

This material is strictly for non-commercial purposes only. It may be used for such a purpose provided it is reproduced without alteration or omission, and that a link is provided to the website www.tasawwuf.org. All other uses require the explicit written permission of the publisher.

THE GLORIOUS QURAN, AND SOME ADVICE CONCERNING REPENTANCE By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmed

Miracle of the Holy Quran

The Noble Quran is Allah's ﷻ message to mankind and a guiding light for humanity. It teaches us how to live every aspect of our lives. To read, to listen, to understand, to teach, and, above all, to act upon this Holy Book, is part of the worship of Allah ﷻ. Just as a magnet attracts iron, the Holy Quran is a magnet for attracting Allah's ﷻ blessings and mercy.

Allah's blessings envelop a gathering in which the Holy Quran is read. This is an extraordinary book, but we have become estranged from its glory and its value.

If this Holy Quran falls into the hands of the worldly people who have a habit of reading novels and digests, they will forget all other books. How can we compare the pleasure of reading a digest to that of the Holy Quran? Truly fortunate are those people who have discovered the satisfaction in reading the Holy Quran.

If musk and amber are placed before a man who has a cold and therefore a stuffy nose, he will not be able to appreciate their fragrance. This is not the fault of the musk

or amber, but the fault of his illness. Today the Holy Quran is amongst us, but because we are diseased by our sins we are estranged from the pleasures of the Holy Book.

Examples of the Righteous

Our righteous predecessors would spend the entire night engrossed in recitation of the Holy Quran. *Hadrat* Fatima رضي الله عنها would become so absorbed in the recitation of the Quran during prayer that she would lose track of time. She once complained to Allah ﷻ, “I began by making intention for just two cycles (*rakats*); Your night is so short that I was able to offer just those two *rakats*.” This joy is attained only by those who have recognized the true magnificence of the Holy Quran.

In Madinah at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, if a man started walking from his house to the mosque at the time of the night vigil (*Tahajjud*) the sound of people reading the Holy Quran would be like the buzzing of bees around their hive. Every night used to be like a night of Ramadan for them. They weren't like us today; if we stay awake at night then when we finally sleep we don't wake up till the afternoon. In those days they worked and participated in battle during the day, and spent the night in worship. They would be refreshed by reading the Holy Quran; it was indeed an extraordinary peace that they thus attained.

This is comparable to a mother who says she is extremely tired and asks that she not be disturbed from her sleep, but sits up fully refreshed if her son suddenly returns from overseas after a long time: all her fatigue will completely

vanish. In this same way those who are close to Allah ﷻ are rejuvenated upon reciting the Holy Quran.

Hadrat Imam Abu Hanifa (May the mercy of Allah ﷻ be upon him) used to complete one reading of the Holy Quran in the daytime and one at night, and would finish its recitation a total of sixty-three times in the holy month of Ramadan.

On her wedding night, *Hadrat* Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal's (May the mercy of Allah ﷻ be upon him) daughter recited seven chapters of the Holy Quran in *tahajjud*. This is no small feat for a girl's first night with her husband. Today people become restless listening to merely one chapter in Ramadan. Most of our elders even today finish *seven* readings of the Holy Quran in Ramadan.

Today when people watch videos and movies, hours go by before they notice how much time has elapsed. Just in the same way the *Ahl-e-Quran* (People of the Quran) have no idea where the time goes when they begin reading. Just as for the one sitting in front of a television screen, scenes of Paradise and Hell pass before their eyes as they read. At times they feel joyous upon reading a verse about Paradise, at times they prostrate in fear upon reading a verse about Hell. Their whole night passes in experiencing these moments of grief and joy.

Four things of which People Never Tire

The Holy Quran is Allah's ﷻ greatest blessing present amongst us today. The scholars have written that a person's heart can never tire of four things.

The first of these is the sky. Everyday we look at the same blue sky, the same stars, the same clouds, but we never tire of this sight. No one has ever said that he wishes the sky to be another color, such as pink.

The second of these is water. Even if someone grows to be a hundred years old, he will never tire of drinking water. Men, women, and children, spend their entire lives drinking the same water, but no one will ever say that he has become tired of drinking water.

The third of these is the sight of the House of Allah ﷻ, the Kaa'ba. One never tires of gazing at it, the site upon which the mercy and blessings of Allah ﷻ are constantly descending. There is truly nothing comparable to the *House of Allah* on this Earth. People wish time would stand still so they could keep gazing at the *Kaa'ba*; their thirst is never quenched, rather it increases. Such lovers of Allah ﷻ have the insight to see these blessings descending.

Once, while on a visit to Washington, people told me that a woman had accepted Islam and had some questions for me. They told me that many non-practicing Muslim women had started practicing again due to her. At prayer time she would dress in her best clothes as if readying herself for someone special, and would become oblivious to everything around her as soon she started praying.

After a brief question and answer session, I asked her what prompted her to accept Islam. She sighed and started explaining; "I was a Jew and my husband was a Christian who was posted in Saudi Arabia for some technical work. Everyday I used to see Muslim men and women dressed in white on their way somewhere. I asked my husband where

they were going and he told me that they go to perform pilgrimage at the Muslim shrine of *Kaa'ba*. I expressed a desire to go but he told me that non-Muslims were not allowed. However, I was determined and so we both bought white clothes and set out. Fortunately no one stopped us and we reached Makkah, from where we found directions to the *Kaa'ba*. Upon seeing the *Kaa'ba* our eyes froze and time seemed to stand still. When we turned to look at each other after some time, we were both crying. With our eyes we told each other that this was the Truth and we should accept Islam. No one ever told me about Islam, but there were so many blessings descending on that House that they changed my life forever.”

The blessings of *Tawhid* descend in Makkah, and the blessings of Prophethood descend in Madinah. One has seen nothing in life if he has not seen these two holy sites. May Allah ﷻ give all Muslims the opportunity to visit to His House.

The fourth thing from which the heart never tires is reading the Holy Quran. Readers of this Book spend their entire lives reciting and teaching it, but never tire of it. Their desire increases the more they read. Allah ﷻ has put incredible blessing in this Book.

Love of the Holy Quran

We traveled to Central Asia at one time during the month of Ramadan, and most of us thought that the Muslims there must pray *tarawih* beginning from the last chapter of the Holy Quran, which is the smallest and easiest. However, we

learnt to our amazement that a recital of the Holy Quran was completed once every ten days in most mosques there.

No one would leave without praying the traditional twenty *rakats*, be it an elderly man or a young child. What added to our amazement was the staggering number of people in attendance, which was up to five thousand in one mosque. We even visited a mosque where a total of ten thousand were standing and listening to one *hafiz*. There would be no space in the mosques and people would overflow into the streets.

This pleasure only comes with sacrifice. No one can taste it until he seeks true forgiveness for his sins and vows sincerely never to return to his old ways. The scholars have ruled that the Holy Quran can only be touched in a state of ritual purity. Likewise, no one can attain the hidden pleasures of this Book until and unless he or she purifies him or her self by repenting earnestly and abandoning completely a life of sin. Once we stop fighting with Allah ﷻ and following our own desires, once we end this war with Allah ﷻ and submit ourselves completely to His will, then we ourselves will bear witness to the descent of these blessings.

The Time of Death

The Prophet ﷺ would pray to Allah ﷻ to allow the Muslims to greet the month of Ramadan in a state of good fortune. Just as a shopkeeper readies himself for the peak sale season, Ramadan is also a season that we should prepare for in advance. This is a season of blessings and good deeds.

Who knows if we will see the next Ramadan? No one knows the time of death.

In Karachi a man fell from a height of five stories onto solid concrete, and walked away without the slightest injury. His friends and family congratulated him on his good fortune and a new lease on life. Just then a friend suggested that he should treat everyone to dessert to celebrate this good fortune. The man got up to walk across the street to buy some sweets. The floor had just been waxed and he slipped on it and broke his neck upon landing, dying immediately. Truly, no one knows the time and cause of death.

A man was killed and his body thrown into a river. Locals found the body some days later and notified the authorities, who registered the case and then turned the body over to the local mosque for burial. The body was unidentifiable because of severe swelling, but the imam summoned up strength and washed the corpse. There was no money to purchase burial robes, and so the imam appealed to the local community, which was slow to respond. Burial robes were finally bought and the body was buried in the local graveyard. There was not a single tearful eye at the burial of this unfortunate individual.

Upon further investigation into the case, the police discovered that this man was a wealthy landowner from the suburbs of the town of Sargodha. He was so popular that people would have given their lives for him. He had two houses, two wives, and four grown sons. How could such a man have known that there would not be a single person to shed a tear at his funeral, and that his burial robes would be

bought after an hour long appeal to the public? Indeed, no one knows the time, place, or the manner in which death will overtake us. We should prepare for death; the month of Ramadan comes to cleanse us of the effects of our sins, we should try to abandon our lives of sin *before* Ramadan, to maximize the benefits we reap therein.

We have to turn to Allah ﷻ with sincerity in our repentance, and seek to reestablish our connection with Him ﷻ. Allah ﷻ offers numerous opportunities for this, and the doors of His mercy and forgiveness are always open. No matter how grave or how large the burden of our sins, Allah's ﷻ mercy washes it all away, and we need to take advantage of this.

Mercy of Allah ﷻ

Upon returning from battle, The Messenger ﷺ of Allah prayed *Asr* and begged Allah ﷻ to forgive the community of believers. At this time he saw a small bird take a few grains of sand in its beak and fly off in the direction of the sea. The Prophet ﷺ turned and paid close attention to this bird as it returned and repeated this action a few more times.

At that point *Hadrat* Jibril ﷺ descended and the Messenger ﷺ of Allah inquired from him the reason behind this bird's curious action. *Hadrat* Jibril ﷺ answered, "Allah ﷻ has presented an example in answer to your dua. Look at this bird and imagine the size of the ocean. Just like the sand in this bird's beak holds no value in front of the vastness of the ocean, the sins of your entire nation hold no value in front of the mercy of Allah ﷻ."

When cast out by Allah ﷻ, Satan swore bold oaths by Allah's ﷻ Honor that he would lead mankind astray so that they would all prove to be ungrateful and sinful. Allah's ﷻ Mercy overcame at this stage and He also swore an oath, saying that He would forgive everyone who would repent sincerely. Allah ﷻ is ready to forgive us, but we need to be sincere in our repentance.

Satan said, "I will lead them astray and attack them from all sides: I will attack them from the front, from the back, from the right, and from the left." This bold challenge frightened the angels for our sake and they expressed to Allah ﷻ their concern that Satan would make matters very difficult for human beings. Satan seemed to have left no option open for escape from him.

Allah ﷻ told His angels that there was no need to worry. He said, "Satan forgot two directions; the one above and the one below. My creation may keep sinning and disobeying Me, but whenever they feel remorse and repent from their sins, between the time in which they raise their hands to ask for forgiveness and the time that they drop their hands thereafter, I will have forgiven their sins."

Allah ﷻ further said, "Shaitan also will not attack from below. Whenever my servant prostrates in shame before Me, I will have forgiven his sins before he raises his head from the ground."

Allah ﷻ keeps presenting us with opportunities, but we refuse to raise our hands or bow our heads in repentance. We have to remember that no one will be able to say to Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment that he cried for forgiveness and Allah ﷻ did not forgive him. A rich man in

this world does not let a beggar leave his door empty-handed. Do we think that Allah ﷻ will send us away empty handed if we cry in front of Him?

Sincere Repentance

Allah ﷻ says that even if our sins are as numerous as all the stars in the sky, all the grains of sand on this earth, or all the leaves of all the trees in this world, even then our sins are few in comparison with His mercy. Allah ﷻ tells us to be penitent and He will accept our repentance.

Hadrat Hasan Basri (May the mercy of Allah ﷻ be upon him) was a great *shaykh* from among our righteous predecessors. A woman would come to him whose husband had died, leaving behind a great fortune to their only son. The boy went astray because of this wealth and started wasting his youth in vain indulgences. The mother kept counseling him to mend his ways, and brought him to *Hadrat* Hasan Basri year after year, but the young man refused to pay heed.

Time came when his evil ways took their toll and the young man fell fatally ill. His mother seized this opportunity to counsel him towards repentance. This time her son paid attention and said to his mother, “I don’t even know how to ask for forgiveness, take me to Hasan Basri so he may teach me.”

A glimmer of hope flickered in the mother’s heart, but she said that she was too old and weak to support and take him there. The son then asked her to bring *Hadrat* Hasan Basri to the house, and also to request him to lead his funeral prayer in case he died before they arrived.

Filled with hope, the mother hurriedly went to *Hadrat* Hasan Basri and told him what was happening. *Hadrat* had just given a *hadith* lesson and was tired and wished to rest. He thought that the son had just said these words to pacify the mother. Both he and the mother had been counseling him for years but he had not listened, so why would he change now? *Hadrat* Hasan Basri refused to come and also refused to lead the funeral prayer.

The mother returned broken-hearted and told the son that *Hadrat* Hasan Basri had refused to come. This news cut through the young man's heart like a knife, and tears filled his eyes. He said to his mother, "Please hear my final wish. I am so unfortunate that even the *auliyaa* refuse to lead my funeral prayer. My time is near: when I die, do not bury me in the graveyard, for I might become the cause of further suffering for others in the grave. Bury me at home, but before burying me tie your shawl around my neck and drag my corpse around the house because I am dying the death of a dog. I beg forgiveness for my sins and may Allah ﷻ show mercy upon me." Saying this he recited the affirmation of faith (*shahadah*) and closed his eyes, leaving his mother crying.

Almost immediately there was a knock at the door. The mother ran and opened the door to see that it was *Hadrat* Hasan Basri. The mother asked him in surprise what he was doing there. *Hadrat* Hasan Basri replied, "I had gone to sleep when Allah ﷻ said to me, 'What kind of a Friend (*wali*) are you that you refuse to lead the funeral prayer of another Friend of Mine?' And I realized then that Allah ﷻ had accepted your son's repentance."

Allah ﷻ is so merciful that He is willing to forgive the worst of us of the worst of sins, if only we repent sincerely any time before our death. May Allah ﷻ guide us towards the realization of His unlimited mercy, and inspire us to take advantage of His forgiveness, and may He also guide us towards leading a pure life, and make us from among those who are sincere to Him. Ameen.

This material is strictly for non-commercial purposes only. It may be used for such a purpose provided it is reproduced without alteration or omission, and that a link is provided to the website www.tasawwuf.org. All other uses require the explicit written permission of the publisher.