

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah Al-Waqiah

I became acquainted with this Surah when I was twenty, and was living a normal routine life with my husband and eight month old daughter. One day there came a boy from some "Madrasah" asking for charity. I felt so sorry for him and gave him some money. In return he handed me a small red book. I said I wasn't interested but he insisted so I just took it and without even looking at it just put it on a side table and went back to whatever I had been doing. After a few days my husband had to go out of town and I was left all alone with my baby. At night when I had put my daughter to bed, I began to feel terrified that what will happen if I die during the night? What will become of my child? So I just sat on the sofa trying to come out of this irrational fear...when I happened to see the same red book. Out of curiosity I opened it and saw that it was a collection of selected surahs from the Quran. I began to read the first surah hoping to feel better. It seemed that as I pondered over the meaning of each line my mind got so involved in it that I forgot how disturbed I had been. And then I thought that I should memorize these words so that I could read them whenever I was upset. So I began to learn four Ayahs daily and as I would do the housework I would keep repeating them. After about forty days I had learned the first two surahs which were Ya-sin and Ar-Rahman. Then came a surah which I didn't know before. I tried to skip it and find some other familiar one but all of the remaining ones were new to me so I thought ok I will do it in sequence and so started this Surah which was Al-Waqiah... As soon as I read the first few lines, I felt like entering a totally different world where the earth was shaking and the mountains were crumbling down and people were

being lined up in three categories....it was awesome and its impact was forever recorded on my mind...

And then it was many years later, when I was blessed with the opportunity of studying the Quran in detail; that I understood the real meaning of this brilliant Surah which leaves you in no doubt that the Day of Judgment will definitely be established whether we remember it or not...

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ {1} لَيْسَ لَوْقَعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ {2}

When the inevitable event will come to pass- no one will be able to deny its coming to pass

And these were the exact words which had shown me the scene of the Qiyamah.....all those years ago.....

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا {4} وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا {5}

The earth shall be shaken with severe shaking and the mountains shall be made to crumble with awful crumbling

Just imagine any earthquake on just one point of earth and the devastation of people's homes and lives. So what will it be like when the whole earth will be shaken? Isn't this enough to put an end to our arrogance....If these gigantic mountains can be crumbled up into dust then what are we in comparison?

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً {7}

Then you shall be divided into three groups

On that day all mankind, from all eras of time, will be resurrected and divided into just three groups. In this world we have hundreds of criteria of categorizing people. We are recognized by our nationality and colour of skin; by our academic qualification and our careers, by our financial status and our various talents and

capabilities...but on that day of final judgment our worth will be decided according to only one thing...our obedience to Allah.

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ {8} وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا
أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ {9}

**Those on the right hand - how *blessed* shall be the people of the right hand;
those on the left hand - how *unfortunate* shall be the people of the left hand**

Quite naturally the people on the right side will be those who worshipped Allah with sincerity and spent their lives in His obedience. And the people on the left will be the ones who had been too arrogant to accept Allah's authority. But what about this third group...who are these people?

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ {10} أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ {11}

And foremost shall be the foremost. They will be nearest to Allah

In a Hadith, the Prophet (s.a.w) asked His Companions, "Do you know who will be the people on the day of Qiyamah who will be the first to enter the shade of Allah's throne?" The *Sahabah* (companions) answered that Allah and His Messenger knew best. And So the Prophet (s.a.w) told them...

"These are the people that when The Truth came to them, they accepted it; when they were asked to give others their rights, they gave it; and their decision for others was the same as what they judged for their own selves."

This honour is so great and that is why its price is our whole life.....not just bits and pieces which we might spare from our free time. We can see that mostly people are so involved with their worldly interests that it is becoming increasingly rare that any

individual should devote his life for the sake of Allah. That is why the following words make me so sad:

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ {13} وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ {14}

Most of them will be from the former people and a few from the later generations

But it gives me a hope as well because Allah has not excluded the people of the later generations altogether. I remember the first time I had read this ayat, my heart wanted to fly in the skies, looking for a way to become a part of this honourable group of people. When I shared this passion with my friends, they tried to discourage me that this place is only for very few people. But I have observed that if the same case is with some worldly benefit we will rush to be in that "few" people...whether it's a limited number of seats in some university or limited plots in a housing scheme...our efforts are doubled....but when it comes to attaining the highest honours of Akhirah we suddenly become very contented.

After describing the wonderful reception which has been prepared for these excellent people, Allah tells us that these are rewards for what they used to do:

جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ {24}

As a reward for their *good* deeds that they had done

Therefore desires and ambitions and dreams can get us nowhere unless they are followed by actions.

Next there are the verses about the companions of the right...

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ {27}

Those of the right hand - happy shall be those on the right hand

They will be in gardens with beautiful trees and fruit; waterfalls and extended shade....endless enjoyment of blessings:

وَفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ {32} لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ {33}

And abundant fruits... neither limited to season nor forbidden

We must really work hard to achieve this status as Allah promises in the next ayat:

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ {39} وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ {40}

Many of them will be from the former people and many from the later generations.

The unfortunate ones who made no effort to fall into the above two groups will have no choice but to stand on the left:

وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ {41}

As for those of the left hand - how *unfortunate* will be the people of the left hand!

They will be in fierce hot wind and boiling water; in a shadow of black smoke which will be neither cool nor beneficial....

Why will they be in such severe punishment?

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ {45} وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ {46}

Indeed they were before that living in affluence and they used to persist on great violations (sins)

Being wealthy is not a crime in itself, but majority of people tend to forget the reality of this world and the hereafter, when they are living luxurious lives....Allah reminds us of our worth:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ {58} أَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ {59}

Have you ever considered that which you emit: Is it you who create *the child* from it, or are We the Creator?

Look at the grand shopping malls and people loading their shopping carts with luxurious food items....do they remember it is all from Allah?

أَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ {64}

Is it you who cause it to grow or are We the grower?

And what about the water that we drink?

أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ {69}

Is it you who send it down from the clouds or are We the sender?

If Allah wanted he could deprive us all from these blessings but He continues to provide for us even when we don't obey Him. Still we are so full of self praise and hardly think that the only being worthy of glorification is Allah:

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ {74}

So glorify the name of your Rabb, Who is the Greatest.

When we read this ayat we should say "sub'hana rabbiyal Azim" which expresses our acknowledgement that only our great lord is the most perfect and pure from all flaws.

The next thing which we should remember is that Just as Allah himself is perfect similarly His words are also most perfect:

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ {77}

Indeed this is a Glorious Qur'an,

So how can we say we believe in Allah and His words when we have no time or place for it in our lives?

أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُذْهِبُونَ {81}

Then is it to this scripture that you are indifferent?

We can deny Allah's religion and make excuses for all our sins but who can deny the ultimate truth of death:

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ {83}

Why is it not then that when you see a dying person's soul come up to his throat

This scene has been so vividly portrayed that I can almost feel it happening in front of my eyes:

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ {84}

While you are helplessly looking on

Allah says that our angels are nearest to the dying person but we cannot see:

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ {85}

And at that time our angels are nearer to him than you, although you cannot see them.

This is the limit of our knowledge....something we so proud of. Whenever we listen to any of Allah's commands which we don't want to follow we arrogantly comment "I don't see any point of doing this or that" Allah reminds us that although he gave us eyes to observe and gain information but he kept some things hidden which can only be "seen" by keeping in touch with Allah through His words. But as we made tremendous progress in science and technology, we began to think we could do everything....Allah asks the most painful question:

فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ {86} تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {87}

Then why do you not - if you claim you are not subject to reckoning- restore to the dying person his soul? Answer this, if you are truthful!

So now when the soul has been taken by the angels....leaving behind the helpless doctors with all their life saving systems....the relatives crying out their hearts....it doesn't matter now whether that person who has just entered an unseen world, was rich or poor; influential or unknown, popular or unpopular.....the only thing which matters is his worth in Allah's eyes; according to which he will be placed in one of those three groups mentioned in the beginning:

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ {88} فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّةٌ نَعِيمٌ {89}

Then if the dying person is one of those near to us. For him there is comfort and bounty, and a garden of bliss

How simply beautiful is the picture that comes to mind. Someone might be living a poor life. People don't even notice him but he was true to Allah and kept doing everything for Allah's pleasure and so the moment this test of life is over; Allah will send his angels with perfumes and flowers to receive this blessed soul.

People sometimes do illegal things just to be a part of their group and to be accepted by society. But our worth is not what this society thinks but what Allah decides. So Allah sends peace on those who spent a righteous life:

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ {90} فَسَلَامٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ {91}

And if he be one of the right hand, he is greeted with salutation: "Peace be upon you," from those of the right hand.

Finally the misguided ones....they will be treated according to what they deserve....regardless of the fact that they might have held honourable status in the world....

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ {92} فَنُزِّلُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ {93}
وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَحِيمٍ {94}

And if he is one of the mistaken rejecters, he is welcomed with scalding water, and burning in hellfire.

Just in case it seems unbelievable; Allah sends the confirmation:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ {95}

Surely this is an absolute truth.

Thus the thing to do is to glorify Allah....

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ {96}

Therefore, glorify the name of your Rabb, Who is the Greatest

These words of glorification are not just to utter thoughtlessly, rather it should be a reminder for us that our actual worth is what Allah thinks of us. Therefore all our efforts should be for his sake and according to the limits set by him. Let's all renew our pledge that our worship and our sacrifice; our life and our death; everything is for Allah who is the lord of the worlds. May Allah accept it from all of us. Ameen