

[Home](#) > [Ramadhan With The Holy Qur'an, 30 Lessons in 30 days](#) > [Lesson 3: Contemplation in The Holy Qur'an](#) > The Necessity For Contemplation In The Holy Qur'an

Lesson 3: Contemplation in The Holy Qur'an

Complaint from The Forlorn Holy Qur'an

{وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا}

The Messenger says, 'O my Lord, behold, my people have taken this Holy Qur'an as a thing to be shunned. '(Furqan, 25:30)

“Forlorn” or “Shun” includes the separation by deed, body, tongue, and heart. So the connection of man with the Heavenly Book must be constant and under all circumstances, that’s why the term “Hijr”, translated as shunning, is used where there is a connection between a thing and mankind.

Therefore, we must struggle from all angles until the Holy Qur'an is brought out of the state of being shunned and the Holy Qur'an is made to be the pivotal point of all dimensions of our practical and scientific life until such time as the satisfaction of the Prophet is attained.

Not reciting the Holy Qur'an, preferring anything but the Holy Qur'an, not using it as our pivot, not contemplating in it, not teaching it to others and not applying the Holy Qur'an in practice, form the evidences of the shunning of the Holy Qur'an. Even if someone acquires the Holy Qur'an but then puts it aside and not look at it nor commit to it, is another form and evidence of shunning the Holy Qur'an.

This Ayah is a statement of great sorrow and distress from the Prophet, although because he is a mercy to all the worlds, he would therefore not curse. Yet in the day of judgement the Prophet will be one of those complaining against us. And so the shunning of the Holy Qur'an, the great sorrow of the Prophet and our responsibility is definite and simply reading the Holy Qur'an on the surface of it is not enough, but rather what is required is bring the Holy Qur'an out of this state.

Imam Redha (pbuh) states that the reason we recite the Holy Qur'an in our daily prayers is to bring the Holy Qur'an out of the state of being shunned.

He also advises us to recite fifty Ayahs of the Holy Qur'an every day and our aim should not be to simply reach the end of the Surah, we should read tranquilly and our hearts are to take refuge in the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and where ever our hearts are troubled, such is if in the darkness of the night we are attacked, we should take shelter with the Holy Qur'an.¹

Here, we narrate some of the commentaries by the greats on the issue of the forlorn Holy Qur'an:

A) Mulla Sadra, in his introduction to the commentary on Surah Al-Waqia'a (Surah 56), says; So much research was conducted in to books written by sages that I was of the opinion that I became somebody, however, after just a little insight, I saw myself as empty of true knowledge. Towards the end of my life my thoughts went towards contemplation of the Holy Qur'an and the narrations of Mohammad PBUH and his Purified Household. I was certain that my work was baseless, as my whole life was spent standing in the shadows instead of in the light. From sorrow, my soul caught on fire and my heart was in flames, until the divine mercy caught my hand and lead me to the secrets of the Holy Qur'an and I started contemplating and commenting on the Holy Qur'an, I knocked hard on the door of the house of inspiration, the door opened and the curtain moved aside and I saw the angels say to me "Peace be upon you all, you have all been blessed, so enter it for eternity".

B) Faidh Kashani said: I have written books and letters, I have researched, yet I have not find a single cure for the pain I have and found the water for my thirst to be evasive, I feared for myself and ran towards Allahﷻ, begging for guidance through in depth understanding of the Holy Qur'an and narrations.

C) Imam Khomeini showed regret in one of his speeches for not spending his entire life in the way of the Holy Qur'an and advised Islamic Seminaries and students to place the Holy Qur'an in all of its dimensions as the highest goal to head towards lest the end of our life be met with regret with regards to how our youth was spent.

The Necessity For Contemplation In The Holy Qur'an

{كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}

A Book We have sent down to thee, Blessed, that men possessed of minds may ponder its signs and so remember. (Saad 38:29)

The image of the Holy Qur'an in this Ayah has been drawn in the following way:

- a) The text of it has been written – كِتَابٌ (A Book).
- b) Sourced from the Divine Revelation and Infinite Knowledge – أَنْزَلْنَاهُ (We have sent down).
- c) The recipient is Divinely Guided – إِلَيْكَ (to thee).

d) Its content is full of blessing – مُبَارَكٌ (Blessed).

e) The aim of it being sent is to contemplate – لِيَتَذَكَّرُوا (may ponder).

f) Knowledge, awareness and to learn the points with in it are necessary first steps in the spiritual journey and being closer towards Allah وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ (and so remember).

g) Wise is the one who succeeds in achieving this.

Therefore, contemplation in the Holy Qur'an is considered to be of the highest significance, because: One who does not contemplate the Ayahs of the Holy Qur'an is deserving of Divine humiliation.

{أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا}

***What, do they not ponder the Holy Qur'an? Or is it that there are locks upon their hearts?
(Muhammad 47:24)***

From the point of view of the Qur'an, a spiritual scholar is someone whose concern is to learn and teach the Qur'an.

{كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ}

Be you masters in that you know the Book, and in that you study (Al Emraan 3:79).

Imam Ali (pbuh), with regards to the infinite concepts and lessons of the Holy Qur'an, states

بحر لا يدرك قعره

The Holy Qur'an is a sea for which its bottom can never be understood.

Usually, over a period of time, the sayings and writings of an individual changes and evolves and contradictions may occur. However, over twenty-three years of revelation, under a multitude of circumstances such as war and peace, fame and exile, strength and weakness, ups and downs, from one who himself never went to learn, there was never a contradiction nor any evolution or change, reason being that these words are from Allahﷻ and not taught by mankind. So the Holy Qur'an cautions:

{أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا}

What, do they not ponder the Holy Qur'an? If it had been from other than God surely they would

have found in it much inconsistency. (An Nissa 4:82)

Why is it the Holy Qur'an is not contemplated over? Where had it been from a source other than from Allahﷻ, there would have been definitely many contradictions.

The order to contemplate over the Holy Qur'an is for everyone and for every era and generation, clear through the fact that every thinker from every era, will arrive at new points from it.

With a little attention in the Ayah, we can benefit from some beautiful points:

1. No thinking in the Holy Qur'an is a cause for Divine reproach and taunt.
2. Contemplation in the Holy Qur'an is a curative medicine for hypocrisy.
3. The way to Islamic orientation and Holy Qur'an is to think and contemplate, not imitation.
4. The Holy Qur'an has called for all to contemplate and to understand the lessons being taught in it.
5. The thought that with in the Holy Qur'an there are contradictions and differences are a result of shallow anxiety and lack of contemplation and attention to detail.
6. The fact that there are no contradictions with in the Holy Qur'an and the single voice in which the Holy Qur'an is said, is a sign that its source is one that is not changeable. This is because anything that is from Allahﷻ is the Truth and Constant and is far from any contradiction, contrast and possibility of being scattered.

1. (تفسير نور الثقلين - Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn)

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