

## 21 Studying the Quran

When I first started reading the Quran, God blessed me that no one told me I could not read it when I had my menstrual period because they understood that made me impure. Otherwise, I would probably never have tried reading it at all. To have anyone forbid me from reading the scripture for about one quarter of my life because my body did what God designed it to do would have made me furious. This inequity would simply have become too much for me.

Fortunately, by the time I heard I should not touch the book when menstruating, the Quran had already hooked me.

The same verse we have discussed in the past several chapters (Quran 2:222) remained the issue. It restricts intimate relations between spouses during the wife's menstruation. And in this case, traditional Muslims use an additional verse.

God tells us first, the Quran remains a well-guarded or protected book. Then comes the following verse, as translated by Yusuf Ali:

*Which none shall touch But those who are clean:  
(The Holy Quran LVI:79 [56:79])*

Most Muslims take this verse to mean no one can handle the Quran who has not made ablution—the ritual wash before the Salat described in Chapter 14 on the Contact Prayers—or those they believe impure—like menstruating women.

However this makes no sense when one realizes that anyone who has not already accepted Islam would never get to read the Quran. They would not know to wash first and even if they did know most would not bother.

Believe me if I had not read the Quran there is no way I would have ever become interested in Islam. What I thought I knew about it scared me too much.

Surely God would not make the Quran so inaccessible to non-Muslims. Otherwise how would anyone learn enough to decide to become Muslim?

Rashad Khalifa translates this verse in a way that makes a great deal more sense to me. Rather than saying one cannot physically touch the book he translates it as:

*None can grasp it except the sincere.  
(Quran: The Final Testament 56:79)*

Thus, if someone does not have pure intentions and they are not seeking the truth they will not understand the Quran, and thus will not grasp it. This makes more sense because anyone who walks into a bookstore can physically pick up a Quran. Whether or not they get anything out of it depends on their sincerity.

For Muslims the Quran should be the only source of their religious law (6:114-115). Therefore, they need to read it, not just wrap it up and put it in the most honored place in the home as many Muslims have traditionally done.

The first revelation of the Quran begins “*Read, in the name of your Lord, who created.*” Although originally God gave this verse to Muhammad, I believe God also addresses us all here. Reading the Quran remains a crucial part of any Muslim’s spiritual practice.

In fact the entire first revelation focuses on studying the scripture:

*Read, in the name of your Lord, who created.... Read, and your Lord, Most Exalted. Teaches by means of the pen. He teaches man what he never knew.*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 96:1-5)

Here God tells us He teaches us what we never knew. Yet Islamic scholars and religious leaders often tell Muslims the Quran is too difficult to understand; that only the scholars can interpret it and that the Hadith(s) explain it. Women have an additional handicap because they believe they cannot even touch the book for a good part of their adult lives.

God does not teach these things, men do. God describes Himself as the Teacher of the Quran. If God becomes your Teacher you do not need scholars or mullahs or Hadith:

*The Most Gracious. Teacher of the Quran.*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 55:1-2)

In this next verse God also lets us know the meaning of the Quran will become clear for the sincere. To me this indicates God commanded Muhammad not to explain the Quran but to leave things to Him.

*Then it is we who will explain it.*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 75:19)

From the above verses, only God teaches us and explains what we don’t understand in the Quran—Muhammad never comes into it. However, this does not magically happen. We must do our part.

God tells us all to read the Quran in the morning— “*at dawn*” is the exact Arabic:  
*You shall also observe (the recitation of) the Quran at dawn. (Reciting) the Quran at dawn is witnessed.*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 17:78)

What a nice way to begin the day, reading the Quran at dawn when it is quiet and we can read without interruptions or distractions.

One may read the Quran in several manners. I like to just open it at random and read. However I also feel God commands me to read the entire Quran (73:4). To be able to accept the entire Quran we must know what it says, so we must have read the whole book.

The following shows both men and women should read the Quran and indicates it is part of our righteous works. Satan will always try to discourage us from doing righteous works. So, the Quran tells us to take refuge in God before we read:

*When you read the Quran, you shall seek refuge in God from Satan the rejected. He has no power over those who believe and trust in their Lord.*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 16:98-99)

These verses show we all, male and female, should read the Quran and we should seek refuge in God before doing so.

In this next verse God shows us we should not only read the Quran but also study it carefully.

*Why do they not study the Quran carefully? Do they have locks on their minds?*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 47:24)

This verse addresses all Muslims not just the men. Another verse (4:82) tells us if we study the Quran carefully we will see it has no contradictions. If it did not come from God that would not be the case, especially given the fact it was revealed so long ago and over about twenty-three years.

The following verse also addresses “*the believers*” which includes men and women. It indicates by studying the Quran we can mobilize—striving for God by coming to know His final scripture.

*When the believers mobilize, not all of them shall do so. A few from each group shall mobilize by devoting their time to studying the religion....*  
(Quran: The Final Testament 9:122)

Thus studying the religion holds a very important role in the society. From previous chapters we know the Quran should become the only source of our religious laws (6:114-115).

Studying the Quran can prove very enjoyable. In an earlier chapter, I mentioned I love Fridays because we gather then for both the congregational prayer and our community’s Quran study.

In our community the brothers rotate giving the Friday Prayer—known as the Jumu’ah Prayer. Then on Friday nights the sisters rotate giving the Quranic study as we read through the Quran “*from cover to cover*” (73:4). Thus we hear the wisdom of everyone in the community. Even children often share their thoughts and questions during our study.

This active participation by everyone in the crucial activities of the community strengthens the community and gives each individual the chance to grow spiritually. Preparing for and giving the Friday Prayer or the Quranic study provide the opportunity for deeper examination of the scripture and then integrating it into our lives.

When my turn to lead the study comes I find preparing for it gives me the opportunity to really delve deeply into the verses I am covering that week. It amazes me how much I find to talk about in the verses I cover.

That becomes one of the real joys of the Quran. You can read it over and over and gain from each reading. Studying with other congenial people provides even more insights as they add from their viewpoints and life experiences.

Quran moves from subject to subject much like our minds do. Unlike the Torah and the Bible, which have a more linear nature to them, it almost replicates our stream of consciousness. Perhaps that adds to the satisfaction of reading and studying it. It speaks to a deeper level than normal books. Maybe it reaches this deeper level because of that similarity to the way our minds work.

Finally, I have heard the Quran cannot be translated and must be read in Arabic. I reject this premise. God revealed it in Arabic, which is very precise for laws. However, Arabic also often has many shades of meaning in one phrase. But, if you are not a native speaker of Arabic I have seen that God will teach you the Quran through a good translation.

The Quran provides the crucial teachings of Islam. If it could only be read in Arabic how would any non-Arabic speaking person become a Muslim? Someone can tell you what the Quran says but nothing has the awesome splendor and power of God's words in your own language.

The following verses indicate the necessity of translating the Quran:

*If we revealed this to people who do not know Arabic. And had him recite it (in Arabic), they could not possibly believe in it. We thus render it (like a foreign language) in the hearts of the guilty.*

*(Quran: The Final Testament 26:198-200)*

Thus, the language you speak becomes unimportant. If you speak the most impeccable Arabic but do not accept its guidance, the Quran will seem as if it were in a foreign language. The next verse shows no matter what language it came in it proves "a guide and a healing" for the believers and will mean nothing to the disbelievers:

*If we made it a non-Arabic Quran they would have said, "Why did it come down in that language?" Whether it is Arabic or non-Arabic, say, "For those who believe, it is a guide and healing. As for those who disbelieve, they will be deaf and blind to it, as if they are being addressed from faraway."*

*(Quran: The Final Testament 41:44)*

The Quran came to mankind in Arabic. But I believe no matter what your native tongue, if God knows you will accept its guidance it will speak to your heart regardless of the translation you read.

For those who have never read the Quran or have not read all of it let me encourage you to do so. I know several people who really had no interest in it or Islam but began reading it for one reason or another and became fascinated. As a matter of fact, I'm one of those people. Even if it does not speak to you as it does to me, reading the Quran will give you a much better understanding of the Muslim world and of yourself. Such an understanding becomes crucial in this time of great change.

What translation should you read?

Even if you speak English only fairly well, I recommend you try Rashad Khalifa's translation. It has expanded and enhanced my understanding of the verses. The first translation made by someone who spoke Arabic as a native, he uses modern, easy to read

English. Many consider Yusuf Ali's translation one of the best, but his native tongue was neither Arabic nor English but Urdu. To me the difference shows.

As Rashad Khalifa translated, he discovered a very fascinating numerical code imbedded in the Arabic of the Quran. This code answered my last doubt about Islam. I had studied the Bible and its history. A great deal of evidence exists that in all the years of oral transmission and then multiple translations of the Bible, some human error has been introduced into this document. How did I know the same thing had not happened to the Quran?

As we will see by the examples given in a few paragraphs, the numerical code in the Quran proves so intricate and all-encompassing I believe the Arabic language had to be created with the Quran in mind for the book to make such perfect sense, never contradict itself, and still conform to the code. Only God could do such a thing. Quran must have come to us intact for this code to hold together as it does.

Since Rashad Khalifa made this discovery as he translated the Quran, it gives a special dimension to his translation—an authorization from God. For fourteen hundred years Islamic scholars studied the Quran, examining it minutely, but God provided this information only to Rashad Khalifa.

There are also a number of aspects of the code that point to the Quran as the only true source of religious guidance for Muslims. I believe God authorized Rashad Khalifa to bring Islam back to its pristine purity. For more information please see Appendix 2 in Rashad Khalifa's translation, *Quran: The Final Testament*.

This numerical code, based on the number 19, permeates the fabric of the Quran. Let me share a small sample of the code.

The Quran begins with "*In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*" Each of the Arabic words in this phrase occurs in the Quran in multiples of 19, and the phrase itself occurs a multiple of 19 times.

The total number of chapters (*suras*) equals a multiple of 19—114 or 19 times 6—as does the total number of verses (6346).

The total occurrence of the word "Allah" equals a multiple of 19, as does the total of verse numbers where that word occurs in the Quran.

If you take each unique number that occurs in the Quran and add them together the total also equals a multiple of 19.

I have provided Appendix 2 in this book to explain more of the basic aspects of this code. If this code interests you, please review it and decide for yourself what it means to you. At the end of Appendix 2, I give references for further study if you should wish to research more.

God describes the believers as those who investigate everything (17:36):

*They are the ones who examine all words, then follow the best. These are the ones whom God has guided; these are the ones who possess intelligence.*  
(*Quran: The Final Testament 39:18*)

Being open to the truth, no matter where it comes from became one of the qualities of Islam I treasure most. Quran based Islam does not form an exclusive club but rather gives an all-inclusive invitation. This invitation includes every human being—regardless of gender, race, creed or nationality. The invitation always remains open to make God your true Lord and Master, your priority.

The Quran provides one of our most powerful tools in making God our priority. Studying it gives many rewards.

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*Until they began reading the Quran for themselves many of my Muslim friends found Islam difficult. For these, reading the Quran became the key to finding their true selves and discovering their own relationship with God. I know of no more beautiful example of this than the following story.*

### **Quranic Reward**

In The Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

I was very young, maybe seven or eight years of age when I fell in love with God and had an immense yearning to observe God’s religion. For years I observed God’s commands, by God’s Grace, without even knowing that they had been corrupted. However, my heart was never completely content and I always felt somewhat of a void. I would study the Quran a lot, but they had scared us so much about asking any questions that unfortunately, the laws of “*hadith*” had become a substitute for the Quran and we had gotten used to it.

I didn’t listen to music, although I loved it, for the books of “*hadith*” prohibited it. I even obeyed the so-called dress code for women (covering my hair) for twenty-two years, until one day, one of my relatives showed me the verse in the Quran regarding the dress code for women. It was then that I decided to stop covering my hair; yet, I was afraid that I might have been wrong.

In school, I had many classmates of different religions, and I always wondered, since God is One, then why were there so many different religions. To make matters worse, when we learned of the many contradictions in Islamic laws, I became more surprised and confused—especially when the people would say that they were followers of the Quran and the prophet Mohammed and yet they each followed different laws and teachings (sectism)! Yet, asking questions was taboo and I would have been known as a sacrilegious person if I dared to ask them. I could feel a storm brewing inside me and I found refuge in writing poetry to express my feelings:

*I am bursting inside and I have nowhere to go but to God  
O God, have compassion on me and show me the way to You  
O God, forbid for me other than the path to You  
For I do not possess the wisdom, so please guide me to You*

*So that I would be dedicated to You in Your path  
And I would dedicate my life to you as a friend would*

Shortly thereafter, God showered me with His mercy and with the key and the knowledge of the hidden secret of the Quran [numerical code of the Quran]—discovered by Dr. Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D. All doors opened to me and all the questions that I had were finally answered through the Quran, not “*hadith*.” The more my questions were answered by the Quran, the more I trusted God, that maybe God had sent Dr. Khalifa to guide us out of the darkness into the light. Today, by God’s Grace, it has been sixteen years since I have wiped out all traces of doubt in my mind regarding the guidance in the Quran. How sweet my life has become and how easy it is to carry out God’s commands.

One of my memories since this knowledge of the Quran has come to me, is when I went to see one of the greatest “Islamic scholars” in Iran, for whom I, among many other Muslims, had great respect. I had many conversations with him, but whenever I would ask him a question, he would answer me with baseless “*hadith*,” and it would greatly upset him whenever I would challenge that “*hadith*” with verses from the Quran. My very last conversation with him was the day he told me: “Sister, our conversations/arguments are a waste of time for me. No matter what I tell you, you read me verses from the Quran!”

And I said to him: “Thank you, this has been the best compliment I’ve received all day!” Then I told him good-bye and I said: “I do not worship what you worship. To you is your religion, and to me is my religion.”

Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe.

—*Parsa, Iran*

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*Like me, sister LK did not really want to read the Quran, but once she started she knew she could not stop. Here she tells her story.*

### **Studying the Quran**

When I was first given a Quran, I really had no intention of reading it. My friend was very excited to give me a copy, so rather than disappoint her I just figured I’d leave it by my bedside table for a couple of weeks and then return it to her with thanks. In fact, that’s what happened to me years later when I gave a friend a Quran. She said she read it, but it meant nothing to her.

God says, “*None can grasp it except the sincere.* [56:79]” Does that somehow mean that I was sincere even before I knew it? I can’t say, but I do know that I did begin to read it and found myself absorbed. I am so thankful it was an easy translation to read and understand—Dr. Rashad Khalifa’s. I saw the way God included everyone in His book. I was amazed at all the references to Moses and Jesus—I thought they belonged to other religions. But I soon came to realize that the Quran is the scripture for everyone. It

is not a “Muslim” book. And if you’re sincere, even if you don’t know it, you will be able to grasp it.

Now, I thoroughly enjoy reading the Quran from cover to cover, over and over again. I enjoy the times I lead a Quran study, so that I can review the verses and tie them to things in my life and in the world around me. God is the Teacher of the Quran (55:2). He speaks directly to me through this wonderful book. I am so thankful that my friend gave me a Quran and that God gave me the guidance to read and understand it.

—LK, U.S.A.

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If you read the first chapter of this book, you know that if I had not read the Quran I would never have become a Muslim. Through all of the years since then, I have read this amazing book many, many times.

But I find a great difference between reading the Quran and studying it. Both have value and can be very enjoyable. However, I especially enjoy studying the Quran with others because I learn so much more from what they share than when I study by myself. Part of that probably comes from the wider range of experience and thought that exists in a group. But I think that another factor adds to the experience. Just as a good classroom discussion of eager students stimulates those students more than studying on their own, I find a study of the scripture with others eager to understand and learn from God’s own words more stimulating and satisfying to both my intellect and my soul than studying by myself.

Often in the past our studies at the mosque I consider home have been broken by times of uncontrollable laughter. If someone unfamiliar with our community had come in at one of those moments they might have concluded that we were intoxicated. But the intoxication did not come from any substance; we were intoxicated with God and the beauty of His scripture.