

Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, September 12, 2003

Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah

Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim

What is the place of the Quran in our daily life ? When you look at the Quran you see just a book which is in all appearances just like any other book. Yet, it is so completely unlike from all other books that have ever been written or will ever be written in the future. [17:88] Say, "If all the humans and all the jinns banded together in order to produce a Quran like this, they could never produce anything like it, no matter how much assistance they lent one another." [18:109] Say, "If the ocean were ink for the words of my Lord, the ocean would run out, before the words of my Lord run out, even if we double the ink supply."

[31:27] If all the trees on earth were made into pens, and the ocean supplied the ink, augmented by seven more oceans, the words of GOD would not run out. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.

Is it not an amazing fact that this book which is just a few hundred pages in length is so encyclopedic in content, far-reaching in intensity, philosophical in significance and awe-inspiring in expression which can impress even non Muslims with the truth of its claim that it is the word of God alone. It guides us in every instant of our lives, in every subject whether great or tiny as to how we should behave towards our family, our friends and towards all of humankind. We learn how to treat our servants and subordinates, the rules of conduct, etiquette, legal and civil rights, criminal and commercial law. We are shown lessons that are to be learnt from history and past generations. Most importantly, it instructs us how to glorify God, seek His forgiveness, put our unwavering trust in Him alone and it instills in us a firm belief that there is a life after death. The Quran is a perpetual Messenger, and a living Book. The Quran expresses in principle what we should, God willing, accomplish in fact. Thus with this divine source of guidance, the Almighty has, by His immeasurable grace and mercy, provided us with both the theory and practice of true faith.

Unfortunately, there are many who profess to follow the Quran but are drifting far from its teachings. They put the Quran on a shelf where it gathers dust and is hardly ever opened. At the most, it is read in Ramadan only or when some relative passes away. Even in Ramadan it is read so hastily because the chief objective is to finish the Book off within the auspicious month. They listen to the *Haafiz* or *Qaari* who chants the sacred verses and more attention is paid to the musical modulation of the voice than to the meaning of the words or the message contained therein. [7:204] When the Quran is recited, you shall listen to it and take heed, that you may attain mercy. How can you take heed if you don't understand Arabic ? Even if you do, we all know that the Arabic spoken and understood today is not the Arabic as at the time of revelation.

Hence *The Quran Must Be Translated* [26:198] If we revealed this to people who do not know Arabic. [26:199] And had him recite it (in Arabic), they could not possibly believe in it. [26:200] We thus render it (like a foreign language) in the hearts of the guilty. [26:201] Thus, they cannot believe in it; not until they see the painful retribution.

It is significant to ask at this stage whether mere reading and listening was the sole objective of revelation. Was this the reason why God sent it down from Heaven? Some smart aleck may quote [73:4]And read the Quran from cover to cover – which already is much better than “*chant the Quran the way it should be chanted*”. But this is the text and not the context. Did Prophet Mohammed and his family and friends not suffer persecution from their tribe; did they not get martyred protecting this Quran to be the unaltered word of God? Why have we become so forgetful and negligent ?

The real spirit and purpose of the Quran is completely opposed to the casual way in which it is being treated. It is meant to be read, pondered and reflected upon, studied constantly night and day. Each one of us is duty bound to make an enormous effort to the best of our ability to comprehend its meaning. We should ask those who know more than ourselves about its teachings and to always check up whether we have correctly understood it or not. [25:59] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, in six days, then assumed all authority. The Most Gracious; ask about Him those who are well founded in knowledge. Very often, a new facet appears or a different or better understanding.

It is not the quantity but the quality that counts. It is no use boasting about as to how many times we have finished the book or the speed that we can read it. Even if you read a little every day with faith and understanding and good intention it is better than reading like a parrot. [2:171] The example of such disbelievers is that of parrots who repeat what they hear of sounds and calls, without understanding. Deaf, dumb, and blind; they cannot understand.

It is not enough just to understand the book but the most important is to put its teachings into practice. We may feel this to be the most difficult part of our duties but God will make it easy for us if we deserve it. [65:4] Anyone who reverences GOD, He makes everything easy for him.

[73:20] ...Instead, you shall read what you can of the Quran....*Faqra-‘uu maa tayassara minal Quraaan*. All translators of the Quran take this to mean *read as much as may be easy for you*. But then we would be sowing seeds but not reaping the harvest.

The Quran says about itself that it is a beacon and a mercy [12:111] In their history, there is a lesson for those who possess intelligence. This is not fabricated Hadith; this (Quran) confirms all previous scriptures, provides the details of everything, and is a beacon and mercy for those who believe. Therefore no one can understand the Quran unless he washes away all impurity and insincerity from his heart. [56:79] None can grasp it except the sincere. The purification of the soul can only be done by performing our religious duties, leading a righteous life and conduct and having an unwavering belief in the Hereafter.

Akim us Salaah