

Surah Al-Ahqaf

Para-26

Bismillahir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

If we believe that Quran is the word of Allah, then we must learn to understand its meanings so that we may act upon its guidance.

What happens if we don't understand or follow Quran? The fact is that human beings have been given the power of intellect and they use it to determine what they want to do in their lives. But this intellect alone cannot help them in making the right choices in life. We need a direct communication from Allah so that He who created us, and this world in which we live, and all the other planets and stars and galaxies, He with His complete and supreme knowledge can tell us what things in life are good for us and what we should stay away from. Where to go and where not to go....what are the things we should avoid at all costs and what are the ideals we should be running after.....if intellect had been enough then why do people worship statues which they carve with their own hands? The false gods who can neither benefit them nor have created a single thing in the entire universe.....How could they have created anything anyway when they are not even masters over their own creation:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ اتَّبُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَارَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {4}

Ask them: "Have you pondered on those whom you invoke besides Allah? Show me anything that they have created in the earth, or do they have any share in the creation of the heavens? Bring me any Book revealed before this, or some remnant of divine knowledge *in support of your beliefs* if you are telling the truth."

It confused me so much when I used to see highly educated people denying the clear verses of the Quran. I wondered why couldn't they see the obvious? But now I understand that the same intelligence which can be used to understand the message of Allah; can also be used in making allegations against it. Thus the arrogant disbelievers in Makkah also did the same thing; they didn't want to believe in Quran so they decided to humiliate it:

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا
سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ {7}

When Our revelations are recited to them, clear as they are, and the truth comes before them, the disbelievers say: "This is plain magic."

And they didn't want people to think that they had been deprived of something special, (which in their hearts they knew to be the most perfect words which they had ever heard) so they made another claim:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا
بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ {11}

And those who disbelieve say of those who believe, "If it had [truly] been good, they would not have preceded us to it." And when they are not guided by it, they will say, "This is an ancient falsehood."

But the believers remained firm in their conviction that there was no god except Allah and He is their only Lord. They were being humiliated and tortured and cast aside by their families but their hearts were at peace because they knew that the Master of the Universe, the King of all Kings, was on their side and one day He will give them the rewards, which they were striving for:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
{13}

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ {14}

Indeed those who say: "Our Rabb is Allah, and then remain firm shall have nothing to fear or to regret. They shall dwell in paradise forever as a reward for their good deeds.

The people, who have this kind of commitment with Allah and stays firm on it, are rewarded in this world too, in the form of a special kind of happiness and peace from Allah. On the other hand those who deprive themselves from Allah's mercy, remain forever in anxiety and restlessness, because in their hearts they have a void which can only be filled with Allah's love and His obedience. So in order to cover their guilt and confusion, they invent other ways to look good in people's eyes. They spend their money and time in charitable works and think that it is not necessary to follow the religion. Many people today ask this question: will these "good" people be punished?

They should ask themselves that if their servant spends all his time out of the house attending to the needs of the neighbourhood and comes after a month to get his salary from them, will they pay him? No, they will tell him to get money from the people whom he had worked for. So if we are not doing anything for Allah and not following the way of the Prophet (s.a.w) then how can we expect any reward from Allah? Still Allah is merciful that he will reward these people in this world but in the hereafter they will be punished for their crime of disobeying Allah and ignoring His guidance:

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا
 وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ {20}

And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], "You received your good things (rewards) in your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you were defiantly disobedient."

Next Allah reminds the people of Makkah about a perished nation called 'Aad. Their Prophet Hud (a.s) had warned them that they should not worship anyone else except Allah but they did not accept his message and were destroyed by a great torment. It's a historical fact that they were great people, highly prosperous, civilized and highly intellectual, but since they ignored the guidance from Allah, their intelligence only led them to destruction:

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا
 أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا
 يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ {26}

We had established them much better than We have established you, O Quraish of Makkah, and endowed them with the faculties of hearing, seeing, and intellect. Yet their faculties of hearing, sight and intellect availed them nothing since they denied the revelations of Allah; and they were completely hemmed in by the same thing that they used to mock at.

These were warnings for the people of Makkah at the time when they were strongly opposing the Prophet (s.a.w). The situation was becoming extremely painful for the Prophet and His followers due to the growing persecution from the people of Quraish. Especially when the people of Taif also rejected him mercilessly, it seemed as if he had no support. But one day as the Prophet (s.a.w) was reciting the Quran in the prayer, there happened to pass by a group of Jinn, who

listened carefully and believed in it, and then returned to their tribe as preachers of faith. Of course Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) was not aware of this so Allah gave him the good news:

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنصتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِم مُّنذِرِينَ {29}

Tell them how We brought to you a group of jinns, who when they reached the place where you were reciting and listened to the Qur'an, said to each other: "Be silent." When the recitation was over, they returned to their people as warners.

We know that Jinn are also a creation of Allah and they have very little intelligence as compared to human beings but they came to the right conclusion because of listening attentively to Allah's revelation. Look how they are warning others:

قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِن بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ {30}

They said "O our people! We have just listened to a Book that has been revealed after Musa which is confirming that what came before it, and it guides to the truth and to the Right Way.

They understood that Allah is to be obeyed above all others and if they don't listen to the teachings of Allah's Prophet then they are going to be in terrible loss:

وَمَنْ لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ {32}

He that does not answer the one who is calling towards Allah, shall neither escape in the earth, nor shall have any to protect from Him. Surely such people are in manifest error."

Reading all of this I wondered how can anyone still remain in doubt when Allah has so clearly told us the truth? The day for recompense is coming nearer day by day. This life seems endless now but on that

day we will feel as if we had not spent even one complete day on earth:

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ
مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ بَلَاغٌ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ {35}

Therefore, bear with them with patience, as did the Rasools endowed with firmness of purpose before you, and do not be in haste about them. On the Day when they shall see that which they are being threatened with, their life on earth will seem to them as if they had lived no more than an hour of a day. The Message of forewarning has been conveyed. Shall any be destroyed except the transgressors?

When I think of the ultimate meeting with our Lord and seeing the Jannat and Jahannum with my own eyes, I wonder is it too much difficult to let go of our false pride, our egos, and enter the true faith of Tauheed? Is it too much of a bargain to let go of our desires for such a short time for the sake of the rewards of that life which will never end? As Allah said in Surah Al-Jathiya ayat-6

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ 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 Az-Zâriyât

Para 26-27



The reality of this life and the Hereafter is such an important part of our faith that Allah has repeatedly warned us about it; especially in the Makkan Surahs. In Surah Adh-Dhariyat the verses are so short and meaningful, as if to prove that we are not totally unaware of what is really going to happen and our heedless lives are not as much a reflection of our lack of knowledge, rather it is a manifestation of our forgetfulness and reluctance to face the truth. Therefore the sequence of Ayat upon Ayat is on one hand a powerful reminder, and on the other hand the reflection of the beauty and depth of the Arabic language. Just see the opening verses in which simply two words of each line, encompass the vastness of the winds and the clouds; all floating smoothly. So imperceptible is their movement that we hardly notice what miracles are being unfolded before us all across the sky:

{1} وَالذَّارِيَّاتِ ذُرُوءًا

By the dust scattering winds

{2} فَالْحَامِلَاتِ وِقْرًا

Then by the heavy laden clouds;

{3} فَالْجَارِيَّاتِ يُسْرًا

Then by their swift gliding;

{4} فَالْمُقَسَّمَاتِ أَمْرًا

Then by those who distribute the big affair (rain);

Allah is taking oath by the winds and their endless movement, to tell us that the warning of the Hereafter is most certainly the truth:

{5} إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ

Surely, that which you are being promised is true;

And we should remember that accountability will also take place:

{6} وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ

And surely, the Day of Judgment shall come to pass.

The next Ayat points to the beauty and splendour of the sky which Allah has adorned with stars and moon and sun and clouds. Just ponder over the fact that He could have lit it up without these objects but Allah is so great, He took care of our aesthetic needs as well. He could have painted it red or orange or even green, but just look at the soft and soothing blue and the soft white clouds, forever changing shapes and colours reflecting the sun especially in the rising and setting of the sun. Imagine how much He loves us, but majority of people, instead of being grateful, show their arrogance by devising their own ideas about the Day of Judgement:

{7} وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ

{8} إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ

By the sky full of orbits, surely you contradict one another in what you say

When there are so many ideas to chose from, it is so easy to go astray but Allah says that only those get distracted from the right way who don't want to follow the path of righteousness.....who think it is such a great burden to submit their own will to Allah's commands. So whoever avoids reality will definitely go far away from it:

يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أَفِكَ {9}

Only the perverse persons turn away from the truth.

When people deny the clear message of Allah's Prophet (s.a.w) then surely they will come up with their own theories about the end of this life. Some say that they will just become dust and bones and there is no after-life. Others say that there will be a life after death but everyone will go to Paradise because Allah is so merciful.....and so on. But their ideas are all based on whims...and whoever builds a life on such a weak foundation is certainly going to be destroyed:

قَتَلَ الْخَرَّاصُونَ {10}

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ {11}

Woe to those who judge by conjecture, those who are engulfed in ignorance and heedlessness.

If you try to explain things to them they arrogantly ask irrelevant questions to prove their cleverness. Like the people asked the Prophet (s.a.w) when will the Qiyamat (hour of Doom) occur? And the Prophet (s.a.w) replied that they should worry whether they have prepared anything for that day or not.

يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ {12}

They ask: "When will the Day of Judgment be?"

Here is the answer for all arrogant people, who think they can outsmart Allah's decisions:

يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفْتَنُونَ {13}

ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ {14}

It will be the Day when they will be punished in the fire, and it will be said: "Taste your chastisement! This is what you were seeking to hasten."

And surely it is true that Allah is most merciful and kind but on that day His Love and compassion will only be for the righteous ones:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ {15}

As to the righteous, they will be in the midst of gardens and springs

Imagine that even if they led a hard life in this world for the sake of Allah's obedience and gave up all those pleasures which they saw most people indulging in, what a small sacrifice it will seem to them on that day when in Paradise they will be receiving their rewards from Allah:

آخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ {16}

Joyfully receiving what their Rabb shall give them; for they were before that (during their life on earth) righteous people

They did not get there just by chance or good luck, as sometimes happens in this world, rather their character determined their destiny as Allah says that they were the "Muhsinin", the ones who did everything with beauty and completeness. We all tend to think of ourselves as perfect people but we should see our true reflection in the mirror of the Quran, as shown to us in the following verses:

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ {17}

They used to sleep but little in the night time

Just count how many nights have we ever spent in our lives in this way. These successful people of the Paradise never thought of any of their deeds as good enough for Allah's sake so even when they spent most of their nights in worship, they would still be asking for forgiveness in the early hours:

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ {18}

They pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning

But even that was not enough that they just dedicated their lives to the prayer mat. Rather they spent their time, their resources, their money, for the less fortunate people. They did all of it with genuine concern, as giving them their right.....not showing off, nor arrogantly doing any favour on them:

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ {19}

And share their wealth with the needy who asked for it, and those who did not ask.

But how did those "lucky" people find Allah's true guidance? There is so much to trap you in illusions so how come they thought and acted differently? Allah says that you just have to look at the earth before you and you will find such clear signs.....but these signs become clear only to those who want to believe:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ {20}

In the earth, there are signs for the firm believers,

People ask for proof or miracles, but Allah is asking all of them "Do you not see your own self?" What a miracle it is the way Allah has created us in such perfect proportions:

وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ {21}

And also in your own selves (there are signs); can you not see?

Allah has given us eyes which make us see this colourful world. But there is also an inner sight which sees beyond the obvious. This inner sight has been given to everyone but most of the people don't use it so their vision remains limited and shallow. On the other hand those who use their insight don't get trapped by the obvious glitter and glamour of the world. They go beyond the surface of things and try and get to the real truth. These are the ones who recognize the signs of their Lord and have a firm belief in His Power and Mercy. A

shining example of one such person, who used his insight and rational thinking to find Allah, was Ibrahim (a.s) His story has been told many times in the Quran.....how he gave up everything for the sake of Allah and proved his utmost belief and submission for Allah.

In the following verses we find that some angels came to Ibrahim's (a.s) house in the guise of being his guests and rewarded him with the miraculous good news of a son. Both Ibrahim (a.s) and His wife were very old. So his wife exclaimed:

فَأَقْبَلَتْ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ {29}

Hearing this, his wife came forward, with astonishment she smote her forehead and said: "A son to a barren old woman!"

But the angels told her:

قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ {30}

They replied: "Thus has said your Rabb: surely He is the Wise, the Knowledgeable."

Even in the midst of such good news, Ibrahim (a.s) remains focused and asks the angels that surely that was not all what their mission was about, so what was their real business:

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ {31}

Ibrahim (Abraham) asked: "O Divine Messengers, what is your errand?"

They told him that they had come to destroy the people of Prophet Lut (a.s) who were involved in the crime of homosexuality:

قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ {32}

They replied: "We have been sent to a guilty nation (*people of Lot, who were homosexuals*),

لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ {33}

To shower upon them brimstone,

Only the Prophet Lut (a.s) and his few followers were saved from this torment. The rest of them were completely destroyed by the terrible punishment. The question is that why Allah is telling us here about these people? Obviously it is to make us understand that the people who don't have any belief in the Hereafter, will never accept the commands of Allah, and so they will have to face His punishment. The same thing happened to Pharaoh and his people who rejected the clear proofs brought to them by Prophet Musa (a.s):

فَتَوَلَّىٰ بُرْكُنَيْهِ وَقَالَ سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ {39}

But he turned his back along with his chiefs, saying: "He (Moses) is a sorcerer or a madman."

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ {40}

Consequently, We seized him and his warriors, and cast them into the sea. Indeed he deserved much blame.

And there was the nation of Aad. They were tall and mighty people highly civilized and prosperous, but they did not fear Allah and rejected the teachings of their Prophet, Hud (a.s).

Allah is most merciful but when people refuse to accept the truth then they invite Allah's wrath. The same breeze which gives so much pleasure became a torment for them:

وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ {41}

There is also a sign in the story of 'Ad: when We let loose on them a blighting wind

مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَعَلْتَهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ {42}

which made rotten everything that it blew on.

The people of Thamud were arrogant in their own progress and thought that the Prophet Salih (a.s) was just frightening them needlessly; so what was their end:

فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ {44}

but they disobeyed the commandment of their Rabb; consequently they were overtaken by the thunderbolt even while they were looking on.

And even before that the people of Nuh (a.s) had made the same mistake of not taking seriously the message of Allah, so they remained disobedient and finally were drowned by a huge flood:

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ {46}

And We destroyed the people of Nuh (Noah) before them because they too were transgressors.

Allah has given us all the clues in the creation of the universe and in our own existence and has revealed to us lessons from the history of the world. Therefore after all that we have seen and heard, it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that we have to turn to Allah, not half-heartedly, not with just a passive obedience but with all our passion and conviction.....Listen to the words in the next ayat and run towards Allah!!

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ {50}

O Prophet, say to mankind: "Rush towards Allah, surely I am assigned by Him as a plain Warner to you all.

When you run towards something then the natural consequence is that you leave something behind....you can't hold on to both. So when we go forward in our commitment with Allah then we have to leave all the things that stand between us and His pleasure....there can be no other object of worship except Allah:

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ {51}

Do not set up another god besides Allah, surely I am assigned by Him as a plain Warner to you all."

This is the absolute truth and there are no two ways about it but if people blame you for going against the flow of majority, or try to discourage you by calling names like "fanatics" or "extremists" then remember that even the best people in the world, who were Allah's chosen Prophets, were also taunted in the same way:

كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ
{52}

It has been the case that whenever a Rasool came to the peoples before them, they said about him: "He is a sorcerer or a madman."

In such a situation, be proud that you are following the examples of those blessed favourites of Allah, and keep running!! As for those who want you to change your direction and come back to their way of life.....just ignore them. This is the advice from our Lord:

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ {54}

So, O Prophet, ignore them; you are not at fault.

The best way to remain steadfast in the way of Allah is to invite others towards Allah too. And don't be afraid that no one is going to

listen to you. Just keep giving the message and surely those who believe will follow:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذُّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ {55}

But keep on admonishing them, for admonition is beneficial to the true believers.

After all, what are we here for..... if not for the worship of Allah?

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ {56}

We have not created jinns and mankind except to worship Me.

Mostly you will hear people say that they don't have time for prayers. They are too busy in their jobs and other worldly affairs. Although Allah doesn't forbid us to fulfil our needs, yet we cannot do so at the cost of ignoring the rights of Allah..... because He is our Creator and Owner and Provider of all needs:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ {58}

Surely it is Allah Who is the giver of all sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Invincible.

The message is bright and clear, authentic and without any doubt or confusion, that this world is a temporary abode where we all are being tested in our faith and actions. Our actual life is to begin on the day of Judgement and each of us will be given exactly what we worked for in this life. If we don't even think of the Hereafter, nor give it any priority, nor strive to achieve its rewards, nor fear its punishment.....then how can we expect Allah to forgive us on that day?

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ {60}

Woe then to the unbelievers, on that Day with which they are being threatened!

May Allah make us strong in our faith and give us the insight to distinguish between the truth and falsehood. May all our actions be according to Allah's commands so that He may forgive us on the day when nothing will save us except Allah's mercy and forgiveness, Ameen.

Surah At-Tur

Para-27

This Surah takes its name from its opening Ayat in which Allah has taken oath by the Mount Tur. It is the same mountain beside which Allah had spoken to Prophet Musa (a.s). If you think about it, what an honour it is for a person if he gets to talk directly with Allah. Often I used to feel such a longing that why doesn't Allah speak to us also? But then I understood that Allah is speaking to us all the time through this eternal Quran, yet we deprive ourselves of this miracle by never giving any time towards understanding its language. The purpose of Allah's communication with us is to give us a feeling of His presence, and to give us a firm conviction in the true religion of Islam and to guide us to the path of righteousness- the path of success. When we listen to Allah's words we are convinced that this world has not been created without a purpose. We understand that it is a test and there is, no doubt, a reward for the righteous ones and a painful torment for those who deny this message by their words or deeds.

To ensure that we don't take this warning lightly, Allah has taken oath of some other things too. But before we go into their detail we must consider the fact that even a simple statement from the Creator and Master of the Worlds, would have been enough for us to believe. Therefore if He has taken oath then it means we have to be very, very attentive of what He is warning us about. Another thing is that although we should understand about the things which Allah has chosen for taking oath but the ultimate attention should be on the object, the purpose.....which is to warn us of the terrible punishment:

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ {7}

مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ {8}

the torment of your Rabb will surely come to pass! There shall be none to avert it.

And what will happen on that terrifying day?

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا {9}

وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا {10}

On that Day, heaven will shake violently and the mountain will travel around.

If we are deluding ourselves by saying things like: "Well, I am not quite convinced" or "It doesn't quite make sense to me" then Listen to what Allah is saying to all those who reject the true warnings:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ {11}

On that Day, woe be to the deniers of truth

Have you ever thought why do some people believe and some do not? After all they have been created in the same mould so what's the big difference. Why do people who are otherwise so intelligent and capable, don't believe in Allah's words? The Quran says:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ {12}

who are engaged in their useless sports.

In this world people continue to enjoy their lives and are honoured by the society even if they are all the time disobeying Allah and earning His anger. But in the Hereafter they will be treated according to their deeds, according to their faith:

يَوْمَ يُدْعُونَ إِلَى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً {13}

On that Day they shall be shoved into the fire of hell with violence

And all their denial and their logics will be of no use:

هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ {14}

and it will be said to them: "This is the fire which you denied.

They amuse themselves by criticizing those who follow the true religion by saying that these poor people have been brainwashed. Just like the Prophets were blamed to be magicians. But on that day when they will be thrown into the fire, it will be asked:

أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ {15}

Is this a magic, or do you not see?

Allah does not do any injustice. In this world the path of righteousness might not be very pleasant at times. There might be difficulties and problems which are just a test from Allah and then people around you start blaming the religion that if it was so good then why are you being treated like this? Why doesn't Allah give you success which he promised? But we should remember that this world is not the place where we can see all the outcome of our deeds. The results will be shown in the hereafter when those who led a righteous life will be given the beautiful paradise:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ {17}

فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ {18}

As for the righteous, they will be in Gardens and bliss, rejoicing in what their Rabb has given them and their Rabb shall shield them from the torment of hell.

While people all around them were only concerned with the pleasures of the world, these Allah conscious people remembered that life is not made just for enjoyment but a test of obedience. Thus their reward will be the eternal enjoyment of Paradise.....a pleasure that will never fade:

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ {19}

It will be said to them: "Eat and drink to your heart's content, this is the reward for your good deeds."

It's a fact that our pleasure is not complete without our families. So Allah will join all the family members who followed the righteous path even if they are on different levels according to their deeds. Those on the lower ranks will be raised high to be united with their parents or children or spouses.....and even friends for the sake of Allah. As in a Hadith the Prophet (s.a.w) assured us: A man will be with the person whom he loves:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ {21}

We shall unite the true believers with those of their descendants who follow them in their faith, and shall not deny them the reward of their good deeds - everyone is responsible for his deeds

It is a clear reminder that we should not only be concerned with our own admission into the Paradise but should also take practical measures to take along our families and friends. Surely the following verses point towards the joy of playful activities which can only be enjoyed with our loved ones:

يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَّا لَعْوُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيمٌ {23}

They will exchange among themselves a cup of wine which shall cause no idle talk, nor sinful urge;

Another pleasurable activity is to sit with family and friends and remember the past incidents. In Paradise too they will engage in the same enjoyment:

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ {25}

They will converse with one another about their worldly life

They will remember the good deeds which they did to gain Allah's pleasure. And the best among them was that they feared Allah even when they were with their closest people....their families:

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ {26}

And say: "When we were living among our kinfolk, we were fearful (of displeasing Allah)

Some might say that what is so special about it? But if you think carefully you will understand that it is very easy to remain on *Tagwa* (fearing Allah and abstaining from wrong things) when you are with like-minded people or those whom you honour or even those who look up to you as an example to follow. But when you are alone with only your family members who know you inside and out, and for whom you cannot put on any false cloak of piety, then fearing Allah and not doing or saying anything which might displease Allah.....really shows the truth of your faith. The main characteristic of these Allah conscious people is that they never give themselves any credit for their goodness. They rightly believe it all to be a favour of Allah. So in Paradise too they will be expressing the same sentiments:

فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ {27}

So Allah conferred favour upon us and protected us from the punishment of the Scorching Fire.

The most important thing is that we should keep praying only to Allah and have faith that He will enable us to follow the right path if we remain true to our commitment. This is what the people of paradise will remember:

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ {28}

Indeed we used to pray only to Him. Surely He is the Beneficent, the Merciful."

Although the above Ayat is so clear, and this faith in one Allah is such a straight forward thing but those who stubbornly deny the truth can come up with a thousand excuses, simply because they don't want to lose their false pride in their own "principles" and philosophies of life.

The disbelievers of Makkah were also using all tactics prove that this Quran is nothing but poetry and that the Prophet (s.a.w) was just making it up or was under some kind of spell. Therefore in the following verses Allah has asked them a series of questions, in a powerful style of interrogation, to make them ponder over the folly of their allegations against the same person whom they had known all their life to be the most truthful and honest one:

أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ {32}

Do their faculties of reasoning prompt them to say this? Or is it merely that they are wicked people?

Is it really possible that the Quran could be fabricated? Don't they have any sense?

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ {33}

Do they say: "This man has invented this *Qur'an* himself?" Nay! They do not want to believe

If it is such a simple thing then why don't they bring a scripture like this?

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ {34}

Let them produce a scripture like this, if what they say is true!

If they deny Allah then how did they create themselves?

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ {35}

Were they created without a Creator? Or were they their own creators?

If they think that they give birth to their children then what about the universe?

أَمْ حَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ {36}

Did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay! They will never be convinced.

They think they control the world. So are they really the distributors of wealth?

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيِّرُونَ {37}

Do they possess the treasures of your Rabb? Or is it they who control them?

Or do they have access to the heaven from where they get proof of their theories?

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ {38}

Do they have a stairway to heaven by means of which they overhear Him? If so, let any of them who overheard Him, bring clear proof.

Some people avoid these reminders as if they will be asked for any payment for listening to the truth. But the true caller to faith, like the Prophet (s.a.w), will never ask for any reward or payment:

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ {40}

Do you ask them payment for your services, that they should fear to be overburdened by a debt?

The truth is that all the deniers of Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w) have something else in their hearts which they depend on as the provider of their needs. It could be any idol or grave or wealth or power, anything which they believe will sustain them and save them:

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ {43}

Do they have a god other than Allah? Exalted is Allah, far above those deities they associate with Him.

Their mistaken belief and stubbornness to accept the truth makes them see everything from a distorted vision. Therefore Allah says that even if they see a sign of punishment coming over them they will dismiss it something resulting from physical laws of the universe....not giving a thought to the One who made these laws as well as the universe:

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ {44}

They are such people that, even if they will see a part of heaven falling down, they would say: "It is but a mass of clouds."

After all the efforts to remove the misunderstanding from the minds of these people and sincerely calling them to the way of Allah, the last thing to do is to ignore them:

فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ {45}

So leave them alone until they encounter that Day of theirs wherein they shall be made to swoon with terror.

It is very important to understand the above ayat in its context because there are people who want to do this as soon as someone disagrees with their point of view. No, it is not what is meant here. See for yourself how for thirteen years the Prophet (s.a.w) and His followers remained in Makkah facing all hardships but still continued to invite people to Islam. It was only after all had been said and done that they were ordered by Allah to migrate to Madinah. Similarly we should also try our utmost with all sincerity and goodness of behaviour to call people to the right way. But after a certain time when we are convinced that we have done all that we could have done, then it is best to ignore them, because at times they not only deny the message but also try to put doubts in our minds about the Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w) as well as the Quran

and Hadith. Therefore we should avoid such people especially if they are dominating and make us lose our faith and energy.

The thing to do in all such trying situations is Sabar (patience) as Allah is sending His love and comfort in the following Ayat:

{48} وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ
{49} وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ

Therefore, wait for the Judgment of your Rabb with patience, We are surely watching over you. Glorify your Rabb with His praises when you wake up and glorify Him in a part of the night, and also as the stars fade away.

Allah is so kind to us. He wants us to avoid the most dangerous thing which might creep into our heart and be a cause of destruction of all our goodness. That dangerous poison is self admiration or thinking oneself to be perfect. Naturally when we mingle too much with people who are unfortunately not on the right track, we feel sorry for them but sometimes we also feel superior to them because Allah has shown us the right way. That is why Allah is reminding us that to avoid this kind of feeling we only have one tool..... which is to keep glorifying Allah, at all times. Thus we will always be alert and conscious that it is Allah alone, who is most Supreme and free from flaws. Whereas we human beings can never declare ourselves free from punishment until Allah has mercy on us on the day of judgement. At the end of the day, only those who live with this attitude will, Insha'Allah, be able to say with all satisfaction of having escaped the horrors of fire and sitting contentedly in the pleasures of Paradise:

{27} فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَّانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ

But Allah has been gracious to us; He has delivered us from the fiery scourge.

Surah An-Najm



An-Najm means star. In the first ayat of this Surah, Allah has taken oath of the stars to prove to the non-believers that Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon Him) was exactly on the right path. The people of Makkah were witness of the fact that all through his life, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) had never been involved in any indecent activity. His truthfulness and honesty was a recognized fact; so why now, when he had brought to them the true religion of Allah, were they doubting him and spreading false propaganda against him?

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ {1}

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ {2}

By the star when it sets, your companion (*Muhammad*) is neither astray, nor misguided

The oath of the stars and their setting is also a proof, that just as stars have a fixed orbit and they never deviate from their path, similarly the Prophet (s.a.w) was firmly following the true revelation from Allah. Therefore, just as people take guidance from the stars to find the direction in the darkness of the land or sea, similarly we should follow the Prophet (s.a.w) with complete confidence that He was, and is, the absolutely best person in the entire history of mankind who practically demonstrated the pure and complete religion of Allah.

The disbelievers of Makkah were labelling the Quran as a mere fabrication but Allah is warning all those who think on these lines.

Unlike common human beings, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was never influenced by his own desires to such an extent that He could have done or said anything which was against the truth. Rather he spoke only what was being revealed to Him:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ {3}

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ {4}

Nor does he speak out of his own desire. This *Qur'an* is but an inspired revelation.

The best knowledge is delivered by the best of people so Allah chose His best angel Gabriel to teach this most noble Book of Quran to the best of mankind, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w)

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ {5}

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ {6}

He is being taught by one who is mighty powerful (*angel Gabriel*); the one free from defects who became stable in the view.

Allah, *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*, knows us so well. He knew that people would deny the truth and put doubts in others minds too. Therefore it was His supreme wisdom and Judgement that He not only sent the revelation through the most powerful angel, Gabriel, but also made him appear in his actual form to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). The following verses are testimony to the fact that our beloved Prophet had the magnificent experience of watching the mighty angel with his own eyes:

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ {7}

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ {8}

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ {9}

He stood poised at the uppermost horizon, then he drew near, coming closer within the length of two bows or even closer,

Look at how the above verses reflect Allah's love and mercy that He gradually brought the angel close to the Prophet (s.a.w), because Gabriel (a.s) was so awesome in size and grandeur that it would have been difficult for Prophet (s.a.w) to see him at close range, all at once. But now when he saw him, there was no doubt in the Prophet's heart of what was apparent before his eyes:

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى {11}

His (Muhammad's) own heart did not deny that which he saw.

Next, Allah tells us that it was not a one-time incident on which the deniers of truth could cast a doubt that maybe the Prophet (s.a.w) was mistaken. Therefore, he saw Gabriel one more time when he was taken to the journey of the heavens, which is commonly known as the incident of Mairaaaj:

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى {13}

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى {14}

And he (Muhammad) saw him once again, near Sidra-tul-Muntaha (the Lote-tree at the farthest end of the seven heavens, beyond which none can pass).

Normally when people see any extraordinary scene, they cannot control their nerves and lose their focus simply because they don't have the wisdom of what to see, and what to ignore. But the Prophet (s.a.w) was a man of extraordinary wisdom and composure:

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى {17}

His eyes did not turn aside nor did they exceed the limit

Thus Allah made him see many signs of His power, including the Paradise and hell, so that when He spread Allah's message to people

and warned them about the realities of life and death, he could speak from first-hand knowledge and experience:

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى {18}

And he did indeed see some of his Rabb's greatest signs.

Although it can be read as a beautiful incident, and while reading it, we can feel the magnificence of Allah, yet I always feel that behind every beautiful ayat, or sign of Allah is an important lesson, which must be contemplated, because Quran is not just for intellectual enjoyment, or spiritual fulfilment, rather its real purpose is to guide us.....whether it is through direct commands or through these mesmerising descriptions, which captivate our imagination.

There are two very important things that I learned from this incident: firstly that our life is incomplete without the revealed knowledge, which Allah sent to our Prophet (s.a.w). And secondly I have come to realize that if Allah has taken such care to provide us with definite proofs of the heaven and hell, and of the angel Gabriel then it means that when we follow anything in the name of religion then we must base it on authentic facts.

On the contrary, we see that whatever idols, or gods that people worship besides Allah, is not based on any proof, but it is their own self created ideas which have been passed down through generations. Like the Arabs, who believed that angels were the daughters of Allah and had named them accordingly.....Allah puts an end to such speculations:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآحِرَةِ لَيْسُمُونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَى {27}

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا
{28}

Those who do not believe in the hereafter give the angels the female names of goddesses. But they have no knowledge of it. They follow mere conjecture; and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all.

But why do people lay the foundations of their lives according to false notions and not on authentic knowledge? It is because they want to fulfil their worldly interests and they don't want to take any responsibility of their actions in the Hereafter. So what to do when people don't want to face the truth? Allah has the most perfect answer for everything:

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا {29}

Therefore, ignore those who ignore Our warnings and seek only the life of this world.

Those who are blindly involved in the affairs of this world and have no concern about the Hereafter believe that worldly knowledge is all that they need to be successful:

ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّٰ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ
اهْتَدَىٰ {30}

This is the sum of their knowledge. Surely your Rabb knows who have strayed from His path, and who are rightly guided.

But we should be careful not to get so involved in this world that we think it to be our destination. Always remember that Allah created this universe for a purpose:

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ
الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَىٰ {31}

To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth, so that He may requite the evildoers according to their deeds, and richly reward those who do good deeds.

Success is for those who belong to this second category of people: "Allazina Ahsanu" i.e. those who do good deeds. But then we are human beings and we are likely to fall into errors, so how can we become totally good? The answer is here:

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا
أَنفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى {32}

Those who avoid the major sins and shameful deeds and are guilty of only small offense, surely for them your Rabb will have abundant forgiveness. He knew you well when He created you from earth and when you were just embryos in your mother's wombs, therefore, do not claim piety for yourselves. He knows best who is really God-fearing pious.

Now this is a Superb Ayat which needs to be really understood well, because it gives us a clear guideline on what to do and what not to do. The most important thing to learn from it is that we MUST stay away from all major sins as well as indecency of all kinds, except what is called "*lamam*" which means small and momentary. Like, for example, you happen to look at something which you were not supposed to see but immediately you should turn your gaze and ask forgiveness from Allah. In other words it could be stated as a slight lapse from your efforts of goodness. We must try our utmost to reduce these lapses too but we should also remember that we cannot become perfect angels and so we should always be positively hopeful of Allah's forgiveness and never give up our struggle of becoming the best representatives of Islam. Next Allah has reminded us that even if we become successful in this struggle, we should never think of ourselves as pure because after all we are just humans and only Allah knows us exactly as we are.

The polytheists of Makkah and the Jews in Madinah were most stubbornly resisting the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and refused to accept Him as a Prophet of Allah. On the other hand they were fond of calling themselves as the followers of Ibrahim (a.s) and Musa (a.s) respectively. But if they really knew what their prophets had taught them then it should not be difficult for them to recognize that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was also calling them to the same religion:

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى {36}

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى {37}

Or has he not been notified about what was in the scrolls of Musa (Moses) and of Ibrahim (Abraham) who always kept his word

Did they not warn them about the accountability of the Hereafter?

أَلَا تَنْزُرُ وَازِرَةً وَّرَ أُخْرَى {38}

“That no soul shall bear the burden of another

And did they not know that they only get from life what they strive for? So if all their investments are for this world and they don't put in any effort for the hereafter then how can they expect to be rewarded for things which they didn't do?

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى {39}

That there shall be nothing for a man except what he strives for

Sometimes it happens that we want to do good deeds but our lives revolve around other things which gratify our desires. So that when we feel guilty we try to satisfy our conscience by saying things like “I do try to pray regularly but it is impossible to maintain the routine” or “I do want to study the Quran but I hardly have any time for myself”these statements can be just excuses, and we should

be well aware that we can fool others by pretending to be Allah conscious, but we cannot deceive Allah. It is also true that sometimes we consistently make genuine efforts, but we fail to achieve our targets. In both cases we should remember that our efforts are not hidden from Allah. He really knows how much effort we have made, and He also knows the deepest reality of our intentions. So we should neither be self satisfied with outward success, nor depressed due to lack of results:

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى {40}

That his striving shall be scrutinized,

ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجِزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى {41}

Then he shall be rewarded for it with the fullest reward

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ {42}

That to your Rabb is the final goal,

He is the one who gave us life and He is the one who will take it back so what should be our objective if not to spend this life for Him? Allah has created so much for us... to observe and to think upon, and He has destroyed those who refused to admit the truth.....then how CAN we deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَىٰ {55}

Then which of your Rabb's blessings would you doubt?

There is not much time left.....we have to turn to Allah while we still can, otherwise the hour of judgement is very close upon us:

أَزِفَتْ الْآزِفَةُ {57}

The ever approaching (*the Day of Judgment*) is drawing near

No one can save us from its torment except Allah:

لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ {58}

None but Allah can remove it.

Those who read these verses with open eyes and listen to Allah's words with an open heart, can feel the urgency of their need for the right path- the right way of life....before it is too late.....but there are some who are so steeped in their ignorance that they fail to realize the seriousness of this test of life. Allah asks them:

أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ {59}

Do you then wonder at this revelation?

وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ {60}

And laugh instead of weeping?

وَأَنْتُمْ سَامِدُونَ {61}

Rather you are wasting your (precious) lifetime in pastime and amusements?

So we should fear Allah and bow down to Him, not just in one *Sajdah* (prostration) but a complete submission of our whole life for His sake:

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَعَبُدُوا {62}

Prostrate yourselves before Allah and worship Him while you can!

It has been recorded in a Hadith that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) recited this Surah in an open gathering in which many disbelievers of the Quraish were also present. When He reached at the end and recited this last verse, He bowed down in prostration; upon which the whole gathering, including the Quraish, were so moved by the words that without realizing they also did *Sajdah*.

So we should also check the state of our own hearts. Are we affected by these warnings? What is the level of our love and fear of Allah?

May Allah make our hearts receptive to His words, Ameen.

Surah Al-Qamar



Imagine yourself on an aeroplane. When you take off from the land you feel the awesome pull of the aircraft against the gravity as you leave behind the solid, secure earth and go higher and higher in the air. For some people, it is a thrilling joy to see everything getting smaller and smaller and for some of us, it can be a frightening experience.....but after a while you get used to the drone of the engines and as the view from the window is reduced to a blur, you start focusing on the things and people around you. The newspapers, magazines and eventually the food.....distract your attention, and the realization that you are hanging in the air, is diminished....until you almost forget it. But as soon as the plane starts descending and the announcement is made that you are about to reach your destination, everybody is again alert, and start fastening the seat belts.....the anticipation and anxiety creeps into your system.....until you land safely.

Similarly our life is also a journey on this earth, which is like a huge air bus travelling through space with unimaginable speed. We have a whole world full of people and things and activities to make our journey comfortable and meaningful but these distractions have succeeded in making us totally oblivious of our actual state of helplessness. And most of us have even forgotten where we are going, and what are we supposed to do before we disembark?

The first Ayat of Surah Al-Qamar is actually an announcement of the end of our flight.....we are about to touch reality.....

اَفْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَاَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ {1}

The Hour of Doom is drawing near, the moon has split asunder; (which is a clear proof that the same thing can happen to the earth.)

We have to understand the purpose of this journey, which is to worship only Allah and live our life according to His guidance, because we are going to meet Him at the end of this journey and face the consequences of all our actions. It is an illusion that this life seems so long and we think we will come back to the right path after we have satisfied our desires. But we just have been given a specific time and we have no idea how little that might be.....

When Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) delivered the message of Allah to the people of Makkah, most of them strongly rejected the concept of resurrection. They refused to accept Him as being the Messenger of Allah and demanded that if this world is really going to come to an end then there should be some physical sign, some miracle that should be shown to them as a proof. So five years before the *Hijrah* (migration) of the Prophet (s.a.w) to Madinah, Allah made them witness a miracle; when one night they saw the moon split into two pieces and the two halves were so separated that each one appeared on either side of the mount *Hira*. After a moment the moon was again joined together. You would think that after seeing such a tremendous sign of Allah's power, they would have accepted the truth; but it did not affect their attitude at all.....stubbornly they said that it was just some kind of magic and nothing else:

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ {2}

Yet when they see a sign, the unbelievers turn their backs and say: "This is an ingenious magic."

Why do people persist in remaining ignorant of the truth? Why don't they accept even such clear proofs? It is because their lives revolve

around their own desires and their false self image makes it almost impossible for them to admit that they were chasing the wrong ideals. Therefore they prefer to turn a blind eye to all those things which make them uncomfortably aware of the truth:

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ {3}

And they denied and kept on following their own fancies. Ultimately every matter shall be laid to rest.

The splitting of the moon was not the only sign of Allah's power; rather, the people of Makkah were also well informed about the nations which had been destroyed before them, because of rejecting Allah's message which the Prophets had brought to them.....

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ {4}

There has already come to them the information of former nations containing enough deterrents

They could have learned a lot of wisdom from the lessons of history but it did not benefit them at all. It is a fact that when someone constantly rejects the truth then his heart becomes sealed:

حِكْمَةٌ بِالْعِزَّةِ فَمَا تُغْنِ التُّذُرُ {5}

And profound wisdom to serve as a warning, but warnings are of no use to these people.

Allah has given us the choice to think and choose our way of life in this world but those who misuse this choice, and reject Allah's guidance should not forget that there will come a day when they will not be able to say "no" to the caller, who will call them towards the final Judgement:

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ نَكُرٍ {6}

Therefore, O Prophet, let them be. On the Day when the caller will call them to a terrible event....

How helpless will be the state of people.....imagine all the seemingly powerful people, their arrogance, their affluent life styles, their pomp and splendour....and then read the following words:

{7} خُشِعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ

They shall come out from their graves, like swarming locusts, with downcast eyes

The arrogant speeches and arguments against Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w) will all be forgotten and they will be rushing blindly towards their fate:

{8} مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ

Rushing towards the caller and the same unbelievers will cry: "This is indeed an awful Day!"

But man is trapped in such an illusion that if he has any power or status he thinks he can insult anyone who dares to speak against his interests. Look at the way the people of Prophet Nuh (a.s) treated him when he brought to them Allah's clear guidance:

{9} كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدُجِرَ

Long before them, the people of Nuh (*Noah*) disbelieved. They rejected Our servant, called him a madman and drove him out.

They were flying so high in their arrogance that they forgot their own helplessness. Allah sent upon them a mighty flood which drowned everything except the boat carrying Prophet Nuh (a.s) and the few people who had believed in Allah:

{13} وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ الْأَوْحِاجِ وَدُسِّرِ

{14} بَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءَ لِمَن كَانَ كُفِرَ

We carried him *in an Ark* built with planks and nails, which drifted on under Our care: a reward for him (*Noah*) who was denied *by the unbelievers*.

This shows Allah's extreme mercy and compassion for His messenger and for the believers of truth.....but at the same time His punishment for those who stubbornly reject His message, is also evident:

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرٍ {16}

How terrible was My scourge and how clear My warning!

The only thing that can save us from such a fate is to live in a state of Allah consciousness. Whatever we do, wherever we go, there should always be an awareness that none of our acts should go against Allah's desire. This is nothing new for us. Being Muslims we know all this, yet we see that there is a widespread confusion about what exactly is the right way of life. There have become so many sects within Islam that even those who want to follow it, are unsure of where to find it, in its real spirit? The reason for all this confusion is that we have deprived ourselves from the true source of Guidance.....which is Quran.....the word of Allah; most carefully preserved in its original form.....for people of all times:

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ {17}

We have indeed made the Qur'an very easy to understand and remember: but is there any who would remember (and take admonition)?

This is just a misunderstanding that Quran is only for scholars. Allah is saying in such clear words that He has himself made it easy for us to understand and now it's up to us.....how we contemplate and receive its guidance. Apparently it might seem an awesome task to learn its language and understand its meanings, but those who have made an effort are witness to the pure simplicity of its teachings. This is the only book in the world which has been read by all sorts of people. Even illiterate people can benefit from its clear guidance because Allah has given such simple examples in it from everyday

life. Simultaneously we see that along with simplicity, there is an amazing depth in its words which stimulates the intellect of highly learned people too. Therefore everyone should study it with a desire to learn what Allah wants us to do.....and Allah will open the doors of His guidance and inspiration.

Next Allah gives us some other examples from history where people of extraordinary talents and prosperity, refused to listen to the message of Allah's prophets and consequently faced a terrible end:

{18} كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

Likewise the people of 'Ad did not believe then how terrible was My scourge and how clear My Warning!

These people of 'Ad were extremely powerful, not only in skills but also in physical attributes; but when they continually rejected the message of Allah, He sent to them a severely cold wind which gave them a humiliating punishment:

{19} إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ

{20} تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُّنْقَعِرٍ

We let loose on them a tornado, on the day of their bitter misfortune, which snatched them off like trunks of uprooted palm-trees.

Just imagine what a terrifying scene it would be when these powerful people were reduced to such humiliation.....being tossed around like dead trees. But then the people of Thamud also made the same error. They were also very proud of their worldly success, and thought that the Prophet Salih (a.s) was just spreading some self created stories or lies. So they said:

{25} أَلْقِيَ الذُّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرُّ

Was he the only person among us to receive this warning? Nay! He is indeed an insolent liar."

Then they demanded for some miracle and Allah sent to them a she-camel, about which they had been warned not to give her any harm.....but they killed it thinking that they could get away with whatever they desired. Consequently Allah gave them a painful end:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُخْتَطِرِ {31}

We let loose on them one mighty blast and they became like the trampled twigs used by a fence builder.

Again Allah says that He has made Quran so easy to understand so is there anyone who will try to understand?

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ {32}

We have indeed made the Qur'an very easy to understand the admonition, so is there any who would take admonition?

Allah's guidance has always been clear and simple but people themselves choose to remain misguided, thinking in their arrogance that it is a sign of independent thinking that they should live by their own laws and not to follow the teachings of Prophets whom they perceive to be just ordinary people. Their tall egos don't permit them to admit that the Messengers of Allah had more knowledge than anyone else, because the revelations which they received directly from Allah contained the complete truth which is required for our salvation.....But arrogance keeps most of us misguided.

Allah is telling us here that rejection of truth is not a new phenomenon:

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ {33}

(Another example is) the people of Lut (Lot) who disbelieved Our warning.

Prophet Lut (a.s) had warned them of Allah's wrath but they did not listen:

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ {36}

Lut did warn them of Our scourge but they doubted his warnings.

They were the first people to indulge in homosexuality, and it had blinded their senses to such an extent that when the angels came to the Prophet's house in the guise of young men, these people rushed to have them.....nothing mattered to them except the fulfilment of their lust:

وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ {37}

They even sought to snatch away his guests from him but We blinded their eyes, and said: "Now taste My punishment and the result of disbelieving My warning."

So they were crushed beneath a painful torment:

وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ {38}

فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ {39}

At daybreak they were overtaken by a lasting punishment.... as if to say: "Now taste My punishment and the result of disbelieving My warning."

What can be easier to understand than these stories full of admonition and wisdom?

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّذَكِّرٍ {40}

We have indeed made the Qur'an very easy to understand the admonition, so is there any who would take admonition?

The same thing happened to Pharaoh, when he thought himself to be indestructible:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرِ {41}

My warnings also came to the people of Fir'on (Pharaoh).

He thought he could easily wipe out Musa (a.s) and his followers, but Allah saved them and caused the mighty pharaoh and all his troops to drown helplessly in the sea.....not even a soul was saved:

{42} كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخَذَ عَزِيزٌ مُّقْتَدِرٌ

They disbelieved all Our signs. Consequently, We seized them with a seizure of the Mighty, Powerful.

Now Allah asks those who disbelieve in Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), that are they better than the disbelievers of earlier times? Or is there any other reason for their arrogance?

{43} أَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَوْلَائِكُمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ

(O Quraish) are your unbelievers better than they were, or have you been granted immunity in the Sacred Books?

How can they delude themselves when Allah has sent such clear warnings?

{45} سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ

{46} بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَىٰ وَأَمْرٌ

Soon will their multitude be routed and put to flight. Nay! The Hour of Judgment is the time promised to deal with them. That hour will be the most grievous and bitter.

Those who persist in their disbelief and do not bother to read the Quran or follow the teachings of Prophet (s.a.w) should know that they are committing a terrible crime, even if they are in any illusion of being "good people":

{47} إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ

Yet, surely the criminals persist in error and madness

In this world they made fun of the believers that they were being overly concerned with the torment of Hell.....their constant claim is

that Allah is so merciful and He cannot burn anyone....but Allah is warning them that this fire will definitely touch those who made fun of it, and made no effort to save their souls from it:

{48} يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ

On that Day when they will be dragged into the fire with their faces downwards, We shall say: "Feel the touch of hell!"

Everything in this universe has been created with a specific purpose and a perfect measure, whether it's the universe with all the countless stars and galaxies, or the plants and animals with their amazing structures and movements.....

{49} إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

Surely We have created everything in perfect ordainment (destiny and purpose).

It doesn't take Allah any time to implement His decisions. It was no big deal for Him to create all the worlds and likewise its destruction will also happen within the blink of an eye:

{50} وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ

We command but once and Our will is done in the twinkling of an eye.

So instead of making guesses about when that time will occur, we should be more focused on our deeds.....because these actions of ours during this journey of life will be like a ticket to our next destination. And remember that we will not be able to make any false claims over there; as each and every thought, word and deed is being recorded:

{52} وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ

{53} وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَنْطَرٌ

All that they do is being added to their record books: every action, small and big is being noted down.

And so at the end of this Surah, Allah is showing us the glimpse of the splendid gardens of delight.....the beautiful paradise, which He has prepared so lovingly for the ones who remained faithful to Him in the worldly life. These people willingly sacrificed their egos and desires for the sake of Allah.....so He will give them this wonderful reward where all their desires will be fulfilled eternally:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ {54}

Surely the righteous will be in the midst of gardens and rivers,

In addition to all the comforts and pleasures of life, one thing which we all desire is honour. But true honour is only for those who are true in their commitment with Allah and who honour His religion, and His Quran and His Prophet (s.a.w).....Not only in this world but also in the hereafter, Allah will honour these truthful people:

فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ {55}

a place of true honour, in the presence of Almighty Sovereign.

Just imagine the beauty of Paradise and then to be given a seat of honour near Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*..... Can there be any honour superior to this? So are we willing to Honour His words? Are we willing to give Him the most precious place in our hearts? Are we willing, to worship Him in the true sense of the word?

May Allah make us of those who reflect on these superb reminders and warnings, and live up to the true guidance, Ameen

Surah Al-Rahman

Para-27

Al-Rahman is the glorious name of Allah which reflects His extraordinary compassion and mercy for His creatures; and Surah Al-Rahman is an expression of Allah's countless blessings and favours on us, which are spread over this entire universe; and are not confined merely to this world but also go far beyond these physical boundaries into the eternal life of the hereafter. If we make a list of these blessings in order of superiority, beginning with the most important thing of our life.....what would that be? For different individuals it could be a different thing according to what they value most in their lives. But have you ever wondered, what is the absolutely best gift of love and mercy which Allah has bestowed on Mankind? The answer to this question is right here in the opening verses of Surah Al-Rahman:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الرَّحْمَنُ {1}
عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ {2}

The Most Compassionate (Allah).

Has taught (you mankind) the Qur'an

The Quran is to our life what the heart is to the human being. If the heart stops working then the body dies even if all other things are in first class condition. Similarly if we are not on the true guidance of the Quran, nothing else is going to benefit us at all. Therefore Allah has reminded us here that we should stop taking this book for granted and open our eyes to the fact that this is the supreme knowledge, wisdom, and cure of hearts.....coming directly from the

Lord. What a great injustice it is if we keep ourselves deprived from this treasure.

Another thing that we take for granted is our own creation. We are so rushed into the endless chores of our existence that we seldom think of the fact that Allah has created us....planned our lives, gave us individual characteristics, talents, abilities, physical attributes.....and most important of all: the power of speech....

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ {3} عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ {4}

Created man and taught him how to convey *his feelings and thoughts*.

We all know that human beings hold a distinguished position in the universe because of their intelligence but have you ever considered that if Allah had not taught us the art to express our thoughts and feelings, our thinking abilities would have been useless. But look at how we are using this ability.....chatting endlessly about inconsequential things, arguing on the same issues over and over again, back biting, telling lies, making false accusations, spreading rumours, making fun of others.....so many sins; all through speech. And even those few people who refrain from these acts seldom think that true appreciation of this great blessing is to use it for the sake of Allah.

In fact being a truly faithful slave of Allah requires complete submission. The whole universe is following Allah's laws.....Look at the sun and the moon how they are glorifying their Lord through their eternal submission, along with the stars and the vegetation spread across the earth:

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ {5} وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ {6}

The sun and the moon move along their computed courses. The shrubs and the trees prostrate in adoration.

Then look at the sky and ponder over its perfect balance:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ {7}

He has raised the heaven high and created the balance

These things are not just for beauty but each one is teaching us a lesson as well:

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ {8}

That you not transgress within the balance.

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ {9}

And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.

Just imagine that if Allah had given all things the power of choice and for just a minute the sun refused to obey Allah and decided to come towards the earth.....what a disaster that could be? But we should remember that if we disobey Allah and destroy the balance, the consequences will be worse than any worldly disaster, even if we cannot see it right now.

Allah made this world so comfortable for us to live in peace but we have not given it the due appreciation. So Allah reminds us of His various blessings which are the basis of our existence..... First of all a place to live:

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ {10}

He laid out the earth for His creatures

And then food for survival and pleasure:

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ {11}

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ {12}

With all its fruits and palms having sheathed clusters, and grain with husk and scented herbs.

This Surah has a great quality of rhythm and when you read it or listen to its recitation you will instantly feel its soothing effect. Moreover, if you understand the words, then you can imagine a picture in your mind, of a tremendously affectionate and kind Lord, giving you life and a religion of peace by which you can ensure a peaceful existence in this world and everlasting success and peace in the eternal gardens of pleasure. What more do we need? Yet we see that the only thing lacking in our lives is peace of heart. We might be living like kings and have all the luxuries that money can buy but still we are deprived of the one thing.....peace.....peace of heart and peace in our homes and peace in our environment. The reason is that we are not grateful for whatever Allah has given us and always keep yearning for things which are out of our reach. This attitude creates in us a general feeling of thanklessness and depression and moves us away from Allah.....Therefore to make us come out of our dissatisfaction Allah has repeatedly asked us one question in this Surah.....

{13} فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

The word "Alaa" refers not only to the favours of Allah but is also used for the amazing signs of His power. So from this verse onwards Allah takes us through a series of eye-openers.....focusing our attention on His miracles and after each one He asks us the same question.....how can we deny His miracles? And this question is addressed to mankind and also the Jinns because they are also the creatures who had been given the choice of obedience, and so they will also be held accountable if they deny the rights of Allah. And among His rights is that we acknowledge that He created us.....

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ {14}

He created man from clay similar to pottery

Even if we cannot see the jinns we believe that Allah has created them as well:

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَّارٍ {15}

And created jinns from smokeless fire.

He is the Lord, the Sustainer of the whole universe whichever direction you follow, you will find Him:

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ {17}

He is Rabb of the two easts and the Rabb of the two wests.

The two easts and two wests symbolize the rising and setting of the sun.....What a miracle it is that every point of sunrise is also a sunset for the people living on the opposite side of the globe.....and every sunset is a sunrise.....Allah's mercy never stops!!

فَبَأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {18}

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

This huge expanse of earth is mostly water.....and so, from the sun, Allah takes us to the miracles of the oceans in which different currents of water flow side by side without mixing up:

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ {19} بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَّا يَبْغِيَانِ {20}

He has made the two oceans apparently meeting together... yet between them is a barrier which they cannot cross

From both these waters there are benefits for the mankind:

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ {22}

He produces pearls and coral from both of them

And upon that water in which a single pin gets drowned, you witness huge ships like mountains.....going from one end to the other by the mercy of Allah:

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ {24}

His are the ships looming up like mountains on the sea

Surely we cannot refuse to acknowledge these favours of Allah?

فَبَأَيِّ آلاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {25}

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

Before studying the Quran, I used to marvel at the ships and aeroplanes and skyscrapers.....and believed them to be the miracles of mankind. Only through the Quran I came to recognize that these things too are Allah's blessings..... because Allah created the Human brain and the resources from which man has been able to produce so many things. Unfortunately this basic truth is kept hidden from us and so we don't recognize or appreciate Allah as we should. That is the reason why we are so far away from Him and why our hearts are so immersed in the accumulation of things which fail to satisfy our souls no matter how far we progress in the world. Everything here is so temporary.....soon to end:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ {26}

All that exists on the earth will perish

Except the one and only Allah.....who will never die:

وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ {27}

But the Face of your Rabb will remain.... full of Majesty and Glory

Just as the creation of this universe is a miracle of Allah, similarly the end is also a sign of His power.....because it shows that He is so

Magnificent and self sufficient that He doesn't depend on His creation.....he doesn't need anything. Compare it with any of your own creation and your attitude towards its preservation.....the heartbreak you feel if it is lost or broken.....can you ever have the courage to break your own piece of craft? We are so weak in front of Him.....So then how can we deny the Al-mighty Rabb?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {28}

Then, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's glories will both of you deny?

We are all dependent on Him.....and He is all the time giving us:

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ {29}

All who dwell in the heavens and the earth, implore Him for their needs, every moment He is busy in some mighty task

We recognize His power to give us but we don't recognize our duty towards Him.... which is to be His obedient slaves. It is His decision that He does not punish us in this world and lets us have our way; so people think that they can keep avoiding His accountability forever. In the following Ayat, Allah challenges them to how far can they run away from Him?

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَأَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ {33}

O you, the assembly of jinns and men! If you have the power to get away from the boundaries of the heavens and the earth (to escape from His punishment), then get away! You cannot get away except with Our Own authority

Allah's power is not something to take lightly:

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ {35}

The flames of fire and molten brass will be unleashed on you both, jinn and men, and you will not be able to defend yourselves.

This universe was not created just for our enjoyment and fulfilment of desires. It is just a test and when it will end, the lovely blue sky which gives such a peaceful feeling of security, will turn into a painful red colour:

فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ {37}

When the heaven will burst and will become red like red hide

Who will be able to deny it?

فَبَأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {38}

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

The criminals who rejected the truth from Allah and led a disobedient life will be given their due punishment:

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأُقْدَامِ {41}

The sinners will be recognized by their faces and they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet

They will no longer be able to deny the facts:

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ {43}

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آتِنِ {44}

It will be said to them: "This is the hell which the culprits denied." They shall go around between fire and hot boiling water.

This terrible scene fills one with fear.....fear of Allah's anger. And in turn this fear makes us humble. But our attitude towards Allah should be a combination of fear and love. Fear makes us avoid sins while love inspires us with hope and energy to do as much as we can for the pleasure of Allah. This love is intensified when Allah shows us the glimpses of the paradise which He has prepared for all those who fear the day of judgement and act accordingly:

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ {46}

For those who fear the time when they will have to stand before their Rabb there are two gardens.

Isn't this the most wonderful blessing.....

فَبَأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {47}

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

Imagine the greenery:

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ {48}

Having shady trees with lush green branches.

The beautiful rivers:

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ {50}

Each of them will be watered by two flowing springs.

The delicious fruits:

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ {52}

In both of them there will be two pairs of every fruit.

Luxurious sitting arrangements:

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ {54}

They will recline on couches upholstered with rich brocade while the fruit of the gardens will be within their easy reach.

Beautiful companions:

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ {56}

Therein will be women limiting their glances, whom neither any man nor jinn has touched before.

Captivating like jewels:

كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ {58}

As beautiful as though they were rubies and corals

Allah is asking another question here which fills my heart with love and happiness:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ {60}

Could the reward for goodness be anything but goodness?

In this world one sometimes feels as if nothing is going right. You might be trying so hard with your own self and with people but the results are often not up to our expectations. In such times we should remember that Allah is recording all our efforts. How can we doubt His generosity?

فَبَأَيِّ آلاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {61}

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

The pleasures of the paradise are not restricted to just two gardens. There will be others far more beautiful than the previous ones:

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٍ {62}

And besides these two there shall be two other gardens

Greener than our imagination:

مُدْهَامَّتَانِ {64}

Densely shaded with dark green trees.

With gushing fountains:

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاخَتَانِ {66}

In both of them there will be two gushing springs.

And fruits in abundance....

فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ {68}

Each planted with fruit trees, dates and pomegranates

Mesmerising, beautiful companions:

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حَسَنَاتٌ {70}

In each of them, there will be chaste and beautiful women.

Unimaginable luxuries:

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى رُفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبَقَرِيٍّ حَسَانٍ {76}

Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets.

What more can we desire!

فَبَأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ {77}

So, O jinn and men, which of your Rabb's favours will both of you deny?

Isn't it ironical that we keep trying to create these luxuries in this world and still cannot match this grandeur of the Paradise which Allah has already created.....the thing to do here is to stop going after these illusions and enrich our hearts with Allah's love and fear, fill our souls with the peace of His remembrance, beautify our lives with His obedience, and strive hard to attain the highest levels of the real paradise.....

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ {78}

Blessed be the name of your Rabb, His Majesty and His Honour

Surah Al-Mujadalah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We all know that complaining is a bad habit. And it becomes a sin when you start exaggerating in your complaints and say things which are far away from the truth. Islam is a religion based on appreciation and gratitude towards Allah as well as people. And thus ingratitude and complaining goes against the very spirit of our religion. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) specially warned the women that a great majority of them will be punished in hellfire because of their ingratitude and complaints against their husbands. But what should we do when people are unfair to us and deprive us of our rights? It seems from the above statement as if women have no right to speak out if some injustice is being done to them. This of course is not the case at all. What is forbidden is exaggeration and excessive complaining to anyone who will listen. But if there is a genuine problem then that's another thing. Allah is most protective of the rights of women and anyone who violates these rights will be subjected to penalty.

The beginning of Surah Al-Mujadalah tells the story of a woman in Madinah, named Khaula, whose husband chose to cut her off permanently using the old Arab custom of *Zihar*. According to it a man just said to her wife that she was like his mother to him, and it meant that the wife became permanently haram (unlawful) for her husband. So Khaula came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) and pleaded with him to suggest a way out of this. Allah not only heard her complaint but gave instant help in the form of the following revelations:

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ {1}

Allah has indeed heard the words of the woman who pleaded with you against her husband and made her complaint to Allah, and Allah has heard what you said to each other. Allah hears all and sees all.

This verse taught me some very important lessons; first is that a complaint should be for some serious problem, otherwise day to day small irritations should not be made into "issues" and mountains should not be made out of mole hills! Secondly even the genuine complaint should be done in front of someone who is in authority to solve it and has the knowledge and wisdom to do so. (If you have an over sensitive mother, for instance, who will over react if her child is in trouble then please don't burden her sweet little heart with your grievances!!) Third and most important point is that our complaint should basically be to Allah who has the absolute authority over all his creatures and even while He is the master

and controller of his vast kingdom, he listens to each and every one of us and knows what we say and also what remains unsaid.

The next couple of verses denounce the injustice of Zihar as being disgraceful and totally unrealistic. Thus a penalty was meted out to the husband who does Zihar and then realizes that he wants to retain his marriage, that he will have to free a slave, or if that's not possible then he will have to fast continuously for two months and if he is not able to do that then he has to feed sixty poor people. Notice that these acts combine spiritual purification as well as being tough on the Nafs (self). But we see that most people take these things lightly and are not bothered about the rights of Allah and the rights of people. They commit injustices and yet they don't even remember what they have done wrong. To all such people Allah is issuing a warning here, in very clear words, that even if they forget; Allah remembers and records everything and they will have to pay for it:

يَوْمَ يَعْتَبُهُمُ اللَّهُ حَمِيمًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ {6}

On the Day of Judgment Allah will raise them *all back to life*, then inform them about what they have done. Allah has kept full record of their deeds even though they may have forgotten, for Allah is a witness over all things.

For the hypocrites in Madinah, appearances were all that mattered. In their hearts they had no faith but they wanted to be known as Muslims. Thus when they would talk among themselves they would do so in whispers because they could not say those shameful things openly. It was all about supporting each other in their disbelief and creating mischief to harm the believers. In the next verses Allah has ordered the believers that they should not follow this example and never to whisper among themselves except for some righteous purpose e.g. giving charity secretly or discussing issues which should not be made public:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ {9}

O believers! When you confer together in private, do not talk about sin and hostility and disobedience to the Rasool; but to counsel about virtue and piety, and fear Allah, before whom you shall be brought together.

And Allah also reassured them that the conspiracies of the hypocrites will not harm them if they keep their trust in Allah:

إِنَّمَا التَّخَوُّي مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزَنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ {10}

Conspiring in secret is the work of shaitan, who means to vex the believers; but he cannot harm them at all except as Allah permits; so in Allah let the believers put their trust.

Even in terms of social ethics whispering is a bad habit and it creates mistrust among people. Islam forbids all such practices because it is a religion of peace and brotherhood. Thus Allah reminds us of our manners which seem trivial yet have a profound effect on our relationships. One of them is to give space to others...to be accommodating and cooperative when someone reminds us to make space or to disperse from a gathering. It is a strange human psyche that we do these things agreeably but if we are reminded by someone else we tend to feel defensive. That is why Allah says that when you are told to be generous then do so....

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ {11}

O believers! When you are asked to make room in your meetings, make room, Allah will make room for you (in this life as well as the hereafter). And if you are told to rise up, then rise up: Allah will raise to higher ranks those of you who have faith and knowledge. Allah is aware of all your actions.

This is the most beautiful concept of our religion that giving does not decrease but increase us in our blessings. Look at the above verse and feel the promise in the words: You make space for others and Allah will open it up for you...Isn't this awesome to think that these physical quantities are constant only in our eyes and Allah can expand or contract them. I have seen people with large families living in small houses and they welcome guests with open arms although they just have a couple of rooms, and I wondered how do they live in such a small space? But now I have understood that scarcity of things is linked to the contraction of the heart. You open up your heart for others and Allah will open up His blessings for you.

On the contrary it was the way of hypocrites to hoard everything for their own pleasure and yet they would not feel secure. Do we not see the same insecurity among the elites of this day....earning millions yet unable to share it with others. Allah says:

لَنْ نُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ {17}

Neither their riches nor their sons shall avail them anything against Allah. They shall be the inmates of hell and live there forever.

Why is the attitude of selfishness so widespread even among Muslims? Don't they believe in Allah? The following verse makes it clear that belief in Allah is strengthened by

remembrance of Allah and shaitan is always putting doubts in our minds and making us insecure about our worldly interests to such an extent that we forget to remember Allah...

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ
{19}

Shaitan has gained possession of them, and caused them to forget Allah's warning. They are the party of shaitan. Beware! Surely it is the party of shaitan that shall be the loser

How scary it is to be associated with the group of the devil...May Allah save us from such a fate. Obviously what we need to do is to be obedient to Allah at all times and follow the teachings of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w). Otherwise those who go against Allah and his Prophet will be disgraced in both worlds:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ {20}

Those who resist Allah and His Rasool will be among the most humiliated.

There are some people who have a weak faith so even when they know that they are going in the wrong direction they don't turn back to Allah because they fear people and loss of wealth or status. Allah is telling us here that He is the one we should fear most...

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لِلَّهِ لَأَعْلَيْنَ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ {21}

Allah has decreed: "It is I and My Rasools who will most certainly prevail." Surely Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty

At the end Allah appreciates the true believers and gives them promise of the beautiful gardens of eternal delight...they gave Allah top most priority in their lives and Allah gave them the most beautiful gift of His pleasure and calls them with the honourable title of *Hizbullah*...Allah's party...the only party which is going to be successful...won't you join it too?

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ {22}

You will never find any people who believe in Allah and the last Day on friendly terms with those who oppose Allah and His Rasool, even though they are their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their relatives. It is they in whose hearts Allah has inscribed faith and has strengthened them with a spirit of His own. He will admit them to gardens beneath which

rivers flow, to live therein forever. Allah will be well pleased with them, and they will be well pleased with Him. They are the party of Allah. Beware! Surely it is the party of Allah that will be successful.

Surah Al-Mumtahinah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

When I read or listen to stories about our glorious past and the amazing heights of success achieved by the Muslims, both in spiritual and material aspects, it makes me wonder at our present state of helplessness and this one question keeps circulating in my mind that what is wrong with us? Why can't we make any progress in this world even though we have the best minds, the best resources and the best guidance from Allah? The reason is that even if some of us have taken Islam as a way of life and we follow its rules and regulations to some extent; but our hearts are not attached to Allah Subhanahu WA Ta'ala as they should be and that is why there is no unity or brotherhood among Muslims anymore. So far in the Quran Allah has taught us many things about life and our purpose of existence but in this last portion of the book Allah is warning us that this knowledge cannot really benefit us unless we have the strongest connection of love and loyalty with Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w) and which should result in a strong brotherhood among the believers as well.

It is so easy to assume in times of comfort that we love Allah and our Prophet (s.a.w) more than any other thing; but what about the times when you are forced to choose between what Allah wants and what your near and dear ones want from you? Would you really give the first preference to Allah? That is "the test"... which is the essence as well as the meaning of Al-Mumtahina.

At the time of the conquest of Makkah, this test was faced by a companion of the Holy Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wassallam) named Hatib Bin Abi Balta .It so happened that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) had decided to keep this expedition a secret because he wanted to take the Makkans by surprise. The purpose was to avoid fighting in the city of peace. But this companion tried to inform the enemy of the advance of the Muslim army, so that as a reward they might protect him and his family in case of a war. Now this was a blunder which could have had most disastrous consequences, but Allah revealed it to the Prophet (s.a.w) who succeeded in preventing this information from getting across to the enemies. As a lesson for all the believers, Allah gave a severe warning in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ
إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ {1}

O believers! Do not make friendship with those who are enemies of Mine and yours. Would you show them friendship, when they have denied the truth that has come to you and have driven the Rasool and yourselves out of your homes, simply because you believe in Allah, your Rabb? If it was indeed to strive in My way, and to seek My good pleasure that you left your homes, how can you befriend in secret? I know all that you conceal, and all that you reveal. Any of you who does this, he indeed has gone astray from the Right Way

It is very important to note here that Allah has not used the words “non muslims” or “disbelievers” but “enemies” meaning anyone who is actively involved in creating obstacles for the believers to follow their faith. How can we even think of befriending such a person who has enmity against Allah and Islam? And Allah knows what we hide and what we display so it means that only an outward show of detachment is not enough; rather our hearts should be detached from all such people and things. But what about our families and relatives? After all we love them so much and Allah has commanded us to do Ehsaan (excellent behaviour) with them...the answer is that we cannot ever be disobedient to Allah for the sake of being popular or to please anybody even if they are our closest relatives because they will not save us from Allah’s punishment on the day of recompense:

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُم أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ {3}

On the Day of Resurrection, neither your relatives nor your children shall avail you. Allah will judge between you, and He is observing all your actions

It does not mean that if your family is against religiousness then you should not be kind to them; or not give them their rights. Allah certainly does not allow us to do that. The fact is that if we truly want the rewards of Akhirah then we will be even more eager in bringing our families towards religion by showing them the beauty of Islam through our own behaviour and dealings with them. We will have to do unconditional Ehsaan which means to give more and to expect nothing in return. This can only be done by someone who believes in Allah and Akhirah and has the strongest desire to save his family from the horrors of hell fire. Otherwise it is so convenient to say that I don’t want to be good to anybody because everybody is so bad...

The test of being good for the sake of Allah... to love our relatives and friends for the sake of Allah and yet giving top most priority to Allah's rights is not an easy thing to do; but then what is life except a test?!!

But sometimes there is such a situation that someone tries to force you to leave your faith and it is no longer possible to go on being nice to them then what should we do? Allah reminds us of the beautiful example of His Prophet Ibrahim (a.s):

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدُّهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ {4}

You have an excellent example in Ibrahim (*Abraham*) and his companions. They said to their people plainly: "We are clear of you and *your gods*, whom you worship besides Allah. We renounce you. Enmity and hate shall reign between us forever until you believe in Allah, the *One and Only God*." But do not emulate what Ibrahim said to his father: "I will pray for your forgiveness, although I have no power to get anything for you from Allah." *Their collective prayer was: "Our Rabb! In You we have put our trust, to You we turn in repentance and to You is our final goal*

There are many things to learn from the story of Ibrahim (a.s) but the thing which I find most touching is that he did not reject his father or his nation on the first day when he recognized that they were spiritually blind. It is our biggest mistake that as soon as we learn the truth in Quran and our inner self is awakened to reality of life and death; we start hating people because of their lack of awareness...not realizing that we were also like that and it took us time to come out of that darkness. But we refuse to give the same time to others! We want to drag them to our faith and it is indeed the worst thing to do. Ibrahim (a.s) made this announcement after he had done everything and been through all the tests including being thrown into the fire. And yet there is no arrogance in him, only softness and humility which is reflected in the prayer at the end of this verse. Through this prayer Allah is teaching us that no test can be endured without His help and that we are always in need of Allah's forgiveness, because no matter what our level of Imaan and Taqwa might be, we are still human beings and never free from flaws:

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ {5}

Our Rabb! Do not expose us to the plots of the unbelievers. Forgive us, our Rabb! You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

Sometimes it gets really painful to bear the enmity of our loved ones, just because they don't want us to leave the former lifestyle, based on ignorance, which we shared with them. But no matter how difficult it might be, we should stay firm in Allah's obedience and trust Allah that He will do the best for us....certainly it is not difficult for Allah to change the hearts!

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {7}

It may well be that Allah will put love between you and those with whom you are now at odds because of the order which is given to you, for Allah is All-Powerful, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful

We as believers are quick to assume that we are doing everything for Allah but we seriously need to examine our real intentions because in the final analysis, our deeds will be weighed according to our inner sincerity; and unlike this world, labels will be of no value at all. Even a great act like migrating from one place to another will not be accepted unless it is truly for the sake of Allah. That is why; when some women from Makkah migrated to Madinah to join the believers, it was essential to assess what was their real motivation...It shows that Islam has no place for empty slogans and false assumptions...

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مَهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ(10)

O believers! When there come to you believing women refugees; examine (and test) them. Allah best knows their faith. If you find them true believers, do not send them back to the unbelievers.....

To enter Islam, is to make a lifetime commitment with Allah that we will obey Him over all other things and we will follow the teachings of His Prophet (s.a.w) in all areas of our lives. Thus Allah ordered the Prophet to take a formal oath from the men as well as women who had entered into Islam so that they realize that they have not just adorned a new cloak but a whole new way of life based on truth and sincerity....a straight way that leads straight to success:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْنَهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {12}

O Prophet! When the believing women come to you to take the oath of allegiance, *take their pledge*: that they will not commit shirk with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not

commit adultery, that they will not kill their children, that they will not give any cause for scandal which they may invent between either their hands or feet (inventing falsehood), and that they will not disobey you in any just matter, then accept their allegiance and pray to Allah for forgiveness. Surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful.

Taking a decision to follow the straight path of success is not enough unless we avoid all things which might distract us from it. Initially the diversion seems to be trivial but if one is not careful he ends up being far from where he had intended to reach. The biggest motivation is our environment so at the end of this great Surah Allah is warning us not to make any friends who do not believe in the Akhirah. In the words of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) "A man is on the religion of his friend"...So be careful and choose the right company which will help you to stay focused for success!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَتَسُؤُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ
{13}

O believers! Do not befriend those who have incurred the wrath of Allah. Indeed they despair of the Hereafter, just as the unbelievers despair of those buried in the graves.

Surah As-Saff

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A drop of water is such an insignificant little thing which you can just wipe off with your hand without even thinking about it. But what happens when these drops join together to form a river or a sea. How much force there is in the waves...those of us who have travelled in a ship must have experienced the power of water...but when you look at those mighty waves, have you ever thought that they are just a collection of drops? What has transformed a tiny lifeless drop of water into a gigantic force? It is unity and cohesion. This is the law of nature and since Islam is a natural religion, it calls for unity and brotherhood. Alone we stand nowhere but together we can become a force...a force that can transform the world into a peaceful place to live, where everyone is selflessly trying to assist you in this collective journey of life because they will all be focused on the end of this journey which is the Akhirah. This is a beautiful dream and this kind of selfless unity and brotherhood looks almost impossible in today's scenario but there is one quality which can make it happen and that is **truth**. If you are true in your commitment, and you have knowledge and faith in the truth of Allah's message, then it travels through people like light. Allah is not impressed with our words but He values our deeds, therefore our actions should reflect our faith which we utter from our lips.....otherwise Allah is extremely angry with deceit and falsehood...that you portray an image by saying things which you don't do:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ {2} كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ {3}

O believers! Why do you say something which you don't do? It is very hateful in the sight of Allah that you say something which you don't do.

This means that if we are believers then we will surely translate our beliefs into action. It is very easy to advise others but to act on the same advice is the test of our real sincerity. When I listened to these verses, I was so worried about Allah's anger that I thought I will never say anything to anyone, anymore! But then I realized that if Allah puts a good idea in my mind or makes me experience the signs of His mercy, or has given me the love of His words, then definitely it is not for me alone but a gift which I must share with everyone. How will I spread it without telling others? So my salvation is in doing utmost struggle with myself to act on all that I say. But acting on religion is, again, something which cannot be done in isolation. Islam gives a way of life; and life involves constant interaction with other people.

So what we need is a combined effort against ignorance and disbelief which has penetrated in our hearts. Allah loves those who make such collective efforts:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرصُومٌ {4}

Indeed Allah loves those who fight for His Cause in ranks as if they were a solid wall.

Imagine a building which has been made strong and smooth. The individual bricks lose their identity in the walls just like drops in the sea. Such a unity among people can happen only when they are ready to accept and forgive each other's imperfection because they realize that they are themselves not perfect. They don't have double standards and they are always ready to share their resources because they value their Akhirah more than the petty interests of this world. They will be humble and soft for one another because they know that their war is not with people but with ignorance and destructiveness. They will love each other because they know that only love can melt and join hearts to work for a collective purpose. But the question is that if we all want peace and success, then why is the reality so different from this vision? Why are Muslims making life miserable for other Muslims? Where is the brotherhood? Allah tells us the answer in the next verse that when people are persistent in their ignorance and disobedience and don't make any effort to change it then Allah also makes them blind...not by taking away their eyes but by taking away their insight and wisdom...as it happened to the people of Bani Israel:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تُوذُونَنِي وَقَد تَّعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ

قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ {5}

Remember what Musa (*Moses*) said to his people: "O my people! Why do you vex me while you know that I am the Rasool of Allah towards you?" But in spite of this when they adopted perverseness, Allah let their hearts be perverted. Allah does not guide those who are transgressors.

So it is apparent from the above ayah that Allah sent His guidance through His messengers but most people did not take them seriously and chose ignorance and chaos over knowledge and peace. On top of it, they try to prove, that the teachings of the Prophet are not right...not realizing that even though they can deceive people but how can they hide from Allah? Thus the Bani-Israel denied not only Prophet Musa (a.s) but also when Prophet Esa (Jesus) came with his brilliant miracles; they said it was magic and not the truth:

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ
وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ {6}

And remember when Isa (*Jesus*) the son of Maryam said: "O children of Israel! I am the Rasool of Allah towards you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and to give you good news of a Rasool that will come after me whose name shall be Ahmed (*another name of Muhammad, meaning 'The praised one'*)." But when he came to them with clear signs, they said "This is plain magic."

This is such a brilliant verse in which Allah has conveyed to us in just one line the complete truth about Jesus (a.s). If we read it closely we can see the following facts:

- 1) Esa (a.s) was the son of Maryam (a.s) and not the son of God.
- 2) He said I am the messenger of Allah...not part of God or God himself.
- 3) He was a messenger only to the Bani Israel...not to the whole world
- 4) He confirmed that the Torah was also from Allah
- 5) He gave the good news of the coming of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and even told His name
- 6) And finally he presented to them such amazing miracles which should have left them in no doubt that he was the messenger of Allah but they denied all that they saw with their own eyes by declaring it to be magic....how blind could they have been? The reason for their rejection was not that they didn't recognize the truth but the fact was that they wanted to hold on to their false self righteousness. Same is the case even today with all the arrogant deniers of truth...they want to wipe it out with their false propaganda but they have underestimated Allah's power:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ {8}

They seek to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His Light, much as the unbelievers may dislike it.

When the Bani Israel persisted in their wrong ways, Allah took the honour from them and bestowed it to the descendents of Prophet Ismael (a.s) who was the son of Prophet Ibrahim

(a.s); by sending in them the last and final Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) who brought the complete guidance of Quran and a deen of absolute truth, as a mercy for the entire mankind:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ {9}

It is He Who has sent His Rasool with the guidance and the religion of truth so that he may proclaim it over all religions, much as the Mushrikīn may dislike it.

How will the peace and mercy of Islam spread to the whole world when the believers themselves are in such a miserable state? It is a question which casts a depressive shadow over the light of my Yaqeen...my faith and my optimism...But Allah is so great, He has a solution for every problem no matter how insurmountable it may seem to us. Therefore He invites us to invest in a business which will save us from a painful end:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنَجِّيْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ {10}

O believers! Should I tell you of a bargain that will save you from a painful punishment?

What will be our response if someone offers us such a trade in which there is 100% guarantee of profit...will we not jump to join in such a business which will alleviate all our worries and fears? So what is the state of my heart when I hear such a promise from Allah? He is calling us:

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ

تَعْلَمُونَ {11}

It is to believe in Allah and His Rasool and strive your utmost in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your persons. That is best for you, if you but knew it.

I remember when I was trying to find out about my religion, I asked my father, “what is the meaning of belief in Allah and His Messenger?” And he taught me a very simple but powerful definition that belief in Allah means that your heart should be fully convinced that only Allah has the power of making things happen and no creature can do anything except with Allah’s command. Secondly, our hearts should be fully convinced that following the way of life of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) will lead us to the success of both worlds and if we ignore his teachings and follow the way of others then it will lead us to nothing but failure. So this is “faith”, a word which is well known and understood by most of us, but the word which has been greatly distorted and used against Islam, is “Jihad”. The moment you say this word, it

brings up images of people murdering others mercilessly or creating disturbance and chaos in society...this imagery is the result of the on-going campaign against this most sacred concept of Islam. Even Muslims will be heard talking against it...sometimes out of ignorance and mostly due to a weak faith and intense love of this world. The fact is that Jihad means struggle...surely nothing can be achieved without effort but especially in the way of Allah there will be tests and trials at every step of the way because Allah wants to test the sincerity of our claims...do we really believe in the success of this way or are we ready to quit at the first set back? So in order to strive towards Allah we need to do utmost struggle in our individual as well as collective lives. If our faith is true then we cannot keep this message to ourselves but will make all efforts to spread it to the whole of mankind and this cannot be done just by day dreams or wishes. Rather we will have to sacrifice our convenient lifestyle for the sake of bringing peace to the world...not by fighting but by spreading the true knowledge of Quran and Sunnah and reverting people back to the true faith on which they were born. For the comfort lovers, this might look to be a gloomy picture of never ending sacrifices and struggles...but look at what is waiting at the other end of this road:

يَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلُكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِينٍ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ

الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ {12}

He will forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow, and will lodge you in beautiful mansions in the gardens of Eden, which will be a supreme achievement

These are the honours of a never ending life and nothing can be better than that but Allah knows us so well...He knows we cannot wait that long to see the results of our efforts so He is giving yet another promise...the glimpses of success in this world:

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ {13}

And yet another blessing which you love: help from Allah and a speedy victory. So *O Prophet*, give this good news to the believers.

So now that the hearts are full of happiness with the promise of success, Allah calls us in the most magnificent words of the Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ

O believers become the helpers of Allah!

What an honourable title it is because He knows we love titles and feel proud to be recognized by them...so he is giving us the most honourable title that we can hope for...**Allah's helper**...a helper of that Being who needs no help, upon whom I depend for every breath that I take and every little morsel of food that I put in my mouth and every tiny little movement that I make...He is calling me His Helper? Isn't it absolutely amazing....?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ
الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ فَأَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَتِ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيَّ
عَدُوَّهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ {14}

O believers! Be the helpers of Allah, just as Isa (*Jesus*) the son of Maryam said to his disciples: "Who will be my helper in the cause of Allah?" And the disciples responded: "We will be your helpers in the cause of Allah." Then a group from the children of Israel believed in him (*Isa*) and another group disbelieved. We aided the believers against their enemies, so they became victorious.

When Prophet Esa (a.s) saw that the so called educated people of Bani Israel were not listening to him, He went to the community of laundry-men and asked them if they would help him and they all agreed to be the helpers of Allah. The interesting thing is that why did they agree to take on this honour while the intellectuals had rejected it. And the answer is that that the biggest hurdle in the way of Allah is arrogance and love of this world. When people think of themselves as too high and mighty to bow down to reality, then they fail to recognize the power of Allah and so Islam does not impress them and this world seems to be the only thing worth their worry or concern. Thus they remain the slaves of this world even though they imagine themselves to be the lords. And the humble folks readily submit to Allah's greatness and accept His promises and warnings with an open heart....so they become the Helpers of that all-Mighty Allah and earn eternal honour and success.

So what is the message of this Surah? To me it is a call to step out of my comfort zone and join with the believers so that with love and mutual trust we may become a strong force in the way of Allah. Alone we are nothing and together we can become the helpers of Allah.....after reading this Surah can anyone sit lazily and not rush to receive this honour?

Surah Al-Munafiqun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

What is happening to Muslims these days is no big secret. It is all over the media. They are being literally crushed into pieces and the world is watching helplessly. Why? Is Allah not with the Muslims? Why doesn't Islam make them strong like it is supposed to? Why is there no peace even when the word Islam means peace? The reason is that just wearing a label of Islam doesn't make us a Muslim. We have to be true to Allah from the heart to be a Muslim. Strength comes from true faith...a faith which reflects in your thoughts, in your words and in your actions...not just the tag under which you were born. So when individuals will all be focused on one point; that is the true and complete obedience of Allah for the rewards of Hereafter; then they will be able to be united and come up in the world as a force. But when they have other worldly interests and their goal is not one, then they might just gather in rallies and demonstrations but their hearts cannot be united. This is most dangerous for our Akhirah as well as the duniya and Allah is making us taste the consequences of our disbelief and disobedience in this world as a warning so that we might take lesson from it and mend our ways before it is too late. While all eyes are glued to the TV screens and the newspapers let us take a moment and open Allah's book and see what solution it gives us for the problems we are facing today. Because it is so ironical that people know so much of what is happening in the world but they don't have any idea of what is happening with their own hearts. They talk of boycotting the companies which support the oppressors but they never think of boycotting our biggest enemy i.e. shaitan. The injustices done by others to Muslims are so apparent to all but we have become blind to what injustice we are doing to our own souls by being so totally immersed in this temporary world that we have forgotten our real life which is coming nearer day by day and we are not making any preparation for it.

Today's Surah is about the Hypocrites of Madinah in which Allah has exposed all their characteristics. But before starting it I would like to give a word of caution that the purpose of these Ayahs and signs of hypocrisy is not that we use it against people and start labelling others as munafiqs; rather it is like a mirror for our own self analysis and we should look deeply into the bottom of our hearts to root out all the doubts and disbelief which we might have. Always remember that only Allah has the right to judge people because only he has the complete knowledge. Our job is just to analyse our own selves and diagnose the diseases of our own hearts, so that we can mend ourselves.

The first sign of the Hypocrite is that they make false claims publicly, to show their sincerity, but Allah knows that they are liars:

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
لَكَاذِبُونَ {1}

When the hypocrites come to you, they say: "We bear witness that you are indeed the Rasool of Allah." Allah knows that you are indeed His Rasool, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.

Normally we react to such warnings in a negative way and start thinking of people who make such claims and then don't act accordingly. As I said earlier, let us leave their matter to Allah and focus on our own behaviour. What should really concern me is that "Do I speak like this and then act totally opposite to my claims?" Sometimes we think it is our personal matter and we can say and do what we want but the reality is that as Muslims we transmit our faith and sincerity to others too. And if we don't do what we say, then it spreads like a disease and becomes a general attitude. That is what the Hypocrites used to do; they wore a cloak of faith but in reality stopped people from following the religion in its true spirit:

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ {2}

They use their faith as a disguise, and thus debar others from the Way of Allah. Evil is indeed what they do

While we might not be discouraging people from Islam deliberately, we should be aware that whatever good or bad behaviour that we display becomes a cause for others to form an opinion about Islam and its followers. When I read about the life in Madinah and feel so proud of the Blessed Companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) who led such virtuous lives, I often think what made the Hypocrites what they were. After all they were in the company of the Prophet (s.a.w) and the Quran was being revealed in front of them. Why did they choose to lead such a disgraceful life of constant lies and deception? The answer is in the next Ayah and we need to read it very carefully:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ {3}

This is because they believed and then renounced their faith. Their hearts are sealed; therefore, they are devoid of understanding

The words of Allah are so clear. Whoever recognizes the truth and then rejects it, by not following it, then Allah takes away his insight. Gradually the sins don't even look like sins and the vision of the heart gets totally sealed up. That is what happens to the Hypocrites...they

do not understand the irreparable loss which is going to result from their misdeeds. They might appear to be very sharp and intellectual in worldly matters, but their understanding of faith, religion and Hereafter is almost nil. They don't have time or concern for learning about these matters because all their time and intellect is being used in the preservation of their worldly interests. They never spend in charity and use all of their wealth for themselves. That is why they have healthy, smart appearances and mesmerizing verbal skills:

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّهِمْ خَشَبٌ مُسْتَدَدٌ يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتِلْهُمْ اللَّهُ أَنْتَى يُؤْفَكُونَ {4}

When you see them, their good stature pleases you; and when they speak, you listen to what they say. Yet they are as *worthless as hollow* pieces of propped up timber. Every shout they hear, they think it to be against them. They are your enemies, so guard yourselves against them. May Allah destroy them! How perverse they are!

Allah is not impressed with their appearances; that is why He is comparing them to magnificent logs of wood which appear to be so strong but are lifeless and have no intellect. This Image also refers to their arrogance that when they came to the gatherings they would not mingle with the believers (whom they thought of as inferior and foolish), and so they would sit at the back or on the sides resting with a grand style against the walls. Not listening, nor having any intention of learning. What does this attitude depict? That they thought of themselves as perfect. This is the biggest deception that could trap a person's heart, because if someone thinks that he has no faults and that all that he is doing is right then there is no way that he will ask for forgiveness...

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّوْا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ {5}

When it is said to them: "Come, the Rasool of Allah will pray for your forgiveness," they shake their heads and you see them turning away with arrogance.

And if someone does not admit his mistakes and does not ask Allah to forgive him then Allah will not forgive him at all, even if the whole world gathers together to seek forgiveness for him. So Allah tells the Prophet (s.a.w):

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ {6}

It is the same, whether you pray for their forgiveness or not, Allah is not going to forgive them. Surely Allah does not guide the transgressors.

The root cause for all disobedience is the love of this world and forgetfulness of the Hereafter. Although we have faith in Allah but we forget why He sent us to this world? What is the purpose of our creation? Right at the start of the Quran Allah has told us that He created everything for us and He created us for His worship. And this worship is not just rituals rather it consists of our complete surrender and obedience in all matters. We are His representatives on this earth and as the chosen nation it is our responsibility to spread His message to the whole world. No one will deny this fact but when it comes to translating this faith into action then we turn to a hundred and one excuses. Here Allah wants to shake us out of our lethargy and self deception... so listen to the warning in the following Ayah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْخَاسِرُونَ {9}

O believers! Let neither your riches nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Those who will do so, it is they who shall be the real losers.

Wealth and children are the wonderful blessings of Allah but they are not given to us as a gift which we can just relax and enjoy... rather every blessing is a test. And these two blessings are the main tests of our lives. We cannot live without these because they are our primary needs but the problem begins when we make our needs into our goals. Because no matter how significant the need might be, it cannot be our purpose of existence. It is just the sustenance of the traveller and not his destination. But we have been living in this deception for so long that we have started thinking of wealth and children as our very purpose of life. Their love and attraction has been engraved deep into our hearts and Akhirah seems to be just a distant probability and too vague to be given any importance. But what is the solution? Allah tells us that the only way to come out of Nifaq (hypocrisy) is through Infaq (spending for Allah):

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ
فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ {10}

Spend, *in charity and in the Cause of Allah*, out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on you before that time when death will come to anyone of you, and he shall say: "O my Rabb! If only you would relieve me for a little while then I would give out *everything in* charity, and be among the righteous."

The only way to ensure salvation is to spend whatever Allah has given us in the way of Allah. Whether it is wealth or our children or other resources and capabilities... every single thing has been given to us as a test. Now it is up to us whether we use them for the success of the Hereafter or let them become a hindrance in our success. Some of us already know this and so we make plans with very good intention; but most often the plans don't come into practise... why? Because we remain in an illusion that we have lots of time and we will do such and such thing when the right time comes... I wonder how we let ourselves be fooled by this thought when we don't even know whether we are going to live in the next moment or not. We keep delaying things and make lots of excuses but we should remember that when the time for action is gone... when death comes... it will not listen to any excuse:

وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهَا وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ {11}

But Allah reprieves no soul when its term comes to an end. Allah is well aware of all your actions.

Every day every hour and every minute and second is bringing us closer to our end. As soon as our eyes close from this world, we are going to step into the world of reality. Then we will realize that the things which we were running after had no value and the deeds which we should have accomplished for the hereafter have been left undone. But then the realization will not benefit us because Life is a one way journey. There are no U-turns...

So make use of your free time before you become busy;

Make use of your health before you become sick;

And make use of your life before you die...

Surah At-Taghaabun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

No concept of the Quran can really touch the inner most core of our hearts unless we realize whose words are these? Whose speech is this? Who is that being who sent this message? That is why at the start of many surahs Allah has brought our attention to the fact that He is the most powerful one and we are nothing in comparison. Because what happens is that the more we gain the understanding of Quran, the more we progress in religion; it gets difficult for the shaitan to lead us away from it because we become firmly rooted in it, like a plant that has crossed the initial stage of weakness. But the shaitan is not half hearted in his enmity; so he does not accept defeat so easily. In fact he attacks us even more strongly; and since he cannot lead us away from religion; he then uses his other weapons to make us lose Jannat, by polluting our hearts with arrogance and self praise which settles in the heart unnoticeably. You can judge yourself when someone praises you; what is the state of your heart then? Are you glad? Or uncomfortable? Also test yourself at the time of criticism; when someone points out your mistake, what is your reaction? Are you ready to admit it and ask forgiveness or do you display your hurt and resentment through denial and arguments? Therefore we cannot easily free ourselves from this disease unless we consciously make it a habit to think of Allah's greatness and tell ourselves that we are nothing except His creation. Only he has the ultimate authority, and so only He deserves the ultimate praise:

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {1}

All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him is due all praise, He has power over all things

What I learned from this ayat is that Allah's glorification and praise should not be limited to just the formal "Zikr" which we do in the morning and evening. It should be and can be a constant activity and we don't require any extra time for it as well. From the moment we wake up in the morning, we have a million reasons to praise Allah! The coming of day after the dark night is a miracle but isn't it an even greater miracle that he brought me back to a life about which I was not conscious just a moment ago. How great is Allah who gave me a heart which can remember him, how refreshing is this water which purifies me, how beautiful is the ritual of Salat which takes me (spiritually) to the heavens even while my feet remain firmly placed on the earth. How beautiful is the morning light, how awesome the endless

sky.... there is no end to the things for which you can praise Allah and remember Him, and be grateful and be happy.

A heart that is focused on Allah in such a way can never ever be impressed with anything more than Allah. But when we are focused on everything *except* on Allah then every little thing will affect us; small little fears will turn into phobias, desires will turn into our rulers, small irritations will become “issues” and life will become miserable and confused. Basically it is not the lack of blessings but a lack of positive attitude... it is not the difference of status but the difference of focus, the difference of belief, which makes one a *believer* or a *denier*:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ {2}

It is He Who has created you; yet some of you are unbelievers and some are believers. Allah is observant of all your actions.

We know what is right and what is wrong but we are not really bothered about it. Because most of the time we are using all our thoughts and words into *proving* ourselves to be good and sadly we do not use the same energy in trying to “become” good in the sight of Allah. Why? Is it because we are more concerned about people’s opinion and are not so much worried about what Allah thinks of us? The basic problem of all the disbelievers in the history of mankind is that they thought that their life was just the life in this world and nothing was going to happen to them after they died.... this lack of fear of accountability made them arrogant and forgetful of their Creator:

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُعْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ {7}

The unbelievers claim that they shall not be raised to life again. Tell them: “Indeed, by my Rabb, you shall surely be raised to life again! Then you shall be told of all that you have done, and that is easy for Allah.”

It all depends on your conviction of the Hereafter. Therefore if you really have a definite picture of accountability in your heart, which remains in your eyes just like when you have to go on a journey next week but in your mind you start making a picture of it, the moment you decide that you are going. After that decision everything that you do revolves around that trip. I don’t need to buy so many groceries, I am leaving for a week, I need to apply for a leave, I should get my car repaired, I should finish my work before going or give some task to my co workers to do in my absence... etc etc And remember it’s just for a week... think if you are leaving for a year... and then think of how big the eternity is going to be!! Can we leave its affairs on chance? Can we afford to lose our place in Jannah? Because that is what

is going to happen on the day of judgement; some people are going to win and others will lose...

وَيُدْخِلُهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ {9}

The Day when He will gather you all will be the Day of Assembly, which shall be the Day of mutual loss and gain *among the people*. Those who believe in Allah and do good deeds, He will remove from them their sins and admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein forever, and that will be the supreme achievement.

This life is a test and the greatest test is to remember that our main worry should be about the Akhirah. But the problem is that we are so busy and trapped in the worries of the world that the Akhirah becomes a forgotten thing which we prefer to dump at the back of our minds. What happens next; is that the life of this world becomes the biggest problem for us and even small little irritations get magnified out of all proportion. Here Allah is reminding us that he will continue to test us through various setbacks and hurdles, but we should remember that nothing can come without Allah's permission, and if Allah has sent this problem then it must have come for a purpose... whoever keeps his faith in Allah will be guided by Allah:

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ {11}

No affliction can ever befall except by the leave of Allah. He that believes in Allah, his heart is guided to the Right Way. Allah has knowledge of all things.

Sorrows and unpleasant things are inevitable part of life but it is up to us how we react to them. Negative reaction begins with lack of faith in Allah, and then blaming others further makes life miserable. Everyone gets hurt in the process and sometimes whole lives are overshadowed by self pity and resentment. When the hearts are full of grudges about others then how can we even think of any genuine good will or brotherhood among Muslims? That is why overall we face this dilemma of mistrust and lack of unity. The thing to do is to cleanse our hearts from such bad feelings and trust Allah that whatever problems we face are for our own good; in one way or the other:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ {13}

Allah! There is no god but Him; therefore, in Allah Alone let the believers put their trust.

Most of our worries and problems arise in our households when our loved ones make it difficult for us to stay cool and patient!! Whether it is our spouses, or children... they will continue to do things against our desire and even the most cool headed among us tend to

lose their temper when it comes to them. Sometimes their love will hold us back from making any substantial contribution towards the cause of Allah's religion. And in some cases they will try to stop you from Allah's obedience... so what are we supposed to do?

Allah tells us:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعَفَوْا وَتَصَفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {14}

O believers! Surely among your wives and your children there are some who are your enemies: so beware of them. But if you pardon, overlook and forgive *their faults*, then know that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

From this ayah I have learned that first of all we should remember that anyone who stops us from religion cannot be our true friend and we should recognize it when shaitan uses a loved one to deviate us away from Allah's obedience. But even then we are not allowed to react negatively but we should continue to forgive and forget in spite of everything; because shaitan loves to break homes and we should defeat his tactics by being on our best behaviour even if we do not find any recognition or appreciation from anyone. But how can we come up to this level of patience and tolerance if we have no fear or consciousness of Allah? Therefore let us not forget the fuel which drives our heart towards goodness... i.e. Taqwa and charity:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ {16}

Therefore, fear Allah as much as you can, listen to *His message* attentively, be obedient, and be charitable, this is for your own good. Those who are saved from the covetousness of their own souls, it is they who are truly successful.

At the end Allah reminds us that we cannot stay on the right path unless we make it our responsibility to spread the knowledge of religion. For this we will need to spend our wealth, our time, our resources and all the talents and capabilities that we have been given by Allah. Also it is not the responsibility of just one person or a particular institution or certain people labelled as "religious". No! It is our joint mission; given to us by Allah, and each one of us has to contribute his own part in it. Whatever contributions we make in this cause whether monetary or otherwise; Allah takes it like a loan... Can you imagine giving a loan to the owner of the entire universe!! Just imagine how much profit He will give you:

إِن تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ {17}

If you lend to Allah a goodly loan, He will pay you back manifold, and will forgive you your sins. Allah is Appreciative and Forbearing *to those who are grateful*.

People who believed in this promise of Allah had no difficulty in giving up all that they had for the sake of Allah's religion. Remember the example of Hazrat Umar (r.a) who donated half his wealth, at the time of the expedition of Tabuk; thinking that this time he will out do everyone else. But then Hazrat Abu Bakar came and donated his entire wealth and belongings. Allah's Prophet (s.a.w) asked him "but what have you left for your family?" and he replied "I have left Allah with them!"

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ {18}

He has the knowledge of the unseen and the seen; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise

In this day and age when everyone is running after money and status; it seems so unbelievable that anyone could be so generous as to give up everything for religion. We only see the obvious but faith makes you see the invisible, believe the incredible and receive the impossible... Therefore those who really and truly believe in Allah, know, that Allah is enough for them; because He Himself is the source of every other thing. So whoever has earned Allah's pleasure; has earned everything!

Surah At-Talaaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Marriage is the most beautiful bond created by Allah between a man and a woman, so that they can experience the joy and satisfaction of mutual love and affection, and nurture a family with responsibility and care. But it is also the biggest test of patience and self control; because Allah made us so different from one another, and due to this difference it is inevitable that there will be certain irritations and conflicts. The best remedy is patience and forgiveness, but like all best things it is not so easy to achieve! There have been many books written on the subject which will give you a list of qualities that you should develop in order to remain happily married. But no book will tell you how to remain on your best behaviour even when your heart is broken with disappointment or how to be kind to an unkind person? The only book which answers these unanswerable questions is the Great Quran, which comes straight from the heavens to open our eyes to the one fact which we don't consider...i.e. fear of Allah. We do have patience and kindness for the whole world but when it comes to that one person against whom we might bear some grudge; then we don't want to give him even his basic rights. But if we fear Allah and want to save ourselves from the consequences of His displeasure, then we will continue to give rights to people even when we think that the other person does not deserve it; and if we want Allah's pleasure then we will continue to be kind and considerate even if people don't appreciate or reciprocate, because we will be seeking our reward from Allah and not people. This is faith, this is Taqwa... that you do everything for the pleasure of Allah knowing that He can and He will solve your problems.

Breaking of a marriage is not an isolated incident. So many people are affected and especially children's lives are thrown into a severe emotional torture. So every effort should be made to preserve this bond. But there are times when despite our efforts things don't work and there appears to be more harm and destruction in remaining together, than in separation. For such exceptional cases Allah has allowed divorce but it should be conducted according to the limits of Allah:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ
بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ
نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا { 1 }

O Prophet! If you *and the believers* divorce your wives, divorce them at the end of their prescribed periods, and count their prescribed periods accurately. Fear Allah, your Rabb. Do

not expel them from their homes *during their waiting period*, nor should they themselves leave, unless they have committed an open lewdness. These are limits set by Allah; he that transgresses the limits of Allah will wrong his own soul. You never know, Allah may, thereafter, bring about some new situation *of reconciliation*.

The amazing discovery for me was when I came to know for the first time that giving divorce in Islam is not what is commonly observed in our society. According to general belief or custom, the word divorce brings to mind the picture of an angry husband losing his temper (and his senses!) saying the word “*talaq*” three times and kicking the poor woman out of her house. Within seconds the queen of her home is reduced to a lost soul on the road, not knowing where to go. This is NOT what Allah has prescribed and even if Muslims do it, it is not the representation of Islam. After one divorce Allah has prescribed a period for which she will continue to stay in her house and the husband can reconcile during that period which is the duration of three menstrual cycles. After that they can separate, if they don't find a way to remain together:

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَيْ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا
الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا {2}

Then when their waiting period ends, either keep them honourably or part with them in an honourable way. Call to witness two honest persons among you, *and O witnesses*, bear witness equitably for the sake of Allah. This advice is being given to all who believe in Allah and the last Day. He that fears Allah may be provided a way out by Him,

This is a heart breaking procedure but the governing factor should not be personal grudges or revenge but Allah consciousness. And whoever remembers and fears Allah will find Him on his side:

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا {3}

And Allah will give him sustenance from the sources he could never imagine: for Allah is all sufficient for the person who puts his trust in Him. Surely Allah brings about what He pleases, and Allah has set a measure for all things

Mostly we tend to think that it is impossible to do one-sided goodness. This is because all the books we read or people we meet are of the same opinion. How much you will read and hear about women's liberation and human rights. But no one is bothered about human duties or women's duties? If we think from the point of view of the Akhirah, Allah is not going to ask

us why we didn't get our rights. But he will definitely ask us about the rights that we were supposed to give others. Therefore Allah wants us to keep giving and to think of receiving only from Allah. When we believe that all power and resources are from Allah then how can we even think of expecting anything from anyone other than Him?

ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا {5}

This is the command of Allah which He has sent down to you. He that fears Allah, will have his sins removed and his reward enlarged.

Sadly very few people have studied this concept of Quran and even those who know it, fail to act on it completely. But still we should keep trying to educate ourselves, especially young people, about the rights and duties in marriage so that they have a sense of responsibility towards it. So far the situation is not very promising because mostly girls and boys have a misleading concept of marriage which is imparted to their minds from childhood through fairy tales and then other fiction which they are exposed to all their lives. They think it is a cruise of delight and so find it very difficult to cope with realities when they come across them. Broken egos and broken hearts then lead to a broken society where people seem to be dragging along with their spouses and the whole family unit is destroyed; and people try and find peace and happiness through illegal means. All this is because people do not fear Allah and so Allah reminds us of the consequence of such recklessness:

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسِبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَدَّيْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُكْرًا {8}
فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا {9}

How many townships have rebelled against the commandments of their Rabb and His Rasools! Stern was Our reckoning with them and exemplary was Our punishment. [8] So they tasted the fruit of their misdeeds, and the fruit of their misdeeds was perdition

Not only did they face tortures in this world but a great punishment awaits them in the hereafter too:

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا {10}

Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment *in the Hereafter*. Therefore, fear Allah! O men of understanding and faith. Allah has indeed sent down to you a reminder (Quran);

Just read this ayah again and focus on Allah words... O people of intellect, if you are so intelligent then you should fear Allah. Use your intellect to be aware of Allah's power and understand the reminder that He has sent to you. Allah is so merciful to His creatures. He not only sent a book but also the Prophet (s.a.w) who taught how to act on this book:

رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ
أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا {11}

a Rasool reciting to you the revelations of Allah containing clear guidance, so that he may lead the believers who do good deeds from the darkness to the light. He that believes in Allah and does good deeds, shall be admitted to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein forever; and Allah has prepared an excellent provision for them.

How beautiful is this verse. Just ponder on its words and you will realize that Allah wants you to come out of the darkness of ignorance and darkness of depression and sadness; and enter into the light of Quran which lights up your heart and lights up your life. And this reward is not just in the world but the power of faith and goodness will take you to the eternal gardens of delight... how beautiful is the promise of Allah!!

He is the originator of everything and He has created such marvels. But He has not forced guidance on us, because it is the test of our faith. He will give guidance and light only to those who really and truly want it and value it from the depth of their heart. Remember that He is Allah, the most perfect and free from all needs:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا {12}

It is Allah Who has created seven heavens, and earths as many. His commandment descends through them; *this is being explained to you*, so that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah encompasses all things in His knowledge.

As believers of Allah our closest bond should be with Allah. Knowing that He created us and He is the one who is constantly showering His countless blessings on us and making decisions for us and taking care of all of our needs. So as we go about our lives, our hearts should be conscious of Him and be attached to Him firmly and completely, in gratitude and fear, so that seeking His pleasure and avoiding His anger and punishment should become our basic objective. May Allah accept our efforts in his way... ameen.

Surah At-Tahreem,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

When I studied this Surah I felt that it has come just in time to save us from a great danger. This is a time when all around us, the family structure is being torn apart by a wave of materialism which has engulfed our lives under the attractive and deceptive term of advancement and progress. Shaitan, our biggest enemy has deceived us into believing that acquiring wealth and status should be our primary objective in life. Therefore men started drifting away from the cares of the family, and concerned themselves with only the financial responsibility. When the wives didn't get the emotional fulfillment from their over tired and over occupied husbands, then they also started compensating for it by finding careers of their own, leaving their children in other people's care. I have personally met women who say that they don't need the money but they just have to "do something" with their lives because raising and caring for a family is no longer considered to be "something". Shaitan makes us see things from a totally negative angle....the most worthy job of being a mother is made to look so ordinary and worthless. With the result that even those who do so are full of self pity and restlessness. The biggest loss in this mad race is that we have all become over involved with this world and have totally forgotten the real world which is hidden from our eyes but is coming closer to us with every passing moment. Surah At-Tahreem has come to remind us of our biggest responsibility in this life which is to save ourselves and our families from a terrible punishment which awaits all those who neglected Allah and His commands and assumed that they could lead their lives in whatever way they wanted. Let us get out of this illusion and learn the truth before it is too late...

The beauty of Islam is that it does not just give us theories but also portrays for us the most authentic practical implementation through the example of our Blessed Prophet (s.a.w). He was the most beloved of Allah yet his whole life is the reflection of complete submission to Allah's commands. On one occasion he took oath that he will never again drink honey, because apparently it had displeased some of his wives, but Allah said that He could not make a Halal thing haram for himself, just to please His wives:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {1}

O Prophet! Why do you make something unlawful, which Allah has made lawful to you in seeking to please your wives? Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

The wisdom behind this ayah is that if the Prophet (s.a.w) makes something haram for himself, then the whole Muslim Ummah who must follow the Prophet (s.a.w) in all cases, will be deprived of a most beneficial blessing in doing so. It should make us really cautious that if the Blessed and Most Beloved Prophet was not allowed to make a halal into haram, then how can we ordinary people make excuses that just because my husband does not approve of it I cannot act on such and such order of Allah. Or just because my wife demands more money therefore I am forced to deal in Riba (interest) or bribery etc. To keep your family happy is one thing, and to give them their rights is your responsibility; but in this too we cannot cross the boundaries of Allah.

Now what happened was that the Prophet (s.a.w) had told his wife that she should not tell anyone about this oath; but she could not resist sharing this secret with another wife of the Prophet (s.a.w). Allah revealed the truth to the Prophet (s.a.w) and also sent a warning to the wives that even if the incident might seem as very innocent and harmless, but they should do Taubah:

إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ {4}

If you both (*the wives of the Prophet*) turn in repentance to Allah - for your hearts have sinned - you shall be pardoned; and if you back up each other against him (*the Prophet*), then *you should know that* his protectors are Allah, Gabriel and all righteous believers, furthermore the angels too are his supporters.

Now what does it teach us? For me it was an eye opener that if anyone is close to Allah due to his honourable status or his extraordinary goodness, then this closeness is an added test of staying on the straight path. Most of the time we have a tendency to take it for granted that if Allah loves me then maybe I will not be punished... however, the truth is, that the higher you go, the more careful you have to be at each step.

The other thing which I learned from this incident is that the trust between a husband and wife is a sacred thing. They should not disclose their secrets with anyone. But nowadays we see that it is not considered to be any unusual thing to talk about your spouse with friends, parents, and even neighbours!! Small everyday occurrences are projected as issues. Why? It is because we are ignorant of the real "issue" of life... the one which should have been the biggest concern of our lives... and that is our well being and safety in the next world. We are so conscious of saving ourselves and our children from diseases or other harmful things of this world and we are all the time taking precautions... but what about the hereafter? Are we doing anything about it too? Listen to the words of Allah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ {6}

O believers! Save yourselves and your families from hellfire, whose fuel is men and stones, in the charge of fierce and mighty angels who never disobey Allah's command and who promptly do what they are commanded to do.

The truth is that the bond of love between parents and their children can be the strongest armour against shaitan and the deceptions of this world. Home is the first learning place for the children. But if there is no one to teach then what will they learn? When they see their parents running after the worldly things then how can they even think about the hereafter? Allah has portrayed the horrors of Hell so intensely so that we must take this thing seriously if we are believers... Because as you must have noticed that this verse is addressed to **us**... who claim to be **believers**. If we believe that Allah has made us and this universe for a purpose; and He sent the Quran to educate us about that purpose; then how can we go on living our lives, ignoring the road map which can guide us to safety both in this world and the hereafter? If someone told you that at the end of the road is a huge pit of fire... will you still keep on travelling on that same road? No you will definitely find a diversion. But if someone does not want to believe in the warning of Allah then they have a thousand excuses for not believing. They never think that their disbelief cannot alter the truth and when the truth will come before their eyes then their excuses will not be of any use at all:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ {7}

They will say to the unbelievers: "O unbelievers! Make no excuses for yourselves this Day. You are being rewarded according to your deeds."

If we take a look around us we find that so few people take the matter of hereafter as a certainty. They might love their life but they don't love Allah who gave them this life. And they have no idea of how beautiful is the paradise which he has prepared for His true believers who seek His pleasure and are always striving for obedience. So that is why our lives are totally opposite to the spirit of Islam and we are deprived of the peace which should have been the natural consequence of our being born into the religion of peace...

But we have to get out of this chaos; we need to straighten out our priorities; we have to save ourselves... but how? Where do we start? Let us all turn to Allah and He will show us the way:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {8}

O believers! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance. It may well be that your Rabb will remove from you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow. On that Day Allah will not humiliate the Prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will shine in front of them and on their right, and they will say: "Our Rabb! Perfect our light for us and grant us forgiveness, for You have power over all things."

How beautiful are the words of Allah... so full of hope and mercy. He is promising such a great reward if we would just do Taubah (a sincere repentance) and come to the true way of life. Some of us keep worrying that even after studying the Quran and all the efforts of bringing positive changes in our lives we still commit mistakes as if we have learnt nothing. At such times the devil makes us depressed that we can never be good because of the deep effects of ignorance. But here Allah is giving us the good news that even if you fall into errors, you should keep turning to me and I will help you to erase all the bad influences which have settled on your heart. And even though this life is a difficult test but whoever keeps true to his faith and commitment with Allah, he will be made to enter the glorious gardens of Paradise. And the light of their good deeds will be their guide. So whoever will hold tight to the light of Quran in this world, will have the light in the hereafter too.

All of this seems so simple and clear but then what stops us from acting on it? The biggest hindrance (or excuse) is that our environment does not allow us to accept our faith wholeheartedly. What can I do when my family is against Hijab? My husband or parents don't want me to learn Quran because they think I will become an extremist or fundamentalist... These seem to be valid reasons but the Quran has the answer to everything. Allah says that Faith is the choice of a person's own heart and if one doesn't want to believe then even if the whole environment is conducive, you will not believe:

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأةَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأةَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُعْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ {10}

Allah has set an example to the unbelievers in the wife of Nuh (*Noah*) and the wife of Lut (*Lot*). They were married to two of Our righteous servants, but they betrayed them. In no way could their husbands protect them from Allah. Both of them were told: "Enter the fire, along with those who enter."

The wives of these two Prophets were believers in name, but their loyalties were with the disbelievers. This kind of faith which was just reduced to a label could not save them from the wrath of Allah. Sometimes people think that even if we are not very religious but we will be given paradise because of our noble ancestors or our pious parents or spouses. This example should be enough to open our eyes to the reality that Allah will hold each one of us accountable for our own deeds. Nothing else will benefit us on that day.

We keep on complaining about lack of support but what support did Asiya (a.s) have, who was the wife of Pharaoh? She believed in Allah even though it meant going against such a cruel person who tortured her brutally because of her faith. Our focus remains on the trials of this world only; but look at her beautiful prayer... as if she doesn't care what is happening to her in this world as long as she gets a house near Allah:

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَةً فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ {11}

And for the believers Allah has set an example in the wife of Fir'on (*Pharaoh*), who said: "My Rabb! Build for me a house as a special favour from You in paradise, deliver me from Fir'on and his misdeeds, and save me from the wicked nation."

And then Allah gives us the beautiful example of Maryam (a.s.) who remained pure and strong in the face of all trials...

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الْقَوَاتِلِ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ {12}

Another example is in the life of Maryam, the daughter of `Imrān, who guarded her chastity, and into whose womb We breathed of Our spirit, who testified to the words of her Rabb, and His scriptures, and was one of the obedient.

She did not even have a father to protect her, nor a husband to share the burden which she carried alone. Imagine what a test she went through in giving birth to a child, facing all sorts of accusations; while her whole life had been of chastity and purity. But her faith was so strong that instead of complaining and lamenting on her problems, she remained focused in her knowledge and complete obedience.

We also want to be the favourites of Allah and we wish for the highest ranks of paradise but are we prepared to pay the price? Allah has just revealed to us that it is not impossible. So let us empty our hearts from all the negativity and make them clean and pure with real Taubah. Turn to Allah and protect yourselves and your families from fire...