

The Qur'an is a guidance from Allah

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The Qur'an was revealed in the blessed month of Ramadan as guidance to mankind:
Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur-an, as a guide to mankind, also Clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong).
Al-Baqara 2: 185

During the month of Ramadan Muslims recite the Qur'an often and recite its verses during prayers. We will discuss the following concepts:

- 1-What is our obligation towards the Qur'an?
- 2-How can we get the best benefit of the Qur'an?
- 3-What is the meaning that the Qur'an is guidance to mankind?
- 4-How can we use the Qur'an as a blessing, a cure for the ills in our hearts and a mercy from Allah?
- 5-What is the benefit of reading the Qur'an?

What is our obligation towards the Qur'an?

- 1-To read it as often as we can with attention and devotion
- 2-To try and understand its message and guidance
- 3-To apply its guidelines in our character and behavior
- 4-To teach the Qur'an to others and spread its useful message
- 5-To defend the Qur'an against those who distort its message

To read the Qur'an as often as we can

Since the Qur'an is the literal word of Allah then it is important to read it often. When we read the Qur'an Allah is talking to us and is guiding us to His straight way, and we are protected by Him.

Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do.
Al-Ankabut 29: 45

And:

And recite (and teach) what has been revealed to thee of the Book of thy Lord: none can change His Words, and none wilt thou find as a refuge other than Him.
Al-Kahf 18: 27

Everyone is busy, but we can devote a certain time for reciting verses of the Qur'an every day of our lives. Some read it after Fajr prayer, others after Eisha'a prayer. We should make an effort to recite the whole Qur'an several times each year.

Understanding the message of the Qur'an

It is our job as human beings to understand God's divine revelation. We are aided by the fact that the Qur'an is easy to understand and easy to remember:

And We have indeed made the Qur-an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

Al-Qamar 54: 17

We should follow certain guidelines in understanding the Qur'an:

1-The Qur'an explains itself, since its verses complete and complement each other.

Looking up other verses that deal with the same subject matter gives us a better Understanding of the Qur'an

2-Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained some verses of the Qur'an, and his Sunnah (tradition) is necessary for proper understanding of the Qur'an

We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought.

An-Nahl 16: 44

3-The Prophet's companions explained the meaning of the Qur'an. Their explanation is useful to us, especially those companions known for their

Knowledge of the Qur'an like Ibn Abbas, Ali, Ibn Masoud

4-Understanding the Arabic language

5-Following the rules of Fiqh and the basic concepts of Islam

6-Using common sense and logic

Applying the Qur'an in our character and behavior

The Qur'an is not a book of entertainment or a story book. It provides valuable lessons and instructions in how we can improve our character and behavior.

Qur'anic characters like Taqwa, Truthfulness, Justice, Kindness and forgiveness, mercy, being faithful to our trusts and promises, sincerity and devotion, humility and lack of arrogance, holding our souls accountable, controlling our anger, hastening in all good deeds, all these characteristics are meant to be implemented in order that we may become better human beings and evolve.

The object of many rituals of worship is to develop these Qur'anic characteristics and to become better human beings:

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint,

Al-Baqara 2: 183

And:

Truly man was created very impatient;

Al-Ma'rij 70: 19

Fretful when evil touches him;

Al-Ma'rij 70: 20

And niggardly when good reaches him;

Al-Ma'rij 70: 21

Not so those devoted to Prayer,

Al-Ma'rij 70: 22

Those who remain steadfast to their prayer;

Al-Ma'rij 70: 23

And those in whose wealth is a recognized right

Al-Ma'rij 70: 24

For the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason from asking);

Al-Ma'rij 70: 25

And those who hold to the truth of the Day of Judgment;

Al-Ma'rij 70: 26

These verses tell us that being constant in our prayers and sharing with others God's blessings and understanding our accountability to Allah will improve our character and behavior. We will not become easily frightened or give up when faced with difficulty, and we will be more willing to help those who need our help.

Our faith should prompt us to help those who are disadvantaged and who need our help:

Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord;
Al-Mumenoun 23: 57

Those who believe in the Signs of their Lord;
Al-Mumenoun 23: 58

Those who join not (in worship) partners with their Lord;
Al-Mumenoun 23: 59

And those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear, because they
will return to their Lord;
Al-Mumenoun 23: 60

It is these who hasten in every good work, and these who are foremost in them.
Al-Mumenoun 23: 61

Teaching the Qur'an to others and spreading its useful message

It is not enough to recite the Qur'an, understand its verses and apply its guidelines in our lives. We should teach it to others and allow its useful message to help guide others as it has guided us throughout our lives. The Qur'an is a blessing and mercy from Allah. Therefore, we should not deprive others from its mercy and blessing. If we are grateful to Allah, then we should help others benefit from the message of the Qur'an.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught the Qur'an to his companions. He used to study the Qur'an with the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) every day in Ramadan. Ibn Abbas related: (The Prophet (PBUH) was the most generous of all mankind, and was most generous during the month of Ramadan, because Jibreel used to meet him every night during Ramadan till it ends, relating to him and teaching him the Qur'an. When he met Jibreel he was more generous than the wind carrying water) Bokhari.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stressed this concept when he said:

(The best amongst you is the person who learns the Qur'an, then teaches the Qur'an to others) Bokhari & Muslim

Defending the Qur'an against those who distort its message

We hear a lot that grieves us from those who attack Islam and the Muslims, and who distort the message of the Qur'an. They do that because of prejudice and hatred, but also because of ignorance about the true teachings of the Qur'an, and because of the bad behavior of some who claim to be Muslims and who propagate a form of Islam that is hateful and violent, contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an.

We have been warned in the Qur'an that such attacks and distortions will occur, and we have been told how to react against such attacks with patient perseverance, not doing wrong and having resolve and commitment:

Ye shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and ye shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship many gods. But if ye persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs.

Al-Imran 3: 186

How can we get the best benefit of the Qur'an?

We explained that Allah sent down the Qur'an as guidance to mankind and as a practical guide to help us improve our character and behavior. The Qur'an is a blessing and mercy from Allah. We should avail ourselves to such guidance and mercy.

Some steps that help us get the benefit of the Qur'an include:

1-Having sincerity and devotion in trying to understand the Qur'an and in Using its message in our lives

The Believers must (eventually) win through,
Al-Mumenoun 23: 1

Those who humble themselves in their prayers;
Al-Mumenoun 23: 2

2-Reading the Qur'an with attention and being focused, and not being distracted:

When the Qur-an is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that ye may receive Mercy.

Alk-Araf 7: 204

And:

Behold, We turned towards thee a company of Jinns (quietly) listening to the Qur-an: when they stood in the presence thereof, they said, "Listen in silence!" when the (reading) was finished, they returned to their people, to warn (them of their sins).

Al-Ahqaf 46: 29

We should recite the Qur'an in slow rhythmic tone, and not be in a hurry:

Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur-an) to make haste therewith.

Al-Qiama 75: 16

It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it:

Al-Qiama 75: 17

But when We have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated):

Al-Qiama 75: 18

Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear):

Al-Qiama 75: 19

and recite the Qur-an in slow, measured rhythmic tones.

Al-Muzzammil 73: 4

(It is) a Qur-an which We have divided (into parts from time to time), In order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages.

Al-Isra'a 17: 106

3-Studying the Qur'an and reflecting on its verses and its message:

(Here is) a Book which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.

SA D 38: 29

4-Turning to Allah seeking His help and guidance

Allah chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him).

Ash-Shura' 42: 13

What is the meaning that the Qur'an is a guidance to mankind?

The Qur'an is a guidance to all mankind. It is not just a book for the Muslims; rather it is a divine revelation to all mankind, because its message is universal:

Alif Lam Ra. A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light - by the leave of their Lord - to the Way of (Him) the Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise!

Ibrahim 14: 1

And:

Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures;

Al-Furqan 25: 1

The Qur'an is the last divine revelation. There will be no more divine books after the Qur'an.

This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.

Al-Maeda 5: 3

Therefore, its message must be applicable and suitable for all times and for all civilizations. Hence the Qur'an gives guidelines but few specific details. This way the Qur'an is not restrictive and is suitable in America as it is suitable in the Middle East. Its guidelines are true and valid at all times.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last of a series of human messengers that Allah has sent to guide mankind to His way. There will be no more prophets or messengers after him:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.
Al-Ahzab 33: 40

Muhammad (PBUH) was a messenger to all mankind, not just to the Muslims, and his teachings are useful for all human beings:

We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.
Sa Ba 34: 28

And:

Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah
Al-Araf 7: 158

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(And the messenger used to be sent specifically for his own people, but I was sent to all mankind) Bokhari

It is the shortcomings of Muslims that we do not make this concept well known to non-Muslims, and that we do not explain the life and message of Muhammad (PBUH) correctly and properly. In contrast, we tend to react emotionally and in anger when we feel that the Prophet (PBUH) is portrayed wrongly. It is a golden opportunity to counter these charges by explaining his noble character and his sayings and the message of love and understanding that he preached.

How can we use the Qur'an as a blessing, a cure for the ills in our hearts and as a mercy from Allah?

The Qur'an described itself as:

- 1-Guidance and reminder
- 2-Blessings
- 3-Cure for the ills in our hearts

4-Mercy

5-a source of strength to Muslims and believers

6-A glad tiding from Allah to those who submit to Allah

O mankind! there hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy.

Yunus 10: 57

Say: "In the Bounty of Allah. And in His Mercy, in that let them rejoice": that is better than the (wealth) they hoard.

Yunus 10: 58

And:

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

Al-Isra'a 17: 82

And:

Say: "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe; and for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes): they are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!"

Fusselat 41: 44

To get these blessings of the Qur'an we must open our hearts and believe in Allah and have faith. Then the guidance of the Qur'an will take hold of our hearts and we can feel its effects and its blessings. We must understand its message and believe on conviction, then we will submit to Allah and will be ready to receive His guidance. Without knowledge and understanding it is difficult to accept the message of the Qur'an or to be committed:

And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qur-an) is the Truth from thy Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it: for verily Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Way.

Al-Hajj 22: 54

The Qur'an came to strengthen the hearts of Muslims, promising God's help and support and as glad tidings to those who submit to Allah:

We have sent down to thee a Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims.

An-Nahl 16: 89

And:

Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims.

An-Nahl 16: 102

And:

Those who reject Faith say: "Why is not the Qur-an revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen thy heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually.

Al-Furqan 25: 32

What is the benefit of reading the Qur'an?

In addition to becoming guided to Allah, having peace and contentment in our hearts, finding a cure for the ills in our hearts and getting a mercy and blessing from Allah, we are promised a great reward as well as forgiveness of sin.

Verily this Qur-an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward;

Al-Isra'a 17: 9

And:

Those who rehearse the Book of Allah, establish regular Prayer, and spend (in Charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a Commerce that will never fail:

Fatir 35: 29

For He will pay them their meed, nay, He will give them (even) more out of His Bounty; for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).

Fatir 35: 30

Peace and tranquility descends when the Qur'an is being recited and the Angels listen:

Osaid Bin Khudair related that he was reciting Surat Al-Baqara and his horse was tied. Then the horse made sudden noise, so he stopped reading, and the horse stopped. When he resumed his reading of the Qur'an, the horse started making noise again, and when he stopped, the horse stopped. He looked at the sky and saw a cloud with lanterns in it. When he told the Prophet (PBUH) next morning, he said: (Do you realize what was that?) He said: No. The Prophet (PBUH) said: (These were the Angels who came near to listen to you reciting the Qur'an. If you kept on reading, they would have stayed till morning and the people would have seen them, they would not have tried to draw away from them) Bokhari & Muslim

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us that the Qur'an will intercede on our behalf on the Day of Judgment:

(Fasting and the Qur'an will intercede on behalf a servant of Allah on the Day of Judgment. Fasting will say: "O lord I prevented him from his desires and his food, allow me to intercede on his behalf"; and the Qur'an will say: "O Lord I prevented him from sleeping at night, allow me to intercede on his behalf) Ahmad, Tabarani & Hakim.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also told us that we are rewarded for every letter that we read of the Qur'an one good deed. He emphasized by saying that: (Alif, Lam, Meem is not one letter, but Alif is a letter and Lam is a letter and Meem is a letter) Bokhari. Therefore, just reciting Al-Fatiha which we have to do in every Rak'a earns us more than 130 good deeds.

Everyone gets his reward for reading the Qur'an: those who excel in reading and memorizing the Qur'an, as well as those who find it difficult to read the Qur'an:

Aesha related that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

(The person who reads the Qur'an and memorizes it is with the honorable righteous ambassadors (The Angels); and the person who reads the Qur'an and tris

his best, but it is difficult for him, will get two rewards) Bokhari. A similar Hadeeth was related by Muslim

When we get preoccupied with reading and understanding and studying the Qur'an Allah will give us a better reward even than those who ask and pray to Allah. Abou Sa'eed Al-Khudri related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: (Whoever was preoccupied with the Qur'an that he even did not ask Allah for any favors, Allah will give him better than those who turn to Allah asking Him; and the distinction of Allah's words over the words of human beings is like the distinction of Allah over His servants) Termedhi.

Do not desert the Qur'an (Hujran Al-Qur'an):

Some desert the Qur'an and do not read it at all. Others listen to it when it is recited. Some only read it during Ramadan, then do not open the Mushaf till next Ramadan. Some read the Qur'an in a hurry, and do not stop to let its verses reach their hearts. Others do not reflect and study the message of the Qur'an. Others read the Qur'an, but do not apply its guidelines or follow its instructions. Some do not teach the Qur'an to their children. The Prophet expressed this when he said:

Then the Messenger will say: "O my Lord! truly my people took this Qur-an for just foolish nonsense."

Al-Furqan 25: 30

So deserting the Qur'an may involve:

- Not reading it
- Reading it only on rare occasions
- Not reading it with attention and devotion
- Not trying to understand it or not studying it
- Not applying its guidelines in our life
- Or not teaching its useful message to others

Another concept of deserting the Qur'an is forgetting what we read or have memorized, because we abandoned the Qur'an for some time. Unless we read the Qur'an regularly and keep on memorizing its verses we are likely to forget what we have accomplished. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized this concept when he said:

(Indeed the person who knows the Qur'an and have memorized it is like the owner of camels that are tied; if he takes care of it he will be able to keep it, but if he let it go loose, it will run and disappear) Bokhari.

In another narration: (If the person who knows the Qur'an recites the Qur'an by night or by day, he will remember it; but if he neglects it, he will forget it) Muslim.