



# Ramadan Study Circle

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

**WEEK 4**





ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF BRITAIN  
PRESENTS

*A 30-day study circle  
programme*

This pack consists of:

- A series of reminders
- Tafsir on short surahs 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 a week of Ramadan. 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*
- Encouraging social action*
- Developing and enhancing 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*

*isb.org.uk*

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# 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 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	Free*	<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 Meet is a different service from Google Hangouts (above). *Hangouts Meet will be made free by Google from 'early May' until 30/09, meaning that anyone with a Google account will be able to host and schedule meetings.
Zoom	Free*	<a href="https://zoom.us/">https://zoom.us/</a>	*The free versions supports group calls up to 40 mins only.

# 22

## DAY TWENTY TWO

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Surah Baqarah Ayah 185: Tafsir  
Reminder 1: Spirituality and empathy  
Reminder 2: Treaty of Hdaybiyah

## Surah Baqarah Ayah 185 Tafsir

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ  
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ  
أُخْرَىٰ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ  
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



“The month of Ramadan [is that] in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance for people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So, whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let them fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. God intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify God for that [to] which God has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful.”

Quran (2:185)



What is significant about the order of the first two sentences in this verse?

- Ramadan is associated with the Quran first before the text makes mention of fasting.
- This makes it a special time for us to do our utmost in listening, reciting, studying, reflecting and memorising the Quran.
- The Prophet used to revise the Quran with Angel Jibrail every year in the month of Ramadan - and in the last year of his life they recited twice.

"God intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship"

How can we see this in practice in our religion?

A surface-level meaning is that God intends for us ease in our fasting. However, it is also a characteristic of Islam's general approach to difficult situations. Whatever we are asked to do is for our benefit.

But we are not asked to do anything in Islam that is beyond our capabilities. If there is some hardship, then there is also a concession. So, the more difficult things become, the more important it becomes for us to focus on God's love for us and the flexibility which God has provided.

From many examples in the Seerah, we know of the importance of ease within Islam.

- For example, the Prophet said: "The most blessed of your religion is the easiest of it."
- Aisha said: "the Prophet never had two choices except that he chose the easier of them, as long as the shariah was not infringed, and there was no haram done."

- One of the five main principles of Islamic jurisprudence is that 'difficulty begets ease'.

This beautiful religion is not designed to be so challenging that it becomes difficult to follow.

The verse ends by remarking, "...perhaps you will be grateful."

When we carefully consider the wisdom and purpose of this verse, we are reminded that the unique aspect of fasting is to become God conscious, to increase our connection with God – to increase in taqwa. Worship is an intrinsic element in drawing close to our Creator: it is through worship such as remembrance that we enable our heart, mind, body and soul to feel an increasingly deeper connection with the Source. In addition, we can choose to reflect on God's creation, increase our gratitude for the blessings we have (particularly during this pandemic) and focus on the gifts before us.

God says, "If you give thanks, I will give you more" (Quran 14:7) which can encourage us to increase our appreciation, deep awareness and thankfulness for all that we have because we love God. This can bring us strength and comfort at the best and worst of times. May it help us all in some small or significant way as we move through this blessed month.

## ***Reminder 1: Spirituality and empathy***

Ramadan is a fundamental pillar of Islam and its foundation traces back through many faiths and traditions, for example, the Quran mentions it was prescribed for nations before us. This month is special due to its connection with spirituality (coming closer to God). Spirituality is what every soul longs for, a longing to know the Creator and feel God's very existence. This spiritual awakening can bring us closer to ourselves, which God tells us is key in understanding our relationship with God.

During the day we are asked to refrain from food, water and carnal desires, all for the sake of God – an exercise set by God, like no other. This is to calm our addictive natures. The side effect of this denial of desires as an act of worship, is that we begin to physically feel hunger and deprivation, and that our minds are focused on the things that really matter in the world. This changes how we view the world, and life in general; like how we view those who are less fortunate, the hungry and the destitute. It appears that one consequence of this attempt to grow in spirituality is to grow in empathy – to feel for God's creatures, a trait loved by God.

***“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Anxious is he about what you suffer; full of concern for you [is he, and] full of compassion and mercy towards the believers.”***

***Quran (9:128)***

Here, in effect, God, the Almighty is praising the quality of empathy in the Prophet – his ability to feel the pain of others. And there is no better example than the Prophet. Empathy and spirituality are thus intrinsically intertwined. For us to feel empathy is to have a noble characteristic that connects us to the Prophet. And to have even a small fraction of the principled character of Prophet Muhammad is something special indeed.

Socially, what does this do for us?

Showing empathy improves our relationships and develops our character as a Muslim – it moulds us to become more compassionate and caring to ourselves and those around us. When we show someone that we are trying to understand them, it brings instant comfort to that person and makes us feel good, too.

It is no wonder that people involved in today's caring industry - from psychologists to social workers to chaplains – place such a high value on the skill of 'feeling empathy'. Research has shown that empathy brings about growth in people, and lack of empathy actually makes them feel worse!

Ramadan is about trying to gain in spirituality – coming closer to God through sacrifice and good actions. Empathy brings real life emotion into our often hard hearts. It breathes life into our sinful souls. It creates tears for others that weigh very heavily in the Sight of God.

## ***Reminder 2: Treaty of Hdaybiya***

### Significance of Hdaybiya

- This moment in Islamic history can't be overstated: within the first two years, more people embraced Islam than in the whole of its previous nineteen years. 700-1400 hundred went on the pilgrimage that ended with Hdaybiya, and when the call was put to emancipate Makkah two years later, 10,000 people responded.
- The Quraysh were compelled to accept the political reality of Islam as a state and religion.
- The balance of power shifted, the surrounding Bedouin tribes were no longer swayed by the Quraysh and saw them as a declining power, unlike Islam.
- It led to the downfall of the Quraysh.
- The Treaty of Hdaybiya was a result of the Prophet's very clear determination to reach a peaceful solution.
- It was shown to the Blessed Prophet in a dream that he would enter Makkah peacefully and he worked hard to realise that dream.

### Events leading up to the Treaty of Hdaybiya

- The Prophet's procession was peaceful, they were unarmed and had a procession of 70 animals driven in front of them.
- When they heard that the Quraysh were preparing for war, they took a difficult mountainous route to avoid confrontation and remain focussed on the pilgrimage.
- The Prophet's camel, Qaswa, knelt and refused to move when they reached the valley of Hdaybiya. The Blessed Prophet took this as a sign from God to make peace with the Quraysh.

- Three delegations were sent to the Prophet, each with a different approach, but all agreed that the Prophet had a peaceful intent and simply wanted the right to enter Makkah as pilgrims.
- The Prophet sent two of his ambassadors to the Quraysh, one escaped with his life, however Uthman's return was delayed.
- The pledge of Ridwan took place when they thought that Uthman had been killed. It was pledged to fight the Quraysh and not to flee the battle.
- When Uthman returned, he explained the Quraysh's position:
  1. They accepted that the Prophet came only for peaceful pilgrimage.
  2. They had no right to prevent them from visiting God's house.
  3. In spite of that, they could not let them enter, in case it was rumoured he entered by force.
  4. Instead they hinted that he could enter the following year.

### Negotiations of the Pact

When the Quraysh sent their emissary Suhayl Ibn Amr to the Prophet, he understood that they now sought a peaceful resolution. However, they had some conditions, one of which was the refusal to accept a document that started with Bismillah, and any mention of Muhammad as the Messenger of God.

### There were 6 main points on the Treaty:

1. To lay aside war for 10 years.
2. If anyone came to the Prophet without permission from their guardian, they would have to be returned home.
3. The opposite, however, was not the case.
4. None of the signatories would show enmity, bad faith or reservations towards one another.
5. Whoever wanted to enter a bond with either party could do so (e.g. Banu Khuza'ah entered into a pact with the Prophet immediately).
6. The Muslims could not make pilgrimage that same year. They could do so the following year, but only for three days and three nights, and they could not carry any weapons on the trip.

### Reaction of Muslims

- Muslims were profoundly disappointed not to make the pilgrimage or see their loved ones.
- They were confused about what to do until the Prophet slaughtered his sacrificial animal, shaved his head and broke camp to head back to Madinah.
- Even Umar questioned the Prophet, to which the Prophet answered, "I am God's Servant and Messenger and I will not go against God's commandments, and God will not make me a loser!" Umar regretted this challenge for a very long time to come.

## Events following the Treaty

- Divine tidings were sent by God about the consequences of Hdaybiya:

“We have granted you a conspicuous victory. That God may forgive you your sin, past and to come, and complete His favors upon you, and guide you in a straight path. And help you with an unwavering support. It is God who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers, to add faith to their faith. To God belong the forces of the heavens and the earth. God is Knowing and Wise.” Quran (48:1-4)

- The men of the Al-Ridwan pledge were also praised: “Those who pledge allegiance to you are pledging allegiance to God. The hand of God is over their hands. Whoever breaks their pledge breaks it to their own loss. And whoever fulfills their covenant with God, God will grant them a great reward.” Quran (48:10)

- A number of people from the Quraysh tribe wished to stay with the Prophet. However, in honour of the Treaty, they were asked to return home; this was very difficult for Muslims to bear.

## Further Lesson of Hdaybiya

1. The idea of making a pilgrimage to Makkah so soon after the battle of Khandaq was for Muslims to assert that the Kabah was not the property of any one tribe or religion and that all had a right to it.
2. The preparation for pilgrimage was in itself a turning point in the journey towards peace.



3. This was a risky strategy to all the confederate tribes who had gathered the previous year to defend themselves in the battle of Khandaq.
4. The path and preparations to peace for Muslims was in many ways more difficult and challenging than the preparation for wars.
5. The Prophet had to prepare and strategize for peace just as much, if not more than they did at times of war. He faced challenges from both within and beyond his own evolving communities.
6. The Quraysh were blinded by their narrow viewpoint and were worried more about their status rather than the long-term implications of the treaty, whereas the Prophet was a visionary and willing to compromise in the short term.

### Discussion Points

1. What lessons can we learn from the Prophet wanting to strike a peace accord with the most powerful people of the time, and the compromises they made in doing so? Can we draw modern day comparisons?
2. If the Prophet was willing to go through personal abuse (his beard was held by the negotiator) for the sake of Islam's long-term goals, then why do we become extremely reactive towards those who abuse his memory, today?
3. How important is keeping one's word, even when faced with injustice?

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Fasting in Ramadan is a pillar of our faith and a time to increase our connection with The Quran
- God mentions that He wants ease for us and not hardship. This is a characteristic of our faith.
- Ramadan teaches us to increase in taqwa but also to feel an empathy towards our fellow human beings. This is a valued characteristic in our faith.



- The Treaty of Hudaibiya was a triumph that resulted from a difficult compromise made by the Prophet who envisaged a time of peace, growth and victory.
- The Prophet was tested at many steps during this time yet remained patient with his eyes set on a long term goal. He refrained from anger or vengeance and was informed by God that the Muslims had been victorious in their endeavour.

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## DAY TWENTY THREE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Surah Humaza: Tafsir

Reminder 1: Devotion of companions

Reminder 2: Truthfulness

## ***Surah Humaza***

*“Woe to every backbiter, slanderer,*

*Who amasses wealth and hoards it,*

*Thinking that wealth will make  
them immortal.*

*Nay, they will certainly be hurled into  
the crusher,*

*And what makes you know what  
the crusher is”?*

*(It is) a fire kindled by Allah,*

*Which rises above the hearts.*

*Surely it will be closed over upon them,*

*In columns outstretched.”*

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ

كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْأُخْطَمَةِ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْأُخْطَمَةُ

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوَقَّدَةُ

الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ

إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ

فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ

## ***Surah Humaza Tafsir***

This chapter condemns bad habits in humankind, particularly slandering & backbiting. Creating discord and stirring up divisions between people; calling people names and attacking someone's character behind their back are all acts deemed unlawful in Islam. Along with habits such as these, the surah also takes a very poor view of selfish hoarding of wealth and the arrogance that can come with it. Mankind can easily fall into the habit of thinking that wealth will make them 'immortal'- they are so engrossed in acquiring wealth and counting it over and over again that they forget death and never consider that a time will come when they will have to depart from the world empty-handed, leaving all material wealth behind.

These vices destroy society:

- Cohesion and trust is impeded because of slandering and backbiting.
- Economic prosperity is hampered by hoarders. Islam encourages the redistribution of wealth in order that all may prosper which can have a direct positive impact in alleviating poverty.

The chapter goes on to share that a person who embodies such characteristics will likely have issues relating to their ego. Their wealth can make them feel so powerful that they forget we are all on the same path – to live a good life – which requires us to wish for one another the same as what we would wish for ourselves.

The fire described in the chapter is no ordinary fire, it is the 'Fire of God', the fire of God's wrath and contempt, which envelops those who become proud and arrogant. This fire will reach the heart of every person who has developed these habits without feeling remorse, changing their ways or seeking forgiveness for these sins.

## ***Reminder 1: Devotion of companions***

Aisha, the mother of the believers, is known to have said:

*'One night, God's Messenger offered prayer in the Mosque and people followed him. The next night he also offered prayer and a great many people gathered. On the third and the fourth nights more people gathered, but then God's Messenger did not come out to them. In the morning he explained, "I saw what you were doing and nothing but the fear that it (i.e. the prayer) might be enjoined on you, stopped me from coming to you." And that happened in the month of Ramadan.'*

*(Bukhari)*

How blessed was the Holy Prophet and how devoted were his companions that even when they were not asked to do so, they would eagerly follow him in everything.

So, in Ramadan the Messenger was in the habit of praying extra night prayers in the mosque, which we call tarawih. Some companions saw him praying twenty parts, others saw him reading eight parts.

At no point did he ask his followers to join him, but out of sheer love, they did it anyway. As word got around that there was an opportunity each night of the Holy Month to offer additional prayers under the leadership of the Prophet, larger and larger crowds came to join in the blessed prayer.

The Prophet then abruptly disappeared from the mosque and continued tarawih on his own in the privacy of his home.

During Umar's leadership, he noticed that people were performing tarawih in small groups, sometimes on their own, and he asked companions if he should get them an imam so they could all benefit from an inspiring and touching recitation of the Quran. - This is how the tarawih prayer took the form we see today.

The sunnah of the Prophet is to perform tarawih. And his preference was to read it himself because he did not want people to start thinking that it is an obligation or that there is an exceptional reward in reading tarawih behind an imam.

For many people today, they go to tarawih in mosques, because it is easier to complete the prayer there and they also get an opportunity to hear the entire Quran with beautiful recitation. Some people however, believe that going to the mosque for tarawih is an essential part of Ramadan and will place greater emphasis on performing tarawih than obligatory prayers. Others still, will look down on those that don't go to the mosque for tarawih, and clearly this is wrong, also.

May God give us the love to follow the Prophet in praying tarawih in whichever form is convenient for us and gain the magnificent rewards of the extra night prayers in this wondrous month. Ameen.

## ***Reminder 2: Truthfulness***

Truthfulness is something which is important to cultivate until it becomes a habit for us to such a degree that the idea of being untruthful makes us feel guilty and affects our conscience.

Ali bin Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, mentioned the positive reciprocal effect of behaving truthfully with people in this worldly life: "whoever does three things with regards to people, they will necessitate three things from them: whenever they speak to them they are truthful; whenever they entrust them with something they do not betray them; and whenever they promise them something they fulfil it. If they do this, their hearts will love them; their tongues will praise them; and they will come to each other's aid."

As for the Hereafter, through God's grace and mercy, the obedient ones - practitioners of truthfulness - will reach a station in Paradise alongside those most fortunate of souls mentioned in the revelation: "And whosoever obeys God and God's Messenger, such will be in the company of those whom God has blessed: the Prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent a company are such people!" Quran (4:69)

In fact, truthfulness is an essential attribute of every single prophet who graced the earth. We are told in the Quran about this many times; here are some examples: "And mention in the Book, Ibrahim: surely he was a most truthful Prophet." Quran (19:41)



“And mention in the Book, Ishmael: surely, he was a man true to his word, and he was a Messenger, a Prophet.” Quran (19:54)

“And mention in the Book, Enoch: surely he was a most truthful Prophet.” Quran (19:56)

We also read in the Quran how a man incarcerated alongside Prophet Joseph addressed him with the words: “Joseph! O most truthful one!” Quran (12:46)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also declared truthful in the Words of God: “The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a truthful one, a Believer.” Quran (5:75)

Hence, to tread the path of truthfulness is to tread the path of the most righteous of God’s creation. And as for ways and means to engender this most noble of virtues into our daily lives, we have been left many teachings from God’s Final Messenger to humanity, Prophet Muhammad, detailing and describing precisely what the injunction of truthfulness requires. One from among these vast and numerous sayings of God’s Messenger is his advice:

“Guarantee for me six things and I will guarantee Paradise for you: tell the truth when you speak, fulfil your promises, be faithful when you are trusted, safeguard your private parts, lower your gaze, and withhold your hands (from harming others).” (Ahmed)

And God confirmed the truthfulness of these words of our Beloved Messenger in the chapter Al Ahzab:

“For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for truthful men and women, for patient men and women, for humble men and women, for charitable men and women, for fasting men and women, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God’s praise: for them has God prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

Quran (33:35)



## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- The Prophet is known to have prayed tarawih prayers and, when he realised his companions were following in his footsteps, he stopped as he was concerned his community may make it obligatory upon themselves.
- The tradition of tarawih prayers at mosques was one that was instituted after the Prophet, by Umar RA.



- Truthfulness is a noble characteristic that we should try to practise till it becomes part of our very nature; where dishonesty affects our conscience.
- The Quran describes many of the prophets and beloveds of God as truthful.
- To tread the path of truthfulness, is to tread the path of the most virtuous of people.

# 24

## DAY TWENTY FOUR

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Reminder 1: God is Great

Reminder 2: God Consciousness

99 Names of God: Al Baseer

## ***Reminder 1: God is Great***

*“When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when they call on Me: Let them also, with a will, listen to my call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way.”*

*Quran (2:186)*

Our Creator is All-Knowing, Wise, Knower of the Finest Subtleties. And God loves us, God is the Most-Compassionate, God does care and is anxious over our wellbeing. So, the Prophet was told to remind us that God’s vastness, greatness and loftiness must be remembered alongside other attributes which God tells us of. God is near to us and listens to our every word, our every prayer and request and mention of God and all of creation. We know, for example, in times of joy and distress, God is closer to us than our jugular vein. God knows what lies in our hearts and minds and so we can take strength from knowing that God is deeply connected to who we are as whole human beings.

So let us make mention of God and bear in mind that when we pray, God is listening to us lovingly and we must always remain hopeful that God will respond to our heart-felt prayers.



## ***Reminder 2: God Consciousness***

God consciousness (taqwa) is a familiar term which has been taught to us through the Quran and Hadith. Being aware of God throughout your day is highlighted as being an important trait of a believer. The literal translation of the Arabic word taqwa is 'forbearance, fear and abstinence' and therefore communicates not only the remembrance of God, but also the remembrance of God's teachings and power.

God consciousness has been defined by scholars as 'the experience of awe' of God but also encompasses a 'high state of heart, which keeps one conscious of God's presence and knowledge', thereby being used as a tool to ensure we strive to stay on the straight path. Being God conscious can include obvious things like praying on time, fasting during Ramadan and actively avoiding behaviours that have been forbidden to us. However, it is also an inward journey full of spirituality which makes each of our journeys unique.

The word taqwa is used in the Quran over 100 times, which in itself shows how important it is to our faith. The Quran guides us on how to cultivate taqwa in our lives, through virtues such as truthfulness (wafa) and patience (sabr). Having taqwa will not only make your life in the hereafter successful, but also make your life on Earth blessed. Through constant reminders of God, you can learn to be a kinder, softer and a more grateful person as well as someone who is Muslim in practice.

The 10th century Sufi scholar Al-Qushayri defined the three parts of taqwa as 'full trust in God with respect to what has not been granted to them; full satisfaction with what has been granted to them; and full patience with respect to what has eluded them'. Taqwa is meant to be the awareness of God's power and of our own humility and gratitude for everything in our lives, which is perhaps easier said than done, especially when we go through stressful and painful times in life. However, with God consciousness comes the awareness that with hardship comes ease and that nothing is in your control save the way you react to what happens to you.

Being in lockdown during Ramadan is perhaps the best time to slow down and focus on seeing God in the little things. Go on a walk, see the sun shining and spend time with your family and try to remind yourself through it all how incredibly lucky you are for the things you have and how to accept the things you do not have, in the knowledge and security that God knows best.

This is not only a tip for a more fulfilling and successful life, but also a key part of Islam which should be simple for us in a time where many luxuries such as seeing friends and loved ones and simply having the freedom to go wherever you want, have been temporarily changed for us. Perhaps this time of reflection and isolation will be a blessing in disguise and help increase our God consciousness to make us happier people in the long run.



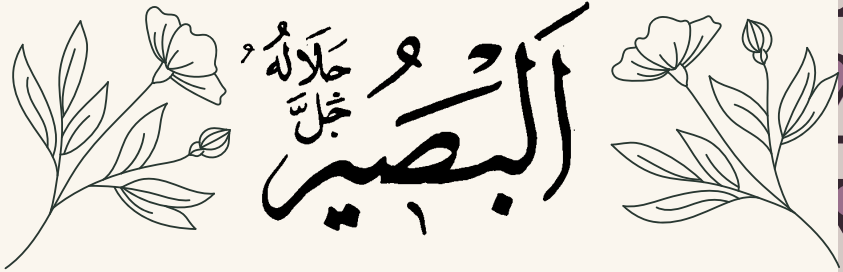
*Discussion points:*

- Do you think God consciousness can be the foundation for the rest of our life?
- How does living in our own towns and cities test our God consciousness and in what ways can we manage this better?





## 99 Names of God: Al-Baseer



### *Al-Baseer* *The All Seeing*

Al-Baseer comes from the root 'b-s-r' which has the connotations of 'seeing and noticing', 'understanding and knowing', and 'having awareness of something'. God is the One whose sees and understands all that has gone and all that will come, and God sees both what is apparent and what is hidden.

God says in the Quran that "God is with you wherever you are, and God sees whatever you do." Quran (57:4)

Al-Baseer knows every visible thing and to God the truth is apparent. God knows what we conceal in our hearts, and the things we do that no one else sees. When we realise that God is al-Baseer, we are disciplined, and we are careful in what we do, for God knows that which we try to hide.

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- God is indeed close to us. He hears our every prayer and is directly concerned and connected to us.
- God is closer to us than our jugular veins.



- Taqwa is defined as God consciousness; a state of awe, awareness, fear and patience.
- If we are aware that God is aware of all we do, that the hardships we face are known to Him and if we believe that they have a purpose and will end; we can develop trust and patience in the Divine Will.



- Al Baseer- God knows all we do; the visible and the invisible as well our every thought and every action.
- If we keep this in mind, we will try to be careful of our every action and will try to exercise discipline.

# 25

## DAY TWENTY FIVE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Surah Ash-Sharh: Tafsir

Reminder 1: Last third of the night

Reminder 2: Your forgiveness will bring you forgiveness

## *Surah Ash-Sharh (The Relief)*

*“Did We not expand for you, [O  
Muhammad], your breast?*

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

*And We removed from you your burden*

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ

*Which had weighed upon your back*

الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ

*And raised high for you your repute.*

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ

*For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.*

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

*Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.*

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

*So, when you have finished [your duties],  
then stand up [for worship].*

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ

*And to your Lord direct [your] longing.”  
Quran (94:1-8)*

وَالِإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَأَرْجَبْ

## *Surah Ash-Shahr Tafsir*

This is an early Makkan chapter, closely related to the chapter Ad-Duha in that it offers comfort to our Beloved Messenger. Some companions indeed recited these two chapters together without the Bismillah in between. Imagine the comfort and solace the Prophet would have felt on hearing both chapters revealed to him directly by his Lord at a time of difficulty and struggle.

By illuminating his heart, God inspires us to carefully consider the value of a heart which is able to expand and constrict. For example, in chapter 6, verse 125, God illustrates the expanded heart and the constricted heart so that we can further understand the role of our hearts in our journeys: "Whomever God wills to guide, God opens their heart to Islam. But whomever God wills to leave astray, God makes their chest tight and constricted as if it were climbing up into the sky."

Verse two talks about the weight of Prophethood which was heavy indeed. It is said that the Messenger would visibly sag on receiving revelation. If on a camel, the camel would sag, as if heavier. A companion reported that whilst sitting next to the Prophet with his thigh against his, Muhammad's thigh became heavy against him as revelation was received. This indeed is the very message that would have led to the mountains crumbling.

God lifted this weight by inspiring the heart of the Prophet with light and divine inspiration and removing any ignorance.

Verses three and four draw our attention to the honour bestowed upon the name of Muhammad. In every call to prayer that rings across every nation, Muhammad's name is celebrated. In every prayer across the world, Muhammad is mentioned and prayers and blessings are sent upon him. His name is praised in Scriptures before the Quran.

“Indeed, We have given you (O Muhammad), a clear conquest that God may forgive for you what preceded of your sin and what will follow and complete God's favour upon you and guide you to a straight path” - Quran (48:2)

“Indeed, God confers blessing upon the Prophet, and God's angels (are asked by God to do so). O you who have believed, ask (God to confer) blessings upon him and ask (God to grant him) peace.” - Quran (33:56)

What a noble and elevated position the Beloved has!

Verses five and six explore the idea that with every difficulty comes ease. Here, God comforts the Prophet that with every difficulty there is ease, if we show beautiful patience.

This verse is then repeated, perhaps to emphasise the message or because, as some scholars say there will be one ease in this life and one in the next for every difficulty.

Verses seven and eight bring the Prophet's focus back to worship. So, when Muhammad had finished with his tasks, God advises him to devote himself to God in worship. To God should he turn his attention and his hopes. Once the jobs of the day and the voluntary actions had been completed, the Messenger of God should turn in prayer to God, especially with his voluntary night prayers.



## ***Reminder 1: Last third of the night***

Narrated Abu Huraira, Prophet of God said: "Every night when it is the last third of the night, our Lord, the Superior, the Blessed, descends to the nearest heaven and says: Is there anyone to invoke Me that I may respond to their invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me so that I may grant them their request? Is there anyone asking My forgiveness so that I may forgive them?"

(Bukhari)

The scholars of the past had different opinions about whether we should interpret this literally or metaphorically. Some might argue that it is difficult to take it literally because the earth is a globe and there is always some part of the earth in the last third of the night. Many companions held the opinion that with sayings that are difficult to interpret they would just affirm that the words were true and leave the exact meaning to God.

What we can definitely talk about is the feeling we get when we hear the words of the Prophet. We can feel that the last third of the night is very special and that it is a time when God is especially close and ready to respond to our requests and our pleas for forgiveness.



## ***Reminder 2: Your forgiveness will bring you forgiveness***

It is our duty to go through Ramadan positively, as much as we can. To do that we need to address all the factors that may possibly be a reason or a barrier against us gaining the pleasure of God.

During the first ten days we may have taken the time to make amends with anyone we feel we may have wronged or upset. This includes family members who we don't often speak to, friends, neighbours and associates. We need to seek forgiveness from anyone we've treated wrongly. This is a very difficult thing to do; for most of us, our pride or raw emotion will get in the way. But it is an act that is beloved to God. One of the most beautiful internal convictions, that is healthy for both our mind and soul, is not to harbour any ill feelings in our hearts against someone; this is the pinnacle of good attitude and one that will only bring us closer to God, the Almighty.

Abdullah ibn Amr narrates that the Messenger of God said: "The merciful are shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy by the One who is above the heavens. The womb is named after the Most Merciful, so whoever maintains the ties of kinship, God maintains a tie to them, and whoever severs them, God severs him".

(Tirmidhi)

Today a particular individual may be in our lives and tomorrow they are not, and the same can be said for us. Waiting is not really an option. We want to reach out to people while they are still here, otherwise it impacts our hearts for a long time.

Imagine the people who we may have upset or hurt with our actions or words and never sought forgiveness. Some of them may have taken that hurt to the grave, erasing our chance to talk to them.

Let us use this blessed month to reach out and ask for forgiveness for the wrong we may have done to others. And every night before we rest our heads on our pillows to sleep, we should try to forgive all those who may have wronged us. This is a characteristic that will lead us to Paradise, and one that is extremely healthy and uplifting for our mental wellbeing and spiritual health.



# ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Muslims are encouraged to get up and pray at night. There is less distraction and worldly business at such a time.
- The last third of the night has a special significance for worship.



- God is Merciful and loves that we show Mercy.
- There is much spiritual and emotional benefit in forgiving those who have wronged us and in seeking the forgiveness of others. We should aim to clear the air at the start of Ramadan and practise forgiveness regularly in our own lives.

# 26

## DAY TWENTY SIX

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Surah Quraysh: Tafsir

Reminder 1: Charity

99 Names of God: Al-Adl

## *Surah Quraysh*

*“For the accustomed security of the  
Quraysh*

لِيَلْفِ قُرَيْشٍ

*Their accustomed security [in] the  
caravan of winter and summer*

الْفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

*Let them worship the Lord of this House,*

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

*Who has fed them, [saving them] from  
hunger and made them safe, [saving  
them] from fear.”*

الَّذِي أَطَعَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوعٍ وَعَآمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ



## *Surah Quraysh Tafsir*

This chapter follows on quite naturally from the preceding chapter, al Fil. So much so that some Companions used to recite both chapters together in the same unit of prayer, even without the bismillah in the middle.

### Who were the Quraysh?

The Quraysh were originally nomads who settled in Makkah and had been there for about two hundred years prior to the Prophet's birth.

Those who settled around the Kabah were called Quraysh of the Hollow. They took on the responsibility of looking after the Kabah, which was an ancient place of pilgrimage from earlier times. The tribe of Quraysh were also divided into various clans; the Prophet belonged to the Banu Hashim clan. A wealthier clan was the Banu Umayyah, from which came the third Caliph, Uthman, and also the first dynasty after the Khulafah Rashidun, starting with Muawiyah.

### Why are we learning about the Quraysh?

The Quraysh were the main tribe to which the Prophet first preached and were descendants of Prophet Ismail. The Muslims were a minority in Makkah, much like millions of Muslims who live in a minority context all around the world. In many ways, although culture and globalisation has changed the way we live today, people through time are very similar in their motivations, vices and virtues.

In the previous chapter, we talked about how these chapters force us to study the life of the Prophet. This is important because the Prophet was not just a Messenger like a postman, as if he posted the Quran through the letterbox and walked away. He demonstrated practically what it means to live by Islam in a day to day context – sometimes during happy and joyous moments, and at other times during great trials and tribulations.

The Prophet was an Arab and we know that the Quran was revealed in Arabic, however, it is important to note that the Prophet himself made clear the importance of equity and equality for all. The Prophet specifically proclaimed in his farewell pilgrimage that “there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab”. Through his choice of companions, we see a diversity of ethnicity, language and socio-economic wellbeing. For example, some non-Arab companions include Suhayb the Roman, Salman the Persian, and Bilal the Abyssinian.

He rebuked one who made a racist, or other offensive remark against another and said to them that they still had traits in them of the (pre-Islamic) age.

### Vocab

Rihla - long journey, travel	Ta'm - to eat
Ash Shitaa - the winter	Ju'i - hunger
As Sayf - the summer	Amaan - safe
Ibadah - worship	Khawf - fear
Bayt - house	

### Verses 1-2:

Ilaf - safeguarding, protection, taming, accustomed, familiarity, uniting together.

This word can have several meanings:

The root word 'alf' means to be familiar with something or to resort to it habitually.

Also, the root word 'ulf' means to cause love to happen between two people. The hearts of other nations were softened up to do business with the Quraysh.

And also, 'ilaf' was used as the name for the covenants of security that the Quraysh reportedly received from the surrounding powers, Byzantine, Persia, Abyssinia and Yemen.

### How were the Quraysh able to travel and trade freely?

Makkah is about a month's journey from Yemen to the south, or from Syria to the north.

In the winter, they travelled south to Yemen, where it was warmer. They would purchase spices and other commodities coming from South Asia.

In the summer, the Quraysh travelled north to Syria and Palestine, where it was cooler. Here, they sold the spices and purchased agricultural goods.



For many other tribes in Arabia, travelling was dangerous due to the fear of highway robbery. However, when the Quraysh became the guardians of the Kabah and began to serve it, they became honourable throughout Arabia; they were often left alone, and their trade caravans began to visit every part of the country fearlessly. Through this trade some of them became quite wealthy.

Verse 3:

Why does the verse mention 'worship' instead of to 'give thanks'?

Being grateful and giving thanks is important, but we show our gratitude through our worship. It is not enough just to say thanks, we have to live our lives demonstrating that gratitude.

Consider what the word ibadah (worship) means in Islam. We translate the word as "worship", but ibadah covers everything that God loves and is pleased with, in the heart, with the tongue and with the limbs. To worship God in the heart is to have love, hope, and fear of God. Remember that good intentions can turn any regular, daily action into an act of worship.

What is the connection between this chapter and the one before it?

The previous chapter mentioned the political security of Makkah. This one mentions the economic security of Makkah.

Imam al Fakhr ar-Razi said: The gift from God is of two types:

1. To remove harm, i.e., removing your problems. This is the gift God gave in Surah al Fil.
2. To give benefit, i.e., God provides you with food and other benefits. This is the case in Surah Quraysh.

What is the connection between this chapter and the prayer of Prophet Ibrahim in Surah

al Baqarah, verse 126?

“O my Sustainer, make this land secure, and grant it’s people fruitful sustenance.”

Quran (2:126)

The prayer of Prophet Ibrahim was for the same two things mentioned in this last verse. A society can’t survive unless it has: peace and prosperity.

## Overall lessons

### Who is the ultimate provider of our peace and prosperity?

We can look around at our context and appreciate our fairly comfortable lifestyles, achievements, wealth and health etc., and we will often ascribe these things to our own personal efforts instead of using these moments of awareness to increase ourselves in gratitude. This can be very powerful when we consider the state of affairs across the world, where there are people suffering and dying from the absence of basic necessities such as clean water, food and security. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the reality of these deep inequalities home to us when we think of the privilege of being able to isolate in a safe place, where all our basic needs are being met. We must realise that the ultimate provider is God, and it is in God that we must trust and rely.

Through this chapter, God is reminding the Quraysh and us to see the blessings in our lives. We live in a society that is blessed beyond its means, where one of the greatest killers is overconsumption. We must use this to remind others of its danger and the fact that blessings require us to remain thankful to God.

We must realise that we should use the opportunities and talents that we have been given to the best of our ability by helping to make the world a little safer and more secure, feed and clothe those who are in need of what we already have and offer the best of our manners to others.

We will also be tested in some way. There is a famous passage in the Quran in Surah al Baqarah:

“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to God, and indeed to God we will return".

Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.”

Quran (2:155-157)

## ***Reminder 1: Charity***

*Abu Huraira related that the Prophet said that God, the Majestic and Exalted said: "Every deed of man will receive 10 to 700 times reward, except Siyam (fasting), for it is for Me and I shall reward it (as I like). There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts: one when they break the fast and the other when they will meet their Lord."*

*(Muslim)*

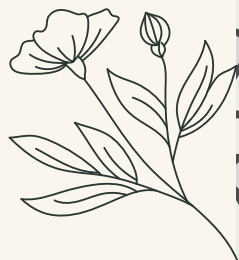
If you give charity, it is usually known about by the public. God rewards you accordingly for this action, doubling or multiplying your reward. But who actually knows that you have really fasted? Only God. That is why God will decide the reward of each and every fast and it shall be revealed to you in the Hereafter.

Two people can look equally hungry and thirsty but depending on how sincerely they fasted, how much good they did during their fast and how much they struggled to avoid hurting or offending others or doing evil deeds, they could be well-rewarded, or gain no reward at all! Only God knows. After a day of turning down food and drink, there are few pleasures greater than the joy of iftar. But God reminds us that there could be a far greater joy than even this, on the Day we meet our Lord. Whilst we are fasting we should be inspired by the hope that we will gain the greatest joy of all – God's good-pleasure (rida) but also keep constantly in mind the fear that even the slightest sin could rub out all the reward and blessings of that fast.

## *99 Names of God: Al-Adl*



الْعَدْلُ  
عَدَلَ  
عَدْلًا  
عَدْلًا  
عَدْلًا



*Al-Adl*  
*The Just*

Al-Adl is from the root 'a-d-l' which has the classical connotations of acting 'fairly', of being 'impartial', of 'making something even' and of 'balancing.'

Al-Adl is The One who delivers absolute justice, based on His complete and perfect knowledge of everything unseen and apparent. He does not wrong or oppress anybody unfairly. With complete faith in Al-Adl, we have the knowledge that God is perfectly fair and that our good deeds will be rewarded, no matter who we are and where we come from.

In Surah al-Anam, God states, "the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice." Quran (6:115)

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Fasting has a reward that is known only to God.
- We should try to purify our intentions and maximise our good deeds to attain God's pleasure while fasting, for who knows what small errors we may commit that might erase our good deeds.



- We can be sure that God is Just and Fair.
- We will be rewarded for all our good deeds, no matter how small.

# 27

## DAY TWENTY SEVEN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Reminder 1: Eid Al-Fitr

Reminder 2: Peaceful Living

99 Names of God: Al Latif



## ***Reminder 1: Eid Al-Fitr***

Narrated by Anas bin Malik: “God’s Apostle never proceeded (for the prayer) on the Day of Eid al-Fitr unless he had eaten some dates.”

(Bukhari)

The Prophet used to eat an odd number of dates.

Abu Ubaid, the freed slave of Ibn Azhar, reported: “I observed Eid along with Umar ibn al-Khattab. He came (out in an open space) and prayed and (after) completing it addressed the people and said: The Messenger of God has forbidden the observing of fast on these two days. One is the day of Fitr (at the end of your fasts), and the second one, the day when you eat (the meat) of your sacrifices.”

(Muslim)

Ibn Majah narrated that Ibn Umar said: “The Messenger of Allah used to go out for the Eid (prayer) walking and come back walking.”

(Ibn Majah)

Tirmidhi narrated that Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “It is Sunnah to go out to the Eid (prayer) walking.”



## ***Reminder 2: Peaceful Living***

“O God, You are the original source of peace; from You is all peace, and to You returns all peace. So, make us live with peace; and let us enter Paradise: the House of Peace. Blessed be You, our Lord, to whom belongs all Majesty and Honour!” (Prophet’s daily prayer)

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic root word for ‘peace’. The notion of peace in Islam is without bounds, and faith in this encourages Muslims to seek the path of peace: “God guides all who seek God’s good pleasure to ways of peace.”

Quran (5:16)

To emphasise the importance of living in peace, when Muslims greet one another they say ‘assalamu alaikum’ which means ‘peace be upon you’ to those that they know and do not know and this is a constant reminder of Islam’s teachings – that we must live in harmony by spreading love and compassion, beginning with ourselves and in our own homes.

The concept of peace in Islam is not just limited to Muslims but is a right for all of humanity. According to Islam, the best way of obtaining peace is to be at peace with yourself, which is attained by leading a reflective and spiritual life. It is also important to be at peace with those around you – being good to your neighbour, treating people with respect, maintaining ties of kinship and looking after the needy and oppressed. These are only some of the responsibilities and duties that are an integral part of Islam, the path of peace.

## *99 Names of God: Al-Latif*



### *Al-Latif The Most Gracious & Subtle*

Al-Latif is from the root 'l-t-f' which means to be 'delicate and elegant,' to be 'gentle and gracious', and to treat something with 'benevolence'. It also means to be 'subtle', or something that is too tiny or subtle to feel'. Microscopic creatures are called 'latifa' as they are too tiny to be seen and felt.

God is not confined to our reality of time and space. God is with us all the time; God is everywhere but you do not see or feel God, and God's actions are so fine and subtle that they may be beyond our comprehension. God is also the most 'kind'; God constantly bestows gifts that are finely suited to the needs of God's creation. God is extraordinarily gracious and understanding; God guides us and treats us with kindness without us perceiving it.

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- The Prophet would mark the Day of Eid by eating an odd number of dates.
- We are advised not to fast on this day of celebration.



- Muslims are reminded of the importance of peaceful living which starts with being at peace with oneself. The greeting of 'Peace be with You' is one that wishes peace upon those we know and those we do not.
- Islam encourages peaceful living and harmonious respectful interactions with our neighbours, the environment and with wider society.



- Al-Latif - God is the Most Kind and Most Subtle.

# 28

## DAY TWENTY EIGHT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Surah Zalzalah: Tafsisr

Reminder 1: The Most Charitable

Reminder 2: The Last Sermon

## *Surah Zalzalah (The Shaking)*

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

*When the earth is shaken to her (utmost)  
convulsion,*

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

*And the earth throws up her burdens (from within),*

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا

*And humanity cries (distressed): 'What is the matter with her?'*

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا

*On that Day will she declare her news:*

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

*For your Lord will have inspired her (to do so)*

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَلَهُمْ

*On that day (of Reckoning), all people will come  
forth in various groups to be shown (the results of)  
their deeds*

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

*Then whoever has done an atoms weight of good,  
shall see it!*

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

*And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil,  
shall see it.*

## *Surah Zalzalah Tafsir*

This can feel like quite a frightening and powerful chapter because the language and tone of recitation matches the sense of anguish and anxiety that reflects the topic of the chapter.

It starts with the idea of a huge, calamitous natural disaster (of what we might call 'biblical proportions'). The second part deals with the Day of Judgement, when all truth will be declared. Finally, it talks about the justice of God.

1. When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion
  - a. It is difficult to think of a more extreme natural disaster than the earth literally shaking to its core
  - b. God brings to mind the idea of God's power and magnificence to overwhelm what we previously understood to be normal
  - c. Humanity is inconsequential in comparison: humanity is at a complete loss
  
2. And the earth throws up her burdens (from within)
  - a. There are different interpretations of this:
    - i. The Earth throwing out the buried bodies of humanity, ready for the Day of Judgement
    - ii. The Earth throwing out its treasures which humanity thirsted after
  - b. In a way, perhaps both are true: humanity being thrown out with the treasures of the Earth which they desired and being made to see what the consequence of such a pursuit was.

3. And humanity cries (distressed): What is the matter with her? ´

a. Can you imagine what you will be thinking when you see all this?

b. In Surah Yasin, God says, “They will say, “O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping place?” (The reply will be), “This is what the Most Merciful had promised, and the messengers told the truth.” Quran (36:52)

c. What would you feel? Bewildered, distressed and worried for yourself and your loved ones?

4. On that Day will she declare her news:

a. (Nasai/Tirmidhi) After reciting this ayah, the Prophet said: “Verily, its information is that it will testify against every male and female servant, about what they did upon its surface. It will say that they did such and such on such and such day.”

b. All your secrets will be exposed

c. According to Rabia Kharashi, Prophet Muhammad said: “Beware of the earth, for it is your root and basis, and there is nothing which a person does on it that it will not report, whether it is good or bad.” (Mujam at-Tabarani)

d. Now linked to verse 2 – all the efforts you put into pursuing the treasures of the earth exposed before you – if you did it honestly/honourably or lied and cheated for it.



5. For your Lord will have inspired her (to do so)

a. Ibn Kathir: Shabib bin Bishr narrated from Ikrimah that Ibn Abbas said about the Day the earth will declare its information, "Its Lord will say to it, 'Speak'. and it will speak." Mujahid commented on the phrase 'inspire it' by saying, "God commands it" (i.e., to speak).

b. Anas reports that the Prophet said: "The earth on the Day of Resurrection will bring out every act that would have been done on its back." Then he recited these verses of the chapter. (Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi)

c. Again the magnificence of God: we may think 'how can the earth speak?' But God can simply inspire this to happen. Remember how the angels could not understand why God would create mankind, and when God showed them what God had taught mankind, they all fell down, realising how little they knew?

d. Other examples of inspiration from the Quran:

i. 'And your Lord inspired to the bee, "Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and (in) that which they construct.' Quran (16:68)

ii. 'And We inspired to the mother of Moses, "Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him (one) of the messengers."

Quran (28:7)

6. On that day (of Reckoning) all people will come forth in various groups to be shown (the results of) their deeds

a. According to Ibn Kathir this means that they will be divided into types and categories: between those who are miserable and those who are happy, and those who are commanded to go to Paradise and those who are commanded to go to the Hellfire.

b. Imagine going to see your life's work and what your Creator thinks of it:

c. 'Some faces on that day shall be beaming, laughing, rejoicing at good news, some other faces on that day shall be covered with dust, darkness will cover them, such will be the disbelievers in God, the wicked evildoers.'

Quran (80:38-42)

7. Then whoever has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it!

a. Bukhari: The Prophet said, "Fear (wards off) the Fire, even if by giving half a date in charity, and even by saying a single word of good".

8. And anyone who has done an atoms weight of evil, shall see it.

a. As a final reminder God states that we will be held to account for the bad we do no matter how small or trivial we think it is.

b. Imam Ahmad recorded from Abdullah bin Masud that the Messenger of God said, "Beware of the sins that are belittled. For verily, they are gathered in a person until they destroy them."

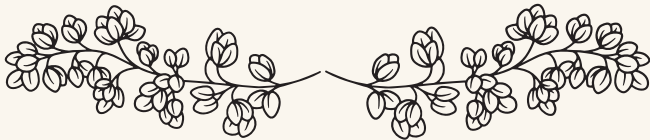
## ***Reminder 1: The Most Charitable Person***

Sadaqa is the Arabic word for 'voluntary charity'. It is often understood as giving wealth to the poor, but there is so much more to this beautiful concept. Sadaqa is the act of giving over and above what is required, based purely on the desire to gain reward or just heartfelt generosity. It extends beyond just the giving of wealth and money. Sadaqa is also that beautiful, infectious smile you give to your loved ones, your neighbours or the stranger you pass in the street. Sadaqa is the removal of potential harm from someone's path; the time you spend helping someone through a difficulty; the food items you cook and share with others; the physical help you give someone in a good endeavour.

Abu Dhar narrated that the Messenger of God said: To smile in the company of your brother or sister is charity. To enjoin good deeds and prevent bad deeds is charity. To guide a person lost in the land to a secure place is charity. To remove troublesome things like rocks, thorns and bones from the road is charity. To pour water from your jug into the jug of your brother is charity. To guide a person with defective vision is charity for you. (Tirmidhi)

The concept of voluntary charity is rich within our heritage. Many of us are blessed with the ability to be charitable, regardless of our personal or financial situation. Sadaqa reminds us that we don't have to be rich to be charitable. God sees the condition of the heart of every believer.

Ramadan is that time of the year when we all think of those less fortunate than ourselves. It is the month when the Prophet was the most generous and the reward for giving in this month is multiplied countless times. We don't need to feel bad if we are unable to give as much as we hoped. Why not start with those simple things that cost nothing, but may change the hearts and minds of many? A smile goes a long way, it is contagious; not only will this deed be heavy on the scales of reward, but it will also be multiplied manyfold during the blessed month of Ramadan.



## ***Reminder 2: The Last Sermon***

“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that your Lord will indeed reckon your deeds. God has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. God has judged that there shall be no interest, and that all the interest due to Al-Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under a trust from God and with God's permission. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People listen to me in earnest, worship God, perform your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and offer Zakat. Perform Hajj if you have the means.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother or sister to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one fraternity. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before God and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone. O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example, the Sunnah, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and it may be that the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O God, that I have conveyed your message to your people.”

## ***Lessons from the Last Sermon***

- This was one of the first pilgrimages where the only people allowed in the haram were believers of the oneness of God.

- He, the blessed Prophet, was the answer to the prayer that the father of the prophets, Ibrahim, had made while he was building the Kabah: "Our Lord! Raise up

in the midst of our offspring a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them your verses and instruct them in the Book and in wisdom, and purify their lives. Verily, you are the Most Mighty, the Most Wise." Quran (2:129)

- God gave the strength and wisdom to Muhammed to erase the traces of evil from the face of the earth, and whatever did not melt with patience and forbearance surrendered to discipline and power. This approach combining justice and mercy is a deep reflection of God's teaching throughout the Quran.

- On the day of Arafah of this great pilgrimage God revealed the verse, "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." Quran (5:3)

- When Umar heard this verse he wept, and when asked why he said, "After perfection there can only be diminishment".

- So, what did the Prophet focus on in his last sermon to mankind:
  - o Be trustworthy, especially of others property
  - o Avoid usury (interest)
  - o Be aware of Satan leading you astray, especially in the small deeds
  - o For husbands to be kind and fulfil their trust with their wives
  - o Fulfil the five pillars
  - o Equality of the races of mankind
  - o Stay on the straight path
  - o Follow the Quran and Sunnah and you will never go astray
  - o Be witnesses to mankind and spread the word of peace

### Discussion Points

- Why is it that when the Prophet chose his last words on earth as God's Messenger, he focussed a significant part of his opening on the evils of taking interest? · Why did the Prophet remind husbands of the rights they must fulfil to their wives but not vice versa?
- There was a large emphasis on equality between different races, why?
- What is the significance of being a witness to mankind?





## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Sadaqa is a beautiful concept of giving and sharing that can be engaged in by every part of our body and soul.
- A smile is a charity. Removing something harmful from the path is a charity.
- Imagine the social benefits if we try to perform as much sadaqa as we can during this Blessed Month and beyond.



- This was the Prophet's final speech during pilgrimage.
- It is a beautiful speech that encompasses the rights of our nearest and dearest as well as the rights of the stranger. It also draws attention to how we should live a spiritually fulfilled life while maintaining the rights of those around us.
- We are advised to be trustworthy, upright, honest and compassionate.
- We are advised to uphold magnanimity, justice, equality and fairness.

# 29

## DAY TWENTY NINE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Surah Qaria: Tafsir

Reminder 1: Eid Prayer

99 Names of God: Al-Baith

## Surah Zaria (The Calamity)

*The Striking Calamity -*

الْقَارِعَةُ

*What is the Striking Calamity?*

مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

*And what can make you know what  
is the Striking Calamity?*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

*It is the Day when people will be like  
moths, dispersed,*

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

*And the mountains will be like wool, fluffed up.*

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

*Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds],*

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقَلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

*He will be in a pleasant life.*

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ

*But as for one whose scales are light,*

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

*His refuge will be an abyss.*

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

*And what can make you know what that is?*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ

*It is a Fire, intensely hot.*

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

## *Surah Zaria Tafsir*

This chapter resembles a newsflash, where an alarming headline is announced, to capture attention. Its purpose is to warn mankind of the coming of the Day of Judgement.

“The Great Disaster!

What is the Great Disaster?

And what do you know what the Great Disaster is?”

After preparing the listeners for the news of the dreadful calamity, the scene of resurrection has been depicted:

- On that Day people will be running about in confusion and bewilderment just like scattered, scared moths around a light.
- Mountains uprooted will float about like flakes of wool in the breeze. Then God’s Court is established in the Hereafter and the people are called upon to account for their deeds.

“The people whose good deeds are found to be heavier than their bad deeds, will be blessed with bliss and happiness. The people whose good deeds are found to be lighter than their bad deeds, will be cast into the deep pit full of burning fire.”



## ***Reminder 1: Eid Prayer***

Narrated by Ibn Abbas : “I am a witness that God’s Apostle offered the Eid prayer before delivering the sermon, and he thought that the women would not be able to hear him (because of the distance), so he went to them along with Bilal who was spreading his garment. The Prophet advised and ordered them to give in charity. So, the women started giving their ornaments in charity.”(The sub-narrator, Ayub, pointed towards his ears and neck meaning that they gave ornaments from those places such as earrings and necklaces.)



***Abu Dawud narrated that Abd-Allah ibn al-Saib said: ‘I attended the Eid (prayer) with the Messenger of God, and when he had finished the prayer he said: “We are going to deliver the khutbah, so whoever wants to sit and listen to the khutbah, let him do so, and whoever wants to leave, let him go.”’***

***(Abu Dawud)***



The Prophet used to vary his route on the day of Eid. He would go by one route and come back by another.

Al-Bukhari narrated that Jabir ibn Abd-Allah said: “On the day of Eid, the Prophet would vary his route”

## 99 Names of God: Al-Baith



الْبَيْتُ  
لَمْ يَجْلِدْ



### *Al-Baith* *The Resurrector*

Al-Baith stems from the root 'b-a-th' which connotes 'awakening', 'raising up from sleep or death', 'sending out', and 'resurrecting'.

God is the One who chooses all who shall be awakened and the One who decides to raise up and awaken the dead. 'Ba-atha' means to wake someone up, or to stir someone to do something. It also means to bring life back from the dead.

Al-Baith is God's quality of raising the dead and revealing what is in their hearts. God states "And that they may know that the hour is coming - no doubt about it - and that God will resurrect those in the graves." Quran (22:7) We know that in the hereafter, we will be held responsible for our deeds and actions. Al-Baith also means to send. God states 'And We certainly sent (ba-athnaa) into every nation a messenger...' Quran (16:36). Prophet Muhammad was sent as a mercy and a teacher, and he was the best example to us all.

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



On the Eid day, the Prophet conducted the khutbah after the prayer. He enjoined the giving of charity and the community responded generously.



Al-Baith - The Resurrector. This refers to God's quality of raising the dead in order for the Reckoning to occur.

# 30

## DAY TWENTY NINE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



Reminder 1: Paradise

Reminder 2: Am I forgetting something?

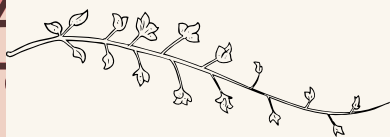
Reminder 3: Righteousness



## ***Reminder 1: Paradise***



***Narrated by Sahl: the Prophet said, "There is a gate in Paradise called Ar-Rayan, and those who observe fasts will enter through it on the Day of Resurrection and none except them will enter through it. It will be said, "Where are those who used to observe fasts?" They will get up, and none except them will enter through it. After their admission, the gate will be shut and nobody else will enter thereafter.'***



***(Bukhari)***

Oh God, accept our fasting and admit us through the glorious, dazzling gate of Al-Rayan. Our Lord, let our fasting bear witness on behalf of us on the Day of Judgment, just as your beloved Messenger informed us that it would:

On the Day of Judgment, the fasting will say: "O My Lord, I prevented this person from food and desires, so accept my intercession for them."

***(Ahmad)***

## ***Reminder 2: Am I forgetting something?***

The word Dhikr or Zikr has a number of different meanings in the Arabic language; it is to remember, recite, repeat and remind. Dhikr is a fundamental part of our beliefs and actions and can be understood in two concepts:

The first is the outward form of remembering God. We achieve this through the gentle repetition or chant of a particular attribute of God. Any of the ninety-nine beautiful names and attributes can be used.

We might choose to repeat a tasbih (short sentences in the praise and glorification of God) such as saying 'Subhanallah' (glory be to God). Reciting the Quran, learning and teaching beneficial knowledge, will also fall under this category. As God says:

“Indeed, through the remembrance of God do hearts find peace.”  
Quran (13:28).

“So, remember Me; I will remember you.” Quran (2:152)

The second concept is the mental and psychological approach to dhikr. This is personally reflecting on God, and the blessings and bounties God has bestowed upon us and the wonders of life we have seen and experienced. It can be as simple as looking out the window and appreciating the beauty of God's creation or looking at our lives and being grateful for the life God has blessed us with. There is much to be grateful for.

Spending some time alone thinking about the Almighty and creation may just be the missing piece in our lives to give us peace and tranquillity. Abu Hurairah narrated that the

Messenger said: "There will be seven categories of people under the Shade of God on the Day when there will be no shade...[the seventh category will be] people who used to remember God when they were alone, and their eyes would well up with tears."

(Bukhari & Muslim)

The reward for such an action seems to be far greater in comparison to the action itself, but when God loves a particular action, God rewards it accordingly. Have we ever considered sitting in a quiet place, and one by one, appreciate the blessings that God has bestowed upon us? And how often have we sat and contemplated the Day we all have to meet with God? Tears in these contemplations are worth the shade on a day when there will be no shade.

### ***Reminder 3: Righteousness***

Human beings are believed to be innately good. Every individual is born with an inclination towards goodness, a natural state that has been implanted in every soul by God. Children are thus born sinless, although every child will have their own unique characteristics and personality, and their upbringing and experiences will often shape their response to situations. Muhammad said, *“Every child is born in a pure state of nature (fitra).”* (Muhammad)

Furthermore, every person has within them the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Muhammad also said:

*“Righteousness is that which makes the heart and the soul feel tranquil; wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves to and fro in the chest even though a legal opinion may have been given in its favour.”*

In other words, when something is good or right, you feel at ease with that decision, however when something is wrong or unjust, although people may tell you it's fine, in your heart you will always feel it to be wrong. But human life is complex, and we will often face tendencies that pull us in different directions – from our ego, greed or another negative influence within. Muslims believe human beings were given freewill so they could choose how they live their life, and whether they follow their innate goodness or choose to live otherwise.

## ***KEY MESSAGES***



- Ar-Rayan is a gate in Paradise that only those who observed the fast will enter through.
- We should pray that God accepts our fasting and that we will be admitted through this gate. Ameen



- Dhikr is the beautiful concept of keeping our tongues moist with remembrance of God; God's Attributes, God's Bounties and all that God has blessed us with.
- We can choose to recite set prayers or sit quietly and contemplate the wonder of the world and all that we are grateful for. There is much reward in this for us; including His Shade.



- Muslims believe all humans are born pure and with an innate knowledge of right and wrong.
- Wrong will cause uneasiness in our hearts such that we feel ill at ease.
- We have the choice of whether or not to tread a path of righteousness and goodness; that is an expression of our own free will.



Assalamalaikum.

We hope that this resource, the Islamic Society of Britain Study Circle Pack, has played a small part in enhancing your Ramadan.

This has been a difficult Ramadan in so many ways. There has been so much loss in society and in our communities; loss of livelihood, loss of connection with friends and family, loss of health and so sadly loss of life. Yet, as you read this, we will have emerged from another Ramadan, Alhamdulillah. I pray that for you and your family, this Ramadan has been safe, spiritual and full of blessing. If you have suffered loss, may God give you the strength and patience to emerge closer to Him.

There has been a small team that has developed this Study Circle Pack with many different contributors to the content. The aim of this pack was to help families to connect during Ramadan and share some time together whilst learning and reflecting on our faith. We hope we have managed to help lift, inspire and spiritualise your Ramadan! If you have noticed any errors or have any feedback, please do send them to us at [info@isb.org.uk](mailto:info@isb.org.uk)

The Islamic Society of Britain is a volunteer-led organisation, committed to enhancing family, young adult and youth development, social engagement and civic action, based on a platform of helping to develop a just and caring society. We are a membership organisation, so please do join us, volunteer for us or help us in whatever way you can, small or large. There is so much need in our society at present so help us to make the difference! All details can be found on our website: [www.isb.org.uk](http://www.isb.org.uk)

Finally, I ask you to remember all the people that were instrumental in putting this pack together in your prayers. It was done in a very short time period and through an amazingly dedicated team.

Your Brother

Khalid Anis

Chair of Trustees Islamic Society of Britain



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