

Q114

087

سورة الاعلى

al-A 'la

The Most High



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SURATUL A'LAA

Suratul A'laa consists of 19 ayaat in 1 Ruku.

It was revealed in Makka and is the 87th sura of the Qur'an.

Benefits

- It is recommended to be recited in the first raka't of Salatul Fajr for memory retention.
- Relief of earache.
- Safety on a journey.
- Entry through any door of Janna.

SURATUL A'LAA (87)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
سَبَّحَ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High,

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

Who creates, then makes complete,

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

And Who makes according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal),

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى

And Who brings forth herbage,

فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى

Then makes it dried up, dust-colored.

سَنُقْرُبُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى

We will make you recite so you shall not forget,

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

Except what Allah pleases, surely He knows the manifest, and
what is hidden.

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى

And We will make your way smooth to a state of ease.

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى

Therefore do remind, surely reminding does profit.

سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى

He who fears will mind,

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

And the most unfortunate one will avoid it,

الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى

Who shall enter the great fire;

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى

Then therein he shall neither live nor die.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself,

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

And magnifies the name of his Lord and prays.

بَلْ تُوْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

Nay! you prefer the life of this world,

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى

While the hereafter is better and more lasting.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى

Most surely this is in the earlier scriptures,

صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

The scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa.

THE QUR'AN

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

"We have sent down in the Quran that which is healing and a mercy to those who believe" Suratu Bani Israil 17:82

Healing from Quran is of three types.

- **Legislative effect:** This includes eiman (faith) in Allah as not only the Creator but the Sustainer and the Protector (Rabb) . This also includes the benefits of salaa, sawm, khums, zakaa, hajj.....
- **Health Guidelines:** Health-promoting items from the Qur'an and ahadith of the ma'sumeen include use of honey, olive, fruit, lean meat, avoiding excessive eating, and prohibition of alcohol, pork, homosexuality.....
- **Direct healing effect of Qur'an:** Recitation of the Qur'an by the sick person or for the sick person has shown to have a direct healing effect on the sick person. This most likely uses medical benefits of Echo. Echo of sound is such a powerful force that it has been used to blast off mountains. Now the miniaturized version of Echo is used in medicine to break kidney stones (lithotripsy), and gallstones. Listening to the recitation of Holy Quran, in a study conducted by Dr. Ahmed E. Kadi and Associates, has been shown to lower blood pressure, heart rate, and to cause smooth muscle relaxation.

- Rasulullah (S.A.W.) always stressed reading the Qur'an loudly and not silently by saying **"The comparison between a silent reader and a recitor (Qari) is like a bottle of perfume when it is closed and when it is opened."**

Benefits of recitation and memorisation

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:

" For everything there is an adornment and a decoration. The adornment of the Quran is a beautiful voice and tone."

It was asked from the Rasulullah (S.A.W.) that which of the peoples voice in the recitation of the Quran is better. He said; "The voice of that person is better who while reciting the Holy Quran and his recitation reaches you, you feel that he is fearful of Allah."

Rasulullah (S.A) said:

" The most honorable and noble from amongst my Umma are the memorisers of the Quran and those who (stay) awake (for worshipping)."

Imam Sadiq (A.S) said:

" Recite the Quran and memorise it. Allah will not punish the heart in which the Quran has been placed.(in it)."

And from amongst the Duas of Imam Sadiq (A.S):

" O Allah, select and approve for us two works : to recite the Quran in a good manner and to memorize their Ayaat."

AYA 1

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

Glorify the name of your Rabb, the Most High,

The word Allah in the Qur'an is the name of an essence of His 99 beautiful names and qualities like Merciful, Kind, Knowing.....

Whatever little information the human being can get about Allah can only be acquired through His names. Otherwise, we have no access.

Our whole word in essence is a name of Allah because nothing which exists can come into existence automatically.

These qualities and Names are therefore an infra-structure for human akhlaq because in Islam, the human being is the representative of Allah. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

“Adopt the akhlaq of Allah”

In the same way, in order to arrive at the ideal society of the Qur'an, we must build our society with the Divine Qualities.

The human being in social life needs peace in his life and As-Salaam – Peace is one of the Names of Allah. A person also needs kindness and forgiveness for well being in individual life as well as in society and Ar-Rahmaan and Ar-Raheem are two of His names.

Society likewise in order to attain solidarity, power and confidence needs eiman –faith. Al-Mu'min –The believer is one of the Qualities of Allah.

In order to attain control over our affairs and independence we must develop strength within ourselves. Al-Qawiyu –The Powerful and Al-Ganiyyu –The Independent (rich) are two more of His Qualities.

The human being and human society is distinguished by having creative ability, and inventiveness. Al-Khaliq –The Creator, Al-

Baariu –The Originator, Al-Musawwiru –The Fashioner are among Allah’s other Names and Qualities.

If you were to play tennis, you would not go onto the court with bedroom slippers. Similarly, we have to learn and apply the right name and thus the right akhlaq in the appropriate situation.

All the Asmaaul Husna - qualities can be reflected in our souls individually and our society be filled with peace, purity, kindness, faith, confidence, honesty, trust, knowledge, awareness, dignity and might.

Each name of Allah is a Dua in itself . When reciting any one of His beautiful Names, ponder over them and try to apply them to your life..

Al-'Aliyy

الْعَلِيُّ

The Most High

Above and beyond, the High above whom there is nothing higher. This name benefits whoever carries it, and recites it as often as possible. It enriches life in all aspects. It is especially recommended to enrich eiman.

"Al-'Aliyy" is derived from uluww which denotes height, sublimity, or loftiness versus lowliness. The height referred to here is that of status. *Al-'Aliyy* is so High that He can never be conceived nor visualized.

According to *Al-Mufradat*, one who is *'aliyy* is a prominent person, a man of distinction. When applied to Allah, the implied meaning is that He is the One above Whose status there is none at all, and everything in existence is under His control.

When Al-'Aliyy is applied to one's life it results in humbleness and submissiveness before the Glory of Allah. It is reported that Allah inspired Prophet Musa (A.S.) to go near a mountain so that He would address him. Every mountain competed with the others in the hope of being the one near which such a divine address would take place. Mount Sinai thought very humbly of itself saying, "Since when do I deserve the honour of being the site worthy of the status of Musa when addressed by his Rabb?" For this reason, Allah inspired Prophet Musa (A.S.) to go near Mount Sinai due to the latter's humility.



Iyas ibn Salmah has quoted his father saying that he had heard Rasulullah (S.A.W.) starting every dua with:

سُبْحَانَ الْأَعْلَى الْوَهَّابِ

☐ "*Subhana al-A`la al-Wahhab,*"

"Glory to the Most High, the ever-Giving."

HUMILITY

Perhaps you have heard the story of the person who received recognition for being the humblest man! They gave him a pin to wear. The following day he wore it and they took it away from him for being proud. One wonders sometimes if humility is like this. As soon as we think we are humble, we are not.

Imam Ali (A.S.) has said: "Humility is the product of knowledge. It is one of the nets spread by real greatness whilst boasting issues from small minds"

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) – the most perfect man whose knowledge was from divinity yet his humility towards the creation was more than of any other human being. He hated to see his companions stand up in his respect. Whenever he entered a gathering, he used to sit in the lowest place.

He used to dine on the floor and used to sit on the floor and used to say: "I am a slave of God; I dine like a slave and sit in the manner proper for a slave."

It has been reported from Imam Sadiq (A.S.) that Rasulullah preferred to ride a donkey without a saddle, preferred to dine in a lowly place with the slaves, and offered alms to beggars with his two hands.

He used to help with housework, milking the sheep, stitching his own clothes and shoes, grinding flour and kneading the dough, and carry his belongings himself. He liked the company of the poor and the destitute and used to dine with them.

Ali ibn Abi Talib once said, "Rise up from here and go to the Garden of Faith, enter and take some roots from the tree of sorrow, a few leaves from the tree of contemplation with seeds of humility and the fruits of understanding, a small measure of the branches of certainty and the kernels of sincerity with the bark of strenuous effort with some of the stems of turning away from wrong action with the strong medicine of modesty, blend it with

the sense, with a heart full of concentration and understanding filled by the fingers of confirmation and the palms of success. Pour it in the basin of inquiry and wash it with the water of your tears. Then take it all and put it into the kettle of hope, bring it to a boil with the fire of your longing to the point that the superficial, superfluous elements and the dregs and sediment might be separated. Then you obtain the juice and cream of wisdom. Then put it in the plate of contentment and submission, low on it with the gentle breeze of your supplication for His forgiveness, cool it so that it will not be spoiled, so that this elixir might be made wholesome. Then drink it in a place where no man can be found and where only Allah can see you”

AYA 2

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

Who creates, then makes complete,

الْخَالِقُ

THE CREATOR

‘Al-Khaaliq’ is derived from ‘khalq’ meaning creating. Al-Khaaliq is the one who brings things into existence from non-existence. He has created and given creation all it needs to achieve its full potential.

Science says that it is life that creates life. However, no single cell has been discovered that was created from lifeless matter. According to science, the earth went through long periods in which there was no possibility of life because of the extreme heat prevailing. The atmosphere was full of molten metals and volcanic eruptions. Later, when the crust of the earth began to cool, only inorganic matter could be found there for millions of years. In short, throughout the tumultuous changes that occurred to the surface of the earth, there was no trace of life on it. How then did life certainly come forth?

Al-Khaaliq is the one who has created not only all life forms but the complete adaptation of every species of animal to its conditions of living – each created with its particular instruments needed for its condition of life.

When prophet Musa (A.S.) was asked by Firawn –“Who is your Rabb?”

Prophet Musa (A.S.) replied:

“..Our Rabb is He who endowed all things with a particular form of creation and then guided it.” **Suratu Taha – 20:50**

Let’s look at some of the unmatched wonders of creation. A female moth emits soft signals that a male moth can pick up from an incredible distance sending it’s own signals in return. However, much one would want to disturb these communications, one is unable to do so. Does this frail creature carry a transmitter or a receiver? A tiny cricket rubs it’s legs together and the sound can be heard upto a kilometre away on a quiet still night. In order to summon it’s mate, the male cricket sets sixty tons of air into motion and the female cricket responds, although no audible sound comes from her?

If you look at the wings of butterflies you will see perfect symmetry. They are masterpieces of art and the marvels of creation of Allah. You will see that the figures and the colours on both sides are identical, no matter how complex its design. Even the smallest spot appears identically on both sides. Hence, there occurs a perfect design and symmetry.

At the same time, a colour on this very delicate and fine wing never gets mixed with another colour and the existing colours are distinguished from the others with a distinct border. How can these spots, that would be scattered with a touch of a finger tip, be arranged, without any loss, to form the exactly identical design on both wings? Even an extra single spot would cause the symmetry to be corrupted. But you can not find any kind of disorder on any one of the butterfly wings on earth. Each of them looks as if it was the masterpiece of a talented artist. This is because the butterflies, like all other living beings, are created by the Superior Creator, Allah.

These wings of the butterflies indicate that these living beings are formed as a result of unique creation, not as a result of series of unconscious coincidences.



The harmony and interconnectedness of millions of natural phenomena in our world can only be explained on the basis of one theory – namely that there is a Creator – Al-Khaaliq who has established creation by means of a limitless and infinite power with a programme for each element of creation.

If we occasionally perceive weak points in nature, it does not imply inadequacy of the Creator because our thoughts and perceptions are too limited to perceive all the mysteries and enigmas of the universe – our intellect cannot comprehend the aims and goals of existence. If we are unable to understand the function of a small screw in a great machine, it does not give us the right to accuse it's inventor / designer as ignorant?

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) said to his companion Mufadhhal: "I swear by my own nafs that Allah has not failed to make Himself known to the ignorant, for they see clear proofs and decisive indications of the Creator in His creation and behold wondrous phenomena in the kingdom of the heavens and on earth that point to their Creator."

Allah creates an angel who prays for the one who recites Al-Khaliq nightly until the end of time. It's recitation also assists one in being able to serve Him.

CREATES COMPLETE - PERFECTION

The human being is programmed to want perfection. What is a perfect human being from the viewpoint of Islam?

We have human being who are physically sound or defective. Do we consider blindness, deafness, paralysis....as defects to virtue, personality or humanity? e.g. The famous Greek philosopher - Socrates was a very ugly man but the ugliness did not count as a defect.

Therefore a human being has a physical personality and a spiritual personality which are distinct. One can be physically sound yet be spiritually ill (even if it means having a 'complex').

The Prophet (S.A.W.) was the perfect human being combining the 2 dimensions perfectly. The fruits of his training can be seen not only in his ahlulbayt but in his companions like Abu Dharr, Miqdaad, Salman, Hudhayfa....

In Islam there exists no country, race, blood, zone and language. These things are not the criteria for perfection of human beings. The criteria in Islam is human values. One who respects human values, believes in the genuineness of the human being and the universe; that is, believes in Allah.

We are programmed to love perfection. It is our fitra (nature). Perfection lies only with Allah. "My God! The honour that You are my Lord is sufficient for me, and the pride that I am your slave is sufficient for me. You are exactly as I would have loved You to be; so make me as You would love me to be."

The perfect state of the nafs is Nafsul Mutmainna - 'Itminaan' means certainty and trust. The nafs is therefore at peace (content). It is the nafs that says: "Everything will end, everything is relative except He from whom I came and to whom I shall return."

The Qur'an says: "*O Nafsul Mutmainna, return to your Lord, well pleased and well pleasing; Enter among My servants; Enter My Janna.*" **89:28-30**

Lets look at the spiritual journey towards attaining Nafsul Mutmainna –

- One must have a determination to hold fast to the path that will stimulate the nafs to attain its goal. Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna) defines this as "...that longing which a human being feels when he/she finds him/herself lonely and helpless and wants to be united with the truth so that he/she may not have a feeling of loneliness and helplessness."
- Observing all the waajibaat and keeping away from all the muharrimaat.
- Spiritual exercise (riyadhat). In Arabic the word riyadhat means training a young horse. A daily programme with effective time management of reflection, nafila prayers, salatut tahajjud, Qur'an recitation and gaining knowledge. However, it must be with moderation, and continuance. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) "...Eiman has 10 degrees like the steps of a ladder which are climbed one by one. If you find anyone below you by one step, pull him/her up to you gently and do not burden him/her with what he/she cannot bear, or else you will break him/her." e.g. convert who was pushed to far.
- Continued tahara - to be in a state of wudhu and/or ghusl as far as possible.
- The spiritual traveller must constantly assess him/herself. Imam Musa ibn Ja'fer (A.S.) has said: "He who does not take account of him/herself once every day is not one of us."
- Less food, less sleep, less talk. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) - "There are 3 things that Allah does not like in a person : Too much sleeping, too much laughing and eating after the stomach is full." "The mu'min enjoys hunger. For him hunger is the food of the nafs." "Silence is a part of wisdom. It is a sign of every virtue." *"They used to sleep only a little while at night and at dawn used to ask forgiveness"* **51:17,18**
- Remembrance of Allah - *"He/she who ignores the remembrance of the Rahman, We assign to him/her a Shaytan who becomes his/her associate."* **43:36.**

To gauge one's progress Imam Ali (A.S.) cites the qualities one displays when one is striving for nafsul mutmainna. His companion Hammam wanted signs of a virtuous person (one with nafsul mutmainna); he requested the explanation to be so vivid and graphic that he could visualise it.

Some of the signs which Imam listed are: *"...they have visualised mentally the glory of Allah in such a way that beyond Him nothing in this world frightens or overawes them....when they come across an aya (in the Qur'an) describing Janna., they feel attracted towards it developing a keen desire to reach it, while an aya about Jahannam makes them feel if they are seeing and hearing the raging fire and the groans of those who are suffering it's tortures....."* *"You will find he/she is firm in faith, resolute though tender hearted and kind...he/she is greedy for knowledge...he/she forgives those who have harmed him/her fully knowing that they have wronged him/her....thought he/she does good deeds he/she feels nervous of his/her shortcomings....every night he/she thanks Allah for having passed one more day under His Rahma (mercy) and every morning he/she starts his/her day with dua...."* (Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 198)

AYA 3

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ

And Who makes according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal),

Everything exists according to a measure (qadr) and a balance. The knowledge of that measure is the beginning of guidance – hidaya.

Some of the most common comments from those disputing the existence and therefore the decree (measure, qadr) of Allah are: "Prove to me Allah exists!", "That isn't proof!", "That doesn't mean anything to me!"

And yet we find that when the same rational proofs and admonitions are given to people who already believe in Allah, they are able to follow the thought process and proofs in order to increase in awareness of Allah and knowledge of His reality and guidance.

The missing factor in all of this is a term in Arabic called "**Hidaya**" or guidance. It is the difference in the state of heart and mind. For example, when Prophet Musa (A.S.) performed miracles in front of Firawn and the Bani Israil, the magicians believed in Allah, but Firawn did not.

Even though two people can bear witness to the exact same miracle and rational proof, there are some that simply don't see anything while others like the magicians do sajda. Allah tells us over and over again, that the state of heart of a disbeliever is such that he is blind and deaf to anything you can say or show them. This is because they lack "hidaya". Allah, over and over, speaks about human beings "not understanding" or "not seeing" what is right in front of them. Their hearts locked and sealed from comprehending the Message that everyone around them seems to be embracing and acting on.

He says:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِينَ

“And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport.”

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know”.

Suratud Dukhan 44:38,39

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

We have not sent you but as a universal messenger to humankind, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most human beings do not understand.

Suratus Sabaa 34:28

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Nay, on the hearts there are locks.

Suratu Muhammad 47:24

So what is the methodology of being guided? Let's take a look at the miracles of Prophet Musa (A.S.) as a clear example of this. Allah empowered him to change the state of his hand, to part the sea, to transmute his staff into a serpent. In every case Allah instructs Prophet Musa (A.S.) to act and obey the etiquettes of causes and effects of this universe. He tells him to throw his staff or strike the water with his staff..... Allah does not simply split

the sea for him though this makes no difference in Allah's execution of the miracle. So if Allah requires His Prophet to act and obey the etiquettes of causes and effect of this universe, even when empowering them to perform miracles, how does one act and obey to be able to seek guidance from Allah?

- The first step is to want guidance and there must be a resolute intention in seeking it.
- The next step is to call upon Him and ask for guidance. In Suratul Ghafir 40:60, He says: **ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ**Call on Me; I will answer you..."
- The next is zhikr – to remember Him – keeping Him in one's thoughts all the time - **الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ** -
- **بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ** "Indeed in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest..Suratur Ra'd 13:28
وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ If anyone withdraws himself from remembrance of Allah Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one, to be an intimate companion to him.
وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ
 Such (evil ones) really hinder them from the Path, but they think that they are being guided aright!
Suratuz Zhukhruf 43:36-37
- The heart needs to have two main qualities to make it conducive to hidaya. These are sincerity and humility. A lack of these two things caused Shaytan to disobey and disbelieve and become expelled and these are the same

things that he inspires in disbelievers so that they will join him in Jahannam.

قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
ثُمَّ لَأَتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ
شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

“Shaytan said: 'Because You have thrown me out of the Way, I will lie in wait for them on Your straight Way: Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: Nor will You find, in most of them thankfulness'

Suratul A'raaf 7:16-17

- Removal of traits which stop guidance as mentioned in the Qur'an.

Transgression

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

It is alike to them whether you beg forgiveness for them or do not beg forgiveness for them; Allah will never forgive them; surely Allah does not guide the transgressing people.

Suratul Munafiqun 63:6

Those who plot to betray

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَائِنِينَ

Surely, Allah does not guide the plot of the betrayers. **Suratu Yusuf 12:52**

Lying and Ungratefulness

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

“.....Surely Allah does not guide one who is a liar, ungrateful..”

Suratuz Zumar 39:3

Arrogance

كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٌ

Thus does Allah set a seal upon every arrogant and obstinate heart.

Suratul Ghaafir 40:35

Injustice

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“...But Allah does not guide unjust people unjust. **Suratu Aali**

Imran 3:86

Reject Faith after accepting it.....and add to their defiance

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَنْ نُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتَهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الضَّالُّونَ

But those who reject Faith after they accepted it, and then go on adding to their defiance of Faith, - never will their repentance be accepted; for they are those who have (of set purpose) gone astray. **Suratu Aali Imran 3:90**

AYAAT 4 & 5

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ

And Who brings forth herbage,

فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ

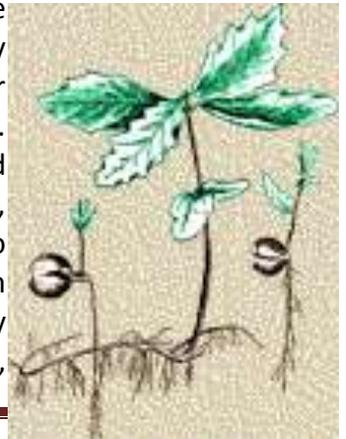
Then makes it dried up, dust-colored.

From one season to the next, herbage is transformed from green living pasture to dusty dried up stalks but there is a message in every aspect of this cycle.

The earth rests as mud – lifeless sometimes for centuries. Then at the touch of a seed it becomes something new and alive. It may become part of a fruit and then be eaten and absorbed into the flesh of another living being. A few years later it returns as dust to wait in the ground for the stimulus of a new seed to wake it up so it can share in life again.

Earth and soil are so wonderful in concept and design that Allah's glory comes naturally for those who live and work closely with the land, and farm it for food. The seed carries the life encoded in its nucleus and it must be passed on to the new generation while the old generation is still alive. The flame must not die.

If you want to witness His glory examine your garden. Get to know the worms; they are working for you, helping to grow your food. You may think of termites as enemies. Learn that for every one that eats the wood in a house, there are a thousand that work, patiently reducing fallen trees and twigs to make new soil. Every grain of topsoil has in course of time been enriched by generations of tiny creatures, bacteria,



plants, and insects. They have used the soil as a means of life, and then have died, leaving the soil richer than before. Living soil is a community; billions of units of life, preparing soil for growing all the fruits we love to eat.

The message of these two ayaat is to ponder over the life cycles of creation and learn by example – to serve and leave the world a better place.

The story of Prophet Uzayr (A.S.) demonstrates the life cycle of the human being enabling one to ponder over life.

One day on his travels he came to a deserted, ruined place and felt the heat. He entered the ruined town and dismounted his donkey, taking figs and grapes in his basket. He went under the shade of a tree and ate his food. Then he got up to look at the ruins of the town. The people had long been lost, and he saw bones. "Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death?" Suratul Baqara 2: 259

He said this not out of doubt but out of curiosity. Allah sent the Angel of Death to take his life. He remained dead for one hundred years.

Allah sent an angel after a hundred years to revive his heart and his eyes in order for him to feel and see how Allah revives the dead.

The angel said: "For how long did you sleep?" He said: "A day or part of a day." He said this because he knew he had slept early in the afternoon and woke up late in the afternoon. The angel said: "You remained asleep for one hundred years." He ate and drank the food which he had prepared before he was overtaken by that long sleep. Then the angel revived his donkey.

Allah said: "And look at your donkey! And thus We have made of you a sign for the people. Look at the bones, how We bring them

together and clothe them with flesh." When this was clearly shown to him he said: "I know (now) that Allah is able to do all things." Suratul Baqara 2: 259

He rode on his donkey and entered his hometown, but the people did not recognize him, nor did his household, except his maid, now an old woman. He asked her: "Is this the house of Uzayr?" She said: "Yes, but the people have long forgotten him."

He said: "I am Uzayr. Allah had taken my life for a hundred years and has now returned it to me."

She said: "Uzayr used to be answered when he prayed to Allah. Pray to cure me of blindness if you are Uzayr." He prayed for she opened her eyes - her blindness was gone. She said: "I bear witness that you are Uzayr."

She rushed to the assembly of the Israelites. Uzayr's son was one hundred eighteen years old, and his grandchildren now were lords of the assembly. She called out to them saying: "This is Uzayr coming to you." They accused her of lying. She said: "I am your old maid. He has just prayed to Allah for me, and here I am whole again, walking and seeing." The people stood up and looked at him.

His son said: "My father had a mark between his shoulders, a black mole," and they discovered it.

They said: "None among us memorized the Taurat since Neabuchadnezzar burnt it, except Uzayr; and there was only one copy of the Taurat, which was hidden by Sarukha. He buried it in the days of Nebuchadnezzar in a place none but Uzayr knows. Prophet Uzayr (A.S.) led the people to the hidden place and took out that copy of the Torah. Its leaves had rotted, and the book itself crumpled.

Uzayr sat under the shade of a tree surrounded by the children of Israel and copied out the Torah for them from that script.

Henceforth the Jews said that Uzayr is the son Allah, for the two pieces of evidence which came down from Heaven: for his copying the Taurat and for his fighting the cause of the Israelites.

Ibn Abbas commented: "So it is as Allah said: "We have made of you a sign for the people." Suratul Baqara 2: 269 That is, for the Israelites, in that he was sitting among his children, they old men, and he a youth.

AYAAT 6 & 7

سَنُقْرُوكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى

We will make you recite so you shall not forget,

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

Except what Allah pleases, surely He knows the manifest, and what is hidden.

The knowledge of tawheed is eternal – once we know we shall not forget. Forgetfulness comes when there is heedlessness (ghafla) and heedlessness comes when there is no khashya (fear of transgression).

FORGETTING AND REMEMBERING

Young children often compete for everyone's attention becoming quite skillful in the process, but not always subtle in their efforts. A 4 year old once while her mum was on the phone, said that she needed to ask her mum a question. Her mum asked her to wait but the little one kept on patting her mum on the arm. When her mum finally turned her attention to her child, her daughter said: "You made me forget what I was going to ask you!" And her mum said: "It must not have been very important or you would not have forgotten." The little girl with an air of confidence said "Don't you know that sometimes people forget some of the most important things in the world?"

When we look at the subject of forgetting and remembering a word of caution first - to forget is not always a negative component in our mental makeup. Some things should be forgotten so that we can move on without the emotional baggage of unnecessary negative memory.

When some negative feeling or attitude is hurting us or hurting someone we love ,it is good for us and good for our mental health to intentionally throw it into the sea of forgetfulness. That's not always easy, but it is possible. People who learn to do this are usually able to keep their lives content whilst those who cannot or will not are often the source of great misery to themselves and to others.

When a painful situation is over, it is very important to be able to forget the details and the resentment it has generated and to remember only the lesson learned.

There are some things that we wish we could forget if we just knew how, but it's not all that easy even when it feels necessary.

There's a poem which ends.....

....I wish there was some wonderful place called the Land of beginning again. Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches and all our poor selfish grief could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door and never be put on again. Some things should be forgotten.....

Jibrail came to Rasulullah (S.A.W.) and said: "O Muhammad! Always remember two things and forget two things – Remember Allah and death and forget the good you have done to others and the hurt others have caused you."

We need to be reminded not to forget Allah. We forget how we got here. We forget why we are here. We forget that we are mortal. We forget that the margin of our ability to handle things alone is slight at best and it narrows exponentially with each year that we live.

It's easy to forget Allah when we do not need him at the moment. And there are ages and stages in our lives in which we see ourselves to be quite self-sufficient. There is a tendency in our

crude, materialistic society to spend our lives trying to make ourselves independent and immune to the misfortunes which strike everyone else.

However, if we study life and observe and ponder carefully we will realise that things inevitably happen from which neither our money, our education, our power, our influence, or anything that we have can save us.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient...

Suratul Baqara 2:155

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ

Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not be tried?

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
الْكَاذِبِينَ

And certainly We tried those before them, so Allah will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars.

Suratul Ankabut 29:1-2

When we are tested, we all speak the same language. We wonder why Allah lets this happen. We start saying things like "Pray for me," Show me some amals.....We all know the procedure because

if we've lived long enough, we've been there. And if you have not been there, don't think for a moment that you will never be there.

You will be.

Remember Allah for He remembers you. We as human beings have a deep need to be remembered, and we usually

experience some degree of disappointment when we are forgotten at some important point or by someone whose recognition is important to us. If you are depressed and weary today, if someone important to you did not recognize you or remember your name, know that the most important one of all remembers you and knows you inside out. He will never forsake you.

The next responsibility is to recognise our duties towards other human

beings. In the hustle and bustle of life, it is all too easy to ignore those around us and to turn inward until we are only tightly wrapped into ourselves..

THE KNOWER OF THE HIDDEN AND THE MANIFEST

For us as human beings, the world is divided into two parts – The hidden (ghayb) and the manifest (shahada). Things are ‘hidden’ in the sense that certain truths, being infinite and non material cannot be perceived by the outer senses. Allah’s knowledge encompasses everything. The events that occur in the most distant part of the universe, happenings that occurred billions of years ago or will occur billions of years later – all are contained in the sphere of His knowledge. He is aware of the course of the stars, the depths of the oceans, the norms and laws of nature as the following aya of Qur’an so vividly portrays.

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبُرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظِلْمَاتِ
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

“And with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures – none knows them but He, and He knows what is in the land and the sea; and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of

the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book.”
Suratul An'aam – 6:59

In order to understand His knowledge, we as human beings try to apply our intelligence to search and reflect stretching the limits of our thoughts – however, our mental apparatus lack the skills required to reach our goal.

Imagine that you are watching cars moving down a street from a small window. You see one car at a time pass by the window, appearing at one end and disappearing from the other. The small window compares to our field of vision – it determines a past and a future for the cars. Our situation with respect to the past and future of the world is like the person watching the cars through the small window. Once we realise that Allah is above time and place, we understand that all past and future events are always present and existent in front of Him like a picture.

We, as His best creation therefore ought to have a sense of responsibility to a Creator who is aware of the most subtle deed and our innermost thoughts. As the Qur'an says:

وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

“And Allah knows what you do”. **Suratul Baqara – 2:283**

It is reported that before Zulaykha tried to seduce Prophet Yusuf (A.S.) she covered the statue of the deity she worshipped with a cloth. Prophet Yusuf (A.S.) asked her the reason for her action and she said that she felt ashamed to do something wrong in front of her god to which Prophet Yusuf (A.S.) replied that if she was fearful of a god of stone, how could he not fear/respect His Kareem Rabb (the most Honourable Nourisher and Cherisher)

AYA 8

وَنُيَسِّرْكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

And We will make your way smooth to a state of ease.

Yusraa means prosperity – it comes from the word yasara meaning to be easy. The path of ease is the path of no resistance – in other words the path of submission to Allah.

The word Islam usually is thought to have originated from the three letters: "*sin, lam, mim*", from "*salama*"; which means to be at peace, to be in a state of tranquil submission, acceptable submissiveness. It is the path of ease and of integration; it is the path of submission to reality because we are part of that reality, we are not separate from it. It is the way from time immemorial; it is not something that occurred some 1400 years ago. It is the "*din*", it is the only way to be, which has been expounded by every prophet and messenger. It is how to integrate the material with the spiritual so they are on the same plane of tawheed. It means to know in order to unify with the occurrence as we experience it and as we interact with it. The outer aspect of it is to interact with the rest of creation courteously, harmoniously, joyfully, correctly, with barriers, not accepting transgression. Ease and submission can only occur if there is obedience to the Creator and serving of His creation.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

Those with eiman are certainly successful” **Suratul Mu’minun - 23:1**

The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

“Eiman is divided into 2 halves; one half lies in sabr (Patience) and the other half in shukr (thankfulness).” “Islam is outward whereas eiman is in the heart (inward).

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) explained the difference between Islam (in the personal sense) and eiman:

“...Eiman means -
acknowledgement made by the tongue,
covenant made in the heart,
and actions performed by the body.....

Eiman has a daar (zone) of it’s own, just as Islam and kufr have. A person is a Muslim before he/she becomes a mu’min...So, when someone commits a big or small act which Allah has forbidden (sin), he/she comes out of the zone of eiman and loses his/her title to eiman, although the title of Islam still remains with him/her. And when he/she turns away from his/her sin and does tawba and istighfaar (repents), he/she returns to the zone of eiman.”

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) also said:

“...Islam is the deen of Allah. One who acknowledges the deen of Allah is a Muslim, and one who acts according to that which Allah has commanded is a Mu’min.”

“Eiman is iqraar (testimony) accompanied with deeds and Islam is iqraar (testimony) without deeds.”

Eiman is not restricted to the solitary sphere of an individual’s existence but it covers all human activity in all aspects - political, social, economic, educational, cultural, etc.. It is eiman which creates a feeling of outrage against corruption, exploitation, tyranny and oppression.

A religion is of little value if it only brings inner light and peace to the individual. It must be able to offer decisive and clear guidance to human beings in every kind of social role or profession, and in each and every phase of their life and career. Only eiman can claim to possess the ability to satisfy fully this requirement.

AYAAT 9 & 10

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى

Therefore do remind, surely reminding does profit.

سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى

He who fears (fears transgression) will heed

The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "Everything has a limit except "Zhikr" for which there is no limit. Allah ordained Salaa and whoever performs them he has observed the limit. If fasts during the holy month of Ramadhan, he has observed the limit. If a one performs Hajj, he has observed his limit but "Zhikr" is not as such. Allah is not content with little "Zhikr", for He has not set a limit for it. Then he recited aya 41 and 42 of Suratul Ahzaab (33)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً
وَأَصِيلًا

"O you who believe! Remember Allah, remembering frequently. And glorify Him morning and evening."

Imam Muhammad A-Baqir (A.S.) has said: "It is written in the Tawrat that has not been altered that Musa (A.S.) asked his Rabb (saying): 'O Rabb! (Tell me) are You near me, so that I should pray to You in whispers, or are You far, that I should cry out. to YOU?' Allah revealed to him: 'O Musa! I am the companion of one who remembers me.' Musa said: 'Who are those that shall be in Your refuge on the day when there shall be no refuge except Your refuge?' He replied: 'Those who remember Me, whom I do remember; those who love one another for My sake, whom I love. They are those whom I remember whenever I wish to strike the earth's people with affliction, and consequently spare them on their account.'"

Imam Khumayni (A.R.) writes - Our shaykh would say: "The *dhakir* (one who performs *dhikr*), during *dhikr*, must be like one teaching words to a little child that has not yet learnt to speak. He repeats the word until the child's tongue is opened and the latter utters the word. After that the child has articulated it, the teacher follows the child and his fatigue caused by repetition is removed, as if he has received an encouraging assistance from the child. In the same way, one who engages in *dhikr* must teach *dhikr* to his heart, which has not learnt to articulate. The point that is concealed in the repetition of the *adhkar* is that thereby the tongue of the heart is opened, and its sign is that thereafter the tongue follows the heart and the hardship and strain of repetition is removed. First, it is the tongue which is *dhakir* and following it the heart also becomes *dhakir* with the tongue's aid and instruction. After that the heart's tongue has learnt to articulate, the tongue follows it and becomes *dhakir* with the aid of the heart or God's concealed assistance.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A.S.) said: "There is no gathering in which the virtuous and the sinful come together and thereafter stand up to leave without mentioning Allah except that it would be a cause of regret to them on the Day of Resurrection.

"Allah said to Prophet Isa (A.S.), 'O Isa, remember Me in your self, so that I may remember you within My self. Mention Me in your assembly so that I may mention your in an assembly better than the assembly of men. O Isa, soften your heart for Me and remember Me much in your solitude. Know that My delight lies in your doing *tabasbus** toward Me. And be alive. in that and don't be dead."

* *Tabasbus* means the dog's wagging of its tail, out of fear or hope

The best times of zhikr as per the hadith of Rasulullah S.A.W.) are: “Allah has said: O children of Adam! Remember Me moments after dawn and moments before evening. I too will assume your important affairs.”

Zhikr is classified into several kinds:

1- “Tahmeed” (Saying praise is due to Allah)

Saeed Chamat said: I said to Imam Sadiq (AS): May I be sacrificed for you! Teach me a comprehensive Dua. The Imam said: “Praise Allah, for in this case, every worshipper will recite Dua for you and will say: Allah hears one who praise Him.”

“Whoever says: Praise is due to the Lord of the worlds at dawn four times, has thanked Allah for that day and whoever repeats the same in the evening, has thanked Allah for the night.”

2- “Tamjeed” (Saying Allah is Almighty) (commendation)

Ali Ibne Hessian has reported on the authority of a friend from Imam Sadiq (AS): “Every Dua which is not preceded by “Tamjeed” is not perfect; first “Tamjeed” and then eulogy. The reporter says: I asked Imam Sadeq (AS): What is the least which will suffice as Tamjeed? The Imam said: “Praise is due to Allah who dominates everything. Praise is due to Allah who is aware of the hidden. Praise is due to Allah who brings the dead back to life and He has power over all things.”

3- “Tahleel” (Saying there is no Allah but Allah) and Takbeer (Saying Allah is the Greatest)

Rabee Azfazeel has reported from Imam Sadiq (AS): “Recite “Tahleel” and “Takbeer” frequently, for there is nothing more favored by Allah than “Takbeer” and “Tahleel”.”

The Prophet (SAW) has said: “The best prayer is to say: There is no

Allah but Allah.”

Four “Tasbeeh”

“One day the Holy Prophet (SAW) said to his companions: If you heap up all your clothes, buildings and the living goods, do you think they will reach the sky? They said: No, O Messenger of Allah! The Holy Prophet said: Shall I introduce to you something whose root is in the earth and its branches in heavens? They said: Yes. The Holy Prophet said: Whenever you complete your prayer say thirty times: Subhanallahi wal hamdulellahi walailahaillallah walaahuakbar the roots of which are in the earth and its branches are in heavens. It is these words that removes from man sorrows, collapsing of wall, fire, being drown in water, falling into well, being attacked by fierce animals, bad death, and tribulation which descend from heavens on the day. Those words are truly righteous deeds.”

It has been reported on the authority of Imam Baqer (AS): “Rasulullah was passing by a man who was planting trees in his orchard. The Holy Prophet stopped and said: Shall I introduce to you a tree whose roots are stronger, gives fruits earlier, and has purer and more lasting fruits than this? The man said: Yes, show it to me O Messenger of Allah! The Holy Prophet said: At dawn and in the evening say: Subhaanallahi walhamdulillaahi walaa ilaa ha illallahu wallaahuakbar. If you recite this Dua there will be ten trees of every fruit for each Tasbeeh in paradise. This is an example of the righteous deed. The man said: O Messenger of Allah! I take you witness and give this orchard to you as a charity for muslim, that is, for the alms givers. Here Allah revealed verses 5-7 of Suratul Layl:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ
وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ
فَسَنِيسِرُّهُ لِيُيسَّرَىٰ

“Then as for he who gives away and guards against evil and accepts the best, We will facilitate for him the easy end.”

Fear of Allah

There are two types of fears. One is fear through ignorance and the other is fear through knowledge.

e.g. When a child is afraid of going into a dark room alone his fear is through ignorance for it is his imagination which is **False Evidence Appearing Real**.

When a toddler reaches out towards a snake slithering in front of him, and his mother rushes to save him for fear of him being bit, her fear is that of knowledge.

Khashya is fear of Allah through knowledge. The more we understand the Greatness of Allah and the more we observe and realise that there is none like Him; the greater the awe (respect, fear). It is only then that we will await adhan in the morning for salaa rather than the adhaan waking us up.

However, this fear must be accompanied by hope.

Hazrat Luqman, the wise told his son:

"O my son! Have such fear of Allah, that when you come to Him with the good deeds of both the worlds, He would still punish you; and have such hope in Allah, that if you came to Him with the sins of both the worlds He would still have mercy for you."

Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.) has said:

"There is no mu'min who does not have two lights (beliefs) in his heart. The light of fear and the light of hope. Were one of these to be measured it would not exceed the other..."

Like the two wings of a bird, hope and fear have to be balanced in order to reach higher towards one's full potential and gain nearness to Allah.



AYAAT 11, 12 & 13

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

And the most unfortunate one will avoid it,

الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى

Who shall enter the great fire;

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى

Then therein he shall neither live nor die.

'Ashqaa' is one who is troubled, unfortunate, shattered, in misery and anguish'. One who does not fear transgression, and does not remember (zikh) is not moving on the path of hidaya (guidance) and therefore is not in submission(ease).

His agitation is fuelled by heedlessness and ignorance and it creates and contributes preparing for the great fire where there is neither life nor death when the human being in essence desires clarity and certainty.

The meaning of heedlessness is a deficiency in full comprehension of facts owing to a blurring of awareness or even total unawareness and the resultant failure to arrive at sound judgments and give pertinent responses. An example of this is given in the Qur'an where Allah says:

اَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مَّعْرُضُونَ

"Humanankind's Reckoning has drawn very close to them, yet they heedlessly turn away." **Surat al-Anbiya': 1**

In the Qur'an, this state of mind peculiar to "those who do not hold firmly to eiman" is defined by Allah in one word: "heedlessness".

One of the causes is to be indifferent to the concept of death.

The human being although being concerned about everything that is linked to his/her own interest displays a heedlessness towards death which must be a matter of utmost importance. We are certain that one who is afflicted by an incurable disease will die. Yet, no less than this person, those of us who have this feeling on certainty will too die in the near future. Maybe even sooner than the person whose death we were anticipating. .

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ
عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Say: 'Death, from which you are fleeing, will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible and He will inform you about what you did.' **Surat al-Jumu'ah: 8**

No matter wher we seek refuge or how we try to escape, there is no choice – ahead of us there is no exit -. The countdown never stops, not for a moment. Wherever one returns, death meets one there. The circle encloses constantly and finally catches up: That is why we need to stop deceiving ourselves or disregarding facts and strive to reach our full potential and closeness to Allah.

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said that one of the best ways to prevent one's conscience from hardening, and attain a good character is by frequently remembering death.

He also said: 'These hearts become rusty just as iron does when water affects it.' On being asked what could clear them he replied, 'A great amount of remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur'an."

Another factor which causes heedlessness is seeing oneself self-sufficient in everything. For instance, when asked about their observance of Islam, most people would say that it is enough not to harm anyone and to try to be a good person. However, this is

pure self-deception. What is important is to be obedient to Allah and to live as He wishes. Unless the human being does this, everything else he does is meaningless and harmful. Allah says in the Qur'an:

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

And what of him the evil of whose actions appears fine to him so that he sees them as good? God misguides whoever He wills and guides whoever He wills. **Suratul Fatir: 8**

What makes someone see his actions as good and attractive is the belief that his own judgement is flawless?

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيْطَغَىٰ أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَعْنَىٰ

No indeed! Truly man is unbridled seeing himself as self-sufficient..”

Suratul'Alaq: 6-7

The linguistic meaning of the word 'mustaghni' (self-sufficient) is 'without need, satisfied'. Its meaning as referred to in the Qur'an is someone's seeing his nearness to God, his fear of God and the hereafter, his good actions and his piety as sufficient and therefore not striving for the better. Most people deviate from God's way for this reason.

It is not possible for someone who listens to his conscience to feel self-sufficient. On the contrary, he looks for the better and tries to do the better in everything moving away from heedlessness for the human being's conscience always reminds him of the Day of Account. Someone who knows that he will give account to God about the life of this world will be continuously striving.

AYA 14

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself,

One who is continually purifying his outward and inward existence is victorious. Falaah (success) speaks of the one who turns the earth, ploughs and cultivates it planting the right things at the right time. Fallaah from the same root means farmer. If he does not do it to his famr, nothing will come from the earth – he has to break it up and work it. In the same way A human being needs to continually purify his innermost being to be on the path of hidaya.

We regularly wash our hands before touching food because our hands come in contact with so many objects that may collect harmful germs from others touching the same objects. We wash our clothes when they collect sweat and dirt from our own body and our surroundings. We bathe and shower, to keep our body clean. All these are intended to keep us in good physical health.

What about that to keep our minds clean and in good health? So many things that we come in contact with can corrupt our minds. We may see a person drawing satisfaction from hitting and humiliating another or achieving success through lying and cheating.. It leaves an impression on our mind and may later make us do the same impulsively. Both eyesight and hearing are indispensable for human learning and development. They can propel us to unimagined heights of human excellence. However, we must learn to use them properly. Otherwise what we see and hear can also corrupt our mind.

How do we purify ourselves from the corrupting influences around us? We need to reflect on what we see and hear and to

separate them into experiences that are desirable form of behaviour and those that are undesirable in the light of some guiding principles. We may call it the exercise of the mind, and similar to other forms of exercise, the exercise of the mind requires regime and regularity.

The process of purification of the mind, variously called purification of the heart and soul, is known in Islam as tazkiya. A pre-requisite of engaging in tazkiyyah is to know that the human mind is prone to becoming corrupted. The corruption may be attributed to acquired elements within oneself, or to external influences, or both. However, the responsibility for any undesirable behaviour rests with the person who commits it and not the person or the environment that caused it. We all bear direct responsibility for our actions. The legal system will make us answerable if we break a law, and in the same way Allah will make us answerable if we defy divine guidance. One cannot use the excuse that the devil made me do it, or there was peer pressure.

If we are caught speeding on a roadway, we cannot be absolved simply because others speeded and did not get caught. Allah sees and hears everything. There is no question of not getting caught. Just as the speeding regulations are meant to save us from hurting ourselves as well as others, the divine guidance is simply for our own benefit.

Success in purification of the mind, soul, or psyche requires recognition that the world can pollute the mind, the soul can corrupt itself via instigation, and desires can conspire to overwhelm one's mind..

Everyone is born with a soul that is pure, free of corruption or impurity. The natural instinct of every human soul is to do what is right. As one grows, the harmful messages through the eyes, hearing, touch, smell and other senses affect the purity of the human soul. Therefore, every human experience must be scrutinized for its potential corrupting influences. Reforming these corrupting influences, within the human mind, is called the process of purification or tazkiya.

AYA 15

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

And magnifies the name of his Lord and prays.

The name is an indication. BY the remembrance of the attributes of Allah; one avoids that which brings loss.

A name is a mark or a sign which serves as a symbol for the recognition of a person or a thing. We recognise something or someone by their name. A name evokes a wide possible range of opinions and emotions. The more knowledge you have of a thing or a person, the stronger the emotion when the name is called out. For instance, the words, ma, mum, mother, mummy, evoke love and affection whilst the word ghost evokes fear, mystery.....

The power of a recognisable name is becoming increasingly valued and valuable. Consider the sponsorship at sporting events and the advertisements you see everywhere. In this case the name calls to mind goods of particular quality from a particular source.

When you remember someone's or something's name, you are paying it them a subtle compliment. You are saying to it them that they have made an impression on you and it gives them a sense of importance. Similarly when you do not recall someone's name it indicates their lack of impression on you.

The word 'name' is therefore synonymous with the word 'reputation' or 'character' when it comes to human beings.

The acquiring of knowledge about the attributes of Allah is closely related to our knowledge of recognition of Allah.

Just as we identify a writer from his/her style of writing and by particular words and phrases which are peculiar to him/her; in the same way every creation of Allah performs the following two main functions:

a) Identifying it's Creator

Projecting the attributes of it's Creator and recognising the purpose of it's creation.

Whatever little information the human being can get about Allah can only be acquired through His names. Otherwise, we have no access.

Allah's attributes are utterly separate from ours and cannot be examined through a comparison with our attributes. For example, when we boast of our knowledge, we are not one and identical with our knowledge. During infancy there was no trace of learning or knowledge in our beings, but later we gradually acquired a certain amount of knowledge by learning. The attribute of knowledge is an accident and our essence is a substance; each is independent of the other. But the case of the divine attributes is fundamentally different. When we say that Allah is all-knowing, what we mean is that He is the source of knowledge: the attribute is not something other than the entity it describes although it is conceptually distinct. In reality, His attributes are identical with His essence; for His essence does not constitute a substance to which accidents might adhere. He is absolute being, identical with knowledge, power, life, stability and realization; He is not subject to any mental or external limit or restriction.

Our whole word in essence is a name of Allah because nothing which exists can come into existence automatically.

These qualities and Names are therefore an infra-structure for human akhlaq because in Islam, the human being is the representative of Allah. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

“Adopt the akhlaq of Allah”

SALAA

"Indeed salaa removes sins like Autumn strips leaves off the trees, and it frees you from the rope of sins tied around your neck. The Prophet (S.A.W.) likened it to a refreshing stream at one's door in which one takes a purifying bath five times in a day and night. After so much cleaning will any dirt remain on a person?"

Imam Ali (A.S.) - Nahjul Balagha

Salaa is an expression of a person's surrender to Allah. It has been specified in such a manner that even one who wants to pray in a lonely corner must observe certain things which are of moral and social relevance such as cleanliness, respect of the rights of others, punctuality, a sense of direction, control over one's emotions, and expression of goodwill (salaam) towards other righteous servants of Allah.

Salaa is seen by some as some sort of a deal like work to be exchanged for wages. Like the employee who only works for the salary at the end of the month, but an employer pays for the benefit he derives from his employees. What benefit can the Lord of the worlds get from our salaa?

However, salaa is the ladder to attain nearness to Allah.

It has a form and a soul, an appearance and an inner meaning. That which is expressed by the tongue and the movements of the body are the outer mould. The soul of salaa is:

- i) The significance attached to it by the prayer.
- ii) His/her attitude towards it.
- iii) The satisfaction and benefit derived from it.
- iv) The extent to which it has taken him/her on the journey towards Allah.

Imam Ali (A.S.) sums up the attitudes of people towards worship in the following hadith:

"A group of people worship Allah out of desire for reward; This is the worship of traders. Another group worship Allah out of fear; This is the worship of slaves. Yet another group worship Allah out of gratitude; This is the worship of free people."

The root of all the aspects of salaa lies in the remembrance of Allah and to live by the knowledge that Allah is observing and watching. It is to this that the Qur'an says:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

"....Adhere to salaa in order that you remain in My remembrance."

Suratut Taha 20:14

Those whose niyya for worship is solely for the pleasure of Allah are described by Imam Ali (A.S.) as:

"Indeed, Allah, the Glorified has made His remembrance the shine of the hearts, which makes them hear after deafness, see after blindness and humble after being undisciplined. In all periods of times when there were no prophets, there were individuals to whom He spoke in whispers through their conscience and intellect."

This speaks of the wonderful effect of salaa and other forms of worship on the heart, to the extent of making it capable of receiving divine inspiration and bringing it to communicate with Allah.

AYAAT 16 & 17

بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

Nay! you prefer the life of this world,

وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى

While the hereafter is better and more lasting.

This life is a preparation for the next: we have been brought here from the non-time to prepare ourselves spiritually for the Hereafter, which is also in the non-time.

There is inward happiness as well as outward happiness. At best, those attached to the life of this world, will obtain a taste of temporal happiness. But we want eternal joy which is the result of abandoning ourselves to Allah on the path of Islam, by means of submission, faith, trust, belief and excellence. Why hide the fact that we are all dying? Every breath is taking us closer to it. The only correct statement every human being can make at any time is: I am closer to death.

Allah in Suratut Tawba Aya 38 says

أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ
إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

“...Are you content with the life of this earth instead of the aakhira? But the provisions of this world compared to the aakhira is but a little.”?

We dressed our world like a bride? Filled our tables with delicacies? Filled our cupboards with the rainbow? Yet Qur’an asks
_ Are you content with this?

We are sent to the world with resources and we have filled it with rich cultures, unprecedented technological advances yet the question to be asked is – Are we content with the material life?

Let us look at the phases of our lives –

- Childhood – a time to play – yet we spend it in studying, today the pressures of exams start even younger
- Youth – a time for enjoyment – but the pressures of qualifying, employment, relationships, family take over
- Middle age – riddled with worries
- Old Age – health and energy give way

In this world troubles and pleasures go hand in hand – Can we call this living?

Rousseau - a renowned philosopher (1712 -1778) writes in his work 'Emile': "I know that I am destined to die, why then should I create attachments for myself in this world?... Emile my son! If you wish to live happily and rationally, attach yourself only to the beauties that are imperishable; try to limit your desires and hold duty in higher esteem than all else.....Accept nothing, until your conscience allows you..."

In the world we find with science we have a lot of fiction – enables human beings to fulfil their hopes, their desires in the world of fantasy. When Insaan finds that his/her aspirations are larger than the space he/she is given – gives rise to frustrations which leads to the ills we see. Is this living or a fallacy of judgement?

Whitehead said – 'Life is nothing but a continuous rehearsal of death.'

The essence is to live to die and not die to live. The advantage of living to die is that Allah in return promises to make every act which would have otherwise died into a living one.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ
أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ

“Indeed We give life to the dead, and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have recorded everything in a clear writing.”

Suratu Yaseen 36:12

The mercy of Allah prepares us to take off in the next life, the akhira. Look at the death of the Master of All Believers, Imam ‘Ali (A.S.) . He said: "I have won, by the Lord of the Ka'ba!" Both the soul and the body were returning to their sources. It was easy and spontaneous. It is only when a human being wishes to hold onto his body, not permitting his soul and body to separate, that death is hard. To facilitate this separation we use, before our death, a simple formula which is the remembrance of death.

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said, "Death is enough of a warning." The warner says, "Don't be angry. Don't be in haste." If you remember death while you are angry, you will be ashamed of yourself. Imagine cheating someone or being suspicious of someone and death comes to you. It is for this reason that we visit the great masters' graves. We do not worship them. But when we go to the grave of a great being such as an Imam, we remember what he represents, how he lived, and how he died. We remember that he was an aya, a sign of Allah on this

earth, and we want to aspire towards that and follow in his footsteps. If we don't go there, we go somewhere else less important, which is less of a reminder. That is the reason the Prophet says: "Increase the remembrance of death for its remembrance obliterates one's mistakes and makes one renounce pleasure in worldly things." It helps to obliterate our mistakes as we have just discovered. Also he says it does not make you insecure about this world. You take what you can, you do your best. And you have no fear.

A man from the Ansar (those who supported the Prophet in Medina) came to the Prophet and asked him: "Who is the most generous and wisest of all men?" The Prophet (S.A.W.) answered: "Those people who remember death most, and those who are most ready for it." We are not suicidal, nor are we here to disturb anything. We are here to know the key which will give us inner peace. We are here to serve Allah in His creation

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said concerning who remember (is aware of) the akhira: "He who leaves the outer frivolity, the unimportant things of this world (who takes what he needs, for his strength, for his knowledge, for his heart), who prefers that which remains to that which will be destroyed and never counts tomorrow as one of his days (because it has not come) but counts himself as one of the people of the graves (i.e. dead)."

AYAAT 18 & 19

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى

Most surely this is in the earlier scriptures,

صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

The scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa

This knowledge is an ancient knowledge revealed to all the Prophets. Tawheed was identical in all prophetic teachings since the beginning of time; but the ways in which He is worshiped and spoken of familiarly may validly change.

The word suhuf is the plural of sahifa which here means 'a tablet or a page on which something is written.' A hadith from Abudhar says that he asked the Prophet (S.A.W.) how many prophets (Ambiya) there were and he answered that there were one hundred and twenty four thousand (124,000). Then he asked about the number of their messengers (Mursaleen), and the Prophet (S.A.W.) answered him: "They were three hundred and thirteen and the rest were only prophets (Ambiya).".....Then the Prophet (S.A.W.) added: "O Abudhar, four prophets were Arabs: Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, and your prophet."

Abuthar asked the Prophet(S.A.W.) how many books were revealed, and he replied: "One hundred and four books were revealed; ten books to Adam, fifty books to Shith, thirty books to Okhnukh (Enoch) and he is the first one who wrote by pen, ten books to Abraham, the Tawrat to Musa, Injeel to Isa, Zabur to Dawud, and Qur'an to Muhammad (S.A.W.)."

The Sura begins with monotheism, continues with prophecy and ends with practiced programs of religion.