

Tafseer Class Notes

Friday, 25 May 2007

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We seek forgiveness from Allah
We stand witness to Allah that there is no God but Him
That Muhammad (SAWW) is his slave and messenger

Prayer for studying

“O God please bring me out of the darkness of illusions and honour me with the light of comprehension, O God open to us the doors of your mercy and propagate us the treasure of your knowledge by your mercy O the most merciful of the merciful ones.”

How to benefit from the Holy Quran

- It is narrated that the Holy Prophet said: “A person who recites as few as ten verses in a night, he would not be counted amongst the negligent people. If he recites fifty verses, he will be counted as a *Dhakhir* (a person who remembers). If one recites a hundred verses in a night, then he is amongst the *Qaneteen* (the obedient). One who recites two hundred verses in a night, then he is amongst the *Qashe-een*. If a person recites three hundred verses overnight, he is one of the *Fayezeen* (the elevated). If a person recites five hundred verses in a night, he will be counted in a group of persons who their whole lives. When a person recites a thousand verses in a night, he will get a *Qantar* of Reward. A *Qantar* is equal to fifteen thousand *Mishqal*. (A *mishqal* is equal to 24 carat of gold). This will be equal to the Mount Ohud.
- The Holy Quran is a miracle.
- We tend to recite the Holy Quran just for its rewards. We usually do not take it to be a book of teaching and education. We pay attention to our intonation when reciting it. We want our recitation to be perfect and correct so as to obtain its reward, then stop at that end and feel satisfied with it. In effect the verses of the Holy Quran just come out from the mouth without entering our hearts! We forget the objective of the Holy Quran is guidance for the *muttaqeen* (believers).
- In Surah Baqarah, verse 2, Allah swt says:

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

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This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil).

- It is a good idea to read the Holy Quran from the same copy because the mind absorbs the picture of the pages and it is then easier to remember the verses.
- Just mere babbling of the Holy Quran is not sufficient. What is important is that we reflect on the verses of the Divine Book.
- Indeed in verse 16:44 of the Holy Quran, Allah swt says:

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

With clear arguments and scriptures; and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect.

- Furthermore in Surah Sad, verse 38:29, Allah swt says:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

(It is) a Book, We have revealed to you abounding in good that they may ponder over its verses, and that those endowed with understanding may be mindful.

- We have a tendency to forget that the Holy Quran is mercy unto to the creatures of Allah. Indeed in verse 17:82, Allah swt says:

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ
الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss.

- Which perdition and loss is graver than that we keep reciting the Divine Book for thirty or forty years, and yet we do not get its real objectives?
- We should recite the following prayer taken from Surah Al-Araf, verse 7: 23:

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَعْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ

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They said: Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.

- One barrier which prevents a learner from benefiting from the Holy Quran is self-conceit. The learner see himself in no need to getting any benefit from the Quran because he thinks that he is perfect and is in no need of knowledge.
- This is one of Satan's masterpieces, by which he always tries to inspire man with imaginary perfection, telling him to be contended with what he has, and to disregard everything other than that which he already has.
- There are some people who only recite the Holy Quran when someone passes away and/or during the month of Ramadan.
- Moreover, there are people arguing over trivial matters such as whether a particular verse was revealed in Mecca or Medina and ignore the important issues which are in the Holy Book.
- Even Moses, a great Prophet as he was, was not contended with his position, nor was he satisfied with his position. So who are we to think of ourselves as having attained the perfection of knowledge? Moses soon met Hazrat Khidr and politely addressed him and asked him to teach him knowledge.
- This is narrated in Surah Kahf, verse 18:66:

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا

Musa said to him: Shall I follow you on condition that you should teach me right knowledge of what you have been taught?

- We should therefore follow the example of Moses. We should try not to be static and should always have the passion to learn continuously. We should never be contended with the knowledge that we have.
- We should follow the example of Hazrat Ibrahim. Even Hazrat Ibrahim wanted to increase his faith and so he asked Allah to show him how he makes the dead alive.
- The incident of Hazrat Ibrahim is narrated in verse 2:260:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولَئِكَ تُؤْمِنُونَ
قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ

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إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا
وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead, He said: What! and do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.

- We should recite the dua: Rabbi zidni Ilma. i.e. O Allah, increase our knowledge! (Surah TaHa, verse 20:114)
- There are many people who unfortunately forsake the Holy Quran due to the thick satanic veil. They have neglected the Holy Book and discarded the Quran. This is a very regretful stage.
- In Surah Furqan, verse 25:30, it is said:

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

*And the Messenger cried out: O my Lord!
Surely my people have treated this Quran as a forsaken thing.*

- Forsaking the Holy Quran is tantamount to forsaking the Ahlul Bayt and vice versa. Indeed as narrated in *hadith thaqalayn*, the Holy Prophet said that the Holy Quran and the Ahlul Bayt will not separate from each other until they join me at the spring of *Kawthar*.
- Many people bind the Divine Book in a nice and valuable cover, and kiss it and then take it out when they want to recite it or when they want to take an *istikharah*. Unfortunately they fail to reflect on the word of this Holy Book.
- Another obstacle which prevents us from benefiting from the Holy Quran is the love of this world. This causes our hearts to incline entirely towards mundane matters, neglecting the remembrance of Allah.
- Sometime this love so overwhelms the heart and the power of endearing post and position becomes so influential, that the light of the divine nature in the heart is put off, and the doors of happiness are closed to man's face.
- In Surah Muhammad, verse 47:24, Allah swt says:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

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Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Nay, on the hearts there are locks.

- Those who want to benefit from the Holy Quran will have to purge the heart from impurities such as the love of this world, and drive away the pollution of cordial sins. Otherwise the hearts will keep getting rusty and will never be purified.
- In Suraw Waqiah, verse 56:77-79, Allah swt says:

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ
فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ
لَّا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

*Most surely it is an honored Quran,
In a book that is protected
None shall touch it save the purified ones.*

- Just as the touching of the external body of this Book is not allowed for the one whose external body is not purified, similarly its knowledge, admonitions and secrets are prohibited to the one whose heart is smeared with filths of the mundane longings. As was mentioned earlier, the Holy Quran is guide for the *muttaqeen*.
- In order to benefit from the Holy Quran we have to hold on to both the Holy Quran and the Ahlul Bayt because the Holy Prophet said that the one who holds on to these two weighty things will never go astray. Indeed, reading the Holy Quran per se is not sufficient until and unless one enters the wilayah of the Ahlul Bayt (as).
- One of the disciplines of reciting the Holy Quran is meditation, which means that the reciter of the noble verses should look for the destination and the objective.
- One should also properly learn the words in the Holy Quran.
- One should learn the correct meaning of the contents of the Book. Such a person will have a higher status compared to the person who just learns how to recite the words of the Quran.
- Finally one should practice the Quran precepts. The true bearer of the Quran is one who understands the words, their meanings and is also a practitioner of the Quranic precepts.
- Imam Baqir (as) has said: “There are three categories of the reciters of the Holy Quran: 1. Those who recite the Book for worldly gains, name and fame. 2. Those that recite the Quran but do not act on its precepts. 3. Those who consider the Quran as a cure for the

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ailments of the hearts. They remain awake in the nights and light the lamps of spirituality in the mosques and the homes. They derive benefits from the recitation of the Book themselves and for the Love of Allah (*Qurabatan il Allah*) pass the benefit to others. With the blessings of such person Allah wards off calamities in store for people. But there are very few such dedicated reciters of the Book.”

- Imam Ridha (as) used to recite the Quran with feelings and tears. He used to cry when reference to the Heaven and Hell came during the reading of the Book. At this point he used to seek Allah’s Help. When the Imam recited the verse *Qul huwallahu ahad*, he used to say *Kadhalik Allahu Rabbi* three times. Similarly after reciting the verse *Qul ya ayyuhal kaferoon* in the prayer, the Imam used to say *Rabbi Allahu Deenalislam* three times. After reciting the verse *Wat-teene wazaitune* Imam (as) used to say *bala wa ana zaalika min al shahedeen*. On reciting the verse *Ala uqsimo beyoumilqiyamah* the Imam (as) said *Subhanaka Allahumma Balah*. On reciting Surah Fateha the Imam (as) said *Alhumdu lillahe Rab al Aalemeen*. Whenever the Imam came across the words *ya ayyuhal lazeena amanu* during the recitation of the Quran he would say slowly the words *Labbaek Allahumma labbaek*.
- Imam Zain al Abideen (as) has said: “If a person wishes to converse with Allah, he should recite the Quran. When he comes to the passages where Allah addresses the people, he should say *lannael Allahumma labbaek* and in the passages where Allah addresses the Prophet (as) or the people of the earlier times, he should feel that the communication is for his own benefit only. When he reads about the spread of victuals of the Heaven in the Quran, he should draw pleasure from the very thought of the delicacies. He should visualize that his Friend has made the spread for him. Sometimes Allah recounts His most superior qualities of Beneficence and Sustenance in the Quran, and at other places, He talks of the unfathomable treasures of knowledge.”

Conclusion

- In summary, the mere recitation of the Holy Quran is not enough if we want to benefit from the Divine Book. We need to reflect on the verses of the Quran and importantly we need to practice the teachings of the Holy Book. Finally, we should always adhere to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt. Undoubtedly, if we hold on to both the Holy Quran and the Ahlul Bayt, we will never go astray.

References for further reading

- *Kitab Adabus Shalat* by Imam Khomeini can be found from the URL: <http://www.al-islam.org/>
- Toward better understanding of Holy Quran by Shayk Muslim Bhanji can be read in e-books from the URL: <http://www.dartabligh.com/>
- *Aynun Hayat* by Allamah AIMajlisi

Disclaimer:

In this tafseer class, there might be shortcomings in imparting the knowledge of the tafseer. If there is any information that requires correction, please do not hesitate to let us know via e-mail: jaafari_tafseer_committee@yahoo.com.sg. Allah knows best.