

Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem

The Qur'an and the family of the Prophet (s).

Imam Ali's (AS) Discourses.

(Excerpts from Nahjul-Balagha)

Syed H. Akhtar

The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s)* 1400 years ago. The Scripture has been preserved by memorizing the entire Arabic text by Muslims, as well as by means of written word.

The external or exoteric aspect of the Quran includes reciting it correctly in a beautiful manner, paying due respect to it and invoking its blessings on ceremonial occasions. The internal or esoteric aspect is to understand its meaning, take lesson from it, strengthen the faith, obey its commandments.

The following Hadith help us give some insight into who are the people with true knowledge of the Qur'an and are the qualified guides.

“I leave behind amidst you, two weighty things, the Book of God (The Qur'an) and my Ahlul Bayt. Should you be attached to these two, never, never shall you go astray after me, for verily; these two will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the spring of “Kauthar.”

(Tafsir-e-Kabeer, Tafsir Durre Manthur)

“Verily, the Holy Qur'an has been revealed on seven letters (levels) of which there is no letter which has not a manifest and a latent meaning, and verily, Ali bni Abi Talib, with him is the manifest and the latent of it.”

(Sahih Bukhari. Sayuti's Itqaan.)

Muslims are advised against making their own interpretation of the Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad and his Ahlul Bayt, the Imams from his family (Peace be upon them all) have expounded and taught us all we need to know about the Qur'an.

Imam Ali (AS) is referred to as “*Qur'an e Naatiq*” or the speaking Qur'an. He has praised the Qur'an in very powerful words, which are recorded in the book Nahjul-Balagha.

* (s) stands for the invocative “Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam,” which means “May God's peace and blessings be on him and his progeny.”

Below are selected excerpts from the book “What is true Success?” based on Nahjul-Balagha (Peak of eloquence) of Imam Ali (AS).

The Contents of the Qur’an:

The Prophet (s) left for you the Book (Qur’an), which clarifies the permitted and the prohibited by God, the obligatory and the discretionary. It contains topics that are general as well as particular; it has lessons and illustrations, and long and short verses. There are verses whose knowledge is obligatory.

(Sermon 1)

The Apparent and the Hidden in the Qur’an:

Certainly, the outside of the Qur’an (exoteric) is wonderful, and its inside (esoteric) is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never end, its amazements will never exhaust, and its intricacies cannot be comprehended, except through itself.

The Qur’an, a Fair Discourse:

Learn the Qur’an, for it is the fairest of discourses, and (strive to) understand it thoroughly, for it is the best for blossoming of hearts. Seek cure with its light, for it is the cure for (the diseases of) the hearts. Recite it in a beautiful manner, for it is the most beautiful of all narrations.

(Sermon 109)

Qur’an is a “Lamp”:

Its wonders are inexhaustible and its subtleties are unending. It is a light (of guidance) for the darkness (of ignorance). (The doors of) virtue cannot be opened save with its keys, nor can gloom be dispelled save with its light. God has protected its inaccessible points (from enemies) and allowed grazing (to its followers) in its pastures. It contains the remedy (for the ailment of misguidance) for the seeker.

(Sermon 151)

Qur’an is a “Strong Rope”:

The Qur’an is a strong rope, a clear light, a cure, a quencher for thirst (for knowledge), a protector and deliverer (from calamities). Therefore, I advise you to adhere to it. There is no crookedness in it. Hearing its repeated recitation does not fatigue the ears. Quoting the Qur’an is expounding the truth.

(Sermon 155)

Qur’an Contains Knowledge of the Future:

The Prophet came with a Book (Qur’an) testifying to the (older) Scriptures. It contains knowledge of what is to come about in the future, the stories of the past, cure for your (spiritual and moral) ills, and regulations for all the situations that you might face.

(Sermon 157)

Qur'an is an Advisor:

The Qur'an is an advisor, a leader that never deceives, and a narrator that never speaks a lie. No one will sit (listen or recite) beside this Qur'an but that when he rises up, he will achieve either guidance or healing of (spiritual) blindness. You should know that no one will need any other guidance after (receiving guidance from) the Qur'an. Therefore, seek cure from it for your ailments, and seek its assistance in your distress. It contains a cure for the worst of the diseases, including the unbelief (in God), hypocrisy, rebellion (against God), and misguidance (from the true Path). Pray to God through its recitation and turn to God with its help. There is nothing like the Qur'an, through which one should turn to God, the Sublime. Know that the Qur'an is an (effective) intercessor and its intercession will be accepted (on the Day of Reckoning). Therefore, you should be among the adherents and followers of the Qur'an. Make it your guide for seeking God. It contains the blossoming of the heart and springs of knowledge. For the heart, there is no other purifier better than the Qur'an.

(Sermon 175)

Qur'an is Proof of God:

The Qur'an orders as well as refrains, and it remains silent as well as speaks. It is the proof of God for His creation. He has perfected its effulgence and has perfected His religion through it. He deputed the Prophet to convey to the people all His commands through it.

(Sermon 182)

Qur'an is the Quencher of Thirst for the Seeker of Knowledge:

Then God sent to the Prophet (s) the Book (Qur'an) as a lamp whose flame cannot be extinguished, a light whose brightness does not diminish, a sea whose depth cannot be fathomed, a way that does not mislead, and a ray of light that does not dim. It is a discriminator (of good from evil) whose arguments cannot not be belittled, a clarifier whose foundation cannot be shaken, a cure which leaves no trace of the disease, a book of honor whose supporters cannot be overcome, and a truth whose helpers are not abandoned. It is the mine of belief, the courtyard of justice, the foundation stone of Islam, the valleys and the plains of truth, the spring whose water is inexhaustible, the goal that the travelers striving towards it do not get lost, and the signpost that no seeker fails to see.

God has made it a quencher of the thirst of the learned, a blooming for the hearts of religious jurists, a highway for the ways of the righteous, a cure after which no ailment remains, a brightness with which no darkness remains, a rope whose grip is strong, a fortress that is invulnerable. It honors him who loves it, a place of peace for him who enters it, a guide for him who follows it, a success for him who argues with its help, a witness against him who rebukes it. It is a shield for him who arms himself (against misguidance), a source of knowledge for him who listens to it carefully, a worthy narration for him who recites it and a conclusive verdict for him who gives out judgment (according to it).

(Sermon 197)

Imam Ali's (AS) Discourses on the Family of the Prophet (s).

About the (Chosen) Members of the Family of the Prophet:

They are the trustees of God's secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, center of His wisdom, valleys for His books, and (lofty) mountains of His religion. With them, God straightened the bend in religion's back and removed the trembling in its limbs.

(Sermon 2)

Beware! The example of the descendants of Muhammad (s) is like that of stars in the sky. When one star sets, another one rises. Therefore, you are in a position that God's blessings on you have been perfected.

(Sermon 99)

We (the chosen members) are the tree of prophet-hood, the resting place of the (Divine) Message, the descending place of angels, the mines of knowledge, and the source of wisdom. Our supporters and lovers await mercy while our enemy awaits wrath (of God).

(Sermon 108)

About the Descendants of the Prophet (s):

The chosen members of his family are the reins of righteousness, ensigns of faith, and tongues of truth. You should accord to them the same high position that you accord to the Qur'an, and come to them (for quenching the thirst for guidance) as the thirsty camels approach the water spring.

(Sermon 86)

To Follow in the Footsteps of the Family of the Prophet (s):

Look up to the members of the Prophet's family. Adhere to the direction they guide you. Follow their footsteps, because they would never let you go astray. If they sit down, you sit down, and if they rise up, you rise up. Do not try to precede them, as you would thereby go astray, and do not lag behind them, as you would thereby be ruined.

(Sermon 96)

(The End)

References: "What is true Success?" Exploring answers from the teachings of Ali bin Abu Talib (p). Excerpts from Peak of eloquence (Nahjul-Balagha). Edited by Dr. Syed H. Akhtar. (Available at Amazon .com)