

## Glimpses of the Essence of Qur'an

Qur'an is a word of Allah SWT and it will be alive till the end of times. It has an essence and spirit which when taken properly, has the potential to change the world. This is what happened with the companions of the Prophet SAW and early Muslims; they perceived Qur'an as a living breathing message from Allah SWT and molded their lives in its essence and the result was a spiritual feat for the world. Qur'an is so much more than laws and commands of do's and don'ts. Allah SWT sent Qur'an with profound essence; the more we analyze it the more we realize its depth. In order to truly benefit from Qur'an, we need to know its essence and how to read it. Here I will reiterate the ten elements from the essence of Qur'an that a scholar has compiled.

1. To get to know Allah *Jalla Jalalahu*, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.
2. To know oneself, by getting to know the relationship between oneself and the Creator and His expectations from His slaves.
3. To know the message of Islam and its purpose.
4. To know Islam, God's chosen way of life, and how to live according to its teachings.
5. Stories of messengers and Prophets in order to take them as role models and imitate them.
6. To introduce us to the kingdom of Allah and His *sunnah* (way of doing things) in His kingdom. This allows us to know if the kingdom of Allah will bear witness to our actions on the Day of Judgment or be a witness against us.
7. To introduce us to the unseen creation of Allah including the *jinnns* and angels; their roles, numbers, and abilities. It is in essence a manifestation of the powers of Allah and is referred to as *Iman bil ghaib* or faith in the unseen.
8. To know the journey and to warn us against the hardships and enemies waiting for us along the way such as Shaytaan, our nafs (desires and temptations), love of this world, fear of the unseen, weaknesses of our souls etc. Once we know about them, we can equip ourselves to deal with them properly.
9. To relay the importance of the Love of Allah and the rights of the brotherhood among Muslims. A quintessential quality which we as a nation are deprived of today.
10. The outcome of the journey of life and the two destinations—*jannah* or *jahannam*. If we spend our lives according to the message of Islam the reward is Jannah, if not then the destination is *jahannam*. One third of the Qur'an is dedicated to the description and delights of *jannah* and the horrors of *jahannam*.

### Implications of the Knowledge:

Once we know the essence of Qur'an and the purpose of its revelation, it has to have implications. We are not living the revelation of the Qur'an according to situations, neither do we have Prophet SAW to chart out for us our course of action. But this knowledge is preserved and the preserver of this knowledge Allah SWT knew that we will be here at this time in current circumstances and since He sent the Qur'an till the end of times, we have no choice but to know that it is just as applicable to us as it was to the companions.

It is a very individual and personal struggle on how I can relate to Qur'an and have it relevant to me. Qur'an holds all our situations and personalities; we can find in it on how to behave as a mother, father, child, if we are rich, poor, sinner, knowledgeable, if we have an accident or sickness or we have been appointed in charge of a task or other people.

The first prerequisite of personalizing Qur'an to us is absolute humbleness to Allah SWT. The more we are poor to Allah and realize that we don't know anything and need Him SWT and His message to guide us, the more our vision will change and we will get in-depth understanding of the Qur'an. The second prerequisite is acquisition of authentic knowledge and understanding of Qur'an from early scholars and submitting to it, instead of relying on our own personal and often corrupted understanding.

Once we realize the essence of the Qur'an we can't help but saying Alhamdulillah for the *Imaan, salah* and the bounty of *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah). The Qur'an is cure for the hearts:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*O mankind! there hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts,- and for those who believe, a guidance and a Mercy. (10:57)*

Once the hearts are cured, our *salaah*—the source of communication with the Lord will be less distracted and more meaningful, thus elevating the level of the believer. Qur'an teaches us to thank Allah SWT and to realize His unlimited bounties on us. We, as humans, tend to be ingrate and forgetful, therefore Allah SWT is reminding us to be watchful of such mistake since bounties of the Lord are increased for the slave when he is grateful for what he has:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ

عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾

*And remember! your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; But if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed." (14:7)*

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرُكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

*Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith. (2: 152)*

Humans are created emotional and tend to reach extreme of fear or happiness, often swaying from the middle course of actions. Allah SWT has given scenarios and promises in Qur'an that curb these extremities by providing hope and announcing punishments. Prophet SAW affirmed one of these promises of Allah SWT of mercy in the following *ahadeeth*:

*The Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said, "There is no day on which Allah frees more of His slaves from Fire than the Day of Arafat, and He verily draws near, then boasts of them before the angles, saying: 'What do they seek?'" (Sahih Muslim).*

*And in another hadith: "Verily Allah boasts of the people of Arafat before the people of Heaven (angels) saying: 'Look to my servants who have come to Me disheveled and dusty.'"*

Allah SWT called himself Ar-Rahman in the Qur'an. He SWT is testifying of his mercy and promising His slaves His kindness. In one *Hadeeth Qudsi*, Allah SWT says:

*"O son of Adam, as long as you call upon Me and put your hope in Me, I have forgiven you for what you have done and I do not mind. O son of Adam, if your sins were to reach the clouds of the sky and then you would seek My forgiveness, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, if you were to come to Me with sins that are close to filling the earth and then you would meet Me without ascribing any partners with Me, I would certainly bring to you forgiveness close to filling it."*

Allah SWT goes on to say in Surah Zumar, ayah 53:

﴿ قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah. for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

How can we suffer from depression, anxiety, or emotional and mental disorders if we truly have the essence of Qur'an which is full of promises of Allah's mercy, kindness, and hope.

How can we be lost and aimless in our lives if the Qur'an has charted out the purpose of our lives clearly for us?

How can we not be grateful when Allah SWT has chosen for us to be among those blessed ones who have heard His message and responded to the call when majority of humanity is living in illusion and loss? How can we not love Allah SWT after all He has given us of forgiveness and promises of hearing our prayers?

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

The most beautiful names belong to Allah. so call on him by them. (7:180)

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way. (2:186)

This life is a constant struggle; struggle towards hereafter versus duniya, struggle to spend in the way of Allah versus collecting wealth, struggle to spend your life for the sake of Allah versus your own desires and *nafs*. And we will never win this struggle unless the essence of Qur'an becomes the essence of our souls and we learn to extract messages for our life's circumstances and situations from the word of Allah SWT.

Quran enables us to reflect internally and externally, reflect on the larger world affairs, and enables us to act or react according to this reflection guided by the meaning and wisdom of the Quran. The more we know and manifest this knowledge in ourselves, the more it enables us to pursue the promises of Allah: the

happiness and dignity of this life and the hereafter. Qur'an is a mirror which will allow you to see yourself and the outside world with a clear accurate vision. If you really want to know who you are, where you are, what to do and not to do, and where to head in your life—read Qur'an.

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