

ABOUT THE NOBLE QUR'ĀN

Scholars have defined the Qur'ān as "the words of Allāh¹ revealed to Muḥammad (ﷺ), the recitation of which is a form of worship."² This definition can be applied to no other book or speech.

Reading and recitation of the Qur'ān is an important form of worship for which a Muslim can expect reward and benefit in the Hereafter. But there was a definite purpose behind the strong encouragement given by the Prophet (ﷺ) in several authentic *ḥadīths* for recitation of the Qur'ān.³ That purpose is clearly stated in the Qur'ān itself:

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

*"A blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded."*⁴

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا﴾

*"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'ān, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?"*⁵

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾

*"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'ān? If it had been from [any] other than Allāh, they would have found within it much contradiction."*⁶

Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad bin Taymiyyah pointed out in his *Fatāwā* that even the ordinary words of men are spoken or written for the purpose of being understood by the listener or reader and that the Qur'ān is surely more worthy of being understood than the words of men. Many scholars have stated that it is the responsibility of all Muslims to learn the Arabic language in order to understand the Qur'ān. Ibn Katheer, author of the well-known Arabic tafseer, maintained that it is also the duty of Muslim scholars to make its meanings known to the people.

No person can afford to be ignorant of the Qur'ān, for it is the constitution revealed by Allāh to regulate and govern human life. It speaks with the perfect knowledge of the Creator about His creation. It exposes the truth and invites man to the way of

¹"Allāh" is the proper name of God and is not used to denote any other being. Therefore, this name is retained in translation to other languages.

²Al-Qaṭṭān, Mannā', *Mabāḥith fi 'Ulūm il-Qur'ān*, p. 21.

³The recitation whose merits are mentioned in the *ḥadīths* is that of the actual words of Allāh in their original Arabic form. Nevertheless, any effort toward understanding the Qur'ān's meanings in order to increase faith, obtain guidance and live by its ordinances is in itself a deed of great merit.

⁴Sūrah Ṣād, 38:29.

⁵Sūrah Muḥammad, 47:24.

⁶Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:82.

truth. It contains important information about human destiny and that of the individual. It educates and raises men to the highest moral, intellectual and social level when they strive to comprehend it and apply its teachings to life.

Moreover, it is the actual words of Allāh - not created, but revealed by Him through the angel Gabriel to a human messenger, Muḥammad bin ‘Abdullāh (ﷺ), for the benefit of humanity. It is an eternal miracle given to the final prophet, Muḥammad, as proof of his prophethood and a challenge to all succeeding generations. It is of unique and inimitable quality. Revealed fourteen centuries ago, it remains today completely intact and unaltered in its original Arabic form.

What does one discover when he understands the meanings of the Qur’ān? The answers to this question can be classified in four main categories:

1. That he can know his Creator as He has described Himself
2. That he can know the purpose of life on this earth and what is expected of every person during this life
3. That he becomes aware of the consequences of his attitudes and his behavior
4. How he should relate to all things - to Allāh by worship and obedience, to his fellow man by justice to all or by *iḥsān* (a higher degree),⁷ and to the universe in general by putting those things under his control to good use

This divine message was revealed to confirm and renew the relationship between man and his Creator and to reinstate the sincere and correct worship of the one true God, Allāh (subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā), who says:

﴿فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ﴾

*"Then let them respond to Me and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided."*⁸

⁷*Iḥsān* has been defined by the Prophet (ﷺ) as "worshipping Allāh as if you see Him" or generally, doing more than one's duty and expecting less than one's right.

⁸Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:186.