

Names of Allah

(from the Stories of the Quran)

November 3, 2019

As Rabb Al Ghafoor

The best way to raise yourself up is by praising Allah SWT. Alhumdulillah in itself is a statement in itself - increasing you in gratitude, patience and goodness - that whatever Allah SWT brings to us is the best for us.

Allah SWT gave us a purpose when we were born, the *fitra*, and this is organically present in us. It's like a natural, organic nourishment present within us, subhanAllah, the best kind there is.

The Quran is perfect as is, and you need to have full faith in its perfection to draw out its benefits. And it will give you exactly what you need, and this is why the stories of the Quran bring such depth and understanding in our lives.

The issue in today's story is ***kufir***, or disbelief. *Kufr* itself means cover, like a cover for the truth. The truth is so clear, and cannot be covered even if you try - the truth that Allah SWT is the only One worthy of worship, and all His Promises and Decree are the truth. Anything that goes against this natural order is a sickness. *Kufr* is of many types - by not accepting Allah SWT, by arrogance, through doubt, or through hatred - these are all major. The opposite of this is belief, submission, humility, certainty and love!

Minor disbelief would be a lack of gratitude or appreciation - with the blessing itself, or the One who gives it to you. This is very common in our relationships with people as well. When we are careful with this in our relationships, with gratitude and appreciation, we raise ourselves up. We should not hate anything in anyone, try and find the good in everyone - this is the best way to live with a pure heart.

Today's story is from Surah Saba ayaat 15-21, about the city of Saba in Yemen. How it goes from green and beautiful to dry and barren because of *kufir* and ingratitude. The name highlighted here is Ar Rabb, our Nurturer. He who reforms us through bringing out our faults, not to expose us but to fix them. He knows the purpose of our creation, what our best skills and characteristics are, subhanAllah. Allah SWT created us with specific strengths for us to fulfill our specific roles in this *dunya*.

He nurtures and reforms us through divine knowledge, situations He puts us in. He reforms us to encourage, upgrade and protect us - to elevate us enough to be in Paradise. Allah is Rabbun Ghafoor, the Most Forgiving - He nurtures us through forgiveness, and reforms us but behind a curtain. This is why one of the questions of the grave is *man rabbuka?*

Saba was a city in Yemen, named after a king. Bilqeess was from here as well. Many messengers were sent to Saba as well because they were mostly sun-worshippers. Saba was given two kinds of blessings - external and internal. Allah SWT gave them two beautiful gardens, full of plants and trees, full of bounty for the people. They were meant to enjoy it and use it, and be grateful for it. But the people of Saba, they disbelieved and were ungrateful. As a result, they went back to worshipping the sun. Allah SWT sent to them a flood, such that the two gardens were destroyed forever, the fruit of the plants grown there turned bitter.

Beside this major *kufr*, they also indulged in the minor. For them to travel from place to place was easy, they would reach their destinations quickly without ever losing their way, and it was completely safe as well. Allah SWT had made ease for them, but they were so ungrateful - they asked Allah SWT to make their journey long, subhanAllah, in order to enjoy their travel. They became stories, an example, for the people and they lost their unity - there is unrest, infighting and disunity between them. Ingratitude tears us apart, causes separation.

This teaches us that whatever blessings we have in our lives, we should use them, subhanAllah, and enjoy them and be grateful. Gratitude will bring us more blessings, better blessings! Chain your blessings by gratitude, because when we are grateful, Allah SWT has promised to increase us - in quality and quantity both. Allah SWT has made so much ease for us, through technology and in other ways, and we should use it to worship Allah SWT.