

Finding Yourself in the Holy Qur'an

One of the earlier scholars of the Holy Qur'an, A taba'ee, Al-Ahnaf bin Qays, while reading Qur'an, he came across this ayah:

Al-Anbiya (The Prophets) - 21:10

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (21:10)

(Now We have revealed unto you a Scripture wherein is your Reminder. Have ye then no sense?- 21:10

He was shocked. He wanted to find out who he was; which type of people mentioned in the Holy Qur'an did he resemble

He spent several nights reading the Holy Qur'an with deep concentration.

So he came across the following people.

Az-Zariyat (The Winds that Scatter) - 51:17-19

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ^(51:17) وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ^(51:18) وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ
وَالْمَحْرُومِ ^(51:19)

17. They used to sleep a little at night.

18. And at dawn, they would pray for pardon.

19. And in their wealth, there was a share for the beggar and the deprived

Are we among those people?

So he came across the following people:

As-Sajdah (The Prostration) - 32:16

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ (32:16)

32:16 (**Asad**) [and] who are im-pelled to rise **[14]** from their beds [at night] to call out to their Lord in fear and hope; and who spend on others out of what We provide for them as sus-tenance.

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) - 25:64

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا (25:64)

25:64 (**Asad**) and who remember their Lord far into the night, prostrating themselves and standing;

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) - 3:134

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

(3:134)

3:134 **(Asad)** who spend [in His way] in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellow-men because Allah loves the doers of good;

Al-Hashr (The Gathering) - 59:9

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَن يُوقَ شَحْحَ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (59:9)

59:9 **(Asad)** give others preference over themselves, even though poverty be their own lot: **[13]** and those who are saved from the greed of their own hearts - it is they, they that shall attain to a happy state! **[14]**

Ash-Shura (The Consultation) - 42:37

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ (42:37)

42:37 **(Asad)** and who shun the sins and disgraceful acts ; and who, whenever they are moved to anger, they forgive;

Ash-Shura (The Consultation) - 42:38

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنِهِمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (42:38)

42:38 **(Asad)** and who respond to [the call of] their Lord and are constant in prayer; and whose rule [in all matters of common concern] is consultation among themselves; **[38]** and who spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance; **[39]**

He stopped there. He was shocked. He said, Oh Allah, I am not among any of these people. Now Remember, He was from early generations of salaf. Taba'een were very close to the time of the prophet, SAWS. He had learned his deen from the Sahaba. If he did not think he was among these people, then where are we

At this point, he took another approach. He said may be I am one of those people who Allah does not like. SO he started looking at those ayahs:

As-Saffat (The Rangers) - 37:35

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ (37:35) وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّا لَتَارْكُوا آلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُونٍ

(37:36)

37:35 (**Asad**) for, behold, whenever they were told, “There is no deity save Allah,” they would become more arrogant.

37:36 (**Asad**) and would say, “Shall we, then, give up our deities at the bidding of a mad poet?” [14]

Astaghfirullah.

وَإِذَا دُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْتَمَزَتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا دُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ
يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ (39:45)

39:45 (**Asad**) And yet, whenever Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who will not believe in the life of hereafter, become with bitter aversion - whereas, when those are mentioned besides Him, they rejoice! [49]

Al-Muddaththir (The One Enveloped) - 74:42

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ (74:42) قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ (74:43) وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِينَ (74:44) وَكُنَّا نَحُوضُ مَعَ
الْخَائِضِينَ (74:45) وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ (74:46) حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ (74:47)

74:42 (Asad) "What has brought you into hell-fire?"

74:43 (Asad) They will answer: "We were not among those who prayed; [26]

74:44 (Asad) and neither did we feed the needy;

74:45 (Asad) and we would indulge in sinning together with all [the others] who indulged in it;

74:46 (Asad) and we used to deny the Day of Judgment

74:47 (Asad) until certainty came upon us [in death]."

At this point, he stopped and waited a while. Then he stood and said oh, my Lord, I seek refuge from such people as I am sure not among one of those.

Then we started looking more in the Qur'an to discover himself and he arrived at the following ayah.

وَأَخْرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (9:102)

9:102 (**Asad**) And [there are] others [135] - [people who] have become conscious of their sinning after having done righteous deeds side by side with evil ones; [136] [and] it may well be that Allah will accept their repentance: for, verily, Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser' of grace.

At that point, he said, of course, I am among those people.

He was a righteous man; he feared Allah and was steadfast in his worship of Allah. He acknowledged that he was not perfect, that he had sins, but he was optimistic and hopeful for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah.

So let's think about it. Isn't where we are. We do lots of Aamal Saliha (good deeds) and then we mix them with some questionable acts.

Which verses of the Holy Qur'an best describe you?

Besides the rituals and charity, we mix good with bad. Food, investment, entertainment.

Month of Qur'an

Ramadan is the month of Fasting, Praying, Charity, Reading Qur'an and Reflecting

The reason for telling you this story so we can use the time of Ramadan to do this sort of reflection.

So, When reading the Qur'an, we should try to be attuned to the message from Allah. Our hearts and minds should be present as we read the verses of the Qur'an.

We have been commanded to think, to reflect, and to ponder on what we read. Reading with contemplation is a lot more fruitful than mindless reading.

Humans are naturally predisposed towards contemplation. But we need a guide to steer our minds out of the narrow straits of the ego and turn its direction to the truth and good. The most dependable guide is the Holy Quran, the Almighty's word, and its embodiment and physical clarification, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.

Holy Quran is an enormous manifestation of His eternal mercy, the Almighty has thereby provided human beings access to much wisdom and the answer to many mysteries. Humanity is therefore required to learn the Quran and first develop our inner world, then strive towards bringing the Quran life with our actions and behavior and finally strive to communicate it to the rest of humankind in the most effective manner.

Thousands of books written in the Islamic world over the past 1400 years have been for the aim of understanding and plumbing the depths of one 'Book' and gaining a closer acquaintance to it. If all the trees in the world were to serve as pens and the seas as ink, it would still be impossible to enumerate the wisdoms and truths contained in the Holy Quran.[1] Within it are the codes of all knowledge and wisdom, as well as the keys to happiness in life both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Continuing research into the Quran will continue to manifest its hidden miracles anew. The Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- informed that scholars can never have enough of reading the Quran, that it never loses its freshness in spite of continuous recital and that its aspects which reduce man to speechless admiration are inexhaustible.

See, Tirmidhi, Fadâilu'l-Quran, 14; Dârimî, Fadâilu'l-Quran, 1.

Muslim scholars have defined the purpose of reciting the Holy Quran as contemplating its meaning, inner wisdom and then acting in accordance with what it demands.

For the stimulation of thought, there is nothing better than reading the Quran, since it is the word of the Almighty who infinitely knows the intricacies of the human condition. In other words, the Holy Quran holds a mirror to each person, enabling him to recognize himself just the way he is. Every Muslim must therefore frequently recite the Quran and reflect on what it exactly is that the Almighty requests with each verse.

Since each word of the Quran comprises immeasurable secrets, a contemplative read of a single verse in this manner is preferable to a careless read of the Quran entire. Only a purified heart and a refined soul gained through delicate contemplation, high morals and righteous deeds can grant one access to the truth of those mysteries.

How did the Prophet of Allah read the Quran?

The Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- used to recite the Holy Quran slowly, with a depth of feeling. He would contemplate the meanings of each verse, immediately putting into practice their commands. Upon reciting a verse commanding to glorify (*tasbih*) the Almighty, he would say *subhan'Allah*, negating the Creator of all deficiencies. Upon reciting a verse suggesting prayer, he would pray the Almighty. Reading a verse speaking of seeking refuge in the Almighty, seek refuge is what he would do.[3]

At times he would focus on single verse so intently that he would pray and contemplate it until daybreak.

See, Muslim, Musâfirîn, 203; Nasâî, Qiyâmu'l-Layl, 25/1662.

The Companions put all their focus on contemplation in order to understand the Holy Quran and meditating on the Word of Allah, glory unto Him, they read it in a way conducive to practice.

A perfect example of this, are the words of Omar –Allah be well-pleased with him-:

“I completed chapter al-Baqara in twelve years and sacrificed a camel in gratitude.” (Qurtubi, I, 40)

Similarly, Abdullah, the son of Omar –Allah be well-pleased with both- is reported to have studied chapter al-Baqara for an entire eight years, in order to put its commands to practice. (Muwatta', Quran, 11)

They read the Quran, properly learning each of its commands and prohibitions in the process. A depth of contemplation on each verse of the Quran made it possible to put each into practice.(Kattani, Taratib, II, 191)

A man once went to Zayd ibn Thabit –Allah be well-pleased with him- and asked him his opinion regarding a complete reading of the Quran in a single week. “It would be good” replied the Companion, adding:

“But I take greater enjoyment from completing the Quran in fifteen days, or even twenty. If you ask why, it is because that way I can thoroughly reflect on the Quran and better understand its meanings.”(Muwatta’, Quran, 4; Ibn Abdilbarr, Istidhkar, Beirut, 2000, II, 477)

Abdullah ibn Masud -Allah be well-pleased with him- says:

“Whoever seeks knowledge should contemplate on the meanings of the Quran, focus on its interpretation and recital; for Quran contains the knowledge of both past and future.”(Haythami, VII, 165; Bayhaki, Shuab, II, 331)