



# 30 Tips for Interacting with the Quran

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*The* Quran, the book of Allah (swt) and His final word to humanity through Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), is a real light that guides humanity to their ultimate success and happiness. It is a book that transformed individuals, families, societies, and nations. It continues to affect the lives of people throughout history. The effect it brought since it was revealed to the Messenger (pbuh) was unprecedented in humanity's history. It was able to cope with challenges in different times and places, and was able to interact with all cultures and experiences.

As MAS members owning a very important mission<sup>2</sup> that stems from the Quran, we won't be able to shoulder such a responsibility without the

help the Quran offers. In other words, the light of the Quran cannot be conveyed by people whose life is not affected by this very light. As one of the scholars said, *"Our society will be shaping its understanding of what we believe in based on our practice, and they will be convinced of our ideas and beliefs if we believe in them first."*

The Prophet (pbuh) described the guidance he came with as an abundant rain that pours on two different types of lands [Bukhari and Muslim]. The first one receives water and produces plantations and fruits. It also has flat areas that keep the water such as ponds and rivers. The other type is a sandy land that does not keep any water nor does it produce any fruits or plantation. We would like to benefit from the Quran and make it affect our lives similar to the

fruitful land in the Prophet's example. We also would like to collect its guidance and share it with people as ponds and rivers do.

This article will help us interact with the book of Allah and get the maximum light out of it. It will prepare us to be from the people of the Quran, the people of Allah, the very close ones [Al-Nassa'i]. It will show us what attributes we should embrace to make ourselves eligible to benefit from the light of the Qur'an. The article will also teach us how we can approach the Qur'an, read it, understand it, practice its teachings, and share its guidance with others around. It will give some practical advice of how we can make a plan to interact with the Qur'an and improve our relationship with this honorable book. It will help overcome some of the obstacles many of us face while approaching the book of Allah. This article is part of the Lighthouse Episode 2, *Flee to Allah*, an episode dedicated to preparing MAS members and those around them for the month of Ramadan, the month in which the Quran was sent down, the month during which we should pay extra attention to the Quran. We ask Allah to make this upcoming month of Ramadan a turning point in our relationship with the book of Allah.

## The Virtues of the Quran

### *Guidance to the Pious*

The Quran is a book of guidance. Allah described His book in the 2nd verse of the 2nd surah, "*This book, whereof there is no doubt, is a guidance to the pious.*"[2:2] This book is a manifestation of Allah's mercy on us. In the surah entitled *Ar-Rahman*, The Most Gracious, Allah said about Himself, "*The Most Gracious, has taught the Quran,*"[55:1-2] indicating that this book, the Quran, is one of the very important manifestations of Allah's mercy on

humanity. It is the light Allah made to guide whomever He wills as He said, "*And we made it light guiding whomever We will from our servants ...*"[42:52] It came to give people the good tidings they will experience when they follow its guidance, and to warn them from the suffering if they don't. It is a book in which we can find spiritual comfort, a solution to all individual, family, and social problems, and a decisive criterion of what is right and what is wrong.

### *A Book of Honor*

It is well known that Allah honored some people over others, some times over others, some locations over others, and even some angels over others. The month of Ramadan is the best month of the year, and in that month is the best night of the year. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the most honorable of the honorable prophets of Allah. The most honorable and sacred place on earth is Mecca. The best community that was sent to humanity is the community of the believers. The leader and the most honorable of the angels is Angel Jibreel. Looking at those honorable people, locations, times, and angels, one can see one common thing: the Quran. It was sent by Allah to the most honorable Prophet, through the most honorable Angel, during the most honorable time, and in the most honorable location. The interesting part about this thought is that the best community sent to humanity is not a particular nation or an ethnic group. It is rather the community of the believers who embrace the Quran and apply its guidance. In order to belong to this honor, we have to belong to the Quran. As Allah said, "*We have sent down a book unto you in which there is your honor.*"[21:10]

This book was always a source of honor to its people. Whoever upholds it becomes honorable and

whoever deviates is dishonored. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "*Indeed Allah elevates people with this book and puts down others.*" [Muslim] He (pbuh) used to honor the people of the Quran not only by his words but by his action. When he was burying the martyrs of the battle of *Uhud*, he buried them in pairs or threes in the same grave. But he did something very interesting. He asked, while burying them, about the amount of Quran each of them knew, and he would put the one with more Quran in a front position than the one with less Quran. [Bukhari] When he used to appoint leaders, he would choose the people who knew more Quran over others, irrespective of their age. When the Messenger (pbuh) decided to send someone to teach Islam to a tribe, he would send people of the Quran. Ibn Abbas narrated that the people of consultation for Umar, the second Caliph, were the people of the Quran, whether old or young.

The value of reading, reciting, and memorizing the Quran is so great. The Prophet (pbuh) mentioned that whoever recites one letter from the Quran will gain a *hasanah*, a reward, and the *hasanah* is multiplied by ten [At-Tirmidhi]. He says, "*Read the Quran for it comes on the Day of Judgment interceding for its people.*" [Muslim] "*Read the two lights, Al-Bakarah and Al-Imran, for they come on the Day of Judgment as two clouds defending the one who had them,*" [Muslim].

## Attributes of the People of the Quran

The people of the Quran are very valuable. Abdulah Ibn Amr<sup>3</sup>, the companion of the Prophet, said that whoever has the Quran would have acquired prophethood except with no *wahy* (revelation from Allah). Al-Fudayl Ibn Ayad said that the one who has the Quran is the one who carries the flag of Islam. All these quotes show how valuable this book is and how

valuable the people who carry it are. The Prophet (pbuh) said about those people, "*The people of the Quran are the close people of Allah.*" This Hadith is very encouraging. Imagine being part of a group whom the Prophet described to be "the close people of Allah"!

Many questions come to mind: Who are these people? What are their qualities? Am I one of them? How can I be one of them? How can I maximize the benefit of the Quran in my life by being part of this group? What qualities do I need to embrace? What actions should I take? These questions are central to this article. In this next few paragraphs, we will touch upon some of these qualities to help the reader embrace them.

### *Sincere Intentions*

The first and the foremost attribute of the people of the Quran is their intention. They approach the book of Allah for one purpose. They read it, recite it, memorize it, understand it, apply it, teach it, and convey it to others in order to gain the pleasure of Allah and get His reward. They do not seek worldly gain or people's praise. The Messenger (pbuh) mentioned in a very famous and very important hadith, "*Verily, deeds are by intentions ...*" [Bukhari, Muslim, and others] In a frightening hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) said that the first three who will be thrown in the hellfire are people of good deeds. Yet, their good deeds were not done for the sake of Allah. They were rather done for the purpose of gaining the praise and admiration of people. One of those three examples is a person whom Allah gave the ability and the opportunity to learn the Quran. When Allah reminds this person with this gift and asks him about what he has done with it, the person responds by saying, "I recited the Quran day and night and taught it to others. And I did that for your sake O Allah." He

will be called a liar and he will be told, "You have done so for people to say he is a reciter, and it has been already said." Also, the Prophet said, "*Whoever learns something from that which is learned for the sake of Allah, learning it instead to gain something from this life, will not smell paradise.*" [Abu Dawood]

A very wrong attitude one may develop after reading these words from the Prophet's hadiths is to stay away from interacting with the Quran fearing those consequences. The purpose of these strong warnings is not to chase us away from the book of Allah. This cannot be the intention of the Messenger (pbuh) who encouraged us in many other hadiths to do otherwise. The purpose, obviously, is to make us pay a very strong attention to our intention and renew it all the time especially while dealing with the Qur'an.

The question that comes to mind here is, "What would be my intention when I interact with the Quran?" Here is a list of intentions we should think of every time we interact with the Quran:

- To recite it and gain a lot of good deeds as the Prophet (pbuh) said "*Whoever reads a letter from the Quran will get a hasanah (reward) and the hasanah is multiplied by ten, ...*"
- To use it to pray at night when everyone else is sleeping is a very valuable and very rewarding act. It is also a sign of pure intention and sincerity to Allah (swt).
- To be kind to our parents as they will be honored at the Day of Judgment because their child has the Quran and applies it. [Abu Dawood]
- To be protected from the punishment of Allah on the Day of Judgment as the Prophet (pbuh) mentioned, "*Read the Quran for it comes at the Day of Judgment interceding for its people.*"

Also, Abu Umamah, one of the companions of the Prophet, said, "*Read the Quran for Allah does not punish a heart that has the Quran.*"

- To teach it to someone else as the Prophet (pbuh) said, "*The best of you is the one who learns the Quran and teaches it.*" [Bukhari]

Can you think of another good intention you can have dealing with this honorable book? Whatever you think of, it has to be for the sake of Allah, gaining His pleasure, and acquiring His reward.

### Seriousness

One important quality of people of the Quran is their seriousness throughout life in general and in dealing with the Quran in particular. It is not enough to wish to be part of this honorable group, the people of Allah. It is not enough to dream to be someone who knows the Quran, teaches it, applies it, and conveys it. This is a task that needs a lot of work - serious, hard work. Allah said in the Quran, "*And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it, with the necessary effort due for it ...*" [17:19] hinting that it is not enough to want the hereafter but you have to work for it. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "*The wise is he who holds himself accountable and works for what is after death, and the feeble is the one who does whatever he desires and makes wishes to Allah.*" [At-Tirmidhi] This is a very inherent quality of the people of the Quran. They do not procrastinate when dealing with the Quran; they put enough time learning, reciting, understanding, and applying. They do not desert the Quran for an extended period of time. In other words, the Quran is a very important project in their life, more important than any other project.

*Mindfulness of the Significance of the Quran*

The people of the Quran know the value of what they are dealing with. They know they are dealing with the book of Allah. They know they are dealing with something that will bring a lot of value to their lives and will reward them the most in the hereafter. They know the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) in which he said, *"There should be no envying except of two people: a person whom Allah gave the Quran and who lives by it during the night and during the day, and another whom Allah has given money and who spends it during day and night."* [Bukhari and Muslim] They also know that, *"The one with no Quran inside is like a deserted house."* [At-Tirmidhi]. They are living by the hadith of the Prophet in which he said, *"It will be said to the one with the Quran, recite and rise for your degree in paradise will be at the last verse you recite."* [At-Tirmidhi] They feel belonging to this honorable group, the close people of Allah, as the Messenger (pbuh) called them. They feel that they are dealing with the words of Allah, that the Lord of the universe is talking to them. They value the Quran, the time they spend with the Quran, the people who teach them the Quran, and the virtues the Quran brings to their life. They prefer it over anything else and, except for the balance and the moderation they are required to demonstrate, they would have spent their every moment with it: reading, reciting, and studying.

*An Embodiment*

The Quran is not just a book for recitation. It is a book for practice and application. The Quran must show itself in our character and our actions. The people of the Quran are an embodiment of the Quran. It is actually very dangerous to learn the Quran and not apply what is in it. A companion of the Prophet, Anas Ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, said, *"There may be someone who recites the*

*Quran while the Qur'an is cursing him."* Some of the scholars explained his statement by saying that this person will recite, "May the curse of Allah be on the transgressors," or "May the curse of Allah be on the unjust," and he, himself, is transgressing and unjust. The people of the Quran demonstrate the Quran in their life. They behave according to its guidance and they demonstrated its values in all their actions. They imitate their leader, the Prophet (pbuh) who was "a Quran walking on earth," as described by his companions. They seek to model their character after the Prophet (pbuh), whose character was described by his wife Aisha to be "the Quran." In the battle of *Al-Yammamah*, many of those who had memorized the Quran participated in the fighting. They used to call one another and encourage one another saying, "O people of the Quran, adorn the Quran with your actions."

*Abandon Sins*

Although the Messenger (pbuh) said that every human makes mistakes, the people of the Quran are the farthest from sins. They consider sinning while holding the book of Allah in their hearts something awkward. If they happen to fall in a sin or a mistake, they immediately repent. They know the beautiful statement of Ibn Aljawzi who said, *"The path to Allah is not one traveled on foot but rather by heart."* They know the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) in which he said, *"When the son of Adam disobeys, a black mark is put on his heart but if he repents, his heart will be cleansed ..."* [At-Tirmidhi and An-Nassa'i] They know for a fact that such a heart cannot be a heart capable of holding the Quran. They know that their ability to keep up with their effort of reading, reciting, understanding, and applying depends mainly on the strength of their heart as the Messenger mentioned, *"There is a piece of flesh in this body; if it is good and sound, the whole body is good*

*and sound. That is the heart.*" [Bukhari and Muslim] They are very scared from the strong statement of Ad-Dahhak Ibn Muzahim in which he said, "If anyone memorizes the Quran and forgets it, it is because of a sin." He was asked, "Why is that?" He responded by saying that Allah in the Quran said, "No calamity that afflicts you except because of what your hands have possessed." [42:30] He continued saying, "And there is no calamity more serious than forgetting the Quran after memorizing it."

## The 30 Tips

In the next few sections, we will talk about interacting with the Quran on three different levels: 1) Reading and memorizing, 2) Understanding, and 3) Applying and Conveying. Whenever we talk about any of these various levels, we will give some practical advice of how can we achieve in these levels.

### *Reading and Memorizing*

"Read!" was the very first order to the Messenger (pbuh). "Read in the name of your Lord," [96:1-2] was a very significant order to the Prophet and to humanity after him. Reading is the gate to knowledge. The best and the foremost we should read, in the name of Allah, is Allah's book. We chose *read* to summarize this group of actions towards the Quran: reading, reciting, listening, and memorizing. The word *qara'* (the root verb) and the word *qari'* (the one who performs the verb) are used to mean read, recite, and also memorize.

Allah in the Qur'an praises "those who recite the book of Allah and establish prayer and spend from what we provide for them in secret and in public, ..." [35:29] Reading and reciting are so important. The reward of reciting one *harf* is a reward multiplied by ten. The Prophet (pbuh) mentioned something

amazing about those who read the Quran, something that will encourage those who can read and those who are still learning. He (pbuh) said, "Whoever recites the Quran fluently, is at the same level with the honorable ambassadors--the angels transmitting the revelation of Allah. And he who recites the Quran and it is difficult for him has a double reward." [Bukhari and Muslim]

We all aspire to be in Paradise, we work for it and continuously ask Allah to grant it to us. However, Paradise is of levels and we should all aspire to reach as high as possible. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "It will be said to the one with the Quran, 'Read and recite and rise! For your degree in paradise will be at the last verse you read.'" [At-Tirmithi] The Prophet encouraged us to recite and beautify our voices with the Quran.

We sometimes take a very wrong attitude regarding memorizing the Quran. We think that it is impossible to do so and that if we had not memorized while we were children, it is too difficult to start now. This is a complete myth. Yes, the Quran is easier to memorize at a young age but it is still possible to memorize later. One does not have to memorize the whole Quran but rather as much as possible.

The Messenger (pbuh) said, "The heart that does not have any Quran is like a deserted house." [At-Tirmidhi] Memorizing the Quran has a lot of value. The Prophet once was sending a group of people for a mission and wanted to appoint a leader to this group. They all came and spoke with him, but then a young man came and the Prophet found out that he had memorized Surah al-Baqarah. The Prophet immediately said, "You are their leader!"<sup>4</sup> As mentioned earlier, in the battle of Uhud, the Prophet used to put those who knew more Quran first in the grave. Whenever he would send people to teach other

tribes about Islam, he would choose the people who memorized the Quran. Those people at his time was known as 'al-Qura'," the ones who have the Quran memorized . Omar said that when anyone has memorized Surahs al-Baqarah and Al-Imran, we should take him seriously. These quotes and others show how important memorizing the Quran is. You should ask Allah sincerely to help you memorize the Quran and you should make your effort to memorize as much as you can.

### *Tips for Reading and Memorizing*

As the Prophet mentioned, "*The wise is one who holds himself accountable and works for what is after death.*" It is really not enough to know how important and rewarding it is to read, recite, and memorize the Quran unless you hold yourself accountable to doing so. In this section, we share a few tips on how you can recite the Quran and gain the maximum reward.

1. Own a small copy of the Quran. Choose one with a font and layout you like. Make it your own and always keep it with you in the car, at work, at home, and in school. Use it whenever you read. Feel its company and value its presence. Protect it from loss or damage. If it gets old, you can change to one of the same font and layout. You will develop familiarity with the location of the verses and the surahs. You will grow to love your copy and you will always find it next to you whenever there is a chance to read.
2. Dedicate a specific amount of time to the Qur'an even if little, such as 15-30 minutes a day. Make this amount little but constant. Try to liberate your mind and heart from anything else during your time to read. Make wudu and seek a quiet place. You can make it a family gathering so that you and your spouse and

kids can share the time. Read or take turns reading. Feel the company of Allah, His tranquility, His mercy and His angels. Feel the honor when remembering that Allah may mention you in this state to His angels. Feel that you are reading the words of Allah and feel the effect of these words on your hearts.

3. Read systematically and try to start from the beginning of one surah, finish it, then move to the next surah. If you are a fluent reciter, try to finish the whole Quran in a month.
4. If you are still learning how to recite, it is extremely useful to remember the double reward you will get when you struggle reading. Try to read alongside with a recording. Make use of computer programs that highlight the verse being recited. Recite loudly with or after the recording.
5. Be part of a weekly *halaqah* where the Quran is recited even for a little time. Try to attend to learn how to recite and get the leader of this halaqah to correct your recitation. Find an experienced person to help you learn how to recite.
6. Do not give up on your pronunciation. You can become a fluent reciter if you consistently try. Be passionate about learning. Try to recite with rules and spend enough time to learn these rules in your halaqah. Do not learn the rules academically. Rather, just learn how the rule applies to pronunciation.
7. Have a strong determination to memorize the whole Quran. Remember all the verses and hadiths of the Prophet about memorizing. Remember the blessings that will come to your life when you do so. If you die without completing the task of memorizing the Quran, Allah will reward you for this sincere intention. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "*Whoever*

*intends to do a good deed and does it, Allah will give him ten rewards. And he who is not able to, Allah will give him one reward."*

[Bukhari and Muslim] As a matter of fact, many people who memorized the whole Quran made the intention and they never imagined that they would be able to. With the strong determination and the support of Allah, they did it.

8. Be realistic. Memorize as much as you can absorb and do not make rosy goals. However, it is always good to challenge yourself to get the maximum out of your time.
9. Try to be part of a memorization group where you all agree to memorize certain parts and help one another review. Encouragement and competition play a big role in memorizing the Quran.
10. Review as much as you can. Memorizing new verses is easy. Keeping the old ones is not. The Prophet said, "*Take care of reviewing the Quran for it wants to run away faster than the camel from an untied leash.*" [Bukhari] Try to dedicate some time for reviewing and memorizing. Join Quran competitions if held in your community and try to hold one if not. Do not be shy to compete even if the other competitors are young kids.
11. Start memorizing easy surahs, especially the ones with short verses. These are easier to memorize and the rhythm of the verses makes them easy to remember.
12. Try to read the translation and the explanation of the verses you memorize. The meaning will benefit you and help you memorize better.
13. When you pray alone or in congregation, try to recite the surahs you memorize. Praying at night with the surahs you know makes them

deeply ingrained in your mind, let alone the beauty of making the prayer long with the surahs you memorize.

14. Remember! Stay away from sins for sins are real obstacles to memorizing the Quran. Imam al-Shafi'i was a brilliant student, and Imam Malik, his teacher, told him, "I see that Allah has given you light, do not extinguish it with the darkness of sins."
15. Make a sincere dua that Allah helps you memorize, for nothing is possible to achieve without the help and the support of Allah. "*It is you whom we worship and it is you whom we seek for help.*" [1:5]
16. When you memorize, recite with your voice and not just with your eyes. You should use the sound of your voice, the picture of the page, and the meaning of the words to reinforce your memorization.
17. Listen a lot. Listen to the surahs you are memorizing. This will make them stick in your mind. The Prophet once heard a man reciting a verse and he said, "May Allah have mercy upon this man. He reminded me of a verse I had forgotten."<sup>5</sup>

### *Understanding and Reflecting*

Understanding the Quran and reflecting upon its guidance is one of the very important purposes for sending the Quran down to us. Allah (swt) said, "*A book we have sent down to you, blessed, for them to reflect on its verses...*" [38:29] Reciting, listening, and memorizing the Quran is so valuable. However, this value is very limited unless it brings about understanding and reflection. The word used in the Quran for this concept is the word *Tadabbur*, which means deep reflection on the Quran, its meaning, and the consequences of those meanings. Allah blames the disbelievers by saying "*Do they not then think*

*deeply in the Qur'ân, or are their hearts locked up?*" [47:24]

The Messenger and his companions paid so much attention to the meanings of the Quran. The Prophet (pbuh) once prayed at night with his companions with one verse, "If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily You, only You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." [5:118] Zaid ibn Thabit said, "It is more beloved to me to recite the Quran in thirty days than fifteen. It is more beloved to read it in fifteen than ten ... Every time I read a verse I stop and call upon Allah." Abdullah Ibn Masud was reciting and he arrived at the verse saying, "O Allah, increase me in knowledge" [20:114] and he kept repeating it. Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr was reciting the Quran when her son heard her reciting, "But Allah has been gracious to us, and has saved us from the torment of the Fire." [52:24] He said, "I went to the market place and I came back and I found her reciting the same verse." Abu Sulaiman al-Darani said, "I recite the verse and I spend with it four or five nights. And except that I finish all my thoughts in it, I wouldn't have left it to the next one." One of the early Muslims said, "Any verse I do not understand and I do not feel it in my heart, I do not count it in my good deeds." Complete submission and humility is the attitude of the people of the Quran when they read it. The Prophet (pbuh), Abu Bakr, and Umar were once listening the beautiful recitation of Abdullah Ibn Masud. He was reciting Surah al-Nisa' when the Prophet (pbuh) told him to stop. He looked at the Prophet to see that his eyes were full of tears.

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali said that in order for us to reach this great quality of *tadabbur*, contemplation and deep reflection, we need to go through some steps: 1) to understand and be mindful of who is talking, 2) glorify Him and think of Him the way He

deserves, 3) be present with our hearts and our minds, 4) and finally, reach the level of *tadabbur*, complete and deep reflection. Abu Hamid also said that there are many attitudes one should embrace while reciting the Quran. The first of these is *personalization* in which you feel that Allah is talking to you personally. When you read, "O you who believe" you project it on yourself. One of the scholars said, "Whomever the Quran reaches, it is as if Allah talked to him." The second attitude is the influence of the Quran on the heart which in turn will affect the body in humility and the eyes will drop tears. The third is to *escalate*. First, you start by feeling that you are reciting the Quran before Allah, looking at Him, and begging of Him. Second, you feel that Allah Himself is talking to you, blessing you with His mercy and grace, and showing you his favors and bounties. The last is when you start knowing the One who is talking: His names will show and His attributes will present themselves before you; so your mind will be focused on the one who is talking, not the words or even the meanings. Along these lines, one of the wise Muslims said, "I recited the Quran and I felt no joy in reciting it until I was able to feel as if the Prophet is reciting it before his companions. Then, I developed a higher level, feeling that I listen to it from Jibril reciting it to the Messenger (pbuh). And now, I feel as if I hear it from the one who sent it, Allah (swt), a joy that I cannot bear to lose."

#### *Tips for understanding and reflection*

The wise always hold themselves accountable, as the Prophet said. We need to make a plan of how to achieve the best understanding of and reflection on the Quran. In a few points:

18. We should always keep in mind that a very important purpose behind the Quran is for us to understand and reflect upon it.

19. Every time you read the Quran, choose one verse or a few verses. Read the translation and the explanation. Try to find out what messages are in the verses and the meanings. Ask yourself, "What are the lessons I can learn? How can this verse affect my life?"
20. If the verse was revealed during or after a particular story, try to know the story and reflect on it. Ask yourself: how is the story relevant to me and how can I benefit from the verse and the story?
21. Try to pray with some verses that you know the meaning of or read about and try to reflect on these meanings during prayer.
22. In your weekly meetings, make time for reflecting on the Quran where every one shares the lessons and the reflections around verses they read about during the week. Make this a weekly assignment for your gathering.
23. If you do not know Arabic, learn major Arabic words in the verses being studied so they bring about some meaning when the verses are recited by you or in front of you.

### *Applying and Practicing*

"Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord ..." [7:3] is a clear order in the Quran. The ultimate fruit of the Quran is to apply its guidance in our lives. Let us think for a moment. We receive emails every day. Some of these emails we delete before even opening. Others we open, skim through quickly, and then delete. If the email is a little more important we read the email carefully and probably keep it in our inbox. Other important emails we flag for further action. There are some emails that we act upon immediately. Our reaction to any email is a function of 1) who the sender is, 2) how important this sender is to us, 3) the essence of the subject line, and 4) how important this subject is to us. We also

respond to the email content based on how much reward we expect if we fulfill what is required (such as fulfilling a job duty) or how much fear we have if we do not act upon the email (such as losing our job). We should ask ourselves, "If we receive a message from Allah asking us to do something, how are we going to deal with it?" Let us compare our answer to the email example above.

The Quran cure our hearts and can change our character. The Prophet (pbuh) was known to be, "*A Quran walking on earth.*" His companions strove seriously to apply the Quran in their life. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab said, "We learn the Quran ten verses at a time. We do not move to the next ten verses until we apply the ten verses we learned." When the companions heard a verse like, "*You will not achieve the great good until you spend from that which you love,*" they rushed to apply it. Abu Talha came to the Prophet and identified the most beloved wealth to him and told the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, put it wherever you want." The women of Madinah responded to the verse of *hijab* that was revealed during Isha time by coming to fajr dressed in conformance with what the verse prescribes, using any piece of cloth to cover themselves. When alcoholic beverages were made forbidden by the Quran, the streets of Madinah became like rivers because all Muslims got rid of the wine they have. When they heard the order of Allah to abstain from drinking, they responded, "O Allah, we abstained, O Allah we abstained!"

### *Tips for applying and practicing*

24. Every time you read the Quran, ask yourself the following questions: What does Allah want me to do? What are the lessons I learn from my recitation? How can I use what I recited to improve my character, change my

life, and help people around me? Is there a side message that I need to learn? How did other people (such as the companions) respond to these verses and how can I imitate them?

25. Find one action every time you read and hold yourself accountable to apply it in the upcoming week. For example, if the verse talks about being kind to parents, make a plan to make an act of kindness towards your parent in the next week and so on.
26. Teach something you learned to someone around you such as your spouse, your children, your parents, or some of your friends. Try to work together to practice what you learned.

#### *Using in Dawah and Tarbiya*

The Qur'an was able to transform people, societies, and nations to the best. Its ability to positively influence people is amazing. We, as MAS members, people of dawah and people who help others grow, will not be able to succeed in calling them to the values the Quran promotes unless we use the methodology of the Quran in doing so. For example, the Quran in the early stages of Mecca focused on building the strong belief in the hearts of the believers with little mention of what is permissible and what is not. Another example is the gradual methodology the Quran used to solve society's chronic problems such as drinking alcoholic beverages. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "If the Quran started by telling people not to drink, they would have said, 'We will never quit drinking.' If it started by telling them do not fornicate, they would have said, 'We will never quit fornication.'" The Qur'an uses a holistic approach in solving small problems and deals with causes to solve symptoms. For example, when the believers disputed around the spoils of the battle of

Badr, the Quran came down to describe real believers, their attributes and what they should be focusing on. It focused more on reconciliation and aspiring to high character than on the details of how to divide the spoils.

#### *Tips for using the Quran in D'awa and Tarbiya*

27. Use the gradual approach in dealing with issues, especially tough ones. A new Muslim or a young brother or sister needs the Quran's gradual approach.
28. Use the balanced complementary nature of the Quranic tarbiya. Speak to the mind as well as the heart. Balance between this life and the hereafter. Mind the physical needs as well as the spiritual needs.
29. Use stories, especially the ones in the Qur'an, to convey ideas and bring about conviction. Use true and symbolic stories as the Qur'an does. Stories are a very good tool for tarbiya.
30. While offering tarbiya to other people, make your priorities similar to those of the Qur'an. For example, the number of verses that talk about forbidding wine, or obligating Muslim women to cover their body are much less in number than those that instill the correct belief, strengthen the relationship with Allah, and instill *taqwa* - God-consciousness - in the hearts of the believers.<sup>6</sup> As a caller to Allah and a people-developer, you should keep these priorities in mind and set the focus and the effort accordingly.

## Conclusion

Our role in MAS is to call to what is good, enjoy what is right, and forbid what is wrong. We need the guidance of the Quran to be able to know what is good from what is bad. We need the Quran to

differentiate between the truth and falsehood. We need the Quran to have answers to many challenges we face while going through our endeavor. We need the Quran to live a life full of *taqwa* and faith. We cannot give what we don't have ourselves. Without the Quran, we will never be able to "move people to God-consciousness, liberty, and justice," nor can we "convey Islam with utmost clarity."

*This article is inspired by the wonderful book, "How to Deal with the Glorious Qur'an," by Dr. Yousuf Al-Qaradawi, may Allah protect him and give him health. It is also inspired by the great lecture "How to memorize the Qur'an," By Dr. Ragheb Al-Sergani, may Allah reward him.*

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<sup>1</sup> Wael Hamza is a member of the Muslim American Society, New York Chapter, MAS-NY. Visit [lecturesNthoughts.wordpress.com](http://lecturesNthoughts.wordpress.com) for further communications.

<sup>2</sup> "To move people to strive for God-consciousness, liberty and justice, and to convey Islam with utmost clarity" MAS mission statement.

<sup>3</sup> Or Amr Ibn al-'as, his father

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<sup>4</sup> This does not underestimate the other leadership qualities required besides the Qur'an. It is obvious that this mission that the Prophet wanted to send these people to require the knowledge of the Qur'an or that the Prophet found out also some leadership skills in this young man. He (pbuh) appointed Khaled and Amr to lead Muslim armies for their ability to do so while not having much Qur'an as other people did. This hadith is meant to show how important the Qur'an is and not to make it the only decisive factor in appointing leaders especially those of executive nature. Of course, Allah knows best.

<sup>5</sup> One might think that this hadith is in contradiction with the verse that says, "We will make you recite and you will not forget." The verse actually meant that the Prophet will not forget the verses until he recite them clearly to his companions who memorize and write those verses. As soon as those verses are memorized and written by numerous people, the Prophet may forget some of them and he will be reminded either by his companions (like the case in this hadith) or by angel Jibril who used to come and review the Qur'an with the Prophet every month of Ramadan until the last month of Ramadan before the Prophet's death where he reviewed the Qur'an with Jibril twice.

<sup>6</sup> This is by no mean calling to focus on belief and abandon actions as some people mistakenly do. It is rather setting the focus and the priority.