

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir's (A.S.) Knowledge of the Holy Qur'an

On the Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

Imam Ja'ffar as-Sadiq (as) has said, "Imam al-Baqir (as) was the best recitor (of Quran) during his time. Whenever he (as) was engrossed in worship at night and recited the Holy Quran loudly, the passer-bys would stop (near the house) and get absorbed in his recitation". (Quran-o-'Itrat)

Imam al-Baqir (as) used to urge the people to recite the Holy Quran for it is the abundant source that guides people to righteousness, enlivens their hearts, and supplies them with abilities of light and awareness. He (as) has said, "The Apostle of Allah (saww) has said: 'Whoever recites ten verses on a night is not written among the heedless. Whoever recites fifty verses is written among those who praise (Allah). Whoever recites a hundred verses is written among the obedient. Whoever recites two hundred verses is written among the humble. Whoever recites three hundred verses is written among the successful. Whoever recites five hundred verses is written among the strivers. Whoever recites a thousand verses, a hundred weight of gold is written for him". (Al-Bayaan)

Abu Baseer came to Imam al-Baqir (as) and said, "When I recite the Quran loudly, Shaytan comes to me and says: 'You simply want to please your family and the people through recitation'." Imam (as) said, "Recite the Quran in intermediate recitation. Let your family listen (to that). Read the Quran with a good voice. Indeed Allah likes recitation of the Quran with good voice". (Al-Kaafi)

Maymoon Qadaah has reported that:

[Imam al-Baqir (as) once told me, "Recite the Quran". I asked, "Where should I begin from?" Imam (as) answered, "From the ninth chapter". As I began to search the chapter, Imam (as) said, "Recite Surah Yunus". I started reciting this chapter and when I reached the verse that reads: 'Those who are virtuous shall receive the best reward and an enhancement. Neither dust nor abasement shall overcast their faces.' (10:26) Imam (as) said, "The Holy Prophet (saww) has said: 'I am extremely surprised as to why I do not turn pale when I recite the Holy Quran'."] (Quran-o-'Itrat)

Ayatullah Shaykh Ali Karimi states:

It should be noted that according to the present arrangement of Quran, Surah Yunus is the 10th Chapter. However, if Surah al-Baqarah is considered as the first Surah of the Holy Quran (as stated by some scholars) or if Surah al-Tawbah (9th Chapter) is considered as part of Surah al-Anfaal (8th Chapter) (as some scholars strongly believe) then Surah Yunus shall be considered as the 9th Chapter. (Quran-o-'Itrat)

His Knowledge of the Holy Qur'an

One of the titles of the fifth Imam of Ahlul-Bayt (as) is that of al-Baqir. Al-Baqir in Arabic has its roots from Baqir, which means 'to split open' or 'to rip open' or 'to cut open'. Imam (as) was called al-Baqir because of his profound knowledge of everything including the Holy Quran, which he (as) had inherited from his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah and which, he (as) split open to impart to others.

Imam al-Baqir (as) himself has been quoted saying: "We have been taught the language of the birds and bestowed with knowledge of everything". (Manaqib Aali Abi Talib)

Jabir bin Abdullah al-Ansari (r.a.) has narrated:

[The Holy Prophet (saww) had told me, "O Jabir! I hope you be alive till you meet a son from the progeny of my grandson al-Husayn whose name shall be Muhammad. He will split open the knowledge of religion and impart it to others. O Jabir! When you meet him, convey my salutation to him".

Thereafter, I always searched for this young man. Finally, when I met him, I witnessed the attributes in him, which the Messenger of Allah had described to me. I conveyed the salutation of his grandfather to him and said, "O Baqir (Splitter)! You are the Baqir in truth. You are for certain the one who will split open the knowledge".] (Ahsan al-Muqaal)

Do Not Interpret the Holy Qur'an With Your Opinion

Qutadah bin Da'amah visited Imam al-Baqir (as) and the following conversation ensued between them.

Imam (as): "O Qutadah! Are you the scholar of the people of Basra?"

Qutadah: "This is what the people say".

Imam (as): "Do you interpret the Quran with knowledge or with ignorance?"

Qutadah: "Of course I interpret it with knowledge".

Imam (as): "Alright then, if you are interpreting the Quran with knowledge, I will ask you a question".

Qutadah: "Please do so".

Imam (as): "Tell me what does Allah (SWT) mean in the following verse: '...And We had ordained the course through them: Travel through them in safety, night and day'."?

Qutadah: "This refers to one who departs from his home with the intention of visiting the sacred mosque (Masjidul-Haraam). He gathers his provision for the journey and hires his transport all through Halaal means. Such a person is in safety until he returns to his family".

Imam (as): "O Qutadah! Take the oath of Allah and tell me. Do you know of any person who has departed from his home for the House of Allah and arranged for his provision and paid for his transportation all through Halaal means yet robbers attacked him, took away his possessions and physically injured him?"

Qutadah: "Yes! Indeed I know of such a person".

Imam (as): "O Qutadah! Woe unto you! (In such a case) if you are interpreting the Quran with your own opinion then you are misled and have misled the people. And if you are interpreting it from what you have heard from others, then again you are misled and have misled the people. Woe unto you O Qutadah! This verse refers to one who departs for the House of Allah after arranging his provisions and paying for his transportation from Halaal means and in addition, he is also cognizant about our rights (the rights of Ahlul-Bayt) then Allah (SWT) will most certainly incline his heart towards us, just as He (SWT) says: 'So make the hearts of a part of the people fond of them...' (14:37) By Allah! We are the answered prayer of Ibrahim (as). Whoever inclines his heart towards us, his Hajj shall be accepted otherwise not. O Qutadah! If one performs Hajj in this manner (as stated) then on the Day of Judgement he shall be safe and protected from the Hell-fire".

When Qutadah heard this, he said, "By Allah! I will henceforth interpret the Quran as you have taught". Thereupon, Imam al-Baqir (as) added, "O Qutadah...only he truly understands the Quran whom the Quran addresses". (Rawdhat al-Kaafi)

An Interesting Incident

Hisham bin Abdul-Malik called Imam al-Baqir (as) to Shaam. When the Imam (as) arrived at the doorstep of Hisham's palace, he (as) was made to wait outside while Hisham talked to his courtiers and the members of Umayyad clan saying, 'When you see me stop after abusing him, I want each and everyone of you present here to abuse him'. Thereafter, Hisham allowed Imam (as) to enter.

Imam al-Baqir (as) entered the court of Hisham and after greeting everyone loudly at once; he (as) took a seat. Hisham was very disappointed that the Imam (as) neither took his permission to sit nor had he (as) addressed him as Khalifa, so he looked towards him and abused him. Hisham also accused Imam (as) saying, 'O Muhammad son of Ali! Someone or the other from amongst you (Ahlul-Bayt) keeps disuniting the Muslims and inviting them towards him. And because of ignorance and insanity, he keeps considering himself as the Imam.' After saying all that he wanted, Hisham fell quiet and as instructed, all those present began to verbally abuse the Imam (as). Finally, when everyone had spoken, Imam al-Baqir (as) said, "O people! Where are you heading to? And where are you being dragged to? It is through us that the Exalted Lord guided your predecessors and it will only be through us that people after you shall be guided. If in the present time you have the leadership then know that in future we shall be the leaders – and ours shall be the final and exceptional leadership – because we are the outcome mentioned by Allah: '...And the outcome will be in favour of the Godwary'. (28:83)

Hisham imprisoned Imam al-Baqir (as). There was not a single prisoner who did not immensely benefit from Imam (as)'s knowledge. When Hisham was made aware of Imam (as)'s popularity in the prison and cautioned about its consequences, he ordered the Imam (as) to be returned to Madina. He also insisted that Imam (as) should be treated roughly and denied water and food during the journey. No one should entertain him in any way.

For three days, Imam (as) and those who had accompanied him were denied food and water. When they arrived at Madyan, the gates of the city were shut to disallow them an entry. The companions complained of extreme hunger and thirst. Thereupon, the Imam (as) climbed a nearby mountain and called out loudly, "O the unjust inhabitants of the city! I am BAQIYYATULLAH (what Allah has left behind for you as a clear proof). Allah, the Exalted says: 'That which is left to you by Allah is better, should you be faithful, and I am not a keeper over you'. (11:86)

In the city of Madyan lived a very old man. When he heard this call, he said, "O people! By Allah! This call is of Shu'ayb – the Prophet of God. By Allah! If you do not respond to his call, Allah will punish you from the heavens and the earth..." Hearing this, the inhabitants

rushed in aid of Imam al-Baqir (as) and his companions. Later on when Hisham was informed about what had transpired, he ordered the arrest of the old man and nobody knows what happened to him thereafter.] (Al-Kaafi)