

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

FOREWORD

الحمد لله الذى انزل على عبده الكتاب ولم يجعل له عوجاً وامرنا بتلاوة كتابه بحقوقه بقوله تعالى اَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَلْمُذِرْكَ وَالصَّلَاةَ وَالسَّلَامَ عَلَى صَفْوَةِ أَنْبِيَائِهِ الَّذِي نَطَقَ بِافْصَحِ اللُّغَاتِ الْقَائِلَ عَلَيْكَ بِتِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ، فَإِنَّهُ نَوَّرَ لَكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ، وَذَخَّرَ لَكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَاصْحَابِهِ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقّاً تِلَاوَتِهِ وَازْوَاجِهِ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِ وَائِمَّةَ دِينِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ فَيَا لَهُمْ لِلْبُشْرَى أَمَا بَعْدُ:

All praises are due solely to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, by whose grace and mercy all good deeds are completed. May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى's special and choicest salawaat and salaam be upon our beloved master and teacher Nabi Muhammed صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, whose life is the greatest example worthy of being followed and who conveyed to us the greatest message of Hidaayah– the Qur'aan.

Memorizing the Qur'aan is a great feat and achievement, which is only possible with the help and Tawfeeq of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The sheer number of Huffaadh in this Ummah is a clear proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur'aan and the truthfulness of Islam. To bear this great message, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has chosen the hearts of His certain special friends who are referred to as Ahlul-Qur'aan and Ahlullaah. May Allah make us truly from amongst them!

This booklet was prepared on the occasion of the completion of Hifzul-Qur'aan by my son – Muhammad Yusuf – under the tutorship of Maulana Muhammad Ebrahim (May his blessings remain!) This booklet aims to briefly outline the importance of tilaawah of Qur'aan in the life of a Muslim, as well as some etiquettes relating to tilaawah, whereby we can attain maximum benefit from the noble Qur'aan.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to:

- 1.) My beloved parents who encouraged me to become hafiz of Qur'aan and allowed me to continue furthering my deeni studies.
 - 2.) My asaatzah (teachers) who taught me with great dedication and sincerity (especially my aapa (Apa Ravat), Hafez Ebrahim Limalia, Qari Abdul Hamid (Potties) and Maulana Ismail Kathrada (May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى keep their shadow over us for a long time!))
 - 3.) My honourable and respected Shaykh and ustadh, MI. Abdul Hamid Ishaq
 - 4.) My spouse who has always encouraged and assisted me in my deeni endeavours and who has sacrificed many hours of her time so that I could fulfil deeni obligations.
 - 5.) All those who taught the Qur'aan to my son.
 - 6.) Maulana Imraan Kajee and Maulana Imraan Mark's family who assisted in editing this book.
 - 7.) Brother Muhammed Mayat who assisted in printing this kitaab.
- May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى reward all of those mentioned above with the greatest of rewards and be pleased with them.
- May Allaah accept it from this useless compiler and make it a means of benefit to mankind at large. Aameen.

Moosa Kajee

14 Rabiul-Aakhir 1442

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CHAPTER ONE

THE GREATNESS OF THE QUR'AAN

The Qur'aan is the word and speech of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Therefore, it holds a prestigious and honourable position in the life of a Muslim. One of the reasons of the Qur'aan being the most virtuous and honoured of all Books is the fact that it is the pure and sanctified word of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the Creator, Cherisher and Nourisher of all the worlds. The Qur'aan was revealed to the greatest of Ambiyaa, Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who was given the duty of propagating and teaching this noble, divine book.

The Qur'aan is the most beloved Kitaab of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the word of the King of kings. It is due to this fact that Imam Ghazali رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said that the Qur'aan is a proclamation from the Lord of the worlds to His servants. This is similar to a person who receives a letter from a prominent and superior dignitary. He becomes overjoyed and reads it over and over.

Similarly, the believer experiences pleasure from the word of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and reads it repeatedly with great joy.

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

الْقُرْآنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ

The Qur'aan is more beloved to Allaah than the skies, earth and whatever is contained in them. (Daarami no. 3401)

The Qur'aan is the final and complete ordinance from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. It is for this reason that it is most virtuous and sublime and is a source of nobility and honour for this Ummat.

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَرَفًا يَتَبَاهَوْنَ بِهِ وَإِنَّ هَاءَ أُمَّتِي وَشَرَفُهَا الْقُرْآنُ

Most definitely, for every nation there is a thing for which they have pride, and the pride and honour of my Ummat is the Qur'aan. (Hilyatul-Awliyaa vol. 2 page 175)

CHAPTER TWO

THE RIGHTS OF THE QUR'AAN

Since the Qur'aan is so great, it has some basics rights over us:

1. **IMAAN BIL QUR'AAN** - To believe every single verse of Qur'aan, especially when it concerns Hijaab, Islamic punishments, inheritance etc.
2. **AL HUBB WAL ADHAMAH LIL QUR'AAN** - To have immense love and respect for the Qur'aan and for those who have memorized the Qur'aan. To honour the Qur'aan, by placing nothing on top of it, not stretching one's feet to it, by handling it with respect and placing it high up in a respectable position, etc.
3. **TAJWEEDUL QUR'AAN** - To learn to recite the Qur'aan correctly, with all the laws of Tajweed. If one has forgotten, a few days effort under a tutor will easily put one back on track.
4. **TILAAWAHUL QUR'AAN** - To recite the Qur'aan. For reciting, lip movement is essential. Mere mind reading will not suffice.
5. **AMAL BIL QUR'AAN** – To act upon the injunctions of the Qur'aan and to practice upon its teachings, lest it becomes a proof against us on the Day of Qiyaamah.
6. **TA'LEEMUL QUR'AAN** – To teach the Qur'aan according to one's capacity, either personally or by aiding those involved in its teaching.
7. **TABLIGHUL QUR'AAN** – To propagate the Qur'aan and its message to those unaware, Muslim and non-Muslim.

In this booklet, we will discuss the importance of tilaawah, and some etiquettes related to tilaawah, in-sha-Allah, so that we can fully benefit from it.

CHAPTER THREE

GREAT VIRTUES OF TILAAWAH

1.) Removes rust - Abdullaah ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “The hearts rust just as metal rusts with water.” When asked what would cleanse it again, Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, “Frequent remembrance of death and the recitation of the Qur’aan.” (Shuabul-Imaan no. 1859)¹

¹ WHY DO WE READ QUR’AAN, EVEN IF WE CAN’T UNDERSTAND A SINGLE ARABIC WORD?

There was once a grandfather who had great love for the Qur’aan. Every night without fail, he would make wudhu, apply ‘itr, remove his beloved Qur’aan from its velvet cover and sit with utmost respect reciting the word of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in a most melodious tone. As he would recite, however, his young grandson would stare at him in bemusement and scratch his head in confusion. One day, his grandson came up to him and asked, “Grandpa, you recite the Qur’aan EVERY night, but you don’t even know Arabic! You read so much but you don’t even understand what you’re reading! What a waste of time!” His grandfather looked at him, smiled and said, “My child, do you see the coal basket in the corner? Good! Empty out the coal, take the basket to the stream, fill it with water and rush back as quickly as your little legs can carry you.” The young boy ran off on his “mission”, heading towards the stream. He filled the basket, turned, and ran straight back to the house. “Grandpa!” he complained, “The water doesn’t stay in the basket because of all the holes! I think I’m wasting my time!” “I think you need to run faster.” suggested Grandfather. And so off he went again, running even faster than before. When he returned this time, there were at least a few drops of water at the bottom of the basket but even those dripped out before he could put the basket down. “One more time! Run your absolute fastest now!” urged Grandfather before the child could again complain. Now when the child returned, huffing and puffing from the exertion, there was at least a small puddle – but even that rapidly drained out before their eyes. “I give up Grandpa!” he exclaimed, “And I’ve wasted my time!” “Hold it! Not so hasty my child.” responded Grandfather. “Why don’t you examine the basket and tell me what you see?” he prompted. The child turned the basket in his hands, looking first at the inside and then turned it the other way, looking at the outside. “It looks brand new!” he marvelled. “It’s all shiny again! All the soot has been washed off!” he said. “Exactly!” replied Grandfather. “The basket is perhaps unable to hold the water, but that doesn’t mean the water doesn’t affect it in any way. Rather the water cleanses and polishes it, removing all the dirt and grime. That, my child, is exactly what happens when we read the Qur’aan without understanding the meaning. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى not only gives us great

reward but also cleanses our hearts through our recitation” he explained. “Wow! Will you teach me to read too?” he asked. “Definitely!” replied Grandfather.

A person suffering from a splitting headache, despite not knowing the pharmacological effect, group schedule or origin of panado, won't think twice before swallowing the tablet. He understands that this lack of knowledge and understanding in no way hinders or obstructs the tablet benefitting him by alleviating his pain. Similarly, when a person recites the Qur'aan with dedication and devotion, it serves to cleanse his heart of the layers of muck and grime that engulf his heart by him sinning. This is regardless of whether or not he understands the meaning of the Qur'an.

The Qur'aan was revealed in Arabic and the people to whom it was directly revealed were Arabs who spoke the most eloquent form and dialect of the language. Despite them being completely conversant and fluent in the language, Nabi ﷺ was tasked with a separate responsibility in his capacity as the Nabi – the responsibility to teach them the RECITATION of the Qur'aan. The recitation of the Qur'aan holds such a degree of importance that teaching the recitation alone formed a separate department from the other departments of Deen. Allah ﷻ not only showed its importance but even expressed it to be a great favour on the Ummah that they learn to recite the Qur'an Majeed. This is because the recitation of the words of the Qur'aan is an irreplaceable form of worship that plays an extremely important role in the life of a Muslim.

Imaam Ahmad ibn Hambal رحمه الله once saw Allah ﷻ in a dream and asked, “O Rabb, what is the best means of acquiring Your closeness?” Allah replied, “O Ahmad, by the Qur'an.” I asked, “O Rabb, by reciting it with understanding or without understanding?” Allah replied, “Whether it is recited with our without understand, it is the best means of acquiring My closeness.” (Ithaafus Saadatil Muttaqeen vol. 4 page 466)

Some Muslims are misled by the idea that reciting the Qur'aan without any idea of the meaning is a “waste of time” as it is merely reading in a “parrot fashion”. Hence they abandon reading the Qur'aan. Such people in reality are doing themselves a great disservice and depriving themselves of the abundant reward Allaah ﷻ has offered. If a person recites just the three letters “alif laam meem” (at the beginning of Surah Baqarah) and nothing else, Nabi ﷺ has promised this person a minimum of 30 rewards! (see hadeeth 4) This is despite the fact that the Ummah of Nabi ﷺ does not know the meaning of these three letters with certainty. This proves without a doubt that recitation of the Qur'an Majeed – although the meaning is not known to the reciter – guarantees immense reward. Are we, as Muslims, willing to deny this reward and thus challenge the promise of our Nabi ﷺ? To understand the meaning of the Qur'aan is indeed very important and striving to learn it at the hands of a true 'Aalim of Deen is a praiseworthy effort. In the event of not knowing the meaning, however, the RECITATION should never be abandoned. We face a dark future if we begin to distance ourselves from the Quraan, the word of Allaah ﷻ, due to

2.) Worldly benefits - Abu Moosa Ash'ari رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The similitude of the believer who recites the Qur'aan is like that of a citron. Its fragrance is beautiful, and its taste is good. The similitude of the believer who does not recite the Qur'aan is like that of a date. It has no fragrance, but its taste is good. The similitude of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'aan is like that of a sweet basil. Its fragrance is beautiful, but its taste is bitter. The similitude of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'aan is like that of a colocynth. It has no fragrance, and its taste is bitter." (Bukhaari no. 5020, 7560, Muslim no. 797)

Scholars have stated: A citron has five qualities:

- a.) It creates a pleasant fragrance in the mouth
- b.) Cleans the stomach
- c.) Aids in digestion
- d.) Keeps jinns away from the house in which it is kept
- e.) Strengthens the memory.

These are the qualities especially associated with the reading of the Qur'aan since fragrance in the mouth, internal purity and spiritual strength are all benefits found in the recitation of the Qur'aan. The jinns stay away from a house in which the Qur'aan is recited. In Ihyaa it is reported from Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that three things improve the memory 1.) miswaak 2.) fasting 3.) recitation of the Qur'aan. (Abridged from Fadhaail Qur'aan)

3.) Increase in imaan - Baraa ibn Aazib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates, "There was a man who was reciting Surah Kahf when his horse was tied with two ropes next to him. A cloud came and hovered above him and began coming closer to him. His horse tried to bolt from it. He went to Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ the next morning and related this incident to him. He said, 'That was *sakeenah*

not understanding its meaning. Will we allow the day to come when we abandon even salaah due to not understanding Arabic? (taken from Jamiat KZN website)

(tranquillity) which descended for the recitation of the Qur'aan.'" (Bukhaari no. 5011, Muslim no. 795)

Sakeenah (tranquility) can refer to:

- 1.) A gold utensil of Jannah which cleanses the hearts of the believers.
- 2) Special mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
- 3.) Dignity
- 4.) Angels
- 5.) Peace of mind.

According to research scholars all these meanings can be meant. The effect of this sakeenah is that a person's imaan increases as is mentioned in Surah Fatah verse 4, "He تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى sends down sakeenah in the hearts of the believers so that their imaan increases."

4.) Reward in the hereafter - Ibn Mas'ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The person who recites one letter of the Book of Allaah shall receive one reward, and a reward is multiplied ten times. I do not say that alif laam meem is one letter. Rather, alif is one letter, laam is one letter, and meem is one letter." (Tirmidhi no. 2910) This hadeeth shows the great virtue of reciting the Qur'aan without even understanding. The example used by Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is very striking. Alif laam meem are the huroof-muqata'at whose meaning is known only by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. When one recites these words, whose meaning is not known to anyone else, he is rewarded. This clearly refutes the statement of those who claim that there is no benefit in mere recitation without knowing the meaning. This is the bare minimum reward, which is for a person who recites without wudhu. Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that for every letter read, there are one hundred blessings for one who reads the Qur'aan while standing in salaah, fifty blessings for one who reads while sitting in salaah, twenty-five blessings for one who recites with wudhu outside salaah, ten blessings for one who recites without wudhu, and one blessing for him who does not read himself but listens to the reader. (Ihya Uloomid-deen vol. 1 page 275)

5.) Light on the earth and treasure in the hereafter - Rasulullaah ﷺ said to Abu Dharr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “Hold firm onto the recital of the Qur’aan, since it is a light for you on the earth and a treasury for you in the hereafter.” (Ibn Hibbaan no. 361)

Note: Tilaawah refers to reciting the Arabic text from the beginning to the end with movement of the lips. Recital of the meaning is beneficial but is not tilaawah. Recital of certain surahs daily are rewarding but are not referred to as tilaawah of the Qur’aan. If a person merely looks into the Qur’aan and mind reads, he will gain blessings, but this will not constitute the reward of tilaawah.

6.) Goodness in the home - Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says, “The house in which the Qur’aan is read, its household members increase, virtues and blessing multiply, angels come down upon them and Satan runs far away from there, but the house in which the Qur’aan is not read, life becomes difficult and empty of blessings, angels leave the house and Satan settles in it.” (Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah no. 30650)

7.) Four great benefits - Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “When a group of people gather in one of the houses of Allaah (i.e. in the masjids) to recite the Book of Allaah and study it, tranquillity descends upon them, mercy engulfs them, the angels surround them, and Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى talks about them by those (angels) who are with Him.” (Muslim no. 2699. Abu Dawood 1455)

In Abu Dawood, a narration of Abu Saeed Khudri رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ appears, “Once I was sitting with a group of poor muhaajireen (emigrants), who did not have sufficient clothes to cover their whole body, due to which some were concealing themselves behind others. A qaari (reciter) was reciting the Qur’aan to us. Suddenly Rasulullaah ﷺ came and stood near us. On his arrival, the reader stopped reciting. Rasulullaah ﷺ greeted us

and asked us what we had been doing. We replied that we were listening to the Book of Allaah. He ﷺ remarked, “All praise is due to Allaah who created such people in my ummah that I have been ordered to stay with them.” He ﷺ then sat in such a manner that we were all at an equal distance from him. He then made a sign to form a circle around him, which we did, with all our faces towards him ﷺ. He ﷺ then said, “O poor muhaajireen, I give you glad tidings of perfect illumination on the Day of Judgement. You will enter Paradise half a day before the wealthy ones. This half day is equal to five hundred years.” (Abu Dawood no. 3666)

Four great benefits for the gatherings of Qur’aan are mentioned in this hadith

1. Tranquillity – The benefit of this is that one’s imaan increases as mentioned in the Qur’aan, “He is the Being who sends down sakeenah in the hearts of the believers the result being that their imaan increases.” (Fath verse 4) (See above)
- 2.) Mercy – The effect of this is that one will be able to save himself from sins as is mentioned in a duaa, “O Allaah, shower Your mercy upon me by the leaving out of sin.” (Tirmidhi no. 3570)
- 3.) Company of angels – By the company of angels, angelic qualities are transferred into one.
- 4.) Being mentioned by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى - This is the greatest bounty, as Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, “And the Remembrance of Allaah is the greatest.” (Ankaboot verse 45)
- 8.) Divine light on the Day of Qiyaamah - Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Whoever listens to one verse of the Qur’aan being recited will receive double reward and he who recited one verse will receive a divine light on the Day of Judgement.” (Ahmad no. 8475)

9.) Safety from senility - Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “Whoever recites the Qur’aan will be saved from senility. The proof of this is the verse, “Then We returned him to the lowest level except he who believes.” Believes means the one who recites the Qur’aan. (Haakim no. 3952) Ikrimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “A person who is always engaged in recital of the Qur’aan, will not lose his senses in old age.” (Tafseer Ibn Katheer Surah Teen verse 6 vol. 8 page 435)

10.) Honour for the reciter’s parents - Muaaz Juhani رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Whoever will recite the Qur’aan and practise upon what it contains, his parents will be made to wear such crowns on the Day of Judgement that its radiance will eclipse the sun, even if it were to be kept in your homes. So imagine what reward there will be for the one who himself practised upon it!” (Abu Dawood no. 1453)

11.) Intercession on the Day of Qiyaamah - Ibn Masood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “The Qur’aan will intercede for the people of the Qur’aan on the Day of Judgement and will show them the path to Jannah (save them from Hell).” (Daarimi no. 3368)

12.) Best of all actions - Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Recitation of the Qur’aan in salaah is better than recitation out of salaah; recitation of Qur’aan out of salaah is better than tasbeeh and takbeer. Tasbeeh is better than optional charity; optional charity is better than optional fasts; and fasting is a shield from the Fire.” (Shuabul-Imaan no. 2049)

13.) Protection from all trials - Haarith A'war says, “I passed by the Masjid when the people were absorbed in storytelling. So I went to Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and said, “O Leader of the believers! Do you not see the people are becoming engrossed in storytelling?” He asked, “Are they doing this?” When I replied in the affirmative, he said, “As for me, I heard Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying, “Soon there will be a Fitnah (severe trial).” So I asked, “What is the way out from it, O Rasulullaah?” He replied, “Allaah's book.

1.) In it is information for what happened before you,

- 2.) information about what comes after you,
- 3.) judgement for what happens between you.
- 4.) It is the Criterion (between right and wrong) without jest.
- 5.) Whoever among the oppressive abandons it, Allaah crushes him.
- 6.) Whoever seeks guidance from other than it, then Allaah leaves him to stray.
- 7.) It is the firm rope of Allaah,
- 8.) It is the remembrance, which is the fountain of wisdom,
- 9.) It is the straight path (free from excesses and deficiencies),
- 10.) It is the one that desires cannot distort,
- 11.) It is not difficult on the tongue to recite it (even if the reciter is a non-Arab),
- 12.) The scholars will never quench their thirst by it,
- 13.) It will never become old due to continuous repetition,
- 14.) Its secrets and hidden points will never terminate.
- 15.) It is the one that when the Jinns hear it, they did not hesitate to say about it, "Verily, we have heard a wonderful Recitation (this Qur'aan)! It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein."
- 16.) Whoever speaks according to it has said the truth,
- 17.) Whoever acts according to it is rewarded,
- 18.) Whoever judges by it has judged justly,
- 19.) And whoever invites to it guides to the straight path." Take this O A'war!'" (Tirmidhi 2906)

In Surah Kahf, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى mentions miraculous events that had occurred with the 'lads of the cave.' There was evil all around them, but because they were firm on the correct beliefs, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى's assistance was with them. Maulana Manaazir Ahsan Gilaani رَحِمَهُ اللهُ in his explanation of Sura Kahf highlights the following eight principles (extracted from the 4th ruku of this surah), which if one were to adopt in any era and any environment, no matter how threatening to his faith it may appear, he too would find himself, In-sha Allaah, in a 'spiritually protected cave'. These eight principles are:

- 1.) Let the Name of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى Govern One's Every Action
- 2.) Adopt a Prescribed Course of the Zikr of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
- 3.) Revive One's Imaan by Pondering Over Inspirational Incidents of the Selected Slaves of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
- 4.) Make Tilaawah a Vital Part of your Daily-Life
- 5.) Staying in the Company of the Righteous and Pious
- 6.) Shun the Habits and Lifestyles of the People of Kufr
- 7.) Be Proud of Your Islam and Invite Towards It
- 8.) Let the Fear of Jahannum and the Hope of Paradise Keep you Focused on your Goal

Under the fourth point, the following has been mentioned:

4.) Make Tilaawah a Vital Part of your Daily-Life

The fourth principle that one discerns from Surah-al-Kahf, which is essential if one wishes to rid himself of devilish poison and walk a straight path to his Creator is to hold tightly upon the rope of Allaah, i.e. The Noble Qur'aan.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states:

وَأَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ

Recite (make tilawah of) what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord!

The order given in this verse is for one to make *Tilawaah* of the Noble Qur'aan. *Tilaawah* literally means 'to follow'. One is thus being ordered to follow behind each word of the Noble Qur'aan both in recitation as well as in practice.

The Noble Qur'aan is a living miracle. It is the uncreated Word of Almighty Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and encompasses Divine Current. Shaitaani forces aim to poison the heart, through the medium of the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and one's thoughts. Nudity, pornography, music, etc. is utilized for this purpose. Their poisonous effects, drip by drip, seep into the heart and blacken it, first

on the surface and then from within. The Noble Qur'aan also targets the heart, except that its course to the heart is not via any organ, but rather direct. The eyes, the ears, the tongue, and the hands enjoy the honour of making contact with the Glorious Qur'aan, but for its entry into the heart it finds no need for any of these organs. In a manner befitting of a king, it enters directly into the heart and initiates an immediate clean-up of the filth that exists within. It purifies and rids the heart of all shaitaani toxins, just as medicine rids the body of viruses and bacteria.

It is for this reason that the Glorious Qur'aan benefits its reciter as well as the one listening, even though they do not understand its meaning. Unlike other speech which is directed first to the mind to comprehend and understand, the Noble Qur'aan directs itself straight to the heart. Yes, for maximum benefit and enjoyment to be attained, understanding and deep pondering over its meaning is essential.

May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى make us all lovers and constant reciters of the Noble Qur'aan! Aameen. (Adapted from Surah Kahf – The ongoing battle between spiritualism and materialism)

CHAPTER FOUR

REPROACH FOR NEGLECTING THE NOBLE QUR'AAN

There are many Ahaadeeth which expound the virtues of the Qur'aan. By the same token there are many other Ahaadeeth which warn against being neglectful towards the Qur'aan. In the light of the Ahaadeeth, Rasulullaah ﷺ sternly warned against making our homes graveyards. The gist of which is, 'O people, most certainly recite the Qur'aan in your homes, because the homes in which the Qur'aan is not recited is likened to a deserted, barren land. Its similitude is that of a graveyard, in which desolation and silence is the order of the day.'

Ponder a little on the emphasis Rasulullaah ﷺ laid regarding the recitation of the Qur'aan. Yet, on the other hand the indifference of some of the Muslims towards the Qur'aan is such, that they do not even have the slightest inclination towards it. They do not even realize which stagnation and darkness they are engulfed in due to their indifference to the Qur'aan. Today in our homes we have Qur'aans wrapped in beautiful silky material, only to be a token of beauty on our showcases or shelves, or to be read over the deceased of our near and dear ones, as if that is the only purpose of the Qur'aan. We do not have the time to recite the Qur'aan anymore. Rather, we indulge ourselves in watching television, sport, reading newspapers, magazines, and playing computer games, dvd's etc. These have become our priorities. How sad and pitiable is our plight!

It is for this reason that such Muslim homes generally are void of blessings and prosperity. They outwardly may seem to be living a happy and carefree life, but in reality they are living in confusion and bewilderment, a life full of indulgence and sin. The saying of Rasulullaah ﷺ can never be incorrect. Think for yourself, when there is gross negligence towards the Qur'aan, and never is it held in the hand and read, nor do we have the time to listen to its recitation, then who is to be blamed if shaitaan and the jinn take control of such a house, and that house is afflicted with calamity, difficulty, hardship, and stacks of worries.

It is because of this indifference that the machinery of our lives does not want to function, and we have become targets of accusations and indictment. Our beliefs and character, worship and monetary dealings, actions and deeds, in short, every facet of our lives is ruined. Therefore, it is imperative to apportion some time daily for the recitation of the Qur'aan. It should be our desire and fervour that some portion of the Qur'aan be memorized. Rasulullaah ﷺ has compared a person who has not learned any part of the Qur'aan to a deserted, dilapidated and forsaken house. (Tirmidhi no. 2913)

A few Ahaadeeth on the neglect of the Qur'aan is discussed below;

Anas رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "The sins of the whole Ummat were presented to me. I did not see a greater sinner than that person who learnt any part of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem and he forgot it." (Tirmidhi no. 2916, Abu Dawood no. 461)

This is a stern warning for the person who learnt the Qur'aan and then forgot it. Allaah forbid, it should not happen that we are not able to even recognize the letters and words of the Qur'aan anymore. May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى protect us!

Abu Moosa Ash'ari رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم once said, "Be watchful over the Qur'aan. I swear by Him in whose control my life is, the Qur'aan is apt to escape from a person's heart more rapidly than the camels from their reins." (Bukhaari no. 5032, Muslim no. 790)

Animals who are let loose from their reins would easily run away. In the same fashion if a person does not look after the Qur'aan he will forget it, until eventually he will forget even its recitation.

Sa'ad ibn Ubaadah رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "The person who learnt the Qur'aan and forgot it, will appear before Allaah as a leper." (Abu Dawood no. 1474)

Oh Allaah! Do not make us of them.

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه says, "The house in which the Qur'aan is read, its household members increase, virtues and blessing multiply, angels come down upon them and Satan runs far away from there, but the house in which the Qur'aan is not read, life becomes difficult and empty of blessings, angels leave the house and Satan settles in it." (Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah no. 30650) (Adapted from 'A Gift to the Qari')

CHAPTER FIVE

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has praised those who recite the word of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in abundance. He says,

يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ

They recite the verses of Allaah in the hours of the night.

(Aal-Imraan verse 113)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “There is no jealousy except in two cases: a man whom Allah has given this Book, so he stands to recite it during the day and night, and a man whom Allah has given wealth, and he spends it during the day and night. (Bukhari no. 709)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “O people of the Qur’aan, do not take the Qur’aan as a pillow [i.e. do not cast it aside abandoning it]; recite it properly, giving it its proper due throughout the day and the night. Spread its message, and ponder upon it, so that you may become successful.” (Shu’abul Imaan no. 1852-1854, Majma’uz Zawaid, vol. 2 pg. 252)

The people in this ummah have really excelled in making tilaawah (reciting) the Noble Qur’aan. Hereunder are some examples of this:

- 1.) Uthmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to spend the entire night in worship and complete the recitation of the entire Qur’aan in one raka’at. (Siyar-A’laamin-Nubalaa vol. 28 page 157)
- 2.) Tameem Daari رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to complete the recitation of the entire Qur’aan in one raka’at. (Siyar-A’laamin-Nubalaa vol. 2 page 445)
- 3.) Thaabit Bunaani رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to recite the entire Qur’aan daily and fasted perpetually. (Siyar-A’laamin-Nubalaa vol. 5 page 224)
- 4.) Ibnul-Kaatib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to complete eight recitations of the entire Qur’aan in one day. (At-Tibyaan fi Aadabi Hamalatil-Qur’aan page 60)

5.) Qataadah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to complete the recitation of the Qur'aan every seven nights during the year. However, in Ramadaan, he would recite the entire Qur'aan every three nights. Then, during the last ten days of Ramadaan he would recite the entire Qur'aan once every single night. (Siyar-A'laamin-Nubalaa vol. 5 page 276)

6.) Saeed ibn Jubair رَحِمَهُ اللهُ would recite the entire Qur'aan every two days. Once, while performing salaah inside the Ka'bah, he completed an entire recitation in a single Rakaah. (Siyar-A'laamin-Nubalaa vol. 4-page 324/325)

7.) Mansoor ibn Zaadhaan رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to recite the entire Qur'aan daily. During Ramadaan, he would complete the recitation of the Qur'aan twice between Maghrib and Isha and would also begin a third recitation. In those times, Isha was delayed until the last quarter of the night. (Siyar-A'laamin-Nubalaa vol. 5-page 441/442)

8.) Mujaahid رَحِمَهُ اللهُ and Ali Azdi رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to complete a recitation of the entire Qur'aan between Maghrib and Isha during the month of Ramadaan. (At-Tibyaan fi Aadabi Hamalatil-Qur'aan page 60)

9.) Imaam Abu Haneefah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to recite the entire Qur'aan daily during the year. In Ramadaan, he would recite the entire Qur'aan twice daily; once in the morning and once at night. A narration of Abdullah ibn Mubaarak رَحِمَهُ اللهُ adds that he would complete the Qur'aan in two rakaats of salaah. (Manaaqib Abi Haneefah of Kurdi vol. 1-page 241/242)

10.) Sa'd ibn Ibrahim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to recite the entire Qur'aan daily and fast every day. During the 21st, 25th and 27th of Ramadaan, he used to complete his recitation before iftaar. (Hilyatul-Awliyaa vol. 3 page 170)

11.) Imaam Shaafi'ee رَحِمَهُ اللهُ would also recite the entire Qur'aan every day during the year. During the month of Ramadaan he would recite the Qur'aan twice daily. All these recitations were done while performing salaah. (Hilyatul-Awliyaa vol. 9 page 134)

12.) Shaykh Abul Abbaas ibn Ataa رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ used to recite the entire Qur'aan every day during the year and three times daily during Ramadaan. (Hilyatul-Awliyaa vol. 10 page 302)

13.) Imam Wakee Ibn Jarrah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ used to complete the entire Qur'aan every night. (Imaam Waki رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ was the student of Imaam Abu Haneefah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ and the teacher of Imaam Shafi'ee رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ. (Siyar-A'laamin-Nubalaa vol. 9 page 142)

14.) Shaykh Waasil Basri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ used to complete the entire Qur'aan every second night. (Al'Ibar of Dhahabi vol. 1 page 218)

15.) Hasan ibn Saalih رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ, his brother Ali ibn Saalih رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ and their mother used to divide the nights into three parts, each worshipping during a portion and completing a recitation of the Qur'aan every night. When their mother passed away, the two brothers completed the recitation by themselves. When Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ passed away, Hasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would complete the Qur'aan every day by himself. (Siyar-A'laamin-Nubalaa vol. 7 page 369)

16.) Abu Bakr ibn Ayyash رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ (a student of Imaam Aasim رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) completed the recitation of the entire Qur'aan every day for thirty years continuously. On one occasion he said to his son, "Oh my beloved son, do not disobey Allaah in this room because it is here that I have completed 12000 recitations of the Qur'aan." When his time of death approached, his daughter began to weep. "What makes you weep?" he asked her, "Why should you fear that Allaah will punish me when I have completed 24000 recitations of the Qur'aan in this little room?" (Sharh Nawawi of Muslim vol. 1 page 79)

17.) Ja'far ibn Hasan Darzayjaani رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ completed innumerable recitations of the Holy Qur'aan, completing every recitation during a single raka'ah of salaah. He passed away whilst performing sajdah. (Dhail Tabaqaatil-Hanaabilah vol. 1 page 255)

18.) Qadi Sulaimaan ibn 'Itr رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ was a judge in Egypt during the reign of

Mu'awiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He used to complete three recitations of the Qur'aan every night. (Siyar-A'laamin-Nubalaa vol. 4 page 132)

19.) Imaam Bukhari رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ used to recite twenty verses in every raka'at of taraaweeh during each night of Ramadaan. Then during the last portion of each night, he used to recite between a quarter to half of the Qur'aan, thereby completing a recitation every three nights. Apart from this, he would also complete a recitation of the Qur'aan every day of Ramadan, ending just before iftaar. (Hadiyyat-ud-Daraari by Shaykh Moulana Fadlur Rahman A'zmi p.38, quoting from Hadiy-us-Saari, the foreword of Fathul-Baari pg. 481.)

20.) Allaamah Shaami رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ used to complete a recitation of the Qur'aan every day during Ramadan while also contemplating upon the meaning of the Qur'aan. (Qurratu Uyoonil Akhyaar pg.9)

21.) Shamsud Deen Muhammad ibn Ahmad Misri Gharraqi رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ (passed away in 816 A.H) used to perform four umrahs and one recitation of the Qur'aan daily. (Shadhraat-ul-Dhahab vol. 9 page 181)

22.) Moulana Zakariyyah Sahib رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ writes, "When I wrote Fadhaail-e-Ramadhaan, I requested my friends to write to me about their habits of reciting Qur'aan during the month of Ramadhaan. The replies I received (concerning their practices of reciting the Qur'aan during Ramadan) ranged between 60 to 65 complete recitations. Amongst these men was my dear friend Moulana Inaamul Hasan Sahib رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ. After completing his memorisation of the Qur'aan, it was the practice of my respected father to complete a recitation of the Qur'aan every day for six months." (Fadhaa'il awr un-Ke Iskhaalaat ke Jawaab, by Moulana Muhammad Shaahid Saharanpuri page 93)

23.) On one occasion, Moulana Zubayrul Hasan رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ, who was the son of Moulana Inaamul-Hasan رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ, led Taraaweeh in Saharanpur and then left for Delhi on 29 Ramadan. When he arrived after Isha, his father Moulana

Inaamul-Hasan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ asked him, "What are your plans?" He replied, "Whatever you say." Moulana Inaamul-Hasan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, "Come let's go on the Musallah." Moulana Zubayrul Hasan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ then went on the Musallah and proceeded to complete a recitation of the entire Qur'aan before leaving the Musalla at the time of Subh Saadiq. (Malfoozaat of Faqeeh-ul-Ummat vol. 3 page 274)

24.) Shaykhul Hadith Moulana Muhammad Zakariyyah Sahib رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ writes, "My respected grandmother was a Hafizah who knew the Qur'aan very well. Apart from doing her household chores such as cooking, it was her habit during the year to recite a manzil every day. In Ramadaan she used to recite 40 Juz of the Qur'aan daily." (Aap Beti page 95 - new Saharanpur edition)

25.) Faqihul Ummah Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ once asked a madrasah Hifz student how many Juz he read daily. When the student responded by saying that he recited half a juz daily, Mufti Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, "It has been my habit for a long time to recite half of the Qur'aan daily in salah and to complete a recitation every day in Ramadaan." (Malfuzaat vol. 3 page 342)

Quoting from Imaam Nawawi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ, Shaykh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ has mentioned a detailed account of various people who used to complete recitations of the Qur'aan in different periods of time. Some would complete a recitation in a month, others in a week, others in three days and others in one night. There were those who completed two recitations in one day and also many who completed three recitations in one day. Then there are also some who have finished up to eight recitations in a single day. Referring to this feat, he writes, "This is the highest number of recitations (in one day) that we know of."

Imaam Nawawi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ also writes,

وكانوا كثيرون يجتتمون في كل يوم وليلة ختمة

There were many who used to complete a recitation of the Qur'aan on a

daily basis.

(The above has been extracted from the book 'The Miracle of the Qur'aan as seen from some incidents' by Moulana Ateequr-Rahman Azmi. The references were rechecked, and some corrections were made.)

26.) Zubaidah was the wife of Haaroon al-Rasheed. She had 100 slave girls who were Haafidhas of the Qur'aan. Besides these, there were others who knew selected portions of the Qur'aan. In her palace, the recitation of the Qur'aan by these slave girls sounded like the buzzing of bees. Each slave girl would recite a tenth of the Qur'aan (3 juz) daily. (Al-Bidayah Wan Nihayah)

27.) During the Muslim rule of Delhi, the leader Fakhruddin employed 12 000 people to recite the Qur'aan daily. They would complete 1000 khatams of Quran daily. He was so generous that he would pay the mahr of 1000 poor women every year. (Qur'aani Dairul Maarif page 1086)

28.) Sultan Saleem I had a special chamber constructed in the Topkapi palace to house Islamic relics and treasures. His love for the relics can be realised from the fact that he would personally sweep and clean the chamber during his lifetime. He also initiated the practice of having the Qur'aan recited 24 hours a day in the chamber. For this purpose, many huffaadh were employed who would recite the Qur'aan in shifts. This continued for a period of 400 years. It was perhaps the only place on earth where the Qur'aan has been recited in this amazing manner. After the collapse of the Khilaafah, this practice stopped. Now the Qur'aan is only recited while the chamber is open to visitors. (Jahaane Didah page 339)

CHAPTER SIX

TEN EXTERNAL RULES OF TILAAWAH (QUR'AAN RECITATION)

It should be known that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has kept benefits and virtue in all good actions. These benefits become apparent only when the etiquettes

and requisites are adhered to. Hence, the Qur'aan too has etiquette and decorum which has to be abided.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى praises those who make tilaawah, fulfilling its rights. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ

Those to whom We have given the Book recite it as it rightfully should be recited. (Baqarah verse 121)

The more we will abide by these etiquettes, the more we will benefit. However, this does not mean that a person who does not abide by these etiquettes must stop his tilaawah. He should continue with his weaknesses and make an endeavour to better himself.

The etiquettes mentioned below have been extracted from Ihyaaul-Uloom of Imam Ghazaali رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. At times, he has mentioned certain points which may create the impression that if we cannot reach that level, we should not make tilaawah. This is incorrect. We should continue doing the action and endeavour to progress. One of the benefits of reading these etiquettes is for us to realize how far we still are from reality and to save us from pride in our actions of worship.

FIRST RULE: THE CONDITION OF THE QAARI (RECITER OF THE QUR'AAN).

He should be with wudhu, having full respect and calmness, either in a standing position or sitting position, facing the Qiblah, with his head cast down, neither sitting cross-legged, leaning against anything nor sitting in an arrogant manner. He should sit as though he is sitting in front of his ustadh (teacher).

The best of all positions is that one recites Qur'aan in salaah standing, in a masjid. If one recites without wudhu whilst reclining on his bed, then too there is reward and virtue, but of a lower level. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has stated,

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

(Those who have intelligence are) They who remember Allaah while standing, sitting and lying down (they do not forget Allaah at any time), and they think about the creation of the heavens and earth. (Aal-Imraan verse 191)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has praised those who remember Him in any position (standing, sitting or lying down), but He mentioned standing first followed by sitting and then lying down.

Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “Whoever recites the Qur’aan whilst standing in salaah will gain the reward of one hundred good deeds for each letter. Whoever recites the Qur’aan whilst sitting in salaah will gain the reward of fifty good deeds for every letter. Whoever recites the Qur’aan out of salaah in a state of wudhu will gain twenty-five rewards for every letter. Whoever recites Qur’aan without wudhu will gain ten rewards.”

Qur’aan recited during tahajjud is most excellent as the heart is most free (from all other matters.) Abu Dharr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to say, “Abundance of sajdahs (i.e. many rak’ats) during the day and lengthy qiraat at night are most virtuous.”

SECOND RULE: THE AMOUNT OF RECITAL

Reciters have different habits, some reciting a lot, whilst others recite a lesser amount. There are those who recite the entire Qur’aan in a day and night, some recite the entire Qur’aan twice and some have even managed to recite the entire Qur’aan thrice in this period. On the other hand, some complete the recital of Qur’aan once a month.

The best in determining an amount is to return to the words of Rasulullaah

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،

لَمْ يَفْقَهُ مَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ فِي أَقَلِّ مِنْ ثَلَاثِ

“Whoever recites the Qur’aan in less than three days has not understood it.” (Tirmidhi no. 2949, Abu Dawood no. 1394)

The reason for this is that reciting so much prevents a person from reciting with tarteel (a slow and distinct manner). When Aaishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا heard a man reciting very fast, she remarked, “This man has neither read the Qur’aan nor kept silent.”

Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ commanded Abdullaah ibn Amr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to complete a recitation of the Qur’aan in seven days. (Bukhari no. 5054, Muslim no. 182)

Similarly, a group of Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ used to complete a recital of the entire Qur’aan every Jumuah. Amongst them were Uthmaan, Zaid ibn Thaabit, Ibn Masood and Ubayy ibn Ka’b رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

There are then four levels in reciting the entire Qur’aan:

- a.) Reciting the entire Qur’aan in one day and night. A group of ulama have disliked this.
- b.) Reciting the entire Qur’aan in a month i.e. one juz every day. This seems to be an excess reduction in the amount of recital, just as the first is an excess in over-reading.

Between these levels are two moderate levels:

- c.) Reciting the entire Qur’aan once a week
- d.) Reciting the entire Qur’aan twice in a week, which is approximately about one third of the Qur’aan daily (10 juz). In this instance, it is best to complete one recital in the day and one at night. One completion should be in the two rak’ats of Fajr on Monday or after them. The completion at night should be in the two rak’ats of Maghrib or after them on Thursday night. The reason for this is so that a person can commence his day and night with a completion of the Qur’aan. The angels continue making duaa for a person until the morning if he completes a recitation at night; and they continue making duaa for him until the evening if he completes a recitation in the day. The blessings of these two recitals will thus encompass the whole day and night.

A bit more detail regarding the amount of Qur’aan to be recited:

If a person is amongst the worshippers traversing the path to Allaah by performing physical acts of worship, then it is not appropriate that he recites less than two recitals a week.

If a person is amongst those traversing the path by actions of the heart and by performing different types of meditations, or he is engaged in the spread of knowledge, then there is no harm if he suffices on one recital a week.

If a person is pondering deeply over the meanings of the Qur'aan, then it is sufficient for him to complete its reading once in a month, since he is in need of repeating the verses and reflecting on them many times.

THIRD RULE: THE MANNER OF DIVIDING THE QUR'AAN:

As for the one who recites the entire Qur'aan every week, he will divide it into seven portions (ahzaab), since the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ divided the Qur'aan into portions.²

It is narrated that Uthmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would commence reciting from Surah Baqarah till the end of Surah Maaidah on Lailatul-Jumuah (Thursday night), from Surah Anaam till Surah Hood on Friday night, from Surah Yusuf till Surah Maryam on Saturday night, from Surah Tahaa till Surah Taa-Seem-Meem on Sunday night, from Surah Ankaboot till Surah Saad on Monday night, from Surah Tanzeel till Surah Rahmaan on Tuesday night, and he

² A delegation went to Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ from Thaqeef. After Isha, Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would address them. One night, he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came later than usual. When asked the reason, he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, "Because I was unable to complete my fixed daily portions of the Qur'aan. I did not want to leave until I had completed." The following morning, this group asked the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ about how Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ divided the portions of the Qur'aan he recited. They explained that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ divided the Qur'aan into (seven parts consisting of) 3 surahs (Faatihah to Al Imraan), five surahs (Nisaa to Anfaal), seven surahs (Taubah to Hijr), nine surahs (Nahl to Noor), eleven surahs (Furqaan to Faatir), thirteen surahs (Yaaseen to Fatah) and the mufassal surahs (Hujuraat to Naas). (Musnad Ahmad no. 16166, 19021, Abu Dawood no. 1393, Ibn Majah no. 1345)

would complete the Qur'aan on Wednesday night. Ibn Mas'ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to divide the Qur'aan into seven parts, but not in this order.

Some have said: The Qur'aan is divided into seven portions: 1.) Three surahs 2.) Five surahs 3.) Seven surahs 4.) Nine surahs 5.) Eleven surahs 6.) Thirteen surahs 7.) Al-Mufasssal which is from Qaaf till the end of the Qur'aan.

In this way, the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ used to divide the Qur'aan and recite accordingly. There is actually a narration from Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in this regard (as mentioned above.) This (division into seven parts) was before its division into five parts, ten parts and thirty parts. All these were introduced later.

FOURTH RULE: THE WRITING OF THE QUR'AAN

It is mustahab (praiseworthy) to make the writing of the Qur'aan beautiful and to make its (letters) clear and distinct. There is no sin in placing dots on the letters, and making marks with red colouring as well as other colours, since this adorns the Qur'aan, makes its letters clear and saves its readers from making mistakes and incorrect reading. Hasan (Basri) and Ibn Seereen رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا used to disapprove of dividing the Qur'aan into fifths, tenths and thirtieth parts. It is narrated that (Abu Amr) Sha'bi and Ibrahim (Nakhaee) رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا disliked dotting of letters with red ink and taking a wage for this work. They used to say, "Keep the Qur'aan free (from anything extra)."

Our thoughts regarding these scholars is that they disliked opening this door, fearing that it would lead to creating excesses in the Qur'aan. They wanted to close this door completely and encourage the protection of the Qur'aan from any change that may infiltrate it. Since these actions have not led to any of these evils, and it has been established by the Muslim community and has led to an increase in knowledge of the Qur'aan, there is no harm in it. It being new does not mean that it is prohibited. How many newly introduced actions are good? An example of this is taraaweeh in jamaat, since it was introduced by Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, but is regarded as a good

innovation (bid'ah-hasanah). A denounced innovation (bid'ah-madhmoonah) is that which opposes an old established sunnah (sunnah-qadeemah) or leads to a change in it.

One of the predecessors used to say, "I shall recite from the Mushaf which is dotted but will not do it myself."

Awzaai رَحِمَهُ اللهُ narrated from Yahya ibn Katheer رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, "The Qur'aan was kept free (from dots and diacritical marks, etc.). The first thing people introduced in it was dots on the ب and ت, etc. They said that there is no sin in this, for it illuminates the Qur'aan. Then they introduced big dots at the end of the verses. They said, "There is no harm in this as it shows the beginning of the verses." Then they introduced thereafter marks showing the beginning and ending of surahs."

Abu Bakr Hadhli رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "I asked Hasan regarding the dotting of the mushafs with red." He asked me what dotting meant. I replied, "People place i'raabs (diacritical points) on the words." He then remarked, "As for placing the diacritical points in the Qur'aan, there is no sin in this."

Khaalid Al-Hidhdhaa رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "I visited Ibn Seereen رَحِمَهُ اللهُ and saw him reading from a mushaf which was dotted, whereas he disliked the placing of dots."

It has been said that Hajjaaj was the one who introduced this (dotting and marking). He brought together the Qur'aan reciters and made them count the words of the Qur'aan and its letters. They made its parts equal and divided it into thirty parts as well as other parts (such as fifths and tenths.)

FIFTH RULE: TARTEEL (RECITING IN A SLOW AND DISTINCT MANNER)

Reciting in tarteel is mustahab (praise-worthy) because the object of the Qur'aan is to ponder over it, as we will soon discuss, and reciting in a slow and distinct manner assists this. For this reason, Ummu-Salamah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا

when asked about the recital of Rasulullaah ﷺ replied that every letter was recited distinctly. (Abu Dawood no. 1466, Tirmidhi no. 2927)

Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “Reciting Surah Baqarah and Surah Aal-Imraan slowly and distinctly whilst pondering over them is better than reciting the entire Qur’aan swiftly.” He also said, “Reciting Surah Zilzaal and Qaariah whilst pondering over them is better than reciting Surah Baqarah and Aal-Imraan rapidly.”

Mujaahid رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was asked regarding two men who commenced salaah. They stood in salaah for the same duration. However, one recited Surah Baqarah only, whilst the other recited the entire Qur’aan.” He رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, “They are equal in reward.”

Know that reciting in a slow and distinct manner is mustahab (praiseworthy) not only for pondering. For this reason, it is still mustahab for a non-Arab who does not understand the meaning of the Qur’aan to recite in this manner and with pauses, since this is closer to reverence and respect (which the Qur’aan deserves), and it creates a greater effect in the heart as opposed to one who recites hastily.

SIXTH RULE: WEEPING (WHILST RECITING THE QUR’AAN)

Weeping whilst reciting the Qur’aan is mustahab. Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “The Qur’aan has been revealed with sorrow. When you recite the Qur’aan, then weep. If you cannot weep, then act as though you are weeping.” (Ibn Majah no. 1337)

Rasulullaah ﷺ also said, “He is not amongst us who does not recite the Qur’aan in a melodious voice.” (Bukhaari no. 7527)

Saalih Murri said, “I recited Qur’aan to Rasulullaah ﷺ in a dream. He said to me, ‘O Saalih! This is the reciting, where is the weeping?’”

Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “When you recite the sajdah of Subhaan (Bani Israaeel), do not hasten to prostrate until you cry. If your eye does not weep, then let your heart weep.”

The manner of forcing oneself to weep is to create grief in the heart. When grief is created, then weeping will occur.” Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Recite the Qur’aan with grief because it was revealed with grief.” (Abu Nuaym in Hilyah vol. 6 page 196)

The method of creating grief is to ponder over the threats, warnings, pacts and promises found in the Qur’aan. Then one should ponder over his shortcomings in fulfilling the commandments and its warnings. Grief will definitely be created, and one will then weep. Then too, if one does not feel grief and weep, as those with purified hearts do, then he should cry due to lack of grief and tears, since this is the greatest of misfortunes.

SEVENTH RULE: FULFILLING THE RIGHT OF THE VERSES RECITED

When a person passes by a verse of sajdah, he should perform sajdah (prostration). Similarly, when he hears another person reciting the verses of sajdah, then too he should make sajdah when the reciter prostrates. A person can only perform sajdah (tilaawah) when he is in a state of purity (i.e. with wudhu). In the Qur’aan, there are 14 verses of sajdah. In Surah Hajj, there are 2 sajdahs and there is no sajdah in Surah Saad. (This is according to the view of Imam Shaafi’ee رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. According to Imam Abu Hanifah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, there is only one verse of sajdah in Surah Hajj and there is one verse of sajdah in Surah Saad.) The minimum requirement is to make sajdah by placing the forehead on the ground, and the most perfect form is to recite Allahu Akbar, then make sajdah and supplicate with such a supplication which is appropriate with the verse recited.³ For example, when a person recites the following verse,

³The method of making Sajdah-Tilaawah according to the Hanafis is as follows: the person should say Allahu Akbar while standing and go into Sajdah. When saying Allahu Akbar the hands should not be raised. While in Sajdah, he should say: ‘Subhaana Rabbiyal’a’laa’ at least three times. Thereafter, he should say Allahu Akbar and stand up. This is the preferred method of performing the Sajdah-Tilaawah. It is also permissible to perform the Sajdah in

خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبِّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ

They fall into sajdah, glorify with the praises of their Sustainer and they are not proud. (Sajdah verse 15)

then he should supplicate,

اللهم اجعلني من الساجدين لوجهك المسبحين بحمدك وأعوذ بك أن أكون من المستكبرين عن أمرك أو على أوليائك

O Allaah! Make me of those who prostrate (before You) for Your pleasure, and who glorify You with Your praise. I seek Your protection from being one of those who are proud to fulfil Your command or are proud against Your friends.

When a person recites the following,

وَيَخْرُجُونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا

They fall into prostration weeping, and this adds to their humility. (Israa verse 109)

then he should supplicate,

اللهم اجعلني من الباكين إليك الخاشعين لك

O Allaah! Make me from those who weep before You, and who are humble towards You.

In this way, a person will prostrate and supplicate after each sajdah.

The same conditions which apply to salaah apply to sajdah-tilaawah as well i.e. concealing of the satr (private parts), facing Qiblah, purity of clothing and body from impurities. If a person hears another reciting whilst he is not in a state of purity, then he should perform sajdah as soon as he attains purity.....The muqtadi should follow his imam in making sajdah of tilaawah, and he cannot make sajdah for his own tilaawah as long as he is the muqtadi.

a sitting posture i.e. facing the Qiblah whilst sitting, a person recites Allahu Akbar and performs the Sajdah, thereafter, raises his head saying Allahu Akbar.

EIGHT RULE: DUAA BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER RECITAL

A person should recite in the beginning of his recital:⁴

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ * وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونَا

I seek the protection of Allaah, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing from the rejected Shaytaan. O my Sustainer, I seek Your protection from the incitements of Shaytaan, and I seek Your protection, O my Sustainer, from their approaching me.

He should also recite Surah Naas and Surah Faatihah.

On completion of the recital, the reciter should read,

صدق الله تعالى وبلغ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اللهم انفعنا به وبارك لنا فيه الحمد لله رب العالمين وأستغفر الله

الحي القيوم

Allaah, the Lofty, has spoken the truth, and Rasulullaah ﷺ has conveyed it (to us). O Allaah, benefit us with the Qur'aan and bless us in it.

All praises are only due to Allaah, the Sustainer of the universe. I seek forgiveness from Allaah, the Ever Living, the All-Sustaining.

Whilst reading, if a person passes by a verse of tasbeeh, he should recite tasbeeh and takbeer. If he passes by a verse of dua and istighfaar, he should make dua and istighfaar. If he passes by a verse discussing matters of hope, he should supplicate for it. If he passes any verse in which fearful matters are discussed, he should seek the protection of Allaah. He will do this verbally or in his mind. Thus, he will say,

سبحان الله نعوذ بالله اللهم ارزقنا اللهم ارحمنا

Glory be to Allaah! We seek the protection of Allaah. O Allaah! Grant us! O Allaah! Have mercy on us.

Hudhaifah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "I performed salaah with Rasulullaah ﷺ. He began reciting Surah Baqarah. Whenever he passed by a verse denoting

⁴ Note that recital of ta'awwuz is also sufficient:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

mercy, he would supplicate or it. Whenever he passed by a verse denoting punishment, he would seek protection (from it.) Whenever he passed by any verse depicting the purity of Allaah, he would glorify Allaah. (With similar wordings in Muslim no. 772, Nasai no. 1008, Abu Dawood no. 873, Ibn Majah no. 1351)

On completion, one should read that which Rasulullaah ﷺ used to recite on completion of the Qur'aan,

اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي بِالْقُرْآنِ واجْعَلْهُ لِي إِمَامًا وَنُورًا وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً اللَّهُمَّ ذَكِّرْنِي مِنْهُ مَا نَسِيتُ وَعَلِّمْنِي مِنْهُ مَا جَهِلْتُ وَارْزُقْنِي تِلَاوَتَهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَأَطْرَافِ النَّهَارِ واجْعَلْهُ لِي حُجَّةً يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

O Allaah! Bestow mercy upon me because of the Qur'aan; make it for me a leader, a light, a guide and a mercy. O Allaah! Remind me of that which I had forgotten (when reciting the Qur'aan), teach me those parts of the Qur'aan of which I am ignorant, grant me its recitation in the hours of the night and the different parts of the day, and make it a proof for me, O Sustainer of the Universe.⁵

NINTH RULE: RECITING THE QUR'AAN ALOUD

There is no doubt that it is necessary to recite the Qur'aan so loudly to the extent that one can hear himself, since recital (qiraat) refers to clearly distinguishing the letters with sounds; thus, sound is necessary. The lowest degree is such that one can hear himself. If one cannot hear himself, his salaah will not be correct.

As for reading so loud that others can hear, it is considered praiseworthy in one aspect and disliked in another aspect.

The following narrations are proofs that reading silently is praiseworthy:

5

قال العراقي: رواه أبو منصور المظفر بن الحسين الأرجاني في فضائل القرآن وأبو بكر بن الضحاك في الشماثل كلاهما من طريق أبي ذر الهروي من رواية داود بن قيس معضلاً

- a.) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “The virtue of reciting the Qur’aan silently over reciting it loudly is like the virtue of giving charity in secret over giving it in public.” (As mentioned in Qootul-Quloob) In another narration, he ﷺ said, “The one who recites Qur’aan loudly is like one who gives charity publicly, whilst the one who recites the Qur’aan silently is like one who gives charity secretly.” (Abu Dawood no. 1333, Nasai no. 2561, Tirmidhi no. 2919)
- b.) A general narration states that actions performed secretly are seventy times more virtuous than actions performed publicly. (Shuabul-Imaan no. 6451)
- c.) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “The best dhikr is that which is silent, and the best sustenance is that which is sufficient.” (Ahmad no. 1477, Ibn Hibbaan no. 809)
- d.) Rasulullaah ﷺ warned, “Some of you should not raise your voice over others in reciting the Qur’aan (or in salaah).” (Sunanul-Kubra of Nasai no. 8038)
- e.) One night, Saeed ibnul-Musayyab رَحِمَهُ اللهُ heard Umar ibn Abdil-Azeez رَحِمَهُ اللهُ reciting Qur’aan in salaah aloud in the masjid of Rasulullaah ﷺ. He had a wonderful voice. Saeed رَحِمَهُ اللهُ commanded his slave, “Go to this person performing salaah and order him to lower his voice.” The slave said, “The masjid is not reserved for us; that person also has a portion in it.” (Rejecting the slave’s argument), Saeed raised his voice, “O devotee! If you intend the pleasure of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى by your salaah, then lower your voice, and if you intend the people, then they will never benefit you in the least bit before Allaah.” Umar ibn Abdul-Azeez رَحِمَهُ اللهُ kept quiet and shortened his rak’at. After making salaam, he took his shoes and went away. At that time, he was the governor of Madinah Munawwarah.

The following narrations are proofs that reading aloud is praiseworthy:

- a.) Rasulullaah ﷺ heard different Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ reciting Qur’aan aloud in tahajjud and he approved of this.

b.) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “When one of you stands to perform salaah (tahajjud) at night, then he should recite aloud, because the angels and the inhabitants of the house listen to his recital and perform salaah with him.” (Similar wording in Bazzaar no. 2655)

c.) Rasulullaah ﷺ passed by three of his sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ all reciting in different ways. He ﷺ passed by Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who was reciting softly. Rasulullaah ﷺ asked him the reason for doing so. He رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, “The One to whom I am whispering (i.e. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) can hear me.” Rasulullaah ﷺ passed by Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who was reading aloud. He ﷺ asked him the reason for doing so. He رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, “I am awakening those who are asleep and repelling Shaytaan.”

Rasulullaah ﷺ passed by Bilaal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who was reciting some verses from one surah and other verses from other surahs. Rasulullaah ﷺ asked him the reason for doing so. He رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, “I am joining some good things with other good things.”

Rasulullaah ﷺ then remarked, “All of you have done good and right.” (A similar narration is found in Abu Dawood no. 1329 and Tirmidhi no. 447 regarding the first art of the hadith. As for the second part, a similar narration is Nawaadirul-Usool vol. 2 page 319)

The method of reconciliation amongst these (apparently conflicting) narrations is that reciting silently is furthest from show and ostentation. This is best for a person who fears this for himself. If one does not have fear of this and reciting will not disturb another, then reciting aloud is better because:

- a.) it involves more effort
- b.) its benefit is connected to others – any good which benefits others is better than that which benefits the person only
- c.) it awakens the mind of the reciter, gathers his concern for reflection on the (meaning of the) Qur’aan and turns his ear to it
- d.) it repels sleep when one raises his voice

- e.) it increases the reciter's enthusiasm to read, and removes laziness
- f.) waking a sleeping man can be hoped for by loud reading in which case, the reciter will be the cause for him awakening (from his sleep due to laziness)
- g.) a lazy, unmindful person gets encouraged by his fervour and gains the desire to serve (Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى).

When any of these intentions is present, then reciting aloud is better than reciting softly. If all these intentions are made, the rewards will multiply. Due to abundance of intentions, the actions of the pious increase, and their rewards multiply. If in a single act, there are ten intentions, then there are ten rewards.

For this reason, we say that reading from the mushaf is better (than reading from memory), because looking at the Qur'aan, thinking about it and carrying it are additional rewards to the recital. Thus, the rewards will be more. It has been said, "Reciting the entire Qur'aan by looking into it is better than reciting seven times (from memory), because looking at the Qur'aan is also an act of worship."

Uthmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ tore two mushafs by reciting so much from them. Many Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ used to read from mushafs, and they disliked a day passing in which they did not look at the mushaf.

A jurist of Egypt came to Imam Shaafi'ee رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ at dawn. He رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ had a mushaf before him. Imam Shaafi'ee رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said to him, "Excessive study of fiqh has prevented you from reading the Qur'aan. I perform Isha salaah and then place the mushaf before me; I do not close it till the morning.

TENTH RULE: RECITING THE QUR'AAN WITH TARTEEL

This refers to reciting the Qur'aan beautifully and in a distinct voice, by controlling the voice though not with excessive stretching which changes the prose order (nazm).

This is sunnah.

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Beautify the Qur’aan with your voices.” (Abu Dawood no. 1468, Nasai no. 1015, Ibn Majah no. 1342)

Rasulullaah ﷺ also said, “Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى does not listen to anything as He listens to a person reciting the Qur’aan in a beautiful voice.” (Bukhaari no. 7544, Muslim 792 – However the word ‘Nabi’ is in these narrations and not ‘person.’)

Rasulullaah ﷺ also said, “He is not from us who does not recite the Qur’aan in a beautiful voice.” (Bukhari no. 7527) Some are of the view that (taghanni) refers to being independent, whilst others feel that it means to recite in a melodious voice. This latter view is closest to the truth according to the linguists.

Once Rasulullaah ﷺ was waiting for Aaishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who delayed in coming. He asked her as to what had delayed her. She replied, “O Rasulullaah! I was listening to the recital of a man. I never heard a better voice than him.” Rasulullaah ﷺ stood up, (went to the masjid), listened to him for a long time and then returned. He ﷺ said, “This is Saalim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhaifah. All praise is due to Allaah who made people like him amongst my followers.” (Ibn Majah no. 1338)

Once Rasulullaah ﷺ listened to Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reciting. Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ were standing with him. They stood listening for a long time. Then he ﷺ said, “Whoever intends to recite the Qur’aan as fresh as it was revealed should recite in the manner of Ibn Ummi Abd (i.e. Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.)” (Musnad Ahmad no. 175, Ibn Majah no. 138 (the last portion))

Rasulullaah ﷺ said to Ibn Masood, “Recite to me.” He رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “O Rasulullaah! Should I recite to you, whereas it was revealed to you?” Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “I desire to hear it from others.” He began reading, and Rasulullaah ﷺ began weeping. (Bukhari no. 4583, Muslim no. 800)

Rasulullaah ﷺ heard the recital of Abu Moosa رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and said, “He has been given one of the flutes of the family of Dawood.” This news

reached Abu Moosa رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who said, “O Rasulullaah! If I knew that you were listening, I would have adorned it fully.” (Saheeh ibn Hibbaan no. 7197, Mustadrak of Haakim no. 5966)

Haytham Qaari saw Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in a dream. He relates, “Are you the Haytham who adorns the Qur’aan with your voice.” He replied in the affirmative. He رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, May Allaah grant you a good recompense!” It is narrated, “When the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would gather, they would command one of them to recite a Surah of the Qur’aan.” Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to say to Abu Moosa رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “Remind us of Your Sustainer!” So, he used to recite by him until the middle of the salaah time. Someone would say, “O Ameerul-Mu’mineen! Salaah, salaah.” He would say, “Are we not in salaah?” indicating to the verse, “and the zikr of Allaah is the greatest.”

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Whoever listens to a verse of the Book of Allaah, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement.” (Musannaf Abdur-Razzaaq no. 6012 – mawqoof narration of Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ)⁶

One narration states, “Ten rewards will be written for him.” Since the reward of listening is great, and the reciter is the cause of it, he will receive a share of the reward, unless his intention is show and ostentation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TEN INTERNAL RULES OF TILAAWAH (QUR’AAN RECITATION)

FIRST RULE: GRANDEUR OF THE DIVINE SPEECH

6

أخرجه أحمد من حديث أبي هريرة من استمع إلى آية من كتاب الله كتب له حسنة مضاعفة ومن تلاها كانت له نورا يوم القيامة وفيه ضعف وانقطاع

Understanding the magnificence and lofty nature of the Speech of Allaah as well as the Bounty and Grace of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى on His creation by descending it from the Throne of His Majesty to the level of their understanding. Consider how kind He was to man in delivering to their understanding the meanings of His speech which is an eternal attribute existing with His Being! Consider how that attribute was manifested to them in the form of letters and sounds which are attributes of human beings, since man is unable to reach the stage of understanding the attributes of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى except through his own attributes. If the essence of the majesty of His speech were not concealed in the garment of letters, neither His Throne nor even the soil in the recesses of the ground would have remain fixed as a result of hearing His Speech, and all that is between these two would have been reduced to smithereens because of the greatness of His authority and the majesty of His light. If Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى had not strengthened Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, he would not have been able to hear His words in the way the mountain could not bear the beginning stages of His manifestation so that it broke into fragments. ⁷

It is not possible to make the magnification of divine speech intelligible to man except through examples on the levels of their understanding. For this reason a certain aarif (gnostic) explained the Divine Speech by saying, “Every letter of the words of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in Al-Lawhul-Mahfooz (The Preserved Tablet) is greater than Mount Qaaf⁸, and if the angels join together to bear a single letter, they will not be able to do so until Israafeel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام - who is the angel entrusted with Al-Lawhul-Mahfooz - comes to it and lifts it; and he is able to do so by the permission of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and His mercy, not by

⁷ This is in reference to the incident when Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام requested to see Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى mentioned that he would not be able to see Him, and commanded him to look at the mountain, where Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى manifested Himself. The mountain broke into bits and Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام fell unconscious. (refer to Surah A'raaf)

⁸ Mountain range which surrounds the earth.

his own power and ability; Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has bestowed upon him the power to do this and engaged him to fulfil this task.

A certain wise man has very carefully explained the manner of Allaah's kindness in delivering the meanings of His speech, despite its exalted nature, to man's understanding and His strengthening him despite his imperfect status. This wise man has set forth a parable: A wise man invited a certain king to the Shariah (revealed law) of the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام. The king questioned him regarding several matters (related to the oneness of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.) The wise man answered in such a way that the king was unable to understand. Then the king asked him, "Tell me, concerning that which the Ambiyaa bring from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, when a claim is made (by them) that this is not the speech of a human being but the speech of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, then how can man understand it?"

The wise man replied, "We have seen that when man seeks to make animals and birds understand what he wants them to do, such as to proceed, to delay, to come forth, to turn back; and he sees that these animals (and birds) are unable to understand his speech which proceeds from the light of his intellect and which has beauty, adornment and order – then he descends to the level of the discriminating sense of the animals and delivers his intentions to these animals through sounds made suitable to them, such as calling and whistling, and through sounds near to their own sounds so that they may be able to understand him.

In like manner, human beings are unable to understand the speech of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to its inmost depth and to the perfection of its attributes. So, in sounds which they use themselves and through which they have heard divine wisdom, it has become like the sound of calling and whistling which the animals have heard from man. This did not prevent the meanings of Divine Wisdom hidden in those attributes, from making the speech (i.e. sounds) noble and magnified, because of the nobility of divine wisdom and its great status. The sounds have become like the body and the dwelling place for Divine Wisdom, and Divine Wisdom has become (like) the soul and

spirit for the sounds. Just as human bodies are honoured and respected because they are the dwelling place for the soul, so the sounds of Divine Speech are considered noble because of the Divine Wisdom that exists in them. The Divine Speech has an exalted status, a high rank, an overpowering authority, and is an executor of judgement in respect of truth and falsehood. It is the just judge, the pleasing witness, and the one which commands and prohibits. Falsehood has no power to stand up in front of Divine Speech filled with wisdom, just as a shadow is unable to stand up in front of sunrays. Human beings have no power to penetrate into the depth of Divine Wisdom, just as they have no power to penetrate with their eyes into the light of the sun itself. They, however, attain from the light of the sun itself only that which their eyes can bear, and which enables them to seek information about their needs. Divine Speech then is like a veiled king whose face is unknown but whose decree is carried out, like the sun which is mighty and obvious but the essence of which is hidden, like the shining stars by which one, although unacquainted with their course, goes in the right way. It is then the keys to precious treasures, a drink of life, from which, if anyone drinks, he does not die, and a medicine from which, if anyone takes a dose, he does not fall ill.”

The words of the wise man are a fragment of what is needed for one to understand the meaning of Divine Speech. More than this is not appropriate to the knowledge of one’s practical life. So, one should be content with this.

SECOND RULE: HONOUR AND DIGNITY FOR THE SPEAKER

At the start of tilaawah, the reciter should bring to his mind the honour and grandeur of the One who Speaks (i.e. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) and should realize that what he is reading is not the speech of a human being, and that in the recitation of the speech of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى there is an extreme danger, because Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى said, Only those who are clean can touch it.” Just as the external side of the mushaf and its pages are protected against the external skin of a person who touches it except when he is pure (both physically and ritually), so also its external meaning is veiled, by the

authority of its greatness and might, from the internal aspect of the reciter's mind, except when it is pure from all defilement and is illuminated by the light of magnificence and reverence. Just as every hand is not fit for touching the letter of the mushaf, so also every tongue is not fit to recite its letters, nor every mind fit to understand its meanings. It is due to such magnification that Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to fall unconscious when opening the mushaf for reading, saying, "This is the speech of my Sustainer! This is the speech of my Sustainer!" Thus, the magnification of the speech (i.e. the Qur'aan) is (in effect) the magnification of the Speaker (Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.)

The grandeur and lofty status of the Speaker (Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) will never come to the mind of the reciter unless he reflects on His attributes, His Majesty and his Works. Thus, when the thought of the Throne, of the heavens, of the earth and all that is between these two, such as jinn, man, other moving creatures and trees come to his mind, and he knows with certainty that:

- a.) the Creator of all of these, who has power over them and who sustains them, is the One who has no partner.
- b.) all are within the grip of His power, move between His bounty and mercy and between His retribution and authority – if He bestows favour upon them, this is through His bounty; and if He punishes them this is by His Justice.
- c.) He is the One who says, "These (the People on the Right) will go to Jannah, and I do not hesitate to do this" and "these (the People on the Left) will go to Hell, and I do not hesitate to do this" and this is the limit of splendour and elevation.

Reflection on these and other similar things will bring to the mind of the reciter the grandeur of the Speaker (Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) first and then the grandeur of the speech (the Qur'aan.)

THIRD RULE: PAY ATTENTION AND ABANDON THE WHISPERINGS OF THE
NAFS

In the explanation of the verse:

يَايَحْيَىٰ خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ

O Yahya! Hold fast on the Book. (Maryam verse 12)

It is said that “hold fast” means to read with seriousness and endeavour. Being serious means to be alone with it when reading it and turning all one’s attention to it and away from all other things. A certain pious person was asked, “When you read the Qur’aan, do you think of anything else?” He replied, “Is there anything more beloved to me than the Qur’aan that I may think of?” One of the pious predecessors used to repeat a verse if his heart was not attentive.

This quality (of having an attentive heart) is generated from the preceding quality, which is having the grandeur of the Speaker, because a person who has the grandeur of any speech which he is reciting will gain enjoyment, feel comfortable and not be inattentive to it. In the Qur’aan is present that by which the heart can gain great comfort if the reciter is fit for it. How can the reciter seek comfort and ponder over anything else, whilst he is in a garden and a place wherein there is no worries? Will a person strolling in a beautiful garden think of another place?

It has been stated that in the Qur’aan there are fields, gardens, closets, brides, brocades, meadows and rooms. All *meems* are the fields of the Qur’aan, the *raas* are its gardens, the *haas* are its closets, the *musabbihaat* (all surahs starting with *يسبح*) are its brides, surahs commencing with *haa-meem* are its brocades, the *mufasssal* (surahs in which the laws and incidents are expounded) are its meadows, and the remainder are its rooms. When the reciter enters the fields of the Qur’aan, plucks different types of fruits from its gardens, enters into its closets, views its brides, wears its brocade, walks care-free in its gardens, and dwells in the rooms of its palaces, then all these absorb him to such an extent that he cannot think of anything else; consequently his heart will not be inattentive and his thoughts will not be scattered.

FOURTH RULE: PONDERING OVER THE VERSE RECITED

This is a level higher than being attentive. At times, a person is not pondering over anything else, but confines himself to hearing something, even though he is not pondering over it.

The purpose of reading the Qur'aan is to ponder over it. For this reason, it is sunnah to read with tarteel (slow and distinct manner) outwardly, so that internally one may ponder over the meanings. Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "There is no goodness in that acts of worship in which there is no understanding, and no goodness in that recital of Qur'aan in which there is no pondering." If a person is unable to ponder except by repetition, then he should repeat the verses, unless he is behind an imam. If he remains pondering over a verse, whilst the imam has gone on to another verse, he will be committing an error. He is like a man whose astonishment at a sentence uttered by a person whispering to him keeps him from understanding the remaining part of what the person says. Similarly (he will be committing an error) if he is reciting the tasbeeh in ruku' but is pondering over the verse the imam recited. This is an evil whispering of Shaytaan.

It is related from Aamir ibn Abd Qays رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that he said, "Evil thoughts overwhelm me in salaah." He was asked, "Concerning worldly matters?" He replied, "I would prefer to be pierced by spearheads to that. However, my mind is engaged in thought about my standing before My Sustainer, and how shall I depart from there (will I be successful or not.)" He considered this to be an evil thought (despite it being such a good thought.) It really is an evil thought because it kept him away from understanding the salaah in which he was engaged. Shaytaan is not able to deceive a person like him except by engaging him in a religious thought, thus preventing him from that which is most superior. When the words of Aamir were mentioned to Hasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, he remarked, "If you are truthful in relating his words, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has not ordered that for us."

It is related that one night, Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ recited

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

and repeated it twenty times. (Abu Dharr Al-Harawi in his Mu'jam)
He صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ repeated it so that he could ponder over its meanings.

Abu Dharr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed nafl salaah with us one night. He continued repeating this verse,

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ، وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

If You punish them, then they are Your servants, and if You punish them, then surely You are the Mighty, the Wise.” (Maaidah verse 118)
(Nasai no. 1010, Ibn Majah no. 1350)

Tameem Daari رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ stood in salaah one night reciting this verse,
أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءٌ مَعَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ شَرٌّ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ
Do those who commit evil deeds imagine that We shall make them as those who believe and do good deeds in life and death? How evil is that which they judge! (Jaathiyah verse 21)

Saeed ibn Jubayr رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ one night continued repeating the following verse:

وَاثْنَاوَا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ

Separate yourselves (from the righteous) this day, O sinners!
(Yaaseen no. 59)

One pious elder said, “I commence reciting a surah, and then some (wonderful meanings) which I view in it keeps me from completing it until dawn appears.”

Another elder used to say, “I do not expect a reward for reading a verse which I do not understand, and to which my mind does not give attention to (when I read it).”

It is narrated from Abu Sulaiman Daraani رَحِمَهُ اللهُ that he said, “I recite a verse, and remain thinking about it for four or five nights. If I do not stop pondering over it, I will not be able to move to the next verse.”

It is narrated regarding a certain pious elder that he continued repeating Surah Hood for six months and did not complete pondering over it.

A certain aarif (gnostic) said, “I complete one reading every week, one reading every month, one reading every year, and I have not completed one reading for the last thirty years.” This is in accordance to his pondering and delving into its meanings. He used to also say, “I have put myself in the place of different labourers in the matters of worship. I perform acts of devotion on four different courses- daily, weekly, monthly and yearly.

FIFTH RULE: UNDERSTANDING (THE MEANINGS OF THE VERSES RECITED)

This refers to seeking from the meaning of every verse recited explanations which befit it, since the Qur’aan encompasses the discussion of:

- a.) the attributes of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى,
- b.) His actions
- c.) the conditions of the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ
- d.) the conditions of those who considered them false and how they were destroyed
- e.) His commands and prohibitions
- f.) Jannah and Jahannum

Examples of verses describing the attributes of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى are:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

There is nothing like Him. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (Shoora verse 11)

الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ

He is the Sovereign, the Most Pure, the Giver of peace, the Giver of security, the Vigilant, the Mighty, the Overpowering, the Glorious.

(Hashr verse 23)

The reciter should ponder on the meanings of these names and attributes of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى so that deep connotations may be disclosed to him. Underneath them are hidden meanings which can be disclosed to those especially favoured by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to understand them. It is to this that Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ indicated by his words, “Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not hide from me anything which he concealed from people, except that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى bestows upon a man understanding of His Book.” (Bukhari no. 6915, An-Nasai no. 4744)

The reciter should be desirous in seeking this understanding. Ibn Mas’ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “One who wants to acquire the knowledge of the past people and the future generations should deeply study the Qur’aan.”

The greatest of all forms of knowledge of the Qur’aan is under the names of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and His Attributes; most people could only know about them certain matters suitable to their understanding and could not obtain knowledge of their depths.

As for the works of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, they are discussed, for example, in His discussion of the creation of the heavens, the earth and other things (such as the rivers and mountains, etc.) The reciter should understand from them the attributes of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, since the existence of a work proves the existence of its Doer, and the greatness of the former proves the greatness of the latter. So, he should view in the act the Agent and not the act. One who knows the True One sees Him in everything, since everything originates from Him, returns to Him, exists by Him and belongs to Him. Thus, He is the All-in reality. He who does not see Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in everything he sees, is as if he does not know Him. One who knows Him knows that ‘everything besides Allaah is false,’ and that “everything will perish except His Being.” The meaning of this is not that everything will be falsehood later on; rather it is falsehood now if its essence is considered in respect of itself but is not falsehood if its existence is considered in respect of the fact that it exists through Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and His Power. So, it has existence by way of following Allaah, and is sheer falsehood by way of independence (from

Allaah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى). This is one of the principles of knowledge achieved by *mukaashafah* (mystical intuition).

For this reason, the reciter – when he reads the words of Allaah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) which ask,

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ

Have you reflected on that which you plant? (Waaqiah verse 63)

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ

Have you reflected on the sperm-drop which you emit?

(Waaqiah verse 58)

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ

Have you reflected about the water you drink? (Waaqiah verse 68)

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ

Have you reflected on the fire that you kindle? (Waaqiah verse 71)

The person should not confine his thoughts to fire, water, sperm-drops and seeds. Rather, he should reflect on the sperm-drop and know first that it is a small quantity of water-like substance the parts of which resemble one another. Then he should consider how it is (gradually) divided into flesh, bones, legs, liver, heart and others. Then he should consider those noble attributes that makes themselves manifest in it – hearing, seeing, thinking and others. Thereafter, he should consider the condemnable attributes that appear in it – anger, desire, pride, ignorance, lying and quarrelling, as Allaah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has stated,

أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Has man not seen that We created him from a mere sperm-drop, and now (forgetting his humble beginnings,) he is suddenly an open adversary?

(Yaaseen verse 77)

Then he, the reciter, will reflect on these wonders so that he may ascend from them to a higher wonder of these wonders which is the attribute from which these wonders have proceeded. He will persistently be considering the making so that he will see the Maker.

As for the condition of the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, when the reciter hears how they were considered false, beaten and hit, and some were even martyred, then he should understand from this Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى's attribute of independence from His messengers and from those to whom they were sent, and that if Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى destroyed all of them, it would not affect anything in His kingdom. When the reciter hears how the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ were assisted finally, he will understand the power of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and Allaah's will assist the truth.

As for the condition of the deniers of Allaah, for example, the people of Thamud and Aad, and the punishment which fell on them, then the reciter's understanding of these should result in a feeling of fear of Allaah's power and punishment. He should take lesson for himself, and should remember that if he is unmindful, disrespectful and is deceived by the delay in punishment, then divine punishment may overtake him, and the sentence (of punishment) may be executed.

Likewise, when he hears the descriptions of Jannah and Jahannum, and all other things in the Qur'aan (e.g. warnings and promises), he should apply them to himself. It is not possible to encompass the complete meaning since that has no end. Every person will gain from it according to what is decreed for him. There is nothing green nor dry except that it is in an open Book.

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

Say, "If the ocean was ink for the words (attributes, excellence, powers) of my Sustainer (to be written), the ocean (of ink) would be finished before the words of my Sustainer can end (before all can be written), even if We supplement it (the ocean of ink) with a like amount of ink (with another ocean of ink)." (Kahf verse 109)

If was for this reason that Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "If I wished, I could have loaded seventy camels with the tafseer (explanation) of Surah Faatihah."

The object of what we have discussed above is only to indicate the method of understanding, so that the door of it may be opened to the reciter. As for a detailed understanding, this is not the objective.

One who has no understanding of what is in the Qur'aan, even to the lowest limit, is included amongst the following:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

(O Rasulullaah ﷺ) There are those people who (appear to) listen to you intently (but with inattentive hearts) until they depart from your presence and then say (with ridicule) to those (Muslims) who have been granted knowledge, "What did he say just now?" These are the ones on whose hearts Allaah has set a seal and who follow their whims.

(Muhammad verse 16)

This seal is one of the barriers of understanding.

وقد قيل لا يكون المرید مريداً حتى يجد في القرآن كل ما يريد ويعرف منه النقصان من المزيد ويستغني بالمولى عن العبيد

SIXTH RULE: BEING FREE OF OBSTACLES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE QUR'AAN

Most people are hindered from understanding the meanings of the Qur'aan for reasons and veils let down on their minds by Shaytaan, so that the wonders of the secrets of the Qur'aan have become obscure to them. Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "Had it not been the case that Shaytaans hover around the minds of the sons of Adam, they would have been able to look at the invisible world (malakoot)." (Musnad Ahmad no. 8757)

The meanings of the Qur'aan are among the sum-total of the invisible world. Everything which is beyond the senses, and which can only be apprehended by the light of spiritual insight (nurul-baseerah) belongs to the invisible world.

The veils obstructing the understanding of the Qur'aan are four:

1.) The first is the direction of all care to the exact pronunciation of the letters, by producing them from their right places (in the mouth and tongue). This is done by a Satan entrusted with reciters of the Qur'aan to turn them away from understanding the meanings of the words of Allaah **جَبَّارٌ وَكَوَّعَالٌ**. This Shaytaan always induces them to echo the letters (of Divine Speech), making them imagine that they have not come out from the right places. When the thought of the reciter is thus confined to the right places for pronouncing the letters of the Qur'aan, how can its meanings be fully clear to him? The greatest laughingstock of Shaytaan is one who obeys him in a deception like this.⁹

2.) The second veil is the reciter being a purely dogmatic follower (muqallid) of a school of thought (madhab), and on which he has remained very firm with a strong mental zeal, by merely following what he has heard, without arriving at it by spiritual insight and mystical vision (mushaahadah). This is a person whose belief has shackled him from going beyond it. So, it is not possible that any other idea other than that in which he has believed should come to his mind. Thus, his consideration is limited to what he has heard. If a distant flash of lightning is seen and one of the meanings of a Qur'aanic verse which is opposite to the meaning he heard appears to him, then the Shaytaan of purely following a school of thought dogmatically attacks him severely stating, "How can this (new) meaning come to your mind, seeing that it is contradictory to the meaning in which your forefathers believed?"

⁹ This is no way undermines the importance of tajweed, which is fardh. However, it should not become the main object, which is the understanding and practise on the Qur'aan (translator).

So, he considers the new meaning a deception from Shaytaan, and he remains at a distance from it and guards himself against the like of it.

For a reason similar to this, the Sufis have said that knowledge is a veil, and by this knowledge they have meant those beliefs which most people have been holding onto dogmatically following an authority or my mere reliance on casuistic sentences written by zealots of schools of thought and delivered to them. As for the real knowledge which is the uncovering of the actual condition of the thing known and which is a vision of spiritual insight, how can it be a veil, seeing that it is the ultimate object of desire?

Pure dogmatic following of an authority is sometimes false (in itself) and is therefore an obstacle to the understanding of the meaning of the Qur'aan. An example of this is a man who has a purely dogmatic belief that Allaah's *istiwa* on His Throne means His being settled on it physically. Then in the case of (the Divine Name) "Al-Quddoos," for example, there comes to his mind the meaning that He is pure from all that is ascribable to His creation; but that purely dogmatic belief of his does not make it possible for this meaning to be firmly implanted in his mind. Had it become strengthened in his mind, it would have led to a second meaning and a third, which would be inter-connected. But he hastens to drive away this meaning from his mind, because it contradicts his false belief which is held purely dogmatically.

Sometimes, purely dogmatic following of an authority is true in itself, but it becomes an obstacle to understanding (the meanings of the Qur'aan), and to the unveiling of them. The truth in which man is obliged to believe in has stages and grades, and it has an external beginning and an internal end. Concentration of man's nature on the external aspects prevent him from reaching an internal end. (This constitutes a veil), as we have discussed in connection with the distinction between the external and internal knowledge made in The Book of the Articles of Faith.¹⁰

¹⁰ This does not refer to not following a madhab (school of thought) in beliefs and action. Imam Ghazaali رحمه الله himself was a dogmatic follower of the Ashari School in beliefs and the Shaafiee School in subsidiary matters. Here, he is speaking of a

3.) The third veil is man's insistence on sin, his being characterized with pride, or his being, in general, afflicted with worldly passion which he follows. These cause the darkness of the soul and its rust and are comparable to dirt accumulating upon a mirror. So, they prevent the truth from reflecting upon the soul. They constitute the greatest of all veils of the soul, and it is by them that most people are veiled (from the meanings of the Qur'aan.) When worldly desires greatly accumulate (in the soul), the meanings of Divine Speech are greatly veiled. When (worldly) burdens on the soul are made light, reflection on its meanings becomes near. Thus, the soul is like a mirror, desires are like rust, the meanings of the Qur'aan are like forms which are visible in a mirror and training the soul by removing (worldly) desires is like polishing of the mirror.

For this reason, Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "If my ummah (followers) consider gold and silver (wealth) as something great, the awe of Islam will be pulled away from it. If he abandons commanding of righteousness and prohibiting evil, they will be deprived of the blessings of revelation." (Amr bil-Ma'roof of Ibn Abid-Dunyaa no. 70)

Fudayl رحمه الله commented, "That is, they will be deprived of the blessings of revelation."

Allaah تبارك وتعالى has made 'turning to Him in repentance' (inaabah) a stipulation for the understanding of the Qur'aan and for the receiving of admonition. Thus He تبارك وتعالى said,

تَبَصُّرَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنبِّئٍ

....a matter of contemplation and a source of admonition for every servant that turns to Us. (Qaaf verse 8)

وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ

higher level of understanding the deeper meanings of the Qur'aan, which is the domain of people of his level, and not us who are mere beginners in the path of knowledge.

None takes lesson except he who turns (to Allaah). (Ghaafir verse 13)

إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Only those gifted with understanding will take lesson. (Ra'd verse 19)

The man who has preferred the deception of this world to the delight of the Hereafter is not among those gifted with understanding, and that is why the deep meanings of the Qur'aan are not revealed to Him.

4.) The fourth veil is present when a man has read the outward tafseer (exegesis) of the Qur'aan and has formed the belief that Qur'aanic sentences have only those meanings which have come down from Ibn Abbaas, Mujaahid and othes, and that "he who has explained the Qur'aan by his personal opinion has taken his place in the Fire." This too is one of the great veils. This belief contradicts the words of Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, "Except that Allaah bestows understanding of the Qur'aan upon a man," and that if the correct meaning of the Qur'aan were only that which has come down by tradition (from the leading exegetes), people would have not disagreed on it.

SEVEN: TAKHSEES (RENDER THE TEACHINGS OF THE QUR'AAN TO BE SPECIFIC)

This means that the reciter will suppose that every part of the Qur'aan is intended for him. If he hears any command or prohibition, he will suppose that he is the man commanded or he will suppose that he is the man to whom the prohibition applies. If he hears any promise of reward or any threat of punishment, he will make the same assumption. If he hears the incidents of the past people and the Ambiyaa, he will know that they are not intended for discussion in the evening (by narrating them), what is intended is that they should be reflected over; from their manifold descriptions should be derived the lesson which is needed. The narration of every

incident in the Qur'aan is only intended to provide some benefit to Rasulullaah ﷺ and his followers. That is why Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى referred to it as,

مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ

That whereby We make your mind firm. (Hood verse 120)

The reciter should suppose that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has made his mind firm by narrating in it the incidents of the Ambiyaa; their patience while suffering (due to the actions of their people), and their firmness in religion while waiting for Divine Help. How can he not suppose this, seeing that the Qur'aan was revealed to Rasulullaah ﷺ not only for him especially, but as a spiritual cure, a guidance, a mercy and a light for the worlds? For this reason, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى commanded us all to be grateful (to Him) for His favour in sending down the Book. Thus He تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى commanded,

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عَالِمَكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ

Keep in mind the favour of Allaah upon you and that which He has sent down to you i.e. the Book and wisdom through which He exhorts you.

(Baqarah verse 231)

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

We have sent down to you a Book which contains advices for you. Will you then not understand? (Ambiyaa verse 10)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نَزَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

We have sent down this reminder to You so that you may expound to the people (Our commandments) which have been sent down to them (through you.) (Nahl verse 44)

كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ

In this way, Allaah presents to people their true conditions. (Muhammad verse 3)

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

Follow the best of the commandments which have been revealed to you from Your Sustainer. (Zumar verse 55)

هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

These teachings are manifest proofs for people, and a guidance and mercy for those who have conviction. (Jaathiyah verse 20)

هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This Qur'aan is an exposition for the people, and a source of guidance and admonition for the pious. (Aal-Imraan verse 138)

Since Allaah's message is intended for all people, it is intended for individuals as well. Thus, this reciter, is intended. He has nothing to do with other people. He should suppose he is the one intended.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى said,

وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنْذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ

(Tell people) This Qur'aan has been revealed to me so that I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches through it. (An'aam verse 19)

Muhammad ibn Al-Qurzi رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said, "Whomsoever it reaches" is as if Allaah has spoken to him."

If the reciter supposes that every part of the Qur'aan is intended for him, he will not take up mere study of it as his duty; rather he will read it just as a slave reads the writing of his master who has written to him so that he may think on it and act according to it. For this reason, a certain religious scholar said, "This Qur'aan consists of treatises which have come to us from Our

Sustainer bearing His covenants. We ponder over them in salaah, busy ourselves with them in solitude and execute them in acts of obedience to Allaah and in following the sunnah of Rasoolullaah ﷺ.”

Maalik ibn Dinaar رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to say, “The Qur’aan is not planted in your minds, O people of the Qur’aan. Surely, the Qur’aan is the Spring of a believer (causes the heart to come alive) just as rain is the Spring of the earth.”

Qataadah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “No one sits in the company of the Qur’aan without standing up, having been harmed or benefitted by it.” Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى said,

هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

That (the Qur’aan) is a spiritual cure and a mercy for the believers, but it only increases the oppressors in loss. (Israa verse 82)

EIGHT RULE: TAKING EFFECT BY THE QUR’AAN

This means that the reciter’s heart should take effect by the different effects, according to the different verses recited. Thus, in accordance with what his mind understands, he will be in a state of grief, fear, hope and so on.

When his knowledge and recognition is perfect, his fear will be most predominant of all the states of the heart. The quality of making the mind straitened and sorrowful predominates Qur’aanic verses. Thus, the mention of Divine forgiveness and Divine Mercy is always seen to be accompanied by stipulations which the reader falls short of attaining. An example of this is the verse:

وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ

Verily I am All-Forgiving.

This is followed by four conditions:

لِمَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى

For the one who repents, believes, does good deeds and then is rightly guided. (Taahaa verse 82)

Another example is the following surah:

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

By the oath of time! Verily man is at a loss (in both worlds) except those who believe, who do good deeds, who encourage each other towards (remaining steadfast on and propagating) the truth and who encourage each other to exercise patience. (Asr verse 1-3)

Even where Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى mentions something briefly, He mentions a comprehensive condition:

إِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Verily the Mercy of Allaah is close to those who carry out their duty to the utmost. (A'raaf verse 56)

This condition includes all other conditions.

Whoever studies the Qur'aan in depth from the beginning till the end will find this method throughout. The man who understands this will be in a mental state of grief and fear. For this reason, Hasan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, "By Allaah! Any person who believes in the Qur'aan and recites it in the morning will find that his grief increases and his joy decreases, his weeping increases and his laughter decreases, his weariness and work will increase, and his rest and relaxation will decrease."

Wuhayb ibn Ward رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, "We looked into the ahaadith and sermons, but we did not find anything which moves the heart more, nor anything which drags grief to the mind more strongly than reading the Qur'aan, understanding it and pondering over it."

A man, then, is affected by tilaawah by being characterized by the quality of the verse recited. Thus, when reciting a verse which warns and restricts Divine Forgiveness to those who fulfil certain preconditions, he will make himself so small as if for fear he is about to die. When a verse of promise for forgiveness is recited, he will rejoice as if he flies for joy. When Allaah, His attributes and names are mentioned, he will bow his head in submission to

His majesty and in awareness of His greatness. When he recites a verse on the disbeliever's belief in an impossible thing for Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى e.g. their belief that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has a child or spouse, he will lower his voice and be broken-hearted in bashfulness because of the evil of what they believed. When Jannah is described, he will produce in his mind a yearning for it; but when Jahannm is described, he will tremble for fear of it.

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ once said to Ibn Masood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, "Recite to me." He says, "I began reciting Surah Nisaa. When I reached the following verse, I saw he was shedding tears.

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

How will it be (the condition of the disbelievers on the Day of Qiyaamah) when We shall bring forth a witness from every nation (the Ambiyaa of every community who will testify against them) and call you (O Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to be a witness over all of them? (Nisaa verse 41)

Then he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Stop now." (Bukhaari no. 5050, Muslim no. 800) This is because thinking about the event which is referred to in this verse engrossed his mind fully.

Amongst those who feared Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, there were some who fell unconscious when reciting verses in which warnings were sounded. Some even passed away when hearing these verses.

Mental states like these will exclude the reciter from being a mere narrator. If a person recites the following verse, *and* he possesses no fear, then he will be a mere narrator.

إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

Verily, I fear, if I disobey My Sustainer, the punishment of a great day.
(An'aam verse 15)

If a person recites the following but does not place trust in Allaah and does not possess the quality of turning to Him, then he is a mere narrator.

عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنُتَبِّأُ وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

In You alone do we place our trust, to You alone do we turn to, and to You alone is the final return. (Mumtahinah verse 4)

If a person recites the following, then his condition should be of steadfastness (against the enemy) or firmness so that he could perceive the sweetness of his recital.

وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ مَا آذَيْتُمُونَا

*We will surely remain steadfast on that difficulty which you inflicted on us.
(Ibraahim verse 12)*

If he is not distinguished by these qualities and if his mind does not frequently experience these states, his portion of recital will only be the movement of the tongue. He will be actually cursing himself,

أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

Behold! The curse of Allaah is on the oppressors. (Hood verse 18)

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

Most hateful it is in the sight of Allaah that you should say that which you do not do. (Saff verse 3)

وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ

Yet they are heedless and turn away. (Ambiyaa verse 1)

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

So turn away from him who turns away from Our remembrance and seeks nothing except the life of this world. (Najm verse 29)

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُوبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Those who do not repent, they are the oppressors. (Hujuraat verse 11)

The reciter will be included in the meaning of these people,

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانٍ

Some of them are illiterate, they do not know the Book, except hopes (one meaning is mere recitation.) (Baqarah verse 78)

وَكَايْنٍ مَنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

How many signs there are in the heavens and earth which they pass by, whilst they are turning away from them? (Yusuf verse 105)

The reciter will be included in this verse because it is the Qur'aan which explains these signs in the heavens and earth, and when he passes by them without being affected by them, he is in effect turning away from them.

For this reason, it is said, "When a person who is not characterized by the noble qualities taught in the Qur'aan, recites the Qur'aan, then Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى calls out to him, "What is your relationship with My speech, seeing that you are turning away from Me? Leave aside My speech if you do not turn to me in repentance."

The example of a sinner who recites the Qur'aan repeatedly is like one who merely reads the writing of the king several times every day; the king has written to him in order to make his kingdom prosperous, whereas he is engaged in ruining it and is content with mere study of what is written. If a person abandons the study when opposing the king's order, it would be further away from mocking him and would not incur the hatred of the king as much.¹¹

For this reason, Yusuf ibn Asbaat رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said, "I intend reciting the Qur'aan. When I remember that which is in it, I fear the wrath of Allaah. So, I then turn to tasbeeh and istighfaar."

¹¹ This does not mean that one should not recite the Qur'aan if he sins. However, we are encouraged to leave sins if we recite the Qur'aan. By the blessings of the Qur'aan, a person should intend to abandon sin. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will then assist him.

Those who turn away from acting on the Qur'aan are intended in the words of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى،

فَتَبَدُّوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَبَيَّسُوا مَا يَشْتَرُونَ

They threw it (the Divine Revelation) behind their backs and bartered it for a paltry price. How evil is that which they bought!” (Aal-Imraan verse 187)

For this reason, Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Recite the Qur’aan as long as your hearts are in agreement with it and your feelings are receptive to it. When you are in disagreement with it, stand up and stop reading.” (Bukhaari no. 5060, Muslim no. 2667)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says,

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

(The believers are those) whose hearts tremble when Allaah is mentioned, whose (strength of) Imaan increases when His verses are recited to them and (as a result, they are those) who trust only in their Sustainer. (Anfaal verse 2)

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “The best man in respect of reciting the Qur’aan is he whom, when you hear him reading it, you see that he fears Allaah.” (Ibn Majah no. 1339)

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “One cannot find a man to read the Qur’aan who is more desirable than one who fears Allaah.” (Fadhaailul-Qur’aan)⁴²

The reciting of Qur’aan is intended to bring to the mind these states and to make one act in accordance with the Qur’aan, otherwise the labour spent in moving the tongue with the sounds of the Qur’aan is light. For this reason, a certain Qaari said, “I read the Qur’aan to my spiritual mentor. After the

قال العراقي: رواه أبو عبد الله الحاكم فيما ذكر أبو القاسم العافقي في كتاب فضائل القرآن اهـ قلت (الزبيدي): ولم يذكر صحابيه وقد رواه ابن المبارك عن طاوس مرسلاً ورواه السجزي في الإبانة عن طاوس عن أبي هريرة. قال ابن السبكي: (6/301) لم أجد له إسناداً.

completion of this reading, when I returned to him to recite it a second time, he rebuked me saying, “You have made the reading of the Qur’aan to me a set duty; go and read it to Allaah – consider what are the duties He commands you to perform, and what are the things He prohibits you.” It is in this that the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were engaged in all actions and conditions. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed away leaving twenty thousand Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ (i.e. in Madinah Munawwarah), only six of whom had memorized the Qur’aan in its entirety; there is even disagreement regarding two of these. Many of them would memorize one or two surahs. Those who memorized Surah Baqarah and Al-An’aam were regarded to be amongst their ulama (scholars).

A man came to (Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to learn the Qur’aan. When he reached the following verse,

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

Whoever will have done the smallest particle of good will see it, and whoever will have done the smallest particle of evil will see it.

(Zilzaal verse 7-8)

he remarked, “This will suffice me,” and returned home. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, ‘This man has returned home with understanding.’ (Abu Dawood no. 1399 with similar wording)

Assuredly a rare thing is that state which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى bestows by favour upon a believer’s mind just after his understanding of a verse. As for the mere movement of the tongue in recitation, it is of little benefit. Rather, one who recites the Qur’aan with the tongue, but turns away from acting in accordance with it is fit to be intended in the words of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى,

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى

Whoever turns away from My advice (the Qur'aan and Dhikr) shall surely have a narrowed (difficult) life (in this world), and We shall raise him blind on the Day of Qiyaamah (after which his sight will be restored to see Jahannam). (Taa-Haa verse 124)

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى

He (Allaah) will say, "This (is how it shall be for you). Our Aayaat come to you, but you forgot them. In the same way (as you had forgotten) you will be forgotten today (and your request will not be heeded to)." (Taa-Haa verse 126)

"You forgot them" means you abandoned them, did not look at them, did not care about them, since to fall short of an affair is said to have forgotten it.

Tilaawah (recitation) of the Qur'aan in its real sense is an activity in which the tongue, the mind and the heart all take part. The part which the tongue plays consists in correct pronunciation of the letters in a slow and distinct manner. The part played by the mind lies in explaining its meanings. The part played by the heart is to accept the advice given and to take effect by the commands and prohibitions. Thus, the tongue recites, the mind translates, and the heart accepts the advice given.

NINTH RULE: PROGRESS

This refers to progressing from a stage in which one feels he is hearing the Speech of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and not from himself. The categories of reciting the Qur'aan are three:

- a.) The lowest category is when man supposes that he reciting to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى whilst standing before Him, and Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is looking at him and listening to him. In this case, his mental condition is one of begging, flattering, entreating and supplicating to Him."
- b.) The second category is when a man views with his mind that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is seeing him, addressing him with His kindness, and secretly conversing with Him with his gifts and beneficence. So, his station is one of modesty, respect, listening attentively and understanding.
- c.) The third category is when a man feels that he seeing the Speaker (i.e. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) in the speech (i.e. the Qur'aan) and His attributes in its sentences. He does not think of himself, nor his tilaawah, nor the relation of

divine gifts to him as the one upon whom they are bestowed; rather he confines his contemplation to the Speaker and concentrates his thought on Him as if he were engrossed in the vision of the Speaker, being divested of thought of anything other than Him. This is the grade of those drawn near to Allaah (al-muqarraboon), whilst the categories preceding it (i.e. the first and second) constitute the categories of people on the right (Ashaabul-yameen); all categories other than these three form the categories of the inattentive people (ghaafiloon).

It is of the highest categories of tilaawah (Qur'aanic recital) that Ja'far As Saadiq رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "I swear by Allaah! Certainly Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has revealed Himself to men in His Speech, but they do not see Him."

Once, Ja'far رَحِمَهُ اللهُ experienced an ecstatic state in his salaah that he fell unconscious. When he recovered, he was told what had happened and was asked by the people what was the cause. He explained, "I was constantly repeating in my mind the Qur'aanic verse until I heard it from its Speaker, and then my body could not remain steady because I saw His power."

It is at a stage like this that the sweetness of Qur'aan reading and the pleasure of secret conversation with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى become intense. For this reason, a certain wise man said, "I used to read the Qur'aan, but did not find the sweetness of it until I recited it as if I were hearing it from Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ reciting to his companions. Then rising to a stage higher than this, I used to recite the Qur'aan as if I were hearing it from Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who was delivering it to Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Then Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى brought me to another stage – I now hear it from its Speaker; at this stage I found in the Qur'aan such intense pleasure and delight that I could not restrain myself."

Uthmaan and Hudhayfah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا said, "If men's souls were purified (from evil qualities), they will not be fully satisfied with tilaawah (rather some thirst for it will always remain.)"

They said this only because it is by purification (from evil qualities) that the soul rises to the stage of viewing the Speaker in His Speech. For this reason, Thaabit Bunaani رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "For twenty years, I struggled (against my lower

soul in order to attain) the Qur’aan (at its highest level), and then for twenty years, I enjoyed the delight of it.”

By viewing the Speaker alone – besides all else – (in His Speech) a man fully obeys the words of Allaah,

فَقَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ

Then run to Allaah! (Dhaariyaat verse 50)

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ

Do not set up any other deity with Allaah! (Dhaariyaat verse 51)

One who does not see Allaah in everything sees something other than Him, and if there is something other than Allaah to which a man gives attention, this attention involves an element of hidden polytheism (ash-shirkul-khafiyy). Rather pure monotheism (at-tawheedul-khaalis) consists in seeing only Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in everything.

TENTH RULE: RENUNCIATION OF ONE’S ABILITY

This consists of the reciter getting rid of any sense of his ability and power, and his looking at himself with the eye of satisfaction and purification.

When the reciter recites verses on promises to the pious and praise of them, he will not view himself as one of these; rather he will view those who have the most certain faith and those who are the most truthful in religion (i.e. the most devout) and will hope that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will join him with them (by raising him to their spiritual status). When he recites verses on Divine hatred and divine reproach of the disobedient and those falling short (of religious duties) he will view himself here, and fearing and pitying, he will suppose that he is the man addressed and intended in these verses. For this reason, Abdullah ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to say in his dua, “O Allaah! I seek Your forgiveness for my injustice and infidelity.” He was asked, “(The meaning of injustice is clear, but) what is the meaning of infidelity here?” in reply, he recited the following verse,

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ

Yusuf ibn Asbaat رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was asked, “What do you supplicate for when you recite the Qur’aan?” He replied, “What I supplicate for is that I seek the forgiveness of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for my shortcoming (in tilaawah) seventy times.” Since he saw himself as one with shortcomings in tilaawah, this became a means of closeness to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. For the man who views his distance from Allaah when in a state of nearness, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى showers His kindness to Him in his state of fear of Him, so that his fear leads him to another degree of closeness beyond the existing one. However, he who views his nearness to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى whilst in fact being distant from Him is ‘deceived’ by a sense of ‘security’ which takes him even further away (from Allaah) and lower than his present position.

Whenever a person sees himself with an eye of satisfaction, he becomes veiled from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. When he crosses the limit of looking at himself and does not see in his tilaawah anything besides Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, then the secret of the invisible world is revealed to him directly. Abu Sulaiman Daaraani رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “Ibn Thawbaan promised his Muslim brother to break his fast with him, but he delayed until dawn. Next day, his brother met him and complained, “You promised to break your fast with me and then broke your promise.” He replied, “Had I not made a promise to you, I would not have informed you of what prevented me from coming to you. On performing Esha salaah, I said to myself that I should perform Witr salaah before coming to you, since I did not feel secure against the possibility of being overtaken by death. When I began reciting Dua of Qunoot, a green meadow was raised before me where there were different types of flowers from Jannah. I was constantly looking at them till daybreak.”

These spiritual perceptions can only occur after one gets rid of oneself and does not look at oneself with a sense of satisfaction and purification, nor at one’s passion. Then these perceptions become specific in accordance with the mental state of the man receiving them. Thus, when he recites verses of

hope, and his mental state is dominated by good thoughts from them, the image of Jannah is exposed to him, as if though he is actually witnessing it (as in the case of Ibn Thawbaan just mentioned). However, if fear dominates him (as a result of reading verses on punishment), then the Fire is shown to him through intuition so that he sees its different forms of punishment. This is because the Speech of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى includes those verses which are benevolent and soft as well as those which are dynamic and forceful, and those which inspire hope as well as those which are frightening. This is in accordance with Allaah's attributes, since amongst His attributes are mercy and kindness as well as retribution and power. Then, in accordance with the reciters view of Qur'aanic sentences and of Divine Attributes, his mind alternates in different mental states (between the state of fear and hope), and, according to each of these mental states, the mind is prepared for a spiritual perception appropriate to it or close to it, since it is impossible that the mental state of the listener will be different from that which he heard, for in it are the Speech of One pleased, the Speech of One angry, the Speech of the Merciful, the Speech of the Avenger, the Speech of the Most Powerful who need not care (for anyone), and the Speech of the Compassionate, the Sympathiser who does not neglect anyone.

CONCLUSION

METHOD OF ACQUIRING PERFECTION IN TILAAWAH

(The following has been extracted from Anwaar-us-Salaah by Moulana Sayyid Ahmed Shahid رَحِمَهُ اللهُ.)

It is clear that by the tilaawah of the Qur'aan, the Qurb (close proximity) of Allaah, His Ma'iyah (Togetherness) and Hudhoori (Divine Presence) are acquired, and that progress in that which is attained is generated to the maximum degree by means of tilaawah and salaah, on condition that there is rooh (spirit) and haqeeqah (reality) in one's salaah. Tilaawah must be

made while bearing in mind the following factors. These factors are for the purpose of practising the method of making tilaawah:

1.) First, a clean and pure location of solitude be fixed for tilaawah, where the Noble Book be kept in an elevated position on a desk or stand.

2.) Make ghusl. The least one can do is to perform fresh wudhu, apply it and sit before the Noble Qur'aan facing the Qiblah. Before opening the Qur'aan, ponder for a few minutes that this is the Speech of my Allaah, which is an Eternal Attribute of my Beloved. It is not separate from my Beloved. This is the edict, the command of my Master. This Speech of His, by means of the blessed Qur'aan is presently in my hands. At this juncture, ponder over the Majesty, the Grandeur and Loftiness of Allaah's speech and one's own insignificance, one's own shortcoming and weakness. Ponder as well, "In spite of my insignificance, my limitations and complete bankruptcy, I have the opportunity at will to recite it with my defiled tongue and secure nisbat and Ma'iyah with my Beloved. That at the time of tilaawah, it is as if I have within my grasp, as if I have taken hold of the tail of my beloved Master's turban and that He is Attentive towards me." The evident example by which this easily comes within understanding is the holding of the cloth of the Baitullaah and pouring one's heart in the precincts of Allaah's court.

3.) After these few moments of pondering begin reciting with appropriate love and respect. During the course of recital, turn one's attention towards the heart in such a manner as if the voice being heard is the voice of Allaah **بَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى**. Just as was the case of Moosa **عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام** who heard Allaah's voice coming from a tree. In the same manner, meditate that one's body is the tree of Moosa **عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام** from which one is hearing the sound of recitation. Develop this condition to the extent that one becomes oblivious of one's voice and one's speaking. Meditate that the Voice of Allaah **بَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى** is falling upon one's ears and that through the Sifaat-Kalaam (Attribute of Speech) the togetherness of Allaah **بَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى** has been attained.

4.) At the time of practising this form of tilaawah, do not concentrate on the rules of tajweed or the meanings of the verses. Tajweed as well as pondering over the meanings are extremely important and cannot be over-emphasised. These aspects must be given due consideration on occasions reserved for this purpose. During the practise of the prescribed form of tilaawah, only the prescribed forms of mediation must be kept in mind, because the mind cannot be directed to concentrate on a variety of objectives all at once.

5.) When one has sufficiently practised this form of meditation to the extent that Ma'iyah (Divine Togetherness) and the greatness of Allaah's Speech is perfectly entrenched, one can devote oneself to including the other factors like pondering over the meanings, etc. At such times, upon reciting verses pertaining to Mercy, the heart must be induced to a state of happiness and joy. One may, if one wishes at such a time, supplicate for these bounties within the confines of the heart, or if the heart desires, repeat the recitation of the subject matter to one's heart's content. On reciting verses pertaining to Wrath and Punishment, generate the fear of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى within the heart while supplicating for protection therefrom. Similarly, one should deal with the verses applying to Divine Power, fascinating aspects of Allaah's creation, Tawheed, Yaqeen and Tawakkul.

6.) Until such a time wherein this form of practise in one's tilaawah does not become firmly entrenched, one should keep this form of tilaawah to a minimum. If anyone's normal habit of tilaawah is excessive, it must be completed at a separate time.

7.) A point of extreme prominence deserving due consideration is that after a totally concerted effort, one must not regard oneself as one who has fulfilled the dues and rights of tilaawah. In fact, the criterion of success is that in the face of increased recognition of Allaah's Majesty, His Grandeur and Presence, one begins to realise that compared to before such tilaawah, one is even more sinful, mean and base. If this condition does not arise,

realise that one is not worthy or capable of practising upon these exercises, because from the point of inception (in the book Anwaar-us-salaah), it was clearly and emphatically mentioned that these exercises will be beneficial to those who by means of zikr and company of the Ahlullaah are actively as well as devotedly involved in the purification of the heart together with the effort to attain ma'rifah (Divine Recognition.)

8.) After completion of tilaawah, recite this dua:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي بِالْقُرْآنِ واجْعَلْهُ لِي إِمَامًا وَنُورًا وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً اللَّهُمَّ ذَكِّرْنِي مِنْهُ مَا نَسِيتُ وَعَلِّمْنِي مِنْهُ مَا جَهِلْتُ وَارْزُقْنِي تِلَاوَتَهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَأَطْرَافِ النَّهَارِ واجْعَلْهُ لِي حُجَّةً يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

O Allaah! Bestow mercy upon me because of the Qur'aan; make it for me a leader, a light, a guide and a mercy. O Allaah! Remind me of that which I had forgotten (when reciting the Qur'aan), teach me those parts of the Qur'aan of which I am ignorant, grant me its recitation in the hours of the night and the different parts of the day, and make it a proof for me, O Sustainer of the Universe.

May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى accept this weak effort and make it a means of our guidance and success in this world and the hereafter. Aameen

سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَثُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ النَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ تَتِمُّ الصَّالِحَاتُ

مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

جَزَى اللَّهُ عَنَّا مُحَمَّدًا مَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ