

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY MUSLIM



REAL LIFE LESSONS FROM

THE HOLY QUR'AN

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Real – Life Lessons from The Holy Qur'an

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Contents

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK	7
Structure of This Book	8
What to Do when Life is Good?.....	9
What to Do when Life is Not as Good?	11
Last Word.....	14
What to Do when Allah begins to Test Your Faith by Taking away Your Wealth and Your Health?	15
Last Word.....	17
A Compilation of Uplifting Verses from the Quran to Help You through Rough Times in Life.....	18
What to Do when You see Yourself acting on Shaitan’s Desires?	20
Last Word.....	21
Tip of a Lifetime.....	21
Getting Into Paradise...A Step-by-Step Plan.....	22
The Dynamics of the Plan	23
Last Word.....	26
Compilation of Qur’anic Verses describing Paradise	27
A Written Contract between You and God.....	29
Introduction:	29
The Contract:	29
Article 1: Gradual reduction of sins.....	29
Article 2: Gradual increment of good deeds.....	30
Article 3: The punitive damage clause	30
Article 4: The Qur’an clause.....	30
Article 5: Sealing the Deal:.....	31
A Word of Caution:	33
A fully-filled Sample Contract	34

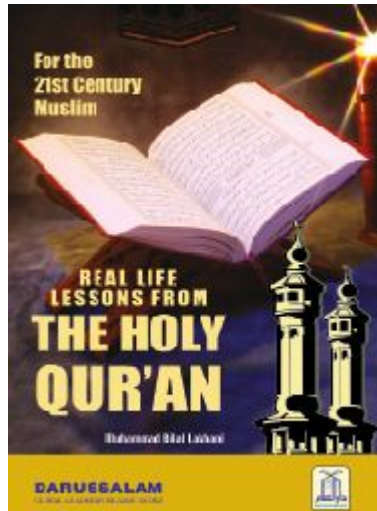
The Personalized Road to Success.....	36
The Difference between Success and Failure	37
Point to Ponder	38
Shortcuts to Paradise.....	39
Shortcut # 1:.....	39
Shortcut # 2:.....	39
Shortcut # 3:.....	39
Shortcut # 4:.....	39
Shortcut # 5:.....	39
Shortcut # 6:.....	39
Shortcut # 7:.....	40
Shortcut # 8:.....	40
Shortcut # 9:.....	40
A Word of Caution:	41
Last Word.....	42
Shortcut for Avoiding Punishment in the Grave:	43
Shortcut for Staying Out of Hell:.....	43
Shortcut to Take People into Paradise with You:	43
Qualities of the People in Paradise:	43
A Foolproof Method for Staying Out of Hell	44
Inside Shaitan’s Head	45
Shaitan’s Weapons of Mass Destruction	47
Last Word.....	48
How to StopShaitan in His Tracks	49
Compilation of Qur’anic Verses describing Hell.....	51
Mastering the Art of Repentance	53

Some Inspiring Words of Advice.....	55
Real-Life Lessons from the Story of Prophet Yusuf (May Allah be please with him)	59
A Short Introduction	60
The Story and Its Lessons	61
Real-Life Lesson # 1:.....	61
Real-Life Lesson # 2:.....	62
Real-Life Lesson # 3:.....	62
Real-Life Lesson # 4:.....	62
Real-Life Lesson # 5:.....	63
Real-Life Lesson # 6:.....	64
Real-Life Lesson # 7:.....	65
Real-Life Lesson # 8:.....	65
Real-Life Lesson # 9:.....	66
Real-Life Lesson # 10:.....	67
Real-Life Lesson # 11:.....	68
Real-Life Lesson # 12:.....	69
Real-Life Lesson # 13:.....	70
Real-Life Lesson # 14:.....	70
Real-Life Lesson # 15:.....	70
Real-Life Lesson # 16:.....	71
Comment:	71
Real-Life Lesson # 17:.....	73
Real-Life Lesson # 18:.....	74
Real-Life Lesson # 19:.....	74
Real-Life Lesson # 20:.....	75
Real-Life Lesson # 21:.....	75

Real-Life Lesson # 22:.....	76
Real-Life Lesson # 23:.....	76
Real-Life Lesson # 24:.....	77
Real-Life Lesson # 25:.....	77
Comment.....	79
The Last Word on Miscellaneous Topics.....	80
Money and Islam Friends or Foes.....	81
Last Word:	83
Why? A Heart-gripping Essay on the State of the Muslim Nation	84
Last Word.....	85
Women and Islam: the Truth at last.....	86
Common Misconception # 1:.....	86
Common Misconception # 2:.....	86
Some of the Rights of Muslim Women include:	88
Last Word:	89
The Last Word on being a Muslim in the 21st Century.....	90

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him, and we seek His forgiveness. Whosoever Allah (SWT) guides then there is none who can misguide him and whosoever Allah leaves astray there is none who can guide him.



As Muslims we consider this life to be a test for the Hereafter, when giving worldly tests the first thing we do is that we cover the syllabus for the test, however when giving the test of our life we fail to cover the syllabus for the test, and that syllabus is the Noble Qur'an. This book is intended to do just that, i.e., to give the Muslims of the 21st century their syllabus for life in the form of life lessons from the Noble Qur'an. A word of caution here, this book is in no way, shape or form intended to be an alternative to reading the Qur'an, but in fact this book is arranged in a format that encourages further reading and study of the Qur'an.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

﴿ كَتَبْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِيزَانًا مُبِينًا ۖ وَلْيَذَكِّرُوا وَلَوْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا ۖ ﴾

(This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember (38:29)

This Verse summarizes my inspiration for writing this book and in this book I will provide over a hundred lessons for life derived from the Qur'an for the 21st century Muslim, I will have succeeded in my effort if this book helps Muslims understand their religion better and hence become better Muslims.

The lessons in this book are meant to be powerful words of advice to Muslims who find themselves at a certain situation in their lives, the direct words of advice from Allah are quoted by quoting the Qur'an, and I provide an interpretation and an explanation to make it easier for the modern day Muslim to understand and use this advice practically.

Structure of This Book

This book is divided into 5 chapters, and each chapter consists of several related life lessons derived from the Noble Qur'an. These lessons are meant to be as concise as possible, and at the same time as inspiring and helpful to the reader as possible.

At a time when Muslims think twice before looking into the Qur'an for answers to their problems, I hope that this book of relevant life lessons from the Qur'an (that I was in immense need of during my teen years) will allow the Muslims of the 21st century to recognize the greatness of this miracle from God, and prevent them from making the same mistakes that I made during my life.

I pray that Allah accepts this work from me and forgives me for any mistakes that may be present in this book, and I also pray that this book helps Muslims to come out of their 'days of ignorance'.

Muhammad Bilal Lakhani,

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

What to Do when Life is Good?



Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

﴿وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا﴾

"We give to men by turns," (3:140)

This Verse confirms what we all learn about life as we get older. That our fortunes in this life are cyclic, i.e., if one day we are doing well for ourselves, the next day we may not be so well off. In this lesson I want to discuss what a Muslim should do if his or her life is going well as we should always fear that Allah might transfer our good fortunes to another if we become ungrateful of the bounties that Allah has blessed us with.

As a Muslim when one is doing well religiously, financially, health wise and in relationships with his family and friends, he can be considered to be having a good time in life. So what does a Muslim in this position do in order to maintain this position in life and to maximize the use of this position in order to benefit him in the Hereafter?

Well for a starter, he has got to realize that this success in life is because of Allah's guidance and His blessings on him, he must also understand that he has been blessed either because his deeds have been righteous or because Allah is taking a trial of him. Allah says in the Qur'an:

﴿لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens it for whom He wills. Verily He is the All-Knower of everything." (42:12)

What this means is that instead of letting your worldly success get to your head and singing praises about your business abilities, what you really have to do is to see this worldly success in light of an additional responsibility, which is to make the most of this worldly success for your salvation in the Hereafter. This Verse also tells us something that a lot of us refuse to pay heed to much to our own detriment and that is that your wealth and provision is something that is in the Hands of Allah and Allah alone, and so it is

much more beneficial to us if we, for example, ask Allah sincerely and passionately for an increase in our wealth rather than spend endless hours networking and entertaining people in power in order to get potential favors that may or may not increase our wealth. The important point here being that we should depend solely on Allah for our provisions and not on our ‘contacts’ or friends, for who can be a better friend to have in times of need than the Lord of the worlds Himself? Furthermore, if we remember Allah when our fortunes in life are good then it is more likely that Allah will remember us when our fortunes aren’t that good and we ask Him for help.

Once a Muslim realizes that all his success is due to Allah’s guidance and blessings, he has got to thank Allah for His guidance and blessings. The best way to thank Allah is by praising and by worshipping Him, especially by prostrating to Him. By thanking Him in this manner you are also benefiting yourself as now Allah will increase His blessings on you as Allah says in the Qur’an:

﴿وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ؕ وَالْكَافِرُونَ
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ﴾

“And He listens to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness and gives them increase of His Bounty: but for the disbelievers there is a terrible penalty.” (42:26)

It is also very important not to get corrupted or get used to this success in life, for Allah will test us by taking some of it away and since this life is only temporary, we should not regret that. Instead we should use this success as a motivating factor to increase our worship so that we can live with this much ease in the Hereafter which is in fact our permanent abode. And no matter how successful we get in this life, we must remember what is making us this successful and not lose track of our religion, as Allah says in the Qur’an:

﴿وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن
يُنْزِلُ بِقَدْرِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ﴾

“If Allah were to enlarge the provision for His servants they would indeed transgress beyond all bounds through the earth” (42:27)

What to Do when Life is Not as Good?



﴿مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ
نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ
رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا﴾

“Whatever good (O man!) happens to you is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to you is from your(own) soul. And We have sent you as a Messenger to (instruct) mankind: and enough is Allah for a witness.” (4:79)

It may not be very easy to see immediately the brilliance of the message in this Verse from Allah to us, but as I put this Verse into context later in this page, the meaning of the Verse is going to become clear very quickly. But first I would like to take a moment to describe certain points in a Muslim’s life where his faith in Allah is tested when some of the luxuries of this life are taken away from him. For example Allah may test a person’s faith by making Islam look like something that is holding the person back from riches or good relationships with friends. Or Allah may take away the person’s health and wealth and see if the person is still a good Muslim under trying circumstances. The golden rule therefore is that any time a Muslim is under distress; his faith is being tested by Allah. Thus whenever you find yourself struggling in life, remember this golden rule, this is a test from Allah, so don’t fail in it by abandoning your religion for the sake of worldly pleasure, and remember that you are going to be rewarded for being patient when being tested, as according to a Sahih Hadith the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said:

“By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, no believer is stricken with fatigue, exhaustion, worry or grief, but Allah will forgive him for some of his sins thereby—even a thorn which pricks him.” (Ahmad 2:303, Sahih Hadith)

So, whenever you find yourself being tested, remember that you are being rewarded at the same time. Now before we try to find solutions to the problems in our lives, we must understand the real causes of

the problems in our lives and according to the Verse I quoted on the previous page, “whatever evil happens to you is from your (own) soul”, so what does this mean. This means that all the problems in our lives are of our own creation. And what action of ours creates these problems?

The answer is our sins. This can be proven using the following Hadith, Imam Ahmad recorded that ‘Aishah (May Allah be please with her) said that Allah’s Messenger (Peace be upon him) said:

“If a person commits many sins and has nothing that will expiate for them, Allah will test him with some grief that will expiate for them (Ahmad, Sahih Hadith)



So all our problems in this life are due to the sins we commit. This may be a little tough to swallow initially, so I want you to look deep into your life and find examples in your life that prove this statement, at first it was tough for me to accept this fact too, but upon further study I was able to find a direct link between the problems in my life and the sins that I have committed.

Now we know what is the root cause of all the problems in our lives, so what is the solution? Simple—yet not known to many Muslims, what I am about to tell you now has the potential to solve all your life’s problems. The two-part solution to all your life’s problems is given below:

- a) Sincerely ask for forgiveness for all the sins that you have committed and make a pledge to mend your ways, i.e., not to commit sins anymore as much as possible.
- b) Increase the time and the quality of your worship.

However, there is a message of hope for those being tested and going through a rough time in life, the following Surah was revealed to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) when he was going through a rough time in his life:

﴿وَالضُّحَىٰ ۝١ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ۝٢ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ۝٣ وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ ۝٤ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ۝٥ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ۝٦ أَلَمْ يَجِدَكَ يَتِيمًا فَشَآوَىٰ ۝٧ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ۝٨ وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ۝٩ فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۝١٠ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۝١١ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ۝١٢﴾

By the Glorious Morning Light, And by the Night when it is still, The guardian-Lord has not forsaken you nor is He displeased. And verily the Hereafter will be better for you than the present. And soon will your

Guardian-Lord give you (that wherewith) you shall be well-pleased. Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter (and care)? And He found you wandering and He gave you guidance. And He found you in need and made you independent. Therefore treat not the orphan with harshness, Nor repulse the petitioner (unheard); But the Bounty of your Lord - rehearse and proclaim! (Surat Ad-Duha, 93)

When being tested a Muslim does feel as if Allah has forsaken him. In the 3rd Verse (in bold) Allah tells the believer that this is not true. And Allah promises that soon ‘you shall be well-pleased’.

Last Word

When being tested by Allah, remember to be patient and hang in there with Paradise as a motivation to struggle through the hardships of life without losing your faith. And remember that the solution to all the problems in this life is to reduce your sins, to repent and to increase your good deeds. When in need of a morale boost start doing Dhikr of Allah, reading the Qur'an, and also take a look at the 'compilation of uplifting Verses from the Qur'an (coming later in this chapter) to help you through rough times in life'.

What to Do when Allah begins to Test Your Faith by Taking away Your Wealth and Your Health?



﴿ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ ﴾

“Verily, We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you (O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)). And We seized them with extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss in health (with calamities) so that they might humble themselves (believe with humility).” (6:42)

It is a well-known fact that Allah tests the faith of Muslims by taking away their health and their wealth or by threatening to take it away, but as seen in the Verse above, if a Muslim does pass the test, his faith will be stronger than it was at the beginning of the test. The first thing I would like to go over with you on this topic is everyday examples of how Allah makes us choose between our faith and our wealth and how more often than not we make the wrong decision.

The testing begins at a young age, you give the grocer a 5-riyal note and he gives you change from a 10. You make a split second decision to keep it or to leave it. As you grow older you are forced to choose between taking and giving interest in your dealings with the bank and other institutions and so it continues. Here is a sample of the questions that appear on the test of life, consider this a cheat sheet, but just make sure you know the answer by the time the question comes up in your life:

Q1) Should I take simple interest on my savings account?

Q2) Should I apply for a non-Muslim country’s citizenship just so that I can be better off financially?

Q3) Should I just make this small bet with my friends (I won’t take the money from them if I win)?

Q4) It won’t hurt him if I don’t tell him a certain fact about my product (the fact doesn’t really matter that much)?