

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO THE QURAN (PART 3 OF 3)

Rating: 5.0

Description: A three-part lesson for beginners focusing on basic issues they face when approaching the Quran. Part 3: With regards to the method of approaching the Quran.

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Objectives

- To understand how to approach the Quran in a way that it becomes a source of guidance.

Arabic Terms

- Tafseer* - exegesis, particularly such commentary on the Quran.

Every Muslim should make a habit to read the Quran on a regular basis, as the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:

“Recite the Quran, for it will come as an advocate for its companion on the Day of Resurrection.” (Saheeh Muslim)

For a new Muslim, it is especially important to read a good Quran translation to keep him firm in faith, to grow spiritually, and to receive guidance from the Quran. The concern should not be to finish the complete translation as quickly as possible, but rather to understand and ponder over its meaning. Read as much as you are able, even if it be a little, but do it regularly.

How Should I Approach The Quran?

(1) Read Quran with Proper Intention

In order to be guided by the Quran and to receive reward, a Muslim must read it solely for the sake of Allah’s pleasure – to be guided by the Quran. First, it should not be to win praise of people. Second, it should be a sincere reading to find and follow the truth,

(2) Choose Good Time and Place, Read Attentively, and Ponder

The Quran must be read with a clear mind and in a proper setting. Choose the best time to read the Quran. One which is conducive to contemplation. Allah says in the Quran:

“Indeed, in this [Quran] is a reminder for those who have a heart or give ear while they are heedful.” (Quran 50:37)

First, a person must have a receptacle ready to receive the message – the ‘heart.’ If this receptacle is not open to the message, it will not ‘receive’ anything even if the lips move. Second, ‘give ear’ is one who listens intently, trying to comprehend what is being said. Third, ‘heedful’ means that his heart is present and in tune with what is being said. If all conditions are present, the person will benefit from the Quran and it will guide him. It must be kept in mind that pondering in itself is not the goal; it is a means to apply the teachings of the Quran in one’s life.

(3) Let the Quran Decide True and False

Allow the Quran to guide you. Let it show you the straight path. Approach it with an open mind. If a person has their mind already made up, they will look to the Quran to find support for their views, and the Quran will never guide them, for it never had the opportunity. A new Muslim needs to change their views and attitudes according to the Quran, not to interpret it to suit one’s preconceived notions. Approach with humility, consciously setting aside what you have been inculcated with from your culture and traditions, taking on the new text as something fresh and new. Allow it to lead you, rather than try and mould it to your previously learned patterns of belief.

(4) Realize Everything in Quran is True

“And whose word can be truer than Allah’s.” (Quran 4:87)

Whatever the subject, Allah says the truth. Whether it is related to the Unseen World, life after death, history, natural law, sociology, or anything else, it all comes from our Lord. Sometimes a person may read something and feel that it is contrary to what occurs around him. In such a case, the beginner should realize that they either misunderstood what the Quran is saying, requiring them to seek a better understanding, or that their perception of what they are reading is skewed by their upbringing. It is essential for a new believer not to doubt a verse due to their lack of comprehension, and be confident of their religion and its truth. Grow with the Quran, seek the explanation from genuine Islamic scholars, the men and women of learning, and consult recognized commentaries (*tafseer*) such as that of ibn Katheer.

(5) The Quran Addresses You

Realize the Quran has been revealed for you. Allah is talking to you directly. The Quran was not just revealed for Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his companions, but rather for every person till Judgment Day.

It is the word of the Ever-Living God, eternally valid, and addresses people of all times. When Allah issues a command, it is addressed to you. It is your personal guide, a healing for the diseases of your soul. Every single passage has a message for you. Every attribute of Allah asks you to build a corresponding relationship. Every description of life after death asks you to prepare for it. Every description of Paradise encourages you to aspire for it, every description of Hell impels you to seek protection from it. Every character is a model to either emulate or avoid. Every dialogue involves you. Every legal injunction, even if inapplicable to your situation, has some message for you. This realization will keep your heart awake. The famous companion, Abdullah bin Masood, said:

“When it says, ‘**O you who believe...**,’ you must listen closely, as it is either ordering you to what is good for you or prohibiting you what is bad for you.”

(6) Release the Text from Constraints of Time and Space

The Quran is a living text with relevance to modern life. Without doubt many verses in the Quran have a historical context; they refer to certain people or a specific incident. The historical context is important to understand some verses correctly. But the examples and moral lessons are relevant to our lives and provide guidance for our own time and context. The realization will make the person realize that even though the Quran is talking about an ancient nation, its moral lessons apply to current events.

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