

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



ALI 270: Methodology and Practice of Qur'anic Tadabbur



Madrasah Az-Zahraa, Richmond, BC
Sessions 3 & 4: April – May , 2104
Jumaadi II & Rajab, 1435

Importance of *tafakkur*

Amirul Mu'minin Imam Ali (a):

أَلَا لَا خَيْرَ فِي عِلْمٍ لَيْسَ فِيهِ تَفَهُُّمٌ،
أَلَا لَا خَيْرَ فِي قِرَاءَةِ لَيْسَ فِيهَا تَدَبُّرٌ،
أَلَا لَا خَيْرَ فِي عِبَادَةٍ لَيْسَ فِيهَا تَفَكُّرٌ

Be aware! Knowledge without thinking has no profit!

Be aware! Recitation of the Qur'an without reflection is of little use!

Be aware! Worship lacking reflection has no effect!

(Al-Kafi, 1:36 and Tuhaful Uqul, Maani Al-Akhbar, p. 226; Bihar Al-Anwar 2:48-49, Aalamu Addeen, p. 100, Mishkat Al-Anwar 137-138, Muniat Almureed 162.)

www.al-islam.org/one-hundred-and-fifty-lessons-life-nasir-makarim-shirazi/lesson-one-thinking-reflection-meditation

Commentary by Ayt Nasir Makarim

- Filling the brain with scientific formulas, logical rules and philosophical principles and other knowledge has little effect if it is not based on proper reflection, a clear world-view and familiarity with fundamentals of man's life.
- Reciting Holy verses of the Holy Qur'an has little effect when it is not accompanied by reflection and thinking about them. Similarly, other forms of worship devoid of the light of thinking and wisdom are like a spiritless body and unable to impart their high educational value.

Qur'an encourages 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)

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَاهَا

Will they not then ponder over the Qur'an
or do they have locks on the hearts (47:24)

Qur'anic Tadabbur: Methodology I

1. Prepare by following few prerequisites:

- i) Firm belief that the Qur'an is a verbatim speech of Allah, which is superior (9:40), full of wisdom (36:2) and decisive (3:7)
- ii) Be in the state of wudhū
- iii) Have humility & willingness to learn
- iv) Read the Du'ā before Tilāwah
- v) Recite the passage, a few verses before and after – following the required etiquette

Qur'anic Tadabbur: Methodology 2

2. Highlight the ayat, passage or surah you plan to do Tadabbur on
3. If you know some Arabic then read the passage twice or thrice, praying that Allah shines His light of Guidance (*hidayah*)
4. Get the translations by 2 to 3 reliable translators (English: Quli Qarai, Mir Ahmed Ali, M H Shakir, Shaheen, etc; Urdu: Farman Ali, Makarim Shirazi; Gujarati: Haji Naji)

Qur'anic Tadabbur: Methodology 3

5. If possible work in a group; each of the member will *inshā'Allāh* receive Divine help in comprehending the Message.
6. Read *sabab al-nuzul* where available. (For e.g. Suratul Ikhlas (#112) was revealed in response to people asking the Prophet: who is this Allah, that you have asked us to worship?)
7. Study simple tafseer of the passage. (Visit www.al-islam.org and read the commentary on the passage from the *An Enlightening Commentary*. The entire work in 20 volumes is found online).
8. Analyze the verse/s. What is Allah saying in these verses? What points do we get from it? Note closely the words used, the sequence of content (for e.g. in 67:2 death precedes life) and reflect on it. How can you apply the verse to your life? why does Allah say so, and why did He not put it differently?
9. Try to find a similar passage or concept in the Qur'an
10. Hadiths from the Ma'sumeen (a) serve the best explanation to Qur'an. Find relevant Hadiths.

Let's reflect: Al-Ma'idah, Ayat 27-31

وَآتِلْ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنِي آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا
وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَئِن بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ
يَدِي إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۗ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنِّي
أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ ۗ وَذَلِكَ
جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ
فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي
الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُوَارِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ ۗ قَالَ يَا وَيْلَتَى أَعَجَزْتُ
أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوَارِيَ سَوْءَةَ أَخِي ۗ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ
النَّادِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

Translation passage 5: 27 - 31

And recite to them the story of Adam's two sons, in truth, when they both offered a sacrifice [to Allah], and it was accepted from one of them but was not accepted from the other. Said [the latter], "I will surely kill you." Said [the former], "Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous [who fear Him]. (27) If you should raise your hand against me to kill me - I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds. (28) Indeed I want you to obtain [thereby] my sin and your sin so you will be among the companions of the Fire. And that is the recompense of wrongdoers." (29) And his soul permitted to him the murder of his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers. (30) Then Allah sent a crow searching in the ground to show him how to hide the disgrace of his brother. He said, "O woe to me! Have I failed to be like this crow and hide the body of my brother?" And he became of the regretful. (31)

Questions for Reflection

Reflect on passage 5: 27 - 31

- 1) Why did Qabil want to kill Habil? What were the emotions he was feeling?
- 2) What does Habil's answer teach you about solving conflicts?
- 3) What did Qabil go through after killing Habil? What happens after a person commits a sin?

An āyat and Hadith on Jealousy

• وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿١٣١﴾

- And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring. (20:131)
- The outcome (*thamar*) of Jealousy is misery of this world and the Hereafter (Imam Ali *'alayhis salaam*)

Rendering by various translators

The phrase in 20:131 - مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ

Pickthal: We cause some wedded pairs among them to enjoy

Qarai: We have provided certain groups of them

Shaheen: We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them

Shakir: We have provided different classes of them

Yusufali: We have given for enjoyment to parties of them

Mirza Mahdi Puya says: After the revelation of this verse the Holy Prophet said:

- He who seeks grace from any, other than Allah, shall depart from this world in despair and disappointment.
- He who covets the wealth of others shall always be in grief.
- He who has received Allah's bounties in abundance but does not spend in the way of Allah, fearing poverty, shall carry a heavy burden on the day of judgement.
- Do not have a feeling of chagrin or rancour at the fortune of another.
- Do not look down upon the poor.

Du'a before the Tilawah by Imam al-Sadiq (a)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ❖ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ *
اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ هَذَا كِتَابُكَ الْمُنَزَّلُ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ، عَلَى رَسُولِكَ
مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَكَلَامُكَ النَّاطِقُ عَلَى
لِسَانِ نَبِيِّكَ، جَعَلْتَهُ هَادِيًا مِنْكَ إِلَى خَلْقِكَ، وَحَبْلًا مُتَّصِلًا فِيمَا
بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ، اللَّهُمَّ فَاجْعَلْ نَظْرِي فِيهِ عِبَادَةً، وَقِرَائَتِي فِيهِ
فِكْرًا، وَفِكْرِي فِيهِ اعْتِبَارًا، وَاجْعَلْنِي مِمَّنْ اتَّعَظَ بِبَيَانَ مَوَاعِظِكَ فِيهِ،
وَاجْتَنَبَ مَعَاصِيكَ، وَلَا تَطْبَعْ عِنْدَ قِرَائَتِي عَلَى سَمْعِي، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ
عَلَى بَصْرِي غِشَاوَةً، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ قِرَائَتِي قِرَاءَةً لَا تَدُبَّرُ فِيهَا، بَلِ
اجْعَلْنِي أَتَدَبَّرُ آيَاتِهِ وَأَحْكَامَهُ، آخِذًا بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِكَ، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ
نَظْرِي فِيهِ غَفْلَةً، وَلَا قِرَائَتِي هَذَرًا، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الرَّؤُوفُ الرَّحِيمُ

(Makārim al-Akhlāq, p. 343)

Translation of the Du‘ā

In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful. O Allah bless Muhammad and his family. O Allah I bear witness that this is Your Revealed Book from You, to Your messenger Muhammad son of Abdullah - Blessings of Allah be on him and his family. And it is Your Spoken Words, through the tongue of Your Prophet. You have made it a guide from You to Your creation. And a connecting rope between You and Your servants. O Allah I have opened Your Covenant and Your Book. O Allah, *so make my looking at it worship, and my reciting it a pondering, And my pondering over it, a way to derive lessons.* Make me from those who are advised by the narrations of its advices, and to avoid Your disobedience. Do not seal my ears when I'm reciting it, and do not place a curtain over my sight. *Do not make my recitation a recitation with no pondering in it, rather make me from among those who ponder over its verses and its rules,* following the code of Your religion. Do not make me heedless when I'm looking at it, nor make my reciting a waste. Surely You are the Most Gentle, the Most Merciful.