man more like myself', said the Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam).

'This was my father Abraham'. Then Gabriel appeared to the Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam) in all his angelic light and splendor. They had reached the lot tree of the utmost boundary, the Sidrat-ul-Muntaha veiled by mysterious colors, inexhaustibly indescribable.

"The sight did not swerve nor did it exceed, Verily he saw of the Sign of his Lord, the Greatest." 53:17-18

Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihe wasalam) had soared to the zenith of Divine heights. It was in this night of supreme spiritual and bodily elevation that he received from Allah Almighty, the second noble pillar of Islam: the five daily prayers. Before returning to the earth, Gabriel also took the Prophet to Paradise where the faithful would rejoice after their resurrection, and was shown scenes from the hell where various types of punishments were being meted out to the sinful.

The journey gave the holy Prophet and His companions a great deal of psychological comfort and renewed their strength and determination to work for the cause of Islam. This helped them remain steadfast in their commitment to Islam's message. The divine command during Al Mairaj that the believers must pray five times a day was an eternal tribute to the Prophet's rendezvous with God. The prayer itself is a form of the faithful's dialogue and communication with the Creator. Al Israa wal Mairaj was thus a landmark and turning point in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Let me mention here that many people have tried to put doubts in the minds of the believers about this journey. They ask, "how is it possible?" and "how can it be explained in scientific laws?" The answer is very simple; that even the scientific laws are a creation of Allah, and Allah is not bound by these laws while planning or taking His actions. If He plans to do something, He has all the power to do it. Nothing of His own creation can hinder Him in carrying out His plans. If we are too ignorant or arrogant to believe in the power of Allah then we should be worried about our own fate. Because what kind of faith is this that doubts everything that comes its way?

There is a strong warning for us in Ayat 13, which tells us that we are ourselves shaping our destiny by our attitudes and deeds in this world. Our real life, that's going to start in Akhirat, and will never, ever come to an end, depends on this life we are living as a test, right now. Look at the way Allah makes us visualize the reality of our situation:

{ 13 } وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا

And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open:

اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا {14}

Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day.

مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ
وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا {15}

Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray: nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise until We raise a messenger.

Because of our unawareness of Quran and Sunnah our concepts have been turned upside down. Instead of making the everlasting life of the hereafter our topmost priority and making solid efforts towards that goal, we have been misled into this false way of life that revolves around the temporary success of this temporary life. Allah says:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا
مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا {18}

Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away.

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا {19}

And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer; (as for) these, their striving shall surely be accepted.

كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ هَهُنَاءَ وَهَهُنَاءَ مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا {20}

All do We aid-- these as well as those-- out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined.

We should understand that only "desiring" akhirat, through our speech, is not enough. After all who would say that I don't want to succeed there? Desire is proved through effort, otherwise they are just empty words when we say "I wish I could pray but I never get the time" or "I wish I could understand the Quran but my job is too important." Allah reminds us once more:

وَلَا آخِرَةَ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا {21}

and certainly the hereafter is much superior in respect of excellence.

Next we come to one of the most important aspects of an Islamic way of life, which is, doing "ehsaan" with our parents. No other religion has placed so much stress on the rights of parents, whereas Allah expects us to give them a far more honourable status than other people.

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرَهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا {23}

And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and (do) goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word.

وَاحْفَظْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا {24}

And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.

What is Ehsaan with our parents? It means treating them with honour, courtesy and kindness. It is not enough just to feel love for them in our hearts, rather we are required to behave with them with utmost respect. While talking to them we should be very careful because we are not allowed to utter even the smallest word of disrespect. Why is it so? Because, after Allah, we owe them our greatest gratitude. Just think of yourself as that little helpless baby who was dependent on its mother for each and every physical and emotional need, while the father was working hard to provide for a comfortable life. Countless times they must have sacrificed their own needs for our sake. Can we even repay one sleepless night our parents went through when we were sick? So next time when your mother repeats a question which you have just answered a while ago, stop that expression of annoyance that springs to your lips and think back to the time when she answered your questions a hundred times. Look at the ayat again and notice that not only our speech but our body language should also be of humility and respect towards them. There is a strong link between our body language and our thoughts and speech. They are all interrelated. It is self deception to say that it doesn't matter how you talk and that its just frankness, and that respect should be in the heart..... No ! if its really in the heart then it will rise to the surface as well, be sure of it !! the fact is that unless we read

these commands straight from the words of Allah, we don't really attach any significance to these matters. Islam is not just a set of rituals, rather it is all about character building of an individual and then of a nation. The next few verses are also about personal and social values which Allah wants us to develop within ourselves, to achieve this goal.

The first thing is to spend on our relatives and other people, believing it to be their right on us. Because if we think that we are doing a favour on them then our attitude reflects the pride that we feel in being so superior. So Allah says:

وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا {26}

And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully.

Secondly it is strictly forbidden to kill our children. How terrible.....but we don't kill them do we? It was the ancient barbaric Arabs who used to bury their daughters alive..... we don't do that. Yes but look at the growing rate of abortions. Isn't this murder? And why is it done? due to fear of poverty.....

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا {31}

And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We give them sustenance and yourselves (too); surely to kill them is a great wrong.

There are some evils that are so contagious and dangerous that Allah doesn't even want us to go near them. "zina" (fornication) is one such thing:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا {32}

And go not near to fornication; surely it is an indecency and an evil way.

What does it imply? Going near it means getting involved in all those things that lead to it. Obscene movies and novels are such things which provoke animal instincts in a person. So do lustful songs, pictures, etc No one jumps into these crimes straight away. Rather it is like a trap and a person falls

into it by seemingly harmless pursuits. We should all be very careful as to where are our youth heading to in this explosion of media and mindless exposure to all kinds of obscenities.

Then Allah reminds us that its strictly forbidden to kill a person unlawfully. The punishment for this crime is Hell. Next we are told to be very careful with the wealth and property of an orphan, if we are entrusted with its care. Promises should be taken seriously and fulfilled. Honesty in give and take is essential. All those things that can be harmful for our character , have been pointed out.

And now look at the next two commands. See how Allah doesn't leave any detail but wants us to really polish ourselves from inside out !!

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا
{36}

And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.

This ayat teaches us the value of our time and our life. Why should we waste or energies on things that don't concern us. Better focus on our targets and reserve our resources for worthwhile pursuits. We should all take a good look at how we are spending our time. How we are using our faculties? What is the focus of our life? Finally the way we walk should also be free of arrogance. Again the link between body and soul :

{37} وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا

And do not go about in the land exultingly, for you cannot cut through the earth nor reach the mountains in height.

And so that we might not be in any doubt of it, Allah makes it very clear:

{38} كُلُّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوهًا

All this-- the evil of it-- is hateful in the sight of your Lord.

And we have the Quran to tell us all we need to know:

{41} وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا

And certainly We have repeated (warnings) in this Quran that they may be mindful.....

but then why are Muslims still so far away from the true spirit of their religion. Allah tells us the reason:

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا
{45}

And when you recite the Quran, We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier;

{46} وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

And We have placed coverings on their hearts and a heaviness in their ears lest they understand it

So its not enough just to let the sound waves hit our ears, rather we should open our hearts to the message of Quran when we are listening to it, if we want it to change our lives. Also we should beware of the evil whispers of the shaitaan. On the day when he had refused to bow before Adam, he had claimed:

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتِ عَلَيَّ لِيُئِنَّ أَخَرْتَنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لِأَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
{62}

He said: Tell me, is this he whom Thou hast honored above me? If Thou shouldst respite me to the day of resurrection, I will most certainly cause his progeny to perish except a few.

Allah answered:

قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَأُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا
{63}

He said: Be gone! for whoever of them will follow you, then surely hell is your recompense, a full recompense:

وَاسْتَفْزِرْ مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِم بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكُهُمْ فِي
الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعِدَّهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا {64}

And beguile whomsoever of them you can with your voice, and collect against them your forces riding and on foot, and share with them in wealth and children, and hold out promises to them; and the Shaitan makes not promises to them but to deceive:

We need to understand here what is meant by the voice of the shaitaan. Most scholars agree that from the Hadees of the Prophet s.a.w it is clear that it refers to music and singing. Nowadays when music has got such an ever present hold over our lives it becomes difficult for some people to accept that it is harmful and therefore prohibited by Allah. But it is a fact that Music leads one to fantasy and away from the remembrance of Allah. The lyrics all lead towards obscenity so that the thinking patters of our young generation has been totally distorted. Many accidents occur due to the distraction caused by music. For those who fear Allah only his command is enough and those who do not fear him , can hear all proofs and still be in doubt.

Allah says that those who don't want to get trapped by the devil will not come under his influence :

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا {65}

Surely (as for) My servants, you have no authority over them; and your Lord is sufficient as a Protector.

And about those who prefer to close their eyes to the reality, Allah says:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا {72}

And whoever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the hereafter; and more erring from the way.

But what can we do to prevent ourselves from this blindness? The Quran gives us the recipe for the strengthening of our souls:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ
مَشْهُودًا {78}

Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; surely the morning recitation is witnessed.

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا {79}

And during a part of the night, pray Tahajjud beyond what is incumbent on you; maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory.

At the end of this awesome surah, Allah tells us to remember Him in all times, because his remembrance is the source of strength for our heart and soul:

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ وِليُّ مِّنَ
الدُّلِّ وَكَبَّرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا {111}

And say: (All) praise is due to Allah, Who has not taken a son and Who has not a partner in the kingdom, and Who has not a helper to save Him from disgrace; and proclaim His greatness magnifying (Him).

Surah Al-Ghashiyah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Sometimes I wonder why there is so much contradiction in our faith and actions. We believe Allah to be the All-Mighty, All-Powerful; yet we fear people more than we fear Allah. We have faith that Allah is the Provider of all our needs yet we are more concerned with people's approval and pleasure, instead of worrying whether Allah is pleased with us or not. And we believe that our life is in the Hereafter, yet we are so involved in this world that it seems as if it is our final destination. That is why when we have to bear any loss of this world we feel like there is nothing more to live for. Why? If we were living for Akhirah then we can never have this feeling of total loss, no matter how great a tragedy might be. We would still have the hope of Akhirah.

But to become "Akhirah oriented" we need to be reminded again and again that this event is sure to come and we better be prepared for it...

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَاشِيَةِ {1}

Has the news of the over shadowing event *of resurrection* reached you?

Just imagine the time when all the human beings, from beginning of this world till the end, will be resurrected and brought in front of Allah to receive the payment of their deeds. There will be some people who will have worked so hard but their efforts were lost in the wrong direction... earning them nothing but pain of regret and humiliation:

وَجْوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ {2} عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ {3}

On that Day some faces shall be downcast... Working hard and worn out.

On the surface it seems unfair to punish a hard working person but imagine the example of a people who were given the task of building houses and they spend their energy in destroying the houses... what will be the payment of their "hard work"? Similarly Allah sent us to this world to live as His obedient slaves and act on His commands, but if we don't even care what His commands are then how can we even hope for any reward? It is sheer foolishness which will become apparent on that day...

تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً {4} تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آتِيَةٍ {5}

Scorching in the blazing fire, given to drink from a boiling fountain.

Simultaneously there will be some people glowing with pleasure:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ {8} لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ {9}

While some faces on that Day shall be radiant... well pleased with their endeavours.

What a great feeling it is when after a long hard day, your efforts are appreciated. It is this feeling which makes a person shine with delight... Thus the believers who had devoted their lives for Allah and sacrificed the temporary pleasures for the sake of Akhirah will get their precious rewards...

فِي حَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ {10}

(They will be) in a lofty garden.

We dream about houses with beautiful rugs and cushions, and spend so much time and money in beautifying our temporary homes but the furnishings of Akhirah are much better and everlasting:

وَأَكْوَابُ مَوْضُوعَةٌ {14} وَمَنَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ {15} وَزَرَائِبُ مَبْثُوثَةٌ {16}

With goblets placed before them; silky cushions ranged in order and fine carpets richly spread.

These ayahs are like photographs of some exotic place and they make us yearn to be among those who reach this level of success. But the disbelievers make fun of such promises that how can they be true... how can dead people become alive and then start leading another life of extreme pain or extreme pleasure. Allah says: have they not seen my creation? Is it not amazing? If I can make “this” happen then I can make “that” happen as well...

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبْلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ {17} وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ {18}

Do they not look at the camels, how they were created? The heaven, how it was raised high?

Out of all animals Allah has chosen the camel... so we must do some research to see the amazing qualities of this animal which will make us aware of Allah's Power of creation. And then look at the sky from one end to the other and imagine that it is only half of it which we see. There is a similar roof on the other side of the world as well... How amazing it is to realize that even this fact used to appear as fiction to people of early times. So what appears as fiction to us now, might also be a hard fact... the sooner we realize it, the better:

{21} فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ

So keep on giving admonition, for you are an admonisher

The Prophet (s.a.w) was being assured by Allah that his responsibility was to teach the people but if they chose to remain ignorant then he will not be asked about it...

{22} لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ

You are not a taskmaster over them.

This principle must be remembered by all those who commit themselves to serve Allah... sometimes we become very harsh with people... it is because we become impatient and want that whatever we convey must be accepted and implemented then and there. We must remember that human beings cannot be forced to believe in anything. So our job is to convey the truth and leave the rest to Allah... He alone is sufficient to judge people:

{25} ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ {26} إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ

Surely to Us is their return, then surely it is for Us to take their account.

Although it relieves us from the accountability of people yet we should forever be worrying about our accountability to Allah which we can never escape no matter how pious or righteous we think ourselves to be. May Allah save us from all illusions and guide us to the thoughts, words and actions which He likes best... Ameen

Surah Al-Hashr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A believer who has made Allah's pleasure his ultimate goal will find that contrary to his expectations, this path is not so smooth and easy. Generally it is believed that Hidayat or guidance is a gift from Allah which he gives to some chosen people and they are just effortlessly gliding along their lives doing deeds of goodness. Almost like robots or machines which have been programmed for goodness. It is assumed that these chosen ones are not plagued with doubts or weaknesses of desires, all of their near and dear ones are their supporters and they have all the resources to keep them on the straight path. But is it really true? How can it be that Allah would make it so easy for them and difficult for all the others? The fact is that the higher one goes the greater effort one requires to maintain that height and still move on. So a believer, at whatever level he might be, is tested by Allah through various trials, and his success depends on overcoming these trials in the best of manner. In Surah Al-Hashr Allah gives us an example of the war in Madinah, between the Muslims and the Jews, to teach us that in every situation there are obstacles for the believers; but the ones who are true to their commitment with Allah, will eventually be triumphant. There is no doubt that only Allah has the most absolute power and who ever believes in this power will certainly be helped by Allah in such a way as we can never imagine. This is among the signs through which we attain Ma'rifat or recognition of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala...the more we contemplate on the signs of His glorification the more we will be closer to him in faith and obedience...The whole universe is calling us to see how great and perfect Allah is:

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ {1}

All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah, and He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.

The tribe of Jews with the name of Bani an-Nadir were settled in the east of Madinah and were active in hidden enmity against Islam and Muslims even though they were bound by the treaty of peace which the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) had established in Madinah. Eventually the Bani an-Nadir made a secret plan to kill the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) though the plan failed before it could be executed. Now there was no question of showing them any further concession. The Holy Prophet at once sent to them the ultimatum that the treachery they had meditated against him had come to his knowledge; therefore, they were to leave Madinah within ten days; but they said that they would not leave and he could do whatever was in his power. Consequently, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) gathered a group of believers and laid siege to them, and after a few days of the siege the Jews accepted defeat and left

Madinah, taking with them all they could carry out of their possessions and destroying their dwellings with their own hands so as to take even the building material with them...

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ {2}

It is He Who drove the disbelievers from among the People of the Book (*reference is to the Jewish tribe of Banu Al-Nadir*) out of their homes at the first banishment. You did not think that they would ever go out; and they thought that their fortresses would defend them from Allah, but the wrath of Allah came to them from where they never expected - which cast such terror into their hearts - that they destroyed their homes by their own hands as well as by the hands of the believers. So learn a lesson *from this example!* O people of insight

To the onlookers it seemed as if the Muslim army had evacuated them but Allah is attributing this whole event to Himself. This means that if the Muslims are truly faithful and if their war is for the sole purpose of preserving their religion, then it is Allah, who is actually defending his believers and giving them help in amazing ways. The events discussed in Quran are not mere stories but lessons for mankind for all times. To me it seems that Allah is telling me that no matter how big my problems are but to remove them, is not difficult for Allah. I feel like every seeker of paradise is all the time battling on two fronts...one is the outside war against obstacles in the way of Allah and the bigger war is going on inside...with the devil and with his own nafs (self). At times of weakness these obstacles feel like mountains, but we should keep our faith strong by constant remembrance of Allah and perseverance in His obedience. Then He will help us. And we should never underestimate Allah's power. It doesn't matter to him how deeply rooted our problem might be or how insurmountable it might seem...He can remove it as easily as he removed the well established Jews from Madinah.

But winning a war even without having fought a battle does not mean that it is the end of all difficulties. The fact is that a Momin's test will continue throughout his life and so even after a victory there are rules to follow and matters to be settled accordingly. Therefore in the following verse Allah is commanding the believers how to manage the lands and property which came under their control as a result of this event:

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ {7}

Whatever spoils from the dwellers of the township Allah has bestowed on His Rasool, shall belong to Allah, His Rasool, *Rasool's* relatives, and to the orphans, the needy and the travellers in need; so that it may not become the property of the rich among you. Whatever the Rasool gives you, take it and from whatever he forbids you, refrain from it. Fear Allah; for Allah is stern in retribution

Although the above ayat deals with the law of assets attained in war but if you see the last words you will find in it the most important law of our life...

“Whatever the Rasool gives you... take it, and from whatever he forbids you, refrain from it. Fear Allah; for Allah is stern in retribution”

It means that the rules and regulations laid out in the Hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w) are as important for us to follow as the Quran because the commands are basically all from Allah and He is going to punish those who do not take Hadith seriously. It is very important to understand that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) has conveyed to us all the aspects of Islam and through his practical example has taught us how to implement it in our lives. The Quran and Sunnah are completely preserved in their original true form. Whatever we invent outside of these limits is innovation and will lead us away from the paradise. This is very dangerous because a person who commits a sin is far more likely to seek forgiveness because of his consciousness that he is sinning. But when a believer acts on innovations thinking it to be worthy of reward in the hereafter, then how and why would he ever do Taubah? This is a trap of the devil so we need to come out of it, by having complete and authentic knowledge of what the Prophet (s.a.w) has taught us to do and what are the things from which he has stopped us. Also we should study the lives of the people who obeyed the Prophet (s.a.w) and how they implemented his teachings in their lives because they were the ones whom Allah blessed with His pleasure and forgiveness. The first among those were the “muhajirin” those who had left their wealth, their land and everything in Makkah and migrated to Madinah with the Prophet (s.a.w) all for the sake of Allah. Therefore they were given the most preference at the time of the division of assets gained in this war:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ {8}

A share of the spoils shall be given to the indigent Muhājirin (*immigrants*) who were driven out of their homes and their possessions, and are seeking Allah's grace and His good pleasure and who *want to* help Allah and His Rasool: such are indeed the true believers.

On the other hand the people of Madinah were so open hearted and generous that they shared everything with the Muhajirin and never bore any grudge in their heart for them. It was because they honoured them and gave them preference over their own needs...Such was their amazing selfless attitude which united the Muslims of Madinah. Allah is telling us here that if we want to be successful as individuals as well as an Ummah then we will have to get rid of the selfishness of our hearts:

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّؤُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا
وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنًا نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ {9}

And those who made their abode *in Madinah (the Ansār)* and believed even before the arrivals of the Muhājirin and love those who migrated to them and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to them, and prefer those *Muhājirin* over themselves, even though they themselves are poor. *In fact* those who are saved from the greediness of hearts, are the ones who will achieve true success

Selfishness arises from love of the world and lack of faith. Even generosity which is for the sake of recognition and praise is not accepted. We need to be good to others, unconditionally and expect our reward and appreciation only and only from Allah. Only then our hearts can find true peace and tranquillity. But it takes a lot of willpower and prayers to eradicate the age old attitudes which we have acquired, over the years, from an environment where goodness is also done in a traditional way and everything begins and ends with the people and their opinions. We are righteous because we love to be recognized as such and we are generous because it is our tradition to be openhearted and we want to be remembered because of it. Rarely will you find a person who can do good even to those who don't appreciate him or who don't reciprocate or even acknowledge his generosity. People will make fun of such a foolish person but in the eyes of Allah he is the most successful because he did everything for Allah and not for people. Thus we should sincerely make efforts to uproot this disease of selfishness from our lives and pray for Allah's help, because

He is the one who has control of our hearts. That is why the believers of the later generations prayed in the following words:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ {10}

And those who came after them say: "Our Rabb! Forgive us and our brothers who embraced the faith before us and do not leave any malice in our hearts towards the believers. Our Rabb! Surely You are the Kind, the Merciful."

When I see my true reflection in the mirror of the Quranic verses, it feels that whatever life I have spent so far was meaningless because even my acts of goodness were not done in the true spirit so what will become of me now. How will I be successful? But when Allah gives warnings then there is also hope in it. When he says "What have you done for tomorrow?" it makes me realize that my most precious thing which I have to take care of, is the day I am living today. Through today I can save my tomorrow. But then I have to relieve myself from the burdens of past by making true and sincere repentance for all that has passed; and I should get rid of excessive fears and worries of the future by praying for Allah's guidance and help...only then can I focus all my energies on the present, which is in my hands as far as Allah has allowed. But for all this we need to have a clear perspective of where we stand and then take into account all the blessings which Allah has given us and all the opportunities of goodness around us. But the most important thing is fear of Allah....Taqwa is our driving force as well as the destination:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَلَمَّا قَدَّمْتُمْ لِعَدِّهِ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ {18}

O believers! Fear Allah and let every soul see what it is sending for the morrow (*Hereafter*).
Fear Allah, surely Allah is aware of all your actions

Then there are those who have forgotten their responsibility towards Allah. They appear to be living a very jolly and carefree life and sometimes believers look at them with envy thinking that they are being deprived of the pleasures of the world whereas the others seem to have it all...Allah warns us against these misleading thoughts....:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ {19}

Be not like those who forgot Allah, as a result *Allah caused them to forget themselves*, it is they who are the transgressors.

How terrible it is that someone should forget how to assess his benefit and loss. Have you seen anyone suffering from memory loss? It is such a pity to see them not recognizing their own children or friends...they are not able to distinguish between the right or wrong way...so they always are in danger of being lost...That is why Allah has sent this clear warning that if we act careless and forget Allah then He will make us forget even our own self.

How can we forget Allah when we have such a glorious Quran to guide us? How could we allow the devil to make us so lost in the illusions of our desires, when there is such a brilliant reminder from Allah? The problem is that we have not given the book of Allah, its due importance. Otherwise if we would have learned it and absorbed its teachings in our lives then it would surely have changed us from inside out. The fact is that its effect is so powerful that it could crush mountains....so then are the hearts of people even harder than that?

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ {21}

If We had sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would have seen it humble itself and split asunder from the fear of Allah, We are citing this example for mankind, so that they may take heed.

Allah is telling us here that the Quran has such power that if the mountains had hearts and could display their reactions, then we would have witnessed the crushing of their egos to dust. Similarly the true believers of Allah are those who absorb the truth of Quran in their hearts so much, that all negative feelings, like arrogance and self love, are broken down and the only thing which remains is the love of Allah and the fear of Allah. The Quran transforms them into humble and polite people who are conscious of their accountability at all times. And to really experience this impact of the Quran, we need to realize the true worth of Allah....Although our intellects can never truly encompass His greatness but Allah has taught us His beautiful names through which we can understand His attributes and glory...

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ {22}

Allah is He, besides Whom there is no god, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Who can be more worthy of our adoration when there is none like Him...can any other being have all these qualities?

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّبُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ {23}

Allah is He, besides Whom there is no god, the King, the Holy, the Giver of peace, the Granter of security, the Guardian, the Almighty, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory be to Allah! He is far above the shirk they commit (*by associating other gods with Him*)

He is the only one with all these beautiful names which reflect His perfection and grandeur. The whole creation is constantly and devoutly serving in His obedience; and if we ignore him then it is our greatest injustice to our own self...His glory will never fade:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ {24}

He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Modeller. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

Surah Al-Infitaar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allah is so Perfect... He has given us everything that we need for eternal success. One of these blessings is that he created in us a need for appreciation and reward. Normally we don't admit that we do like to be thanked and appreciated for our efforts, but the fact is that this need has been programmed into our system so that we might work really, really hard for getting the reward of Jannah and the sweetest pleasure of being appreciated by Allah the almighty. In every salah we say the words *maliki yaum-iddin*... meaning that we believe Allah to be the Master of the Day of Recompense, so whatever good we do is for Allah. This motivation keeps us alive that our lives are not going unnoticed... Allah is watching everything and if our intention is to please Him then He will grant us what we worked for. This faith should have been enough reason to keep us happy and busy but then why is it that we remain sad and depressed? The problem is that all our lives we expect appreciation from people... we want instant recognition and appreciation even though we don't admit this... that is why we are quick to serve people who appreciate us but are reluctant to do anything for ungrateful people. However if our intention is to get Allah's appreciation then it shouldn't matter to us whether our effort is being recognized by people or not. Some people who don a cover of piety and righteousness also do it to impress people. This is the worst kind of deception and may Allah save all of us from it. But why are we like this? It is because we haven't really understood the purpose of our lives. We have neither understood the word of Allah, nor have we acted on the teachings of our Beloved Prophet (s.a.w) But Quran is a remedy for all the diseases of the heart and InshaAllah as we go through today's Surah, Al-Infitaar, we will realize that our whole life depends on our belief in the day of recompense... So Allah shows us how it is going to happen:

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ {1} وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ {2} وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ {3}

When the heaven will cleft asunder; when the stars will scatter; when the oceans will be torn apart;

Have you ever pondered over the question that why will Allah destroy everything which He created with such systematic detail and perfection? Actually the purpose of putting an end to this universe is to bring everything to its conclusion... The world was created just as a testing place and now the time has come for the results to be announced:

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ {5}

Then each soul shall know what it has sent forth and what it left behind.

We say we believe in Judgement and Recompense, but if our faith in this day is so strong then why is it that the majority of us are not following Allah's commands? It is because we are living in this self created illusion that Allah is so kind and merciful, so He will forgive us anyway... Allah is asking all of us:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ {6}

O man! What has lured you away from your gracious Rabb?

What a great injustice it is to not obey Allah who made this world for us and gave us all the lawful means to derive pleasure and satisfaction. But the devil leads us towards breaking all limits of Allah and we are ever ready to accept his ideas... So how are we going to get out of this web of self destruction? We need to remind ourselves how Allah created us and why?

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ {7} فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ {8}

Who created you, fashioned you, proportioned you, [7] and moulded you in whatever form He pleased?

Did Allah create us without any reason? Even our intellect demands that there should be a consequence for everything... why then should we not believe in the consequence of our whole lives?

كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالذِّينِ {9}

Nay! In fact you deny the Day of Judgment!

Allah is not going to pass any judgement without proof. Although He is the master of every creation, and does not need to offer any proofs but look at His justice that He has appointed special angels who live with us throughout our lives with the sole mission of recording everything that we say or do...

وَأِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لِحَافِظِينَ {10} كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ {11} يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ {12}

You should know that guardian angels have indeed been appointed over you, who are noble writers, they know all that you do.

For those who did everything for the appreciation of Allah, there is great reward... but for those who did not care for Allah and just wanted to remain popular among people even at the cost of Allah's disobedience will find nothing but failure and destruction:

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ {13} وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ {14}

On that Day the righteous will surely be in bliss; while the wicked will indeed go to hell

When I read such verses I feel so grateful for the faith that Allah has blessed us with. How amazing is this great blessing to believe in Allah and the day of recompense but then it saddens me to realize that we are not really making any significant preparation for that day...why? If we believe in it then why isn't this belief being reflected in our actions? Allah tells us so clearly that it is because we have not fully realized what a day that is going to be:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ {17} ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ {18}

What will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is? Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is?

Without Quran we could never understand our own behaviours. Now it seems as if for the first time this fact has penetrated my heart that our contradictions in our speech and action is because we have not given any serious thought to the consequences of our actions. We are more worried about what people will say and not worried at all about what Allah will do to us if we are not obedient to Him. So at the end of this surah Allah sends a clear warning that the same people for whom you choose to disobey Allah, they will have no power at all to save you at all...

يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ لِلَّهِ {19}

It will be the Day when no one shall have the power to do anything for another: for, on that Day, Allah shall keep the entire command to Himself.

It does not take any great wisdom or intellect to reach the conclusion that if Allah is the One who created us and He is the One, who is going to judge us, then it is His judgement for which we should be most concerned about and nothing else should come between us and His obedience. May Allah remove all doubts and misconceptions from our hearts and make us strong in our faith so that we might live for Allah the way He likes best... Ameen

Surah Al-Jinn

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Islam is the religion chosen for us by Allah but its blessings are visible only to clear eyes. Just like the brilliant sun makes everything shine out so brightly but we see things according to our own vision. If someone is wearing dark glasses, he might say that everything is grey. But it doesn't mean that there is something wrong with the sun. It keeps on shining with the same intensity even if it is hidden by clouds.

In the last surah we read about Prophet Nooh (a.s) who spent almost a thousand years trying to convince people of the oneness of Allah, but they could not see the truth in all that time. Here in surah Al-Jinn, Allah tells us a completely different story in which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was reciting Quran during salah and a group of Jinn was passing by. So they stopped to listen to this beautiful recitation and immediately recognized its truth and beauty. But Jinn are an unseen creature of Allah so how did the Prophet (s.a.w) come to know of this event? It was revealed to him by Allah:

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا {1}

O Prophet say: "It has been revealed to me that a band of jinns listened to the Qur'an, then returned to their folk and said: 'We have heard a wonderful Qur'an

Just look at their expression of delight and wonder... it reminds me of my first taste of the Quran and my deep sense of pleasure and surprise as if I had found my lost treasure!!

We all know that Jinn have a limited intelligence as compared to man. Even then they comprehended something which is at times not even grasped by highly intellectual people. It means that mere intelligence is not enough to recognize the truth, but we need the true desire to reach the most authentic and most perfect thing.

The fact is that when you really appreciate something then you begin to recognize its virtues very clearly. That is why the Jinn immediately recognized the actual purpose of Quran:

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا {2}

It (the Quran) guides to the Right Way. We have believed in it and henceforth shall worship none besides Our Rabb.

The miracle of the Quran is that instantly it connects to Allah... and makes us realize His true worth:

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا {3}

Surely our Rabb's Majesty is exalted: He has neither taken a wife nor a son

Then all the prejudices against Allah, or going against His commands, seem to be utmost foolishness:

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا {4}

Some who are foolish among us have been uttering atrocious lies about Allah

Most people have misguided ideas about Jinn. So many theories have been propagated about them, and people believe all sorts of nonsense, due to lack of knowledge. This surah not only proves the instant effects of Quran, rather it also gives us a true picture of this unseen creation of Allah. Whatever Allah has told us about Jinn should be enough for us and anything which people spread from their own imagination should be avoided. Because people have unrealistic fears about jinn and some even seek their protection. This is shirk... to think that someone besides Allah can give you protection:

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا {6}

Indeed, some individuals among mankind used to seek protection with some individuals among the jinns, so they caused such *jinns* to become more arrogant

All the jinn are not same... they also have a mixture of good and bad like human beings:

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قَدَدًا {11}

There are some among us who are righteous and some to the contrary; we have sects following different ways.

The important thing is that they recognized that the way to salvation is to follow Allah's guidance:

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا {14}

Surely there are some among us who are Muslims and some who are deviators from the truth. Those who have adopted Islam have found the way to salvation

Thus ends the speech of the Jinn. The clarity and strength of their faith is amazing but the question is: how can we reach this level of conviction? And then how to remain steadfast in

faith when so many people try to convince that if you become religious you will be deprived of the benefits of this world. Allah is giving us a strong assurance that if you stay true to your commitment then I will shower my blessings on you like rain:

وَأَلْوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقِينَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا {16}

And (Allah revealed): "If they remained straight on the (right) Way, We should certainly have bestowed on them Rain in abundance (i.e. abundant provisions)

The rewards of being on the right way are great but we should remember that all blessings are tests... because if we get involved in their pleasure and forget Allah then it is the worst thing that anyone can do to himself:

لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا {17}

And we (with worldly blessings) thereby put them to test. And whoever neglects the remembrance (Quran) of his Rabb, shall be made to undergo severe punishment

Allah's worship cannot be done unless we are firmly attached to two things... The Book of Allah and The teachings of His Prophet (s.a.w). So we must understand both; if we wish to follow the way to success. Sadly our concept about the Prophet (s.a.w) is mostly based on ignorance and imagination. Therefore it is our duty to get the true knowledge about him and spread it to others, so that we recognize what a truly great personality he was and how wonderful was the wisdom which he imparted to us through his words and deeds. His basic message was of purity of worship for Allah:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا {20}

O Prophet, say: "I pray only to my Rabb and worship none besides Him."

It is human nature that they get attached to the messenger in an exaggerated way and forget Allah. Thus they conveniently think that even if they don't follow the commands of Allah they will be saved by the Prophet (s.a.w). Here in this verse is a clear answer to this misconception:

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا {21}

Say: "I have no control to cause harm or bring you to the Right Way."

So if we truly love our Prophet then we should learn what he taught and follow it in our life; otherwise his disobedience is not a small thing:

إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا {23}

My mission is only to deliver what I receive from Allah and make His messages known. As for those who disobey Allah and His Rasool, they shall be put in the fire of hell to live therein forever."

The matters of the unseen are known only to Allah and He sends messages to His Prophet through angels along with strict protective measures:

إِلَّا مَن ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا {27}

except to the Rasool whom He may choose for that purpose, and then He appoints guards, who march before him and behind him,

This shows how much care is taken to protect the authenticity of the message. So then how ignorant we are that we think that we don't need any formal education of the Quran or Hadith? The fact is that Allah guides only those who want to be guided and He has a record of all things:

لِيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا {28}

that He may know that they (the Rasools) have indeed delivered the messages of their Rabb. He also encompasses all their surroundings and keeps a count of each and everything."

If Allah is counting everything so what should be our attitude towards life? Can we afford to be carefree about all the blessings that Allah has given us? We have to step out of our routine way of thinking and look deeply into things... because if we do not realize what opportunities and talents we have got then we will not be able to use them for our success. May Allah guide us to the right way of thinking and make us the best believers and representatives of His religion... Ameen.

Surah Muhammad

Para-26

Bismillahir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

As I open the Quran to study a new surah, an amazing thing happens that whatever situation I am going through, I find verses that relate to it. It is a clear proof that Allah knows what goes on in our minds and He has answered all our thoughts in such a way that we can open it from any page, and we can see the words speaking out to us as if it's being revealed to us just at that moment. What a miracle it is to listen, and to be able to understand, Allah's words.....Alhamdulillah

So let's start Surah Muhammad and see what lessons Allah has in it for us. Surah Muhammad begins with a stunning Ayat which has a direct and powerful warning that if anyone rejects the true faith and does not accept Islam as the only true religion, and even stops other people from accepting and following the way of Allah, then all his deeds will be wasted:

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ { 1 }

Those who disbelieve and obstruct Allah's Way, He will render their deeds fruitless

Basically it refers to the Arabs of Makkah who used to think that just by being the care-takers of the Ka'ba, and doing some other acts of generosity, they have attained a high esteem in Allah's eyes. So they opposed the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) when he brought the message of Tauheed because they couldn't bear to let go of a lifestyle which suited their interests. Yet they thought that they were on the right way because they believed in Allah and called themselves the followers of Ibrahim (a.s) Therefore Allah warned them that they should stop fooling themselves because true faith is

not just taking Allah's name but they will have to believe and support all that was being revealed on the Prophet (s.a.w) too:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
مِن رَّبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ {2}

As for those who believe and do good deeds and believe in what is revealed to Muhammad - the truth from their Rabb - He will remove from them their evils and improve their condition.

This is an important reminder for us that our faith and our deeds are acceptable only when one supports the other. Just saying I believe in Allah is not enough until I prove by my actions that I fear Allah and know that He is the ultimate judge of right and wrong. Similarly just doing some acts of charity which suit my temperament without having faith in Allah, will have no value on the Day of Recompense. It is a common misconception that people believe in the Quran but don't think that learning Hadith is important as well. But in this Ayat we find that our faith cannot be complete unless we have the three important ingredients.....Faith in Allah.....goodness of action.....belief in the Prophet (s.a.w) and all that was revealed to Him i.e. The Quran and the Hadith.

This Surah was revealed in Madinah and we know that The Muslims had suffered a lot of cruelty from the Pagans of Makkah for thirteen years, without any retaliation because Allah had not allowed them the use of force. When they eventually migrated to Madinah, they were still under the continuous risk of military action from the people of Makkah because they wanted to put an end to the rising power of Muslims in Madinah. Now was the time when for the first time Muslims were given permission to defend themselves. But Islam is a religion of peace and so they were given detailed instructions on how to be at war and still be the agents of peace. How to do

"Ehsaan" even to prisoners; yet be fearless in the battle ground and aim for the enemies in a bold manner:

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْخَتْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاقَ
فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ذَٰلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ
لَأَنْتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَن
يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ {4}

Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers *in the battlefield* smite their necks and, when you have thoroughly subdued them, then *take prisoners of war and bind them firmly*. After the war lays down its burdens, then *you have the choice* whether you show them favor or accept ransom. Thus *are you commanded*. If Allah wanted, He Himself could have punished them; but He adopted this way so that He may test some of you by means of others. As for those who are slain in the cause of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.

This ayat and other such commands from Allah show that even when the believers were facing such enemies who had tortured them so ruthlessly and then drove them out of their hometown, they could not for one moment forget that their life is for Allah and they have to follow His instructions at all times. Their wars were defensive, and were not to avenge their own anger but to uphold Allah's religion. Thus Allah assured them that whoever will strive for Allah's religion, Allah will definitely help them:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ {7}

O believers! If you help *the cause* of Allah, He will help you and establish your feet firmly

This life will end anyway. We cannot save it permanently. So who can be more fortunate than the one who uses it for Allah? We have been given this entire universe full of luxuries and attractions but if we make these our destination, and forget that these were merely a necessity of our journey through this world, then what is the difference between us and animals? Even if we have learned to

satisfy our desires in a much more sophisticated way, yet we are still doing basically the same thing.

This is not my opinion but Allah's own evaluation as we can see in the following ayat:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى
لَهُمْ {12}

Surely Allah will admit those who believe and do good deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow. While those who are unbelievers, they are to enjoy only this life and eat as cattle eat; but in the hereafter, the fire shall be their abode

In the above Ayat is the description of the Jannat as a place where rivers flow.....we read it so often in the Quran and it always seemed to me very delightful and mysterious to think what those rivers will be like. Although we can never imagine the true picture of the paradise, but the following Ayat has given a glimpse of the delightful rivers:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ
لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى
وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ
وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ {15}

Here is the parable of the paradise which the righteous have been promised: it has rivers the water of which will never be stagnant, rivers of milk whose taste never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it they will have all kinds of fruits, as well as forgiveness from their Rabb. Can such people be compared to those who shall dwell in hell forever, and they will be given scalding water which will cut their intestines into pieces?

Notice that the same Ayat, which began with such a captivating description of the rivers of paradise, ends with a horrid alternative of intestines being cut into pieces by the scalding water.....It is

such a clear warning that Allah, who is so Beneficent and Compassionate, is entirely capable of giving the most painful torment to all those who chose to deny Him and His commands. May Allah forgive us all....Ameen.

It might seem difficult or even impossible to some people, to change their lifestyle according to the Quran; but once a person takes the first step of acceptance, and submits his desires and fears in front of Allah, then Allah helps and guides that person to greater heights of righteousness:

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ {17}

As for those who follow the Right Way, Allah will increase their guidance and bestow on them their righteousness.

When we say that Islam is a religion of peace then we expect that there should be no talk of war. It's like expecting that a good surgeon will never operate on a person because cutting his skin and causing blood to flow out of his body is inhuman. Islam is a complete code of life and it gives instructions on what to do when you are being attacked. What will you do if someone attacks you? Welcome him with a smile? But those who have no faith spread this negative propaganda about Islam being a terrorist religion and those whose faith is weak accept these allegations and start doubting their religion too. This is not something new as the same thing happened all those centuries ago in Madinah where some people did not have very strong faith:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَأَوْلَى لَهُمْ {20}

The believers were asking: "Why is not a Sūrah revealed allowing us to fight?" But when a decisive Sūrah carrying the order of allowing them to fight is

revealed, you saw those in whose hearts was a disease looking at you like the one under the shadow of death. Woe to them

The truth of the matter is that people who talk against Islam do not have complete knowledge about it. And so they quote the verses of the Quran out of context. And it's a pity that people who believe them, have also not contemplated on the Quran.

Allah asks them:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا {24}

Will they not ponder upon the Qur'an? Are there locks upon their hearts?

In this world a person can say a hundred things against Islam, against Quran or Hadith, and still Allah doesn't stop providing for them. He still lets them complete their appointed time on this earth. But what will happen when this time is over.....

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ {27}

Then what will they do when the angels carry off their souls, smiting their faces and their backs?

Does this mean that Allah is doing zulm on them? No; Allah doesn't do anything without a reason:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَسْخَطَ اللَّهَ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ {28}

That will happen because they followed the way that called for the wrath of Allah and hated to adopt the way of His pleasure, therefore He made all their deeds void.

Before we move on let's take a moment and ponder on these words for our own self evaluation. Quran is a mirror and if we see carefully we can see our true images....so I must look and see....am I one of those people who are fascinated and follow the trends which Allah dislikes, and are suffocated with dislike when they have to follow something that Allah likes?

So it's obvious that faith has to be followed, and is not just an utterance of words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ
{33}

O believers! Obey Allah and obey His Rasool, and do not let your deeds come to nothing

It's the illusion of this world which traps our senses in such a way that we cannot think beyond it. Therefore Allah brings us out of it:

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَإِن تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ أُجُورَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ {36}

The life of this world is but a play and amusement. If you believe and follow the way of piety, He will grant you your rewards and will not ask you to give up your possessions.

What is it that can help us to strengthen our faith? Spending our money, our time, our efforts for the way of Allah is something that holds our heart and if done consistently and sincerely, Allah makes the small seed of faith in our heart grow into a strong tree. But if we want to hold on to our money, and our routine lives, then it is going to put us into endless loss:

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تُدْعُونَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يَبْخُلُ وَمَن يَبْخُلْ فَآئِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ {38}

Behold, you are those who are being asked to give in the cause of Allah. Yet some of you are stingy, whereas whoever is stingy to His cause, is in fact stingy to himself. Allah is self sufficient, it is you who are needy. If you turn away He will replace you by some other folk; who will not be like you.

What an astonishing end to a magnificent Surah.....reminding us of our reality.....putting an end to all our arrogance once and forever. What are we anyway? What can we give to Allah who owns the entire Universe? It is just as a test that he provides us with things and then asks us to spend a little of it in his way.....and look at us how we spend on our own luxuries and how we give in the way of Allah. And see the words at the end and think about it; if we don't want to do anything for Allah's religion, it doesn't matter to Him at all. He can wipe us all out of this world in less than a moment and bring in other people.....who will not be like us.....what more do we need to hear, after this?

Again, the words from Surah Al-Jathiya come to my mind:

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبَأْيٍ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

{6}

These are the revelations of Allah, which We are reciting to you in all truth. Then, in what report will they believe if not that of Allah and His revelations?

Surah Al-Mutaffifin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We are humans and thus we can never hope for perfection. Perfection is only for Allah. But we can and should always strive for excellence. Excellence means that you make utmost efforts to fulfil your responsibilities in the best of manner. It is human nature to make mistakes but the quality which differentiates a believer from a hypocrite is that a believer considers his errors as a mountain which might crush him and so he asks forgiveness from Allah and forever worries about his status with Allah. The hypocrite on the other hand is totally casual about his mistakes and neither recognizes them nor feels guilty even if he is aware that he has done wrong. Between these two is the third category of people who truly believe in Allah and the hereafter but they take paradise for granted and think that they are so good that Allah will forgive them whatever they might do. This arrogance leads to destruction in both worlds... because Allah severely dislikes arrogance and carelessness. Therefore at the end of Quran where we might feel so good that we are at the completion of a great task and Allah must be so happy with us... here comes a Surah which is to save us from flying too high on the wings of self praise and self worth. This is surah Al-Mutaffifin which is a warning that no matter how righteous we are we should always be careful not to decrease our efforts... whether in worship of Allah or in giving people their rights.

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ {1}

Woe to those who defraud

Who are the people whom Allah is referring to as the “mutaffifin”?

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ {2} وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ {3}

who when, they take by measure from men, take the full measure, but when they give by measure or by weight to others, they give less than due

If we were to identify one major factor which has contributed to our decline, it would be our lack of sense of responsibility. We are so concerned about our own rights but are totally careless about the rights of others. How can such a society hope to prosper? How will we face Allah in the hereafter?

أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ {4}

Do they not think that they will be raised to life again

Each and every act of dishonesty is being recorded; however trivial or insignificant we might call it... in fact I don't even think we should use these words where duties are concerned because nothing is without significance in this test of life. There is a consequence for everything. For example if someone comes late to duty by just 10 minutes and leaves 10 minutes before the appointed time, it comes to 7300 minutes in a year... Same goes for all other things. It reminds me of the Hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w) where he warned us to stay away from small sins because if we keep doing them without feeling sorry or making amends then they will become a mountain of sins from which there will be no escape...

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ {7}

Indeed not! The record of the wicked is in **Sijjeen** (register of *prison*)

It is such a pity that we take these warnings so lightly. If someone warns us about any loss of this world then we immediately become concerned but if Allah warns us about the loss of the hereafter, we hardly feel any urgency to mend our ways. This is a subtle form of rejection... a denial of truth. But where will this denial and rejection lead us?

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ {10}

Woe on that Day to the disbelievers

The question is that why do we have this attitude of carelessness regarding the hereafter? Don't we have enough proof that everybody has to die? Do we not have knowledge of Allah and the hereafter? Then why do we Muslims not follow the right way of life?

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ {14}

Of course not! In fact their misdeeds have caused a covering (raan) on their hearts.

How amazing it is that in such a few words Allah has clearly defined our biggest hurdle in the way of success. And that is the "Raan" which has enveloped our hearts. Raan is the Arabic word for rust. Just as the rust can destroy such a solid thing as iron, similarly the sins that we accumulate on our hearts are enough to corrupt and destroy our belief. So when we keep

indulging in bad habits without feeling guilty and without asking Allah's forgiveness then the heart loses its ability to see the truth. Therefore we should make sincere Taubah to Allah that He might forgive us and remove the effects of our sins from our hearts. Leading a careful life is surely not easy but if you keep the reward in mind then you can cross all obstacles that might come your way:

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ {22}

Surely the righteous will be in bliss

If someone tells us that you will have to pay a certain price to get the supreme benefits of a lifetime, without any fear of loss, what would be your response? Surely we will rush towards it and even borrow money for the required investment. So what are we waiting for? Why don't we rush towards the beautiful Paradise where every little thing will be exquisite in looks, delightful in fragrance and most refreshing in taste... just visualize the following scene:

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ {24} يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ {25} خِتَامُهُ مِسْكٌَ وَفِي ذَلِكَ
فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ {26}

And you will recognize in their faces the brightness of bliss. Their thirst will be quenched with the choicest sealed wine, and the seal will be of musk. Those who wish to excel above others, let them endeavour to excel in this.

Obviously this truth can only be felt with a believing heart. Otherwise those who are already trapped in the web of illusions can see no "logic" in following any religion so they make fun of the believers:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ {29}

During their life on earth, the culprits used to mock at the believers

Some wrongdoers do feel in their hearts that they are not doing the right thing but they cannot accept it and so they hide their guilt by blaming others:

وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ {32}

And when they saw *the believers*, they used to say: "These are the people who have surely gone astray,"

But this web of deception can hold them only for a little while. In the hereafter the truth will be as evident as the shining sun...

فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ {34}

On that Day, the believers shall be laughing at the unbelievers

Allah has given us such clear warnings but if we do not take any guidance from these surahs and verses then it is our own loss. On the day of judgement there will be no injustice at all. Everyone will get only what they worked for...

هَلْ تُؤْتَوْنَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ {36}

“Have not the unbelievers been fully rewarded for what they used to do?”

After such powerful words, I don't know what else I can say except a dua that May Allah help us to see the truth in this world so that we don't remain in any illusion. May He help us in self analysis and self purification so that we might attain His forgiveness and eternal success...inshaAllah

Surah An-Naas

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the world that we live in, we are aware of different dangers and we take safety measures against them; but ironically the biggest danger that threatens our life in this world as well as in the hereafter, is unrecognized by many... and that is the constant danger of being deceived by the devil... we think that we are making the right decisions in life not even analyzing whether we are really following the right way or are we blindly following the devil's whispers? If we don't recognize our biggest enemy then how can we protect ourselves against his activities? That is why at the end of our journey through Quran Allah is making us aware of this danger, and also giving us the assurance that we do have one big thing going in our favour... which is the most reliable protection and care of Allah... who is the Lord of all mankind:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ {1}

Say: I seek refuge in the Rabb of mankind

In this world we are so impressed by those who have some authority and power... and we look towards them for help... often facing disappointment due to their carefree attitude or sometimes due to their inability to understand or solve our problems. Here Allah is reminding us that the real king is Allah... who can us everything.

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ {2} إِلَهِ النَّاسِ {3}

King of mankind, the real God of mankind

Here Allah reveals to us that the most harmful thing which is constantly threatening our safety is not traffic accidents, or treachery of people, or loss of wealth or even life... but the real danger is to believe and follow the whispers of the devil...

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ {4} الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ {5}

From the mischief of the slinking whisperers (*Shaitan and his workers*)... who whisper into the hearts of people

The only purpose of the devil is to prevent the people from entering Paradise, so he keeps trying to deceive them by making sinful things look attractive... consequently the heart which

should be full of Allah's love, starts to love the forbidden things... and the person is willingly led into the ways which bring him utter destruction in both worlds. Therefore Allah is giving us the powerful weapon of this most effective dua which will protect us not only against the devil but also from the people who have become his partners in driving people away from the righteous path...

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ {6}

Whether he be from among the jinn or from mankind.

Although this life is full of dangers and it is so because Allah made it like this... as a test of our faith and obedience... But the Quran is the most powerful shelter for us and the good news is that this journey has no end. If we really and truly want Allah's guidance then He fills our hearts with a never ending love and attachment for His book which is the ultimate source of guidance for all mankind...

So my dua at the completion of this journey is that may this journey never end... may Allah always keep us joined to Him through His Book... may we understand its true spirit, may we act on its guidance and may we be among those who spread its message all over the world...ameen summa ameen.

Surah An-Nasr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The way to achieve Allah's pleasure is not a cruise... rather Allah keeps testing the faith and determination of the believers by putting them in various trials. These tests not only increase them in their faith but also raise their status in the paradise. But it becomes quite difficult to remain patient, when a person is trying to please Allah but his efforts seem to bring no positive result... on the contrary the whole environment turns against him. The time comes when the devil tries to make him believe that even Allah is not happy with him because if Allah is on his side then why isn't he making things easy for him? Why is he not removing the hurdles? The shaitan loves to make us hopeless but we should not lose hope in Allah's mercy because His help is very near...

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ {1}

When there comes the help of Allah and the victory

1400 yrs ago when Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) had to leave his hometown to migrate to Madinah with a small number of followers, it must have seemed totally impossible that one day He would enter Makkah as a Conqueror... but it did happen only after seven years of migration... and because of this victory the whole Arab accepted Islam:

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا {2}

You see the people entering Allah's religion (*Islam*) in multitudes

We also experience this miracle of Allah in our lives when He sends us his help in miraculous ways and saves us from most impossible situations. These are the moments of extreme joy and gratitude... but it is also a test of our obedience. What do we do in such situations?

Do we give all the credit to our own intelligence that we managed to succeed?

Or we think we are so pious that we have become Allah's favourites... so He has given us exactly what we desired?

Or do we really believe it to be nothing else except Allah's greatness and mercy... and we feel even more aware of our sins and this enormous guilt makes us turn to Allah in sincere repentance...?

In fact the last option is the only one leading to Allah's pleasure:

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا {3}

So glorify your Rabb with His praises, and pray for His forgiveness: surely He is ever ready to accept repentance

I have often felt this strange feeling of inadequacy after having done any act of goodness... I feel like I could have done so much better than this... but couldn't do it... due to my lack of knowledge or my lack of proper planning, or maybe it is lack of determination or sincerity... But today I have understood that even though analysing one's faults leads to becoming a better person but it should not become a cause for hopelessness with oneself... therefore we should do a lot of "Istighfaar", to remove the bad feelings of not reaching the level of excellence which we want. The more we ask Allah's forgiveness, the more He fills our hearts with peace and gives us hope and optimism to start again.

May Allah help us always to remember the fact that all goodness is from Him alone... this awareness of our own weakness and Allah's greatness is the biggest lesson to learn... so may Allah increase us in our knowledge... ameen.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah An-Noor

Just as eyes cannot see without light, similarly our intelligence and reasoning alone cannot guide us towards complete success, without the light of Allah's Book, to show us the way.

In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah says:

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ
الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ {257}

Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into **the light**; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are Shaitans who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide.

So this is the Surah of Light. It liberates us from the darkness of ignorance and confusion towards the light of Allah's love. Although the whole of the Quran is from Allah, yet for this Surah specially, Allah says that "we have revealed it" so that we should have complete trust in the wisdom of the rules laid out in it. The opening Ayat is in fact a short and accurate introduction of this radiant Surah

سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ {1}

(This is) a chapter which We have revealed and made obligatory and in which We have revealed clear communications that you may be mindful.

And then right after it Allah states the punishment of Adultery. Look at the straight forward tone and the clarity of words, which Allah has used here, so that anybody, with even average intelligence can verify its exact meaning.

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ {2}

(As for) the adulteress and the adulterer, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement.

Now we see that this Ayat has provoked great controversy that Islam is so barbaric and so cruel. Why should a man be flogged a hundred times for just one mistake?

Allah has told us in the Quran:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ {4}

Indeed We have created man in the best of moulds,

Man was created with dignity and self respect, an honorable being, and what is the purpose of "zina" (adultery)? It is the degradation of Man, when he stoops from his honorable position, just to satisfy his lust. If this sick crime is not stopped immediately it acts like a virus and spreads in the whole society so that the very balance and structure of family life collapses, giving rise to chaos and insecurity. Allah wants to protect us from this madness where no one is safe anymore. An American woman once commented:

"If you only knew the insecurity that an American woman goes through, every single day of her life, in fear that her husband might dump her for another more attractive person"

Allah loves us and he wants us to live a life of mutual trust and harmony. The family structure is supposed to be a Haven of peace and love. And if anyone dares to sabotage it, then they should be tortured publicly so that it is established as a terrible crime which no one would dare to repeat. Allah knew that there would be some who would try to act like they are more tenderhearted than Allah Himself so He said:

"Let not pity withhold you in their case.....If you have faith in Allah and in the day of recompense"

That's what it's all about: our Faith. It's not just saying the words of the "shahadah" but believing that ONLY ALLAH in His infinite love for us and

His infinite wisdom could have come up with a system of life as beautifully balanced as Islam.

This balance is manifested in the fact that Allah has not allowed anyone to falsely accuse anyone of adultery. This is a serious crime in Allah's eyes and such a person who wishes to ruin someone's reputation will also be flogged:

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً
وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ {4}

And those who accuse chaste women then do not bring four witnesses, flog them, (giving) eighty stripes, and do not admit any evidence from them ever; and these it is that are the transgressors,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {5}

Except those who repent after this and act aright, for surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Next we have the Ayaat which refer to a slander that was fabricated against Ayesha (r.a) the wife of the Prophet (s.a.w) by the Hypocrites of Madinah. According to her own narrative, Ayesha (r.a) had accompanied the Prophet (s.a.w) on a mission. On the way back while they were about to proceed one night, she discovered that she had dropped her necklace and so she got out of the howdah that she had been riding in and went off in search of it. It took her quite some time and during her absence the caravan took off, carrying her howdah thinking that she was inside it. When Ayesha returned to the camp and found no one she decided to wait there so that they will come back and find her. She fell asleep and was discovered by Safwan, who used to come up behind the army to pick up anything they might have left on the way. Upon seeing the wife of the Prophet, he exclaimed: "Inna Lillaahi wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'oon" and so Ayesha woke up. He lowered his camel and Ayesha mounted it, while he set out walking, leading the camel by the rope. And they did not exchange a single word, till they reached the army, who had halted at midday. Upon seeing them, the chief of the hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubaiyy said, "By Allah, they have not come safe." This rumor was spread like wild fire and took Madinah by storm. Until these following Ayaat were revealed, which proved the innocence of Ayesha (r.a), for all times to come.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ
 امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
 {11}

Surely they who concocted the lie are a party from among you. Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin; and (as for) him who took upon himself the main part thereof, he shall have a grievous chastisement

Allah reproached all those who took part in circulating the rumor.

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ
 {12}

Why did not the believing men and the believing women, when you heard it, think well of their own people, and say: This is an evident falsehood?

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ
 {16}

And why did you not, when you heard it, say: It does not beseem us that we should talk of it; glory be to You! this is a great calumny?

There is an important lesson here for all of us that it is a serious crime to ruin other peoples' reputation by idle gossips and backbiting. A true believer is a careful person. His purity of heart is reflected in the purity of his conversation. Allah says that even if you have been indulging in it so far, do not ever repeat it again:

يَعُظُّكُمْ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {17}

Allah admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again if you are believers.

Why is it so strongly prohibited? Actually when people discuss these shameful things, then it does have an imperceptible effect on them even if

they are not involved in it. And the publicity of evil creates a never ending curiosity, which leads to the eventual involvement in such acts.

So Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ {19}

Surely (as for) those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter; and Allah knows, while you do not know.

Allah wants us to live in peace and harmony but the Devil allures us towards immorality and immodesty:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ
يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ
أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ {21}

O you who believe! do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan, and whoever follows the footsteps of the Shaitan, then surely he bids the doing of indecency and evil; and were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

We should remember that the devil cannot rest until he leads us astray from the straight path of Allah's guidance. For this he has various traps. One of them is to make it seem very trivial for us when we deprive someone of their basic rights. So many people fall into this trap that after a while such a violation of Allah's laws becomes very normal and seems harmless. And if you remind someone the seriousness of their offence then they become defensive and protest, "Oh! Don't be so formal.....surely Islam is not so rigid!" But we forget that Islam is a complete way of life. It focuses as much attention on proper social behavior as on the spiritual aspect. So Allah reminds us here of an important social issue:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى
أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ {27}

O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates; this is better for you, that you may be mindful.

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ {28}

But if you do not find any one therein, then do not enter them until permission is given to you; and if it is said to you: Go back, then go back; this is purer for you; and Allah is Cognizant of what you do.

A home is a place where one wants to live in peace and security. Allah is protecting our privacy here. And it's better for us not to enter a door without permission, so that the doors of people's hearts are not closed on us, and relationships are not soured. It is a matter of dignity and respect, the more you give; the more you get, and of course the actual rewards are with Allah.

Our life is such that we cannot exist on our own. We have to interact with people and this involves an unavoidable contact between men and women. Islam is a natural religion. It doesn't put a complete ban on mutual interaction, because that would have been impossible. So we have been given certain rules which make it possible for us to conduct ourselves in such situations, in a graceful manner, without compromising on our modesty. So the first order is for Men:

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ {30}

Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do.

And then the same applies for women as well. We are all familiar with hijab of the dress but notice that the first thing is the hijab of the eyes. Why? because, "The glance is the poisonous arrow of shaitan." When we look at someone with unnecessary intensity, that's the first step towards danger, towards unlawful desires arising in your heart, so lower your gaze and protect your modesty:

وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ

And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms

And in the same Ayat Allah has forbidden women to display their adornment to any man except the ones Allah has Himself listed down:

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ

and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women;

This Ayat ends with the reminder that even the walk should be modest and not such that would attract attention:

وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ

and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known;

After all, it is the way towards Allah and towards success:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ {31}

and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful.

Although a lot can be said on the subject but it is enough for the time being to understand that the essence of these rules is to avoid situations which can lead to our exploitation. Allah is protecting us here. Women are like precious jewels so don't cheapen yourself under the false banner of so called

"liberation" and don't become an object for every man on the street to ogle at.

Surah An-Noor contains an Ayat which is mysteriously beautiful. It makes you stop and think what is Allah telling you here. Listen carefully:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ {35}

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth; a likeness of His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, (and) the glass is as it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost gives light though fire touch it not-- light upon light-- Allah guides to His light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Cognizant of all things.

The niche in this example is the chest of the believer and the lamp is the heart inside it. The glass is the environment and the potential in this heart to catch the light of Allah's guidance is such that it seems on the verge of glowing, even if no fire touches it. This Ayat actually focuses on the connection between Allah's light and the purity of a Momin's heart. And every time I read it, it makes me want to be such a lamp that would reflect Allah's light to the whole world, like a starAnd Allah guides towards his light whom he wills.....doesn't it fill you with the most passionate desire to be that person for whom Allah makes it a reality?!!

In a striking contrast, Allah gives the example of another kind of light that deceives a person and this is the light of mirage, which makes you see images which do not exist.....

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ {39}

And (as for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are like the mirage in a desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water; until when he comes to it he finds it to be naught, and there he finds Allah, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full; and Allah is quick in reckoning;

What a pathetic situation for a person who believes that what he is doing is very rewarding and at the end of his journey he finds nothing but hot earth, Imagine his frustration and remorse. Allah says that all those who think that they are wiser than Allah and that they can devise a more successful way of life other than Islam, their lives are like dark oceans in which they shall never see the light of truth:

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ
بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكِدْ يَرَاهَا وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا
لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ {40}

Or like utter darkness in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, (layers of) utter darkness one above another; when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light.

How frightening are the last words of this Ayat: For whom Allah has not appointed any light, then for him there is no light. May Allah save us all from such a terrible fate.

In the following Ayat, Allah tells us how to make sure we are not among the losers:

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ {52}

And he who obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and is careful of (his duty to) Him, these it is that are the achievers.

We all say that of course we fear Allah but we have to prove our sincerity too:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ {56}

And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you.

And there are some other rules too which we take lightly but they are also a reflection of our piety. One such rule is the discipline of privacy within a house, between various family members. Allah says "O You who have faith....." It means it is a part of our faith to obey this command:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ
 مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ
 بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَهُنَّ
 طَوَافُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
 حَكِيمٌ {58}

O you who believe! let those whom your right hands possess and those of you who have not attained to puberty ask permission of you three times; before the morning prayer, and when you put off your clothes at midday in summer, and after the prayer of the nightfall; these are three times of privacy for you; neither is it a sin for you nor for them besides these, some of you must go round about (waiting) upon others; thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, and Allah is Knowing, Wise.

Remember that everything belongs to Allah including our own selves and we are going to return to Him. This is the truth of our existence and upon this truth ends this Surah of Light.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ
 فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ {64}

Now surely Allah's is whatever is in the heavens and the earth; He knows indeed that to which you are conforming yourselves; and on the day on which they are returned to Him He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Cognizant of all things.

Surah Nooh

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Da'wah (calling people to Allah) is a unique "job". On one hand there are extraordinary rewards for it but on the other hand it requires lots of patience and sacrifice. But have you ever thought why did Allah give us this task in the first place? We could all have been Muslims and each one of us could have been responsible for our own lives and just our own deeds. Why this added responsibility to call others? As I pondered over this question, I realized that Allah has blessed us with this honour so that we can truly experience the real taste of faith. I have myself experienced that it gives me tremendous energy and pleasure to talk to others about Allah. And it is a fact, that when I am reminding others of His blessings and His miracles; of heaven and hell; of this world and the hereafter; it is my own heart which is the most attentive listener and gets affected in a most powerful way. It gives me an added realization that now I have to prove my words through action. And then I also realize that I cannot do anything except with the help of Allah. This is what connects me more and more with Allah... But everything has a price; and the price of da'wah is patience, perseverance and sacrifice.

Thus nearly at the end of this Magnificent Quran Allah tells us the story of Prophet Nooh (a.s) whose patience was tested to an extraordinary limit yet he stayed firm in his conviction and continued to work for Allah till the end...

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ {2} أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُوا {3}

He said: "O my People! I am sent towards you as a plain Warner. Worship Allah, fear Him and obey me.

This has been the message of all Prophets: Worship of Allah, consciousness of Allah and obedience of the messenger. Religion cannot be complete if any one of the above is missing. We readily understand worship of Allah and following the way of the Prophet; but what is the significance of Taqwa? It is actually the awareness that Allah is watching over us, which makes us lead a clean life. Therefore an Allah-conscious person will constantly be alert about all his words, deeds and thoughts; and will strive towards sincerity and purity at all times. But what does one achieve from such a life?

يَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
{4}

If you will do so, He will forgive you your sins and give you respite for an appointed term. The fact is that when the term given by Allah arrives, it cannot be deferred. If you could understand!

One would think that such a true and complete message will be instantly appreciated and accepted but it is human nature to dislike any warning which hinders their selfish and careless attitude towards life. So look at the reaction of people after listening to the warnings of Nooh (a.s):

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا
اسْتِكْبَارًا {7}

Each time I called on them to seek Your pardon; they thrust their fingers in their ears and drew their cloaks over their heads, persisting in sin and puffing themselves up with insolent pride.

Anyone would want to give up after such a rejection but a true caller to faith never gives up:

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جَهْرًا {8} ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا {9}

I have called them aloud; then I appealed them openly in public and secretly in private,

This is the patience and consistency which is missing from our efforts. When we call others to Islam we expect them to change overnight and if anybody rejects the invitation we never bother with them again. But if you really are sincere in your desire to help others and to save them from loss then you will use all the methods; and never give up hope.

The fact is that when people reject faith and lead a life of desires, their hearts are burdened with guilt and they never get satisfaction even though they have lots of things to amuse them. Thus it is a great favour on them if you can gently guide them towards doing Taubah... a sincere repentance. So we see that in spite of all the transgression of his people, he is calling them to forgiveness:

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا {10}

So I said (to the people): "Seek forgiveness of your Rabb, He is ever ready to forgive you.

It is a common misconception that if you commit yourself to deen then you will be deprived of the worldly benefits. The following verses have this good news from Allah that sincere

duas of forgiveness not only earn us the pleasures of the hereafter; rather they are a means of barakah in worldly things as well:

يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا {11} وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا {12}

He will send abundant rain for you from heaven, and he will help you with wealth and sons, and provide you with gardens and the flowing rivers.

But what a pity it is that man gets so mesmerized by the worldly pleasures that he forgets Allah...

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا {13} وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا {14}

What is the matter with you that you do not regard the greatness of Allah; when He has created you in gradual stages?

Isn't it simply amazing that the same earth which provides us sustenance will be our host after death...? Nooh a.s tries to awaken the intellect of his people:

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا {17} ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا {18}

Allah has caused you to grow as a growth from the earth. He will return you to the same earth and then raise you back to life again *on the Day of Resurrection*?

He reminded the people that Allah had given them so many blessings so that they might turn to Allah in gratitude; but alas! they could not get out of their illusions and instead of turning to Allah; their attention was focused on pleasing the influential people of the society. So getting thoroughly disgusted by their blindness, Nooh (a.s) puts his sadness in front of Allah:

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا {21}

Finally, Nooh (*Noah*) submitted: "O Rabb! My people have disobeyed me, and followed those *chiefs* whose wealth and children have added to them nothing but loss.

The people who reject the messengers of Allah might think of themselves as very powerful but they are all going to face a terrible punishment for their sins:

مِمَّا خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا {25}

Because of their wrong doings they were drowned *in the great flood* and made to enter the fire. They found no one besides Allah to help them.

It is a fact that when man transgresses the boundaries of Allah shamelessly and never listens to any warnings then the hearts get hard and there remains no chance of any positive change. Thus it went on for years and generation after generation people continued to reject the teachings of Nooh (a.s). Finally when there was nothing more to be done, he made this prayer:

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا {26}

And Nooh said "O Rabb! Do not leave a single unbeliever on the surface of the earth.

He had put up with so much of rejection and frustration but never did he complain about his situation...There is no self pity or complaints for his own hardships... Rather he asks for forgiveness if there had been any lack of effort from his side...

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا تَرِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا {28}

O Rabb! Forgive me, my parents and every true believer who seeks refuge in my house, and all believing men and believing women. As to the wrongdoers, grant them increase in nothing but destruction."

We are all facing such situations and what is our attitude. If people don't listen to us we condemn them and think of our own self as perfect and flawless. But we should remember that we are not angels and there is always a chance that maybe our own behaviour is not good. Maybe our own actions don't match our words. Maybe the character we want in others is missing from our own personality. The Prophets were free from all such imperfections but we ordinary human beings can never be perfect. Therefore we should always be ready to look into our own hearts before putting the blame on others. Da'wah is not an ordinary job so the patience required for it is also extraordinary. But for those who want the highest levels of eternal success; it is not such a big price after all...

Surah Al-Qalam

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allah's love is the most precious gift which we all yearn for but it cannot be attained without following the footsteps of our beloved Prophet (s.a.w) with complete love and trust. The more we know about his life and personality, the more we will love him for all his magnificent qualities. This love is the completion of our faith, and is absolutely essential for us to acquire; because without love and faith, actions are just mechanical gestures which have no spirit and no effect.

The first and foremost requirement of loving the Prophet (s.a.w) is to follow his way of life and to convey his teachings to the whole world. This is a responsibility on all of us who feel honoured to be his followers. But this path is filled with trials and only those can walk upon it, who first learn to be patient and calm, forgiving and moving on, loving people unconditionally and putting the work of religion ahead of their own satisfactions. In fact, those who love Allah love to work for Him and feel honoured to be given any opportunity to serve Him. If someone has truly felt this love, then he will never complain nor be overtaken by any self pity or self righteousness... because he knows that what he is working for is far more precious than his own life...

So in Surah Al-Qalam, Allah is giving us the excellent example of our Prophet (s.a.w) who put up with all the trials and accusations from the disbelievers with the utmost patience and perseverance. Although the Prophet (s.a.w) ignored all the malicious remarks of the disbelievers but Allah is taking oath for the sake of His beloved Messenger:

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ {1} مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ {2}

Nūn. By the pen and what they write. By the grace of your Lord you are not a madman.

This oath of the pen makes me feel that there must be something really great in this small little tool but we take it so casually. Today most of us feel too lazy to write but where would we be if the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w) had not used the pen? Thus writing is Ibaadah if done for the sake of Allah. And we should use this immense power of pen to spread the ultimate truth to the whole world.

But apart from the pen and other means of communication there is one other tool which is the most precious, the most effective and the most worthy of honour... and that is the excellence of character. If we study the life history of our Prophet (s.a.w) we find that He had

the best manners, not only with friends, not only in good times, but also with enemies, He displayed extraordinary patience and tolerance... that is why Allah has promised for him a reward which is limitless:

وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ {3} وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ {4}

And you shall have a never ending reward. You are of the highest noble character.

Although it is a topic which cannot be encompassed in just a few lines, but the most important thing about the personality of our Prophet (s.a.w) was that all his manners were genuine and ever present. His etiquettes and behaviour had no contradiction with His real self. That is why He had an awesome personality which affected others like magic. The hard hearted pagans tried to prove that He was a magician but they could not comprehend that there is no magic like the magic of tenderness, true love and care.

On the contrary, today we find that people are attracted to Islam but they are confused when they see the unpleasant behaviour of the followers of this great religion. We might have learned the Quran and Hadith but we need to do a lot of work on our character building too. And the best characteristics which we have to focus on are patience and tolerance. What is the use of thinking yourself as good and proving everybody else to be wrong? The task of judgement is not for us...

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ {7}

Surely it is your Rabb Who knows those who have strayed from His Way, as He knows best those who are rightly guided.

It has always been the case that those who reject the truth are greater in number than the believers. So there is a great danger of being influenced by the force of the majority. Thus Allah has cautioned the Prophet (s.a.w):

فَلَا تُطِيعِ الْمُكذِبِينَ {8} وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ {9}

So do not yield to the unbelievers. They desire you to compromise a little, so they too would compromise.

Now this is a very important point to remember that being kind hearted does not mean that one should compromise on religion for the pleasure of others. So we should be good and caring for others but remain firmly within the limits of Allah. Sometimes people will try to dissuade you from your work by indirect means. Thus we have to be even more careful in this case...

وَلَا تُطِيعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ {10} هَمَّازٍ مَّشَاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ {11} مَنَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ {12}

Neither yield to any mean oath-monger; mischief making slanderer; opponent of good, transgressor.

When people are given a blessing they often think that it is because they have “earned” it and don’t realize that it is a test from Allah. Or in some cases they don’t even realize that they have been given a great gift which is for their own good. The disbelievers of Makkah were also deceived by their own arrogance, and failed to appreciate the gift of Quran and guidance through the greatest Messenger of all times. In the next verse Allah reminds them of a story which was quite famous among the Arabs:

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ {17}

Surely We shall try them as We tried the owners of the garden when they swore that they would pluck its fruit the next morning.

This story is about the owner of a garden who used to divide his fruit in three portions; giving one third to the poor and needy, one third to his relatives and kept the remaining for himself and his family. Due to his sharing, Allah gave abundant blessings to him but when he died, his inheritors decided to keep all the fruit to themselves because they thought that it was their own hard work and their own earning. So they planned to harvest it early in the morning before any poor folk could come to beg. But Allah sent a punishment while they were asleep and the garden was totally destroyed:

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ {19} فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ {20}

So a calamity from your Rabb came down upon it (the garden) while they slept. and by the morning it lay as if it had been already harvested.

When early the next morning they reached the garden they couldn’t believe what they saw:

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُونَ {26}

But when they saw the garden, they cried: “Surely we must have lost our way!”

Then they realized that it was a result of their own arrogance and stinginess:

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ {31}

Finally they said: “Woe to us! Surely we had become rebellious.

The loss of this world can be recovered but what will happen in the Akhirah? When there will be no more chances?

كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَالْعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ {33}

Such is the punishment *in this life*; but the punishment in the Hereafter is even greater, if they but knew it.

In this world anyone can plant a garden and enjoy its fruits but the gardens of paradise are only for those who have lived a life of extreme caution and carefulness. They fear to disobey Allah; they fear to utter foolish words, they are forever conscious of the result of Akhirah:

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ {34}

Surely the righteous will be rewarded with gardens of delight by their Rabb

But the disbelievers will mock them and go on with their carefree lives, not thinking about the simple fact that those who obey Allah and those who break His limits cannot be equal:

أَفَجَعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ {35} مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ {36}

What do the disbelievers think? Shall We treat the Muslims as We treat the guilty? What is the matter with you? What kind of Judgment do you make?

We make decisions on the basis of our intellect and after that the next source of our knowledge is through books. So Allah is asking the disbelievers:

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ {37} إِنْ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَّا تَخِيرُونَ {38}

Or do you have a Book in which you read, that you shall be given whatever you choose?

If neither intellect nor books can testify to their foolish judgement, then maybe they have signed a contract with their Lord?

أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بِالْعَةِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنْ لَكُمْ لَمَّا تَحْكُمُونَ {39}

Or do you have a sworn covenant - a covenant binding on Us till the Day of Resurrection - that you shall have whatever you demand?

The problem is that they don't want to give up their lifestyles and have refused to bow down to Allah. How many of us have established Salah in our lives? We continue to be casual about this obligatory worship but look at the next verse and you will feel the enormity of this error:

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ {42}

On the Day of Judgment, when the dreadful events shall be unfolded, and they shall be asked to prostrate themselves, they shall not be able to do so.

It can also refer to those who pray regularly but their hearts do not bow down to Allah's greatness. Why? Because they are too much filled up with their own pride. What will become of this false pride when our real picture will be exposed to all of mankind?

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ {43}

They shall stand with eyes downcast, utterly humbled; because during their safe and sound *earthly* life they were called upon to prostrate themselves *but they refused to do so*.

This ayat teaches me the importance of self awareness. I have to focus on all my flaws and remove them with Allah's help so that I might be saved from this torture of shame, regret and humiliation. If this feeling gets absorbed in my heart and I start working on my self-purification then how can I have any time or concern to blame anyone else or to find fault with others?

Imagine how our Prophet (s.a.w) must be receiving these strong verses... how awesome was his responsibility and how painful it must have been for him that when he conveyed it to the Makkans they constantly rejected him... Thus Allah is sending him the comforting words that if people are not accepting the truth then He will Himself deal with them:

فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ {44}

O Prophet, leave to Me those who reject this revelation. We shall lead them step by step to their ruin, in ways that they cannot perceive.

But the Prophet (s.a.w) was so kind hearted... so much full of love and concern for his people. He could not ignore what was happening around him. He was not like us that we just think of our own end and don't worry about the others. Thus Allah assures Him:

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْأُخْتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ {48}

So wait with patience for the Judgment of your Rabb and be not like the man of the fish (*reference is to the Prophet Yunus (a.s) who was swallowed by a fish*), who cried when he was in distress.

Prophet Yunus (a.s) was also rejected by his people and he was so grieved by their disbelief that he decided to leave them before the order had come from Allah. But when he was swallowed by the fish, he realized his mistake and asked Allah's forgiveness. So in this story there is great lesson for us that even if we are facing tremendous difficulties in the way of Allah, we should remain firm and never lose hope. Sometimes the emotions of grief and anger makes a person feel totally helpless and drained. Shaitan uses such chances to make us despair of Allah's mercy. And so there is great danger of making wrong decisions.

As far as people are concerned, different people will respond to Allah's message in different ways. Some will believe wholeheartedly and become strong supporters, some will be on the middle course, and some will be so hostile that their hatred will be reflected in their expressions. Just like the people of Makkah:

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ {51}

The unbelievers would almost trip you up with their eyes when they hear Our revelations (*The Qur'an*), and say: "He (*Muhammad*) is surely crazy."

But even if the disbelievers labelled the Quran as false, or fabricated, but they could not extinguish the light of Allah's words which was destined to illuminate the worlds:

وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ {52}

This (*The Qur'an*) is nothing but a Reminder to all the people of the world.

Thus ends the beautiful Surah with a great reminder that Quran is for the whole world so we have to fulfil our responsibility of conveying it to everyone. Allah has given us so many resources and the only thing we really need is a true commitment... because even if someone is unable to go out and reach people, we do have one thing which can cross the barriers of time and space... and that is the pen... Al-Qalam!!

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah As-Sajdah

Our beloved Prophet, Muhammad, May peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him, used to recite Surah As-Sajdah daily, before going to sleep at night. And on Friday mornings He chose this Surah to recite in the first unit of the Fajar prayer. When I had read these facts in a book of Hadeeth, some time back, I had been curious to find out more about it. Obviously there must be something really important in its message. And we need to understand its importance because the "Sawab" or reward for following the Sunnah (teachings) of the Prophet (s.a.w) can be multiplied manifold if we do so with consciousness and understanding.

After reading it in its detail, I found that this Surah contains the essence of our faith and that is why it serves as daily reminder at night just at the completion of the day and the beginning of our oblivion into a near-death state. The realities outlined in its explicit words, help us to cleanse our souls by asking Allah's forgiveness for whatever shortcomings we displayed during the day and help us to remember death for which we all need to be prepared at all times.

For the words of Allah to be effective in our lives, we need to be free of all doubts, therefore, Allah says right in the beginning of this Surah:

تَرْيَلُ الْكُتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ {2}

The revelation of the Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the Lord of the worlds.

And then Allah reminds us of the purpose of the Quran.....to warn people so that they may be guided. The non believers of Makkah used to say that the Prophet had himself written this book. Even today there are people who doubt the authenticity of the Quran. For all of them Allah says:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ {3}

Or do they say: He has forged it? Nay! it is the truth from your Lord that you may warn a people to whom no Warner has come before you, that they may follow the right direction.

It is our weakness that we are so caught up in the endless cycle of our daily routines and the race for worldly benefits that we never stop and ponder upon the purpose of our existence. There are many who have not even thought about this in the course of their lives. Isn't it a pity to go on living, day after day and not knowing where we are going or why we are going and what do we hope to achieve at the end of this journey?

The Quran teaches us to think and it begins by focusing our attention on our own selves. How awesome it is that Allah has created us:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ {7}

Who made good everything that He has created, and He began the creation of man from dust.

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ {8}

Then He made his progeny of an extract, of despicable water.

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا

تَشْكُرُونَ {9}

Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks.

But look at how arrogant humans are that they enjoy all the blessings of Allah and don't remember to give thanks. Instead they doubt resurrection:

وَقَالُوا أَنَذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَئِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ

{10}

And they say: What! When we have become lost in the earth, shall we then certainly be in a new creation? Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord.

Allah tells us that they will all be brought before their Lord, no matter how much they deny it in this world. But when that happens, it will be too late to make amends. The following verse depicts a scene of the day of resurrection, when the criminals, those who denied the truth, will be standing before Allah. Look at how pathetic their condition is and so Allah says, "If only you could see them....."

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُو رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا
نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ {12}

And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord: Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard, therefore send us back, we will do good; surely (now) we are certain.

They chose to forget this meeting with Allah, and so Allah will also forget about them on that day:

فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ {14}

So taste, because you neglected the meeting of this day of yours; surely We forsake you; and taste the abiding chastisement for what you did.

It is a moment for reflection. Let's analyze ourselves before it's too late. Do we really have faith in Allah and the day of resurrection? If yes then how come we go about our lives as if that day is never going to come? If we truly believe that Quran is the guidance towards success then how come our majority doesn't even know what's in it? We can very well say that we believe in the word of Allah but how much time or effort do we make towards its education and learning? And what is our attitude towards Allah's religion? Do we submit to Allah's will or do we make excuses?

Our claims of faith can be judged in the mirror of the following Ayat, which is so awesome that it is recommended that when we read it, we should make "Sajdah" (to prostrate) as an act of submission:

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ {15}

Only they believe in Our communications who, when they are reminded of them, fall down in prostration and celebrate the praise of their Lord, and they are not proud.

These are the true believers, who get up to pray when the rest of the world is asleep. They call upon their lord with hope and fear; the perfect balance of faith; where their hope doesn't cause them to be fearless and their fear doesn't make them hopeless with themselves:

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
{16}

Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them.

Allah has promised great rewards for these people and it is going to be so magnificent that we can't even imagine:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ {17}

So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did.

And of course this special surprise gift is not for everyone but only for those who do good deeds with sincerity and consistency, keeping in mind the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w)

Now we find that in today's world acting on Islam is not an easy task. You need to revise your lifestyle and you might be afraid of being a misfit. So Allah has given us a very good advice here to think rationally and not expect that you can act like everybody else and still be a Momin (true believer). How logical and heartwarming are these words:

أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَّا يَسْتَوُونَ {18}

Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal.

If they act differently then of course it is logical to expect that they will be treated differently in the hereafter. Just look at the stark contrast of the consequence of their actions:

أَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَى نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
{19}

As for those who believe and do good, the gardens are their abiding-place; an entertainment for what they did.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا
وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ {20}

And as for those who transgress, their abode is the fire; whenever they desire to go forth from it they shall be brought back into it, and it will be said to them: Taste the chastisement of the fire which you called a lie.

How extremely terrible is the fate of the transgressors; we should all ask Allah's forgiveness and protection from such a fate. The question arises that why did these people continue to disobey Allah when they knew that one day they will be accountable for their deeds. The fact is that there is a difference between knowing some thing and being convinced of it. When we listen to warnings but our hearts turn away from the truth then we can't protect ourselves from destruction. That is why Allah calls it the biggest injustice to one's own self.....to ignore the teachings of Allah:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ
{22}

And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the communications of his Lord, then he turns away from them? Surely We will give punishment to the guilty.

The illusion of this world has deceived the people into thinking that they can live in whatever way they want, just because Allah's punishment doesn't overtake them while they continue to disobey Allah. But haven't they ever thought about the people who were destroyed before them? Surely there are signs.....

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ {26}

Does it not point out to them the right way, how many of the generations, in whose abodes they go about, did We destroy before them? Most surely there are signs in this; will they not then hear?

Still they doubt the truth and ask: "when will this judgement take place?" Allah says that when they see the reality on that day, they will believe but it will be too late:

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ {29}

Tell them: On the day of judgment the faith of those who (now) disbelieve will not profit them, nor will they be granted a respite.

So what are we all waiting for? Another day; another night?

Wake up when there is still time and turn to Allah.

As for those who refuse to listen to these clear warnings, Allah says:

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَانْتَظِرْ إِنَّهُمْ مُنْتَضِرُونَ {30}

Therefore turn away from them and wait, surely they too are waiting.
