

1.2 How to Approach The Quran

Main Topics Covered

- **Read God's Message** (0:00 to 1:00)
- **How to Read?** (1:00 to 1:45)
- **Surahs (Chapters) & Ayahs (Verses)** (1:45 to 2:50)
- **Names of Surahs** (2:50 to 5:00)
- **How to Approach The Quran** (5:00 to 6:15)
- **Forming a Network of Words & Meanings** (6:15 to 9:00)
- **Cross Referencing in The Quran** (9:00 to 10:00)

How to Approach The Quran

The first question is, "How to approach the Quran?"

That question is tied to what we said in the [previous episode](#) about the first word "Read". You have to know that you have to read the Quran; it's actually an obligation.

Some people are scared to read the Quran. Or some people told them that they can't read the Quran because they will never understand it, whether they know the Arabic language or they read a translation, but you should read.

It is imperative that every Muslim, every believer and every human being actually reads that message from Allah.

How to Read?

This is a very important question. You have to know that the Quran is not like other books. The Quran has a special nature; it is not divided into chapters based on human themes. Why?

Because human themes change.

You might imagine that if the Quran is dealing with everything in life, then, therefore, perhaps we have a chapter on history and a chapter on economics, a chapter on politics, a chapter on esthetics, and a chapter on beliefs... But that is our own division of knowledge and sciences and so on.

Surahs & Ayahs

The Quran doesn't go like that. The Quran takes you in every chapter (surah). A surah is a wall around something, like a compendium of ayat. And ayat are not exactly verses, they're signs. Every sentence is a sign and proof from Allah.

Now, a number of proofs (ayat) make a chapter (surah), and every chapter is a journey, whether long or short. It is a journey that takes you from the beginning to the end to teach you something that is not put in human themes.

We could think about particular themes of surahs. Some surahs are dedicated to talk about the hereafter, some surahs are dedicated mostly to talk about certain parts of history, or certain prophets ...

But surahs do not go by themes, they go by a particular journey that Allah wants to take you from the beginning to the end.

Names of Chapters

Therefore, when you read the surah, usually the name of the surah depends on one of the main themes or words that are usually uncommon in the Quran.

Al Fatihah (The Opening) is the opening of the Quran

Al Baqarah (The cow) is based on the story about the cow, after a few pages

Al Imran (The family of Imran) is based on the story of Imran

Al Ma'idah is based on the story of the Table towards the end of the surah

Al An'am is because there is so much talk about cattle (an'am)

And Al A'raf, there is so much talk in the beginning of the surah about the barriers

Al Anfal because Allah started with the spoils of war (anfal)

At Tawbah is named so because of the repentance paragraph at the end

Yunus is named so because Prophet Yunus is mentioned and highlighted

Hud is named so because of Prophet Hud is mentioned

Prophet Muhammad & The Companions

Every time there is a name of the surah, it is chosen usually by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

By the way, when he would tell the companions to put that verse in this surah that has the mention of the cow, the surah that has the mention of Hud, the surah that has the mention of the children of Israel, the surah that has the mention of the spider... And then, eventually, "that has the mention" was omitted and it became the surah of the Spider, the chapter of Hud, the chapter of Yusuf, the chapter of the Ants...

And we notice from the names of the chapters that Allah has given so much prominence to animals and insects. The names of the surahs are not named after our little themes. And that is part of that answer of that question: how to approach the Quran?

To know that it has a special nature. Allah is directing our attention to the significance and the magnificence of animals and insects: a chapter by the name of the elephant, the ants...

And the importance of Prophets (peace be upon them). Many chapters are titled by the names of the Prophets: Surat Muhammad, surat Hud, surat Yusuf...

And the importance of certain aspects that Allah is revealing in the Shariah: the surah of divorce, for example. But the chapter of divorce is not only about divorce, it's actually talking about history and other topics.

How to Approach Quran?

Let the Quran take you through the journey of every surah and through the whole journey, and not to think necessarily in terms of our little classification of knowledge, and our little division of topics. But to let the Quran teach you about what Allah wants to teach you.

Forming a Network of Words & Meanings

Then Allah will give you, as you read, a network of meanings in your mind.

When you start reading the Quran, you might not understand what the "worlds" are:

[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds (Quran, [1:2](#))

What are these "worlds"? Are there different worlds other than our world? And then you know, eventually, that, yes, there is a world of Jinn, or hidden beings. There are other beings in this universe, on earth and in heavens that we don't see and we don't comprehend in different dimensions obviously and in different ways.

We know that there are different worlds of animals and plants, different planets and seven heavens and seven earths that Allah created.

You might not understand what the words are, but as you go, you will understand.

You might not understand who the hypocrites are in the first page of surah Al Baqarah, chapter 2, there will be a mention of the hypocrites, people who claim that they are believers but they are not. And you don't understand that kind of human behavior until you start to read so much about them throughout the chapters that talk about the hypocrites and understanding who they are and how they behave and their danger on the truth...

You might not understand how the Quran would guide me, and then eventually it would teach me that.

After a few pages, there would be a talk about the children of Israel. You don't understand what's the significance of this particular tribe, and why Allah is giving it so much narration and so much stories (about 25% of the Quran is about the children of Israel).

And then, eventually, you will know how the continuation of the message of Islam is actually going from Moses to Jesus to Muhammad (peace be upon them), and how the Quran is giving a different history of religions and tribes... And how all of this is actually one message but people deviate, and the scribes add to the scripture what is not from the scripture; and the priests, monks, and rabbis sometimes corrupt their faith and some others actually hold the faith and worship and are sincere.

It's a very important lesson for the community of believers.

Cross-Referencing in The Quran

As you read, Allah starts to mention a cross-reference. The Quran is full of cross-referencing. We have revealed to you before the story of that Prophet. And We have told you before what we made unlawful to the children of Israel. And We will tell you about some prophets and We will not tell you about others. And towards the end, we talk back about the beginning, about the guidance, the hereafter, the hypocrites, and from the beginning, we talk about the end, about the Straight Path...

If you search for the Straight Path in the Quran, you will start to connect what that Straight Path means and what it entails, and you start to form a bigger picture and you will start to be guided to the light of the Quran.

We ask Allah to guide us and forgive us.