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Qur'anic Values: Values That Guide Us to Goodness

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْخَبِيرِ الْحَكِيمِ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ
الْقَوِيُّ الْمَتِينُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ صَادِقُ
الْوَعْدِ الْأَمِينِ ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ .
أَمَّا بَعْدُ ، يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ ، أُوصِيكُمْ وَنَفْسِي بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ ، فَقَدْ
فَازَ مَنْ اتَّقَى وَخَابَ مَنْ عَصَى .

Blessed jama'ah,

I would like to first and foremost remind myself and everyone here that no matter how great we are, we will ultimately return to Allah the Almighty. Therefore, my brothers, we must equip ourselves with taqwa. Fulfill all of Allah's commands and abstain from all of His prohibitions. May we return to Allah in a state of Him being pleased with us.

My brothers,

Throughout this entire month, we have gained many benefits and gems of wisdom from several verses of the Qur'an. These

include the values of taqwa, justice, maintaining relationships – not just amongst human beings, but also our relationship with the environment. Such is the nature of the Qur’an, which contains the words of Allah. Its guidance is compatible for every period and situation. Allah s.w.t has said in Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 2:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾

Which means: *“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah.”*

Therefore, in ensuring that the lessons from the Qur’an continue to be incorporated and applied in our lives and current situations, I would like to share several tips that hopefully can become our guidelines when approaching religious texts.

My brothers,

In reading Qur’anic texts, we need to be mindful of the underlying explanations and contexts, so as to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning and intent of these verses.

Imam At-Tabari once said, *“I am truly astonished with people who read the Qur’an but do not know the tafsir of its verses. So how can they taste the sweetness of its recitation?”*

The lack of deep understanding of the meaning of a particular verse can cause misunderstanding and confusion with regard to its significance, and may even lead to problems.

As an example, we often hear Verse 10 of Surah Al-Hujurat:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

Meaning: *“The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”*

It is often understood from this verse that Allah s.w.t is saying a Muslim can only be friends and be close to another Muslim and not with someone of different beliefs. However, Almarhum Sheikh Muhammad Saeed Ramadan Al-Buthi in his book entitled “Love in the Qur’an and Its Role in Human Life” wrote that such interpretations are inaccurate. On the contrary, this verse should be understood as a reminder that there should be no hatred or enmity between one Mukmin and another. It should not be used to justify that Muslims cannot have close relationships or even familial ties with people of different race and religion. This is because there are many other verses in the Qur’an that encourage the Muslim community to have positive relationships with those of different faiths and to treat them well, as long as this does not pose threat to their faith and lives.

Beloved jama'ah,

The example that I have just mentioned reminds us of the importance of having a holistic understanding of Qur'anic verses, and not relying solely on the translation of these verses.

There are some of us who tend to seek for religious information from the internet. While this is a good effort, we must realize that although there are good and beneficial interpretations that can be found online, there are also interpretations that are inaccurate and can cause confusion. For example, verses that may seem rigid and restrictive. These verses were usually revealed during specific situations, and are not suitable to be applied to all situations and for all people. Therefore, we must strive to provide the right explanation and guidelines in understanding such verses.

Furthermore, we have heard how the failure of some individuals to holistically understand religious texts, and its application to the current needs and contexts, have caused some people to assume that they were not capable to live and contribute to the larger community.

My brothers in Islam,

The following are some guidelines that in my opinion are suitable for us to follow as part of our efforts to study and understand the Holy Qur'an.

Firstly, the importance of understanding the reasons for the revelation of verses in the Qur'an, or better known as *Asbabun Nuzul*. This will greatly help us to understand the context of the revelation of a particular verse, as well as the wisdom and the story behind it. The same applies in approaching a particular hadith, and even the writings of past scholars.

The truth is, we are all indirectly influenced by our surroundings, conditions of life, the culture of our society and how our society collectively thinks, and the time that we live in. For every action that we take and every word that we utter, there is a reason that drives it. The same thing goes for scholars. The books they wrote were intended to provide guidance to their respective societies.

Therefore, my brothers, by understanding the background, the societal life, the religious situation and the reality that surrounded a particular piece of writing, the reader will have a deeper insight on why a statement or fatwa was issued. This means that when their circumstances are different from ours, the particular fatwa or statement might then not be suitable to be applied in our current context, and we need to get opinions and explanations from contemporary scholars on how best to interpret such fatwas.

Secondly, translations of the Qur'an or hadiths do not give a complete picture of the significance and concepts behind Qur'anic verses and hadiths. The best way, beloved jama'ah, is

for us to ponder over the explanations by scholars in established Tafsir books, that explain the significance behind that particular religious verse. Find teachers who can give us proper explanations on the contents of the Qur'an and the hadiths of Rasulullah s.a.w that are appropriate for our current contexts. Too often we find that many misunderstandings and much confusion with regard to the Tafsir of religious texts arise when we simply interpret these texts literally.

In honour of the Hijri new year that is dawning upon us very soon, let us together increase our obedience towards Allah by deepening our understanding of the Qur'an and other branches of religious knowledge. If we declare our belief in the Holy Qur'an but have not begun to understand its contents properly, then are we staying true to our declaration of faith? May our hearts be open to accept the truth in all its forms, and may we become better Muslims in this upcoming new year. Amin ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ
الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا
فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.