

I am sitting by my door. I stare out into the garden reflecting on the lessons I have learnt thus far. I feel shy as I write this, fearful of what others will say or think as they read this. Will they judge me? Will they look at me and think that I attended just one retreat and am now a changed person? I silently chastise myself and remember the words of sister Haifa Younis, the only thing which should worry me, the only question which should be on my lips and in my ever heart beat... 'Ya Rabb, are you pleased with me, ya Rabb have I done that which will gain your pleasure and for your pleasure alone'. I have spent my life constantly worrying about what others will think of me, a fruitless pursuit which will never be achieved. So much so, that I lost sight of the only thing that should concern me; pleasing my lord.

I thank Allah swt for giving me the opportunity to attend the ladies retreat and for the opportunity to learn from sister Haifa Younis, may Allah swt be pleased with her. It has given me a peace and contentment that I did not know was possible. It has given me a hunger to learn about my deen, to gain knowledge; for I have learnt Allah SWT cannot be worshipped through ignorance. I am surrounded by ni'mah, blessings, from Allah SWT and yet never before have I used any of it in the pursuit of his pleasure. I am so blessed to have such beautiful mosques, imams, books and classes in plenty and yet have I ever used of any of these blessings to know my lord? The answer is no. And if I do not wish to leave the house I have the internet and an Iphone, with hundreds of websites and applications on almost every aspect of my deen. And yet have I ever used this to journey towards my lord? The answer is no. Allah swt has given me all I need to know in a single perfect book and till now it has lain unopened on a shelf. Allah forgive me.

Knowledge, ilm. Without it what are we? Without it how can we please Allah swt? Inshallah I will open the Quraan and learn an Ayaah. I will take one step towards my lord and Inshallah he will pull me towards him for I have learnt obedience brings more obedience. Inshallah if I learn one ayah today, I will learn two tomorrow.

I sincerely pray that everyone will have the opportunity to attend this retreat and learn from sister Haifa Younis. Through the grace of Allah swt she has opened my eyes and inspired my quest to learn and to seek knowledge. Inshallah may Allah give me the strength to continue this journey and to continue to let one question alone shape my life "Ya Rabb, are you pleased with me?"