

سُورَةُ الْأَعْلَى

Surah Al-A'laa (The Most High)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah , the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

Introduction

Surah Al-A'la was one of the favourite *Surahs* of the prophet (*salAllahu alayhi wa sallam*).

There are a number of *Surahs* in the *Qur'an* called *Al-Musabbahaat*; these are the *Surahs* which begin with the declaration of the perfection of Allah ('*azza wa jal*).

They either begin with:

- 1) **سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ** (ex. Surah As-Saff, Al-Hadeed, Al-Hashr) - perfection of Allah is being declared by all creations in the past tense.
- 2) **يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ** - Present and Future tense declaring the perfection of Allah (ex. Surah Al-Jum'ah [62], At-Taghabun [64]).
- 3) **سُبْحَانَ** -Declaring the perfection of Allah in the infinitive form (Ex. Surah Al-Israa' [17]). This is permanent, even if there are no creation, perfection of Allah is declared, and timeless perfection is declared by nouns.
- 4) **سَبِّحْ** -A Command to declare Allah's perfection (ex. Surah Al-A'la).

Of the *musabbahaat*, this is the most beloved to the prophet (*salAllahu alayhi wa sallam*), for a number of reasons. One of them is evident in the sunnah that he (*saw*) would love to recite this specific Surah in every single Jum'ah prayer and in both of the Eid prayers.

Connection to the Previous Surah (*Surah At-Tariq*):

In connection with the previous Surah, Surah Al-A'la is a beautiful transition. In the last ayah of Surah At-Tariq, Allah (SWT) gave consolation to His messenger (*saw*) and there was a commandment there: **فَمَهِّلِ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ رُوَيْدًا** (So allow time for the

disbelievers. Leave them awhile.). This is an imperative, a command form in the singular addressing the prophet (saw). This indicates the messenger (saw) was concerned about the planning and the activities of the disbelievers, which is why Allah is saying, 'Let it go, let them have their leeway.' But now, Allah ('azza wa jal) has turned the messenger's (saw) attention in a different direction. *If you are not to worry about them, what should you be worried about instead? What is the alternative activity?*

—

Ayah 1:

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High,

- The messenger (saw) has been commanded to declare the perfection of the name of his Lord, the Most High.
- There are many narrations of the companions (ra), including Ali (ra) that whenever he (saw) heard this ayah, he would say:

«سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى» "Subhana Rabbi al-A'la, Subhana Rabbi al-A'la (Glory to my Lord, the Most High)."

When this ayah was revealed: **فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ** (So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great (56:96)), the messenger (saw) commanded, "Put it in your rukuu'." Similarly, when the first ayah of Surah Al-A'la was revealed, he (saw) said, "Put it in your sujood (prostration)."

In this ayah, Allah (SWT) mentions the word **اسْمَ** and it is particularly beautiful here in contrast to the previous Surah, *Surah At-Tariq* because part of its style was to omit the name of Allah (SWT), He didn't want to mention it next to those arrogant kuffar.

In Surah at-Tariq, Allah (SWT) states:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ
خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ

So let man observe from what he was created. So let man observe from what he was created.. (86:5-6)

Allah didn't say, "He created," but He (SWT) asked the human being to look carefully how he was created or what he was created from; this is the passive form.

Similarly, Allah says: **يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ** (The Day when secrets will be put on trial.. (86:9). Allah doesn't say, "He will test the secrets/ We will test the secrets," and the passive form is used, omitting the name of Allah.

Even when the name of Allah (azza wa jal) or His mention occurs in the previous Surah, it occurs in the form of pronouns, which by definition have a form of ambiguity. For example, if I say, "He is something, something..." you are wondering who 'He' is, unless I mention him by name.

Allah said:

إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ

Indeed, **He**, to return him [to life], is Able. (86:8) Allah said, "He," and didn't mention His name.

Similarly at the end of Surah At-Tariq, Allah said:

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

But **I am planning a plan**. (86:16) - Allah did not say, "Allah is also making a plan," but used 'I' instead and omitted His name. Surah At-Tariq almost in its entirety omitted the name of Allah and in this Surah, you begin with His name and are filling the void that was there.

Vocabulary:

سَبَّح

- It is a *fi'il amr*, a command form.
- It comes from the *mastarr*/ infinitive *tasbeeh*. *Tasbeeh* is to declare or remember Allah with a certain profound remembrance that Allah Himself has taught.
- *Tasbeeh* comes from the word *sibaaha*, which means to swim. In Arabic, there are different words used for swimming, but this word in particular refers to a type of swimming where you don't go under the water and you maintain your level above the water, and is close to the concept of floating.
- **What does floating have to do with remembering Allah or declaring His perfection?** When something floats it retains its level and refuses to go down. We say that Allah (azza wa jal) is beyond any imperfections, so we've

declared this perfect level of Allah, and we are to not say anything about Him that brings that level down, and we have to retain that perfection in acknowledging Allah's perfection in the things we say about Him (concept of tasbeeh).

- Meaning of word: Declare the perfection, retain that declaration.

Other ayaat (verses) in which Allah speaks about doing tasbeeh:

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance. (110: 3)

- Allah added the letter **ب**

Similarly we find:

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great (56:96)

Similarly the angels say:

وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ

...while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" (2:30)

When you say 'sabbaha'(the verb), next to it you find next to it the particle/ harf **ب**.

In this Surah, however you don't say the **ب** in **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى**. This is one of the few places in the Quran where tasbeeh is not mentioned with a **ب**.

By mentioning the **ب**, the meaning of the text becomes '*Declare the perfection of Allah by using His names,*' and it refers to usage.

أَسْمَ

- refers to any of the authorized names of Allah, the ones He taught.

When you declare Allah's perfection by calling Him, 'Al-Khaaliq, Al-Musawwir, Al-Hakeem,' you are doing tasbeeh bismi Rabbik (tasbeeh with the name of your Lord). Here, the word 'with' does not occur. Difference: *Declare the perfection of the name of your Lord*, the implied meaning is to acknowledge, retain the perfection of your Lord and not necessarily declare it.

When **ب** is used, the idea leans more to doing thikr of Allah and remembering Allah by His most beautiful names. **سَبِّحْ أَسْمَ رَبِّكَ** is more about acknowledging the perfection of Allah and not allowing yourself to hear anything, be a part of any conversation, to entertain any thought that brings down the status of Allah.

Nowadays, you have comedies making fun of people, situations, but more and more comedy has become something that pokes fun at Allah (azza wa jal). A lot of comedians find the concept or discussion about God funny. There has been a lot of comedies about the Bible, God, or Jesus and the prophets (as) have been the point of satire in their own lifetime and even now. The other place you find this discourse is cartoons and a lot of people watch these cartoons that are supposed to be funny, but they have in them commentaries, statements, utterances that are entirely blasphemous. This culture of blasphemy against Allah in entertainment is something that has been going on for some time, in American tradition atleast. There is almost a rebellions against God and there are sub-plots, themes in even children's cartoons and comic books that poke a hole in the idea of a Divine Entity. Even novels are written and the underlying themes of literature are questioning God Himself.

A lot of films, movies, supposedly of entertainment have a natural disaster coming and the human beings are all able to get together and fight that natural disaster and overcome it. Entire movies are dedicated to a Meteor Shower, or a Tsunami and people somehow survived all of it. This is an idea of, 'Biblically God was able to destroy towns but now we can overcome it, now we have the technology to survive.'

For example, in X-Men, one of the themes was human beings have superabilities and they've evolved and the worst bad guys is some entity that comes from the sky and wants dominion and harmony in the universe and wants to impose his law on human beings because that will bring order to this chaotic world. Psychologically, it is telling children anything that comes from above is evil, you have to fight it and human beings have the idea of freedom, which is glorified. The message of Islam is not freedom, but the idea of slavery to Allah, so this idea being embedded to people that nothing will impose its will on me has been injected to popular entertainment culture.

سَبِّحْ أَسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

Declare the perfection and maintain the perfection of the name of your Lord. According to most mufasssiroon, though the word **أَسْمَ** has benefits, it makes no difference because

in the end when the messenger commanded (saw), "Put it in your sujud," we don't say 'Subhana ism rabbi al-a'la' but we say 'subhana rabbi al-a'la.' We don't introduce the word ism in that *thikr*, so that tells us essentially, it is the same as saying: Declare the greatness, perfection of your Lord. So the benefit of mentioning ism is that with every one of Allah's names, you have to be conscious and aware around you in your speech and that of others: Is there something being said that undermines one of the perfect names of Allah? We have to be that sensitive in our tawheed, that when we hear something, we can tell this is not becoming because Allah has this perfect name and this statement does not fit with Allah's perfect name; we shouldn't be accepting/ tolerating that statement. This is what is at the heart of this statement, making you sensitive to the perfection of Allah.

On one hand there is *thikr* of Allah and on the other hand is *tafakkur*, deep thought that comes with declaring and internalizing the tasbeeh of Allah.

Allah said رَبَّكَ

- It is one of the names of Allah. Why does Allah specifically mention this name and not any other? Because at the heart of the relationship Allah has with us is this term: *Rabb*: He is *Rabb* and we are *'abd*.
- *Rabb* includes the one who has complete authority over you, the one who gives you gifts, the one who owns you, the one who has mastery over you. It even includes in a sense the one who created, but generally it does not.
- When you think of Master in English, its opposite slave comes to mind, so it's that master/ slave relationship that is being brought to mind when Allah mentions His name *Rabb*.
- When you think of any of Allah's names (ex The Creator, The Wise, The Knowledgeable, etc), in the end these are all names of my Master, these aren't abstract concepts, there is a relationship that I have with Him.
- Ex. When you say *Khaaliq* (Creator), there is a relationship between you and the creator, you are the *makhloq* (that which has been created), but that relationship is not necessarily a bonding relationship. For example, I can manufacture a table, statue, etc but the relationship is not necessarily constant.
- Of the relationships Allah depicts in the Quran, the one that is constantly retained between us and Allah is *Rabb*.
- This attitude of Allah being my *Rabb* if it is absent this discussion, then you will find people not acknowledging Allah's perfection. These are the people who dare say things about Allah that are inappropriate about Allah. When people say, "Why did Allah do this to me? How come Allah says this?" and question the wisdom of Allah, or in any way/shape/ form, the heart of the matter is they have not accepted one thing about Allah: that He is the *Rabb* and they are *'abd*.

- Because this tasbeeh is being done first and foremost by the messenger of Allah (saw), رَبِّكَ, your Lord, meaning the Lord of Muhammad (saw).
- Everytime you say His name, you remember He is the master and you are the slave. How does a slave speak about the master? When the slave mentions the name of the master, there's humility, acknowledgement of a higher power, and there is fear also; these attitudes have to sink in a believer when he makes thikr of Allah.

الْأَعْلَى

- Majority say it is an adjective of Rabb and not of ism.

In the previous Surah, Allah called our attention to something very high in the sky:

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ

By the sky and the night comer -

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ

And what can make you know what is the night comer?

النَّجْمِ النَّاقِبِ

It is the piercing star - (86:1-3)

We are impressed by this *Tariq*, the beautiful creation in the sky, but Allah says, 'There is someone even higher, your Lord the Most High, who is above all these things you find impressive.'

- الْأَعْلَى comes from 'alaa/ ya'luu/ 'uluwwan, which means height and grander.

AlBiqaa' and his teacher Abu Ja'far bin Zubair (in their Tafseer Book): In the previous Surah, Allah spoke about how the kufaar were making a plan (إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا) - **Indeed, they are planning a plan**, 86: 15). They were actively engaged in making a plan to destroy, and undermine the messenger of Allah's (saw) mission, which is really the mission Allah intends. So they are trying to undermine the intent/ guidance Allah has revealed, but Allah is beyond and above their plan, He is الْأَعْلَى.

Also in the previous Surah, the made an allegation against the Quran, that this is just casual talk, and Allah refuted that by saying:

وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ) - And it is not amusement, 86:14). To say the Quran is casual talk, you are not talking about the speech but the speaker, the one who is saying it, and that would be reducing the perfection of Allah and you begin now as a refutation: **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى**

- Ash-Shawkani: Declare the greatness of your supreme Lord, there is not a Lord Higher or more Supreme than He, nor Greater.
- Most of the mufasssiroon making a tafseer without the ba, the meaning of this verse becomes *tanzeeh*. Meaning cleanse the name of your Lord and the concept you have of it; when you speak of His name, have clean, pure thought of Him (SWT).
- Concept of *tanzeeh* - Some words apply to us that also apply to Allah. For example, Allah exists and we also exist. Allah knows and we can use it for a human. Allah sees and a human being sees. A word has been used for the Most High and also any other creation. Due to the limitations of language, we are using the same word for Allah and a human, so you have to be conscious of what separates the same word when being used for Allah and when used for any other creation.
- **Difference** - The attribute given to Allah (SWT) has no beginning nor end. Allah's seeing has always been there and will always be there, but my seeing has not always been there and it will not always be there. Similarly, another difference is that my vision has a limit (I can't see inside myself, behind the wall, I can't see everything at once, etc.) but Allah's seeing is infinite and unlimited in its capacity. Also, when I say I can see, the ability is not something I own, it was given to me and will be taken away. When we say Allah sees, it was not given to Him nor can it be taken away.
- Be cognisant of the perfection of the name of your Lord, that when you mention Him, you are not found mentioning Him except that you are fearful of Him, acknowledging His grandeur, and when you mention Him, it is in a respectful fashion. It is the attitude with which you mention your Lord and not just the thikr itself. This is highlighted by not mentioning 'the' next to **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ** .
- Allah should only be named with and remembered by names He (SWT) taught us. For educational processes, we make the names Allah and Rabb common knowledge. These are the names Allah taught us and they have a beauty, nobility, and elevation to them, that Allah Himself has given. We should call to Him using the names He taught.

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى (Say, "Call

upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the best names.") {17: 110}

Ayah 2:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

Who created and proportioned

- In the previous Surah, creation was mentioned but of humans specifically and it was mentioned in the passive form: *What was he created from?*
- Here Allah mentions the active form because it begins with a name, so the name, the Lord should be known.
- The first thing we learn is His lordship and the first thing about the Rabb you should know is HE created.
- Most of humanity acknowledge a divine being that created but refuse to accept that He is their Lord. They will refuse to make that leap that they are enslaved to that higher power and that they owe that higher power anything/ has rights over them.
- Allah mentions His name the establishes His rights over us first (Rabbik) and then His created power is mentioned second.
- There is no other Rabb like Him, no other Master has the power to create. All other masters at the most have the power to own, control but they themselves are created. This Lord is unique because He created.

فَسَوَّىٰ

- From taswiya: to even, balance out.
- Every creation has been intricately evened out.

Ayah 3:

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ

And who destined and [then] guided

- waw of 'atf - this ayah is connected to the first ayah, meaning: **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ** **الَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ** **الْأَعْلَىٰ**, followed by

So declare, acknowledge the perfection of the name of your Lord, the Supreme, who does two other things: **قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ**

قَدَّرَ

- Qaddara is to plan, calculate, to have an exact act plan of action for something and to have precise calculation at hand, ready. Ex. When someone engages in a project of architecture, they have to plan how wide, deep, the kinds of materials, etc. One who doesn't know what they are doing can do guess work but the one who has an important project they have to do precise planning.
- We learn from a hadith that the taqdeer of the entire creation precedes the actual creation 50, 000 years. Allah planned all of this before it was executed. In human effort we know the more you plan for something and then do it, the better it comes out. When something is not done with a lot of planning it doesn't come out good. What you see is the final product but not all the planning that came from before.
- The previous ayah was about creating and this ayah is about planning, executing, calculating every last, minor detail.
- "Allah planned everything out in its exact nature - what it will be like, its implications, consequences of the creation, what it will do, when it will come to creation, when it will cease to exist.." Meaning all the activities, properties of the creation was planned in advance. Elsewhere in the Quran, Allah states: And the decision, matter of Allah has already been declared in precise calculation. Elsewhere: *Allah has made a precise calculation for everything.*
- This ayah is general because Allah (SWT) didn't add a **كَ** (you), and refers to everything in creation. The first thing that comes to mind is the human being and his creation, planning. Of all the human beings, the messenger of Allah (saw) was mentioned.

Allah created, perfected, and planned for everything but that plan is useless unless executed. For example, if a person says he will show up to work, until you tell the person to do the work the plan is incomplete. Everything is according to a plan and now that person needs instructions. So Allah (SWT) says: **قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ** (He planned it out,

created perfectly and then guided).

فَهَدَىٰ

In relation to the prophet (saw), this means Allah created him in an intricate fashion. It was planned that he would live in this region, this many years, will go through experiences, he will experience the sadness of being raised as an orphan, loss and difficulty, and will finally experience being in contact with an angel. Allah perfectly created the prophet (saw), planned for that day though the messenger (saw) has no idea this is part of the plan. It was part of the plan that Allah (SWT) would guide him.

This ayah primarily refers to the prophet (saw) and then generally everyone else, because we find the mention of the prophet (saw) at the beginning and end also.

Scholars say there are two types of hidaayah:

1) cowniyyah - There is the guidance of creation, for example Allah (SWT) created the cow, the sheep, insects, birds, sun and moon, etc and guided them to do whatever they were created for, they perform the functions of their creation.

"Human beings we go to school, college, or we get some training to learn certain skills. What training did the child get when it comes out of the womb of his mother that he knows exactly where to go to for milk and what training did the mother get to produce the milk naturally? How does a calf when it comes out know to not eat worms? This is part of the guidance. Allah planned the mechanisms, designed the food for the child in the chest of the mother, He intricately designed and planned for it and it came at the right time, but He guided the child to drink also.

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

He said, "Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it]." [20:50]

Allah (SWT) did not only create but also guided. These creatures know where to get their meals, produces their homes.

Example, an ant knows how to produce their home, where to get their rizq and what to do.

2) shar'iiyyah.

In the following ayah, Allah (SWT) mentions one example of the creative process.

Ayah 4:

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ

And who brings out the pasture

أَخْرَجَ

- akhrajja/ ikhraaj: to extract, or pull out

الْمَرْعَىٰ

- comes from the verb ra'aa (verb), which is to pasture, to graze, feed animals
- raa': the shepherd because he is taking care of animals of pasture
- mar'a (tharf makaan - a place): a place of a lot of greenry, the purpose of which is animals will graze on it, perfectly suited for consumption of certain animals.
- Animals don't eat any kind of plant and need certain kinds to survive. Children you have to get food for them, shelter, etc. Who has been providing food for birds, and these creatures for thousands of years? Every bird leaves its nest in the morning and Allah has a plan for what it will eat.

Allah is referring to that as an example of His perfectly calculated and planned design.

In the previous Surah, Allah (SWT) spoke about another kind of khurooj.

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ

The human being's creation starts from the fluid that is between the sulb and the taraa'ib.

{86: 7}

Ayah 5:

فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ

And [then] makes it black stubble.

غُثَاءً

- comes from the word ghuthyaan, which literally means to be nauseous, or to want to vomit
- ghathal waadi: When the valley is filled with leaves, dung, or any kind of natural waste.
- ghathas-saylu marta'a: when lots of water comes and draws pasture, all the grass gets torn from the ground and pile up in one place
- Two meanings: 1) something put together or compiled together 2) the piling up of any kinds of plants - not necessarily rubbish/ filth but also when plants are jumbled together or grown in a cluster right next to each other.
- In open fields, ghuthaa' would be parts of greenery that are clustered together.

أَحْوَىٰ

- superlative adjective, af'alu tafdheel
- hawaahu (verb) means to bring two things together; something black and red at the same time, ie very dark
- Two implications: 1) Some kinds of vegetations when they're fully mature, then they have this texture to them which is green, red, etc but overwhelmed by a blackness. 2) When they turn bad, they become black.
- Darkness is a sign of maturity and another of going bad. A great number of ulemaa (scholars) consider this ayah to be talking about the vegetation that is so wonderful then being reduced to rubbish (turning black, turning into crust, being piled on one another). So Allah is contrasting how He creates and destroys the same exact creation; a few weeks ago it was mar'aa and now it is b ghuthaa'an ahwaa.
- Some ulema (scholars) disagree and say this ayah is showing you the mature of the plants, how they bunch together.

Depending on which of the two meanings you take, it impacts the rest of the Surah. If this ayah is talking about the best of the plantation and the worst of it being destroyed, then it is a comparison of the temporal nature, transient of this life. If this is talking about how plants mature, it means the messenger (saw) should not worry that the Quran will be recited to him and he will not forget, meaning it will reach maturity.

Ayah 6:

سَنُقَرِّئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ

We will make you recite, [O Mu'ammad], and you will not forget,

سَنُقْرُكَ

- qara'a: to recite
- aqra'a/ yuqri'u: to make someone read
- Allah is saying soon We will make you read, recite.
- This is the miracle of the messenger (Saw). When the angel came, he (saw) said: I cannot read. Meaning this ability will not be your own, it will have been given to you from Allah.
- This then refers to the Surahs that are coming (**س** indicates future).
- The messenger (saw) is concerned that he might forget the Quran which was revealed to him, and he is also concerned that there is no guarantee he will live upto the demands of the revelation.

This concern occurs in three places of the Quran and this is the third of them. **1)** Allah (SWT) says: **وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا** (And, [O Muhammad], do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge.") [20:114]

2) **لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ** (Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with recitation of the Qur'an.) [75:16]

The messenger (saw) is very aware that he was carrying in his heart the message of salvation for the rest of humanity, for all generations to come. He (saw) had this enormous sense of responsibility, and one of the things that was nerve-wrecking to him (saw) is he might forget even a piece of it. Think of it from the point of view of a student: when you start worrying about one part of your studies, you stop worrying about the other part. For example, if you are listening to a lecture from your professor and you are writing everything down, when you worry too much about writing, you are not paying close attention. You write it down and when you look back at it, you think: *What was I writing?* When you focus on one thing, you lose track of another thing. Allah (azza wa jal) does not want the focus of His messenger (saw) to be on memorizing because that will distract him (saw) from what Allah deems more important.

Allah (SWT) takes that concern away from him and says: **سَنُقْرُكَ** (We will make you recite).

The Surah began with: Declare the perfection of your Lord. Many of the scholars commenting on the language of this ayah say that when the messenger of Allah (saw)

acknowledges the beauty and perfection of Allah's names, that in and of itself starts making his burden light. And then when he (saw) reflects on the creation (insert ayah 3-5), everything has been created, precisely calculated, thoroughly planned, has its time, and was guided; you (O Muhammad (saw)) are no exception. Look at the pasture around you; its been created, grows for a purpose and then reaches its culmination. Just like that, you will also be given this revelation, you have nothing to worry about because this planning is not in your hands, but in Allah's hands.

فَلَا تَنْسَى

- The messenger's (saw) concern was that he would forget and Allah says: No, He's taken the responsibility that he (saw) will not forget.
- Grammar: If the *alif makhsoora* was not there (**تَنْسَى**), it would be *fi'il mahiy* (don't forget) and it would be forbidding the prophet (Saw) from forgetting. If it was a *fi'il mahiy*, it would be more of a burden on the prophet (saw) but Allah (SWT) is giving him a consolation - *You won't forget*.

Ayah 7:

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

Except what Allah should will. Indeed, He knows what is declared and what is hidden.

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ

- Mashiya: concrete decision.
- By using the word **شَاءَ**, Allah has let us know that even if the messenger (saw) forgets an ayah, it is not like a casual intention. For example, teacher says something and then tells students, "Forget it." - because the teacher didn't think it through enough. Allah (SWT) has already established in the Surah everything is thoroughly planned.
- Meaning 1) Allah will make forgotten what has already been planned to be forgotten. This was part of the plan all along and it's not as others say, "He decided to change His mind." It would be inappropriate to say that about Allah (SWT), and this Surah begins with: *Don't think or say inappropriate things about Allah*.

Most of the scholars agree this ayah is not about an ayah being forgotten altogether.

Some scholars are also of the opinion it is about a verse that is forgotten altogether, as Allah (SWT) states:

مَا نَنْسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا

(We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it...) [2:106]

- Better than it, meaning better suited for the people, better for their guidance, what they need the most.
- For a certain time, there is certain instruction and it doesn't apply to all times but for that certain time. When that ayah's purpose is fulfilled, He lifts the ayah and removes it from the memory of all people (this is one opinion). If an ayah was revealed, whose precise guidelines were necessary for that occasion, and then thereafter, keeping that ayah would be more of a cause for harm than good, so Allah (SWT) removes it.
- Another interpretation: Allah sometimes made His messenger (saw) sometimes forget Quran in salah and the sahaba would remind him, 'Has this ayah been cancelled because you didn't recite it?' And the prophet (saw) would say, 'No I forgot it.' This illustrates that the messenger (saw) is in the end a human being.

Who is beyond all imperfections in any way, shape, or form? It is Allah, **سَبَّحَ** **أَسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى**. The messenger of Allah (saw) is so far above us, but nowhere near Allah; there is no comparison. So Allah establishes His perfection and control over His messenger (saw). We dare not say anything inappropriate about the messenger (Saw) but we need to understand that Allah is our Rabb and his Rabb.

This ayah also shows the innocence of the prophet (saw) and his purity. Those who claim to be free, or pure of sin (ex. Priest) in comparison to the prophet (saw) is that they are never corrected, but the messenger of Allah (saw) is corrected by Allah Himself. That in itself is a guarantee that the messenger of Allah (saw) is in that correct path - that Allah corrects him.

إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

- Meaning the parts of the Quran that are recited in the jahr, Allah knows, and that which has been hidden, He knew about them all along.

Language of the Ayah:

الْأَعْلَى

- Istithnaa' bi ma'n al-qilla (exception is miniscule) - meaning if you will forget something, it will miniscule incidents and they will be one/two things, and Allah will make you remember again. In other words, *it is not a permanent forgetfulness and it will come back to you. Don't let that overwhelm you and think you will forget the Quran but these exceptional cases will happen.* This why we don't find thousands of narrations about the prophet (saw) forgetting the Quran and we literally find a handful. Put this in perspective: How many ayaat are being revealed, and how many surahs are there? 114 Surahs, not all are complete at once, bits and pieces of ayaat of different surahs are coming and the messenger (Saw) knows which ayah goes in which surah, some surahs take a number of years to complete (ex. Surah Al-Baqarah was revealed in 12 years). In that context, finding only a few narrations about the prophet (saw) forgetting Quran is in itself a miracle.

When the prophet (saw) forgets an ayah, it is the fulfillment of the word of Allah, as He (SWT) says: **إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ**.

إِنَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ

This is called al-ithbaat 'alaa ghayril faa'il - the word **He** is mentioned twice. By saying it this way, it is implied that no one else but He.. In other words, the messenger (saw) is told: You are learning, but in the end, who truly has knowledge? Allah (azza wa jal). His superiority over His slave, Muhammad (saw) is illustrated when He says: **إِنَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ**

الْجَهْرَ

- Jahar is an activity that you do, which everyone can see.

The opposite of *jahar* is *sirr*. **وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ** (And conceal your speech or publicize it...) [67:13]

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوِّءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ (Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged...) [4:148]

In context, Allah (SWT) doesn't use the opposite of jahar (ie *sirr*) but instead uses *khafiya*.

يَخْفَى

- Khafiya is to hide something so well that you don't even know it exists. *Sirr*, on

the other hand, is a secret but the person who doesn't know the secret at least knows that a secret exists. When you say khafiya, it is so secret that you don't even know it is there.

- When the prophet (saw) is made to permanently forget an ayah, will anybody feel it was missing? No, there's no inclination that something was missing.

الْجَهْرَ is a noun and **وَمَا يَخْفَى** is a verb. Why would Allah (SWT) use the noun form for the manifest and the verbal form for that which is hidden? 1) A verb is limited and a noun is unlimited. By limiting it, it means only a few things will be hidden, forgotten (ie lesser in degree). 2) Nothing remains hidden forever and Allah (SWT) will eventually expose everything, so the attribute of something remaining hidden will not last forever.

Ayah 8:

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

And We will ease you toward ease.

- Allah first gives the prophet (saw) the consolation that he (saw) will not forget the Quran.
- In normal Arabic, you say **نُيَسِّرُكَ** (meaning We will make easy **for you**). This is a rhetorical function of Arabic; some prepositions if mentioned, you were expecting them, but if taken away, the meaning is still clear. The function of taking the preposition away is to bring two words closer together (this is called *taqreeb*). When you put a preposition, you take the words farther apart. In Arabic it means that this 'word' demands to be farther away from that 'word', but when the words are close so are the concepts - meaning Allah (SWT) has brought Himself closer to His messenger (saw) out of love when He says: **وَنُيَسِّرُكَ**. This is part of the beauty of the Quran and an expression of the love Allah (SWT) shows His messenger (saw).

We will make easy for you - If someone says they will make something easy for you, you will think something was originally hard and now you will make it easy for me. Allah says **وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ** (*I will make easy for you to eventually get to the ultimate ease.*)

لِیَسْرَىٰ

- *Yusra* is the superlative form and the feminine form of *aysar* (*af'alu tafdheel*).

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيَسْرَىٰ

- **وَنُيَسِّرُكَ** - Allah has guaranteed that the struggles of the messenger (saw) will be made miraculously easy for him by Allah's intervention. Just as Allah took the task of Quran, which the messenger (saw) thought it would be difficult for him to remember, Allah said: *He would make him (saw) recite and he would not forget.*

Similarly, Allah says: **وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ**

And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember? {54:17}

- The second is his struggle in the world, the dawah he has to give, the message he has to deliver - how will he (saw) do it? Allah guarantees him, *He will make ease for him* (saw). When we look at the struggle of the prophet (saw), we see the most difficult struggle ever waged in human history. But when you look at the relationship between Allah and His messenger (saw), Allah calls it 'easy'. This is putting tawakkul in the messenger (saw) - no matter how tough things get, his (saw) anchor, refuge is this ayah: **وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيَسْرَىٰ**

لِیَسْرَىٰ

- Hadith used by mufasssiroon as an explanation of this ayah: "I have been sent with the *hanifiyyah* (legacy of Ibrahim (as), sole dedication to Allah) that has in it lots of relaxation, allowance, and very easy." In other words, the shari'ah (regulations, commandments) of Islam will not be difficult, they will be easy.
- Allah didn't say 'We will ease to yaseer' but He (SWT) said: 'We will ease you to yusraa (easier).' Meaning, when you start to live by the shari'ah, life gets easier and not harder. Allah (SWT) says:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

And Allah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak. {4:28}

When a person starts following the ahkaam of Allah, they start to feel life is getting harder and Allah is instead saying: *Allah intends to make life easier for you, to ease your burden and the human being was created weak.* The human being does not realize what will make life easy and he thinks it will make life difficult. Part of the difficulty is that we may not understand the wisdom in shari'ah.

- Ash-Shawkani mentions the meaning of al-yusra: The path by which the memorization of revelation will become easier than it has ever been before.
- It is also said 'the easier' is referring to the shari'ah (the laws the will come and make life easy).
- When Allah (SWT) intends to guide someone, He opens his chest for Islam (submission). When you submit to Allah's commands you will find relaxation, and if you find relaxation that means Allah (SWT) has intended for you to be guided. On the other hand, if you are from the unfortunate who when they obey Allah they feel discomfort (their chest becomes tight as if climbing up to the sky, losing his breath), then this is part of a curse (ar-rijs) upon those who don't believe.

One of the core lessons of this Surah from the very beginning is the change in attitude. What is the attitude with which you remember Allah, how you think of Allah and respond

to things said about Allah was captured in: **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى**. Then the attitude of the messenger's (saw) concerns being removed; then the prophet's (saw) attitude of the coming revelations, thinking it would be difficult, Allah tells him (saw): *It will be easy, and the way to it will also be easy.*

Ayah 9:

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ

So remind, if the reminder should benefit;

فَذَكِّرْ

فَ is a conclusion, meaning therefore, then, after your concerns have been removed, the Quran will be given to you and you will not forget, and you apparent problems, your hidden He knows them and will facilitate your way for you...Now that all of your distractions have been taken you, you need to get back to your mission: **فَذَكِّرْ**

- Normally, you expect thakkir to be follow by something, ex. thakkirni (remind

me), thakkirhu (remind him), thakkir an-naas (remind the people); but here no object has been mentioned. In other words, the messenger (saw) is told 'No matter where you are, no matter what situation you find yourself, continuously engage in the act of reminding.'

- This is the second commandment/ imperative form used in this Surah, the first one being سَبِّح. In these two, there is a summary of the entire life of the messenger (saw). When he (saw) is not reminding the people, he is doing tasbeeh of Allah - either he (saw) is standing in the middle of the night, declaring the perfection of His Lord in salah, or in the daytime he (saw) is out, delivering the reminder to the people.

فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذُّكْرَىٰ

- In Arabic, this is a conditional statement. The literal meaning would be: *Remind if the reminder served to have benefit.*
- نَفَعَتِ is in the past tense (fi'il maadhy). Had it been in the present tense, the meaning of the ayah would be: *Maybe it will have benefit.*

إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذُّكْرَىٰ

- This is a rhetorical statement. For example, 'If you're a real man, you will go,' is a challenge to the person. Similarly, Allah tells the messenger (saw): *Remind if the reminder will have benefit.* One of the implications of this is *for sure remind because certainly there is benefit in reminder.* Another implication is *maybe this will have benefit.* The only One who knows if a reminder will benefit is Allah: إِنَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ. When you try to remind someone and they repel what you say, you don't know maybe it got stuck in their head and they processed it a month from then. Sometimes people don't listen to you right away and listen when you are gone, or they don't want you to know what you said affected them; their ego wouldn't allow them to show they are actually listening.
- This should be our attitude towards people; we don't judge but remind. Sometimes you are with your cousins, family, or friends and think: *Maybe I should remind them, maybe I should say something about the language they're using, how they're wasting time, or that they shouldn't be putting their eyes,* and then you think: *No, they won't listen, they're not the masjid type, etc.*
- **Don't think in your head who you should be reminding and who you should not because Allah has not given you the licence to see what's**

inside anybody's heart.

- This reminder can benefit anyone, so much so that as hopeless as Fir'awn is, Allah (SWT) still sends him a reminder. No judgment is passed on him even though he is a genocidal maniac until he makes a decision himself.

الذِّكْرَى

- Noun; comes from thakara/ yathkuru
- Thikran is the hyperbolized/ mubalagha form of thikr - ie powerful reminder. Meaning, the powerful reminder will benefit. When you deliver a reminder, it should be powerful and not weak, you should find good, strong words, words that will appeal to the audience.
- According to Lisaan ul Arab, it could be an alternative masdar for three words:
- 1) **thakara** - to mention. If it comes from thakara, it means just mentioning itself could be of benefit. Whoever benefits or not, you yourself will benefit when you mention Allah's name.
- 2) **tathakkara** - to make an effort to remember. When you make an effort to remember Allah, no matter how far from the results you are, still benefit has come to you.
- 3) **thakkara** - reminding others, the activity itself will still carry benefits, regardless of whether you see the results or not.

The messenger (saw) would get very upset when people wouldn't listen to the message.

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ إِن لَّمِ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا (Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muhammad], if they do not believe in this message, [and] out of sorrow.) [18:6] Allah is telling him (saw) to not worry about anything else but to just remind.

Ayah 10:

سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ

He who fears [Allah] will be reminded.

سَيَذَّكَّرُ

- From tathakkur, meaning very soon the one who will make effort to remember is the one who fears.

Allah said **مَنْ** instead of **الَّذِي**. Man could be anyone, anyone who has fear in them.

يَخْشَى

- Khashiya is to fear something greater than yourself or has power to overcome you.

Allah is saying, Whoever has that fear, even for a little while, will make the effort to remember.

The messenger (saw) is told to remind, and the reminder at times is scary, so the one who is scared will make an effort to remember for themselves. What will they remember? The ayaat being recited to them, because the messenger (saw) was told: *Remind with the Quran.*

If **الَّذِي** was used, Allah (SWT) would be talking about someone in particular but if **مَنْ** is used, the scope is open - anyone who has any fear can still make their way back, and make an effort to remember.

Ayah 11:

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

But the wretched one will avoid it -

- Who will make an effort to run away, and at all costs avoid the thikr (remembrance)? **الْأَشْقَى**

الْأَشْقَى

- Comes from shaqiya/ shaqaawatun: to be unfortunate
- Shaqii is the opposite of sa'eed: happy, fortunate.
- Shaqii is someone who is unfortunate, meaning someone who doesn't have the fortune of good things, speech, advice, counsel, company.
- Ashqaa': the most unlucky, the most unfortunate, who doesn't have anything good in his life whatsoever (mostly refers to good advice/ counsel).
- The most unfortunate person, who surrounds himself with evil company,

reminder, discourse, wasting his life away... this person will make all efforts to avoid this message.

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يَتَجَنَّبُهَا

- Tajannub comes from janb (side) and it means to avoid your side from even touching it, to distance yourself from something and to keep far away.
- This person will make all efforts to distance himself from this reminder, and this is the most unfortunate person. He thinks the people who take the reminder are unfortunate, but the reality as Allah (SWT) describes - *He is the most unfortunate.*

سَيَذَكَّرُ and يَتَجَنَّبُهَا are on the same pattern grammatically (tafa'ul) - one is making the effort to remember and the other is making the effort to run away from the remembrance. In the previous Surah, the plan of the disbelievers was mentioned, and here, the plan of al-ashqaa' (the most unfortunate person) is mentioned, which was to stay away from this reminder at a personal level.

Ayah 12:

الَّذِي يَصَلِّي النَّارَ الْكُبْرَىٰ

[He] who will [enter and] burn in the greatest Fire,

يَصَلِّي

- يَصَلِّي is not passive, meaning he won't be thrown, cast in the hellfire but he will go himself, his limbs, hands, feet, will rebel against him and he will cast himself into hellfire.

In the previous Surah, Allah said:

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

But I am planning a plan. (86:16). He made his plan to stay away from the reminder and Allah made a plan for him to cast his ownself into the hellfire.

In the Surah, the superlative form is used often, ex: الْأَعْلَى , أَحْوَى , يُسْرَى ,
الْأَشَقَى , الْكُبْرَى , أَبْقَى , الْأَوْلَى , الدُّنْيَا

The most unfortunate gets the biggest fire.

Ayah 13:

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

Neither dying therein nor living.

- Allah did not mention in this Surah the name Jahannam or Sa'eer but He (SWT) mentioned Naar, fire itself. In other words, Allah is highlighting the punishment of burning. If someone is getting burnt, the only thing on their mind is getting it (the fire) off, and if you can't get it off, they are begging for death - they can't stand the pain.

Allah says: وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ (And death will come to him from everywhere, but he is not to die...) [14:17] - Meaning he will have every reason to die, but he will never die. Would you call burning like that life? This person will be asking for death, as soon as he sees the hellfire and before even being thrown in.

We touch a little fire with our finger and pull it back, but this person will be in it FOREVER, and Allah does not give him release nor death.

Ayah 14:

So far in this Surah, no mention of Jannah has been made, nor any good news. Now Allah (SWT) speaks of the successful and now you are ready to hear the alternative.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself

Similarly Allah says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

(Certainly will the believers have succeeded) [23:1]

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ

- Meaning the person has already attained success.

أَفْلَحَ

- Comes from iflaah, which comes from fallaah (farmer).
- Arabs were obsessed with farming because most of the Arabian region was desert and very few places had a farm. So whatever few regions who had farms they would have lots of words for it because this was important to them.
- Fallaah is someone at the end part of the year, when he is harvesting, getting the fruit of his labour. This happiest time of the year for a farmer. When he is putting in the seed, he is called a kaafir (literal meaning of the word before Islam). At that time, he is nervous - *I don't know if it will be a good season, if it will rain / not, I don't know if there be any infestations in the field*, etc. When it's time for harvest season, in any agricultural culture, there are lots of festivals, and celebrations because this is an amazing occasion. In other words, this is not a kind of success you just enjoy, but there's a long paralist, turmoil, and labour behind it before you get to harvest.

When Allah (SWT) says: **قَدْ أَفْلَحَ**, what is highlighted is that a lot of work went into that success, just like the farmer before he got to harvest.

Because Allah (SWT) says: **قَدْ**, 1) There is no doubt about it 2) This is already the case - meaning the person Allah (SWT) is describing has already attained success.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

Whoever engages in the act of trying to cleanse themselves from within, whoever has the time and effort to look inside themselves and say, 'How can I become a better person, how can I cleanse myself, is there anything good inside me that I can nourish?' - has succeeded.

مَنْ- meaning anyone, whoever engages in this act.

The bottom line of this Surah is: look inside yourself, find something good inside of you,

harvest it, and let it come out. The person who is concerned with cleaning themselves attained the ultimate success because now they have the right concern, the right attitude, the right priority.

تَزَكَّى

The scope of 'tazakkaa' is so open that Musa (as) even offers Fir'awn:

فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

(And say to him, 'Would you [be willing to] purify yourself) {79:18}

وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ

(And let me guide you to your Lord so you would fear [Him]?") {79:19}

Even in Surah Al-Mu'minoon, when Allah mentions the believers attained success, the act of purifying oneself is mentioned:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

Ayah 15:

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّىٰ

And mentions the name of his Lord and prays.

The one who attained success first tried to cleanse himself from within, and to help cleanse himself, he is engaged in remembering, mentioning the name of his Lord.

رَبِّهِ

- Allah said *Rabbihi* as opposed to *ism Allah*, because when the person remembered His name, he acknowledge that it wasn't just anyone's name, He is not just The Wise, The Creator, The Knowledgeable One but He also happens to my Master. *If He is my Master and I am His slave, I better act like one*; the first practical act of a slave: **فَصَلَّىٰ**.

For the messenger (saw), a higher thing was said: *Be conscious of the perfection of the name of your Lord, the Supreme*. For everyone else, the beginning is required - Just mention the name of your Lord, and the consequence of that is you will want to connect to that Lord by means of salah.

- The root for **يَصَلَّى** is sad, lam, and ya and the root for **فَصَلَّى** (salaah) is sad, lam, and waw. Both roots are very close but one of them will be in hellfire, and the other one will be saved and has attained ultimate success. The contrast is the one attain ultimate success, the final practical manifestation of it is salaah.

إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى - Allah knows the inside and outside of our salaah.

We are standing in a row altogether, made wudu, praying in the right direction, making sajdah the same way, everyone is listening to the same qiraa'ah but one person thinking about what's home for dinner, and another person is thinking what did I leave in the middle at work, and one person is actually remembering Allah, is connected to His Lord and left the world around him.

Ayah 16:

Allah tells us what keeps humanity from finding this right priority of success. If you ask anyone, they are running after success. A student is running after success by graduating, a candidate is running after success by getting the job, a business owner is running after success by making his expanding his business or making it profitable.

How come people are distracted from this ultimate success? What are they running after? Allah explains:

بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

But you prefer the worldly life,

- In the previous ayah, it was third person (He prayed) but now, it is in second person: you. When you think of someone in the third person, you think abstract and you don't think of yourself. Allah makes you realize when He is giving you these lessons, don't think of anyone else but yourself.
- Allah said: **YOU have given preference.**

تُؤْتِرُونَ

- Atharaa': to compare two things and decide one is more valuable than the other and you give it more time, preference, and priority.

الدُّنْيَا

- Feminine form of adnaa', which means closer; inferior.
- Allah calls this worldly life closer (you get things right away) and He (SWT) also calls it inferior.
- You prefer worldly life, the closer life because the things you think success are, they are right here. The things Allah (SWT) calls success, like Jannah, being saved from the hellfire, in our point of view, it seems far. The human being sees the house in Jannah very far, but the house he can get with haraam transaction very close. He sees the drinks of paradise as far but the haraam drink offered here is right here. The hoor ul ayn is seen as far but the haraam on the internet, on the television, going down the street, hanging in the mall, in the hallway in highschool or at work, that's here now. So Allah (SWT) offers something far in our view, and our pleasures are right here in front of us - immediate.

Ayah 17:

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.

- The hereafter is 1) better 2) more lasting.
- Both words (خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ) are comparative in nature. Comparative words are used because in the previous ayah, we engaged in a comparison. Tu'thiruuna - you compared and preferred one over the other, and now, Allah (SWT) gives His comparison.
- Mufti Muhammad Shafiyy: Imagine given two options: 1) To live in a small house that is not furnished, not in a good neighbourhood but you own it 2) You are given the option to stay in a five star hotel for two days.
- Any smart, sane person would pick the home. We don't see the akhirah and in a sense think it will be inferior. *'I don't know what will be there in Jannah, but I know the kind of furniture I want now, and what the interior decor should look like. I don't know if they have IKEA in Jannah / any websites to pick and match furnitures, etc.'*
- We think of Jannah as 'Yes it is there but I'm not sure what's going to happen there.'

- Jannah is forever! They tell you that you own the home forever, but you don't own yourself forever.
- Ex. Person comes to the States, gets the green card and is told, "You are a permanent resident." No one here is a permanent resident, we are all temporary and will be gone, the only fixed thing is death.
- Firstly, anyone house you can have here, that house will be better and on top of that, it will be everlasting. Allah gives two comparisons that convinces you of the better nature of the akhirah.

Human beings have this innate nature in us to want to get things right away and to not want to wait. Allah (SWT) offers us Jannah later, no brochures, no pictures, no websites you can visit to get a view of the property, He just tells you you will have a good neighbourhood, large property, waterfront property, you get to stay forever, no property tax, etc. but you don't see anything else. When a human wants to buy something big, they want to see it first, especially if a heavy price. Allah (SWT) is asking for everything, our entire life. He is asking us to believe and will not show anything. The One selling it to you is only giving you His word. For ex, if someone offers to sell you a house and says you will have it in 20 years, you can't see the house, etc you wouldn't take that deal and would call him a scam. If you bought that house and told your family, "I bought a house, I'll be able to move it in 20 years and I don't know where it is, etc," they will call you crazy. But when a believer gives for the sake of Allah his wealth, assets, life, career, efforts and goes to his family, and tells them, "I've given for the sake of Allah, Allah will reward me with Jannah," They say, "Are you crazy? What about the home here?" The hypocrites would call their own family members 'as-sufahaa' (the foolish ones). This is why prophet (saw) called this deen strange; it begins with something you cannot see (Allah is promising you all these things but you cannot see it).

Your imaan in the akhirah is tested with your preference. What gets your time, effort, attention, where does your day go, what do you with your free time?

We can say we prefer Allah, the deen, live for the sake of Allah (SWT), etc but if our actual preferences are headed in a different direction, Allah knows: **إِنَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ الْجَهْرَ** وَمَا يَخْفَى. He knows what you show, the obvious and what's hidden. He knows if we made an effort to clean ourselves. We have to look deep in ourselves to find the answer to this question.

Ayah 18:

إِنَّ هَذَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى

Indeed, this is in the former scriptures,

- What is been in the former scriptures? That the next life is better and more lasting; to declare the perfection of the name of your Lord, the most supreme.
- If one internalizes that the next life is better than this one, they've got the gist of every messenger's message.

Ayah 19:

صُفِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ

The scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

- Why are these two mentioned? The two primary audiences of the prophet (saw) were the Mushirkoon of Quraysh (they acknowledged Ibrahim alayhi salaam) and the People of the Book (their legacy begins with Musa alayhi salaam). The two primary audiences, their ears are tuned - he is not saying anything new; your father Ibrahim (as) and your leader Musa (as) both said the same thing.

The Surah began with something universal and the Surah ends by reminding us of that same essential message.

All three imaaniyyat are covered: 1) Belief in Allah and His perfection is covered in the beginning of the Surah 2) Revelation covered in the middle of the Surah 3) The Afterlife is covered at the end of the Surah.