

The other category is the believer who fasts by abstaining from worldly things for Allah. His heart fasts from grieve and greed for material possessions, his mind fasts from wishful thinking while his heart and soul are ever fresh with the remembrance of Allah and the Final Day. This faster's *iftar*, fast break, is when he or she meets Allah, and his happiness is when he sees his Maker. This is fasting of *khawasul khawas*, specials of the specials, the *`aarifeen*, truly wise and knowing.

The *`aarifeen*, truly wise, are the people who are not entertained nor gratified by material earthy things, no sound, seen, or shape can gratify them beside Allah. No ocean can quench their thirst but the continence of Allah, their ambitions are bigger than this world. In a net shell whoever fasts by the command of Allah from lusts for food, drink, and desires, Allah will greet him in the Hereafter in the *Jannah*, and whoever fasts from anything but Allah his final `Eid will be when he is granted the ultimate honor of seen his Lord. Allah states:

“For those whose hopes are in the meeting with Allah (in the Hereafter, let them strive) for the term (appointed) by Allah is surly coming and He hears and knows all thing.”

(Al-Qur`an, 29: 5)

Charity

The acts of charity and benevolence toward the less fortunate, for the sake of Allah, are highly desired on all occasions, but more so during the blessed month of Ramadan. In the book of *Al-Bukhari*, Ibn 'Abbas (raa) related:

“The Messenger of Allah (saas) is the most benevolent among the people. His benevolence increases markedly during the month of Ramadan when the angel Jibreel meets him every night of Ramadan, to rehearse with him the *Holy Qur'an*. The Messenger of Allah (saas) was more charitable with his good possessions than the moving winds that bring torrential rain.”

As you may be aware, there are two kinds of charitable acts. There is regular, voluntary charity, (*sadaqah*), that can be given any time, from inviting others to meals, at *iftar* time during Ramadan, to outright gifts to an individual or a charitable organization. On the other hand, there is an obligation of *Zakaat* (obligatory charity), which is the annual return of 2.5 percent that is levied against one's savings or assets that have matured in the last twelve months. Although annual calendars for Zakat can be set in any month, many people prefer to give their *Zakaat* to its rightful owners during Ramadan so as to offer these two obligations of Islam at the same time. We included a brief Fiqh of Zakaat and its recipients in the book.

Recitation of Al-Qur'an (*Tilawatul Qur'an*)

It is highly recommended to recite or read *Al-Qur'an*, the final word of Allah (SWT), at all times, at least completing it twice in a year. The reports from the companions show how some of them completed *Al-Qur'an* in five days, some in four while others in three days. Imam An-Nawawi (raa) said:

“The speed must depend on the condition and situation of the person and what he or she does for a living.”

The recitation of *Al-Qur'an* should not be the reason to become slacked in your other responsibilities. The speed of your recitation must be regulated by the ability to understand, because *Al-Qur'an* encourages the reciter to ponder about what he or she reads. Allah states:

“Here is a Book which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.”

(Al-Qur'an, 38:29)

This verse indicates that *Al-Qur'an* was revealed for the maximum encyclopedic benefit, mercy, and guidance to the human race. That is why He (SWT) described it as blessed, (*mubarak*). These blessings can be realized to the fullest only if the reader meditates and thinks through its divine words, containing layers of insights and wisdom and life-long experiences of the human race - of how to live a better life both spiritually and materially - which can never be found in any other book.

In a hadith by 'Aishah (raa), reported by Al-Bayhaqi, she said:

“The house in which *Al-Qur'an* is recited is seen by the heavenly world as the stars are seen by the earthly world.”

This hadith indicates some of the meritorious aspects of this most authenticated book of Allah. The home in which its residents recite this book is illuminated as brightly as a star on the face of the earth, and is visible in outer space.

As a preparation for reading, it is recommended to have cleanliness, (*taharah*), by making *wudu* before settling down to recite *Al-Qur'an*. for the recitation of *Al-Qur'an* is worship, '*ebadah*, namely the best form of remembrance of Allah (*dhikir*). The Messenger of Allah (saas) disliked making *dhikir* without cleanliness. Allah (SWT) states in *Al-Qur'an*:

“And that is indeed a mighty adjuration, if you but knew. That this is indeed a *Qur'an* most honorable, in a book well-guarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean.”

(*Al-Qur'an* 56:76-79)

It is not a sin, however, to read without *wudu* if you are unclean from minor impurities that entail *wudu* before prayer. If you feel like using the restroom for urination, passing wind, etc., stop and go relieve yourself completely, and make *Wudu* then return to resume your reading. If you are defiled from major impurities, that is, the ones which entail complete bath, (*ghusl*), it is prohibited to read *Al-Qur'an* during the state of defilement, the agents of which include discharge of semen, sexual intercourse, bleeding as a result of childbirth, and menstruation. However, it is allowed for these people to look in *Al-Qur'an* while not holding it, and they may read it with their eyes and their hearts, but not recite it. [Note: one shouldn't encourage reading *Qur'an* in a state of defilement, but rather encourage *Ghusl* first.]

The place you choose to sit to recite *Al-Qur'an* should be clean from any filth or bad odor. This is why it is prohibited to read it the restroom. While reading the *Qur'an*, it is recommended to face the direction of *Al-Qiblah*.

The reciters are commanded to say, I seek refuge, “*Ta'awudh*”, that is, putting a distance between themselves and Satan (*Shaytan*) by seeking refuge in Allah (SWT) from the rejected enemy, the reason being Satan dislikes to see a servant in communication with Allah. If you do not seek refuge, he may come to distract, confuse, and induce you to doubt. Allah (SWT) says:

“When you do read *Al-Qur'an*, seek Allah's protection from Satan, the rejected.”

(Al Qur'an 16:98)

In the event that you are interrupted during reading, it is advisable to repeat *ta'awwudh* before you resume. As for the phrase of *ta'awwudh*, the following is reported:

“A'uwudhu billah (As-Sa mee'u, Al-'Aleem) iminash Shaitan ir Rajeem.”

“I seek refuge with Allah (The All Hearing, The All-Knowing) from Satan, the rejected.”

The majority of scholars recommend that it be said aloud, especially if there is an audience.

In Islam we are commanded to start every act, spiritual or non-spiritual, big or small, with *Basmalah*, that is: “*Bismil llahir-Rahmanir Raheem*” (In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.) The reason is to seek Allah's blessings for the action you are about to embark on. Undoubtedly, no deed is more deserving or worthy of *Basmalah* than the '*ebadah* of reading *Al-Qur'an*. With the revelation of *Bismillahir-Rahmanir Raheem*, Allah has educated His Messenger (saas) to

make it an unceasing habit of saying *Bismillah* before reading and before every act.

Basmalah is one of the unique aspects of *Al-Qur'an* as every chapter (*surah*), except Surah Nine (*Tawbah*) commences with this most profound statement. It is prearranged as an incomplete statement to be completed, or filled in, if you will, by the servant. For instance, if you want to read, it becomes: I read in the Name of Allah... if you want to eat, it becomes: I eat in the Name of Allah... That is what we mean by an incomplete statement to be completed by the doer.

If you can read *Al-Qur'an* in the Arabic language, it is preferred to recite with the basic rules of *tajweed*, including rules of chanting (*al-ghunnah*), prolongations (*al-madd*), assimilation (*al-idghaam*), etc. In a report by Bukhari, Anas bin Malik (raa) was asked to describe the way of the Messenger of Allah (saas) in reciting *Al-Qur'an*. Anas said the Messenger of Allah (saas) used to recite with *tarteel*, chanting, prolonging his long vowels. Anas (raa) gave a demonstration by reciting '*Bismillah*' to show how the Messenger (saas) recited it, prolonging the sublime word, Allah, Ar-Rahman, and Ar-Raheem.'"

It is, however, undesirable to read with excessive speed. Reading a part of *Al-Qur'an*, (*juzh*), slowly, so as to think through what you read, is preferred to reading double the ordinary speed without pondering. The former way is more respectful, and is in accord with the aims of the Lawgiver, than hastily reading through the Book absent-mindedly.

It is recommended to beautify your recital with a pleasant voice. In a hadith by Ibn Hibban (raa), the Messenger of Allah (saas) has been reported as saying:

“Beautify the recitation of your *Qur'an* with your voices.”

But you should not exaggerate to the point that the phonics, morphology, or syntax are distorted or altered. Reciting *Al-Qur'an* with mistakes, (*lahn*) is not synonymous with chanting or a pleasing voice. Also, one's recitation should not sound like singing.

I mentioned earlier that it is sunnah to seek to comprehend what you read. The following are some of the ways one should go about *tadabur*, or pondering through what he reads. The simplest thing is to think out the meaning of the words so as to get a better insight to their meaning and message.

If the verse contains commands and prohibitions you should immediately decide to accept or restrain from them. But if it is something you have failed in the past to do, you should seek forgiveness and intend to do it in the future. In the event that the verse contains mercy, you should feel happy and request it, or if it contains wrath, you should seek refuge in Allah. If the verse glorifies Allah, you should glorify Him.

In the book of Muslim, Huzafah bin Yaman is reported as saying:

“I prayed behind the Messenger of Allah (saas) one night. He opened his recitation after *Al-Fatihah* with chapter *Al-Baqarah*, the Cow. Coming to the end of it, he followed it with the chapter *An-Nisa*, the Women. Coming to its end, he followed it with Chapter *Al-Emran*, the Family of Emran). He read them consecutively and when he came to a verse that contained glorification of Allah, he glorified, or a question, he asked, or seeking refuge he sought refuge.”

It is sunnah to say *takbeer* from Chapter *Ad-Duha*, 93 to the end *An-Nas*, Chapter 114. The sunnah is to pause at the end of Chapter 93 then say *Takbeer*. If you are completing *Al-Qur'an*, you do likewise at the end of each *surah*, chapter, until *An-Nas*. The sunnah was started after the first revelation was received

and after the period of *Fatrah*, during which revelation was cut off from the Prophet (saas), and the Makkans were saying Allah had forsaken Muhammad. When *Ad-Duha* was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (saas) said: “*Allahu Akbar*” (Allah is the Greatest).

As to what one should say: You may say “*Allahu Akbar*” (Allah is the Greatest), or *La Illaha illallah, wallahu Akbar*, (There is no deity but Allah, and Allah is the Greatest).

The sunnah recommends prostrating at the end of every *sajdah* (prostration verse). There are 15 such verses in *Al-Qur'an*. They are in chapters: *Al-A`araaf*, (7:206); *A` Ra`ad*, (13:15); *An-Nahl*, (16:49); *Al-Isra*, (17:107); *Maryam*, (19:58); *Al-Hajj*, (22:18 and 22:77); *Al-Furqan*, (25:60); *An-Naml*, (27:77); *As Sajdah*, (32:15); *Saad*, (38:24); *Fussilat*, (41:37); *An-Najm*, (53:62); *Al-Insiquaq*, (84:21); and *Al-'Alaq*, (96:19).

Now there is the question about what is the best time to read or recite *Al-Qur'an*. The best time by far is reciting during Salaat, then night-time reading, especially the latter part of it. The best time of day is after *Subh* (Morning Prayer). The best or preferred days are the days of 'Arafah, Fridays, Mondays, and Thursdays. The best ten days are the last ten of Ramadan and first ten days of the month, Zul-Hijjah. Of the months, Ramadan is the best.

The preferred day to start *Al-Qur'an* is Friday, and the best day to complete it is Thursday. The best hour to complete it is the first part of the day or night. For, according to Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas (raa), if the completion is in the first part of the night, the angels will pray for you until morning, and if it is early in the morning they will pray for you until evening. Fasting is recommended on the day of completion.

It is recommended to start again after each completion of *Al-Qur'an*. In a hadith reported by Tirmidhi (raa), the Messenger of Allah (saas) has been reported as saying:

“The best deeds in the sight of Allah are the deeds of the one who completes *Qur'an* and resumes again, the one who reads *Al-Qur'an* from the beginning to the end, and whenever he finishes he resumes again.”

It is undesirable to stop reading to converse or talk to someone, laugh or play or look at something that takes away your attention, unless there is a valid reason, as has been reported by Al-Bukhari, by the way of Ibn 'Umar (raa).

Du'aa of Recitation of the Entire Qur'an (*Du'a Khatmil Qur'an*)

At the completion of Al-Qur'an starting from *Al-Fatihah* to *An-Nas* the reciter must turn to Almighty Allah with supplications. It is further advisable to gather the members of ones entire family and friends for these special supplications. This may be done in a house or in the masjid. In a hadith reported by Anas bin Malik (raa) the Messenger of Allah (saas) said:

“The supplication of the completion of qur'anic recitation is an accepted supplication.” (Abu-Dawud)

Hence forth, Anas was accustomed to gather his family to pray. He will supplicate while they say ameen. Indeed, *du'aa* is not a set of recitations that one is supposed to read on different occasions, it is a dynamic interaction between the supplicant and His Creator. When you list your requests and needs take them to the Harkener (*Al-Mujeeb*).

There is no special supplication reported from the Messenger of Allah (saas) at the completion of the entire Qur'an recitation. The believer is free to supplicate, pray or request in supplication whatever one desires of this world or the Hereafter. The supplications that are in circulation and are found at the end of certain publications are not reported or related to the Messenger of Allah (saas), nor from his companions, or the followers of the companions or even from the four famous Imams of Islamic thought, Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'e and Ahmed bin Hanbal may Allah's mercy be upon them.

The supplicant must be aware of what he is saying in the supplication. He must believe in the supplication being answered by Allah, supplicate with sincerity and determination, and must not doubt in the supplication.