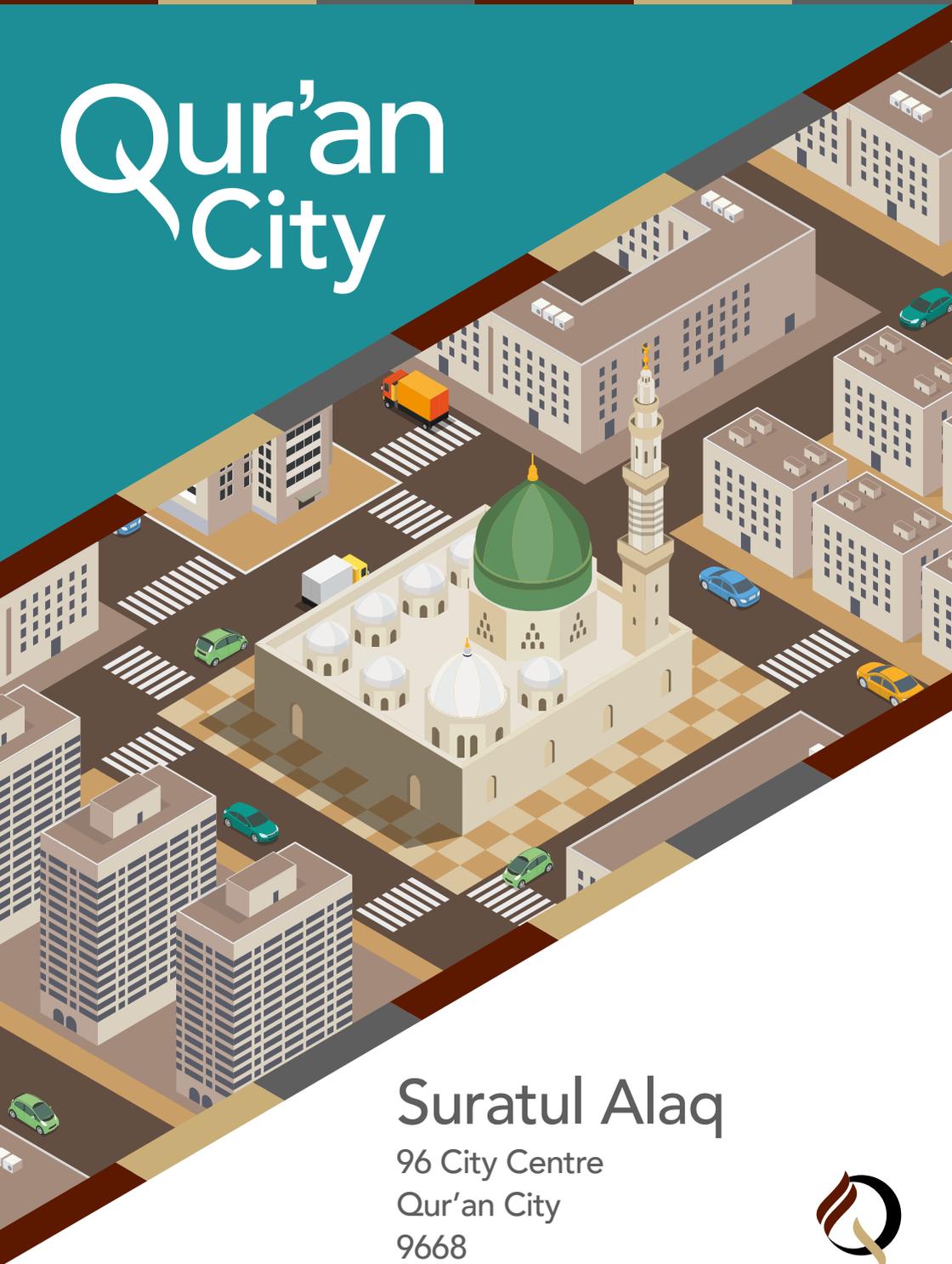


Qur'an City



Suratul Alaq

96 City Centre
Qur'an City
9668



FOCUS ON SURATUL 'ALAQ

The first five ayaat of this sura are known as the first ones to be revealed to the Prophet pbuh. The sura is concerned with the awakening of the intelligence and self-knowledge that is already within the reader. It begins with the injunction of 'Iqra' - Read. Then it refers to the creation of the human being out of a clot. It draws attention to the ungratefulness of the human being because he sees himself independent of Divinity. The sura ends with a command to prostration, and of drawing closer to Allah. It emphasises the fact that the art of reading or literacy forms the basis for civilized life and culture.

Benefits of recitation

- Safety from accidents
- Safeguarding

SURATUL 'ALAQ 96

THE SURA IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS:

1-5 An awakening to knowledge as the ultimate source of success

6-8 Rebelliousness is due to disbelief in returning to the Rabb and thus disbelief in accountability

9-18 Historical example of rebelliousness

19 Submission to the Creator *Sajda* a cure for ignorance

There is a wajib sajda in this sura

Wajib Sajda

Historical example of ignorance
Abu Jahl

'Amr bin Hisham known as
Abul Hakam (father of wisdom)
Rejected message of Tawheed

Threatened to stamp on Prophet's
neck if he saw him in sajda

Prophet named him Abu Jahl
(father of ignorance)
and Pharaoh of the Muslims

19 Submission to
Divinity combats
Ignorance
19

18
17
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
9 - 18

8
7 Think
Independent
6 Rebellious
6 - 8

5 Learn
4 Learn, Write
3 Read
2
1 Read
1 - 5

**Rebelliousness
Ignorance**

**Awakening
Intelligence**

PART 1 AYAAT 1-5 READING, LEARNING, WRITING

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ In the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

1 Read! In the name of your Lord who created

The sura starts with a command 'Amr'; the command to read. Iqra' comes from the root word 'qara'a' which means to read or recite. The command was to a memorizing community who did not read. Through this one word the Qur'an became the most read, printed and reproduced book in the world giving birth to countless libraries *Ummul Kitab*.

The Prophet *pbuh* fulfilled the command for the rest of his life reciting the worlds revealed to him by Allah through Jibrail. The aya orders the reading of the Qur'an in the name of Allah to ensure that it is the word of the Creator and not that of anyone else, thus always begin a recitation of the Qur'an with the Basmallah.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

2 Created the human being from a clinging substance.

The embryo can only develop if it latches on to the womb. Even the earth is suspended in its course within the cosmos. The human being can only reach his personal best by clinging on to Divinity.

PART 1 continued

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

3 Recite, and your Rabb is the most Honoured

The command of Iqra' *Read* is repeated emphasizing that it is reading, understanding and applying the knowledge of the Qur'an that gives nobility to the human being.

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

5 Taught the human being that which he did not know.

Human beings were unaware of their personal best *potential*.

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

4 Who taught by the pen

In Suratul Qalam, Allah swears by the pen. Highlighting its greatness for writing is a means of preserving knowledge. All knowledge that we have today is because someone wrote it down.

PART 1 THE DAY OF MAB'ATH 27th RAJAB 610 CE

Mab'ath means revival. It is the revival of human values and the basic purpose of life, for every human being to reach his personal best *full potential*.

It is possibly the most important event in history that benchmarks the separation of good from evil, and sifts right from wrong; for which humankind was being prepared through a long and unbroken chain of divine messengers spanning different eras and various geographical regions in order to build the mindset for the single universal message, Islam.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The Prophet *pbuh* used to spend a lot of time in the Cave of Hira *in the Mountain of Light some 2 miles from Makka*. On the 27th of Rajab in the 40th year of his life.

The angel Jibrail appeared to him saying: **“ Read in the Name of your Lord Who Created; Created man from a clot; Read and your Lord is Most Honourable; Who taught (to write) with the pen; Taught man what he knew not? 96:1-5 ”**



The Prophet *pbuh* who was never formally taught how to read or write recited them as though he had always known them. This one incident changed the course of humanity. It was the start of the gradual revelation for the next 23 years of the Qur'an and the dawn of the universal message of Islam.

He went home and narrated the incident to his wife Sayyida Khadija who immediately testified to his Prophethood. It was now the duty of the 40-year-old Messenger of Mercy to not just convey it to humankind, but to entrust it to a line of trustees.

PART 1 EXTRACT FROM NAHJUL BALAGHA SERMON 191

Known as Al-Khutbah al-Qasi`ah

“From the time of his weaning, Allah had put a mighty angel with him *The Prophet pbuh* to take him along the path of a lofty character through the day and night, while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me through his actions some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it. Every year he used to go in seclusion to the **cave of Hira**’, where I saw him but no one else saw him.

In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet *pbuh* and Khadija, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the awesomeness of divine revelation and message, and breathed the scent of Prophet hood.

When the revelation descended on the Prophet *pbuh* I heard the moan of Shaytan. I said, “O’ Prophet of Allah, what is this moan?” and he replied, “This is Shaytan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O’ `Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a Prophet, but you are my successor and you are surely on *the path of virtue*.”

The Prophet *pbuh* had said: **“I was the Prophet when Adam was still in the (uncreated) state between water and clay.”**

PART 1 continued

READING, LEARNING & WRITING

The Prophet *pbuh*, says: **“ It is wajib for every Muslim to acquire knowledge. Allah likes those who seek knowledge.”**

He also said: **“ Indeed, the angels spread out their wings for the seeker of knowledge out of their delight for him, so that he walks over them.”**

It is said that reading is to the mind as exercise is to the body.

Here are some advantages of reading:

1. Mental Stimulation

Studies have shown that staying mentally stimulated can slow the progress of (or possibly even prevent) Alzheimer's and Dementia, since keeping your brain active and engaged prevents it from losing power. Just like any other muscle in the body, the brain requires exercise to keep it strong and healthy.

2. Knowledge

Without input you're operating in a vacuum. You've created your own world where what you know is what you know. It's comfortable but life is not stationery. Every day, more and more is added to the knowledge base and its always evolving. Everything you read fills your head with new bits of information, and you never know when it might come in handy. The more knowledge you have, the better-equipped you are to tackle any challenge you'll ever face. Additionally, here's a bit of food for thought: should you ever find yourself in

dire circumstances, remember that although you might lose everything else *your job, your possessions, your money and even your health* knowledge can never be taken from you.

3. Vocabulary Expansion

The more you read, the more words you gain exposure to, and they'll inevitably make their way into your everyday vocabulary.

4. Stronger Analytical Thinking Skills

Analytical thinking is being able to gather information and identify key components that relate to the information. It also allows the comparison of data from different sources enabling the drawing of conclusions and thus appropriate solutions.

PART 1 continued

5. Improved Focus and Concentration

In our internet-crazed world, attention is drawn in a million different directions at once as we multi-task through every day. In a single 5 minute span, the average person will divide their time between working on a task, checking email, chatting with a couple of people, keeping an eye on Facebook, monitoring their phone, etc. When you read, all of your attention is focused on the book; the rest of the world just falls away, and you can immerse yourself in every fine detail you're absorbing. Try reading for 15-20 minutes every day, and you'll be surprised at how much more focused you are once you get to the office.

6. Better Writing Skills

This goes hand-in-hand with the expansion of your vocabulary; exposure to well-written work, especially Divine words, has a noted effect on one's own writing. In the same way that painters use techniques established by previous masters, so do writers learn how to craft words by reading the works of others. You only have to look at the duas and words of the Ma'sumeen to know where their source of inspiration came from.
E.g. Sahifatus Sajjadiyya

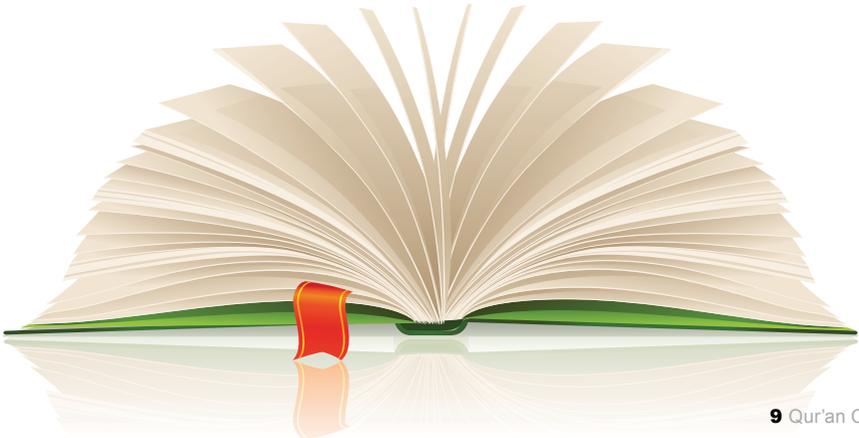
7. Tranquility

In addition to the relaxation that accompanies reading a good book, it's possible that the subject you read about can bring about immense inner peace and tranquility. Allah in the Qur'an says "It is only with the remembrance of God, do hearts find tranquility". Reading the Qur'an can lower blood pressure and bring about an immense sense of calm.

KNOWLEDGE

Imam Ali pbuh used to say:

O seeker of knowledge!
Knowledge has many merits...
Thus, its head is humbleness
And its eye is freedom from envy
And its ear is understanding
And its tongue is truthfulness
And its memory is research
And its heart is good intention
And its intellect is the knowledge
of things and matters
And its hand is compassion
And its foot is visiting the learned
And its resolution is integrity
And its wisdom is piety
And its house is salvation
And its compass is well-being
And its mount is faithfulness
And its weapon is softness of speech
And its sword is satisfaction
And its bow is tolerance
And its army is discussion with the learned
And its wealth is refined manners
And its stock is keeping away from sins
And its provision for journey is virtue
And its drinking water is gentleness
And its guide is divine guidance



PART 2 AYAAT 6-8 Rebelliousness

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّا

6 Nay! For sure , the human being rebels

The word 'yatgha' comes from tughyan which means to cross the limits knowingly. The previous ayaat allude to the gaining of knowledge through reading. This aya indicated that the reason for rebelliousness is ignorance.

wrong and realizes that there is accountability.

REBELLIOUSNESS, IGNORANCE & INDEPENDENCE

Rebelliousness is the aggressive and rejecting stance to authority or crossing the limits willfully. If you were totally independent, you wouldn't think about anyone else but yourself.

أَنْ يَرَاهُ اسْتَعْتَبَى

7 Because he sees himself self-sufficient.

The human being rebels because he thinks he is independent and doesn't need or anyone to place laws on him. He rebels because he thinks he does not need anyone.

The root cause of human rebellion is when one thinks that one is free of need, and thus does not want anyone to place laws upon him. This imagination of being independent is the characteristic of those who when they obtain some blessings, wealth, tranquility or high position, feel self-sufficient and forget that everything is from their Rabb. That is the core of ignorance.

The key to ignorance is being satisfied with the knowledge one possesses, and placing all one's trust in it. The key to knowledge is the desire to exchange one level of knowledge for a higher level, together with divine grace and guidance. The lowest quality of an ignorant man is that he lays claim to knowledge which he does not deserve; his most common characteristic is ignorance of his own ignorance, and the most extreme aspect of his ignorance is to reject knowledge.

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ

8 Indeed, to your Rabb is the return.

It is only when one is sure that there is a return to He who is Greater than oneself and one's record of deeds will be presented that one stops doing

PART 3 AYAAT 9-18 An example of what not to do *Abu Jahl*

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى

9 Have you seen the one who forbids

pbuh who was barely 5 moved them away from her father's back and consoled him.

At another time, he said that if he saw the Prophet *pbuh* put his head on the ground in *sajda*, he would tread on his neck. When he came near the Prophet to carry out his threat, he stopped and it seemed as if he was pushing something away from himself with his hand. He was asked what was the matter with him, and he answered. "Suddenly, I saw a ditch of fire between me and him; a frightful thing, and I saw some wings and feathers, too."

عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى

10 A servant of Allah from praying?

This refers to the historical example of Abu Jahl *father of ignorance*. His name was 'Amr bin Hisham and he was known as Abul Ḥakam *father of wisdom*, because he was known to be intelligent and was generous. The elders of the Quraysh valued his opinion and at a young age made him a member of their special meetings, which were held at Darun Nadwa, where they would make decisions and policies.

His hatred for the Prophet *pbuh* and rejection of the message of Tawheed was intense. The Prophet *pbuh* therefore called him Abu Jahl *the father of ignorance*, even referring to him as the Pharaoh of the Muslims. He persecuted those who became Muslims and was the one who killed Sumayya *mother of Ammar Yasir*.

When the Prophet *pbuh* was praying near the Ka'ba once, he ordered the intestines of a camel to be brought and thrown on the Prophet's back. Those with him laughed and mocked the Prophet *pbuh*. Sayyida Fatima

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدَى

11 Have you considered if he were on the right way?

PART 3 continued

أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالْتَّقْوَى

12 Or enjoins righteousness?

If Abu Jahl was intelligent, then he should at least have considered that the Prophet *pbuh* was on the right way and was preaching righteousness. It would have stopped his rebelliousness.

Some mufasssireen have said that it may mean that with such intelligence he would have been awesome, had he believed and understood the message of tawheed taught by the Prophet *pbuh*.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى

14 Does he not know that Allah sees?

Abu Jahl thinks he is just being mean to the Prophet *pbuh*, however Allah is watching his actions. Even the Makkans believed in an ultimate Creator. But Abu Jahl's arrogance leads him to ignorance. The answer is here: *The Relation between Knowledge in the first 5 ayaat and the arrogant rejecter of the truth here.*

Reading, Learning and Writing as opposed to arrogance, rebellion and ignorance. Knowledge brings humbleness. It is said that a tree that has more fruits bows down, whilst one that bears no fruit stands up straight. Rejection of this knowledge makes one arrogant.

أَمْ آيَاتِ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى

13 Have you seen if he denies and turns away

كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ

15 No! If he does not stop, We will surely grasp him by the forelock.

PART 3 continued

نَاصِيَةٌ كَاذِبَةٌ خَاطِئَةٌ

16 A lying, sinning forelock.

The forelock *Naasiyaa* represents the front part of the forehead where one does sajdah. It also represents one's pride and dignity and the mind and knowledge. Abu Jahl did not accept the message of Tawheed because his arrogance which led to his ignorance.

Allah here warns the rejecter of the truth exposing him. The aya alludes that Abu Jahl knows that the message of the Qur'an is the truth but he is lying against it because of tribal pride.

At the end of the sura, we will see an order to do sajdah for closeness to Allah, and even if Abu Jahl does not put his head down - then in the end, his head will be dragged down. One way or the other one will accept the truth here or in the hereafter.

فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ

17 Then let him call his associates.

سَدُّعُ الزَّبَانِيَةِ

18 We will call the angels of Hell.

The Prophet *pbuh* was once praying near Maqami Ibrahim near the Ka'ba when Abu Jahl came up to him and told him that he was not allowed to pray. The Prophet *pbuh* told him to go away. He said: "Do you call at me and send me away? Don't you know that the men in my tribe are more than any others in these surroundings?"

It is at this time that these ayaat were revealed and he saw the ditch of fire and the angels of jahannam. Zabaniya is the plural of zibniya which means disciplinary guards *here it refers to the angels who guard jahannam.*

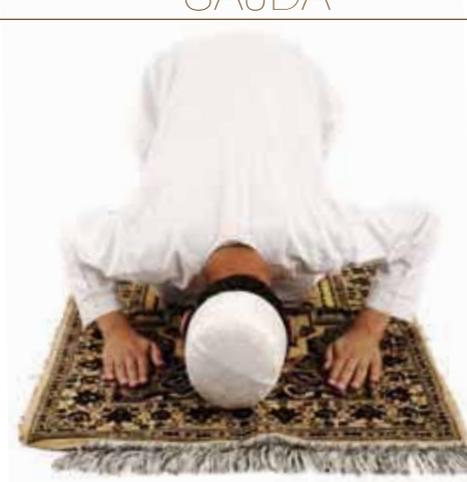
PART 4 AYAAT 19 SUBMISSION TO THE CREATOR

كَلَّا لَا تُطَعُّهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ

19 No! Do not obey him. But prostrate and draw near to Allah.

Don't be like Abu Jahl who will be dragged into jahannam in the position of sajda. Rather, do sajda and be humble in this life to reach your full potential.

SAJDA



“One who does sajda is never far from Allah; while the person who shows ill courtesy and neglects to honour Him because his heart is attached to something other than Allah in the state of sajda will never come near to Him. Therefore when you do sajda, do it with humility, know that he has created you from the very earth that people walk on.

Allah made sajda the occasion to draw near to Him in one's heart and innermost being. Whoever draws near to Him is far from all that is other than Him. Do you not see that in its outward appearance the state of sajda is not complete except by disappearing from all things and being veiled from all that the eyes see? If someone's heart is attached to something other than Allah in prayer, he is near to that thing, and far from the reality of what Allah desires in His prayer. For He has said, Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his chest (33:4).” Imam Sadiq (pbuh)

SAJADAT TILAWAT

There are four wajib sajadat in the Qur'an, on hearing or reciting them one must perform a sajdah. It is not necessary to face qibla, or be in wudhoo. The only condition is that the sajdah must be done on a sajadaga, earth or any other thing on which sajdah is allowed. As for wajib sajadat the ayaat are marked in the Qur'an with the word sajdah.

The sajadat are in the following ayaat :
32:15, 41:38, 53:62, 96:19

A mnemonic to remember them:

**When a star Suratul Najm (53) is born
Suratul 'Alaq (96) do 2 sajdah's Suratus
Sajdah (32) & Suratul Fussilat (41)**

There are 10 mustahab sajadat in the Qur'an, on hearing or reciting the ayaat in which they appear it is recommended that one performs sajdah.

**The 10 ayaat with mustahab sajadat are:
84:21, 38:24, 27:26, 25:60, 22:18,
19:58, 17:109, 16:50, 13:15, 7:206**

RECOMMENDED RECITATION IN SAJDAH

i) Recite

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ حَقًّا حَقًّا

There is no god but Allah
and that is the truth truth

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِيْمَانًا وَ تَصْدِيقًا

There is no God but Allah
in whom I believe and testify to

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عِبَادَةً وَرِقًّا

There is no god but Allah in
whom I submit and am a slave of

سَجَدْتُ لَكَ يَا رَبِّي تَعْبُدًا وَرِقًّا

I prostrate for you O my Rabb with
submission and as Your Slave

لَا مُسْتَنْكَفًا وَلَا مُسْتَكْبِرًا

With no rejection or arrogance

بَلْ أَنَا عَبْدٌ ذَلِيلٌ طَعِيفٌ خَائِفٌ مُسْتَجِيرٌ
In fact I am your slave who is lowly, weak,
fearful and needful of Your protection.

ii) Recite:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَبِحَمْدِهِ

Glory be to my Rabb, the most High and
praise be to Him

iii) Recite, a takbeer after the sajdah

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

ADDENDUM ON SALAA

Our goal in life is to reach our full potential in all aspects: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Praying and in particular sajda is the medium which:

1. Keeps us in touch with HE who is perfection and thus allows us never to be limited. Salaa reminds us that we cannot and should not be bound or limited by anyone or anything. Salaa is called '**mirajul mu'mineen**' *that which allows us to soar to heights that knows no bounds.*
2. It is an awesome form of time management.
3. It is the act of seeing reality from God's point of view.
4. It allows us to explain to Him how things look like from our perspective. He is saying *"tell me how things look like from your perspective in your world, and I will try to accommodate your perspective, provided you believe that I CAN."*

But more so we pray because our body requires nourishment, health, safety and comfort. We pray to acknowledge our dependency upon, our appreciation of, and our gratitude to the Source of all the needs, joys and achievements of life. We pray because our soul is lonely. A spark of the Divine fire, it has journeyed to a world heavy with things, forces and objects that shout out their own reality, obscuring their Source. So the spark yearns for the fire and strives to become reabsorbed in it. Eagerly it awaits the times set aside for prayer; those precious daily moments when the person it inhabits ceases to commune with the world and communes with his or her Creator.

Both body and soul are praying. The body is praying for life and existence. The soul is praying to escape life, to transcend existence. And yet, as salaa progresses, a certain harmony emerges. As the soul prays, climbing the heavens, the body *who's praying on the same page, there's no escaping that* learns that spirituality too is a need that transcendent strivings is also a pleasure; that talking to HIM is also an achievement. And the soul, who's praying on the same page as the body *there's no escaping that, either* learns that life, too, is Divine; that existence is also a way of achieving perfection and thus divinity; that achievement can be the ultimate full potential, if they are harnessed to HIM.

So why do we pray? Because the body needs the soul and the soul needs the body; and both need to be made aware that the other's need is also their own. That ultimately is the essence of prayer; to know our needs, understand their source and comprehend their true objectives. To direct our minds and hearts to He who implanted them within us, defined their purpose, and provides us with the means to fulfill them.

SUMMARY

The sura begins with the command of **Iqra'** *Read* and ends with the command of **Waqtarib** *come close to Allah*. Closeness to Allah is only achieved through knowledge and understanding (read, learn and write). Both relate to Salaa, recite Qur'an in the beginning of each rakaa of salaa and do sajda at the end of each rakaa. There is no knowledge or closeness to Allah with arrogance for it leads to ignorance. The key to success is therefore knowledge that leads to humility.

