

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ALI 270: Methodology and Practice of Qur'anic Tadabbur



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Good tidings to all of you

Your intention and efforts of learning and understanding the Holy Qur'an will never be wasted:

عن النعمان بن سعد بن علي عليه السلام، أن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم قال: خياركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه.

Holy Prophet (s): the best amongst you are those who learn the Qur'an and [then] teach it.

عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: ينبغي للمؤمن أن لا يموت حتى يتعلم القرآن، أو أن يكون في تعليمه.

Imam al-Sadiq (a): it is essential for a believer not to die until he has learnt the Qur'an, or he is in the process of learning it.

Why Tadabbur of the Qur'an?

We cannot completely understand the treasures of the Qur'an unless we think about what it says and absorb the teachings with our minds and hearts.

Verses of the Qur'an are not just for reciting with the tongue, but to create thought and awakening, and a movement towards action. Most important the Holy Qur'an has a living message for humanity to the Day of Resurrection.

Qur'an revealed for Tadabbur

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ
وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

A blessed Book that We have revealed to you

So they may ponder upon its verses so that those who have understood may be mindful. (38:29)

The HQ is surely blessed. Its recitation, reflection, history, reasoning, story, the samples of sciences, hidden news, similes, bids and forbids, all in all are full of mysteries and secrets. The aim of revelation has not been that the believers suffice to its mere recitation by the tongue; rather the verses become the source of contemplation and awakening the conscience and in turn, bring a motivation to the path of 'action'.

(Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an, v. 15)

Remove the obstacles

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Will they not then ponder over the Qur'an
or do they have locks on the hearts

Surat Muhammad, No. 47, Ayat 24

From Tafsir of 47:24

A prerequisite for pondering over the Qur'an is to remove the locks from the heart. These locks prevent the light of guidance from entering the heart. They include qualities such as pride, selfishness, jealousy, etc.

Without self purification, the light of Qur'an will not enter the hearts. Once a believer starts self purification, the light of the Qur'an enters and allows further progress in it.

Pondering over the Qur'an – a quality of the Muttaqin

During a night they are upstanding on their feet reading portions of the Qur'an and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear (of Hell) they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. (*Khutba 193, Nahjul Balagha*)

Let us Reflect: Al-Hujurat, 49: 1 -5

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ * یَا اَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُقَدِّمُوْا بَیْنَ
یَدَیْ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ ^ط ۝ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِیْعٌ عَلِیْمٌ 1 یَا
اَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِیِّ وَلَا
تَجْهَرُوْا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ تَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالُكُمْ
وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ 2 اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یَغْضُوْنَ اَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ
رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِیْنَ اَمْتَحَنَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوٰی ۚ لَهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ عَظِیْمٌ 3 اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یُنَادُوْنَكَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ
الْحُجُرٰتِ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا یَعْقِلُوْنَ 4 وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوْا حَتّٰی تَخْرُجَ
اِلَیْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَیْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ

Translation passage 49: 1 - 5

In the Name of God, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.

49:1 O you who have faith! Do not venture ahead of God and His Apostle, and be wary of God. Indeed God is all-hearing, all-knowing.

49:2 O you who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak aloud to him as you shout to one another, lest your works should fail without your being aware.

49:3 Indeed those who lower their voices in the presence of the Apostle of God—they are the ones whose hearts God has tested for Godwariness. For them will be forgiveness and a great reward.

49:4 Indeed those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them do not apply reason,

49:5 and if they have patience until you come out to them, it will be better for them, and God is all-forgiving, all-merciful.

Questions on the passage

- 1) What do these verses tell you about the status of the Holy Prophet (s) and his relationship with Allah?
- 2) What does it tell you about his relationship with the Muslims?
- 3) How is lowering the voice with the Prophet (s) part of Taqwa? (verse 3)
- 4) Look at the endings of verses 1 and 5. Why were these particular names of Allah chosen for these verses?
- 5) If you had to use one word to describe, what Allah is asking from believers in these verses, what would that word be?

Tafsir of the passage 49: 1 - 5

Suratul Hujurat is a Surah of Akhlaq, discussing the etiquette that must be maintained in society. The Surah starts with etiquette of leadership.

Respect of the Holy Prophet (s) and his saying is the respect of Allah. His orders must be obeyed without disrespectful argument, although suggestions may be given to the Prophet (example: Salman Farsi's suggestion at the Battle of Khandaq)

Importance of Good Etiquette

Imam Ali (a): Good etiquette are like new, beautiful clothes

Imam al-Sadiq (a): One who does not have the following five things has not much good in him: religion, intelligence, modesty, a pleasant character and good etiquette

Application of the verses

Verse 2 was recited by Imam al-Husayn (a) at the time of the burial of Imam al-Hasan (a) when they were prevented from burying him next to the Holy Prophet (s), which created a big commotion

The verse is put up near the grave of the Holy Prophet (s) to remind Muslims to respect the presence of the Prophet (s), even after his death.