

Surah Al-Ma'arij

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The word Al-Ma'arij has been translated as “The Ascending Stairways”. It brings to my mind the image of stairs rising towards the sky and people climbing on different levels of faith and goodness. We are in a sort of race against time to accumulate as many good deeds as we can. But all our life our focus remains on the exterior actions, while the root of goodness lies in the heart. We remain in an illusion of righteousness because self analysis is a task, which we think that we don't need any more. While the truth is that the higher you go on the ladder of goodness, the more you are at a risk of falling prey to these tricks of the devil. Therefore we should stay connected with the Quran and keep asking Allah to protect us from all the diseases of the heart specially arrogance because it is the root of all evil. It was arrogance which made *iblis* (the devil) into the most hateful creature in the eyes of Allah. And it was arrogance which made the Makkans reject the warnings of Allah. They were so full of their ego that they ridiculed the Prophet (s.a.w) when he warned them of Allah's punishment; and challenged him to bring the punishment if he was truthful:

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ {1}

A questioner asked for a punishment bound to happen

The illusion of being in control of everything makes people forget their real state of helplessness. It is a test from Allah that He is invisible and all the other resources are visible. And so people become attached to the visible “gods”. Whereas if we use our insight it will become very clear that our choice and control in life is very limited and that too has been given by Allah. Therefore all greatness belongs to Allah:

مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ {3}

It will come from Allah, the Owner of the Ways of Ascent.

The words of the Quran are awesome... they go straight into the heart and make you see things in the light of truth. But what can you do if people want to remain in their state of ignorance and disbelief? Often we face this dilemma of trying to present Allah's message to people but they react in an offensive manner... at such times one feels literally helpless with anger but Allah is cautioning us to remain peaceful and patient:

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا {5}

Therefore, endure with graceful patience.

Just imagine how much torture was inflicted on our Prophet (s.a.w) but He never reciprocated in a rude manner. His goodness of character was so impressive that the same enemies accepted faith in later years. But do you think it was easy? Of course not! But He endured all the pain for the sake of Allah. If we want to be close to Him in Paradise then we will also have to display the same patience and goodwill towards people. But our problem is that we are so impatient and selfish...

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا {19}

Indeed, man has been created impatient

All our energies of thought and action are being spent in safeguarding our selfish interests and this attitude is reflected in the following words:

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا {20} وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا {21}

When evil befalls him, he becomes despondent; but when blessed with good fortune, he becomes stingy

So how can we develop patience...??

A well balanced character can only be achieved through consistent and sincere worship...If we bow down to of Allah in *salah* five times a day He will bless us with a special kind of patience, peace and tranquillity.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ {23}

Those who remain steadfast in their Salah (*prayer*)

But then why is it that we are regular in prayers but still not consistent in goodness? The answer is that prayer should not just be an exercise of limbs but a conscious act of purification through a dialogue with Allah. Such a person, who develops a bond with Allah through prayer, will also be eager to connect to people by sharing his blessings with them:

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ {24} لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ {25}

And those who set aside a due share in their wealth; for the beggars and the deprived,

The third characteristic of these people is that they confirm their belief in the hereafter, both in words and deeds:

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ {26}

And those who accept the truth of the Day of Judgment,

And even while doing all these things they remain in fear of their Lord... isn't this amazing?!!

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ {27}

And those who dread the punishment of their Rabb

You see that nowadays we do a little act of goodness and we feel so satisfied with ourselves... it is because we think that the test of the hereafter is so simple. But the ones who are really knowledgeable about Allah think very differently:

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَا مُنَّوْنَ {28}

Surely the punishment of their Rabb is not something from which anyone can feel safe.

The greatest motivating force for a person to stay away from all evil is this realization of Allah's justness and His terrible punishment. Otherwise if this faith is not right then the shaitan has an easy task of portraying all sorts of evil practices in a beautiful covering. The only way out, is to abstain from all forms of indecencies:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَعْمَارِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ {29}

And those are the ones, who guard their private parts,

And not to forget that faith is not a personal thing. Rather we have to be faithful to others in all our dealings:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ {32}

Those who keep their trusts and honour their promises

This is a complete picture of a true believer, someone who is true to himself, true to Allah and true to people. But in fulfilling all these responsibilities, he remembers that the basis of his faith and stability lies in his lifelong connection with Allah, and so he guards it like his life:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ {34}

And they are those who strictly guard their Salah (*prayers*)

What is the end result of all this patience, sacrifice and consistency of goodness? It is the honour of Paradise... something that we cannot ever imagine with our limited intellects because Allah has not made anything similar to it on this earth...

أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُكْرَمُونَ {35}

It is they who shall live with honour in paradise.

At the time when these beautiful words were being revealed and believers were being given the great promise of paradise, the disbelievers were rushing from all sides to oppress the Prophet (s.a.w) and they tried to prove that it was a fabrication. Just imagine yourself in such a situation... how awful it must have been for the Prophet (s.a.w) to put up with their taunts and rudeness. But Allah was with him and gave him comfort through these eternal words:

فَذَرَهُمْ يَخوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ {42}

So leave them to plunge in vain talk and blunder about until they face that Day of theirs which they are being promised.

The reason for this attitude, even in today's scenario, is that the disbelievers want to safeguard their interests and feel threatened by the one true religion which demands worship of only one God. They are too much in love with their wealth and status to come out of their worship of these "idols". But on the day of judgement, the same people will be rushing towards Allah, like in this world they rush towards their goals and targets:

يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ {43}

The Day when they shall rush forward from their graves, as if they were racing towards a goal.

But for the disbelievers it will be a most humiliating day... their arrogance will be turned to shame:

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ {44}

With downcast eyes and countenances distorted with shame. Such will be the Day, which they are being promised.

Just imagine this scene and think deeply... can we afford this pain of regret and humiliation on a day from which there is no turning back?

So turn back to Allah now when you can and enter into His shade of mercy. Allah's obedience is the only protection from the trials of this world and of the hereafter. May Allah guide us all... ameen.

Surah Al-Muzzammil

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

You must have read the stories of great men in the way of Allah who went without proper food for long periods of time. Kept fasts and then after the long day of work would break their fast with just dates and water. They even went to war, travelling hundreds of miles in the hot desert with minimal provisions, or transport... so have you ever wondered what was the source of their energy? How did they survive those extreme conditions? Never in any Hadith or narration have I heard any self pity or expression of resentment or any sense of deprivation. Now compare it with the abundance of food and luxuries of our present situation and surprisingly people are not satisfied. Talk to anyone you want and most of the time you will listen to a long list of problems and complaints. Everyone seems to be angry at the circumstances and full of self pity... why? Isn't this a strange equation? They had nothing and they were energetic and enthusiastic... we have everything and yet feel lost and confused. Obviously there must be some ingredient which they had and we don't... and I believe it was that very ingredient which gave them energy and deep satisfaction.

Wouldn't you like to discover that secret? I just found it in today's surah Al-Muzzammil...

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ {1} قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا {2}

O you who wraps himself in clothing! Arise to Pray at night except for a little-

This surah was revealed in the early years of Makkan period. The task of receiving the divine revelation and then conveying it to others required a lot of effort. So Allah Ta'ala is calling the Prophet (s.a.w) in such a loving way to get energy from the closeness of His Lord in the last part of the night. And this prayer has one special ornament... the beautiful recitation of Quran:

.....وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا {4}

.....and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured, rhythmic tones.....

To experience the delight of this gift... which is the night prayer, you need to have faith in Allah. Otherwise if someone mentions to us Tahajjud, the first thought which enters our mind is "how will I get my sleep?" and so we remain empty and deprived from this great pleasure, this total satisfaction which fulfils all our needs. That is why we have this emptiness in our

lives... because we are missing out on this treasure which is laid out every single night of our lives and we are too ignorant or lazy to get up and grab it with both hands!!

There are a lot of people I know who want to do great things for Allah but they complain of having no energy. But the same people will get energy for all the worldly tasks... strange, isn't it? Some of us even go as far as to recognize that our Nafs is too spoilt and doesn't want to do anything except to fulfil its desires. But then we don't get any clue how to train our inner "self". Allah is telling us here the golden rule that if you want to train it then you will have to make it work!!

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْءًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً {6}

Surely the getting up at night for prayer is most effective for controlling the self and most suitable for reciting *the Qur'an* as well;

Everything in our religion makes sense... nothing is against human intellect. Of course the one who created our intellect and who made the rules of life, are not different... but the one and only Allah. So how could there be any contradiction in what we need and what we have? It is only prejudice which makes us doubt the commands of Allah and we think there is no requirement for them. Such people may ask that what is the need for Tahajjud when we already have five prayers to connect to Allah... Isn't that enough for spiritual nourishment? The answer is in the next verse:

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا {7}

Because, during the day you are hard pressed with worldly affairs

There has to be sometime during the cycle of night and day when we can be close to Allah with absolutely no distraction whatsoever; and that is possible only at night:

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلاً {8}

Remember the name of your Rabb and (detach from everything to) devote yourself to Him exclusively.

To be cut off from all things does not imply that you leave your home and family and start living in jungles or mountains. Rather it means a sort of mental detachment at the time of prayer. Imagine you love someone most dearly. No matter where you are, you remember that person. But when you are in the company of that most beloved person you don't remember anybody else... such should be our relationship with Allah. But sadly we are totally opposite... when we are with Allah we don't forget duniya... throughout prayer we are

immersed in the thoughts of people or things... and when we are in duniya, we forget Allah and do exactly as the duniya expects us to do...

But are we so blind that we don't understand who is more worthy of our love and devotion? Imagine someone who owns everything and can give you all that you need... will you not turn to him completely?

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا {9}

He is the Rabb of the east and the west: there is no God but Him, therefore, take Him as your Protector.

If today you get this good news that there is someone who is willing to take all your worries and is promising to sort out all your problems... how will you feel?

So try it out tonight and give Allah the burden of your heart. Just experience the pleasure of breathing easy☺

But what about people and their unfair attitudes? They make life so miserable and there seems to be no solution... but look here; Allah has a solution for everything...He is so perfect!!

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا حَمِيلاً {10}

Bear patiently with what they say and leave their company in a polite manner.

In other words we have to be patient and learn not to be judgemental. If someone tries to come between you and Allah... just be very calm and find another route. Allah is everywhere!!

The day of recompense is not far and we should all be worrying about that instead of wasting our energies on petty little issues:

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيْبًا مَّهِيلًا {14}

On the day when the earth with all its mountains will be in a violent commotion, and the mountains will crumble into heaps of shifting sand.

The thought of the hereafter is enough to remind us of the reality of life. Without the end in mind, we tend to magnify small irritations and trials, into huge problems. But really the thought of Allah's judgement brings everything into the right perspective. That is why Allah says:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكَرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا {19}

Surely this is but a reminder, so let him who wills, take the Right way to His Rabb.

I love this ayat because it gives an unbeatable answer to an excuse largely used by people who are so much in love with their worldly life that they cannot think of anything beyond its boundaries... and then they say things like “It is Allah’s will whom he wants to guide... so if he will guide us we will also pray or do Hajj.” Especially for Hajj people usually say “Only he can go whom Allah calls”. But see how clearly Allah is saying that whosoever wants, can make a way towards Allah... The guidance is clear; now it is up to us whether we go to the right way or keep hiding behind excuses.

The next and final ayah is a long one and I will take it in parts because there are very important lessons which deal with practical application of the wonderful concepts discussed earlier...

The first point is that Allah knows our limitations and weaknesses so he made things really easy and do-able by saying these beautiful words:

.....فَاقْرَأُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.....therefore, read from the Qur’an as much

as you easily can.

This is because people are in different situations and they can judge from their own routine how much they can sacrifice from their sleep:

عَلِمَ أَن سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ

..... فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَاقْرَأُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ He knows that there may be some sick people

among you, and some others who travel through the land to seek Allah’s bounty; and yet some others fighting for the cause of Allah. Therefore, read as much of the Qur’an as you easily can.

This is such a beautiful example of Allah’s love and mercy for his faithful slaves. On one hand he does not give orders to read any definite amount of Quran... secondly He also hasn’t given us a complete leave from this duty... work hard to meet the requirements of life but the Quran will go side by side...and not just for the night prayer but even in the day; whether you memorize it or keep a copy in your bag! Just read whatever you can easily read... but do not leave it behind☺

The night prayer and reading the words of the beautiful Quran at that time; is really an act of love and desire... Allah must appreciate it so much... but does it mean you can now skip your fajr salah? Or other duties? NO not at all...

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا Establish the Salah (*five time daily prayers*) and pay the Zakah (*poor due*), and give to Allah a goodly loan.

We have discussed before, what it is to give loan to Allah; but I heard a most amazing definition from a scholar and want to share it will all... "Qardhan Hasan" (giving beautiful loan) means to spend our lives and our belongings for the sake of Allah without any expectation of payment. It doesn't mean that you don't want reward from Allah... rather it means that while giving, your heart should just want to give out of love of Allah and not to spend in a calculating way. It means to give generously and selflessly... there is a difference when you calculate what you will get out of it. And see the next words say it all:

وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا Whatever good you will send forth for yourselves, you will find it with Allah, which will be much better and greater in reward.

It seems as if there could be no more to be said but one thing remains and that is to humbly ask Allah's forgiveness... why? Because nothing you do is without faults. It is human nature to make mistakes and the only thing which erases these errors is Allah's loving forgiveness because He certainly is the most Merciful:

..... وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ {20}

Seek Allah's forgiveness, surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

We need to spread this truth to others too because there are so many doubts and misconceptions in the minds of people due to ignorance and over-involvement with the affairs of daily existence. They need to be told that the real source of everything is Allah and the only way to peace and happiness is to put your trust in Him and turn to Him with love and humility. Our hearts are so burdened with pressures of all kinds but Allah is offering His protection to us. Why should we deprive ourselves when we have such a forgiving and merciful Rabb who is willing to take us into His mercy... if only we turn to Him and follow the path that leads to success... InshaAllah.

Surah Al-Muddassir

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Before studying the Quran I used to consider myself as a fairly good Muslim but my heart was totally involved in this world and its various issues. Religion for me was a set of rituals and after having done them such as Salah and zikr, I considered having done my duty and now was free to occupy my time with the things that needed to be done or things that I loved doing. So basically my time was divided into two slots... one was for doing the “duties” and the other was for “relaxation/enjoyment”. As long as things went smoothly I was ok, but whenever some problem came up I used to be very upset and confused. I just couldn't understand why people had to suffer miseries, why do they have to die? Why were people so selfish and inconsiderate? Why do they have to hurt others and make life miserable for those around them? Because my vision was blocked and I could see things from the perspective of this world only, so it depressed me.... Until Allah blessed me with the guidance of the Quran which restored my vision and I began to understand the true purpose of my existence.

But why am I telling this story now? What does it have to do with Surah Al-Muddassir? Actually this great surah has reminded me how terrible it is to live life with a distorted vision, even in the midst of a million blessings. Can a lost person be happy? Even if he is driving the most luxurious car... certainly he cannot enjoy the ride until he knows where he is going. Even if he deludes himself of having fun, can he reach his destination?

Unfortunately this is the way most people are living their lives and there is such a great need for us to spread the real truth which Allah has revealed and preserved in the form of Quran and Sunnah; but to try to wake up a sleeping person who does not want to wake up... is not such a simple task. We need to have a lot of love, goodwill, sincerity and knowledge of the proper etiquettes of “Dawah” (calling people to Allah). Therefore Allah has given us a complete manual right in the beginning of Surah Al-Muddassir which was originally addressed to our Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon Him)

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ {1} قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ {2}

O you wrapped up (in garments)! Arise and deliver your warning.

We keep reading so many warnings about health hazards, about possible weather calamities, about rise and fall of markets and how we should invest our money... all the

dangers of the world and our fear of loss and failure makes us believe whatever is told to us... we immediately turn to safety measures... but the fact is that none of the dangers of this world can compare to the greatest danger of the hereafter i.e. the terrible hellfire... that is something which we need to save our souls from- first and foremost... because in this life the problem will go away or your life will end. Either way we will be released from whatever difficulty that might come our way... but if someone fails the test of life and displeases Allah through disobedience and arrogance then the pain will be everlasting... may Allah save us from that (Ameen)

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ {3}

And proclaim the greatness of your Rabb.

We say the words "Allahu Akbar in all our prayers and in the words of Azaan we hear this... but is it really the feeling of our heart? Does it reflect in our behaviour? The real essence of religion is that we establish Allah's absolute greatness in our lives by giving Him the topmost priority in all our decisions. His pleasure should be our greatest goal and His fear should be our greatest fear. Now these are the two basic concepts that we have to convey.... Allah's Greatness and the reality of the hereafter... these two are the motivators of the heart. next comes the outward appearance of the caller to faith...

وَتِيَابِكَ فَطَهِّرْ {4}

And purify your garments.

Why is this so important that Allah has specifically mentioned it in the Quran? Generally people have this misconception that a religious person has no concern with the physical aspects of life. We should understand that all these things are a blessing for man and we should use them with goodness and gratitude so that they increase us in Allah's love and obedience. Also cleanliness is something which has a direct effect on our soul as well as the person whom we interact with. So a believer might be poor and wear old clothes but they will always be clean like his heart... because Allah has ordered us to stay away from all bad things:

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْتَرِ {5}

Keep yourself away from uncleanness.

When we do something good to others we feel good and it is very natural... but just take care that never think that you have done any favour on anyone... Because it is Allah's favour on us that He enables us to do anything good and also whatever we do is eventually going to benefit our own selves. So never expect that others should acknowledge your goodness:

وَلَا تَمُنَّ بِتَسْتَكْبِرُ {6}

Do not favour others to expect a gain.

After having taken all these steps when you lovingly and sincerely call people to Allah, it might happen that most people will not take it positively and will blame you of "acting very pious" or other such remarks. Therefore the quality which we need most in this way is "patience for the sake of Allah"...

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ {7}

And be patient for the sake of your Rabb.

The spiritual fulfillment in connecting people to Allah and giving them hope of His mercy and a light of guidance is something which cannot be expressed in words. But only those people can achieve it who are willing to bear the pain of rejection and ridicule with patience. Because one comes across a lot of people who will not like to hear the truth and will even try to prove that the caller to faith is himself a wrong person. Such an example has been described in the next few verses where Allah tells us of an affluent man in Makkah who tried to prove that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was just mesmerising people with his magic and that there was no truth in his sayings.... how could he even say such a thing about a man whom the whole town knew to be the most truthful and the most trustworthy. Obviously it was just his arrogance, as is expressed in the following words:

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ {23} فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ {24}

Then he turned his back in scornful pride and said: "This is nothing but a magic derived from the old";

Even after fourteen centuries the same thing happens that people who feel threatened that if Islam comes into the lives of people then it will be an end to their wrong ways so they try to prove that the caller to Allah's message is projecting some self created theories:

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ {25}

"This is nothing but the word of a human being."

Although in this world they are not being caught and punished for their falsehood, and some people might even believe and follow them... thinking them to be so powerful and intelligent but in the hereafter they will be given their due return for their disbelief and arrogance:

سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ {26} وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ {27} لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ {28} لَوَّاحَةٌ لِلْبَشَرِ {29}

Soon I shall cast him into "Saqar". What will make you understand, what "Saqar" is? It is *burning fire which* leaves nothing and spares none. It shrivels the human flesh.

Our actions and words do not always show up in any obvious consequence in this world. Some people continue to do injustice to others but no one ever takes them to task. We continue to make the same mistakes time and time again but we don't have to pay for them. This makes us relaxed regarding the consequences of the hereafter but we should remember that Allah does not punish us in this world but he has warned us again and again in the Quran, about the day when each and every thought word and deed will be weighed...

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ {38}

Every soul is held in pledge for its deeds.

And when people will be thrown into the hellfire, which they had denied all their life, they will be asked:

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ {42}

"What brought you into hell?"

Just look at their answer...

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ {43}

They will answer: "We did not use to offer the Salah (*prayers*)

We take salah so lightly although it is the first thing that will be asked of us in the hereafter. And then the other thing which we never think of:

وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِينَ {44}

We did not use to feed the poor

Amazingly the next ayat depicts our biggest distraction which is eating away our time and life and we don't even realize it...

وَكُنَّا نَحُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ {45}

We used to join those who wasted their time in vain talk

All this is due to the fact that our belief in the hereafter is diminishing in direct proportion to the increasing love for the worldly activities. Today we claim to have faith in Allah and the hereafter but on that day of the final judgement, the disbelievers will realize the truth:

وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ {46}

And we used to deny the Day of Judgment,

How terrible it is to dwell in an infinite sea of torture and regret... but sadly we don't pay attention to the warnings in this life when we still have a chance to make things right...

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ {49}

Then what is the matter with them that they turn away from this admonition?

We run away from facing the truth and we think we are being very intelligent and independent; but look at what Allah is saying here:

كَانَتْهُمْ حِمْرًا مُسْتَنْفِرَةً {50} فَفَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ {51}

Like frightened donkeys fleeing from a lion.

If only we had realized that Quran is such a great blessing of guidance and knowledge, then we would have honoured it more than anything else but our hearts are trapped in the illusion of this world and we have neglected to learn and apply the reminders of the Quran:

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ {54}

But no! Surely this *Qur'an* is an admonition.

But Allah does not force guidance on us. He has given us the freedom of choice. And this is the test of life how we use this freedom. Therefore the Quran benefits only those who accept its truth and choose to be reminded:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ {55}

So whosoever will (let him read it), and receive admonition (from it)!

Just as there is an arrogance of disbelief similarly there is an arrogance of piety. And this is so sad that some people tend to think of themselves as so pure and righteous and then start to look down on others. This is again a trap of the devil and we must be very very careful not to fall in this error. We must remember to be extra thankful to Allah day and night and bow our hearts in front of His majesty because we could not have achieved guidance without Allah's will...

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ {56}

But none takes heed except by the will of Allah. He Alone is worthy to be feared and He Alone is worthy to forgive *those who fear Him*.

What a magnificent ayat this is... ending with the most powerful reminder that ONLY Allah is deserving of our fear and ONLY He has the power of forgiveness.

May Allah give us Hidayat and save us from arrogance and disbelief. May this message reach to all the people of this world...Ameen

Surah Al-Qiyamah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

As we continue with our daily existence... it seems to be an unending cycle of day and night but the fact is that with each passing moment we are coming closer and closer to our end. Even though we “believe” in the Day of Judgement, yet it seems to be a dreamy sort of event which is to come in a far away future. Due to a severe lack of knowledge of Quran and Hadith, we have started believing in the illusions of this world and think of it as reality; with the result that the reality of “resurrection and recompense” seems to be an illusion.

If you change the sign boards on the roads by switching over east with west...can anybody reach their destination? Similarly the certainty that the day of Judgement is very near, acts as a sign post in our conscious minds, motivating us to stay on the right way... therefore Allah takes oath of this great day...

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ {1}

I swear by the Day of Resurrection

Apart from giving us knowledge of the day of Qiyamah, Allah has blessed all of us with a very sophisticated “tool” which is the conscience. It is like an alarm which rings as soon as we do something wrong. The strength of this alarm depends on the strength of our faith and knowledge. And the fact that Allah has taken oath of it really makes me think how great this blessing is... but sadly how little we make use of it:

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ {2}

And I swear by the self reproaching soul!

But the people of Makkah to whom these verses were revealed did not want to believe in Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and tried to challenge the divine verses with their logic of possibilities... Allah asks them:

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ {3}

Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?

The answer is so amazing and awesome:

بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ {4}

Why not? We are able to put together, in perfect order, the very tips of his fingers.

After reading this verse, I just sat mesmerized looking at my finger tips and marvelling at the pattern of the lines... so fine and so intricate. It was as if I was seeing them for the first time and I understood that this is how Quran opens our eyes! How amazing is the power of that Rabb who created these tiny joints with all the details and will again make us whole and complete, even after we become a collection of dust and bones...

But some people prefer to remain blind even after seeing it all... until they will be overtaken by the horrors of the Qiyamah:

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ {7}

When the sight shall be dazed...

When some calamity hits us in this world our first reaction is to run away from the scene but on that final day there will be no place to protect anyone:

يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفْرُ {10} كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ {11}

- on that Day man will ask: "Is there any way to escape?" Nay! There will be no refuge.

How we deny the truth with our logics and the power of speech but on the day of judgement Allah will tell us the reality of what we did...

يَنْبَأُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ {13}

On that Day man shall be told about all his deeds, from the first to the last.

It is not that we are blind about ourselves... rather Allah has given us both outer and inner vision and we can see where we are going wrong; but we just have this habit of denial due to which we don't admit our faults and seldom try to correct them:

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ {14} وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ {15}

Indeed, man shall bear witness against himself, even though he shall plead with excuses.

The reason behind this self deception is nothing but the love of this world. Instead of being mesmerised by Allah and bowing down in front of His greatness, we are mesmerised by the love of the world and its temporary benefits and pleasures....

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ {20}

Nay, the fact is that you people love this fleeting life.

We go on blindly in pursuit of this world, not realizing that the price we are paying for it is too high:

وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ {21}

and you are heedless of the Hereafter.

Some might say that to change our lifestyle for the sake of the Akhirah is nearly impossible and what will become of us if we give up the haram pleasures... others might even try to prove that the haram is not haram anymore... but amidst all this non seriousness and denial there will still be some fortunate people who will seek the truth and follow it even though they have to make some sacrifices... but look at how they will be honoured and pleased on the day of Judgement:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ تَأْضِرُّهُ {22} إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ {23}

On that Day, some faces shall be bright, looking towards their Rabb.

What greater joy can there be that the one whom you try to please is actually pleased with you... the one you love, loves you... So when the believers of Allah will look at the countenance of their Rabb and see with their eyes how pleased He is with their efforts then it will be a supreme moment of joy for them and they will forget every other thing that they were given before that. Can anything in this world compare with this pleasure?

But it is a matter of faith and for those who don't believe in these verses and continue on their ways, there is a sad end awaiting them:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ {24} تَظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ {25}

And on that Day some faces shall be gloomy, thinking that some backbreaking calamity is about to be inflicted on them.

How can we not believe when we have seen death with our own eyes...?

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ {26} وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ {27}

Nay, when a man's soul is about to leave and reaches to the throat; and those around him cry: "Is there any enchanter to help?"

How sad is the moment of departure... think of the pain of any separation and then multiply it with infinity... that will be the intensity of saying farewell to this world forever:

وَوَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ {28}

Then man will be certain that it was the time of departure *from this world*.

So what will be the state of the person who did not do any of the things which Allah told him to do? Where will he go now?

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ {30}

that will be the Day of driving towards your Rabb.

Allah specially mentions two things and it is a sort of warning to us that while we have still time we must hold on to these things which the unfortunate soul neglected to do:

فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ {31}

But in this life he neither believed, nor offered Salah (*prayed*);

And then Allah repeats again and again the word which we fear the most... misery and suffering...

أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ {34} ثُمَّ أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ {35}

Woe to you, *O man*! Woe to you. Again woe to you, *O man*! Woe to you.

How can we even think of being independent in our choices and decisions? When we have been created from a drop of water and through various stages Allah has made us complete humans... how can we even dare to disobey the one who gave us this life and everything?

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى {36} أَلَمْ يَكُنْ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَنِيٍّ يُُمْنَىٰ {37}

Does man think that he will be left *to wander around* without any purpose? Was he not once a drop of emitted semen?

If we contemplate on this amazing creation of our bodies, of this universe, of all the varieties and species of plants and animals, night and day, the sun, moon and stars... all separate yet woven together in a complex program of life and death... then how can we think that Allah who created it the first time cannot do so again?

أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ {40}

Has He not then the power to bring the dead to life?

For me this Surah is such a powerful reminder that whatever excuses I have to put the interests of this life ahead of the hereafter, all those reasons, logics, and excuses are as baseless, as weak, and as foolish as the disbelief in resurrection. Because if we really believe in our destination then we cannot loiter and waste our time on the way... if we truly believe in the immense pleasures of the hereafter then we cannot lag behind in achieving the maximum benefits. Allah has programmed into us a need for permanent happiness and success... it is just a matter of faith where we believe it can be found. If we believe it is in the hereafter then will work for that and if we think that it can be found in this world then it will be striving in vain...

May Allah save us from all false illusions and open our eyes to the reality. May He increase us in our faith and guide us to the ultimate success...ameen

Surah Ad-Dahr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I have loved this Surah even before I studied its meaning. Sounds a bit strange... how can one be inspired by something that one doesn't even know or understand? This is the miracle of the Quran that it attracts your heart in so many ways... and one of its attractions is its rhyme and rhythm of words. I remember that some years ago I received a "Ramadan gift-pack" from a friend of mine in which she had put in some booklets, pamphlets, cards of duas etc. Along with that there were some cassettes. Instantly I played one of those and heard for the first time the recitation of Surah Ad-Dahr... I thought I had never heard anything so beautiful in my whole life. Although I couldn't understand it then but just listening to its mesmerising sound I knew there must be something very special in these amazing words that sounded like something out of this world!

Alhamdulillah today after studying it I feel like Allah has answered all my questions regarding life and its mysteries. I understood that we feel lost because we keep looking for guidance from people. And we don't realize that only Allah has the complete knowledge and only He has the ability to make us see things from the right perspective. To understand life we must understand how and why it all began...

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا {1}

Has there not passed over man a period of time when he was nothing- -not even mentioned?

Try to imagine what the world would be like if there was not a single person in it... empty houses, empty roads, no human voices, no traffic, nothing... How meaningless it would be without human beings... therefore it is such a big truth that Allah created everything for us... but what have **we** been created for? Allah answers in the next ayah:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا {2}

Indeed, We have created man from the sperm drop *containing both sexes*, so that We may test him. *Therefore*, We gave him the faculties of hearing and sight.

So life is a test... we keep hearing this sentence but rarely does anyone ask... what is the subject of this test? What is the syllabus? What type of questions will be asked?

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا {3}

Then We guided him to the Way: Now, *it is his choice* either to be grateful or to be a disbeliever.

The syllabus for our test has come straight from the heavens. Allah sent us the complete guide in the form of Quran. He sent us the most perfect teacher, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) who not only taught us the Quran but also taught us the wisdom to apply it in our lives. So now it is up to us whether we are grateful or ungrateful. If we appreciate life, acknowledge with our words and deeds that everything that we have has been given to us by Allah so it should be used according to His will and Desire, then we have passed this test; otherwise there is a terrible end...

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا {4}

For the disbelievers, We have prepared chains, fetters and a blazing fire.

Sometimes paradise seems an impossible target but this Surah has given me such a hope and encouragement that it is not so difficult to achieve... the only thing we need to get there is to be grateful... Being grateful means that you have a positive attitude... you recognize that Allah had given you so much that you cannot even count. So you will try to win His pleasure with goodness and excellence in all that you do... such will be the fortunate people:

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا {5} عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

{6}

The righteous shall be *in paradise* drinking from a cup of wine mixed with Kafoor (*camphor-water*), from a gushing spring at which the servants of Allah will refresh themselves, and *shall be able to* take out its channels from place to place *at their will*.

The most prized quality of grateful people is that they fulfil their commitments and fear the day of Judgement:

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا {7}

They are those who keep their **vows** and dread the Day of widespread terror

The Arabic word for a vow is “Nazr”. This means that a person makes some commitment with Allah to do some extra deeds. Nazr is defined as making something obligatory on

oneself which is not otherwise an obligation. There reason to do so is to gain pleasure and nearness of Allah; because being humans we tend to make a lot of mistakes and the only way we can hope to wash away the effects of these mistakes is to do replace them with lots of extra good deeds. But just making intention is not enough because after the initial burst of motivation our efforts tend to fade off. So we should make commitments with Allah, not only for extra salah or fasting but also of other deeds of goodness... some for our personal development like education of Quran and Hadith and other targets of helping people:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا {8}

And they feed the poor, the orphan and the captive for the love of Allah

But all along this road to success we need to keep looking at our compass, the tool which tells us where we are going. In the journey of life, our compass is the intention of our hearts... the motivating factor. It is human weakness that we want instant recognition and appreciation from people but we can correct this habit by reminding ourselves that our goal is to attain Allah's approval:

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا {9}

(They say): "We feed you for the sake of Allah Alone; we seek from you neither reward nor thanks

Awareness of the reality is such a great blessing of Allah and we should all pray and work hard to attain it through humbleness and acquiring knowledge. It is this awareness which motivates a person to do countless acts of generosity yet instead of becoming pleased with himself he keeps fearing His Lord...

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا {10}

Indeed we dread our Rabb's torment of a very distressful Day.

And this balance of gratitude and Allah's fear leads a person to ultimate success:

فَوَقَاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا {11}

So Allah will deliver them from the evil of that Day, and bestow on them freshness and joy

To be saved from the hellfire and to enter Paradise... this is the ultimate success:

وَجَزَاءُهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا {12}

And their recompense shall be Paradise, and silken garments, because they were patient.

No success comes without a price and the price of eternal happiness is Patience. We simply cannot do anything without patience and perseverance. Someone rightly said that patience and gratitude are two wings and we can fly to Jannat if both these wings remain strong. If one of them is cut off our flight will be in serious danger... It might seem hard to swallow the unpleasant things of this life with patience but just see how much reward there is awaiting those who decide to do it:

مُتَكِّينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا {13}

There they shall be reclining upon high couches; they shall feel neither the scorching heat nor the biting cold

It brings to mind such a delightful picture... complete serenity and freedom from all highs and lows... no more burning sun... no more freezing cold; just relax and enjoy the pleasures of Paradise:

وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلَالُهَا وَذُلَّتْ قُطُوفُهَا تَدْلِيلًا {14}

The trees of paradise will spread their shade around them, and their fruits will hang in clusters within their easy reach.

This is probably the only Surah in Quran where we find such a vivid description of Jannah. Reading such words increases our love for Allah even more, for all His detailed preparations and also for telling us in advance... so that we can work even harder to achieve it and bear the loneliness and hardships of this way in happiness of anticipation:

وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِآنِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا {15} قَوَارِيرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا

{16}

They shall be served with silver dishes, goblets of crystal, and goblets made of crystal-clear silver, filled by their attendants in due measure.

There will be such honours given to the successful people which we cannot even imagine:

عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَحُلُّوا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا {21}

They (*the residents of paradise*) shall be arrayed in the garments of fine green silk and rich brocade, and adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Rabb will give them pure wine to drink.

Why is all this being given to them? Because they sought Allah's appreciation and so Allah will give them what they strived for:

إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا {22}

"Verily this is a Reward for you, and your Endeavour is accepted and recognised."

Whenever I imagine the long road to Paradise, the ultimate pleasure I visualize is that Allah will say "your efforts have been appreciated". This longing to hear these words from Allah is the greatest motivating force in the world. It makes every other thing secondary... people's pleasure, their approval, their criticism, their hurts... everything just fades away. But to strengthen this vision you need to keep looking outside the window of this temporary world into the infinity of the hereafter... And do you know where I found such a window? It is the Quran...

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا {23}

Surely, it is We Who have sent down this Qur'an to you through gradual revelations,

But these days, even to reach this "window" requires a lot of patience and determination; because lots of evil forces are there to stop your way. That is why Allah says:

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ آثِمًا أَوْ كَافِرًا {24}

Therefore, await with patience the command of your Rabb and do not yield to any sinner or disbeliever.

But we need strength even to do Sabar... where will get that strength from?

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا {25} وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا {26}

Glorify the name of your Rabb morning and evening; prostrate before Him at night and glorify Him during the long hours of night.

So Allah has made it so easy for us... go to him in Salah and get the energy to do sabar. Do sabar and get the rewards of paradise... then why are so few people willing to walk this way? What is stopping them?

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا {27}

These people love the transitory life of *this world* and neglect the heavy Day *that is coming ahead*.

So we need to cut down on all trivial things which keep us addicted to the concerns of this world. This world is our necessity not our purpose... it is a way, not a destination. We can enjoy the scenes on the way but we don't fall in love with them so much that we get off our train and start living there, forgetting our actual destination. But again only Allah has the power to reveal the reality to us... therefore hold tight to His words:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذَكُّرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا {29}

This is indeed an admonition, so let him who will, adopt The Way to his Rabb

So if you are a fortunate person already on the way of your Lord remember that one big trap of the devil is that he will try to make you arrogant... so Allah reminds you that there is no reason for you to feel proud of yourself because you could not be on the right way if he had not guided you:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا {30}

But you cannot will, except by the will of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Knowledgeable, All-Wise.

Therefore we should just keep on doing our best and stay away from all self praising thoughts, words and deeds... patience and gratitude should be our motto and keep praying for Allah's help and Mercy:

يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا {31}

He admits to His mercy whom He wills, and for the wrongdoers He has prepared a painful punishment.

Such a beautiful end to a heart moving surah! May this end be the start of a new awareness and a new energy and resolve to be the best slaves of Allah... humble, patient and grateful...

forever turning to him in hope and fear... seeking His pleasure and working day and night towards this goal... InshaAllah

Surah An-Naba'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Alhamdulillah we have reached the final part of the Quran. When I had started upon this journey, three years ago, I had been fully aware that I had taken upon myself such a huge task for which I was neither capable nor knowledgeable. Yet I believed that whatever I have studied in the Quran has to be shared with the whole world and Allah helps those who work for His pleasure. Thus I started writing these reviews... but really I had thought it almost impossible that I will ever reach the end!

This is the way we live in this world. We move on from day to day and we know it has an end but our minds fail to imagine how something so full of life can cease to exist. That is why when we hear the death of a person we feel shocked, as if the concept of death is totally unthinkable for us. Surah An Naba' is really an eye opener for us if we ponder over its verses and more than ever before I have felt like the day of recompense is just so near and that it is high time we wake up from our illusion that we are going to stay here forever.

Our concept of the hereafter has become cloudy to such an extent that instead of making any preparations for that "mega event", people are mostly arguing about it. Their questions are not to gain any knowledge or to clear any doubt, rather they want to prove it as false and imaginary. Do we ever argue about any "breaking news"? We have no problem at all in accepting and believing the words of a newscaster. So what about the breaking news which Allah is giving us?

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ {1} عَنِ النَّبَأِ الْعَظِيمِ {2}

Concerning what are they disputing? Concerning the Great News,

Allah has made this world in such a way that things do not appear as they are. The reality becomes clear only if we are interested in something and sincerely want to know about it. But most people are not interested in finding about the hereafter and so they make excuses to prove that what they are doing in their lives is perfectly alright. But soon we will see the truth with our own eyes:

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ {4} ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ {5}

Very soon they shall come to know; We repeat, very soon they shall come to know.

In the hereafter everything will become so crystal clear but even in this world if we ponder over the creations of Allah, we can “see” His message written clearly all around us.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا {6} وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا {7}

Is it not true that We have spread the earth like a bed, and the mountains as pegs?

How awesome is the rain that falls from the clouds. Could we have created water with our own hands? Then why don't we appreciate these miracles?

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا {14} لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا {15} وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا {16}

And We sent down abundant water from the clouds, bringing forth grain, vegetation and gardens of luxurious growth?

But the pleasures of this world are not unlimited. Everything in this world has an end. And like the beginning, the end also has a purpose...

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا {17}

The Day of decision is already fixed.

It is our inborn need to be rewarded for what we do. Some people might not want any “physical” return for their favours but they will definitely want appreciation or acknowledgement for what they have done. But in this world it is not humanly possible for anyone to give you the return for your efforts. Take the example of a mother... imagine what she has to bear for the sake of her children plus taking care of her husband and the entire household. Even if someone decides to pay her, it is simply not possible to assign any monetary value to her patience and hard work. Therefore a day must come in which all these dues are paid in full.

But the evil doers, who do not believe in any punishment beyond this life, think of themselves as very successful that they have committed so many crimes and no one has been able to catch them. They don't know what is awaiting them:

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا {21} لِلطَّاغِينَ مَابًا {22} لَابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا {23}

For sure, the hell shall lie in ambush. For the transgressors a place of destination. There they shall live for ages

Next Allah informs us of the horrors of that terrible fire so that we can protect ourselves as best as we can:

لَا يَدْوِفُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا {24} إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا {25}

in it they shall taste neither refreshment nor drink, except scalding water and decaying filth:

On the other hand the people who believed in the hereafter and spent a life of carefulness will be awarded the great success:

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا {31} حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا {32}

On that Day, the righteous will certainly achieve *their Heart's desires*: beautiful gardens and vineyards

Their deeds will be rewarded by the bountiful Lord:

جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا {36}

a recompense from your Rabb and a gift beyond their account

That day is bound to come so instead of arguing about it we must immediately start working for that everlasting success:

ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا {39}

That Day is a sure reality. So let him who desires, seek a way back to his Rabb

Still if someone does not want to believe, then what can be said after such clear verses?

That day is not so far away as we think.... a day when we will truly see what we have collected for our final home:

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ
تُرَابًا {40}

Indeed We have forewarned you of an imminent punishment which lies close-at-hand, on the Day when man shall see what his hands have sent forth and the unbeliever will cry: "I wish! I could remain merely dust."

May Allah save us from the regret of that day. As someone has so rightly said "we must face one out of two things: either the pain of discipline or the pain of regret". So if want to be saved from the pain of regret then we must be ready to live each moment of our life as if it is the last chance we have, in which we can do something to please Allah. Wasting time in vain pursuits is so easy and shaitan uses this trick on us that he gives us false hopes. Let us contemplate on the words of Allah and turn to Him for help and support. Surely He helps those who want to walk on the right way.

Surah Abasa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Just as we are curious to know what is the quality that Allah likes the most in a person similarly we should also be aware of the things which He does not like. And this Surah openly reflects Allah's dislike for arrogance and His anger at the arrogant people. It has always been the case with privileged people that a majority of them suffer from a sense of superiority and in most cases they think themselves too high and mighty to follow the commands of Allah. The chiefs of Makkah were no exception. Some of them were once sitting in the company of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w) and He was trying to convey to them Allah's message so that they might accept Islam. A companion of the Prophet (s.a.w), named Abdullah bin Umme-Maktum (r.a) turned up and tried to ask the Prophet (s.a.w) to teach him about something. Now this companion was blind and could not see that the Prophet (s.a.w) was attending to some other people. So he just came in and started talking. Although the Prophet (s.a.w) did not say anything to him but his face showed some sign of irritation. Now this seems to be such a harmless gesture but Allah sent down this Surah in which He made it very clear that in His eyes the believer who fears Allah and is so eager for knowledge has a far greater status than the non-believing people, however noble or influential they might be.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى {1} أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى {2}

He (*the Prophet*) frowned and turned away; when there came to him the blind man (*Ibn Umme Maktüm, who came to the Prophet and interrupted his conversation with the chiefs of Makkah*)

This is a great lesson for all those who think that they are superior to others on the basis of their worldly status or their knowledge and wisdom. It is so common in us that we look down on people because of their apparent weaknesses... but we should remember that it might be that they are far better than us. Thus Allah refers to Abdullah Ibn Umme Maktoom, that he was a far better learner even if he was visually handicapped:

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكِّي {3} أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى {4}

How could you tell? He might have sought to purify himself; or become reminded and might have benefited from Our reminder.

How often it is that we see a blind person and feel pity for him as if he is the most unlucky person but in fact the real blindness is of the hearts who do not perceive the truth...

أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْنَى {5} فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى {6}

As for him who is indifferent; to him you were attending

Again Allah reminds us that in His eyes the true worth of a person is in his character... so we should never ignore the true and sincere believers, no matter how weak and insignificant they might seem. Allah has not sent His Book for just a few selected type of people... rather it is for the whole mankind; irrespective of worldly status:

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ {11} فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ {12}

It should not be so! Indeed, this is but an admonition; let him who wants, accept it

We are so impressed by people and their possessions but Allah is directing our attention to the fact that the noblest thing in this world is the Quran:

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ {13} مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ {14}

It is written in scrolls, which are honoured; exalted, purified,

But some people don't understand what could be so special in a book? Actually these are the arrogant ones who cannot see anything beyond their tall egos. Allah wakes them up by this reminder of their origin:

فُقِيلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ {17} مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ {18}

Woe to man! What a disbeliever he is! Out of what Allah has created him?

And then ponder upon the end:

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ {21}

Then causes him to die and stows him in a grave.

But really the end is only a waiting period before the second birth:

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنشَرَهُ {22}

Then He will surely bring him back to life when He pleases.

The people of Makkah were strongly denying the idea of resurrection. And they said how old bones could be made into complete human beings. So Allah calls their attention to the miracle of His creation... how He creates "live" things from the dead earth. We don't have to go to any laboratory to observe these facts. Just focus on a morsel of food and contemplate on how it passed through so many places and stages before it reached your hand:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ {24}

Let man reflect on the food he eats

It is all Allah's blessings that we are using; so will we not listen to Him?

وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا {29} وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا {30} وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا {31}

Olives and dates; lush gardens; fruits and fodder,

But all this is for a limited period. Suddenly it will all come to an end... and then no one will stop to help anyone else:

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاعَةُ {33} يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ {34}

Finally when there will come the deafening blast; on that Day each man shall flee from his own brother

In this world the relations between siblings may often turn sour but with parents one cannot even think to be separated. Yet the calamity of that day will be so great that even parents will lose their significance as well as spouses and children:

وَأُمَّهُ وَآبِيهِ {35} وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ {36}

And (even) his mother and his father; And his wife and his children.

These are the same people for whom we live. Just to keep them happy we give up other important things... even ignoring the rights of Allah. How often we hear this excuse that we cannot follow such and such thing because our families don't like it. But then why do they become strangers on that day when we will be in most need of help?

لِكُلِّ امْرِيٍّ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُعْنِيهِ {37}

For each one of them, on that Day, shall have enough concern of his own to make him indifferent to the others.

This is the reality we must face... that each one of them will be so engrossed with their own concern that it will be impossible for them to consider anyone else. It is a very important reminder from Allah that even though it is obligatory to give the rights of our loved ones but it is not their right that we disobey Allah because of them. Because no matter how much they seem to love us today they will not help us in the hereafter.

The people who understood this fact in this world and made Allah their no-1 focus of life, naturally have to put up with a lot of difficult stages but their end will be so sweet...

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفِرَةٌ {38} ضَاحِكَةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ {39}

Some faces on that Day shall be shining; smiling and joyful

And those who remained trapped in their own arrogance, and did not believe in Allah's revelations, will find themselves in a really difficult and painful situation:

وَوُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ {40} تَرَهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ {41} أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرَةُ الْفٰجِرَةُ {42}

And some faces on that Day shall be dusty; and veiled with darkness. These shall be *the faces of* the disbelieving wicked.

So this is the end which we all have to face. We can all see ourselves... what we are doing? Whom we are pleasing? Only Allah will be the judge on that final day of judgement so how can we live our lives in contrast to His commands? Lets open our eyes to the truth... see the direction of our lives and adjust our sails accordingly! May Allah be our guide... ameen.

Surah At-Takwir

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Our happiness and peace of mind depends so much on the environment in which we live, yet we are rarely grateful for the shining sun, the twinkling stars or the air in which we breathe. We go on and on in the never ending cycle of our routine lives as if this world will continue to serve us forever. In these times of materialism, there is no time for contemplation on the blessings of nature and thus we move further and further away from our Creator. We seem to be totally ignorant of the fact that the biggest connection between Him and us is the miracle of His creation... and if we are too busy to even look at these things then how will we remember Him or be grateful to Him? Thus in Surah At-Takwir Allah is giving us a warning that the world is going to end one day and it will be a terrible day in which nothing will be the same anymore:

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ {1} وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ {2}

When the sun will cease to shine; when the stars will lose their lustre;

In the next few verses Allah has shown in complete detail of all the horrifying things that are going to happen when this world will finally come to its end. That is why I always feel that the Quran is actually a window through which we can watch all the things which are otherwise unimaginable...

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ {5} وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ {6}

When the wild beasts will be brought together; when the oceans will be set ablaze;

It is human nature to take for granted whatever we have and we only realize the value of a blessing when we are faced with the possibility of losing it. Even life itself becomes a routine and we hardly ever thank Allah for being alive! But as soon as we are faced with some life threatening disease, or an accident... then all our sleeping senses come alive, and we beg Allah to give us another chance. So Allah is warning us that we should make use of our life while we still have it because it will soon be gone. And the day will come with all its catastrophes in which the biggest worry of a person will be the "luggage" that he has brought along....

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ {10}

When the record will be laid open;

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ {14}

Then each soul shall know what it has bought with it.

All the thoughts, words and actions are being recorded by the angels and they don't miss even the tiniest details. Most of the time we are forgetful of their watching eyes and writing hands and so our whole attitude towards life becomes casual and non serious. On one hand we might be doing acts that please Allah; but side by side we say or do such things which neutralize all our good deeds. This carelessness is like darkness and the light of the heart is the only thing which can eliminate this ignorance. Thus Allah daily makes us witness the night and day so that we might ponder on the darkness of our hearts and make efforts to light them up with the light of Quran:

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ {17} وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ {18} إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ {19}

By the night as it dissipates; by the morning when it breaths again: surely this word (*The Qur'an*) is brought by a noble Messenger (*Gabriel*),

When you begin to follow the teachings of Quran, it becomes so difficult because the whole world seems to be rushing in the opposite direction. So it makes one think that the whole society cannot be wrong so maybe I am the one who has gone crazy. Even if you remain firm in your faith, other people will continue to put this doubt in your mind. So Allah has very strongly stated the fact that the taunts of the disbelievers are false and baseless:

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ {22}

O people of Makkah! Your companion has not gone mad;

This Quran is the most authentic message of Allah which takes us out of the darkness of doubt into the light of faith and conviction. There is no other way to success...but the shaitan has led people away from Quran and now they are running in all directions to find peace but how can they find a thing where it is not meant to be:

فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ {26}

Where then are you going?

It is not enough that we just sit and criticise the people who have gone astray. Rather it is our responsibility that we convey to them this treasure which was meant for the whole world and not just one selected group of people:

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ {27}

This is but a Message to all the people of the world,

But only those can benefit from this Magnificent Quran who truly have a desire to be guided to the straight way...

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ {28}

To each one who wishes to follow the Right Way.

Allah's guidance is the greatest gift on this earth and He gives it to those who ask Him for this gift with utmost sincerity and seriousness. But even this choice that we make in our heart, is a gift of Allah. This is something that we often forget and so we tend to feel "proud" of being connected to the Quran. Being happy and grateful for finding the straight path is one thing, but giving oneself the credit for it, is sheer folly and leads to arrogance. And we all know that arrogance leads to the fire... So Allah the most merciful and the most compassionate Rabb, is reminding us in this most beautiful verse that if you have opted for guidance then it is also the blessing of your Lord that He "allowed" you to make this choice:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ {29}

Yet your wishes are of no avail unless Allah, the Rabb of the worlds, pleases so.

This is the beauty of Allah's message that He does not leave anything incomplete and wants us to understand and live with the complete truth. May Allah help us to remember the worth and importance of all His blessings so that we might use them positively for ultimate success and happiness... ameen.

Surah Al-Infitaar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

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

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

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

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ {5}

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

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

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ {6}

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

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

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

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

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

كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالذِّينِ {9}

Nay! In fact you deny the Day of Judgment!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ لِلَّهِ {19}

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

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

Surah Al-Inshiqaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Although we do read about the day of judgement in many surahs of the Quran yet I never truly experienced the impact of meeting Allah until I read surah Al-Inshiqaq. I felt like the purpose of my whole existence has been depicted in just one verse of this surah where Allah says that all your efforts in your life have one end. No matter where one lives on this earth, and no matter what his occupation might be, no matter what religion he might follow, what belief he has and whatever direction he might choose for his efforts, the fact is that all of us are moving towards one end and that is the standing before Allah. Day after day, step by step... we are on a non-stop journey which is taking us to that moment when each one of us will be standing in front of Allah, waiting for the final result of our life...

Life is a test and this universe is the answer sheet on which we write our deeds. When the test will be over there will be no more need of these things so Allah will order everything to collapse:

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ {1} وَأَذْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ {2}

When heaven will split asunder, obeying its Rabb's command as it ought to.

Just imagine such a powerful and huge thing as the sky being so obedient and humble before its Lord and then compare it with our own size and our arrogance and disobedience... may Allah forgive us, how casually we treat his commands... But how far can we escape our responsibility towards Him?

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ {6}

O mankind! Surely you must strive towards your Rabb, a hard striving, and then you shall meet Him.

I still remember the trembling of my heart in my school days, when at the end of the year we would be standing in lines, and the teacher would enter the classroom holding the stack of report cards. It used to be a moment of fear and regret... regret at wasting my time in useless things when I could have used it to study more thoroughly and fear of the consequences of my non-serious attitude. But that used to be the end of just one term or

year and the new class would begin with a new hope. So imagine what it will be like when the whole of one's life will be assessed and there will be no retest, no new class in which to regain the loss...

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ {7} فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا {8} وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا {9}

Then he, who will be given his Book of deeds in his right hand, shall have a quick and easy reckoning and shall return to his people rejoicing.

What a joy and what a relief it will be for the fortunate souls who will be forgiven by their Lord. These words of Allah create such a longing in me to be one of those people and I shudder to think of what will become of me if I am not successful in this war against the devil and the temptations of this world... just read the next verses and imagine the utter despair and misery of the people who took the day of judgement casually and made no effort to please Allah:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ {10} فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا {11}

But he who will be given his book of deeds from behind his back, shall soon be calling for death

Why are we not serious about our accountability? Why do we not prepare for our permanent life in the hereafter? It is because we think that this world is our home and life will just end after death...

إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَن لَّنْ يَحُورَ {14} بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا {15}

And thought that he would never return to Allah for accountability? Yet, surely his Rabb was ever watching over his misdeeds

Our test is to believe in the unseen; so that even if no roof collapses over my head if I miss a prayer but I should have belief in the punishment of the hereafter. Similarly I should have this conviction that Allah is going to reward me for my righteous deeds. Without this faith we can never follow Allah's commands. Even in the physical world we see that every action has a reaction, every act has a consequence... so then how can we assume that this life will have no consequence. Allah created these amazing signs in the universe but the question is: do we take the right lessons from it or not...

فَلا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ {16}

I swear by the glow of sunset;

Have you ever wondered why does the twilight have such a saddening effect on the heart, even though it is always glows with such spectacular colours? Because we know that this beauty is soon going to be covered in the darkness of the approaching night...

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ {17}

By the night and all that it gathers together;

The sky is fascinating in all its changing colours and lights but surely the peak of its beauty is with a full moon... yet with all its magnificent charm and loveliness, it is also a reminder that nothing in this universe is going to remain forever:

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ {18}

By the moon, when it grows full

Allah has taken the oath of all of the above mentioned things to teach us a very important lesson... and that has been stated in the next ayat:

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ {19}

That you shall gradually pass from one stage to another.

What a simple yet the most accurate description of life... we all have to move from one stage to the next. And we cannot stop this journey no matter how comfortable we might be at any stage... we have to move to the next. So why should we waste our time in something that is going to end at the cost of something that is going to remain forever and ever? But those who don't want to believe, will never accept the reality:

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ {20}

What is the matter with the people that they do not believe?

We have to understand that our intelligence is limited to only a certain capacity and we cannot fully grasp the truth until we receive it directly from Allah. This is why Allah revealed

the Quran and preserved it in its original form so that we might take the true guidance from it. But then it depends on our desire whether we want to be guided or not:

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ {23}

And Allah knows what they are hiding *in their hearts*.

Human beings can never be perfect and we do make mistakes but then we can readily wash them away by sincere Taubah. But if we insist that we are doing fine then gradually the small sins lead to bigger ones and the heart gets so corrupted that it is no longer able to lead a person towards any goodness... so what is going to be the end of it all? Can Allah's disobedience give us anything except pain and humiliation?

فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ {24}

Therefore, proclaim to them a painful punishment

Why do people not surrender their lives for Allah? They have heard about the punishment of the hereafter but their hearts don't really believe in it... why? Because they have this BIG misconception that if they follow Allah's commands then they might be deprived of the pleasures and benefits of this world. They think it is a sort of punishment to limit yourself in the boundaries set by Allah. What a pity it is that they don't know the secret which has been revealed by Allah in the Quran again and again that the pleasures and benefits which the disbelievers yearn for, are only for those who are obedient to Allah. May be in this world someone might be apparently enjoying life in disbelief and transgression but firstly the enjoyment is only superficial and inside there is a lot of pain and depression. Secondly the enjoyment or benefit is only for a limited time until death... after that only those will be rewarded with unending joy and peace who remained truthful to Allah even if they had to bear some pain or deprivation in this world...

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ {25}

Except those who embrace the true faith and do good deeds; for them there will be a never ending reward.

So now that we are alive and we have been given the power to choose between these two ways of life; what should be our choice? Limited pain for everlasting pleasure or limited

pleasure for everlasting pain? May Allah give us the wisdom and strength to always stick to the right decisions... ameen

Surah Al-Fajr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The magnificence and glory of Allah is most visible at Fajr... the time when the blanket of night is pierced by the glow of the rising sun... and the world begins to light up like magic. It is a time of hope and a beginning of a new day, a new life, a new chance to accomplish all the things which we want to do. If people knew this and took advantage of the blessings of this time, there would be no more “depression”...no more tension... But we remain sleeping at his blessed time and deprive ourselves of the rays of hope and enthusiasm which Allah sends for people who remember Him at Fajr...

وَالْفَجْرِ {1}

By the morning

When Allah takes oath of something, it is to focus our attention to that specific sign of His existence. Whether it is the morning or the amazing darkness which looks so permanent yet goes away so imperceptibly that we can't even perceive its movement...

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ {4}

And the night when it departs!

Obviously the purpose of observing nature is not an end in itself; rather the objective is to learn some important lesson... so Allah asks this question to make us think and evaluate and reach the conclusion:

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرِ {5}

Is there not in these an oath (*enough evidence*) for those who use their common sense?

Allah does not dictate the answers; rather He wants us to use our intellect... So here comes the second question:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ {6}

Have you not seen how your Rabb dealt with 'Ad?

Obviously we haven't seen this incident with our eyes, but Allah has told us about the people of "Aad" many times in the Quran. So why does He want us to think about them again? Surely there must be something related to the signs of day and night... But if we fail to understand the connection then look at the next two ayahs... maybe we can find some clue...

وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ {9} وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ {10}

And with the people of Thamūd who hewed out *their dwellings* in the rocks of the valley?
And with Fir'on (*Pharaoh*) the owner of stakes?

All of the above three examples are of people who were the superpowers of their time. Wealth and prosperity were abundant. But they made one fatal error:

الَّذِينَ طَعَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ {11} فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ {12}

They all transgressed beyond bounds in their cities, and committed great mischief therein.

When people become arrogant and destructive they forget that they will themselves be enveloped by the same fire which they burn for others... Allah's punishment is very swift:

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ {13}

Therefore, your Rabb let loose on them His scourge of torment.

So what does all of this teach us? It is not just a story of the past which we hear and brush aside... but a lesson to learn. The lesson is that if someone is disobedient to Allah then all of his power and wealth cannot save him from Allah's wrath... Similarly the night and day are not just times to sleep and get up mechanically but reminders of life and death... and most importantly it is a proof of resurrection. Watching the rising sun makes us realize that death is not a permanent state... just like the night turns into the day, one day we will wake up from our graves... to face the consequence of our actions...

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبَالِغُ الْمُرْصَادِ {14}

Surely your Rabb is ever watchful.

Even though we believe in these statements yet we don't seem to apply these lessons in our lives... the problem is that we have remained so far away from the first hand knowledge of

Quran and Hadith that even our basic concepts about life are not realistic... we think of every situation as the final end and behave accordingly:

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ {15}

As for man, when his Rabb tries him through giving him honour and blessings, he says: "My Rabb is bountiful to me."

Just recall any triumph of your life and remember your reaction... did you remember that it is a test? Were you concerned how to give shukr? Did it increase you in your worship and obedience of Allah? Because this is what the test is all about... whether in happiness or in sorrow... Allah's pleasure should be our biggest concern. But it is our ignorance that when Allah gives us any blessing, we think we have a very honourable status in Allah's eyes; so instead of becoming humble and obedient we become proud and careless. On the other hand when the test comes in the form of unpleasant situations, we become resentful and angry with Allah's decisions:

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ {16}

But when He tries him through restricting his subsistence, he says: "My Rabb has humiliated me."

Obviously this kind of attitude has a painful outcome in the hereafter but even in this life, it has a direct effect on our character. The worldly status has become everything to us. Therefore even if we outwardly help the poor people, we don't think of them as worthy of any respect or honour:

كَأَلَّا بَلَ لَا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ {17}

Nay! But you did not give respect to the orphan,

The fact is that Muslims have forgotten their responsibility of helping others... and are just running after their personal interests:

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا {19} وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا {20}

Man is busy building towers of wealth and extravagance while the reality is that these are like sand houses which will all be washed up by a single wave of the hereafter:

كَلَّا إِذَا دُمَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا {21}

Nay! *You should know*, when the earth will be pounded to powder,

And when the hellfire will be brought forward, all illusions will disappear like smoke...

وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذُّكْرَى {23}

Hell shall be brought in sight. On that Day man will remember his deeds, but how is that remembrance going to profit him?

What is the use of understanding the errors when there is no more chance for correction? But the regret will be so overpowering that he will cry out:

يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي {24}

He will say: "Alas! Would that I had sent forth *some good deeds* for this life of mine."

You see this is the crux of the matter: we think this is life and so we do nothing for "our real life"... the life which has yet to begin... Allah keeps telling us... but only a few fortunate people believe in it to such an extent that they fulfil all their responsibilities... both to Allah and to people. Such lucky souls shall get the good news from the angels:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ {27} ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً {28}

"O fully satisfied soul! Return to your Rabb, well pleased with Him and well-pleasing to Him.

Death seems to us like an end but if we see with the eyes of our hearts, it is nothing but a new beginning... if we want to have a good life there, then we will have to make utmost struggle in this life and not waste it in ignorance and illusions. Although that life in the hereafter is unseen, yet if we use our hearts we can see it as clearly as the words we read in the Quran...

May Allah guide us to the best efforts and the best results... because true faith is not gained by just thinking or desiring... rather it has to be earned by sincere deeds and lots of duas.

Surah Ad-Dhuha

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

This is one of my most beloved surahs of the Quran because it became known to me at a time when I most needed it. It was the spring of 2005... I had been listening to the tafseer of the Quran for more than a year and had reached the 18th chapter, but quite often it seemed to me like my heart was still not free from negative and depressive thoughts. And it used to hurt me a lot that why the Quran is not having a permanent healing effect on me. Why did I keep falling back to the same self-pity and hopelessness... so one night when I couldn't sleep due to restlessness and anxiety, I just picked a book lying on my shelf, thinking that by reading a few pages I might be able to find some peace... the book was about the life of the Prophet (s.a.w) and I started reading the same page where it had opened on its own. At first I couldn't properly focus on the words but after a few lines there was an excerpt from the translation of the Quran which held my heart with its stunning effect...

وَالضُّحَىٰ {1} وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ {2}

By the morning brightness, and by the night when it covers *with darkness*,

It was Surah Ad-Dhuha and I felt like it was a special message for me, coming directly from Allah... full of hope and love; reminding me that just as there are happy times full of light and life, similarly Allah puts us through difficult times in which there seems to be no light and no hope... but they are both a test... the bright times are a test of our gratitude and appreciation and likewise the hard times are a test of our faith and patience...

Most of us are deceived by the devil when we face any disappointment in life. The devil makes us think that it is a sign of Allah's displeasure or that He doesn't care for us... whereas the fact is that Allah never forsakes a true believer... and we should never lose hope in His mercy:

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ {3}

Your Rabb has neither forsaken you (O Muhammad), nor is He displeased.

We have all experienced that the good times pass by too quickly but the difficult phases in life seem endless. Here Allah is giving us hope that even though the problems might seem bigger than mountains but Allah is bigger than every other thing. So He can solve all issues

no matter how impossible they might seem to us. The road to Allah's pleasure and forgiveness is full of hurdles but the end is very sweet:

وَلَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ {4} وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ {5}

Certainly the later period shall be better for you than the earlier. Soon your Rabb shall grant you something with which you will be well-pleased.

Going back in the memory lane, I remember that these words were enough to open my eyes and I understood that my depression was nothing but an illusion created by the devil and I was trapped in it due to the weakness of my own self. I realized that if I wanted to get rid of these illusions then I will have to strengthen my faith in Allah by focusing on the understanding of the Quran and being conscious in my Salat and duas. Just making this decision in my heart I seemed to be filled with a new energy... as if all of a sudden the darkness was replaced with a brilliant light. And when I read on to the next words, I was so moved by their truth that I started crying:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ {6}

Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered you?

I cried because I felt the sadness of the small child who had been born to a widowed mother and she too left him at the tender age of 6... That was how our beloved Prophet (s.a.w) started his life... but then we see that he grew up to be a man full of truth and honesty. There are no traces of self pity in his brilliant character. Who gave him this confidence? The same Allah who guided Him to the ultimate truth:

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ {7}

Did He not find you lost and gave you guidance?

My tears were not only for the Prophet (s.a.w) but also for realizing the truth about my own life. For the first time I realized that the same Allah who cared for His Prophet (s.a.w) was caring for me, and the same Allah who guided him was giving me the gift of guidance too... Allah has given us the same Quran which was revealed on the heart of His prophet (s.a.w) but how many times have we been really grateful for this great gift? We cry for petty little deprivations of life because we don't know the value of the Quran and its guidance, which we keep ignoring. Hasn't Allah given us so much that we cannot even count?

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ {8}

Did He not find you poor and made you self-sufficient?

We keep worrying over things which we don't have. Or sometimes we feel proud of having so many blessings. But very few people realize that all blessings are a test. On the day of Judgement we will not be given any reward for what we had in life; but it will be seen how we used those gifts to please Allah... that is the real test. Therefore Allah is reminding us of some very important duties:

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ {9}

Therefore, do not treat the orphan with harshness

When we see any helpless person, we tend to feel superior... so we have to correct this attitude by thinking that we could also have been in the same situation. Therefore we should express our gratitude to Allah by being extra nice and helpful to the orphans and other needy people:

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ {10}

And as for the beggar; do not repel him

And finally Allah reminds us of our most important responsibility:

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ {11}

And as for the bounty of your Rabb; express it.

Normally we are all the time grumbling and complaining about "how hard life is" but Allah is telling us here that we should not only focus on what we have, but also express it. And our greatest thanks should be for the greatest gift... and that is the gift of guidance. We should tell the whole world about the miracle of Quran and how it changes our life and gives us the hope of eternal success... may Allah guide us all to that beautiful destination... ameen

Surah At-Takathur

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Time is a commodity which is given in the same amount to each and every individual on the face of this earth. Exactly twenty four hours every day of our lives... this supply never varies but the way we use this time depends on our priorities. Each and every second, minute and hour is taking us towards our destination whatever that might be... but then how ignorant we are that we just go about our "routine lives" never stopping to think of what our journey is all about? Where is our time being spent? What is our direction and what is our destination? Maybe the reason for this mechanical attitude towards life is that we have assumed that the only purpose of our lives is to fulfil the needs of this life... and no matter how much we acquire, we are never satisfied because we are always comparing ourselves with someone or the other who has more than us. So materialism has become a universal nucleus around which the majority of the world is revolving. And we muslims despite having a clear knowledge of the reality of life, are also running along the world... not realizing that this mad race for material gains is nothing but a trap... an illusion... which becomes apparent only when it is too late...

أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ {1} حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ {2}

Competition in worldly increase diverts you... until you get into the grave

Now we must understand that making use of the blessings of this world is not a sin... rather it is a means of being connected to Allah and being grateful to Him. But it becomes a problem only when we make it the only concern of our life and forget the real goal for which Allah sent us to this earth. Death is the ultimate eye opener and it is not something which we can avoid simply by not giving it any attention... soon we will have to face the truth:

كَأَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ {3} ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ {4}

Nevertheless, soon you shall come to know. Again, nevertheless, soon you shall come to know

Allah gave us all the means to acquire knowledge of the reality of life and death, but he did not force us to be convinced... because it is a test of our faith whether we believe in Allah's words with utmost conviction or not. What a meaningful life we can have if we understand the Quran and Hadith and live according to its teachings... the peace and tranquillity of

knowing Allah and living according to His pleasure is the greatest pleasure of this world... but it can only be experienced by those who have “Yaqeen”...

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ {5}

No! If you only knew with knowledge of certainty...

We don't realize that we cannot avoid the reality by denying it. No matter how firmly we close our eyes but the shining sun will not go away simply because we don't want to acknowledge its presence. Similarly the hereafter will come on its appointed time and the heaven and hell which Allah created for us will also become apparent to our eyes... whether we like it or not:

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ {6} ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ {7}

You will surely see the Hellfire... Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty.

Here in this world we become boastful if we get any gift from Allah. We forget His mercy and we think that whatever we have is due to our own hard work or intelligence. We might impress people with this show of material greatness, but we forget that every blessing which Allah gives us is a test and we will be held accountable for each and every thing that we have:

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ {8}

Then you shall surely be questioned, on that day, about the blessings (*faculties and resources that you were given in the worldly life - as to how you used them?*)

If we keep this accountability in our mind then our whole attitude will be different. Instead of boasting, we will feel the seriousness of responsibility... and do we even know what our responsibility is? Yes most people know that we must be grateful for our blessings but does being grateful mean only to be happy upon ones gifts and say “Alhamdulillah” or Thank you Allah? No... this is not the end of it... real gratitude is with your heart when you feel that Allah is the only one who deserves praise... so there will be no self praise. Secondly, gratitude is done by expressing thanks to Allah and also proclaiming His greatness to people. And finally the essence of gratitude is to use every blessing in the way of Allah...

He gave us everything and He has the greatest right over our lives. So how can we go against His wishes? Is there any excuse for our denial and disobedience? None at all...

