

The Spring of the Holy Qur'an

The month of Ramadhan has been aptly named the spring of the Qur'an. During this month, believers set aside more time than usual to understand the word of Allah, to learn and ponder over its verses. Muslim homes and mosques ring with the beautiful recitation of this glorious book. It is the season of Qur'an reciting, when the desire to learn and understand the word of Allah blooms and flourishes, just as the natural world blossoms in the Spring.

The following Ahadith show the importance of reciting the Qur'an in the holy month:

- *"Invoke your Lord in right earnest, with hearts that are free of sin and evil, to enable you to fast and to recite His Book (the Qur'an)."*

Holy Prophet (S)

- *"Whoever recites an ayat from the Qur'an (in Ramadhan) will receive a similar reward as the one who recites the entire Qur'an in other months."*

Holy Prophet (S)

- *"Everything has a springtime, and the springtime of the Qur'an is the month of Ramadhan."*

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a)

- *"Invoke Allah, ask for forgiveness, recite the Qur'an, and repent to Allah for your sins more frequently, so that the blessings of the month of Ramadhan may come to you, while you are sincere to Allah, the Exalted."*

Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a)

The Holy Qur'an contains great cures for mankind, beautiful gems of wisdom for life, and the best instructions for happiness in this world and the Hereafter. God speaks to human beings through it, and it is incumbent upon all believers to find out for themselves what God has said to them.

Reciting the Holy Qur'an

Many Muslims like to complete the recitation of the entire Qur'an in this blessed month. If that is not possible, at least a portion of the holy Book should be read during this month. The reward for it is much greater than in other months.

Recitation of the Holy Qur'an has many benefits. The following Hadith illustrate some of these benefits:

- *“Illuminate your homes by reciting the Holy Qur'an . . . for if the Holy Qur'an is recited frequently in a house, it brings blessings for the family, and the house will give light to those in Heaven as the stars of Heaven give light to those on the earth.”*

Holy Prophet (S)

- *“The heart gathers rust like iron. Remove this rust by the recitation of the Qur'an.”*

Holy Prophet (S)

- *“Whoever derives pleasure from the recitation of Qur'an, will not be depressed by the departure of friends.”*

Imam Ali (a)

How to recite the Qur'an

1. Do wudhu before reciting. It is forbidden to touch the writings of Qur'an without wudhu. Even when not touching the writings, it is recommended to do wudhu before reciting the Qur'an.
2. See protection of Allah from the Shaytan.
3. Recite with a beautiful voice. The Holy Qur'an should be read slowly, with a beautiful voice and consideration for the rules of recitation. The Holy Prophet (S) says: Give beauty to the Qur'an with your voices. And when he was asked as to who had the best voice for recitation, he said: The person who, when you listen to him, you realize that he fears Allah. The Holy Prophet (S) has also said: Everything has a decoration, and the decoration for the Qur'an is a beautiful voice.
4. Interact with the Qur'an. Another important point to remember is to interact with the Qur'an when reciting it. When reading verses which promise blessings and reward for the believers, one should be excited and hopeful. But on reading descriptions of punishments meted out to those who disbelieved and displeased Allah, a believer is fearful and seeks refuge in Allah.

Sometimes Allah asks a questions, as in Sura ar- Rahman, Which of the bounties of your Lord will you two deny?. Commentators say a recitor of the Qur'an should answer that by saying None of your

bounties, my Lord, do I deny. This type of interacting with the Qur'an makes the Qur'an alive, not just a book to be read.

Understanding the Holy Qur'an

It is important that believers try to understand what Allah has revealed in the Holy Qur'an. It is a book of guidance, and to derive and act upon this guidance, we need to read and understand its verses. The fourth Imam (a) says:

- The Qur'anic verses are treasures of Knowledge and whenever a treasure is opened, you have to see what lies therein.
- Ponder over the verses of the Qur'an, and learn from them, for they are the best of lessons.

Understanding the Qur'an could be done through reading the translation, thinking about the words used in the verse, the causes of revelation, and reading and discussing the commentary provided by knowledgeable scholars.

Understanding and pondering over the verses of the Holy Qur'an is an important duty of all Muslims. Allah talks to us through the Qur'an, and we need to read and understand what He says in it. Many Muslims believe that understanding the Qur'an is the duty of scholars, and they are content to just recite the verses without giving them much thought. The Holy Prophet (S) will complain about such Muslims on the day of Judgement. The Qur'an says he will say: O my Lord! My people took the Qur'an very lightly. By studying and pondering over the verses of the Qur'an, we will not be among the group the Prophet (S) will complain about on the day of Judgement.

Exercises

These exercises are to familiarize students with the contents of the Qur'an. This will Inshallah bring an appreciation for the holy Book, and an increased understanding of what God has sent us for guidance.

1. Choose one surah of the holy Qur'an for students to memorize, understand, ponder over, and read commentary of. Surahs could be chosen according to Grade level and available material. Some good sources of commentary for surahs are:
2. Choose some Qur'anic verses on important topics for students to learn. They could memorize them, understand them, ponder over them, and read or discuss relevant commentary. Some verses which could be included are:
3. Let students make their own schedules for Quranic recital during the holy month. This could include reading of translation and/or commentary.

4. Let the students memorize the hadith on importance of reciting and understanding the Qur'an.
5. Discuss the following important topics with the students during the holy month:
 - Revelation and compilation of the Qur'an
 - Miracles of the Qur'an
 - The need of guidance for human beings

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