Qur’anic Lessons

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Article

Importance of The Holy Qur'an

The first lesson to be learned by all students is about the importance of the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an is the Book of Allah *subhaanahu wa ta'aalaa*. Every word in the Qur'an has come from Allah. That is why we say that it is a Holy Book. The words in the Qur'an were sent by Allah to Prophet Muhammad *sallal-laahu 'alayhi wa-aalihi wa sallam*. The Prophet (S) received the words of Allah through angel Jibra'eel. This Qur'an is a Holy Book that was not written by anyone but sent by Allah to Prophet Muhammad (S) through Jibra'eel.

1. It is the most truthful speech: Prophet Muhammad (S) regularly read the words of Allah to Muslims around him. These Muslims were very pleased and excited to receive the words of Allah. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *The most truthful speech, the most eloquent advice, and the greatest stories are in the Book of Allah*. The Muslims listened carefully to what the Prophet read, memorized the sentences and passages of the Qur'an, recited them regularly and followed the teachings of the Qur'an. In order to preserve the words of Allah the Prophet appointed special people known as "Scribes of the Qur'an" to write down the words of Allah.

2. It is in original language: Prophet Muhammad (S) was an Arab and the majority of people in Mecca and Medina spoke Arabic. Therefore the Qur'an was sent in Arabic. Arabic is written from right to left. It is better to learn to read the Qur'an in its original language. Therefore, we will put efforts to learn Qur'an written in Arabic instead of simply reading its translation in other languages.

3. The Holy Qur'an contains Allah's message to all people. It tells people how to act correctly. It guides us to a correct way of life in this world. The Book of Allah also talks about life after death. It tells us that Allah has prepared Paradise for good people and Hell for bad people. The Qur'an encourages the worship of only one God Who creates and provides for them. The Book forbids people from evil and condemns those who do wrong. It contains stories of the past Prophets and the examples of bad and good people. People are advised in the Qur'an to be good to others and respect them. It teaches people to live in peace and harmony.

4. Qur'an brings happiness in this world and the Hereafter. Following the Qur'an brings happiness in this world and the world after death. The Prophet (S) said: *If you desire the life of the fortunate, the death of a martyr, the salvation on the Day of Regret and the shade on the Day of Extreme Heat, then you should study the Qur'an because it is the word of the Merciful, a sanctuary from Shaytaan and a causes the tilting of the Balance*. In another Hadith we read that the Prophet (S) has said: *The recitor of the Qur'an will be spared from the calamities of the Hereafter.*

5. It is the only Divine book that has remained unchanged. Allah sent the Qur'an to His Prophet. A book sent by Allah to people is known as a Divine Book or a Heavenly Book. Other Divine Books were also sent to previous prophets. These are: Suhoof to Prophet Ibraheem *'alayhis salaam*; Zaboor to Prophet Dawood *'alayhis salaam;* Tawraah to Prophet Moosaa *'alayhis salaam; and* Injeel to Prophet 'Eisaa

'alayhis salaam.

The difference between the Qur'an and past revealed books is that the Qur'an is the only Divine Book that has remained unaltered. The Qur'an we have with us contains exactly the same message that was sent to Prophet Muhammad by Allah through Jibra'eel.

6. Our supplications get answered if we were to pray after reading the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet (S) said: *One who starts the Qur'an and finishes it, Allah will grant him one answered supplication*. It also helps in strengthening our faith. Imam Ali (a) said: *Reciting the Qur'an plants the seed of faith*.

7. The Qur'an is the best companion. It can be of great help when a child or adult is feeling lonely. Imam Ali Zaynul 'Aabideen (a) said: *If all who live between the East and West perish, I will have no fear as long as I have the Qur'an with me*.

8. Students get wise when they start reading the Qur'an in their childhood. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *Whoever reads the Qur'an before becoming Baaligh, has indeed been given wisdom as a child*. The Holy Book is the best intellectual treasure a student can have. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *The Qur'an is a wealth with which there is no poverty, and without which there is no wealth*. On the other hand not caring to read and study the Qur'an is a great loss. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *Surely the person in whose heart lacks the trace of the Qur'an is like a ruined house*.

9. Muslims read the Qur'an to understand the true teachings of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (S) left the Holy Book and the Ahlul Bayt (a) as the most important legacy for Muslims after him. He said: *I leave two weighty things among you: The Book of Allah and my family – the Ahlul Bayt. Indeed these two will never separate until they reach me near the pool of Kawthar*.

10. All Muslims recite some Soorahs in their prayers. However, it is good to memorize more Soorahs and read them in Salaat. Imam Muhammad Al-Baaqir (a) said: *Whoever recites the Qur'an while standing in his prayer, Allah will bestow on him a hundred blessings for every letter; and whoever recites it while sitting in his prayer, Allah will reward him fifty blessings for every letter; and whoever recites it outside of his prayer, Allah will grant him ten blessings for every letter*.

11. The Qur'an is a cure to mental and spiritual diseases: Imam Hasan al-'Askaree (a) said: *The Messenger of Allah (S) said: I advice you to the Qur'an since it is the beneficial cure, the blessed medicine, the protection ('Isma) for he who holds fast to it, and the salvation for he who follows it. Neither does it cause crookedness so that it departs (from the truth) nor does it deviate so that it causes trouble. Its marvels do not come to end and the vastness of refutations does not wear it.*

Respect and Rights of The Holy Qur'an

Now that we know that the Holy Qur'an is not an ordinary book, but a Divine Book sent by Allah for the guidance of all people, we must show respect to it. Here are some of the points we need to remember.

1. A part of the Qur'an carries the same respect as the entire Qur'an. Allah says:

***When the Qur'an is recited, listen to it* (*7:204*).**

We know that when recitation takes place it is always of a part of the Qur'an. Even then Allah uses the word Qur'an for the part that is being recited. Therefore, if you have a Siparah, a binder or a booklet that contains Soorahs and passages from the Qur'an, you treat it like a Qur'an.

2. The Qur'an should always be carried with proper care. When your Madrasah bag contains the Qur'an, or a part of it, take extra care of the bag. Keep the bag slowly on the desk or floor instead of letting it fall on its own. Use both hands to remove the Qur'an from your bag, kiss the cover of the Qur'an, place it slowly on a desk (or on a wooden carrier specially built for holding the Qur'an) and open the pages gently.

3. When the Qur'an is being recited, listen to it and be attentive (7:204). If you are busy with something else then at least do not disturb the recitation by talking, for example, or making noise. There is reward for listening to the Qur'an. Imam Ali Zaynul 'Aabideen (a) said: *Whoever listens to a letter of the book of Allah, the Glorious and Almighty, without even reading it, Allah will write down for him one good deed, forgive a sin, and raise him a degree*.

It was the practice of unbelievers in Mecca to make a lot of noise so that others could not listen to the Qur'an (41:26). Do not be like them and instead lend your ears to the Qur'an and give it respect. We often wish that God would talk to us. One way to achieve this is by reading the Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad (S): said: *Lo! Whoever has longing for Allah should listen to the word of Allah*! Also, if you wish to talk to God then do Tilaawa. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *Whenever one of you would like to talk to his Lord, he should read the Qur'an.*

4. The Qur'an should be recited regularly. It is disrespect to keep the Holy Qur'an unread. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *Brighten your homes with reciting Qur'an; do not turn them into graves. Surely the house in which a lot of recitation takes place enjoys many blessings and the members benefit from it. Such a household shines for the inhabitants of Heaven as stars shine to the inhabitants of the earth*. On the Day of Judgment the Prophet will complain to Allah about some Muslims who had abandoned the Qur'an (25:30).

Another Hadith of the Prophet (S) says: *Indeed hearts rust in the same way irons rust*. He was asked: "What will polish the hearts?" The Prophet answered: *Reading the Qur'an*. The more Qur'an we read the better it is. We should discipline ourselves to read a good portion of Qur'an daily. Imam Ali (a) said: *He who recites 100 verses daily from the Book in the order it is in, Allah writes for him the reward equal to all the good actions of every one on this eart*h. Shaytaan would like us not to read, understand and study the Qur'an. Let us fight him with all our strength and faith. Imam Ja'far As-Saadiq (a) said: *There is nothing more unpleasant to Shaytaan than to see a man reading the Qur'an to gain insight*.

5. Children should get familiarized with the Qur'an early in their lives. Imam as-Saadiq (AS) said: *He who recites Qur'an while he is young, Qur'an mixes with his flesh and his blood, and Allah places him amongst the blessed and the chosen righteous. On the Day of Judgment, Qur'an shall become his defender and* [pray for him a handsome reward.]

6. It is the right and respect of the Qur'an that it should be followed. Imam Ja'far Saadiq (a) said*: Lo! One, who learns the Qur'an, teaches it and practices according to it, I will guide and lead him to Paradise*.

7. It is also the right and respect of the Qur'an that those who have the knowledge of the Qur'an should teach it to others. This is among the noblest acts. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *The best of you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it.*

8. Take the interpretations of the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams from his family, i.e. the Ahlul Bayt (a). Imam Hasan al-'Askaree quoting Prophet Muhammad said: *Recite it* (*i.e. the Qur'an*) *as Allah gives you ten rewards for each letter that you recite from it*. Then the Imam (a) said: *Do you know who really holds fast to it and reaches to such honor and reward? He is the person who takes Qur'an and its interpretation from us Ahlul-Bayt* (*a*) *or from the deputies that we send to our followers, and takes its* (*interpretation*) *neither from the opinions of those who argue* (*on the speech of Allah*) *nor form the analogy of those who compare* (*different parts of the speech of Allah*).

9. Once you have completed reading your lesson or referring to the Qur'an then close it gently instead of leaving it open.

10. Do not put another book or any weight above the Qur'an. The Holy Book should always be kept on the top in a pile of books.

11. It is Haraam (forbidden) to make Najaasaat (impure things like blood and urine) touch the Qur'an. In the event where the Qur'an becomes Najis, for instance if it falls in Najis water, it is Waajib (obligatory) to purify it (make it Taahir).

12. Old and worn out copies of the Qur'an should be disposed in safe places. This includes sending them for recycling, burying them in the earth or casting in rivers.

Manners of Reciting The Holy Qur'an

By now we know that the Qur'an is a special book and deserves respect. Now let us look at some of the manners of reciting the Qur'an. It is the right of the Tilaawa (recitation of the Qur'an) that we follow the rules when reciting the Qur'an.

1. Perform Wudhoo before you prepare to read the Qur'an. Allah says:

None can touch it **(*the Qur'an*)** ***save the purified ones*** **(*56:79*).**

Once Imam Ja'far As-Saadiq (a) asked his son Ismaa'eel to read the Qur'an. The latter said that he was not in Wudhoo. The Imam said in that case he could recite it but should not touch the writings of the Qur'an. Therefore, it is advisable to use a stick or pen to point to the words or sentences of the Qur'an you are reading if you are not in Wudhoo.

2. Read Du'aa before Tilaawa. Reading of the Du'aa helps to keep our focus and reminds us of what we need to take from the Holy Book. Ma'soomeen (a) have recommended a number of Du'aas. The Du'aa taught by Imam Ja'far As-Saadiq (a) appears in this booklet with Qur'an lessons.

3. Always say *A'oodhubillaahi minash shaytaanir rajeem* (اَعُوْذُبا اللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ) when you begin reading the Qur'an. It means: I seek refuge in Allah from the cursed Shaytaan. This is what Allah instructs us to do in Aayah 16:98.

4. Next say *Bismillaahir rahmaanir raheem* (بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيْمِ) The meaning of this phrase is: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Whenever Imam Moosaa Al-Kaazim (a) wished to make a point to Haroon Rasheed using Aayaat from the Qur'an, the Imam would begin with *A'oodhubillaah . . .* followed by *Bismillaah . . .*

5. Sit facing Qiblaah when reciting the Qur'an. Please note that this is the best direction to face. However where it may be difficult or impossible to face Qiblaah when reading the Qur'an (for example if your desk is facing another direction) then it is all right not to face the Qiblaah.

6. Recite the Qur'an with Tarteel as instructed by Allah in Aayah 73:4. This means that we should recite the Qur'an in a good voice with rhythm instead of plain reading.

7. Recite the Qur'an slowly Allah said to the Prophet:

do not move your tongue with it **(*Qur'an*)** ***to make haste therein*** **(*75:16*).**

The aayaat of the Qur'an should be recited in slow tones with each word being pronounced clearly. The Prophet (S) advised Muslims not be concerned about finishing a Soorah when reciting the Qur'an.

8. Be Humble when reciting the Qur'an. The Prophet (S) says that the best recitor is he who is humble when reciting the Qur'an and realizes his own insignificance. Some people exhibit their insignificance and the awe of talking to Allah through weeping. This is a good sign. Prophet Muhammad (S) said: *Eyes that weep when reciting the Qur'an will be shining with delight on the Day of Resurrection.*

9. Try to understand the recitation. Holy Qur'an is a book of Guidance (2:2). It is necessary for us to understand the message Allah sent all people through Prophet Muhammad (S).

10. Read from the Qur'an by looking at the writings instead of reciting from your memory. In a Hadith

from one of our Imams it is said that mere looking at the writings of the Qur'an carries reward.

11. Interact with the Qur'an. Imam Ja'far As-Saadiq (a) says that it is important to react to the aayaat of the Qur'an when reciting it. When we come across aayaat on Paradise, Mercy and Grace of Allah, Good Outcome in the hereafter, we should hope for these in our hearts. On the other hand if we are reading aayaat that warn us about the punishment, fire, Hell, etc. we should pray to be saved from these.

12. Open your heart and mind to the Qur'an and ponder over what you read. Allah often invites us to think and ponder over the contents of the Qur'an. In Surah Muhammad Allah says:

Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up? (***47:24***)

13. Perform Sajdah where required to do so In the entire Qur'an there are 15 places where performing of Sajdah is required. At 4 places it is Waajib (obligatory) to do Sajdah if we were to read or listen to these sections of the Qur'an. For the rest of the places it is Mustahab (recommended) to do Sajdah.

14. Say *Sadqallaahul 'Aliyyul 'Azeem* (صَدَقَ اللهُ العَلِيُّ العَظِيْمُ) every time you end a recitation of the Qur'an. The meaning of this phrase is: Allah, the Sublime, the Great, is truthful in what He has said

15. Read one of the Du'aas after Tilaawa. The Ma'soomeen have taught a number of Du'aas, from these two have been included with Qur'an lessons. In these Du'aas, amongst other things, we pray to the Almighty to enlighten us through the Qur'an and make us follow the teachings of the Qur'an.

Hadiths in the lessons taken from

1. *Forty Hadiths (1), Virtues of The Qur'an*, Department of Qur'anic Affairs, 1998.

2. *Wasaa'ilush Shi'ah*, v. 27.

3. *Al-Kaafee*, v. 2

4. *Bihaarul Anwar*, v. 89/92.

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