

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

سورة الأعلى

SURAH AL 'ALAA

Introduction

- Hadith: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : (كان لا ينام حتى يقرأ المسبحات ويقول فيها آية) (خير من ألف آية) ("The Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) didn't sleep until he recited the Musabbahaat (starting with the praise of Allah) and said in them is a verse better than 1000 verses." (At Tirmidhi, Hadith #2712) - رواه الترمذي وصححه الألباني / 2712 - (الصف ، الجمعة ، التغابن ، الأعلى
- The surahs that begin with tasbeeh are : Surat Al Isra'a (The Night Journey), Surat Al Hadeed (Iron), Surat Al Hashr (Gathering), Surat Al Saf (Ranks), Surat Al Juma'a (Friday), Surat At Taghabun (Mutual Loss and Gain), Surat Al A'ala (The Most High) (الإسراء ، الحديد ، الحشر ، (الصف ، الجمعة ، التغابن ، الأعلى
- The name of the Surah is 'Alaa – the name of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) The Most High. There is a hadith that says the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forget the best of the Mussabihat, and Ubay ibn Ka'ab said it might be (سبح اسم ربك الأعلى) and the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said it is. That's why it's read in the Eid prayers and witr prayers. And only Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) knows best.

- Surah Al 'Alaa is the last of the Mussabihat and it is Makkiah. The theme of the surah is tawheed – tawheed al uloohiya and tawheed ar roobubiyah.
- The name of the Surah is mentioned in the first ayah.
- What is the connection between the first ayah and last ayah? In the first ayah, we need to remove all imperfection of Allah (سبحانه) and the last ayah is telling us about the unity of belief. All of the previous messengers and previous books had the same belief. Tawheed did not just come with Islam but also in the previous books.
- Breakdown of the surah:
 - Ayat 1 to 5: Glorification and magnification (تسبيح و تعظيم)
 - Ayat 6 to 13: Favor to work (تكليف و امتنان)
 - Ayat 14 to 19: Success (الفلاح)

Ayah 1 – (سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى) (Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High)

- (سَبِّحِ) (Glorify): This is a command to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and to everyone reading the Qur'an to do tasbeeh, to negate all imperfection from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). There is nothing negative in this life, all is positive because it's all Allah's actions. You might see something negative, but you know everything is good because it's all the actions of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). All the problems, calamities, miseries are 'subhan Allah'. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) does not sleep, is not heedless, nor have partners, etc.
- One of the motives of the shaitan is to make us ungrateful, how? Just to think negatively, this is ingratitude. The moment you see something bad you forget all of the good things. The bad is always magnified, so you need to make tasbeeh.
- (اسْمِ) (the Name): the name of your Rabb the Most High, and we say (سبحان ربي الأعلى) in the sujood. Different thoughts can come in your mind while in sujood but you need to make tasbeeh. When you say it, you need to really believe in it with heart and tongue. We are down in sujood, we feel the humiliation, a slip can make us fall, we might be down, but Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is the Most High. You will not put down your head to anyone except Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). In Islam you're forbidden to put your head down to anyone. Which names of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) are mentioned?
- (رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى) (of your Lord, the Most High): Rabb, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is nurturing you. You don't know who's a means to nurturing you, sometimes it's your parents, your spouse, your children, sometimes

an outsider is nurturing you without realizing. A situation can happen with your child in order for you to be nurtured. Your Nurturer is not someone low, but He's the Most High. In life, people want to go to higher level schools to get better training, and Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is nurturing you in order to be reformed to go to paradise. You can't go to paradise without being nurtured. It's similar to before entering a university, there are requirements, and the higher the level the university is, the greater the requirements. Now imagine entering paradise, subhan Allah. That's why the nurturing of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is the most high because it's for paradise. And the ones who are nurtured the most are the prophets because their level is so high in paradise, subhan Allah. Look at the tests they went through – look at Ibrahim (عليه السلام), Prophet Mohammed (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) knows what level you can take, it's not you to choose of what you can't handle or not – Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) knows.

- So you're negating all imperfection from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) through His greatest nurturing. Before some scholars used to nurture their students according to their level. They would give a harder time to the students they knew can handle it. Who is your Rabb the Most High? Ayat 2 to 5.

Ayah 2 – (الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ) (Who has created (everything), and then proportioned it)

- (الَّذِي خَلَقَ) (Who has created (everything),): Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) has two types of nurturing: general and special, general is for everyone by food and drink to make them survive this life. Special nurturing is to be taught manners, knowledge, etc in order to be reformed to go to paradise. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) nurtures us through His actions, decrees. The first action is creation – we were nothing before and Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) created us.
- (فَسَوَّىٰ) (and then proportioned it): Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) perfected your creation – it means Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) gave you the perfect picture in order to do the job you're created for. You have one heart, two eyes, two arms, eyebrows, etc. Why does the heart look like it does, the brain, the nose? Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) knows. Everything has detailed creation, when you look at small creations under the microscope – you see the details and greatness of the Creator. Our organs are covered with skin, imagine if you could see through your veins, organs, blood flowing, subhan Allah. Otherwise we would not be able to interact with each other, subhan Allah.

Ayah 3 – (وَأَنْذَىٰ قَدَرًا فَهْدَىٰ) (And Who has measured and then guided)

- (وَأَنْذَىٰ قَدَرًا) (And Who has measured): Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) decreed and measured everything before it happens. Any incident that happens is already decreed by Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) and is written in the Preserved Tablet – so you need to make tasbeeh. Where you are right now is decreed by Allah (سبحانه وتعالى), meaning you can't be anywhere else, subhan Allah. The decrees are the power of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى)
- (فَهْدَىٰ) (and then guided): Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will guide you to fulfill the decree. For example, it's decreed for you to meet someone, and you'll be at a place that you didn't think you were going to, and on your way you get stuck in traffic all in order to meet that person at that time. Nothing is coincidence or random, it's all decreed. And to be guided is also for the religion. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) decrees that the person will be guided, or that person will seek knowledge. That's why we ask Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) to guide us to the Straight Path, in both the duniya and akhirah. For example, imagine if Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) has decreed that your faith will increase by 50% in the next minute, so a situation will happen that will wake you up, subhan Allah. Sometimes you could be in a crowd and from all the places, your eyes are set on someone with no legs, and at that moment it makes you realize to be thankful for what you have, it makes you seek forgiveness and make dua'a for the person.

Ayah 4 – (وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ) (And Who brings out the pasturage)

- (الْمَرْعَىٰ) is the place where cattle eat food; ie: the pastures. So Who's the One that's taking care of you and the animals? Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) brings down rain, and makes the land to grow. Sometimes the pastures grow without anyone trying to plant it like a garden. All of this is general nurturing.

Ayah 5 – (فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ) (And then makes it dark stubble)

- After it grows, it will become dry and dark in the end, meaning it dies. This shows it's not green forever, similarly for us, we grow and grow and then we go downhill. This is the life cycle.
- All of the decrees of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) are perfect.

Ayah 6 – (سُنُقِرْكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى) (We shall make you to recite (the Qur'ân), so you (O Muhammad ((صلى الله عليه وسلم))) shall not forget (it),)

- This is a special nurturing/favor from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). This is a glad tiding. And notice in the ayat about general nurturing it was mentioned in the absent form and now for the special nurturing it's mentioned in the direct form, subhan Allah.
- Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is the One Who will make you to read and memorize. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is illiterate, he couldn't read and Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) made the Qur'an to be preserved in his heart, subhan Allah. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) didn't bring the Qur'an to make you miserable or be stressed. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will help you. You can't drink water without the help of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى), so what about the Qur'an? Subhan Allah.
- The glad tiding from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is He will teach the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) a special knowledge that he will not forget. This is a special nurturing with knowledge. So don't worry, it's Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) that will teach you and make you read.

Ayah 7 – (إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى) (Except what Allâh, may will, He knows what is apparent and what is hidden.)

- (إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ) (Except what Allâh, may will,): you will forget if Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) wills and that's by the wisdom and knowledge of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). There is even wisdom in forgetfulness, subhan Allah.
- (إِنَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى) (He knows what is apparent and what is hidden): Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) knows all that is apparent and hidden. Don't deal in life as if you know everything, so many things in life are hidden from us, we don't know why some things happen but we need to make tasbeeh.

Ayah 8 – (وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى) (And We shall make easy for you (O Muhammad ((صلى الله عليه وسلم))) the easy way (i.e. the doing of righteous deeds).)

- This is the second glad tiding, the first one was in the future and this one is in the present tense. The deen of Islam is easy. And Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) wants the ease. Anyone who tries to do more than the deen then it will overcome him. The deeds of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) were consistent. And when you come into the deen, you need to come in slowly. People new to the guidance are excited to do so much though in the end they can't handle it.
- Your task is to worship Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) but you can't do it on your own, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will help you → (اياك نعبد و اياك نستعين). Our test in life is not about physical power because then it would be unfair; people's abilities are different. Our test in life is about the power of

our istia'na in Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). How strong is your belief in Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) and how strong is your reliance in Him?

- When any task in life comes, don't just close the door. When you know Allah (سبحانه وتعالى), you'll say I can't do it but with Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) He can make everything possible.
- Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will make your way easy and where you go easy – double ease. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will guide you to the ease. Imagine driving and it's easy and the road you're driving on is smooth and easy. And every creation is made to do what is easy for it. For example, the bees make honey, but we humans cannot make honey. We humans are created to worship Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) so Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will make the worship easy for you. When Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) gives you a responsibility, then He will make it easy for you. When you're a mother, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will make it easy for you. And don't worry about the future, some ladies don't have children and think how will it be to raise them when they're teenagers but why stress about the future? Also when learning, it's not the teacher or students that make things easy – it's Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). Or when going to the hospital, don't say it's the doctor who will make it better, it's Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) Who makes things easy. May Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) make everything easy for you. Ameen.

Ayah 9 – (فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى) (Therefore remind (men) in case the reminder profits (them))

- Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is commanding the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to remind the people because they forget. For example, we know that Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is Ar Razaq, Al Hadi, etc but we forget when we see the means or see fitna. So what do we need? Reminders, especially about (لا اله الا الله). Reminders can either be through the Qur'an or universal signs like nature. For example, you might see a baby cat without a mother and you have feelings of mercy inside of you and think how Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is merciful to you. We're not talking about new information, but reminders are something you've heard, but there's 'dust' on it and you need to brush off that dust. How? With reminders.
- And before you speak, you need to evaluate the situation and see if the time or place is suitable to remind. If a person is tired or hungry, you're just pushing the person to rebel when reminding them at the wrong time – wisdom is needed when reminding. Because a person could react by saying something wrong about the religion or Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). Who will benefit from the reminders? Believers, and the more you believe the more you will benefit. And the one whose heart is pure and present. And the one who's listening attentively, even if your heart is not pure but when you listen attentively then that will purify the heart. When scholars would notice students getting tired in lectures then they would end it because knowledge

is precious, it includes kalam Allah so respect is needed. And who will benefit from the reminder?

Ayah 10 – (سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى) (The reminder will be received by him who fears (Allâh),)

- The one who fears Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) with knowledge and this is simply an action in the heart. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will make this reminder help you and benefit you depending on what's inside your heart. So we need this khashiya and this comes from knowing Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) and fearing Him. Those who know Him, fear Allah's greatness and standing in front of Him more than the hellfire, subhan Allah. Or they want Allah's pleasure before paradise. And before you can fear Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) with knowledge you need to believe, and to believe you need to purify your heart. Imagine fear is connected with reminder, subhan Allah. And who will avoid the reminders?

Ayah 11 – (وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى) (But it will be avoided by the wretched)

- The wretched – they will avoid it either physically by turning away, leaving, or by heart. They will try to change the topic when a reminder comes. When anything comes to you then it means you need it. That's why many people say after I heard the lecture, it was about me. And this shows the power of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى), He's All-Knowing of our situations. This shows you that it's Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) Who's nurturing us, and all of our nurturing is exactly suitable for us.
- When you're feeling the reminders are talking about you then it shows you're heart is alive and remember that reminders are from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) so don't take it personally. But the ones who avoid the reminders hate to be exposed.
- (الأشقى) means the most miserable, the opposite is a happy person. He's the most miserable person because he's avoiding the reminders and this shows that happiness is in reminders. That's why the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said the study circles are gardens of paradise. It's better to learn through knowledge than to go through experiences, people and hardship in order to learn. So don't avoid reminders because avoiding them is a cause of misery, subhan Allah. And taking the reminders is a means to happiness because with reminders you'll be reformed and become better and better – this is special nurturing. The one who's miserable will not be nurtured so how does he expect to reach paradise? Subhan Allah. If the person is avoiding reminders, who will then take charge of

him? The shayateen. May Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) never make us avoid the reminders. Ameen

Ayah 12 – (الَّذِي يَصْتَلِي النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى) (Who will enter the great Fire (and will be made to taste its burning).)

- If a person is avoiding the nurturing, thus not being reformed or elevated, because he thinks he's so good, what place is left besides paradise? The hellfire. What happens in the hellfire?

Ayah 13 – (تُمْ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى) (There he will neither die (to be in rest) nor live (a good living).)

- He cannot die to be relieved; there is so much torture and pain. And he will not live, meaning he's not having a good life. So anyone who's living a miserable living then he's not living, subhan Allah. May Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) protect us from the hellfire and grant us paradise. Ameen.

Ayah 14 – (قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى) (Indeed whosoever purifies himself (by avoiding polytheism and accepting Islâmic Monotheism) shall achieve success)

- What is the way to success? The one who purifies himself. And (أَفْلَحَ) comes from (فلاح) which means a farmer, so a farmer needs to put in effort and struggle. So you need to put in effort to succeed.
- When the heart is purified, then your tongue will be purified and then your actions will be purified. And when you know your sicknesses then you do taqwa and patch it and cover it. And when you know your sicknesses then it makes you humble. And when your sicknesses are exposed to others, then they don't show mercy. But Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is merciful because He knows you have this sickness and trying to overcome it. May Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) never expose our sins to others. Ameen.

Ayah 15 – (وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى) (And remembers (glorifies) the Name of his Lord (worships none but Allâh), and prays (five compulsory prayers and Nawâfil — additional prayers).)

- When your heart is clean, what will happen to your tongue and actions? You will remember Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) (وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ) and you will pray (فَصَلَّى). And when your heart is more pure, you will remember Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) all the time, when you wake up, when you go out, while you're on your own. And when you remember Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) then you will pray a good and acceptable prayer and prayer is total submission. Imagine if we have remembrances throughout the day so that we can be prepared for the prayer. But it's not the case, what's the obstacle?

Ayah 16 – (بَلْ تُؤِثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا) (Nay, you prefer the life of this world)

- We prefer the life of this duniya, subhan Allah. It means we've made the duniya our priority and Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) wants to give us paradise, subhan Allah. We're not purifying ourselves, we're not having taqwa, we're not patching our hearts because of the duniya. Our ego, pleasure of the people, disappointment of the people, etc is stopping us.

Ayah 17 – (وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى) (Although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.)

- But the hereafter, which is later and unseen, is better and forever. But the duniya is worse and temporary. The quality of the people, the quality of the homes, the quality of life in paradise is (خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى) – the best and forever.

Ayah 18 – (إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى) (Verily, this is in the former Scriptures) and Ayah 19 – (صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى) (The Scriptures of Ibrâhim (Abraham) and Mûsa (Moses))

- All of this information is not new, but it's there in the previous books. This shows unity of belief.

It is a great favor from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) to have completed the Musabihat. May Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) forgive us and accept from us. Ameen. Alhamdulliah for everything. May we enter paradise zumara zumara. Ameen.

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