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The Abandonment of the Qurʾān

Today, we have a complaint that we must address to this new generation which is: Why are they not acquainted with the Qurʾān? Why are they not being taught the Qurʾān in their schools? Even if we go to the Universities, we see that the (Muslim) university students cannot even recite the Qurʾān! Of course it is unfortunate that this has occurred however we must ask ourselves, “What steps have we taken to help them in this path?”

Do we assume that with the lessons of Fiqh, Shariʿah and Qurʾān which are being taught in the Islamic schools (Madaris) that this is enough for the new generation to become completely acquainted with the Qurʾān?

What is more amazing is that the previous generations were also distanced from and had abandoned the Qurʾān – and then we wish to complain to the new generation why they have not developed a relationship with the Qurʾān!? Without doubt, the Qurʾān has truly been alienated from ourselves and then we still expect the new generation to hold onto the Qurʾān!?

At this point, we will prove to the readers how we have alienated ourselves from this Sacred Book. If a person’s knowledge is that of the science of the Qurʾān – meaning that he does a lot of contemplation upon the contents of the Qurʾān and if he knows the complete interpretation of the Qurʾān, how much respect would such a person have amongst us? None. However, if a person was to know “Kifayah”¹ of Akhund Mullah Kadhim Khurasani, then he would be respected and would be considered as one with integrity.

Thus, the Qurʾān is truly unknown and has become distanced from us and this is the same complaint that the Qurʾān itself will proclaim!

We are all included in the protests and objections of the Messenger of Allah (S) when he complains to Allah (s.w.t.):

(يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا)

“O’ my Lord! Surely MY nation took this Qurʿan as something trivial.”²

Approximately one month ago³, one of our own great scholars had gone to the holy cities (in Iraq) and narrates that he visited Ayatullah Khuʿi (q.d.s.). He said to the Ayatullah, “Why have you stopped the lessons in Tafsir which you were previously giving?”⁴ The Ayatullah replied to him that there were many obstacles and difficulties in offering classes on Tafsir of the Qurʿan. This scholar then told Ayatullah Khuʿi (q.d.s.), “Allamah Tabaʿtabaʿi (q.d.s.) has continued his classes on Tafsir of the Qurʿan in Qum and thus, most of his time is spent in this area of study and research.” Ayatullah Khuʿi replied, “Ayatullah Tabaʿtabaʿi has sacrificed himself – he has withdrawn himself from the society” – and he is right.

It is amazing that in the most sensitive issues of the religion, if we see a person who sacrifices his entire life to study the Qurʿan, then he will fall into thousands of difficulties and problems from the point of view of his food, overall life, his character (within the society), his respect and he will be removed from and deprived of many things. However, if he was to spend his entire life in the study of books such as “Kifayah”, then he would be worthy of receiving everything!

Thus, in summary, we can find thousands of people who know “Kifayah” very well. They also know the replies to the points brought up in “Kifayah” and they even know the replies to the replies that have been given – and they even know the replies to the replies of the replies of “Kifayah” however we cannot find even two people who know the Qurʿan properly! If you ask any scholar about a verse of the Qurʿan, they will say that they must go back and refer to the Tafsir of the Qurʿan.

What is even more amazing than this is that the older generation has acted in this regards to the Qurʿan, however we had higher hopes that the new generation of the youth would be able to read the Qurʿan, understand it and act upon it!

If the previous generations had not strayed away from the Qurʿan, then without doubt, this new generation too would not have been led astray from the path of the Qurʿan. Thus, it is ourselves who have acted in this way to earn the wrath and curse of the Prophet (S) and the Qurʿan.

In relation to the Qurʿan, the Noble Messenger (S) has stated:

إِنَّهُ شَافِعٌ مُشَفَّعٌ وَ مَا حِلٌّ مُصَدَّقٌ

By this we mean that in the presence of Allah (s.w.t.), the Qurʿan is an intercessor and its intercession will be accepted and in relation to those people who ignore the Qurʿan, it will complain (to Allah (s.w.t.)) and its complaints will be accepted as well.⁵²⁹

It is both the older generation and even the newer generation who have done an injustice to the Qurʿan

and continue to do so. It is the previous generation who had initiated this act of ignoring the Qurʾān, and it is the newer generation who are continuing in their footsteps.

This in conclusion, in the issue of the leadership of the youth, more than anything else, there are two things which we must do:

1) We must first recognize that which is troubling this generation. Once we have done this, then we can sit and think of the cure and remedy for their problems, since without knowing what is troubling them, it is not possible to go forth and cure the illness.

2) The second thing is that the older generation must first correct themselves. The older generation must ask forgiveness for the greatest sin which they have committed and that is that they have left and ignored the Qurʾān. We must all return back to this Qurʾān and place the Qurʾān in front of us and then march forward under the shadow of the guidance of the Qurʾān so that we will be able to reach to happiness and perfection. !

Selection of Ahadith

The Youth

(1) قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَلشباب شعبة من الجنون.

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “The period of the youth is from the stages of obsession.”⁶

(2) قال الإمام عليّ عليه السّلام: جهل الشاب معذور وعلمه محقور.

2. Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has said: “The ignorance of the young person is excusable and his knowledge is limited.”⁷

(3) قال الإمام عليّ عليه السّلام: شيئان لا يعرف فضلهما إلّا من فقدهما:
أَلشباب والعافية.

3. Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has said: “There are two things which people do not recognize the greatness of until they lose them: their youth and good health.”⁸

(4) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: خير شبابكم من تشبه به كهولكم و شر كهولكم من تشبه به بشبابكم.

4. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “The best of your youth are those who resemble your old people9 and the worst of your old people are those who resemble your young people.”10

(5) قال الإمام الصادق عليه السلام: وصية ورقة بن نوفل لخديجة بنت خوليد إذا دخل عليها يقول لها: إعلمي أن الشاب الحسن الخلق مفتاح للخير مغلاق للشر، وأن الشاب الشحيح الخلق مغلاق للخير مفتاح للشر.

5. Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said: “Any time Waraqah ibn Nawfil would go to see Khadijah binte Khuwaylid, he would advise her as such, ‘You should know that surely the young person who has good behaviour is the key to all goodness and is kept away from all evil, while the young person who has bad behaviour is kept away from all goodness and is the key to all evil.’”11

(6) قال الإمام عليّ عليه السلام: إعلموا رحمكم الله أنكم في زمان القائل فيه الحق قليل....فتاهم عارم، وشائبهم آثم، وعالمهم منافق.

6. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has said: “You should know that, may Allah have mercy upon you, surely you are living in a time in which those who profess to be on the Truth are very few in number ... their youth are obstinate, their young people are sinners, and their scholars are hypocrites.”12

Training Of The Youth

(7) قال الإمام عليّ عليه السلام: إنما قلب الحدث كالأرض الخالية، ما القي فيها

من شيء إلا قبلته.

7. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has said: “Surely the heart of the youth is like the uncultivated ground – it will accept whatever you throw upon it [and that is what will grow from it].” 1337

8) قال الإمام الصادق عليه السلام: – للأحول – : أتيت البصرة؟ قال: نعم. قال: كيف رأيت مسارعة الناس في هذا الأمر ودخولهم فيه؟ فقال: واللّٰه إنهم لقليل، وقد فعلوا وإن ذلك لقليل. فقال (عليه السلام): عليك بالأحداث؛ فإنهم أسرع إلى كلّ خير.

8. Imam Jafar ibn Muhammad as–Sadiq (a.s.) said to a companion named Al–Ahwal: “Have you been to Basrah?’ The man replied, ‘Yes.’ The Imam (a.s.) then asked him, ‘How did you find the enthusiasm of the people in regards to this issue [of the Wilayah and Imamate of the Ahlul Bait] and their acceptance of it?’ The man replied, ‘I swear by Allah surely those people [who follow and accept this] are few in number. They work upon this [propagating this belief to others, even though they are small in number.]’ The Imam replied to him, ‘I advise you to work on the youth [in educating them on these issues] since surely they are quicker to accept all good things.’” 14

Seeking Knowledge While A Youth

9) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم: من تعلّم في شبابه كان بمنزلة الرسم في الحجر، ومن تعلّم وهو كبير كان بمنزلة الكتاب على وجه الماء.

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “The person who seeks knowledge while in his youth is similar to the act of inscribing something upon a rock; while the person who seeks knowledge while he is old is similar to the act of writing something upon the water.” 15

(10) قال الإمام عليّ عليه السّلام: العلم من الصغر كالنقش في الحجر.

10. Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has said: “Gaining knowledge in one’s youth is like imprinting something on a rock [it will always remain].”¹⁶

(11) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: من لم يطلب العلم صغيراً فطلبه كبيراً فمات، مات شهيداً.

11. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “If a person who does not seek knowledge while he is youth, but rather goes to seek it when he becomes old and dies in this state, he dies as a martyr [Shahid].”¹⁷

(12) قال النبي أيّوب عليه السّلام: إن الله يزرع الحكمة في قلب الصغير والكبير، فإذا جعل الله العبد حكيماً في الصبى لم يضع منزلته عند الحكماء حدّاته سنّه وهم يرون عليه من الله نور كرامته.

12. The Prophet Ayyub (a.s.) has said: “Surely Allah implants wisdom [Al-Hikmah] in the heart of the young person and the old person. So then if Allah makes a servant a wise person in his youth then he would not lower his status in the eyes of the intellectuals simply because he is of a young age since they will see the nur (divine light) of Allah radiating from this person.”¹⁸

The Young Person And Refraining From Seeking Knowledge

(13) قال الإمام الكاظم عليه السّلام: لو وجدت شاباً من شبّان الشيعة لا يتفقه لضربته ضربة بالسيف.

13. Imam Musa ibn Jaʿfar al-Kadhīm (a.s.) has said: “If I was to find a youth from amongst the youth of the Shiʿa not gaining a deep knowledge and understanding, I would surely strike him with a sword.”¹⁹

(14) قال الإمام الباقر عليه السلام: لو أُتيت بشاب من شباب الشيعة لا يتفقه (في الدين) لأدبته.

14. Imam Muhammad ibn ʿAlī al-Baqir (a.s.) has said: “If I were to find a youth from amongst the youth of the Shiʿa that was not engaged in gaining a deep knowledge and understanding [of the religion] I would seriously reprimand him.”²⁰

(15) قال الإمام الصادق عليه السلام: لست أحب أن أرى الشاب منكم إلا غاديا في حالين: إما عالما أو متعلما. فإن لم يفعل فرط، فإن فرط ضيع، فإن ضيع أثم، وإن أثم سكن النار والذي بعث محمدا بالحق.

15. Imam Jaʿfar ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said: “I do not like to see the youth from amongst yourselves except that he/she is passing the life in one of two states: either as a scholar or as a student. So then if he is not in one of these two states then he is one who has wasted (something) and surely the one who wastes is one who has squandered something and surely the act of squandering is a sin and the person who commits a sin shall reside in the Hell Fire – I swear by the one who appointed Muhammad with The Truth.”²¹⁴⁵

The Greatness Of A Young Person Who Worships [Allah]

(16) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم: إن الله تعالى يحب الشاب التائب.

16. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “Surely Allah, the High, loves the young person who is repents [for his sins].”²²

(17) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: ما من شيء أحب إلى الله تعالى من شاب تائب، وما من شيء أبغض إلى الله تعالى من شيخ مقيم على معاصيه.

17. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “There is nothing more beloved to Allah, the High, than a young person who repents (for his sins); and there is nothing more detested in the sight of Allah, the High, than an old person who perpetuates in disobeying Him.”²³

(18) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: إن الله تعالى يباهي بالشاب العابد الملائكة، يقول: أنظروا إلى عبدي! ترك شهوته من أجلي.

18. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “Surely Allah, The High, boasts to the Angels in regards to the young person who is a servant (of His) and He says, ‘Look towards my servant! He has refrained from following his lowly desires for My sake alone.’”²⁴

(19) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: فضل الشاب العابد الذي تعبّد في صباه على الشيخ الذي تعبّد بعد ما كبرت سنّه كفضل المرسلين على سائر الناس.

19. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “The greatness of the worshipper of Allah who is a youth and who worships Allah while in the stage of his youth over the old person who worships [Allah] after he has become of old age is like the greatness of the deputed ones [the Prophets and Messengers] over all other creations.”²⁵

(20) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: سبعة في ظلّ عرش الله عزّ وجلّ يوم لا ظلّ إلاّ ظلّه: إمام عادل، وشاب نشأ في عبادة الله عزّ وجلّ.

20. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “There are seven individuals who shall be protected under the shade of the Throne [Power] of Allah, the Noble and Grand on the day when there shall be no shade except for His shade: the just leader ... and the youth who spent his time in the worship of Allah, the Noble and Grand.”²⁶

The Greatness Of The Person Who Spends His Youth In The Obedience To Allah

(21) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: ما من شاب يدع لله الدنيا ولهوها وأهرم شبابه في طاعة الله إلا أعطاه الله أجر إثنين وسبعين صديقاً.

21. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “There is not a single young person who turns away from the transient world and its pleasures only for the [pleasure] of Allah and spends his youth in the obedience of Allah until he reaches to old age, except that Allah would grant him the reward of seventy-two truthful [and righteous] people.”²⁷

(22) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: إن أحب الخلائق إلى الله عز وجل شاب حدث السن في صورة حسنة جعل شبابه وجماله لله وفي طاعته، ذلك الذي يباهي به الرحمن ملائكته، يقول: هذا عبدي حقاً.

22. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “Surely the most beloved of the creations to Allah, the Noble and Grand, is the youth who is young in age and who is a very handsome/beautiful individual however he places his youth and his beauty in Allah and in His obedience alone. This is the thing for which the Most Merciful [Al-Rahman] boasts to His Angels about and says, ‘This is truly my servant.’”²⁸

(23) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و سلم: إن الله يحب الشاب الذي يفني

شبابه في طاعة الله تعالى.

23. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “Surely Allah loves that young person who spends his youth in the obedience of Allah, the Most High.”²⁹

(24) قال النبي إبراهيم عليه السلام: لما أصبح فرأى في لحيته شيبا - شعرة بيضاء - : الحمد لله رب العالمين الذي بلغني هذا المبلغ ولم أعص الله طرفة عين.

24. It has been narrated about Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) that one day he woke up and saw a white hair in his beard and said: “All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the entire universe who has made me reach to this stage in my life in which I have not disobeyed Allah for as much as the twinkling of the eye.”³⁰

The Definition Of A Youth

(25) قال الإمام الصادق عليه السلام: لسليمان بن جعفر الهذلي - : يا سليمان من الفتى؟ قال: قلت: جعلت فداك الفتى عندنا الشاب، قال (عليه السلام) لي: أما علمت أن أصحاب الكهف كانوا كلهم كهولا فسماهم الله فتية بإيمانهم؟! يا سليمان من آمن بالله وأتقى فهو الفتى.

25. Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (a.s.) said the following to Sulayman ibn Ja'far Al-Hadhali: “O’ Sulayman, what is meant by a young person [Al-Fata]?” He said, “May I be sacrificed for your sake. In our opinion, a young person [Al-Fata] is a youth [Al-Shabb].” The Imam said to me, “However you should know that surely the Companions of the Cave [Ashabul Kahf] were all old people, however Allah refers to them as youth who have true faith?! O’ Sulayman, the one who believes in Allah and has consciousness of Him is a young person.”³¹

(26) قال الإمام الصادق عليه السلام: – لرجل – ما الفتى عندكم؟ فقال له: الشاب، فقال: لا. الفتى: المؤمن، إنّ أصحاب الكهف كانوا شيوخا فسماهم الله عزّ وجلّ فتية بإيمانهم.

26. Imam Jaʿfar ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (a.s.) said to a man: “What is meant by a young person [Al-Fata] in your estimation?” The man replied, “A youth.” The Imam (a.s.) replied, “No, the young person [Al-Fata] is the true believer. Surely the Companions of the Cave [Ashabul Kahf] were all old people, however Allah, Glory and Greatness be to Him, called them youth who believed in Him.”³²

قال الإمام الحسن ابن علي المجتبي عليه السلام:

إنكم صغار قوم و يوشك أن تكونوا كبار قوم آخرين فتعلموا العلم. فمن لم يستطع منكم أن يحفظه فليكتبه و ليضعه في بيته

(بحار الأنوار – ج 2 – ص 152 – ح 37)

Imam Hasan ibn ʿAli al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) has said:

“Surely today you are the youth of the nation, and tomorrow, you will be the leaders of the community, thus, it is incumbent upon you to seek knowledge. So then if you are not able to memorize all that you learn, then you must write it down and preserve it (for safe keeping) so that you can refer to it later on (when you need it).”

Biharul Anwar, Volume 2, Page 152, Hadith 37

1. This is one of the major books in the field of Usulul Fiqh that students of the Theological Seminary need to study as they progress in their studies to reach the highest level of learning – Ba`thul Kharij. (Tr.)

2. Surah al-Furqan (25), Verse 30

3. From when this lecture was originally given in 1963. (Tr.)

4. It has been narrated that Ayatullah Khu`i was offering classes in Tafsir of the Qur`an some 8 or 9 years ago in Najaf, some of which were also printed in book form.

5. al-Kafi, Volume 2, Page 599

6. Al-Ikhtisas, Page 343

7. Ghururul Hikm, Hadith 4768

8. Ibid., Hadith 5764

9. You should know that people are of two categories of which the one category is the young person who has distanced himself from following the desires of his lower passions and is distanced from the ignorance which is accompanied by the period of the youth. He has a desire to gravitate towards goodness and to distance himself from bad traits and it is in regards to this type of youth that the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) has said:

يعجب ربك من شاب ليست له صبوة

“Your Lord is amazed to see a young person who has distanced himself from following the desires of his lower passions and is distanced from the ignorance which is accompanied by the period of the youth.”

10. Kanzul `Ummal, Hadith 43058

11. Amali of al-Tusi, Page 302 and 598

12. Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 233

13. Tuhaful `Uqul, Page 70

14. Qurbul Isnad, Page 128 and 450

15. Biharul Anwar, Volume 1, Page 222, Hadith 6 & Page 224, Hadith 13

16. Ibid.,

17. Kanzul `Ummal, Hadith 28843

18. Tanbiyatul Khawatir, Page 37

19. Fiqhul Ridha, Page 337

20. Al-Mahasin, Volume 1, Pages 357 and 760

21. Amali of Al-Tusi, Pages 303 and 604

22. Kanzul `Ummal, Hadith 10185

23. Ibid., Hadith 10233

24. Ibid., Hadith 43057

25. Kanzul `Ummal, Hadith 43059

26. Al-Khisal, Page 343, Hadith 8

27. Makarimul Akhlaq, Volume 2, Page 373

28. Kanzul `Ummal, Hadith 43103

29. Kanzul `Ummal, Hadith 43060

30. Illulush Shara`iyah, Volume 2, Page 104, Hadith 2

31. Tafsir al-`Ayashi, Volume 2, Page 323, Hadith 11

32. Al-Kafi, Volume 8, Page 395 and 595

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