



# Ramadan Study Circle

The opportunity to learn, connect, and  
spiritually grow with your family during  
the month of Ramadan

**WEEK 2**





ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF BRITAIN  
PRESENTS

*A 30-day study circle  
programme*

This pack consists of:

- A series of reminders
- Tafsir on short surah's of the Quran
  - Attributes of God
- Short stories of the Prophet (pbuh)

*Version 1.0*



## *How to Use this Pack*

- This resource has been created in order to allow families to come together during Ramadan and hold a study circle.
- The purpose of this is to help bring families together in worship and remembrance of God in a constructive and aided way, especially at a time when it is difficult for us to be together as families and friends, and in places of worship.
- This resource can be used as an aid or as a comprehensive guide. No prior level of knowledge is required. You may use the information provided as little or as much as you feel necessary, at your own discretion.
- We would suggest that families sit together regularly, every day during Ramadan to do the circle in order to benefit from this circle. Set a fixed time every day if you can!
- The circle is designed to take 30 minutes. This can of course be extended to suit interests and circumstances.
- We would encourage families to take a circle regularly with wider family or friends through online interfaces. This will bring together families regularly in worship and the remembrance of God.
- Each pack covers the first week of Ramadan. Weeks 2, 3 & 4 will be circulated later. To obtain the next pack please visit [isb.org.uk](http://isb.org.uk).
- For your ease, each day is divided into 3 sections. This includes the following: Quran, a story with a message from Islam, a reminder or reflection and a summary of one of the 99 names of God.



***We hope you will find this guide can structure some of the worship we commit to in Ramadan but also help us in staying connected as families and friends, growing closer to God.***







*The Islamic Society of Britain is a community based national charity. We are a membership organisation, with members spread across the whole of the UK Established in 1990, we were one of the first organisations that sought to evolve a uniquely British flavour to Islam. In order for this to happen we felt that Muslims would have to think seriously about understanding their faith in a British context.*

*Our aims are:*

- To promote greater understanding and awareness of Islam*
- To organise, educate and enhance the development of British Muslim communities*
- To encourage positive contribution to British society and the promotion of social justice*



*The Islamic Society of Britain has four key areas of focus over the coming two years:*

- Connecting families & building brotherhood/sisterhood*
- Developing youth and young adults*
- Encourage social action*
- Develop and enhance civic engagement*

*Our youth section (11-17) is called Young Muslims*

*Our young adult (18-26) section is called Campus*

*Please do become a member or join our mailing list*

*[www.isb.org.uk](http://www.isb.org.uk)*

*[www.isbcampus.org.uk](http://www.isbcampus.org.uk)*

*[www.ymuk.net](http://www.ymuk.net)*

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*0300 365 10 9 8*

# Glossary

- Hadith*** Refers to reports of what Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said and did (literally: statements or talk).
- Islam*** Has two meanings intertwined, 'peace' and to 'give one's will to God'.
- Pbuh*** Peace be upon him
- Quran*** The Muslim scripture (literally: Recitation).
- Ramadan*** The 9th month of the Islamic calendar, when Muslims observe fasting.
- Salah*** Ritual prayer, alone or in a group (literally: link or communication).
- Sawm*** Fasting. The fast begins before sunrise and ends at sunset each day

***Sunnah***

The practice and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (literally: trodden path).

***Surah***

A chapter of the Quran (literally: divider).

***Tafsir***

Commentary of the Quran.

***Zakat***

A charitable contribution of 2.5% donated to the poor and needy (literally: purification).





## *Video Conferencing Guide*

Family meetups are usually a prominent feature of our lives during Ramadan. Due to the current circumstances, however, this is not feasible for a many of us. Thankfully, it is still possible to connect with family members who do not live in the same household and organise study circles with them, through the utilisation of video conferencing facilities.

These facilities allow the user to create a secure, virtual 'room' into which they can invite family, friends, and anyone else they wish. The invitees can then connect to the room using a variety of different devices, but ideally one with a microphone, a speaker/audio output, and a camera. When a user is connected, it is entirely within their discretion whether or not they allow their video and/or audio feed to be broadcasted.

The content for the circles can then be broadcasted in real time by one of the members of the group. This is done through the use of the 'screen-share' feature. In the context of a study circle, this allows for all members of the group to see the same text and images of this booklet at the same time, so that they are able to follow what is being said or commented on. The circle can then proceed as normal.

*There are many different software solutions which offer conferencing software. A few of these are listed below:*

Platform	Price	Link to use / download	Notes
Skype	Free	<a href="https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/">https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/</a>	
Google Hangouts	Free	<a href="https://hangouts.google.com/">https://hangouts.google.com/</a>	Requires a Google account. Without a G-Suite account, video calls with up to 10 people are supported.
Google Hangouts Meet	£4.60/month	<a href="https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en-uk/pricing.html">https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en-uk/pricing.html</a>	Please note that Google Hangouts <b>Meet</b> is a different service from Google Hangouts (above). Hangouts Meet is <b>not</b> free: it comes as part of G-Suite, which is a paid service. Google Hangouts Meet allows for more participants than Google Hangouts.
Zoom	Free*	<a href="https://zoom.us/">https://zoom.us/</a>	*The free versions supports group calls up to 40 mins only.



DAY 8

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Surah Asr: Tafsir

Reminder 1: Freedom

99 Names of God: Al Quddus

## *Surah Asr*

وَالْعَصْرِ

By time,

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ

Indeed, humankind is in loss,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا  
بِالصَّبْرِ

Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.



## ***Surah Asr Tafsir***

Imam Shafi said: if God had only revealed this surah it would be sufficient for the guidance of all humankind. It holds the very essence of the Quranic message and if followed it would be enough to achieve success in this life.

How can 3 verses encapsulate the essence of the Quran?

Verse 1: By the time.

Literal meaning of Asr is time.

Edward Lane Lexicon: Root word of Asr **عصر** is juice, squeezing fruit for its juice, wringing cloth for water. If you combine the two you get time which is squeezed out running out of time, e.g. salatul Asr. In the Quran it says beware of the middle prayer (salatul Asr) why? Because of forgetfulness. This is because during Arabian society Asr was the busiest time of day because daylight is running out, markets were busy, travellers prepare to leave. Everyone is trying to make the most of the day before the daylight ends.

This is why Marmaduke Pickthall translates V1 to 'by the declining day' (sunlight declining). Therefore, 'I swear by Asr' - God is swearing by something so it shows the importance of time. The surah before this, is Al Takathur in which the last verse 'and on that day you will most surely be called to account for [what you did with] the boon of life!' (Asaad)

What is the boon of life? It is answered in the next verse (first verse of Asr);

Time is something we take for granted and only realise often when it is it's too late.

Verse 2: Verily man is in loss.

'Inna' is emphasis

If Takathur is about greed and want, then Asr is loss (khusr).

This greed in Al Takathur is ingrained in each of us and we will all be affected by it.

Verse3: Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.

God is telling us how to save ourselves from greed and want:

1. Iman

1. Good deeds

2. Spreading truth together

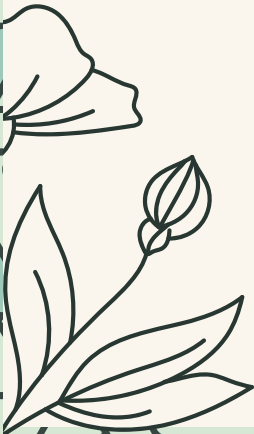
3. Patience/steadfast together

We're being told that 'Man is in a state of loss' unless he does these 4 things.

- Have Iman on the inside and do good deeds on the outside
- Come together to follow Islam: Why? Because you will be more committed when you have a responsibility to others.
- Imam Shafi said that this surah holds the essence of the Quran. It's easy to get bogged down in the minute details of Islam, instead focus on the core Quranic message:

- Belief
- Goods deeds
- Ummah

And make use of the best gift God has given us 'Asr', time.





## ***Reminder 1: Freedom***

The importance of freedom has arguably been underplayed in Islamic, and most other, religious thought. Prior to the modern world emphasising the importance of liberty, the value of the individual and the agency of human beings, collective life, duties and responsibilities were often heralded as more important virtues.

However, the autonomy of the human spirit cannot be denied in the Islamic tradition. The will of human beings – the free will to accept or reject, even faith – is the differentiating feature and the force that is seen to elevate man above the rest of God’s creation. As the Quran says: “...let there be no coercion in matters of faith...” (2:256). Thus, exercising that free will is, in its most basic sense, the right of human beings, a human right. Such rights have been hard won and need to be protected at all costs.

As the ways in which we view the world and our roles in it evolve and develop, human understanding has come to treasure and celebrate the human spirit. But we have also seen the devastating consequence of unfettered human action when at its worst – wars, genocides and awful brutalities in the name of nations, ideologies, religions, wealth and any number of other causes. Our freedoms are to be cherished, but they only have true value when we exercise them responsibly whilst bearing in mind the dignity and rights of other human beings.



## *99 Names of God: The Absolute Pure*



الْقُدُّوسُ  
مُجَلَّبٌ  
عَلَى  
جَلَالِهِ



### *Al Quddus The Absolute Pure*

Al Quddus is The One who is pure, spotless, without blemish or fault. It is the One who is far from, and untouched by any worldly imperfections, and their essence and attributes are of unimaginable purity and perfection, beyond human understanding. Al Quddus is derived from the root 'q-d-s' which means cleanliness, far from impurity and to be holy or sacred in classical Arabic. The word 'quds' means purity. The verb 'Qadasa' is from the same root and means 'movement of a bucket.' Why is it called Qadasa? Because from that bucket of water you will obtain purity and cleanliness. The ancient roots of the Arabic word Quddus, as well as the Hebrew word 'Kadosh' signify that which is 'set apart of different.' That which is 'other'. Thus, Quddus connotes One who is set apart, distinctly different and thus separate from all worldly imperfections, sins and faults. The one who's perfection and righteousness are so perfect that they cannot be grasped by humankind.



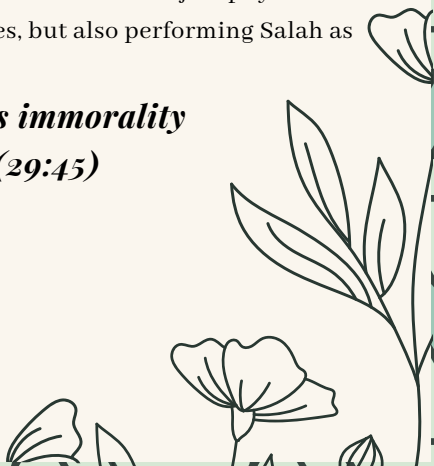
Thus, Al Quddus means holy and transcendent above everything. God is beyond our senses—our sight, our hearing, beyond our understanding of space and time and beyond any imperfection a human could imagine.

This contrasts with humankind, all of whom have imperfections and limited wisdom. God's power and glory is beyond which our minds can ever comprehend.

When we look to God as 'Al Quddus', we see him as free from the fault of Shirk, free from a spouse or child, he is free from death and free from committing dhulm (injustice) and lying. He is free from having a shabeeh (one who is similar to him) and is free from dhalaal (error) or nisyaaan (forgetfulness.)

Imam Ibn Ata'ilah mentions that the imperfections of this world exist so that we turn towards God who is free from any imperfections. Our responsibility as servants of Al Quddus is to turn away from that which is impure. This is not just physical purity such as cleansing ourselves, but also performing Salah as

***'Indeed Salah prohibits immorality and wrongdoing' (29:45)***



## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- The Quran mentions that free will is a human right which needs to be protected at all costs.
- Freedom is to be cherished and has true value when it is exercised responsibly whilst bearing in mind the dignity and rights of other human beings.



- Al Quddus translates to the one who is without any faults
- God is completely different from us in that God is free from any impurity and is ultimately beyond perfection.
- Just like God transcends our senses, time and understanding, God is also beyond any imperfection we may have.

# 9

## DAY NINE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Reminder 1: Fasting

Reminder 2: First Revelation

99 Names of God: Al Jabbar



## ***Reminder 1: Fasting***

***Abu Huraira related that Rasulullah said: Many people who fast get nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst, and many people who pray at night get nothing from it except wakefulness.***

***(Darimi)***

This is a stark reminder that there are no fixed guarantees of reward for fasting: our fast could bring us the greatest reward of all – God's pleasure on the day we meet Him, yet it could just as easily bring us no reward, only the physical suffering of deprivation. It is all down to the quality of our fast and how much we remember our Loving Creator during the fast.



## ***Reminder 2: First revelation***

*“Read! Read in the name of your Lord who created,  
Who created Humankind from a clot.  
Read: Your Lord is most Generous,—  
He who taught Humankind by the pen—  
Taught Humankind that which he knew not.”*

*(96:1-96:5)*

With these words to an illiterate man, God changed the course of human history. After this moment of revelation the veils were lifted from our eyes and the darkness of ignorance was replaced with the light of knowledge. A Prophet received his Prophethood and we, received a means of salvation. In the person of Muhammad (pbuh) we were given the blueprint for humanity, an example that has stood the test of time.

But what effect did this moment have on humanity? We have an account of the impact on the Prophet (pbuh) from the closest of his companions, from the best of his friends, from his wife Khadijah (ra). It was to her that Muhammad (pbuh) rushed back to, in his hour of need. There he lay in her arms huddled under a blanket, shaken with fear and doubt.

Muhammad (pbuh) had been in the cave of Hira when the voice of Angel Jibrael had relayed God's command.

“Read....”

We know that the Prophet (pbuh) questioned. Questioned how a man who knew not how to read could follow this command.

The Angel had then squeezed him until even his breath left him and commanded again.

“Read...”


Again, Muhammad (pbuh) pleaded that he could not read. Yet again he was squeezed until he felt that his ribs would break.

“Read...”

It was like a rebirth! A squeezing, a drawing of breath, a man reborn. Then the words came to him as relayed by Angel Jibrael, as they had to every Prophet and Messenger of God since the dawn of time. A command to bear witness that - There is no God but Allah!

Upon leaving the cave Angel Jibrael in his true form was visible from horizon to horizon, the expanse of the sky was filled with this vision. The Angel affirmed the true nature of Muhammad (pbuh). He was to be the last prophet of God.

But now Muhammad (pbuh) doubted his ears and eyes. He feared that there could not be a reasonable explanation for what he had experienced. At this moment when others may have doubted him, called his words the ravings of a madman. At this moment when even a Prophet doubted his own Prophethood, one voice rang clear and unwavering. There was no doubt in Khadijah. She had known this man better than anyone, as intimately as no other. There was no doubt, that Muhammad (pbuh) was the messenger of God.

The page features a decorative border with a repeating geometric pattern of interlocking shapes in shades of pink and beige. At the top, there are line-art illustrations of leaves and flowers. The main text is centered in a white rectangular area.

So, the first revelation was the first moment of certainty, the first moment when two unalienable truths entered the consciousness of the first Muslim.

***There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger***

Key lessons - There is no reason to fear doubt, doubt can open us up to a greater appreciation and understanding of the facts. However always seek advice from those that will guide you to the right path. Choose your friendships and relationships based on this and trust in good counsel.

Discussion points - Why do you think the Prophet doubted himself? When we doubt ourselves who do we confide in, who is that person for you? What allows us to believe in ourselves again? Is it the support of someone we trust who can remind us that we can be the person God wants us to be?

## 99 Names of God: *The Compeller*



الْجَبَّارُ



### *Al Jabbar* ***The Compeller, The Restorer, The Repairer***

Al Jabbar comes from the root 'j-b-r' which has the Arabic connotations of 'restoring something to a good state,' 'to confer a benefit,' to be 'compelling and irresistible' and to be a 'supreme high above all creation.' 'Nakhlatun Jabbaarah' is used to describe a tall date palm tree that is very strong and gives a lot of fruit. Furthermore, when something is incomplete and you complete it, the act is called 'jabr.' When there is a deficiency and you make up for it, it is also called 'jabr.' The root is also shared by the word 'algebra' or 'aljabar', as you 'fix' the equation. The word 'jabeerah' is used for a splint- to help fix broken bones.

Al Jabbar is The One who irresistibly restores all of creation to soundness and sufficiency,



The One who compels everything to divine will- yet is never compelled and the One who repairs, reforms and completes.

Similarly to the majority of the 99 Names of God, 'Al Jabbar' is of an intensified form so it not only means 'one who restores' but the 'One who restores completely' or 'irresistible restoration'.

It connotes the One who is the Ultimate Restorer of the soundness, wholeness, and righteousness of all things. For a human being to claim such power would be false and arrogant, but for God it is simply the truth.

The root 'jabr' also shares a root with words that mean 'to pressurise, to compel or to force someone to do something'... to 'tyrannise someone and be tyrannical.' For example the Quran uses the root in surah 26:130 'And when you strike, you strike as tyrants.' When jabbar is used for people, it is a negative sense as they have no right to be tyrannical and oppress others. They use their oppressive nature to 'fix things.' When God fixes things it is positive. Jabr does not befit human beings- they are supposed to be servants.

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- There are no fixed guarantees of reward for our fasts.
- Whether we are rewarded or not depends on whether we remain steadfast and God conscious throughout Ramadan.



- When the Prophet received his first revelation, God blessed us with knowledge of how we are able to be forgiven and reach salvation.
- When the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received revelation, he went to his wife Khadijah for consolation as he was afraid and shaking.
- The Prophet also witnessed Angel Jibrael in his true form and because of this believed that people would say he was mad. However, his wife Khadijah knew undoubtedly that her husband was the messenger of God.



- God is seen as Al Jabbar which means he is the repairer.
- God is able to restore His creation and is able to compel them to do as he wills without aid.
- God is able to fix all things completely due to not only being all knowing, but also all powerful.

# 10

DAY TEN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Surah Baqarah (2:183): Tafsir

Reminder 1: Community

Reminder 2: Tawakkul



## *Surah Baqarah*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

*O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous –*

(2:183)

1. What three things do you learn about fasting from this first ayah?

- It is obligatory - unless there is another reason (see below)
- It was prescribed for people before us
- The purpose is to attain taqwa

Why are the “people who came before” mentioned in this ayah?

God knows, but perhaps:

- There is some psychological benefit
- It is reminding us that this message is not new, something invented by our Prophet (pbuh)
- All these practices are ancient wisdoms - prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage



Where have you seen this word taqwa in the Quran? What does it mean?

It is mentioned repeatedly in the Quran, but most famously:

- In the very beginning:

“This is a book in which there is no doubt, a guidance for the Muttaqin (the God-conscious)”

(2:2)

- In a famous ayah about the racial and gender equality:

“O humankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you (Atqaakum). Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.”

(49:13)



## ***Reminder 1: Community during the month of Ramadan***

Zayd ibn Khalid Juhni related that the Prophet (pbuh) said: He who provides for the breaking of the siyam of another person earns the same merit as the one who was observing siyam without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter.

(Tirmidhi)

Ramadan is a social month, there is a sense of community like no other. Sadly this Ramadan has been challenging in that we are all asked to stay safe and stay home in order that we might all overcome the current global pandemic. Muslims all around the world are observing Ramadan in a type of itikaf. Despite our deep meaning to be with those we love, our neighbours and wider community, we all have a duty that is rooted in our theology to remain home unless we need to for giving, shopping or medical supplies.

As is our custom we remember all the unfortunate poor people in other parts of the world who might not afford anymore than a piece of bread or one date, after which they are forced to continue fasting.

We should also make an effort to reach out to our friends and neighbours, regardless of their religion, to ensure they are safe and well. Where possible, we must do this without leaving our homes. In traditional societies, the whole community – Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu, would all look forward to Ramadan, because Muslims used to share iftar with their neighbourhood, because as muslims we must be generous.

All children from the community would grow up with fond memories of the joys of Ramadan. With God's abundant blessings we can remember this Ramadan as one in which we helped to eradicate a global virus.

## ***Reminder 2: Tawakkul***

***'...Believers always put their trust in God'***

*Ibrahim (14:11)*

Tawakkul is the Islamic concept of complete reliance on God, or 'trusting in God's plan,' and is often referred to as 'God consciousness'.


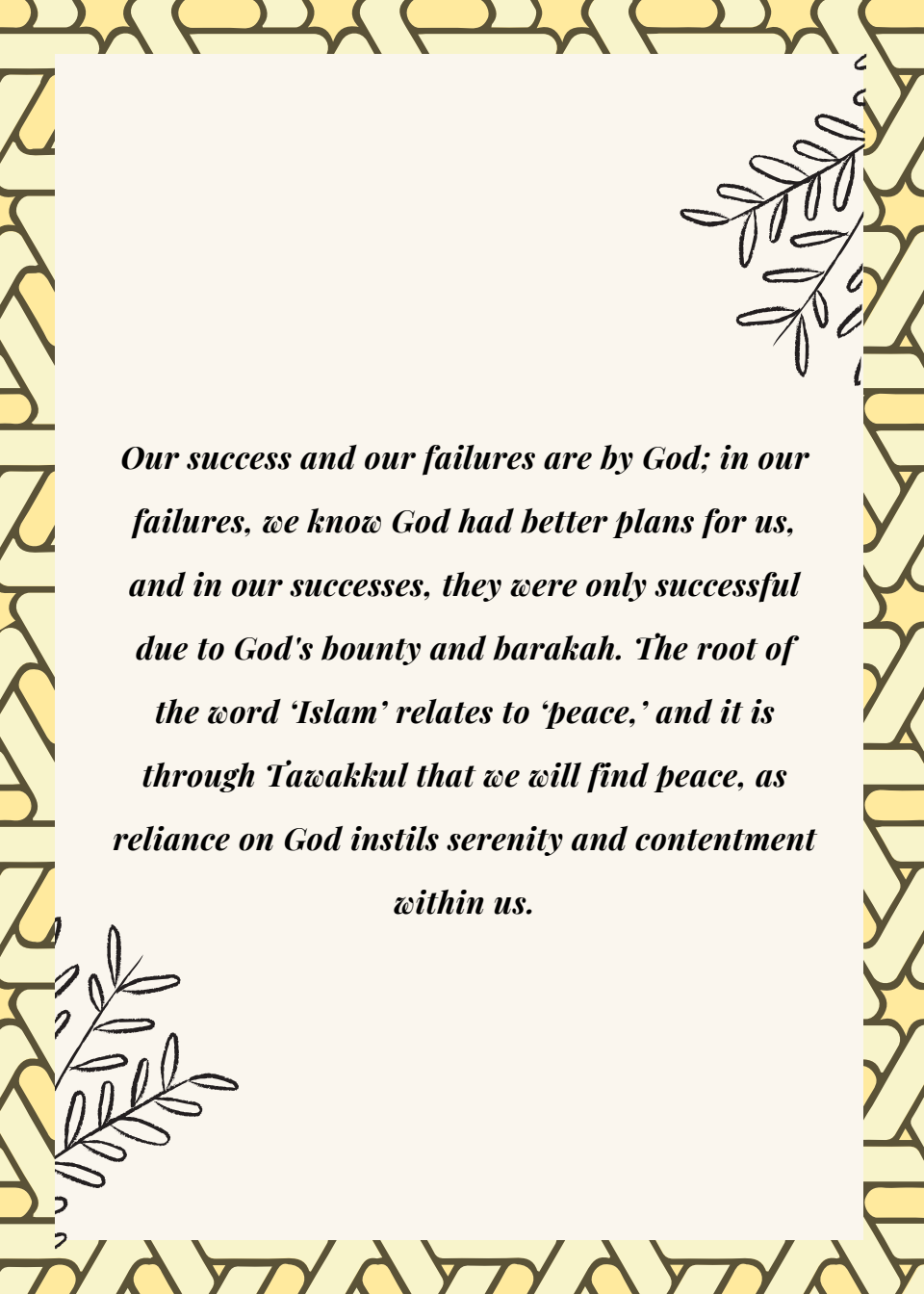
The root of tawakkul in classical Arabic is 'w-k-l,' and other words derived from this root include 'wakeel'- 'the person who we trust' and 'mutawakkil'- the person who trusts someone. 'Wakalat' also stems from this root, and translates to 'to entrust,' 'charge' or 'authorise.' Furthermore, God is 'al-Wakeel'- the 'disposer of affairs,' the One who is entrusted, relied upon, depended upon and sufficient to take care of all matters. Tawakkul is thus putting trust in God, whilst also implementing the means that have been permitted.

Scholars have differentiated between 'tawakkul' and 'tawaakul.' Tawaakul comprises elements of laziness, inability and resignation'. It encompasses the concept of a miracle 'dropping from the sky', and the expectation of God to send down provisions whilst one does nothing themselves. This contradicts every aspect of the Prophet's (pbuh) life and his jihad; for example, when migrating to Medina the Prophet (pbuh) took all precautions that were possible; he planned the journey secretly, telling Ali (ra) to sleep in his bed and arranged for a faithful guide to lead them to Medina. After he had done what was humanly possible, he had trust in God that he would be delivered safely.


It was reported that a Bedouin who had confused 'tawakkul' for 'tawaakul' came to the Prophet and asked him about the matter. He asked, 'Should I tie my camel and rely upon God, or should I leave her untied and rely upon God?' and the Messenger (pbuh) replied, 'tie her and then rely on God.'

Although the authenticity of this Hadith is questioned, the essence of its meaning is in line with the Sunnah and Quran; that you endeavour and strive to overcome difficulties and hardship, whilst simultaneously taking God as your support, as the fundamental influencing force. Umar ibn al-Khattab heard the messenger of God saying, 'If you trusted God with due tawakkul then God would provide you sustenance as God provides for the birds; they go out in the morning with empty stomachs and come back in the evening with full stomachs.' A bird sitting in its nest praising God will not have his stomach filled. The bird has to go out, work hard and find his food. One who goes out and expends effort, whilst knowing that God provides will obtain what they desires.

Tawakkul, if anything, is a comfort to believers. It is hard to reason with life, and easy to question why things happen especially when they have a negative consequence. Many then fall into the trap of feeling hopeless and question the meaning of their obstacles. However, with trust in God we can draw comfort from the knowledge that our responsibility is limited. If we know that we can rely on God, we are safe in the knowledge that God knows what we are going through, that we will be able to bear it and that he has better plans for us. Tawakkul allows us to maintain hope and modesty.



*Our success and our failures are by God; in our failures, we know God had better plans for us, and in our successes, they were only successful due to God's bounty and barakah. The root of the word 'Islam' relates to 'peace,' and it is through Tawakkul that we will find peace, as reliance on God instils serenity and contentment within us.*



## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Ramadan is the perfect opportunity to reach out to our neighbours and community by phone/online to ensure they are healthy and safe.
- It is also mentioned that if we break the fast with 10 others, we gain the reward for all ten fasts together! This is a unique opportunity to video call our friends and family and break fast together.
- Especially in today's climate, looking after our community will aid people to realise what Ramadan actually is and share fond memories of this sacred month.



- Tawakkul can be translated to be reliant and trusting God.
- God can be relied upon at all times. Having trust in God does not mean we should expect God to send us provisions and stand by and do nothing. Instead, we must also put in effort whilst also placing trust in God to allow the best thing for us to happen.

# 11

## DAY ELEVEN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Surah Al Fil: Tafsir  
99 Names of God: Al Khaliq  
Reminder: Generosity



## *Surah Al Fil*

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ

*Have you not considered, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?*

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ

*Did He not make their plan into misguidance?*

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

*And He sent against them birds in flocks,*

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ

*Striking them with stones of hard clay,*

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

*And He made them like eaten straw.*

## *Surah Al Fil Tafsir*

This surah refers to an incident that took place in the same year that the Prophet (pbuh) was born. Yemen was an economic and political power house but after a flood, it declined in importance.

Yemen was conquered by an Abyssinian general named Abrahah. His aim was to revive the economic fortunes of Yemen but he realised that the religious hold of the Ka'bah had to be changed.

So, he built a great church/temple in San'a, but it made no difference.

The largest army ever seen in Arabia, perhaps up to 60,000 soldiers, containing an elephant, (or perhaps many elephants and one large elephant), marched towards Makkah to destroy the Ka'bah.

### Ayah 1

Perhaps this ayah is addressing the Prophet (pbuh) and all the other people who did not physically see the event as it was so widely known and spoken about.

The entire city had to be evacuated.

The army was bigger than the population of Makkah.

It was such a significant event that the calendar of the Arabs was based on it. People remembered it as the Year of the Elephant.

This ayah does not ask if you have seen “what” happened, but “how”. Kayfa (how) is used for amazement. How could it be that a massive army of strong elephants come to you and you have no army to defend your city - yet they are destroyed?

### Ayah 2

The word “Kayd” is used to refer to a secret plot. What was secret was the motive of the Abyssinians- they wanted to take control of the trade routes that led from south Arabia to Syria and Egypt.

### Ayahs 3 - 5.

These ayahs contain a great deal of vivid imagery:

Ayah 3 conveys the image of lots and lots of birds.

It is said that the sky was completely covered.

Ayah 4 (like ayah 3) is in the present tense, which conveys the sense that the stones kept coming down continuously like rain.

It is said each bird had 3 stones, two in its claws and 1 in its beak.

Ibn Abbas said that when the stones would fall on anyone, they caused swelling, burns and infected the skin.

Ma’kool is that which is eaten. That’s how they were transformed; as if grinded and chewed. The greatest army that Arabia had ever seen, with the largest animal that anyone had ever seen, was literally wiped out by birds and stones.



### *Lessons:*

1. God is giving a reminder to His Messenger that God is on his side; Your Master will give you help through whatever means it takes. The same way your Master protected the Ka'bah when it had no other human being to defend it.
2. It is a reminder to those around Muslims that they should remember God's favour upon them, how He preserved Makkah and be grateful to Him for that.
3. This surah is also a lesson for every rebellious tyrant, oppressor and dictator who lives in any civilization at any time. This incident is also a proof of the honour of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The Arabs thought God had protected the Ka'bah for them. But God had protected this house for His beloved final Messenger- so he could revive the legacy of Ibrahim (as) for humankind, and unite people to the worship of God alone.

## *99 Names of God: The Creator*



جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ  
الْخَالِقِ



### *Al Khaliq The Creator*

Al Khaliq stems from the classical Arabic root 'kh-l-q- which has the following connotations; to 'proportion one thing according to another,' to 'create something based on a pattern or a model which one has devised or to bring a thing into existence from non-existence.'

Thus, Al Khaliq is the One who determines and creates according to the proper measure and proportion of each thing, and the One who plans and determines how, when and where to create. He is the One whose works are perfectly suited and creates something from nothing, from non-existence into a state of existence. He has the power to change things back and forth between the states of existing and non-existing.

***'God is the Creator of all things and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs. To God belongs the keys of the heavens and the Earth. And they who disbelieve in the verses of God- it is those who are the losers.'* Quran (39:62/63)**



God has created whatever the eyes can see, perfecting them by His bounties and goodness, and bringing them into existence according to His will, desire and wisdom. He creates things with the knowledge of what will happen to them.

Humans cannot create. They manipulate or reassemble eg houses, furniture, cars etc but the raw materials; the wood, stones and metal has been provided for by God. No human can create this on their own. God calls himself 'Ahsan-ul-Khaliqueen' meaning 'The Best of Creators.' This is a metaphor however, as there are no other creators besides Him.

## ***Reminder 1: Generosity***

*Narrated by Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet was the most generous amongst the people, and he used to be more so in the month of Ramadan when Angel Jibraeel visited him, and Angel Jibraeel used to meet him on every night of Ramadan until the end of the month. The Prophet used to recite the Holy Quran to Angel Jibraeel, and when Angel Jibraeel met him, he used to be more generous than a fast wind (which causes rain and welfare).*

(Sahih Bukhari)

Let us celebrate the joy of the Quran's revelation in Ramadan with generosity greater than the wind which brings heavy rain to a scorched desert.

Let us shower with love and compassion the poor and needy, the desperate, the displaced, the children who have lost their parents through war, disease and famine, those who cry themselves to sleep at night, the folk with only rags to preserve their modesty, those who are so poor they are forced into slavery and oppression. Let's remember those who suffer from the current global pandemic that is Covid 19. Let us pray for the martyrdom of those who have passed and healing for those who continue to suffer.

Let us moisten our tongues with ardent prayers to Him who has the true power to alleviate their suffering and pray for them with tears of longing from the depths of our hearts.

Oh God, flood humankind with your mercy, your compassion, bring us ease out of hardship, happiness out of sorrow. O God, answer the prayers of the oppressed and liberate them from cruelty. Ameen.



***“Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, in secret and in public have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.”***

***(Quran, 2:274)***





## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- We should follow the Prophet's (pbuh) continuous example of generosity and should try and support those who are vulnerable, respect the elderly, the orphans and those in need.
- We can also help through prayer as God truly hears all our prayers.



- God is also known as Al Khaliq which means God is the best of planners and creators.
- God controls what comes into and out of existence and was of course, the creator of all humankind.
- The Earth and heavens were also moulded by God as well as all in-between. Humans could never replicate this.

# 12

## DAY TWELVE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Reminder 1: Bettering ourselves

Reminder 2: Eco-Islam

99 Names of God: Al Wahhab

## ***Reminder 1: Bettering ourselves***

**Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (pbuh) said: If people do not avoid false talk (i.e. lying) and false conduct during siyam, then God does not care if they abstain from food and drink.**

(Bukhari, Muslim)



We must always keep in mind that our fast is about creating change, about becoming a better person. If we were bad and offensive before fasting, and during fasting, we remain just as nasty and continue with our wrongdoings, then God will not hold any regard for such a fast – we will gain nothing from it except hunger and thirst and tiredness.

## ***Reminder 2: Eco Islam***

*And it is He [God] who set you as vicegerents on Earth..."*

*(Quran, 6:165)*

If it's suggested that when you are given something as a loan, the lender has entrusted you with its care and safeguarding, you'd agree, wouldn't you? Regardless of the length of time of the loan, you are responsible for that item for the entire duration of your temporary possession of it. The more important the item, the more vital it is that the responsibility is taken seriously.

The above-mentioned verse from the Quran quite nicely encapsulates this core value in terms of what is the most important loan given to humanity: Earth. Muslims believe that God created the heavens and the earth, and that humankind has been appointed as God's deputies to look after the earth. This is, of course, both an incredible blessing and a hefty responsibility. Unfortunately, we tend to take gross advantage of the former and conveniently forget about the latter.

Responsibility, in all its shapes and forms, is given great emphasis in Islam. Being a Muslim entails using God-given resources in a careful and conscientious manner, and repairing, to the best of our ability, any damage we cause. We should take the current crisis as a reminder of the importance of reconnecting our relationships with ourselves, each other and the natural world.

The Quran hints at the careful balance that holds our planet and atmosphere together, and our responsibility to respect this balance:

“And the sky He has raised high, and He has set up the Balance, that you may not exceed (due) balance.” (Quran, 55:7-8).

So Islam established being ‘green’ as a core principle more than 1400 years ago.



## *99 Names of God: The Liberal Bestower*



اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ جَادًا  
الْوَهَّابُ



### *Al Wahhab The Liberal Bestower*

*'Lord! Do not let our hearts deviate after having guided us, but grant us mercy from your own presence, for You are the Granter of bounties without measure'*

*Qur'an (3:8)*

Al Wahhab is the One who continually bestows gifts and blessings upon all creation and The One who gives with no expectation of any return. The root 'w-h-b' has the classical Arabic connotations of 'to give for no compensation,' 'to donate or bestow,' 'to give freely and liberally' or to 'grant or endow.' Al Wahhab is derived from the proper noun 'hibah', the verb of which 'Yahib' means to 'make someone else the owner of what the giver (the first party) rightfully owns without asking the second party for any compensation in return.' It is the gift which is free from any recompense or gain for the giver. If someone gives gifts quite often, they earn the titles 'jawad' or 'wahhab'- the generous one and the oft-giving respectively.

God is described as Al Wahhab- the Most generous and the Most Giving. He is also described as 'Al Wahib'- 'the giver', whereas al-Wahhab means 'granter of many gifts.' Al Wahhab is The One who has no selfish end; He grants without being asked. He is the gift giver and He does not give painstakingly, nor does He seek a benefit or advantage for Himself by doing so. He initiates giving and ever tries to get closer to His servants and excludes no one from His bounty. He showers one with blessings without having reason to do so.

It is said that when the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to wake up during the night, he would supplicate thus: "Lord! There is no God but You! Glory to You! Lord! I seek Your forgiveness for my sins, and I plead to You, by Your mercy, O Lord, to increase my share of knowledge, not to permit my heart to deviate after having guided it, and to grant me, from You, a mercy, for surely You are Al Wahhab..."

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- It must be noted that fasting is not just about abstaining from food and drink, but also from things like telling lies, backbiting and false conduct.
- After all, Ramadan is about self-improvement and bettering ourselves.
- If we fast from food but remain bad in character, it is as if the fast did not occur.



- The Earth was given as a trust from God to His creation. Therefore we have a responsibility to protect and look after it.
- The Quran mentions balance as imperative. We must respect this balance and protect the environment and do our duty.



- God is Al Wahhab meaning He is the Ultimate Giver of gifts.
- God undoubtedly blesses us all with gifts daily and asks for nothing in return.
- God grants what is being asked for without any selfish gain or benefit.



# 13

## DAY THIRTEEN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Surah Ma'un: Tafsir  
Reminder 1: Ihsan  
Reminder 2: Diversity

## *Surah Al Ma'un (The small kindness)*

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ

*Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense?*

Al Fatiha - Maaliki Yawm Deen - Master of the Day of Judgement

So Deen means

- Religion, way of life
- Belief in the Day of Judgement, the afterlife, etc

Some people deny Islam. But some people deny the Day of Judgement altogether.

The two meanings are connected. The Day of Judgement is connected to your Deen, your way of life. You will be “judged” according to how you lived your life.

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ

*For that is the one who drives away the orphan*

وَلَا يَحْضُرُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ

*And does not encourage the feeding of the poor.*

In Ayah 2 and 3, we are given examples of things those who deny the recompense do:

- They do repulse the orphan, i.e., push away the weak and marginalised in society.
  - They do not encourage others to do good deeds, so they are not only stingy with their own money, but encourage stinginess in others.
- Verse 3 also means that they do not encourage others to do what is an obligation. Feeding the poor is not only a charitable act in Islam, it is in fact a right of the poor upon the rich.

“And in their wealth there is a rightful share for him who would ask and for the destitute”

(51:19)

Vocab :

Al Yateem - orphan

Al Miskeen - poor

Many philosophers have come away with the idea that if God does not exist, then morality is just a human convention, that is to say, morality is wholly subjective and non-binding. Morality is only what society says it is at the time.

In his book *Morality after Auschwitz*, Peter Haas asks how an entire society could have willingly participated in a state-sponsored program of mass torture and genocide for over a decade without any serious opposition.

If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: “If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted.”

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ

*So woe to those who pray*

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

*[But] who are heedless of their prayer -*

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

*Those who make show [of their deeds]*

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

*And withhold [simple] assistance.*

Ayah 4, 5 and 6- 'woe to those who pray'

Notwithstanding the discussion we have had already, this part of the surah seems to be switching focus away from those who "deny the religion" to those who pray.

Are those of us who are "religious" really any better than those who are "not religious"?

A Hadith states the prayer of the hypocrite is when he sit watching the sun, waiting for the last moment, then stands, pecking out four rakat, in which he remembers God but little.

The hypocrite does not perform prayer out of worship but only to increase their reputation.

As opposed to those who are ...

- Constant in their prayers (70:23)
- Mindful of their prayers (70:34)

The Companions were relieved that the ayah said woe to those who are heedless of (*an*) their prayers and not in (*fee*) their prayers. Because it can be the case that sometimes you can forget something during the prayer - for that we pray the sajdah (*sahw*) at the end. But to be heedless of the prayers is more general; it is to neglect them altogether.

- To ignore the prayer and its timings.
- To take the prayer as a burden.
- Only pray when in a group.
- Only go through the motions.
- Don't pay heed to the Adhan.

"Say, That which God has is better than any amusement or merchandise! And God is the Best of providers." (62:11)

What has prayer got to do with what was at the start about orphans and feeding the poor?

"Indeed the salah protects against evil and shameful acts"  
(29:45)

The salah is the most important thing that can help you lead the best life.

It is not only your connection to God, it is for your benefit in this world and the next.

Your prayer should result in good behaviour towards others.

The hypocrites are ones who only come to the prayer lazily and only spend reluctantly (9:54).

And praying salah only when you are being watched is like giving in charity only so that others can see it.

### The main lessons of this surah

One big lesson for us is that you cannot be a good Muslim while not also being a good person, helping others in need.

Prayer is very important, but it should also have the effect of improving our character.

There are some types of people who make a big show of their religious devotions, or there are those who make a big show of their charitable donations, but when they are asked for something small, maybe in private, maybe in their day to day life, maybe from a neighbour, they make excuses.

This is the real test of one's belief in the Hereafter.

Vocab:

Al Ma'un can mean ...

- utensils or tools that people would share and lend to one another, such as a pickax, a pot, a bucket, etc
- zakat
- food and drink for guests
- something small so that you wouldn't really miss it

## ***Reminder 1: Ihsan***

Reported by Umar ibn al-Khattab. "A man said to Muhammad 'Oh Muhammad tell me about Islam,' and the Prophet said, 'Islam is to testify there is no God but Allah, to establish prayer, to give charity, to fast in Ramadan, to perform pilgrimage.'

The man said then, 'Tell me about faith' and the Prophet said, 'Faith is to believe in God, the angels, His book, His messengers and the last day.' The man then asked, 'What is excellence.' The Prophet replied, 'Excellence is to worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you.'

(Muslim).

The man in the hadith was Angel Jibrael. In essence, the hadith is describing how our way of life, in Islam is composed of three parts; Islam, Iman and Ihsan- the three parts described above. Islam is the outward submission to the will of God; Iman is faith and Ihsaan is spiritual excellence.

Throughout history, humans have had an innate, internal drive to seek purpose in life and live for something greater than just ourselves. In Islam, we aim to grow closer to our Creator, to be excellent worshippers and moral leaders. Ihsaan is the most forgotten teaching of Islam; encompassing the idea that you 'worship God as if you see Him' as the Prophet (pbuh) stated above. This is the highest level of human spiritual possibility; the realisation that you are an individual in the very presence of the Divine, and due to this awareness, your actions are not checked by outward social mechanisms.

Instead, there is an internal mechanism that prevents you from doing that which is bad, and this is the awareness and shame, that God can see and hear all you do.

Ihsaan shares the same classical Arabic root as the word 'husn' which can be translated as 'beauty' and 'perfection', and also the word 'tahseen' translating to 'beautification' and 'hasan' meaning 'handsome' or 'beautiful.' Thus, the meaning of Ihsaan actually goes beyond excellence, and literally means to 'make beautiful.' It means to do a thing 'well', to aim at beauty and perfection, and, most importantly to do things from an inner compulsion or urge. In effect; it should be a work of love and not just duty.

As humans, we recognise beauty; be it in nature, adornments, people and architecture. We naturally strive to contribute to beauty in the world, and this can only occur with spiritual development. Ihsaan is seen throughout the ancient Muslim world; where the idea of building a mosque not only focuses on the sanctity and the serenity of having a place of worship, but also a place which is something beautiful, which makes you feel in awe- even in its simplicity.

This is Ihsaan, the highest state of Islam. It implies deep attachment and profound love for the Divine, genuine faithfulness and sacrifice which transforms a Muslim into a Muhsin. A Muhsin is an individual who 'beautifies, improves or enriches one's worship or relationship with God, or one's actions and conduct towards others.'



## Reminder 2: Diversity

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ  
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

***O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).***

***( Quran 49:13 )***

This striking verse reminds humankind of the beauty of diversity. Imagine how boring it would be if we were all of the same language, colour, religion, appearance, wore the same clothes and had the same customs, likes and dislikes. The reality is that all the diversity in the world makes it such a lively and interesting place and all people are special. And we are being reminded that we are all one family: if you go back far enough, we all share the same ancestors.

In the presence of God, the most noble are those who excel in their character, their piety, their carefulness in conduct, based on a consciousness of God – i.e. their taqwa. The consciousness of God should result in a carefulness of mind and conduct – a wariness of doing anything to displease our loving Creator.

‘Umar ibn Al Khattab (ra) once asked Ubayy bin Ka’ab (ra) the definition of taqwa. In reply Ubayy asked, “Have you ever had to cross a thorny path?” ‘Umar replied in the affirmative to which Ubayy responded, “So how do you do it?”

‘Umar said that he would carefully walk through after first having collected all loose and flowing clothing in his hands so nothing gets caught in the thorns to injure him. Ubayy explained,

“This is the definition of taqwa - to protect oneself from sin through life’s dangerous journey so that one can successfully complete the journey unscathed by sin.”

Although you cannot forbid things for others if they are halal, true piety is about being extra careful with yourself, to the point of even restricting yourself from things which may be lawful, because they might lead to sin.

***Atiyah As-Sa'di said the Prophet (pbuh) said, "The servant (of God) will not acquire the status of those with taqwa until they abandon what is harmless out of fear of falling into that which is harmful."***

***(Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)***



## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Islam is composed of three main factors which are Islam, Iman and Ihsaan.
- Islam means to submit fully to God and to realise the importance of the 5 pillars of Islam.
- Iman is having faith in not only the unseen, but also in the words of the Quran and the Prophet.
- Ihsaan is about reaching excellence spiritually and trying our very best.
- Ihsaan is often forgotten but is very important. We must aim to do things well. Therefore, in all our actions we should strive to do our best.



- God has deliberately created us in different forms whether this be our gender, race, religion or creed. This makes the world special and allows us to learn from each other.
- God judges people from what is in their hearts and how their awareness of God affects their character.
- Our differences should not divide us but should unite us as one human race.

# 14

## DAY FOURTEEN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful*



Surah At Takathur: Tafsir  
Reminder: Benefits of Suhoor  
99 Names of God: Al Baasit

## *Surah At Takathur*

أَلْهَنكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ

*Competition in [worldly] increase diverts you*

حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

*Until you visit the graveyards.*

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

*No! You are going to know.*

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

*Then no! You are going to know.*

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

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

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ

*You will surely see the Hellfire.*

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ

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

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

*Then you will surely be asked that Day about  
pleasure.*

## *Surah At Takathur Tafsir*

Ayah 1 What kinds of things do we compete with each other for?

It could be wealth, a bigger car or house, more for the children, influence, power, beauty, exam results or a spouse ..... Takathur implies both competing and boasting.

Also,

- Gathering wealth without right
- Withholding it from those to whom it rightfully belongs

It does not say in the surah what we are being distracted from. It is left for you to fill in the blanks. We may be distracted from:

- Remembrance of God
- Remembrance of the Hereafter
- Preparing for the Hereafter
- Reading and studying the Quran
- Looking into yourself, what is your purpose in life
- Salah
- Zakat and Sadaqah

Rivalry to increase in worldly gains distracts people from God and the remembrance of the Hereafter. What else distracts you?

Social media, mobile phones, TV, sports, gaming?

The Quran says,

“Let not the life of this world delude you” (31:33)

We must beware of (Economic) materialism, also called acquisitiveness where acquiring material possessions functions as a central life goal and we think that possessions can provide happiness.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “If the son of Adam had a valley of gold, he would desire another like it ...” (Fath al Bari 11:258)

In the world, there is a growing trend of increasing materialism in reaction to discontent.

Spirituality teaches us to aspire for a better life, a more illumined life. Whereas materialism teaches us to desire more material goods and material wealth.

Spirituality enables peace of mind. Materialism, even with all the wealth in the world can never buy peace.

Ayah 2 - Why does it say “visit” your graves?

Visit implies that it is a temporary stay. We will not be staying in our graves forever.



Ayah 3-4 - Why is there repetition in the ayah?

Scholars have mentioned different reasons for this:

- To emphasise that people cannot evade the outcome of their actions.
- The first is when you go to your grave, the second is when you come out of the grave.
- First is addressed to the wider community and second to believers.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib said : “People are asleep and when they die they wake up”.

“*Kalla*” can mean “Nay” or “Indeed”

Ayah 5-7 - The knowledge of certainty (ayah 5) and the eye of certainty (ayah 7).

*Yaqeen* is more than just knowledge, it is absolute conviction.

In fact scholars have said that there are 3 levels of certainty:

1 Ilm al Yaqeen - Certainty of mind (or knowledge)- obtained by (inductive) reasoning e.g., smoke signifies fire, wet grass means it rained, we use this kind of knowledge and reasoning every single day.

2 Ayn al Yaqeen - Certainty of sight e.g., you see the fire.

3 Haq al Yaqeen - Certainty of truth, obtained by experiencing something directly e.g., you are burned by the fire.

The disbelievers wanted Ayn al Yaqeen. They wanted to see the Hereafter. But we are human beings who can use our God given intellect and reasoning.

Looking around us at the world gives us proof of God's existence. In addition this comes from:

- Reading the Quran
- Studying the life of the Prophet (pbuh)
- Reflecting on nature

What is the connection between the first ayah and the last ayah? An Naeem translates as comforts, but also blessings. So, the things that we compete for are not bad in themselves, they are blessings from God. We often ask for these things in our prayers.

There is nothing wrong with trying to do your best in your exams and get the best grades and do the best you can at school, at university, at work, etc.

The Prophet (pbuh) said we should strive for excellence in everything we do, even sharpening the blade before slaughtering an animal for eating (so that it is quick and the animal suffers the least amount of pain)

So, these things are not in themselves a distraction. They are only a distraction if we indulge in them to an extreme, to the exclusion of our purpose in life. We should ask ourselves why we want to achieve material success in life? Is it because it gives us personal pride and satisfaction? Or is it because we intend to do something with that success? What are your intentions?

- To make the world a better place•
- To stay home and stay safe amid the current pandemic
- To help people
- To spread peace

Set your intentions correctly and you won't be disappointed no matter what happens. Because maybe God wants you to achieve your intentions in another way from the way you thought.

What blessings will you be questioned about? In addition this ayah is telling us that people will be questioned about what they have done with the blessings that God bestowed upon them while on earth.

E.g.,

- Your health
- Your knowledge
- Your talents
- Your money
- Your education
- Your skills

Islam is also a blessing.

We will be asked about what we did with it.

## ***Reminder 1: Suhoor***

'Amr b. al-'As reported God's Messenger (pbuh) as saying: The difference between our fasting and that of the people of the Book is eating shortly before dawn. (Muslim)

Sahl b. Sa'd (ra) reported God's Messenger (pbuh) as saying: The people will continue to prosper as long as they hasten the breaking of the fast. (Muslim)

The Prophet (pbuh) would sometimes fast for days continuously without eating but forbade his companions from doing the same: "Who among you is like me? I spend the night (in a state) in which my Lord feeds me and provides me drink." (Muslim)

Similarly, he emphasised the importance of being prompt in eating and drinking just before and after the fast, because extending the fast beyond the prescribed limits may cause harm to the body, and this is not the purpose of fasting.

What distinguishes the followers of Muhammad (pbuh) is that they see piety as being strict in adhering to the teachings, not in going beyond them.



***Anas related that Rasulullah said:  
“Take the Suhoor meal, for there  
is blessing in it.”***

***(Bukhari, Muslim)***



## 99 Names of God: *The Expander*



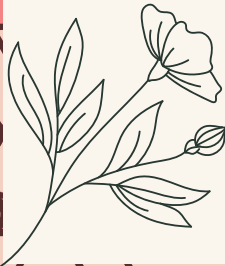
### *Al Baasit* *The Expander*

Al-Baasit stems from the root 'b-s-t' which has classical Arabic connotations of 'to expand or enlarge,' 'to grant in abundance,' 'to spread and make spacious' and to 'extend a hand.' The extended hand can be as a gesture of good will (eg in order to shake hands with someone else) or to harm someone else (eg inflicting physical harm or damaging property etc)... for example Cain, the son of Adam said to his brother 'if you stretch forth your hand to me, slay me ' (5:28)

It also means to please. According to tradition, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said about his daughter Fatima that 'she is part of me: whatever pleases her pleases me and whatever displeases her displeases me too.' Thus, it literally means to relax all the facial muscles in order to express pleasure and happiness, elation or excitement.

Furthermore, 'Inbisat' the noun means 'abandoning modesty', 'Al baseeta' is the 'outstretched tract of land' and 'bast' is 'expansion or propagation.'

Al Baasit is therefore the One who makes ample and plentiful all that is needed. the One who makes the way wide open and stretches out a helping hand to mankind. It connotes a powerful and majestic sense of infusing something with a gift that will grow and flourish in great abundance; thus He is the One who infuses the soul into the body and who has filled the heart with spiritual abundance, the One who's glory and abundance fill and expand the heart. Al Baasit is the One who pleases the souls by making them happy and delighted. He plants the seeds of life in bodies to signal the beginning of life therein. Al Baasit doesn't exist in the text of the Holy Quran yet its derivatives do.



## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- The Prophet (pbuh) emphasised the importance of eating just before and after the fast because elongating the fast could cause harm to the body. This also shows how God did not intend hardship on us.
- We should listen to rules but not go beyond them.



- God is Al Baasit which means He is the Releaser or Unfolder.
- God is able to help mankind by providing what is necessary and gifts us daily.
- God also is the beginner of our lives and blows into us our souls.

