

## **Keys to Success – Reflections from Surat al-Asr**

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### **Defining Success**

- Living a happy and peaceful life that is pleasing to Allah (SWT)

### **What is the Purpose to This Life?**

- To please Allah (SWT) but also to be happy in this life as well as the Akhirah.
- Prophet Adam and Eve started out living in Jannah (ideal place) but were sent to Earth after disobeying Allah as a test.
- We are tested because we (humans and jinn) have a choice, whereas other animals are conditioned to worshipping Allah.

### **Introduction**

- “If Allah (SWT) only sent this Surah to us for the guidance of Mankind, this will be enough for us”- Imam Al Shafi
- The Surah summarizes the entire Quran

### **The Meaning of “Al-Asr”**

- Asr refers to time that is fleeting and limited: begins at birth and ends at death
- “The age of my ummah (in average) is between 60-70 years.” (Tirmithi).
  - Asr: implies we have limited time in the test of life
  - Another meaning: declining day, the day that is about to end
  - Some scholars say that it refers to the Asr salah, very limited in time
  - At a linguistic level: Asr refers to something that is pressed or squeezed
- Dahr, another word for the passage of time, wasn't used as it is without a specific limit

### **The Oath**

- ‘Wal’ means oath in Arabic
- Even though Muslims swear only by Allah, Allah swears by the creation often to highlight its importance. In this case it’s the passage of time, “Asr”.

### **Most Surely Mankind is In Loss**

- The words “Inna” and “La” are used to add emphasis on words
- “Khusr” refers to destruction, being deceived, lead astray and misguided
- What has mankind lost? Connection to Allah which is followed by loss of Jannah, loss of peace and tranquility that results from going against one's natural inclination to worship the creator, and loss of the chance to live a good and pure life
- Many hadith mention that the collapse of the universe correlated to collapse of human civilization
- Why are non-Muslims happy when disobeying Allah so openly? They are not lacking in worldly abundance but lack inner peace and grounding as indicated by high rates of suicides and drugs

### **Four Keys of Success**

1. Faith (Eman)
2. Perform righteous deeds (As-Salihah)
3. Enjoin one another to follow the truth (Al-Haq)
4. Enjoin one another to patience (As-Sabr)

### **1. Faith (Eman)**

- Every action has intention (that comes from iman), certainty and conviction.
- If lacking in any of these three actions, one is not considered a believer.
- Prophet (SAWS) started every answer with Shahadah.

### **How Can We Have Eman?**

- It takes effort, sacrifice and humbleness
- Humbleness is very important: Iblees went astray because he was arrogant
- Effort: Ask Allah for guidance, to create Eman within us and make it certain and increase it
- Ask Allah (SWT) for guidance, ask Him to create Eman within us and make it certain and increase it
- Demonstrate Eman through actions to yourselves (not for others)
  - Not easy: we must struggle (Jihad al Nafs) to make salah, wear hijab, give zakat etc.
  - A Muslim is a person whose actions others don't fear: "There is no faith for one who cannot be trusted"
- The Nature of Eman: Eman increases with ibadah, decreases with sins
  - Everybody makes mistakes but the best of all people are those who ask for forgiveness after
- Always maintain intention
- When you leave something of the sake of Allah (SWT), he will reward you with something better
- Allah (SWT) has told us that He will guide those who seek the guidance from Him. If only we would walk towards Him then He will come towards us at speed. So you need to do what is required of you.
  - However, you must take the initial step

### **2. Perform righteous deeds**

- Your actions are proof of your Eman, it can't just remain in your heart
- Murjiah is a Muslim sect that values only intentions and holds that no actions can be used to judge anyone's heart, not considered Muslim anymore because although it's not up to us to judge, actions are.
- As-Salihah has a deeper meaning than righteous deeds. It refers to setting right what was wrong; putting back in proper place something that was out of place.
  - We need to be among sources of good in this world and turn to Quran and Sunnah to see if our actions are right or wrong.
  - There is consensus on major issues and little disagreement on minor issues.

- Ex. In wudhu, we must put water on our head. There is disagreement on how much needs to be wetted, but agree that wudu must be made.
- “The most beloved of people according to Allah is he who brings most benefit to people, and the most beloved of deeds according to Allah the Mighty, the Magnificent, is that you bring happiness to a fellow Muslim, or relieve him of distress, or pay off his debt or stave away hunger from him. It is more beloved to me that I walk with my brother Muslim in his time of need than I stay secluded in the mosque for a month.” (Tabarani – Hasan, Silsilah Saheeha, Al-AlBani)

### **3. Enjoin One Another to Follow the Truth (Al Haq)**

- The Arabic word ‘Tawasaw’ means to connect or join, to come together and form a bond with.
  - Importance of Brotherhood and Sisterhood: The Prophet (SAWS) made Medinian and Meccan Sahaba brothers.
  - You need someone with you to remind you: you can’t do it by yourself
  - Islam is not a deen of isolationism
  - First must learn the truth in order to follow it
  - Muslim must learn Islamic Knowledge and then share it and guide others

### **4. Enjoin One Another to Patience**

- Sabr: When we make an effort or sacrifice something, we need sabr
- Duaa of Umm Salamah: ‘To Allaah we belong and unto Him is our return. O Allaah, recompense me for my affliction and replace it for me with something better.’
  - Umm Salamah's husband had passed away. This left her sickly and depressed and she became known as “Ayyin al-Arab”, the one who had lost her husband. She kept thinking who could be better than Abu Salamah? However, she had faith in Allah and in the end, she got married to the best human being in the world.

### **References:**

1. Abdur Raheem As-Saranbi, <http://www.quran-tafsir.org/asr.pdf>