

## **Reciting the Qur'an as it Deserves to be Recited**

By Muaz Billoo

The Qur'an is the focal point of a Muslim's life. It is our direct link to Allah ﷻ. It is the greatest gift of Allah ﷻ to mankind. In Surah al-Rahman, Allah ﷻ begins by renumerating some of his bounties,

**“Al-Rahman (The Infinitely Merciful), (He) has taught the Qur'an, (and He) has created mankind.”**

Allah ﷻ precedes the creation of man by emphasizing that He has taught the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the most direct way with which we can come closer to Allah ﷻ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

**“You will never be able to return to Allah with anything better than that which has come from him (i.e. the Qur'an).”<sup>1</sup>**

Therefore, we have to examine our lives to ensure that the Qur'an is an integral part of my life. We must ensure that we adhere to its rights. Regarding the rights of the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ says in Surah al-Baqarah, ayah #121,

**“Those whom we have given the book recite it as it deserves to be recited.”**

The question is: what does it mean to recite the Qur'an as it deserves to be recited? Some explanations given by the commentators are as follows:

1. **To pause in the recitation and ask Allah for Jannah when reciting an ayah related to Jannah and to pause and seek Allah's protection from Jahannam when reciting an ayah related to Jahannam.**
  - a. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ؓ is reported to have said regarding the aforementioned ayah, “When he (the reciter) passes by the mention of Jannah (in the recitation), he should ask Allah for Jannah. When he passes by the mention of Jahannam, he should seek Allah's protection from Jahannam.”<sup>2</sup>
    - i. Imam al-Qurtubi ؒ writes, “It has been reported that when the Prophet ﷺ would pass by an ayah related to mercy, he would ask (Allah for mercy), and when he would pass by an ayah related to punishment, he would seek (Allah's) protection.”<sup>3</sup>
    - ii. Hafiz al-Sakhawi ؒ writes regarding his teacher, the seal of the Muhaddithin, Hafiz ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani ؒ, “When he would recite Qur'an – and he would recite abundantly, especially while on a conveyance and after the Fajr salah – he would recite with deep reflection and tranquility. Whenever he passed by an ayah related to mercy, he would ask (Allah for mercy) or if he passed by an ayah related to punishment, he would seek (Allah's) protection.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Mustadrak Hakim* #2039 as per the edition published by Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; #2059 in the edition published by Dar al-Ta'seel. This Hadith was authenticated by Imam Hakim, and Hafiz Dhahabi concurred.

<sup>2</sup> *Tafsir ibn Abi Hatim* #1160

<sup>3</sup> *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* 2:348

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Jawahir Wa al-Durar Fi Tarjamah Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Hajar* 3:1045

2. **To consider Halal whatever the Qur'an declares Halal, to consider Haram whatever the Qur'an declares Haram, and to recite it exactly as Allah revealed it without distorting its words nor misinterpreting it.**

- a. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه said, "Indeed, to truly recite the Qur'an is to declare Halal whatever the Qur'an declares Halal, to declare Haram whatever the Qur'an declares Haram, and to recite it exactly as Allah revealed it without distorting its words nor misinterpreting it."<sup>5</sup>

3. **To act upon the Qur'an.**

- a. Abdullah ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه interpreted the ayah to mean, "They follow it (i.e. act upon it) as it deserves to be acted upon."<sup>6</sup>
- b. This explanation has also been reported from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه, 'Ikrimah, 'Ata, Mujahid, Abu Razin, and Ibrahim al-Nakhai رضي الله عنه.<sup>7</sup> This was the view preferred by Imam ibn Jarir al-Tabari.<sup>8</sup>
  - i. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضي الله عنه is reported to have said, "Whoever follows the Qur'an, will end up in the gardens of Jannah."

In reality, all three of these views on the ayah are applicable to our daily lives. Every Muslim needs to make ask Allah for Jannah, seek His protection from Jahannam, declare Halal whatever the Qur'an declares Halal, to declare Haram whatever the Qur'an declares Haram, recite the Qur'an exactly as it was revealed, and to act upon it without misinterpreting it.

**Simply put**, it is to recite the Qur'an appropriately while also pondering over its meanings and acting upon its injunctions.

In order to implement all of these aspects, one must understand what Allah ﷻ is saying in the Qur'an. How can one act upon the Qur'an, know what it declares Halal, or know when one is passing by an ayah of mercy, if he doesn't understand anything from the Qur'an? In order to develop the ability to understand these things, it is important that we study under the guidance of the righteous and pious scholars. By sitting with and learning and from them, one will be able to gain significant exposure into the meanings of the Qur'an. May Allah ﷻ allow us to implement the Qur'an into our lives.

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<sup>5</sup> *Tafsir al-Tabari* 2:489, Dar Hajr. A similar narration can be found in *Tafsir Abdur Razzaq* 1:288

<sup>6</sup> *Tafsir ibn Abi Hatim* #1159

<sup>7</sup> *Tafsir ibn Kathir* 1:315

<sup>8</sup> *Tafsir al-Tabari* 2:492