

E-BOOK

THE GREATNESS OF THE QUR'AN VIRTUES

Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad al Dosary (PhD)

THE GREATNESS OF THE QUR'AN VIRTUES

Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad al Dosary (PhD).



INDEX

Part One: The Greatness of the Qur'an's Overall Superior Qualities

Section One: The Qur'an is Allah's Revealed Speech

Section Two: The Qur'an is an Honor for Arabs in Particular, and for the Muslim Nation in General

Section Three: The Qur'an Guides to that which is Most Upright

Section Four: The Qur'an is a Blessed Book

Section Five: The Qur'an Contains in it an Explanation of All Things

Section Six: The Qur'an is Allah's Favor and a Cause of Happiness for His Slaves

Section Seven: The Qur'an is Guidance, Mercy, and Glad Tidings for Muslims

Section Eight: The Qur'an is Light

Section Nine: The Qur'an is Life for those Who Believe in It

Part Two: The Greatness of the Qur'an's Specific Superior Qualities

Section One: The Virtues of Listening to the Qur'an

Section Two: The Virtues of Learning the Qur'an and of Teaching it to Others

Section Three: The Virtues of Reciting the Qur'an

Section Four: The Virtues of Memorizing the Qur'an

Section Five: The Virtues of Applying the Teachings of the Qur'an



Part 1:

The Greatness Of The Qur'an's Overall Superior Qualities

Section One: The Qur'an is Allah's Revealed Speech

In the following pages, we will be looking at the virtues or superior qualities of the Qur'an - the qualities that set it apart from other books. Without a doubt, one of the most important qualities of the Qur'an is that it is the speech of the All-Knowing, the All-Wise – Allah (sp). Allah (sp) said:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ

“And if anyone of the Mushrikun (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah (the Qur'an)” (Qur'an 9: 6)

This Verse proves that the Qur'an that we recite and that is written within the covers of copies of the Qur'an is Allah's speech, not figuratively, but literally. It also proves that the Qur'an was revealed from Allah (sp). What this means is that Allah (sp) spoke the Qur'an, that Jibreel (p) heard it from Him, and that Jibreel (p) then descended with it and conveyed it to the Messenger of Allah (s) just as it was

conveyed to him from Allah (sp).¹

¹ Sharh Al-'Aqeedah Al-Waasitiyyah by Muhammad Khaleel Harraas (pgs. 153, 154).



Because the Qur'an is the speech of the Lord of all that exists, another one of its superior qualities is that it was not created. The Qur'an is the speech of the One Who has no equal, no rival, and no one that is similar to Him.

And since the Qur'an is Allah's speech, its words are weighty and of great import, and are thus not easy to bear, which is why Allah (sp) informed us that, were the firmest of mountains to be given life,

and were the Qur'an to descend upon it, it would have, as a result of being terrified, fallen down and broken into pieces. Allah (sp) said:

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ

“Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rending asunder by the fear of Allah.” (Qur'an 59: 21)

To be sure, the strength of men's hearts do not come anywhere near the strength of mountains. Nonetheless, mountains cannot bear the message of the Qur'an, whereas Allah (sp), through His infinite wisdom and mercy, has given human being some ability to do just that: to bear the message of the Qur'an and to apply its teachings.²

Section Two: The Qur'an is an Honor for Arabs in Particular, and for the Muslim Nation in General

There is no need to sugarcoat the situation of Arabs prior to the advent of Islam; for the simple fact is that they lived in a state of complete ignorance and darkness. Corruption was widespread, and everything about their lives – their beliefs, their worship, their dealings among themselves, and their system of governance – could be described as reprehensible, ridiculous, or wicked. Then Allah (sp) sent to them the Prophet (s), who came to them with the Noble Qur'an, which drastically changed their lives. Once a people that were despised and known for their ignorance, Arabs, through their adherence to the

² At-Tidhkaar Fee Afdalil-Adhkaar (pg. 45).



Qur'an, were raised to a level of honor, dignity, and power. They became the best of nations, and leaders of all other nations.

The Qur'an is a blessing for all Muslims in general, but it is particularly so for Arabs. With the emergence of two powerful empires – the Roman and Persian Empires – Arabs were alive on borrowed time, and were ripe for subjugation or assimilation at the hands of either the Romans or the Persians. Empires, by their very nature, need to expand, or at least they need the members of conquered nations to do their dirty work for them – fighting wars, working as slaves, and so on. Already, some of the Arabs of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions – the Levant) had become Christians, and were virtually assimilated into the Roman Empire. If it was not going to be subjugation or assimilation, Arabs were ripe for extinction. They had very little to offer the outside world; they were not exactly concerned with the goings on of the world; and they were tribal in nature: They even drew distinctions among themselves, with the members of one tribe considering the members of other tribes as being foreigners. They were ready, if not for complete extinction, then for at least a degree of extinction: the kind that involves living in remote areas with the members of one's tribe, contributing nothing to mankind, and having virtually no impact on the world at large – like the tribes that, even today, are discovered deep within the jungles of the world.

But the Qur'an saved them, helping to preserve their identity, their culture, and their language. The Qur'an was the main reason why the Arabic language spread to Asia, Africa, Europe (Andalusia), and elsewhere throughout the world. Arabic became one of the most important and widely-spoken languages on the world stage, since every Muslim, all over the world, felt, and still continues to feel, that Arabic is his language. Every Muslim feels that way because Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. There are three Verses which prove that the Qur'an should be a cause of pride and honor for Arabs in particular, and for Muslims in general:

1) Allah (sp) said:

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ ۖ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ



“And verily, this (the Qur’an) is indeed a Reminder for you (O Muhammad (s)) and your people (Quraish people, or your followers) and you will be questioned (about it).” (Qur’an 43:44)

There are two possible interpretations of this Verse. According to the proponents of the first interpretation, the Qur’an is a reminder for the Prophet (s) and for his people; according to the second interpretation, the Qur’an is a source of honor for the Prophet (s) and for his people. The latter, regardless of whether or not it is the correct interpretation of the Verse, conveys a true meaning. How so? Well, because of the Qur’an, billions of Muslims throughout history have sent prayers and salutations upon the Prophet (s), and they will continue to do so until Allah (sp) inherits the earth and that which is on it. As for the Prophet’s people, prior to the advent of Islam they were considered a nonentity in the world. If the people of other nations did mention them, they spoke of them in a scornful and disparaging manner. But once the Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet (s), Arabs took a leading role on the world stage, and they continued to do so in the centuries that followed.

2) Allah (sp) said:

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“Indeed, We have sent down for you (O Mankind) a Book, (the Qur’an) in which there is Dhikrukum (your Reminder or an honor for you, i.e., honor for the one who follows the teaching of the Qur’an and acts on its orders). Will you not then understand?” (Qur’an 21:10)

As the translator pointed out within parentheses, the meaning of this Verse is as follows:

If you obey the commands of the Qur’an and avoid perpetrating its prohibitions, your status will be raised, and the Qur’an will be a source of honor for you.³

Technological knowledge, scientific knowledge, domestically produced products – Arabs had none of these things to offer to the world. The one thing they had to contribute to mankind was the one thing that was more valuable than everything else

³ Tafseer as-Sa’dee (3/269).



combined: The religion of Islam. Mankind came to know Arabs due to their religion, their Book, their beliefs, and their manners.⁴

3) Allah (sp) said:

صَ ۚ وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ

“*Sad. By the Qur'an full of reminding.*” (Qur'an 38: 1)

Contrary to the interpretation of Dhil-Dhikr in the abovementioned translation – full of reminding – As-Sa'dee (may Allah have mercy on him) said that it means, “Possessor of great honor and distinction.” Added to that overall meaning, As-Sa'dee (may Allah have mercy on him) stated, is the fact that the Qur'an is a reminder for human beings, providing them with all of the knowledge they need in this life, in terms of both their beliefs and the laws by which they must abide.⁵

Section Three: The Qur'an guides to that which is Most Upright

In Chapter *Al-Israa* of the Noble Qur'an, Allah (sp) said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ

“*Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right.*” (Qur'an 17: 9)

In this Verse, Allah (sp) informs us that the Noble Qur'an, which is the greatest of all revealed Books and the most comprehensive in terms of the knowledge it contains, “guides to that which is most just and right.” Or in other words, it guides mankind to the path that is the straightest, the most upright, and the most correct.

In a general way, this Verse states that the Qur'an guides mankind to the most upright and just of paths. But were we to go into specifics, by mentioning examples of how the Qur'an achieves that aim, we would have to mention every Verse of the Qur'an, since the Qur'an, in its entirety, guides mankind to what is best for them regarding both this world and the Hereafter.⁶ If one wants to know the best and most upright way of treating any issue – whether it has to do with beliefs, manners, deeds,

⁴ *Tafseer as-Sa'dee* (3/269).

⁵ *Tafseer as-Sa'dee* (4/279).

⁶ *Adwaa al-Bayaan* (3/372).



politics, work, acts of worship, etc. – one simply has to go to the Qur'an to find his answer.

Section Four: The Qur'an is a Blessed Book

In four different Verses, Allah (sp) described the Qur'an as being blessed:

1) Allah (sp) said:

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ ۖ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّلَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ

“And this (the Qur'an) is a blessed Book which We have sent down, confirming (the revelations) which came before it.” (Qur'an 6:92)

2) Allah (sp) said:

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ ۖ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“And this is a blessed Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down, so follow it and fear Allah (i.e., do not disobey His Orders), that you may receive mercy (i.e., saved from the torment of Hell).” (Qur'an 6: 155)

3) Allah (sp) said:

وَهَذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبَارَكٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ ۗ أَفَأَنْتُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ

“And this is a blessed Reminder (the Qur'an) which We have sent down, will you then (dare to) deny it?” (Qur'an 21:50)

4) Allah (sp) said:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ ۖ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“(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.” (Qur'an 38:29)



Something that is blessed is not only something whose goodness is confirmed to be present, but also something whose goodness is perpetual and plentiful. Such is certainly the case regarding the Noble Qur'an.⁷

Regardless of any other consideration, the Qur'an is blessed because it is Allah's speech, because its carrier was Jibreel (p), and because its destination was the heart of the Prophet (s). It is furthermore blessed because of its contents. Compared to the large and multiple volume works that have been authored by many men throughout history, the Qur'an is small in size – just over six-hundred pages in its most recent print. And yet each one of its Verses conveys a quantity and quality of meaning that are not found in scores of pages of any book that a human being has authored.

In short, the Qur'an is blessed in every way possible: Its recitation is blessed; its knowledge is blessed; its meanings are blessed; the effect it has on people's hearts is blessed; its goals and aims are blessed; and so on.⁸

Without a doubt, the Qur'an is more blessed than any other divinely revealed Book. If we were to compare the Qur'an to the Torah, for instance, we would find that the Qur'an is small in size. Nonetheless, it is, by dint of its blessedness, more comprehensive in terms of the meanings it conveys. Every day, the Qur'an gives something new, for its wonders never run out. When a group of people read the same Verse of the Qur'an, one of them understands one meaning, and another comes out with another beautiful meaning, which, though different, is equally correct. This quality of the Qur'an – that many meanings can be derived from few of its words – is proof that its speaker is Allah (sp), the All-Wise. What I have mentioned here thus far is the meaning of the Saying of Allah (sp):

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ

“(This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings.”
(Qur'an 38:29)

Every divinely-revealed book that has come before the blessed Qur'an was meant for a specific period of time, and for a specific nation of people. As for the Qur'an, it addresses the needs of all of mankind, and its Verses provide appropriate legislations

⁷ *At-Tabarruk Wa-Anwaa'uhu wa Ahkaamuhu* by Dr. Naasir 'Abdur-Rahmaan Al-Judai' (pgs. 45, 46).

⁸ *Fee Dhilaal Al-Qur'an* (2/1147), and *Lataa'if Al-Qur'aaniyyah* by Dr. Salaah Abdul-Fattaah Al-Khaalidee (pgs. 15, 16).



for the needs of people of all eras, which it will continue to do until the Day of Resurrection.

Section Five: The Qur'an Contains in it an Explanation of All Things

Allah (sp) said:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ

“And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything.” (Qur'an 16: 89)

Ibn Masood (r) said, “Each field of knowledge, as well as each and every thing, has been explained to us in the Noble Qur'an.”⁹ What this means is that, either explicitly, implicitly, or by way of allusion or suggestion, the Qur'an comprehensively deals with every worldly field of knowledge. Up until this day, as has been attested to by a score of scientists and doctors and scholars, newly discovered knowledge is found to be mentioned, hinted at, or alluded to in the Noble Qur'an – whose revelation preceded the actual discovery by more than 1400 years. It is for this reason that we find a number of Western specialists either praising Islam and the Qur'an or going all the way and entering into the fold of Islam.

Section Six: The Qur'an is Allah's Favor and a Cause of Happiness for His Slaves

Allah (sp) said:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

“Say: 'In the Bounty of Allah, and in His Mercy (i.e., Islam and the Qur'an) – therein let them rejoice.' That is better than what (the wealth) they amass.” (Qur'an 10:58)

⁹ Tafseer Ibn Katheer (4/601).



Commenting on this Verse, Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudree (r) said, "The Bounty of Allah (sp) is the Qur'an, and His Mercy is making you (O Muslims) its followers."

In the abovementioned Verse, Allah (sp) made it clear that following the guidance of the Qur'an is better than worldly pleasures and possessions, as well as all of the other temporary enjoyments of this world. The Companions (rp) understood this Verse correctly, and they applied its meanings as well, for they were not deceived by the fleeting pleasures of this world.

There are many examples of the Companions' disdain for worldly things and their longing for the Hereafter, but given the limited scope of this work, I will mention just one, and it is directly relevant to the abovementioned Verse. When war booty arrived in Al-Madeenah from Iraq, Umar (r), and a freed slave of his went out to check the inventory of the booty. Umar (r) began by counting the number of camels that had arrived, and there were a great many indeed. Impressed by the quantity of goods that had arrived and that could be used to help his fellow Muslims, Umar (r) said, "All praise is for Allah, the Exalted." His former slave, as if to interpret the abovementioned Verse, said, "This, by Allah, is the Bounty of Allah and His Mercy." Umar (r) responded, "You have lied. This (wealth) is not what is meant in (the beginning of) Allah's Saying: *"Say: 'In the Bounty of Allah, and in His Mercy; therein let them rejoice'. That is better than what (the wealth) they amass."* (Qur'an: 10:58)

"That is better than what (the wealth) they amass." Rather, this wealth is that which they amass (in the said Verse)."¹⁰

It is not wealth or material well-being of any sort that determines the true status of people in this world, never mind their status in the Hereafter. In fact, worldly things and possessions very frequently are the main causes of misery and depression for people in this world, and of eternal punishment in the Hereafter. In these days of unprecedented wealth, one does not, especially in the West, have to look hard to find instances of wealth and misery being the two main features of people's lives.

Section Seven: The Qur'an is Guidance, Mercy, and Glad Tidings for Muslims

In Chapter *An-Nahl*, Allah (sp) said that the Noble Qur'an is:

¹⁰ *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (4/289).



وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً ۖ وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

“A guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims).” (Qur’an 16:89)

It is important to note here that the Qur’an is guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for Muslims only. It is guidance in that it informs Muslims about correct beliefs, thus saving them from false and misguided beliefs. It is a mercy because it leads to happiness in both this world and the Hereafter. And it is glad tidings in that it informs Muslims about the good they will receive in this life, as well as the blessed and joy-filled existence that awaits them in the Hereafter. These three qualities are for Muslims only; as for others, they have turned away from the Qur’an and deprived themselves of its fruits. The noble scholar Ash-Shinquitee (m) asserted this point when he said, “This Verse clearly implies that the qualities it mentions are not for non-Muslims.”¹¹ This implied meaning is mentioned explicitly elsewhere in the Qur’an; for instance, Allah (sp) said:

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً ۖ ۙ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي ۙ آذَانِهِمْ وَقُرْۙ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى ۚ

“Say: ‘It is for those who believe a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is heaviness (deafness) in their ears, and it (the Qur’an) is blindness for them.’” (Qur’an 41:44)

And in another Verse, Allah (sp) said:

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءً ۖ ۙ وَرَحْمَةً ۖ ۙ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۙ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ۙ

“And We send down from the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers) nothing but loss.” (Qur’an 17: 82)

¹¹ Adwaa Al-Bayaan (3/315).



Section Eight: The Qur'an is Light

Allah (sp) said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا

“O mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof (Prophet Muhammad (s)) from your Lord and We sent down to you a manifest light (this Qur'an).” (Qur'an 4: 174)

Elsewhere in the Qur'an, Allah (sp) said:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

“(This is) a Book which We have revealed unto you (O Muhammad) in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allah and Islamic Monotheism) by their Lord's Leave to the Path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all Praise.” (Qur'an 14:1)

The Qur'an is “light” because it illuminates the truth and drowns out the darkness of ignorance, disbelief, polytheism, sin, and corrupt manners. The Qur'an is light, and the purpose for which it was revealed is to remove people from the darkness of disbelief and ignorance and to bring them to the light of *Tawheed* (Islamic Monotheism). Had darkness reigned supreme throughout the earth, and had the light of the truth remained hidden and forgotten, life on earth would be plagued by complete and unmitigated corruption, violence, chaos, and evil.

In order to save people from darkness and misguidance, Allah (sp) has sent to them a clear Book, one that benefits them both in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah (sp) said:

يَا أَهْلَ آلِ كَتَبَ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِن آلِ كَتَبَ وَيَعْفُوا عَن كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِّن



اللَّهُ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ (١٥) يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ
السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (١٦)

“Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light (Prophet Muhammad (s)) and a plain Book (this Qur’an. Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to a Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism).” (Qur’an 5:15, 16)

Section Nine: The Qur’an is Life for those Who Believe in It

Allah (sp) said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ

“O you who believe! Answer Allah (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life.” (Qur’an 8: 24)

A fruitful life can be achieved only by those who obey Allah (sp) and His Messenger (s); all others are not truly alive. They might be alive in the sense that animals are alive: they eat, they sleep, they satisfy their carnal desires, and that is about it. But having no relationship with their Creator, they lead pointless lives; to the degree that it is as if they are dead.

Qataadah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, “(The saying of Allah (sp)) ‘That which gives you life’ refers to the Qur’an. In it is life...safety, and protection for both this world and the Hereafter.” The truly good life, therefore, is the life of one who obeys Allah (sp) and His Messenger (s) both outwardly and inwardly. Those who fulfill this description are truly alive, even if they have died. Others are truly dead, even if they are still physically alive. Allah (sp) said:



أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن
مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا ۗ

“Is he who was dead (without faith by ignorance and disbelief) and We gave him life (by knowledge and faith) and set for him a light (of Belief) whereby he can walk amongst men, like him who is in the darkness (of disbelief polytheism and hypocrisy) from which he can never come out” (Qur’an 6: 122)

Even among those who, by obeying Allah (sp), are truly living, there are degrees of being alive. The one who is most completely alive among them is the one who best obeys the commands of the Qur’an. Others among them are alive to the degree that they do the same, and they lose out on a truly complete and fruitful life to the degree that they are negligent regarding the Qur’an’s commands.¹²

This section is titled “The Greatness of the Qur’an’s Virtues”, but truth be told, as much as one tries to be comprehensive, no human being can truly grasp the many virtues and superior qualities of the Qur’an. Even supposing that a human being had the ability to do just that, and supposing that he wanted to record that knowledge in print, all of the paper on earth would not be enough for him to complete his task. Long before he would have finished enumerating the Qur’an’s superior qualities, he would have run out of both paper and ink. It is therefore sufficient here for us to enumerate the ones we grasp, and to appreciate the fact that there are many others that we do not grasp or that we do not

fully appreciate.¹³

¹² Al-Fawaaid (pg. 88).

¹³ Khasaais Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem (pgs. 124, 125).



Part 2:

The Greatness of the Qur'an's Specific Superior Qualities

Section 1 :The Virtues of Listening to the Qur'an

Introduction

Every Muslim knows that reciting the Qur'an is an act of worship, but many Muslims seem to be unaware of the virtues of listening to the Qur'an. It is a well-known fact from the biography of the Messenger of Allah (s) that he loved to hear the Qur'an being recited by others. On one occasion, he ordered Abdullah bin Masood (r) to recite the Qur'an so that he could listen to him. When Abdullah (r) complied, the Prophet (s) became fully engrossed in his recitation, being moved to the point that his noble eyes began to shed tears. Based on this incident (as well as on other proofs as well, scholars agree that it is recommended in Islam to ask someone who has a beautiful voice and who reads the Qur'an well, to recite the Qur'an. In fact, making such requests is a habit that was common among the righteous Muslims of the early generations of Islam. Without a doubt, a sincere, heartfelt, and skillful recitation of the Qur'an promotes the ability of an audience to both contemplate and understand the meanings of the Qur'an.

The virtues of listening to the Qur'an are many; in the following pages, I will focus on some of the more important ones.



First: Listening to the Qur'an Results in Being the Recipient of Allah's Mercy

Allah (sp) said:

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy” (i.e., during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imam (of a mosque) is leading the prayer (except Surat Al-Fatiha, and also when he is delivering the Friday prayer Khutbah. (*Tafsir At-Tabari* Vol.9, Pg. 162-164). (Qur'an 7: 204)

Here, Allah (sp) orders His slaves to listen to the Qur'an and to remain silent during its recitation. The implied meaning here is that they should contemplate and apply the Qur'an's teachings, for doing so leads to receiving Allah's mercy. The famous scholar Al-Laith (m) said, “Mercy comes no sooner to anyone than to a person who listens to the Qur'an.” Al-Laith based his statement on the saying of Allah (sp): “So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy”.

The exact translation of the end of this Verse is, “So that perhaps you may receive mercy.” The translator of the abovementioned Verses likely left out the word ‘perhaps’ because when Allah (sp) makes a promise with the word perhaps, it means that He (sp), being All-Generous and Most-Merciful, has made that promise binding upon himself.¹⁴ So the meaning is not, “so that perhaps you may receive mercy,” but instead, “as a result of obeying these commands, you will receive mercy”.

When someone chooses not to listen to the Qur'an, he hurts himself in an unimaginable way. People who listen to the Qur'an in order to benefit thereby reap fruits that are truly wonderful, such as gaining a feeling of closeness to Allah (sp); experiencing moments of spiritual elation; feeling happy and content; and being at peace - all of which are the truly precious enjoyments of this life.

The Prophet (s) informed us that, when people gather together to study the Qur'an and to listen to its recitation, they benefit a great deal in the process. For instance, it is related in Muslim that the Prophet (s) said: “Whenever a group of people gather in the house from the houses of Allah (sp), in order to recite the Book of Allah and to study it among themselves, peace descends upon them, mercy

¹⁴ *Tafseer Al-Qurtube* (1/23).



envelops them, the angels surround them – and Allah mentions them to those that are with Him” (Muslim 2699).

Second: Listening to the Qur'an Leads to Guidance for Both Human Beings and Jinns

Allah (sp) made it very clear that the Noble Qur'an is a source of guidance in both this world and the Hereafter. Hence if someone adheres to it, by reciting it, listening to it, contemplating its meanings, and applying its commands, he will neither go astray nor become miserable. Allah (sp) said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ

“Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right.” (Qur'an 17: 9)

The Qur'an gave glad tidings specifically to those who listen to the Qur'an, promising them true guidance, and describing them with the qualities of wisdom and intelligence. Allah (sp) said:

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ (١٧) الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُؤْتَوْنَ الْأَلْبَابَ (١٨)

“So announce the good news to My slaves, those who listen to the Word good advice (La ilaha illallah none has the right to be worshipped but Allah (sp) and Islamic Monotheism, etc.) and follow the best thereof (i.e., worship Allah Alone, repent to Him and avoid Taghut, etc.) those are (the ones) whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding” (like Zaid bin Amr bin Nufail, Salman Al-Farisi and Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari) *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 12, Pg. 244. (Qur'an 39: 17, 18)

In this Verse, Allah (sp) speaks of those who listen to the “Word,” or to the “Speech.” Without a doubt, the best “Word” or “Speech” is that of Allah (sp), and then that of His Messenger (s). Allah (sp) said:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا ۖ مُتَشَابِهًا ۗ



“Allah has sent down the best statement, a Book (this Qur'an), its parts resembling each other in goodness and truth” (Qur'an 39:23)

Those that listen to the Qur'an and follow its teachings are the ones that Allah (sp) has guided to the best of deeds and manners, and they are the people of understanding.

The Qur'an can result in guidance not just for believers, but for disbelievers as well:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ

“And if anyone of the Mushrikun (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah (the Qur'an)” (Qur'an 9: 6)

What is more, Allah (sp) made the Qur'an a cause of guidance for jinns as well:

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا
عَجَبًا (١) يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا
أَحَدًا (٢)

“Say (O Muhammad (s)): ‘It has been revealed to me that a group (from three to ten in number) of jinns listened (to this Qur'an). They said: ‘Verily! We have heard a wonderful Recital (this Qur'an). It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allah).’” (Qur'an 72; 1, 2)

Allah (sp) wanted good to befall the group of jinns that are described in this Verse, and so he willed for them to go to His Messenger (s), so that they could hear the Noble Qur'an from him, and so that He (sp) could complete his favor upon them. Those jinns, having become guided themselves, returned as warners to their fellow jinns. The chain of events that led to their guidance began with them listening to the Qur'an. They said to one another, “Listen in silence; they did so, and as they listened quietly to the Prophet's recitation of the Qur'an, they contemplated its meanings; as a result, the trueness of the Qur'an's Verses reached the inner depths of their hearts. Allah (sp) said:



وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ (٢٩) قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِن ۙ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَىٰ الْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (٣٠)

“And (remember) when We sent towards you (Muhammad) Nafran (three to then persons) of the jinns, (quietly) listening to the Qur’an, when they stood in the presence thereof, they said: ‘Listen in silence’ And when it was finished, they returned to their people, as warners. They said: ‘O our people! Verily! We have heard a Book (this Qur’an) sent down after Musa (Moses), confirming what came before it, it guides to the truth and to a Straight Path’ (i.e., Islam).” (Qur’an 46: 29, 30)

Third: Listening to the Qur’an Results in a Heart that is Submissive and Spiritually Strong, and in Eyes that Shed Tears (Out of the Fear of Allah (sp))

When a believer contemplates the meanings of the Qur’an, his heart begins to shake, being fearful of Allah (sp), and his eyes begin to shed tears. His mental state heightens as he becomes more conscious of his Lord. And he oscillates between a state of hope and a feeling of fearfulness; he is hopeful of Allah’s rewards and, more importantly, of Allah (sp) being pleased with him, and he is fearful of Allah’s anger and punishment.

A believer reaches such a state not just when he recites the Qur’an, but also when he hears someone else reciting it to him. We know this to be true based on the Sunnah of the Prophet (s). Abdullah bin Masood (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) once said to him, “Recite (the Qur’an) to me.” Not being able to believe what he had just heard, for the honor that was being bestowed upon him was indeed great, Abdullah (r) said, ‘Shall I recite it to you, when to you it has descended!’

‘Verily, I desire to hear it from someone other than myself,” the Prophet (s) replied. Abdullah (r) then began reciting Chapter *An-Nisaa*, until he reached the Verse:



فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ
شَهِيدًا

“How (will it be) then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad (s)) as a witness against these people?” (Qur’an 4:41)

The Prophet (s) then said to him, “Stop”, at which point Abdullah (r) looked up and saw tears flowing from the noble eyes of the Prophet (s).¹⁵ Scholars have raised the question, why did the Prophet (s), who knew the Qur’an better than any of his Companions (rp), ask Abdullah bin Masood to recite it for him? In response to this question, Ibn Battaal (m) said, “It is possible that he wanted to hear it from someone else in order to establish a precedent: To make it an act of Sunnah for one to hear the Qur’an from another person.” On the other hand, it is possible that the Prophet (s) wanted another vantage point – that of a listener as opposed to that of a reciter – from which he could contemplate the meanings of the Qur’an. This latter possibility is quite probably true, because a person who listens to the Qur’an is in a better position to contemplate the meanings of the Qur’an than is a person who recites it: The listener’s mind is unoccupied by other tasks, and is able to focus wholly on the meanings of the Qur’an, whereas the reciter must, in addition to contemplating the Qur’an’s meanings, focus on the task of reciting the Qur’an and making sure he is following the rules of *Tajweed* (of reciting the Qur’an in a proper manner, in terms of pronunciation of letters, elongation of vowels, etc.).¹⁶ Whatever the case, one thing is for certain: the abovementioned Hadeeth illustrates the Prophet’s humbleness in his dealings with his followers.¹⁷

As Imam An-Nawawee pointed out, the Hadeeth proves that it is recommended to cry sincerely upon hearing Verses of the Qur’an, doing so, we are informed in the Qur’an, was the Sunnah (i.e., way or practice) of all Prophets (st):

¹⁵ Al-Bukhaaree (5055).

¹⁶ Fathul-Baaree Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree (9/117).

¹⁷ Saheeh Muslim, with Sharh of An-Nawawee (6/329).



أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِن ذُرِّيَةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا
مَعَ نُوحٍ ۚ وَمِن ذُرِّيَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا ۚ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمٰنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا ۖ وَبُكِيًّا ۗ

“Those were they unto whom Allah bestowed His Grace from among the Prophets, of the offspring of Adam, and of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Nuh (Noah), and of the offspring of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Israel – and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the Verses of the Most Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping.” (Qur'an 19:58)

The people of knowledge, who are the inheritors of the Prophets (st), similarly are moved to the point of crying and of feeling an increase of faith when they hear the Qur'an, a reality that we are informed

about in the following Verses:

قُلْ ءَامِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا ۗ إِنَّا إِلٰهِنَ أَوْثَرًا ۗ أَلْعَلِمَ مِن قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ۗ (١٠٧) وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَا ۗ إِن كَانَ وَعْدُ
رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا ۗ (١٠٨) وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا ۗ
(١٠٩) ﴿﴾

“Verily! Those who were given knowledge before it (the Jews and the Christians like Abdullah bin Salam and Salman Al-Farisi), when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration. And they say: ‘Glory be to our Lord! Truly, the Promise of our Lord must be fulfilled.’ And they fall down on their faces weeping and it adds to their humility.” (Qur'an 17: 107-109)

Discussing the meaning of these Verses, Al-Qurtubee (m) said, “This is a very favorable description with which Scholars are praised. In fact, every person of knowledge, and even every person who has gained a degree of knowledge, should strive to reach the level that is described in these Verses, a level in which one, while listening to the Qur'an, feels moved, humbled, and fearful all at once.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Al-Jaami' Li-Ahkaam Al-Qur'an (10/347, 348); refer also to Tafseer Al-Baidaawee (3/481) and to Ibn Katheer (5/134).



Section 2: The Virtues of Learning the Qur'an and of Teaching it to Others

Introduction

In Islam, teaching knowledge is recommended; in fact, it is considered to be one of the best acts of worship that a Muslim can perform. In a Hadeeth that is related in Muslim, the Prophet (s) said: *“Whoever invites (others) to guidance will receive a reward that is similar to the rewards that will be given to those who follow him, and yet that will not result in their losing out on any part of their rewards in the least.”*¹⁹

Perhaps the most wonderful aspect of teaching is that it endows one with a second life. We all die, and for the most part, our deeds come to an end, but there are three exceptions to that rule, and one of them involves knowledge by which people benefit after one dies. So, for instance, if you teach a child how to pray, you will continue to receive rewards as long as he prays, even for the prayers he performs after you die. Abu Hurairah (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said: *“When a person dies his deeds are cut off from him except from three (exceptions); perpetual charity (i.e., charity that continues to benefit people even after the giver dies), knowledge that continues to benefit people; and a righteous son who supplicates for him (i.e., for the person who has died).”*²⁰

After he mentioned this Hadeeth, Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim (m) wrote, “This Hadeeth is one of the strongest proofs of the lofty status of knowledge (in Islam) and of the greatness of its fruits. The reward of knowledge continues to accrue for a man even after he dies, so long as people continue to benefit from the knowledge he imparted. Therefore, even after such a man dies, it is as if he continues to be alive.... In fact, considering that others' deeds come to an end when they die, it is as if he is being given a second life.”²¹

To be sure, one cannot understate the importance of teaching knowledge in Islam. And yet it is important to understand that not all knowledge is the same: some branches of knowledge are more important than others. That being the case, there is no doubt that the best and most superior field of study is the Book of Allah (sp). Therefore, a person who learns and teaches the Qur'an is better than someone who learns and teaches any other subject or field of study.

¹⁹ Muslim (2674).

²⁰ Muslim (1631).

²¹ Miftaah Daar As-Sa'aadah (1/175).



The pious Muslims from the early generations of Islam strove to learn the Qur'an and to teach it to others. It is from the blessings of Allah (sp), and then by dint of the efforts of our pious predecessors, that so much knowledge about the Qur'an has been passed down throughout the generations and remains preserved in books. Their role-model in this regard – as well as in every aspect of their lives – was none other than the Messenger of Allah (s), to whom the Qur'an was revealed. From the early days of his mission – when he would teach the Qur'an in the house of Al-Arqam bin Abee Arqam – the Prophet (s) would either teach the Qur'an directly to his Companions (rp) or appoint certain Companions (rp) to teach others what they knew of the Qur'an.

In discussing the virtues of learning and of teaching the Qur'an, I will focus on the following five issues.

First: Both the Qur'an's Teacher and Student are Similar in a Way to Angels (sp) and Messengers (st)

Who would not want to be likened to Angels and Messengers (st). But that is exactly the honor one receives for teaching and learning the Qur'an. The likeness stems from the fact that, originally, when the Qur'an was first being revealed, there was a teacher and a student, the former being the Angel Jibreel (p), and the latter being the Prophet (s).

Second: The Best of People are Those Who Learn the Qur'an and Teach it to Others

Learning and teaching the Qur'an are two of the best of deeds that one can perform, and are a source of honor for a person both in this life and in the Hereafter. There are numerous Hadeeth narrations that exhort Muslims to both learn and teach the Qur'an, perhaps none of them being more well-known to Muslims than the following narration: Uthmaan bin Affaan (r) reported that the Prophet (s) said: *"The best you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it (to others)."*²²

In this Hadeeth it is made patently clear that, after the Prophets and Messengers (st), the best people are not those who are the richest or wealthiest members of society, but instead those who both learn and teach the Qur'an. The Hadeeth describes true and sincere followers of the Prophet (s), who strive to learn the Qur'an

²² Bukhaaree (5027).



and to purify themselves in the process, and who also strive to teach the Qur'an to others and invite them to study it.

What is Meant by Learning and Teaching the Qur'an

One would do well to ask the question, does learning and teaching the Qur'an refer to students who learn how to recite the letters and words of the Qur'an at the hands of a skilled reciter, or to students who learn the meanings of the Qur'an from a Shaikh who is conducting a study circle. Actually, it refers to all of the above – to both learning how to recite the letters and words of the Qur'an, and to learning about the meanings of the Qur'an – although the latter kind of learning is superior to the former. After all, the chief goal of studying the Qur'an is to learn its meanings; learning to recite it properly is a means to that end. And, as is usually the case, the end is more important than the means.²³

The Muslims of the early generations of Islam understood the importance of learning and teaching the Qur'an; in fact, a great many of them dedicating their lives to those ends. Of the many scholars who did just that, I will mention the examples of a representative few. Saad bin Ubaidah said, "Abu Abdur-Rahmaan taught others the Qur'an from the time of Uthmaan's caliphate until the rule of Al-Hajjaaj." The very same Abu Abdur-Rahmaan, whose full name is Abu Abdur-Rahmaan Abdullah bin Habeeb As-Sullamee, taught the Qur'an to people in the Masjid of Kufa for forty years, a job he began during the caliphate of Uthmaan, and which he continued to perform until the days of Al-Hajjaaj. At the end of his life, he referred to Uthmaan's Hadeeth – "The best among you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it" – saying, "And that is what made me sit here (as a teacher of the Qur'an for so many years)."²⁴

Imam Naafai bin Abdur-Rahmaan bin Abu Nuaim Al-Madane (m), one of the famous Seven "Reciters", was blessed with a long life. What did he do for the more than average number of years he spent on earth? The answer to this question is truly impressive: He spent more than seventy years of his life teaching the Qur'an to others.

Imam Abu Mansoor Al-Khayyaat Al-Baghdaadee (m) had a number of students who went on to become famous reciters in their own right. Imam Adh-Dhahabee (m) said about him, "He taught the Book of Allah for a long time, and entire nations of

²³ *Miftaah Daar As-Sa'aadah* (1/74).

²⁴ *Fathul-Baaree Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree* (9/97).



people (i.e., a great many people) studied under his tutelage.”²⁵ Imam Abu Mansoor was generous, kind, and patient; for a long time, he taught blind people the Qur'an for the sake of Allah (sp); as if that was not enough, he would also provide for their financial needs. It is related that he taught the Qur'an to more than seventy blind students, a feat that bespeaks a very kind and giving heart.²⁶

Third: Learning the Qur'an and Teaching it are Better than all of the Treasures of the World

Uqbah bin Aamir (r) said, “Once, while we were in As-Suffah (the back portion of the Prophet's Masjid, which functioned as a temporary abode for poor Muslims), the Messenger of Allah (s) came out and said: “Who among you would love to go out every morning to Buthaan or to Al-Aqeeq, and to come back from that place with two high-humped camels, without being guilty of a sin or of the crime of breaking off ties of relations?”

Here, the Prophet (s) mentioned camels in particular because, among the Arabs of that era, camels were very expensive and were owned only by those who were wealthy. And the statement “without being guilty of a sin...” means: “Who among you would like to go to either of the two said places and return with camels that, though you got them for free, were procured in an Islamically lawful manner?” Uqbah (r) went on to relate, “We answered, O Messenger of Allah! We would love to do that!” He (s) said: *“Then shall not one of you go at the beginning of the day to the Masjid and learn or recite two Verses of the Book of Allah - the Possessor of Might and Majesty, for doing so is better for him than for him to have two camels. And (reciting) three (Verses) is better for him than having three (camels, and four is better for him than having four camels...”*²⁷

In this Hadeeth, the Prophet (s) informed us that, while it is a good deed to recite the Qur'an in one's home or elsewhere, it is even a better deed to recite it in the Masjid. This is because the Masjid is a place where the Qur'an should be taught, and also because the Masjid, being a place of peace and calmness, is especially conducive to freeing one's mind of foreign thoughts and to contemplating the meanings of the Qur'an.

²⁵ *Siyar Alaam An-Nubalaa* (19/222).

²⁶ *Siyar Alaam An-Nubalaa* (19/223).

²⁷ *Muslim* (803)



In another Hadeeth, the Prophet (s) equated the reward of learning and teaching knowledge with the reward one receives for performing Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah). In a Hadeeth that At-Tabaraanee (m) related in *Al-Kabeer*, the Prophet (s) said: *“Whoever goes at the beginning of the day to the Masjid, intending thereby nothing save the act of learning something good or teaching it, receives a reward that is similar to the one that is given to a Haaj (a person who performs the greater pilgrimage to Makkah), a Haaj that has completely (and correctly) performed his pilgrimage.”*²⁸

What specific kind of good knowledge one should learn or teach is not specified in this Hadeeth, so the stipulated reward applies to Tafseer, Islamic Jurisprudence, Tajweed (learning to recite the Qur'an properly), and all other branches of Islamic knowledge; without a doubt, however, the most superior of those subjects is the Book of Allah (sp).

In yet another Hadeeth, the Prophet (s) informed us that a person who studies good and beneficial knowledge is, in terms of ranking, like a person who fights in the way of Allah (sp). The Prophet (s) said: *“Whoever comes to this Masjid of mine, having come for no reason other than to teach something good or to learn something good, is, in terms of his ranking, like one who fights in the way of Allah. And whoever comes for another purpose is like a man who stares at someone else's possessions.”*²⁹

It is very fitting for a student or teacher of the Qur'an to be likened to a person who fights in the way of Allah (sp), for, like the latter, the former engages in a struggle, a struggle to overcome their desires, a struggle against the Shaitaan (the Devil), a struggle to be patient, a struggle to consistently attend circles of knowledge, and a struggle to forsake the world and its pleasures.

Fourth: Whoever Teaches a Verse (of the Qur'an) will have Its Reward, as Long as It Continues to be Recited

There are two kinds of good deeds that a person can perform: One involves an act of worship, such as two units of prayer, whereby the worshipper benefits no one save himself. And the second involves a good deed whose benefit extends beyond the doer of the good deed; so, for example, if a person gives charity to the poor and needy, he

²⁸ At-Tabaraanee in *Al-Kabeer* (8/94). In his grading of this Hadeeth, Al-Albaanee said in *Saheeh At-Targheeb Wat-Tarheeb* (1145), This (Hadeeth) is *Hasan Saheeh*.

²⁹ Ibn Maajah (227). And in *Saheeh Ibn Maajah* (186), Al-Albaanee declared this Hadeeth to be authentic.



is performing a good deed of the latter kind: He is benefiting not only himself (by gaining rewards for the Hereafter), but others as well.

To be sure, the latter kind of good deed is superior to the former. Among the good deeds of the latter category is teaching beneficial knowledge to others. Abu Hurairah (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said: *“Verily, among the deeds and righteous acts that reach a person after he dies is knowledge that he taught or spread (while he was alive).”*³⁰

Teaching the Qur'an falls within the intended meaning of the following Hadeeth: *“Whoever guides to that which is good receives a reward that is similar to the one that is received by the doer of that good (i.e., by the one who did the good as a result of having been guided to do so at the hands of the first person.)”*³¹

Nonetheless, an even more specific proof of the reward of teaching the Qur'an, even if it is only a single Verse, is confirmed in the following Hadeeth, in which the Messenger of Allah (s) said: *“Whoever teaches (a person or a group of persons) a Verse from the Book of Allah – the Possessor of Might and Majesty – will have the reward for having done so as long as it is recited.”*³²

The stamp one leaves on this world after one dies – in terms of one's good deeds – is referred to, in the following Verse, as one's 'traces', a trace literally meaning a remnant, sign, or vestige:

وَنَكُتِبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَعَائِرَهُمْ ۚ

“We record that which they send before (them), and their traces” (their footsteps and walking on the earth with their legs to the mosques for the five compulsory congregational prayers, Jihad (holy fighting in Allah's Cause) and all other good and evil they did, and that which they leave behind) (Qur'an 36:12)

“That which they send before (them)” refers to the good deeds that Muslims perform before they die. With this wording, deeds are likened to things that a person sends ahead to the Hereafter, just as a traveler sends his things ahead of him to his intended destination.³³ The wording at the end of the Verse likens good deeds to physical traces or vestiges left behind by a person after he dies: The physical traces or vestiges of a person who has died are, for instance, the house and property and family

³⁰ Related by Ibn Maajah (242), and Al-Albaanee declared it to be *Hasan* (acceptable) in *Saheeh Ibn Maajah* (198)

³¹ Muslim (1893).

³² In *As-Silsilah As-Saheehah*, Al-Albaanee ruled that this Hadeeth is authentic (1335).

³³ *At-Tahreer Wat-Tanweer* (22/204).



he left behind. The traces or vestiges of his deeds, for which he will be rewarded, are the continued application of the good things he taught to others while he was alive.

Fifth: The Reward of Teaching the Qur'an to One's Children

Today, many Muslims send their children to a *Qaaree* so that they can be taught the Qur'an. While such a practice is laudable, parents should also spend some time teaching their children – which of course involves learning first - since the duty of educating children rests squarely on the shoulders of parents. At least initially, a child, before being sent to a teacher, should be taught part of the Qur'an by his or her parents. In order for them to gain an appreciation of the Qur'an, children must be made to see the dominant role the Qur'an has on their household. Parents create a wrong impression on their children when, in the home, they are allowed to play and watch television all day, while they recite the Qur'an only when they go to study under the tutelage of a *Qaaree*. In such situations, a child will come to think that religion is for the Masjid only, while home is a place for worldly pleasures and pursuits.

For these reasons, it is encouraged in Islam for parents to teach their children the Qur'an; in fact, that is what our pious predecessors from the early generations of Islam would do with their children. The reward for teaching one's children the Qur'an is great indeed, and is proportionate to the effort, patience, and hardship that is involved in teaching children, whose minds frequently wander and who need constant attention.

Buraidah bin Al-Husaib (r) said that, one day, he was with the Messenger of Allah (s) when he heard him say: *“Verily, the Qur'an will meet its companion (i.e., the person who recited it and followed its teachings) on the Day of Resurrection. The Qur'an will meet him when his grave will split apart for him, and will be like a man whose face has lost his color. The Qur'an will say to him, ‘Do you recognize me?’ He will say, ‘I do not recognize you.’ The Qur'an will say, ‘I am your companion, the Qur'an, which (because you were preoccupied with me) caused you to go thirsty during the middle of the day (when it is hottest outside), and made you lose Sleep at night (i.e., because you were busy reciting me)...’ Then he will be given a kingdom in his right hand, and eternal life in his left; and a crown of dignity will be placed on his head. As for his parents, they will be attired in two robes.... And they will ask, ‘What has made us deserving of being attired in these?’ It will be said to them, ‘For*



teaching your child the Qur'an.' Then it will be said to him, 'Recite and rise up through the levels and rooms of Paradise.' He will continue to ascend as long as he continues to recite, regardless of whether he recites quickly or slowly, carefully enunciating each letter."³⁴

A similar narration, with a similar wording is related in At-Tabaraanee's *Al-Ausat*.³⁵ In it, the Prophet (s) said, "His parents will be attired in two robes, robes that are more valuable than the earth and all that is in it. They will say, 'O our Lord! Why are we given these (i.e., what good deed have we performed to deserve these)?' It will be said to them, 'For teaching your child the Qur'an...'"

The parents described in this Hadeeth will be bewildered on the Day of Resurrection, not being able to understand why such expensive robes are being given to them. They will not be able to think of any deed they had performed in this life that could make them deserving of so much goodness. At this point of the Hadeeth, one might be led to believe that they are being rewarded for having performed countless prayers, for having sacrificed their lives for the sake of their religion, for having given all of their wealth away in charity, or for any other deed that, among human beings, is at once rare and remarkable. But it was none of those deeds that made them deserving of the priceless robes; rather, it was the simple act of teaching their child the Qur'an. Without a doubt, if all parents contemplated this Hadeeth and understood its implications, more and more of them would sacrifice their time, their money, and their energy to make sure that their children were adequately taught the Noble Qur'an.³⁶

Section 3: The Virtues of Reciting the Qur'an

Introduction

The Messenger of Allah (s) would read the Noble Qur'an a great deal. Through his actions, he made it clear that one should avail of any opportunity to read the Qur'an. He would read it standing up, sitting down, or lying down; while in a state of purity and in a state of minor impurity, while walking and riding; and in virtually every other situation or position he found himself to be in.

³⁴ Ahmad in *Al-Musnad* (5/348); the scholars who wrote a commentary of Imam Ahmad's *Musnad* have said regarding this Hadeeth, "Its chain is *Hasan* (acceptable)." (38/42).

³⁵ At-Tabaraanee in *Al-Ausat* (6/51); also, Al-Albaanee included this Hadeeth in his work *As-Silsilah As-Saheehah* (2829).

³⁶ *Anwaar Al-Qur'an* by Mustafa Al-Himsee (pgs. 181, 182).



While there were no cars or trains or planes during the lifetime of the Prophet (s), there were horses and camels. People would spend days and even weeks on a camel, riding from one city to another. The Prophet (s) would avail of such long periods of free time to recite the Qur'an; for instance, Abdullah bin Mughaffal (r) said, "On the Day of the Makkah Conquest, I saw the Messenger of Allah (s); he was on his riding animal, and he was reciting Chapter *Al-Fath*."³⁷ Therefore, the act of reciting the Qur'an while riding on a means of conveyance is from the Sunnah of the Prophet (s); in fact, it is a Sunnah that we should strive to revive. Many of us spend long hours traveling by plane, by train, or by car; and while the average journey these days does not take weeks, it can nonetheless take a few hours and sometimes even a few days. When we find ourselves on such a journey, we should, in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (s), make a concerted effort to dedicate at least a part of the journey to reciting the Noble Qur'an.

The Messenger of Allah (s) would exhort his Companions (rp) to recite the Qur'an while they were traveling by road; incidentally, many Verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet (s) while he was traveling from one place to another. Then he would continue to recite those Verses throughout the course of the remainder of his journey.

There is hardly an occasion during which it is deemed inappropriate to recite the Qur'an. Those rare occasions during which we should not recite the Qur'an have been made clear to us in the Sunnah of the Prophet (s). So, for instance, we are forbidden from reciting the Qur'an while we are in the bowing position during Prayer, when we perform prostration and during other parts of the Prayer - except when we are standing up. Also, it is a detested act to recite the Qur'an while one is sitting down to urinate or defecate. And if one is sleepy or dizzy or drowsy to the point that one does not know what one is saying, one should not recite the Qur'an. And finally, during the Friday Sermon anyone who can hear the Imam speaking should not recite the Qur'an.³⁸ The point here is that the Prophet (s) would exhort his Companions (rp) to recite the Qur'an as much as possible, for he wanted the Qur'an to play a dominant role in every part of their lives.³⁹

As is the case regarding listening to the Qur'an, the virtues of reciting the Qur'an are numerous and blessed. Were Muslims to know the virtues and rewards of reciting

³⁷ Bukhaaree (5034)

³⁸ *At-Tibyaan Fee Aadaab Hamalatul-Qur'an* (3/1261).

³⁹ *Yuallimuhumul-Kitaab Al-Ta'aamul Ma'al-Qur'an Al-Kareem* (pgs. 42, 43).



the Qur'an, they would carry the Qur'an with them everywhere they went, reciting it both by day and by night. Regarding the virtues of reciting the Qur'an, I will focus on three key issues.

First: Reciting the Qur'an is a Profitable Undertaking

Allah (sp) said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ (٢٩) لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ (٣٠)

“Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah (this Qur'an) and perform As-Salat, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a (sure) trade-gain that will never perish. That He may pay them their wages in full, and give them (even) more, out of His Grace. Verily! He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (good deeds and to recompense).” (Qur'an 35: 29, 30)

In these Verses, Allah (sp) praises those who recite the Qur'an. These Verses are so clear in their praise that Imam Al-Qurtubee (m) said regarding one of them (either Verse 29 or 30), “This Verse is the Verse of reciters (of the Qur'an), and is intended for those among them who both have knowledge (of the Qur'an) and apply that knowledge in practice.”⁴⁰ As Imam Al-Qurtubee (m) stated, Allah (sp) praised reciters of the Qur'an for consistently reciting it, for studying its meanings, and for applying its teachings.⁴¹

Furthermore, in the abovementioned Verses, Allah (sp) likened the act of reciting the Qur'an to business – more specifically, to a very profitable business. When Allah (sp) says that He will reward people for doing a good deed, and when He (sp) does not state the amount of that reward, it means that He (sp) will give them a great deal, for He (sp) is All-Generous. Consider a mere created human being who is the king of a land. If he promises an undisclosed amount of money as a reward, he will give more than people expect him to give if he is generous. Allah is the Most Generous, so imagine the reward a reciter of the Qur'an will receive, given that Allah (sp) has said:

⁴⁰ Tafseer Al-Qurtubee (14/345).

⁴¹ Fathul-Qadeer (4/348) and to Tafseer As-Sa'dee (4/216).



لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ

“That He may pay them their wages in full, and give them (even) more, out of His Grace.” (Qur’an 35:30)

None save Allah (sp) knows what “more” specifically means in this Verse in terms of exact quantity; but while we do not know that exact quantity, we can, based on the fact that Allah (sp) is the Most-Generous, safely say that it far surpasses what each of us can imagine.

Abdullah bin Masood (r) related that the Messenger of Allah (s) said: “Whoever recites a letter from the Book of Allah receives for it a reward, and a reward (in Islam) is multiplied by ten. I do not say that Alif-Laam-Meem (which, for instance, is the beginning part of chapter Al-Baqarah) is a letter; rather, Alif is a letter, Laam is a letter, and Meem is a letter (i.e., in the calculation of rewards).”⁴²

In this Hadeeth, the Prophet (s) made it clear that, for every letter of the Qur’an that a Muslim recites, he will receive ten rewards. In Islam, the reward for a good deed is multiplied by a minimum of ten:

مَنْ جَاءَ عَآءٍ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا ۗ

“Whosoever brings a good deed (Islamic Monotheism and deeds of obedience to Allah (sp) and His Messenger (s)) shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit.” (Qur’an 6: 160)

But it must be pointed out that that is the minimum reward one receives; as for the maximum amount, the sky is the limit, for Allah (sp) being the Most-Generous, can give as much as He wants to whomsoever He pleases. He (sp) said:

وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Knower.” (Qur’an 2:261)

Without a doubt, in terms of whether a reciter will receive the minimum amount of ten rewards for each letter or whether he will receive more, various factors come

⁴² At-Tirmidhee (2910), and Al-Albaanee declared it to be authentic in *Saheeh Sunan At-Tirmidhee* (2327).



into play – such as the level of his sincerity, his degree of concentration, the manners he shows while reciting the Book of Allah, the lessons he takes away from the Verses he recites, and so on. Abu Dharr (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said: *“Allah, the Possessor of Might and Majesty, said, ‘Whoever comes with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof to his credit, and I may even give more than that.’”*⁴³

There are various AHadeeth that mention the rewards one receives for reading specific invocations; few of those invocations, if any, result in the rewards one receives for reciting the Qur'an. Consider the great many rewards – even if we calculate the minimum tenfold amount – one earns for reciting a page or chapter of the Qur'an.

On the Day of Resurrection, some people will be desperate for a single good deed, which is all they will need in order to make their good deeds outweigh their evil deeds. If we truly understood how desperate we will be for rewards on the Day of Resurrection, we would certainly spend more time reciting the Qur'an, and less time engaging in fruitless and frivolous activities.

Our problem, therefore, is either that we do not understand how desperate we will be for rewards on the Day of Resurrection, or that we just don't care. Perhaps we think that the Hereafter is a long way off, when it is truly near at hand. A student knows that he will be rewarded in the short-term – at the end of the semester – with a grade, which is why he spends hours, days, and weeks reading his textbook. And even after going through his assigned readings, he goes back to reread, review, and summarize what he learned; in many instances, he might memorize verbatim important parts of the textbook. And he does all of this in order to receive a good grade, so that he can achieve a degree of worldly success. He had to do all of that work because he knew that worldly success was not guaranteed for him, but rather that he had to work for it. So does he, or any of us for that matter, think that success in the Hereafter is guaranteed for him? Does he think no work is required to achieve Paradise? If he truly thinks this, he is deluding himself in the most unimaginably worst way possible.

⁴³ Muslim (2687)



Second: As a Result of Reciting the Qur'an, Tranquility, Mercy, and the Angels Descend

Abu Hurairah (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“Whenever a group of people gather in a house from the houses of Allah(sp), in order to recite the Book of Allah and to study it among themselves, peace descends upon them, mercy envelops them, the angels surround them – and Allah mentions them to those that are with Him.”⁴⁴

In this Hadeeth, very specific rewards are promised to those who gather, not to eat or to pass time with conversation, but to “recite the Book of Allah and to study it among themselves.” The people who attend such a gathering will be the recipients of four priceless rewards:

1) Peace and Tranquility Descend upon Them

When a person attends a gathering in which the Qur'an is recited, peace descends upon him. One would do well to ask what that “peace” means. It means that, unlike the people outside of the gathering, most of whom are filled with anxiety, sadness, fear, or worry of some sort, he is calm and at peace.⁴⁵ This is not to say that his life is problem free; to the contrary, like all other human beings, he has his share of problems in life. But when he enters the Masjid and meets with his brothers in order to recite the Book of Allah and to study its meanings, all of his worries go away and peace descends upon him.

These days, people try numerous methods to alleviate their stress and to forget their worries. Most commonly, people resort to alcohol and drugs, but, notwithstanding a short period of feeling “high”, these products create more problems than they solve (in fact, they do not solve anything), and they make matters worse than better. Alcohol and drugs are used by those who try to escape their worries and troubles; in the end, however, they escape nothing, but instead dig a deeper hole of misery for themselves. Would that more and more people who are slaves of their addictions left gatherings of sin – wherein alcohol and drugs are consumed – and made their way to gatherings upon which peace descends. There they would find a permanent solution to their problems: a way to purify their hearts

⁴⁴ Muslim (2699).

⁴⁵ *Wa Rattilil-Qur'an Tarteela* (pg. 15).



and souls of sins, and the achievement of a kind of peace that does not result in a hangover, but in a stronger soul that is better equipped to face the trials and tribulations of life. Without a doubt, as much as people try to find peace in drugs, alcohol, fornication, or any other means of escapism, the only way that mankind can truly find peace and tranquility is through the Noble Qur'an.⁴⁶

2) Mercy Envelops Them

Mercy is near to the people of the Qur'an; in fact, it envelops or covers their gatherings. Within their gatherings, they do things that make them deserving of Allah's Mercy; outside of their gatherings, people, for the most part, are driven, in their actions, by the desire to increase their bank balance. Without a doubt, the former are better:

وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

"But the Mercy (Paradise) of your Lord (O Muhammad (s)) is better than the (wealth of this world) which they amass." (Qur'an 43: 32)

Mercy envelops gatherings in which the Qur'an is recited and studied; this should not come as a surprise, considering the fact that the Qur'an itself is mercy; this applies to the knowledge that was revealed to past Prophets (st), for Allah (sp) said about Noah (p):

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَعَاءَ تَانِي رَحْمَةً مِّن عِنْدِهِ

"He said: 'O my people! Tell me, if I have a clear proof from my Lord, and a Mercy has come to me from Him'" (Qur'an 11:28)

"Mercy" in this Verse encompasses the blessings of prophethood, revelation, knowledge, and wisdom. The Prophet Saaleh (p) made a similar statement:

وَعَاءَ تَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً

"And there has come to me a Mercy from Him" (Qur'an 11: 63)

And regarding the Qur'an being a mercy, Allah (sp) said:

⁴⁶ Anwaar Al-Qur'an (pgs. 107,108).



وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَيِّنًا ۖ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً ۖ وَبُشْرَىٰ
لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

“And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims).” (Qur'an 16: 89)

In Chapter *Al-A'raaf*, Allah (sp) said:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ

“And My Mercy embraces all things” (Qur'an 7: 156)

If, as we are informed about in this Verse, Allah's Mercy embraces all things, it is only fitting that it should embrace the people of the Qur'an.

3) The Angels Surround Them

The Angels surround them with their wings in order to honor them, and what makes them deserving of that honor is the purpose for which they gathered. During the lifetime of the Prophet (s), the noble Companion Usaid bin Hudair (r) physically perceived the presence of Angels while he recited the Qur'an, for they drew very near to him. This occurred one night while Usaid (r) was reciting Chapter *Al-Baqarah* of the Noble Qur'an. In the middle of his recitation, he raised his head towards the sky and saw a cloud, and it appeared as if there were many lamps in it. Then the cloud, or what seemed to be a

cloud, left until he could no longer see it. When he later went to the Prophet (s) and asked him about what he had seen, the Prophet (s) said, “Do you know what that was?” Usaid (r) said, “No”. The Prophet (s) said:

“Those were angels that came close (to you) because of your (beautiful) voice. Had you continued to recite, people would have seen them as well...”⁴⁷

4) Allah (sp) Mentions Them to Those that are with Him

That “Allah (sp) mentions them to those that are with Him” means that He praises them to the Prophets and noble Angels (st) that are with Him.⁴⁸ It would be

⁴⁷ Bukhaaree (5018).



hard to think of any honor that is greater than being mentioned by Allah (sp), the Almighty. Imagine yourself – you being a weak and poor and needy slave to Allah (sp) - being mentioned by your Creator, Allah (sp). If a Muslim, or any person for that matter, knew that the president of his country praised him in front of his ministers, would not his heart swell with pride and happiness. Well – and to Allah belongs the highest example – should not one become even happier knowing that Allah (sp), the Possessor of Might and Majesty, mentioned him in the highest of gatherings?

The aforementioned rewards should be ample reason for Muslims to search out for gatherings in which the Qur'an is studied. The people of the Qur'an are truly blessed in many ways; others who turn away from gatherings of the Qur'an out of laziness or a lack of understanding truly lose out on a great deal of good.⁴⁹

Third: To Recite the Qur'an, Regardless of One's Ability as a Reciter, is a Good Deed

Aishah (rh) reported that the Messenger of Allah (sp) said:

*"The person who is proficient in the Qur'an is with the Safarah (the Messengers or the Angels), the Kiram (those that are close to Allah), and the Bararah (those that are obedient to Allah). As for the person who reads the Qur'an, though it is difficult for him and though he stutters, he has two rewards."*⁵⁰

This Hadeeth describes two kinds of people:

1) A Person Who Recites the Qur'an Well

The abovementioned Hadeeth contains glad tidings for those who went through a process of learning and practicing until they became skilled reciters of the Qur'an. Such people pronounce each letter properly, adhere to the rules of Tajweed (the rules of reciting the Qur'an properly), and are easily able to recall the Verses and chapters they have memorized. As a result of their efforts, they are told that they belong in the company of the *Safarah*, and the commentators of this Hadeeth have said that *Safarah* refers either to the Messengers of Allah or to the Angels (st). For like Messengers and Angels, skilled reciters of the Qur'an know the Qur'an by heart, convey it to others, and remember Allah (sp) frequently.⁵¹

⁴⁸ 'Aun Al-Ma'bood Sharh Sunan Abu Daawood (4/230).

⁴⁹ Anwaar Al-Qur'an (pg. 111), and to Wa Rattilil-Qur'an Tarteela (pg. 15).

⁵⁰ Muslim (798).

⁵¹ Saheeh Muslim with Sharh of An-Nawawee (6/85), and to Wa Rattilil-Qur'an Tarteela (pg. 19).



2) A Person Who Receives Two Rewards for His Recitation of the Qur'an

Such a person stutters and finds it difficult to adhere to established rules of reciting the Qur'an properly. Despite his shortcomings, he is encouraged to recite the Qur'an. And so every Muslim, regardless of his ability to recite the Qur'an, receives a great reward from Allah (sp) for reciting the Qur'an, contemplating its meanings, and applying its teachings. As for those who make an effort but still find it difficult to recite the Qur'an, they receive two rewards, one for reciting the Qur'an and the other for the effort they make to do their best to recite the Qur'an in a correct manner.

Some people might take away from this Hadeeth the understanding that a person who recites the Qur'an poorly receives more reward than does a person who recites it skillfully and beautifully. But that, as Imam An-Nawawee (m) pointed out, is simply not true: "This Hadeeth does not mean that a person who stutters while reciting the Qur'an gets more reward than does a person who recites it skillfully; in fact, the latter is not only better than the former, but he also gets more rewards – that of being in the company of the *Safarah*, and many other rewards as well. The status of being with the *Safarah* is not mentioned for any other person, so how can someone who did not take the trouble of memorizing the Qur'an, of learning to recite it properly, and of reciting it frequently ... be placed on an equal footing with someone who did all of those things?"⁵²

This is not to put down those who stutter when they recite the Qur'an; it is simply to say that a person who does not stutter is better. One must remember, after all, that a skillful reciter stuttered when he first learned the Qur'an. He then had to struggle and learn until he achieved proficiency, and until he became deserving of being likened to Messengers and Angels (st).⁵³

What Muslim would want to live the rest of his life without being able to recite the Qur'an properly? In this regard, not every poor reciter is to blame. Some people have a natural stutter that they cannot overcome, and others, particularly those who are non-Arabs, find it difficult to pronounce certain letters of the Qur'an. Such people, who strive to improve but do not succeed, receive two rewards from Allah (sp), and they are not blameworthy in the least. That being said, some people use the abovementioned Hadeeth as an excuse not to learn how to recite the Qur'an. The

⁵² *Saheeh Muslim with Sharh of An-Nawawee* (6/326).

⁵³ *At-Tidhkaar fee Afdalil-Adhkaar* (pg. 83).



reason for their failure to recite the Qur'an properly is not the result of being limited in their abilities, but is instead the result of laziness and not taking the time to improve. Most non-Arab Muslims find it difficult to pronounce certain Arabic letters, and yet, through practice and determination, they learn and become proficient reciters of the Qur'an. And so, yes, some people are blameworthy for stuttering while reciting the Qur'an, especially those who speak and read Arabic fluently but do not go to the trouble of learning how to recite the Qur'an; or those who studied Islam at a university level, but while they learned Islamic Jurisprudence, never bothered to learn how to recite the Qur'an properly.

Such people have not given the Qur'an its just due, and their poor recitation is a result of one of two possibilities: Either they neglected the Book of Allah at a young age, and then by the time they wanted to learn, the rules of recitation were too demanding for them to master; or they learned how to recite the Qur'an when they were young, but then they abandoned the Qur'an for many years. Their long estrangement from the Qur'an resulted in it being difficult for them to re-learn the rules of recitation. The people of the latter category, unless they repent and strive to improve themselves, are in danger of being among the people that are referred to in the following Verse:

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

“And the Messenger (Muhammad (s)) said: ‘O my Lord! Verily, my people deserted this Qur'an (neither listened to it nor acted on its laws and orders).”
(Qur'an 25: 30)

This Verse makes it clear that a Muslim, no matter what his circumstances, should never stop reciting the Qur'an. This applies both to proficient reciters and to poor reciters who use their weakness as an excuse not to recite the Qur'an. Like everything else in life, achieving proficiency in one's recitation of the Qur'an, or at least gaining a degree of adequacy, can be achieved through practice and determination. One simply has to make a good intention and then strive to improve; if one does that, as is known by all those who have tried, Allah (sp) will make matters easy for him. After making an effort to improve one's recitation, one can either hope for success or at least the achievement of two rewards.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ *Anwaar al-Qur'an* (pgs. 93-98).



Section 4: The Virtues of Memorizing the Qur'an

Introduction

In the early generations of Islam, people, for the most part, learned the Qur'an by committing it to memory. Allah (sp) said:

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ ۖ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ ۗ

“Nay, but they, the clear Ayat are preserved in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge” (Qur'an 29: 49).

Allah (sp) blessed this nation by making the hearts of its righteous members repositories of His Noble Book; it is as if in their hearts there are layers upon layers of scrolls upon which the Qur'an is written, so accurately have they committed the Qur'an to memory.

In a Qudsee Hadeeth, the Prophet (s) related that Allah (sp) said to him (s):

“Verily, I have sent you only in order to test you and to test (others) through you. And I have revealed to you a Book that is not washed off with water. You recite it both when you are awake and when you are asleep.”⁵⁵

That the Qur'an “is not washed off with water” means that it is preserved in the hearts of men and that it cannot be wiped off, erased, or destroyed; instead, it will remain until the end of time.⁵⁶

Many people throughout history have succeeded in memorizing the entire Qur'an; they were able to do so because Allah (sp) made His speech easy for human beings to remember. Allah (sp) said:

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ۚ

“And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember, then is there any that will remember (or receive admonition)?” (Qur'an 54: 17)

Some non-Muslims might not comprehend how the Qur'an is easier to memorize than any other book, and yet most Muslims, though they might not understand the 'how' part, have experienced the ease with which the Qur'an is memorized. Some Muslims are able to read a page of the Qur'an only once or twice, and, though they are not known for any exceptional ability to retain knowledge, that is all they need to

⁵⁵ Muslim (2865).

⁵⁶ Saheeh Muslim with Sharh of An-Nawawee (17/204)



commit it to memory. This is especially the case for those who understand the Arabic language. That being said, one of the truly amazing aspects of the Qur'an being easy to memorize is the fact that a great many people who have memorized the Qur'an these days do not even speak the Arabic language. Though they do not understand more than a few words of the Qur'an, by the grace and mercy and help of Allah (sp), been able to commit all of it to memory. It is difficult to enumerate the number of Muslims that have memorized the entire Qur'an. We know there are great many of them – as has been the case throughout history – but the exact number we do not know.⁵⁷

Imam Abul-Hasan Al-Maawardee (m) said, "One of the ways in which the Qur'an is a miracle is the ease with which it is memorized by people, regardless of the language they speak, for the Qur'an has been memorized even by a person who not only is unable to speak or understand Arabic, but also is a mute. No other divinely revealed Book is memorized to the degree that the Qur'an is memorized, which is one of the various ways in which Allah, by His grace, has made it superior to every other Book that He has revealed."⁵⁸

Whenever the opportunity presented itself to him, the Prophet (s) encouraged the Companions (rp) to memorize the Noble Qur'an. In fact, in various ways he treated people differently based on how much Qur'an they had committed to memory. So, for instance, he (s) would give the banner of an army to the soldier that had the most Qur'an memorized. Also, if he sent out a military unit, he would appoint as its leader the one who had the most Qur'an memorized. And most Muslims know that the Imam for prayer should be the person who knows the most Qur'an. Even when certain Companions (rp) died, the Prophet (s) treated them differently based on their knowledge of the Qur'an, for he would place first in the side compartment of a shared grave the Companion (r) who had the most Qur'an memorized.

Finally, the Prophet (s) stipulated that, if a man wanted to get married, he had to give his wife some dowry (*Mahr*), which could be in the form of gold, silver, a ring, etc. But on certain occasions, if a man did not have any wealth to give his wife-to-be, the Prophet (s) would marry him off to her based on the Qur'an he had committed to memory; or in other words, the Qur'an he had committed to memory was considered

⁵⁷ *Kaiifa tataawajjahu Ilal-'Uhum Wal-Qur'an Al-Kareem Masdaruha* by Dr. Noorud-Deen 'Atr (pgs. 83, 84).

⁵⁸ *'Alaam An-Nubuwwah* (pg. 69).



his dowry, for it was understood that he was going to teach it to her. Our discussion on memorizing the Qur'an revolves around the following three issues.

First: The High Ranking of a *Haafidh* (i.e., a Person Who has committed the Entire Qur'an to Memory)

The word *Haafidh* is a well-known term to Muslims – to non-Arab and Arab Muslims alike – and it refers to someone who has committed the entire Qur'an to memory. When the believers will enter Paradise, a *Haafidh* will achieve special honors, one of them being that he will rise above others towards the higher stations of Paradise. Abdullah bin Amr (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said:

*“It will be said to a person of the Qur'an, ‘recite and ascend, and recite slowly, carefully enunciating each letter, just as you used to do in the world. For indeed, your station (in Paradise) will be the height you reach when you have recited your last Verse.’”*⁵⁹

This Hadeeth refers specifically to one who has memorized the Qur'an, and not to one who reads it from a copy of the Qur'an. Ibn Hajar Al-Haitamee (m) said, “The said narration refers to a person who has committed the Qur'an to memory, and not to a person who reads it from a copy of the Qur'an. This is so because people are the same when it comes to reading from a copy of the Qur'an; the question of less and more does not come into play. People do vary, however, in regard to how much Qur'an they have memorized; the differences between them are quantifiable, and so their stations in Paradise differ based on how much Qur'an they have committed to memory.”⁶⁰

We must keep in mind, however, that, in order to achieve the honor that is described in the abovementioned Hadeeth, certain conditions must be fulfilled. Al-Albaanee (m) pointed out those conditions when he said, “This Hadeeth clearly establishes the superiority of a person who has committed the entire Qur'an to memory, but still, such a person has to fulfill an important condition, namely, that he memorized the Qur'an for the sake of Allah (sp) and not for worldly gain, such as the earning of a dinar or dirham. For it must be remembered that the Prophet (s) said: *‘Most of the hypocrites from my nation are reciters (of the Qur'an).’*⁶¹

⁵⁹ Abu Dawood (1464). And in *Saheeh Abu Dawood*, Al-Albaanee said, *Hasan Saheeh* (1300).

⁶⁰ Al-Fataawa Al-Hadeethiyyah (pg. 156).

⁶¹ Ahmad in *Al-Musnad* (2/175), and the editors of *Al-Musnad* wrote, ‘Its chain is authentic.’ (11/213). And Al-Albaanee included this Hadeeth in his compilation “*As-Silsilah As-Saheehah.*” (2/386).



The people of the Qur'an are a special breed. For, as At-Teebee pointed out, 'Recitation of the Qur'an is for them what glorifying Allah is for the Angels. Nothing turns them away from the fulfilling act of reciting the Qur'an; in fact, there is nothing they enjoy more or find more fulfilling than reciting the Qur'an.'⁶²

Second: A *Haafidh* is Placed Before Others Both in this World and in the Hereafter

1) A *Haafidh* is Most Deserving of being Chosen to Lead Others

A *Haafidh*, or even someone who is very knowledgeable of the Qur'an, deserves to be honored and placed ahead of others. Consider the story of Abdur-Rahmaan bin Abzaa Al-Khuzaa'ee (r). He was one of the youngest Companions (rp) of the Messenger of Allah (sp), and he was the *Maulaa*, or freed slave, of Naafai bin Abdul-Haarith.⁶³ Because he was a freed slave, AbdurRahmaan did not enjoy many of the advantages that were enjoyed by other members of society, people who had wealth, honor, status, and strong family ties. Nonetheless, he lived, by the grace and mercy of Allah (sp), not during the days of pre-Islamic ignorance, when he would have been oppressed and made to do hard labor, but during the golden years of Islam. As such, because of his qualifications, he rose to the rank of governor and ruled over an entire region, an achievement that was unheard of just a decade earlier.

'Aamir bin Waathilah reported that Naafai bin Al-Haarith met Umar bin Al-Khattaab (rp) at Usfaan. The two were well-acquainted with one another, for Umar had appointed him governor of Makkah. Umar (r) asked him, "Who did you appoint as governor of the people of Al-Waadee (during your absence)?" Naafai replied, "AbdurRahmaan Ibn Abzaa." Umar (r) asked, "And who is Ibn Abzaa?" Naafai said, "He is one of our freed slaves."

Thinking that AbdurRahmaan bin Abzaa was probably unqualified for the job, given that he had been a slave, Umar (sp) said, "You have appointed over them a freed slave?" Naafai replied, "Verily, he is a reciter of the Book of Allah (the Possessor of Might and Majesty), and he is a scholar of Islamic Inheritance Law." Amazed at how AbdurRahmaan (r) went from being a slave to the governor of Makkah, Umar (r) recalling what he once heard from the Prophet (s), exclaimed, "Lo! Indeed your

⁶² 'Aun Al-Ma'bood (4/237,238).

⁶³ Al-Isaabah (4/149), At-Taqrīb (1/472), and Siyar 'Alaam An-Nubalaa (3/201).



Prophet (s) said: *'Verily, Allah raises people with this Book, and with it, He lowers others.'*⁶⁴

One cannot understate what Islam did for the poor and weak members of Arab society, for here was a man who did not have wealth, status, or a noble lineage. According to the standards of worldly people, he was probably considered to be one of the lowest ranking members of society. But according to the standards of Islam and of the Qur'an, he was one of the noblest members of society. The Quran raised him from the status of a freed slave to that of a governor. And his knowledge of the Qur'an qualified him for the job of ruling over others and acting as a judge over them. If two rich men quarreled with one another over some money, his word was final, and his judgment was binding upon them.

As for Umar (r), he only had to hear about Abdur-Rahmaan's qualifications before he began to recognize his status as a scholar of the Qur'an; furthermore, Umar (r) approved of Naafai's appointment and even pointed out why AbdurRahmaan (r) was deserving of the job:

*'Verily, Allah raises people with this Book, and with it, He lowers others.'*⁶⁵

2) A Haafidh is the Most Deserving of People to Lead Others in Prayer

Abu Masood Al-Ansaaree (r) reported that the Prophet (s) said: *"Let he who has the most knowledge of the Book of Allah lead the people (in prayer)"*⁶⁶

The high-ranking of a *Haafidh* is most clearly seen when, for instance, hundreds of people attend congregational prayer and he, by virtue of the fact that he has committed the entire Qur'an to memory, is chosen to lead them in prayer.

3) In Matters of Importance, a Haafidh Should be one of the First People to be Consulted

Ibn Abbaas (r2) said, *"The Qurraa (the reciters of the Qur'an, the people who had the Qur'an memorized) would be members of Umar's gathering (during his caliphate), and they were the people with whom he consulted (regarding matters of importance), regardless of whether they were old (above forty) or young."*⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Muslim (817).

⁶⁵ *Anwaar Al-Qur'an* (pg. 248).

⁶⁶ Muslim (673).

⁶⁷ Bukhaaree (642).



4) A *Haafidh* is Given Precedence in Shared Graves

Jaabir bin Abdullah (r) related that, following the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (s) decided to bury fallen Muslim soldiers in shared graves, with a ratio of two men per one grave. For each grave, the Prophet (s) had to choose which Muslim to place first in the side compartment that was dug out inside of the grave. And so for each grave, he would ask his Companions (rp), *“Which of these two learned more of the Qur’an?”*

If one of the two men was pointed out to him, he would place him first in the side compartment of the grave. And he would then say: *“I am a witness over these (men) on the Day of Resurrection.”*⁶⁸

If the Prophet (s) ranked the dead based on what they knew of the Qur’an, it is only fitting, or even more fitting, that those who are alive should be ranked based on the same criteria.

وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

“And for this let (all) those strive who want to strive (i.e., hasten earnestly to the obedience of Allah).” (Qur’an 83: 26)

Third: The Various Virtues of Being a *Haafidh*

1) Being the “People of Allah”

We are all slaves unto Allah (sp), but there are some Muslims among us who are close to him: They are his *Auliyyaa*, or his close obedient slaves. Then there is another category of people. They are His “people” and His chosen, closest slaves. Anas bin Maalik (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“Verily, Allah has His people among mankind.”

The Prophet’s Companions (rp) asked, “And who are they?” The Prophet (s) said:

*“They are the people of the Qur’an. They are Allah’s people, and they are the ones that are closest to Him.”*⁶⁹

First, it must be understood that we cannot make comparisons to Allah (sp), for to Him belongs the highest example: He is above all of his creation, and there is nothing like unto Him. But for the purpose of understanding the implications of this Hadeeth, imagine a rich or famous man who says, “These are my people.” He is referring to a select group of people he has chosen to keep close to him. To be sure,

⁶⁸ Bukhaaree (1353).

⁶⁹ Ibn Maajah (215), and, in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, Al-Albaanee declared this Hadeeth to be authentic (178).



given that he is rich, he will shower them with gifts and love. What will be the case, then, when Allah (sp) chooses the people of the Qur'an to be His "people"? Imagine, given that He is the Most Generous One, the blessings He (sp) will shower upon the people of the Qur'an. As for the Hereafter, He (sp) will give them more than they could have ever hoped or asked for.

2) A *Haafidh* is Among Those Who have been Given Knowledge

In the following Verse, Allah (sp) praised those Muslims who have committed the Qur'an to memory, describing them as being people "who have been given knowledge":

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ ۖ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ ۗ

"Nay, but they are clear Ayat are preserved in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge" (Qur'an 29:49).

Allah (sp) guaranteed to preserve the Qur'an until the end of time. And one of the ways in which He makes sure the Qur'an remains preserved is guiding many members of this nation to store the entire Qur'an in their hearts. That in itself - i.e., being a means by which the Qur'an remains preserved - is a great honor for a Muslim. Therefore, the Qur'an is preserved both on paper and in the breasts of men. Just suppose that even the slightest vowel change was mistakenly added to the Qur'an on paper, so many Muslims have memorized the Qur'an that that mistake would not be able to find a way to their hearts; furthermore, it would be quickly found out and corrected.

3) The Hellfire will not Burn Those Who have the Qur'an Memorized

Every Muslim wishes more than anything else to be saved from the torment of the Hellfire and to be admitted into the gardens of Paradise. Those that have committed the Qur'an to memory will have at least the first part of that wish fulfilled. They will be saved from the Hellfire because of what is in their breasts - the Noble Qur'an. Uqbah bin Aamir (r) reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) said:

*"Had the Qur'an been in a skin container (i.e., a container made of hide or skin), the Hellfire would not be able to consume it."*⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Ahmad (3/155), and, in *Saheeh Al-Jaami'*, Al-Albaanee ruled that it is a *Hasan* (acceptable) narration (2/953).



Or in other words: Had a skin container been given the ability to store the Qur'an, the Hellfire would not touch it based on its proximity to and contact with the blessed Qur'an. Imagine, then, a believer who takes it upon himself to memorize the Qur'an, to store it in his mind, and to constantly review and recite it. Thus what would have applied to the skin container certainly applies to him, *In Sha Allah* (Allah Willing).

Section 5 : The Virtues of Applying the Teachings of the Qur'an

Introduction

To be sure, the greater goal of every Muslim vis-à-vis the Qur'an should be to apply its teachings, by obeying its commands, staying away from its prohibitions, and making it the overall blueprint of one's life on an individual, a familial, and a societal level. As much as a person recites the Qur'an, he will not receive a complete reward until he applies what he recites, by bringing the teachings of the Qur'an into the realm of practical application. Allah (sp) said:

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ

“Those to whom We gave the Book (or those to whom We have given the Book) recite it as it should be recited)” (Qur'an 2:121)

To “recite the Qur'an as it should be recited” means to obey its orders and follow its teachings.⁷¹ Throughout history, no one has better applied the teachings of the Qur'an, both outwardly and inwardly, than the Prophet (s), whom Allah (sp) praised by saying about his character:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

“And verily, you (O Muhammad (s)) are on an exalted standard of character.” (Qur'an 68: 4)

Aishah (rh) clarified the meaning of this Verse when Saad bin Hishaam bin Aamir asked her, *“O Mother of the Believers, inform me about the character of the Messenger of Allah (s).”* She said, *“Do you not recite the Qur'an?”* He said, *“Yes.”* She said, *“Then, verily, the character of the Prophet of Allah was the Qur'an.”*⁷² As An-

⁷¹ Tafseer At-Tabaree (1519).

⁷² Muslim (746).



Nawawee (m) pointed out, this means that the Prophet (s) applied the teachings of the Qur'an, adopted the manners that are extolled in the Qur'an, learned from its lessons and stories, applied its laws, contemplated its meanings, and recited it as it should be recited.⁷³ In short, the Prophet (s) was a practical manifestation of the Qur'an. Or in other words, he was a walking, talking version of the Qur'an.

In his *Tafseer* of the abovementioned Verse, Ibn Katheer (m) said, "Applying the teachings of the Qur'an...became a part of his nature and an integral part of his character."⁷⁴

The deeper meanings and secrets of the Qur'an are perceived only by those who apply its teachings and transform its meanings into real world application. Those meanings and secrets remain hidden to people who recite the Qur'an in a ritual manner, seeking to be blessed thereby, but not willing to learn and act; and the same goes for those who treat the study of the Qur'an as an academic endeavor, thinking that the Qur'an should be studied because, for instance, it is part of our "Arab heritage."

The reward one receives from Allah (sp) is commensurate with the degree to which one applies the Qur'an's teachings. Suppose that a man memorizes all of the laws of his country but then clearly commits a crime and shows no regard for the law. Will his knowledge of his country's laws benefit him in the least? The answer to this question is an obvious and a resounding, no. But then why do some Muslims think that, in spite of their knowledge of the Qur'an, or in spite of the many Chapters of the Qur'an they have committed to memory, they can act contrary to laws of the Qur'an with impunity?

Recitation of the Qur'an and the application of its teachings must go hand in hand; otherwise – if one does the former to the exclusion of the latter – one is heading down a dark path that leads to severe torment in the Hereafter.

How does a Muslim benefit if he memorizes Chapter *An-Noor* in its entirety and consequently knows the punishment of a fornicator, but then goes right ahead and fornicates – and we seek refuge in Allah from being such a person. Will the fact that he has memorized Chapter *An-Noor* save him from being punished? This question, understood in a broader sense, is one that each one of us should contemplate. Our

⁷³ *Saheeh Muslim with Sharh of An-Nawawee* (5/268).

⁷⁴ *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (8/164).



knowledge must be followed by action; otherwise, we put ourselves in great danger of being punished with the Hellfire.⁷⁵

Some of us read the Tafseer of an entire section (*Juzz*) of the Qur'an in one sitting; and while studying the Tafseer is a laudable endeavor, we must learn to strike a balance between learning and applying what we learn. Consider the manner in which the Prophet's Companions (rp) studied the Qur'an: Al-Amash related from Abu Waail that Ibn Masood (r) said, "If a man among us learned ten Verses, he would not go beyond them until he knew their meanings and applied the teachings they contained."⁷⁶

The Virtues of Applying the Qur'an's Teachings

The greatest reward awaiting a person who applies the Qur'an's teachings is Paradise. And yet, since Muslims apply the Qur'an at different levels – with some being better than others – it is only fitting that there be different levels in Paradise. Allah (sp); said:

وَلِكُلِّ ۖ دَرَجَاتٌ ۖ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا ۗ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

"For all there will be degrees (or ranks) according to what they did. And your Lord is not unaware of what they do" (Qur'an 6: 132)

Another major reward one receives for applying the Qur'an's teachings is being blessed with a good life in this world. Allah (sp) promised that reward in Verse number 97 of Chapter *An-Nahl*:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ ۖ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً ۖ طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision, and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e., Paradise in the Hereafter)." (Qur'an16:97)

⁷⁵ *Anwaar Al-Qur'an* (pg. 211).

⁷⁶ *Muqaddimah Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (1/36); the scholars who studied the Hadeeth narrations that are mentioned in Tafseer Ibn Katheer said that the chain of this narration is good.



The rewards for applying the Qur'an's teachings are at once many and varied; some of them are given out in this world, and others, in the Hereafter. The following are just a few examples.

1) Guidance

Allah (sp) said:

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

“So announce the good news to My slaves, those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are (the ones) whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding” (Qur'an 39: 17, 18) In this Verse, Allah (sp) informs those who apply the Qur'an's teachings that, of all of the people on earth, they are the ones who are truly guided and are on the Straight Path that leads to Paradise. But this Verse says something more, it intimates to the people of the Qur'an that, not only are they upon true guidance, but also they will neither go astray in this world nor suffer misery or wretchedness in the Hereafter.

2) Mercy

Allah (sp) said:

وَهَٰذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ ۖ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“And this is a blessed Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down. So follow it and fear Allah, (i.e., do not disobey His orders), that you may receive mercy” (Qur'an 6: 155).

We all want to be the recipients of Allah's Mercy. In this Verse, we are told that the fastest and shortest way to achieve Allah's Mercy is to follow the teachings of His Book.

Allah's Saying that “you may receive mercy” is an explicit promise that Allah (sp) makes to His slaves; and yet, it also suggests an implicit warning: That, if they do not follow the teachings of the Qur'an, they will be punished both in this life and in the Hereafter.



3) Success and Happiness Both in this World and in the Hereafter

Allah (sp) said:

فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“So those who believe in him (Muhammad (s)), honor him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'an) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful.” (Qur'an 7: 157)

In this Verse, the Qur'an is likened to light, in the sense that it removes the darkness of ignorance; and only the truth can be seen in the light of the Qur'an. Also, a follower of the Qur'an is likened to a man who travels by night; if a light appears before him, he heads in its direction, knowing for certain that at the point of the light he will gain safety from the dangers that surround him in the darkness of the night. It is compulsory upon every Muslim to seek out the light of the Qur'an, to believe in it, to apply its commands, to stay away from its prohibitions, and to learn important lessons from its stories and parables. If a person stays away from the light of the Qur'an, he will wander in darkness and fall prey to sin, temptation, doubt, and even, if he strays too far, disbelief.⁷⁷

4) Expiation of Sins and Having One's Situation in Life Improved

Allah (sp) said:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيَّا مُحَمَّدٍ ۗ وَهُوَ
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ

“But those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and believe in that which is sent down to Muhammad (s), for it is the truth from their Lord, He will expiate from them their sins, and will make good their state.” (Qur'an 47: 2)

Allah's Saying “He will expiate from them their sins” applies to both small and major sins. If, by applying the Qur'an's teachings, their sins are expiated, they will be saved from punishment both in this life and in the Hereafter.⁷⁸ It is held by some

⁷⁷ Adwaa Al-Bayaan (7/80), and At-Tahreer Wat-Tanweer (8/319).

⁷⁸ Tafseer As-Sa'dee (1/784).



scholars that He will expiate from them their sins” means that, by virtue of their faith and their good deeds, Allah (sp) will hide for them their previous disbelief and their sins, a favor that He (sp) will bestow upon them because they changed their ways and repented from their past mistakes.⁷⁹

A second reward in this Verse is mentioned as well: Allah (sp) will make good the state or situation of people who apply the Qur'an's teachings. This means that, in this world, He (sp) will make good their affairs for them, and that, in the Hereafter, He will admit them into Paradise, wherein they will abide for eternity.⁸⁰ According to another interpretation, Allah's Saying “will make good their state” means that He (sp) will make good for them their religion, their worldly affairs, their hearts, their deeds, and every aspect of their lives.⁸¹

At any rate, Allah's Saying “will make good their state” seems to have broad implications; what is certain is the fact that, if Allah makes “good the state” of a person, that person will achieve inner peace, tranquility, and strong faith in Allah (sp). And the main reason for that reward is that they:

اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ

“Followed the truth from their Lord.” (Qur'an 47: 3)

⁷⁹ Al-Kashshaaf (4/319).

⁸⁰ Tafseer At-Tabaree (26/39).

⁸¹ Tafseer As-Sa'dee (1/784)



هذا الكتاب منشور في

