

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

MISSED CALLS



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SESSION 1

- The Quran presents past human history as an opportunity for us to extract lessons and learn from.
- It is also a cautionary tale.
 - It quotes the responses of the disbelievers to the Prophet SAW and the Prophets before him.
 - They would say that the stories in the Quran were simply fables about those who died before them.
- Through these two positions the Quran is telling us that our relationship with the past needs to be filtered through two lenses:
 - The Quran represents a clear clarification of everything that came before it in terms of scripture and revelation.
 - Allah tells us in the Quran that as believers we are building on the past by looking at what can be continued, as well as breaking from the past if it was anti-Islamic.

Our View on the Quran

- We need to figure out how the Quran speaks to us in this day and age.
- If a person views the Quran as just a text like any other book, they may feel that there is competition between these sources of information.
 - This would cause uncertainty and confusion about which book they should turn to first.
 - We have access to an abundant amount of information which can lead to a lack of receptivity to the Quran.
- During the time of the Prophet SAW, literacy was very rare and there were very few books.
 - When the Quran was revealed people were able to accept it without having to decipher between various different texts.
 - Today, we have so much information that some people may be misled by it.
- We must ensure that our Quran is the primary source of information in all aspects of life.
- The Quran, by nature, calls to and invites the believer in on multiple levels of engagement.
- Before there was even a physical book, people were able to engage with the Quran.

Missed Calls of the Quran

- When a person checks their phone and sees that they have a missed call they may get feelings of anxiety or stress.
 - Similarly, one should feel this way when they are disconnected from the Quran.
- The more connected we are to our devices, the less connected we are from the larger signs and calls around us, mainly the call of Allah SWT to us in the Quran.
- In Surah Ali Imran Allah SWT states:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

Surely Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He raised from among them a Messenger to recite to them His signs, and to purify them, and to teach them the Book and Wisdom. For before that they were in manifest error. (3:164)

- This is a description of the Arabs during the time of the Prophet SAW.
 - They were in a state of jahiliyyah (ignorance) before the Prophet SAW arrived.
- Allah SWT does not say that He bestowed a favor among the disbelievers or the general population, but He singles out the believers as the ones who have this favor.
- The word “manna” (مَنَّ) means that someone has bestowed such an amazing favor upon you that you feel the need to do something for them in return.

- Why are the believers specifically mentioned?
 - The work of belief is not done after a person says the shahadah.
 - As believers we have entered into a covenant with Allah SWT and we have terms which we must uphold.
 - Our main responsibility is to determine what our relationship is with the divine revelation.
 - Do we feel the same sense of anxiety that we get when we lose our phones when our relationship with the Quran is not being fortified?
- The Prophet SAW expressed concerns about the level of engagement that people had with the Quran even during his time.
 - He SAW would warn people about the consequences of not being engaged with the Quran.
 - He SAW said that the house in which there is no recitation of the Quran is like a house which has been abandoned.
 - This was said even during a time where the Quran was being spread throughout the community.
- Consider the following questions:
 - What is our relationship with the Quran today?
 - How much of our culture as American Muslims is influenced by the Quran?
 - Are we in danger of abandoning the Quran?

- Scholars say: If you claim to love Allah SWT then why have you abandoned His book? Have you not stopped to contemplate what is in it from gentle reminders?
- The action of the Quran on the heart of a believer is something that takes place in the realm of the metaphysical far more than the realm of the intellectual and the academic.
 - There are people who spend their entire lives studying the Arabic language and they are not even Muslim.
 - This tells us that one does not need to be a scholar in Arabic to have a relationship with the Quran.
- In order to be engaged with the Quran, we must engage with it in the different levels that it calls us to.
 - The Quran is not only a physical book but it can be engaged with by listening to it and reciting it.
 - One can be engaged on a deep level with the Quran just by being an active listener.

How Do We Become Disengaged with the Quran?

- The first dimension of abandonment of the Quran is physical distancing.
 - Scholars state that when there is actual physical distance between the believer and the Quran, they become disconnected.
 - In our business of being modern day Muslims, it is very easy for us to be physically distant from the Quran.

- This shows us that having physical contact with the Quran alone will make us more connected to it.
- The second dimension of abandonment is spiritual and theological distancing.
 - One may have access to the Quran and they may read it, but it becomes just a ritual in which there is no connection.
 - This is where a person reads the Quran but they are not touched by it.
 - They do not feel the need to live their lives by what they read in the Quran.
- In Surah Al-Furqan, Allah SWT states:

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

And the Messenger will say: "My Lord! My own people had made this Qur'an an object of laughter." (25:30)

- Most of the commentators would say that this ayah refers to the people of Quraysh and how they would literally turn away from the Quran.
 - However, this ayah can also speak to our condition as Muslims today.

Signs of Disengagement with the Quran

- Feeling a lack of connection when reading the Quran.
 - Not being affected by the words or the recitation.
- Having a lack of connection between the Quran and everyday life.

- A person may start to pick and choose what they feel is important or necessary to follow from the Quran.
- Treating the Quran as a cultural artifact

The Call to Believers in the Quran

- There are 89 times in the Quran where Allah SWT calls upon the believers by saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“Oh those who believe,”

- These verses begin in this way to bring in the attention of the reader and cause us to focus on them.
 - This does not mean that we should exclude other verses but it means that we should read these ayahs in a particular way.
- The obligation of reflecting upon the Quran (tadabur) is a requirement upon every believer.
 - We must take time to think about the verses we read.
- The Quran begins with surah Al-Fatiha to show us how we must interact with the Quran.
 - This surah addresses the general population of all Muslims.
 - It sets us up to understand the more difficult verses that come throughout the Quran.
 - Some verses, when taken literally, are difficult for modern Muslims to understand and accept.

- The answers to these difficult verses are in other verses of the Quran, like the verses that call specifically upon the believers.
- We must be able to see ourselves in that call.
 - This means we must be connected with the Quran.
- If theologically we have become disengaged with the Quran and our hearts have become completely closed off to all of its beautiful calls so that all we see is the literal meaning of the verses, then our faith may be in jeopardy.

