

71. Quran

Allah, the Wise, has said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ

“Surely this Qur’an guides to that which is most upright”¹

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) has said:

مَا آمَنَ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ اسْتَحَلَّ مَحَارِمَهُ

“One who regards as lawful that which the Qur’an considers to be unlawful, has not brought faith upon it”²

Short Explanation

A reciter of the holy Qur’an is in need of three things: A heart that is humble and submissive, a body that is free from entanglement of work and a place that is free from presence of others.

As such, whenever a reciter’s heart becomes submissive to God, the accursed Satan distances himself from him; whenever he isolates himself from worldly preoccupations, his heart becomes more receptive to reciting the Qur’an; and when he selects an isolated place for reciting the Qur’an, his soul develops an intimacy with God, he begins to experience the sweetness of conversing with God and subsequently various miracles of the Qur’an shall become manifest for him.³

1) Attention towards the Creation or the Creator?

There was a person who would persistently visit the house of U'mar Ibn Khattaab in order that he might perhaps be given some material assistance. Exasperated by his constant visits, U'mar said to him: *Have you emigrated to the house of God or to the house of U'mar? Go and recite the Qur'an and learn its teachings for then you shall not possess the need to come to my house.*

The person went away; months passed and he never returned again. Upon making enquiries about him, U'mar was informed that he had distanced himself from the people and had now begun to devote all his time in an isolated place, in the worship of God

U'mar began to search for him, and upon finding him, said: *I longed to see you (and have come to inquire after your health). Tell me, what caused you to distance yourself for us?*

The man replied: *I read the Qur'an and it made me independent of U'mar and the People of U'mar.*

Hearing this, U'mar asked: *What was the verse that you recited that made you take this decision?*

He replied: *I was reading the Qur'an when I came across this verse:*

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

“And in the heaven is your sustenance and what you are threatened with.”⁴

Reading it, I chided myself: “My sustenance is in the heavens, whereas I search for it on the earth; I am indeed an awful person.”

U'mar, greatly affected by these words, acknowledged: *You speak the truth!*⁵

2) The Holy Prophet and the Quran

One of the spiritual qualities of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) was his deep intimacy with the Qur'an.

Sa'd Ibn Hishaam relates:

I approached A'aishah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) and inquired about his ethics and conduct. In reply she asked: *Do you recite the Qur'an?*

I answered: *Yes, I do*, whereupon she remarked: *The conduct of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) was in complete accord with the Qur'an.*

His (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) voice was such that his recitation of the Qur'an was more beautiful and captivating than anyone else.

Anas Ibn Maalik, his (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) servant, says: *While reciting the Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) would stretch the tone of his voice.*

Ibn Masu'd, who was one of the scribes, who would write down the verses when they were revealed, says: *"One day the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) said to me: "Recite the Qur'an so that I may listen to it." I recited the chapter al-Nisaa till I reached the verse 41:*

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

"How will it be then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness against these?"

*As soon as I recited this verse, I observed that his eyes were filled with tears. He then said to me: This much is sufficient."*⁶

3) Ahmad Ibn Tuloon

Ahmad Ibn Tuloon was one of the kings of Egypt. When he died, the ruling administration hired the services of a Qur'an-reciter for a large sum so that he should recite the Qur'an over the grave of the king.

One day it was found that the reciter had vanished and no one was aware where he had gone! After an intensive search, when he was eventually found, he was asked: *Why did you run away?* All that he said was: *I shall not recite the Qur'an any more.*

He was told: *If you feel that your salary is less, it can be doubled.*

But he insisted: *Even if you multiply it several times over, I shall not recite the Qur'an.*

When he was told: *We shall not leave you till you reveal to us the reason for this behavior of yours,* he revealed: *Some days back, Ahmad Ibn Tuloon objected to my recitation and said: "Why do you recite the Qur'an over my grave?"*

I said to him: *I have been asked to recite the Qur'an for you so that you get its rewards.*

He said: *Not only do I not get any reward of your recitation on the contrary, with every verse that you recite, the fire, which engulfs me, is increased. I am told: "Do you hear the verses of the Quran? Why, while in the world, did you not act in accordance with the Qur'an?"*

The reciter then pleaded: *Relieve me of the responsibility of reciting the Qur'an for that impious king.*⁷

4) Five Hundred Copies of the Quran atop the Spears

In the battle of Siffeen, when the situation turned for the worse for the forces of Shaam, Mua'wiyah sat in consultation with A'mr A'as to find a way to evade the imminent defeat that faced him. A'mr A'as suggested: *Whoever has a Qur'an should raise it on a spear and invite the people of Iraq towards an arbitration based on the Qur'an.*

Abu Tufail, one of the companions of the Imam Ali (peace be upon him) says:

The dawn after the Night of Clamour (*lailatul Hareer*), we observed that in front of the soldiers of Shaam there appeared things that were similar to flags. When daylight increased, we realized that they had tied Qur'ans to their spears. The great Qur'an of the mosque of Shaam was tied atop three spears with ten people holding it aloft. In each of the five sections of their army there were one hundred copies of the Qur'an – for a total of five hundred copies, held atop the spears, before the army of Iraq. In addition, all the while they were heard shouting the following slogan: *By God! By God! For your religion, this book of God shall arbitrate between you and us!*

When Imam Ali (peace be upon him) observed this, he sighed: *O' Lord! You are aware that their aim and objective is not the Qur'an. You rule between them and us for You are the True Ruler.*

This act on the part of the people of Shaam caused a split in the ranks of Imam's companions and there arose a disagreement amongst them. One group of simpleminded individuals said: *It is not permissible for us to battle them anymore for they have invited us to the book of God.* Another group said: *This act of Mua'wiyah is deception and we should not allow ourselves to be deceived.*

The consequence of this disagreement was that Mua'wiyah was able to extricate himself from the battle and thus achieve what he had sought to achieve.⁸

5) Napoleon

Once Napoleon, while reflecting upon the Muslims, asked: *Where is their main center?* He was informed that it was Egypt.

When he traveled to Egypt together with a translator and entered its library; when the translator opened the Qur'an, the following verse appeared before him:

Surely this Quran guides to that which is most upright and gives good news to the believers⁹

When the translator translated this verse for him, Napoleon stepped out of the library and passed the entire night in reflection and meditation. The next morning he visited the library again and the translator

translated other verses of the Quran for him.

On the third day, when the translator had translated a portion of the Qur'an for him, Napoleon sought to know more about this book. The translator explained: *They (the Muslims) believe that God has revealed the Qur'an upon the final Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his holy progeny); this is their book of guidance till the Day of Judgment.*

When he heard this, Napoleon remarked: *What I have concluded from this book is that firstly, if the Muslims act upon the comprehensive and extensive teachings of this book, they shall never face humiliation and ignominy; secondly, till the time the Qur'an continues to play a role in their lives, the Muslims shall never submit before us, Westerners, except if we were to bring about a separation between them and the Qur'an.* 10

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1. Holy Qur'an, ch. Al-Israa (17), vs. 9.
 2. Safinah al-Bihaar, vol. 2, pg. 415.
 3. Tadhkerah al-Haqaaq, pg. 16.
 4. Holy Qur'an, ch. Al-Dhaariyaat (51), vs. 22.
 5. Hikayaat-ha-e-Shanidani, vol. 2, pg. 65; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, Ibn Abil Hadeed, vol. 19, pg. 320.
 6. Daastaan-hai-Az-Zindagi-e-Payambar, pg. 63 as quoted from Mahajjah al-Baidhaa, vol. 4, pg. 120 and Bihaar al-Anwaar, vol. 92, 326 and the book 'Kuhl al-Basar, pg. 79.
 7. Riwaayat-ha Wa Hikaayat-ha, pg. 131; Daastaan-ha-e-Paraakandeh, vol. 2, pg. 55.
 8. Shaagirdaan-e-Maktab-e-Aimmah, pg. 372.
 9. Holy Qur'an, ch. Al-Israa (17), vs. 9. *إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ*
 10. Raahnamaa-e-Sa'adat, vol. 2, pg. 478; Humaa-e-Sa'adat, pg. 96.

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