

# Qur'ānic Reflections

SESSION 5

تَسْبِيح  
the tasbeeh project

# Reminder: Reflecting on the Holy Qur'ān

“

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ...

Those to whom We have given the Book  
read it as it ought to be read... ”

SŪRAH AL-BAQARAH (2:121)



Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as): “They recite its verses **slowly**, and **understand** it, and **act** according to its orders, and **hope** for its promises, and are **afraid** of its threats, and take **lessons** from its stories, and **obey** its commandments, and **desist** from what it prohibits.”



**A truly immersive,  
transformational  
experience!**

# Tafsīr and Tadabbur

**Tafsīr:** reveal the meaning of a verse. The task of the Holy Prophet (saw), his righteous successors and specialist scholars.

**Tadabbur:** reflection and pondering on the message of a verse, internalising the implicit meaning of the verse, taking admonition and making changes. An order for all - Surah Muhammad (47:24):

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

*Do they not contemplate the Qur'an, or are there locks on the hearts?*

# Session 5:

## Surāh Āl Imrān

### (3:92)

“

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ  
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

You will never attain piety [righteousness] until you spend out of what you hold dear, and whatever you may spend of anything, Allah indeed knows it. ”

SŪRAH ĀL-IMRĀN (3:92)

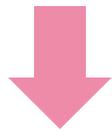
الْبِرُّ is something to aim towards

Not all good deeds count as الْبِرُّ

الْبِرُّ involves action and sacrifice

# Meaning of بَرّ

بَرّ



**Barr** means broadness and expansiveness, so dry land and vast deserts are called *barr* (as opposed to large bodies of water which are called *bahr*) - **e.g. Sūrah Yunus (10:22)**. The term *barr* is applied to righteous people because their good deeds have extensive effects on the society.

بِرّ



**Birr** means to be pious, righteous or just - **e.g. Surah Āl Imrān (3:92)**. The main difference between *khayr* (goodness) and *birr* (righteousness) is that *khayr* has a general meaning of goodness while *birr* has the specific meaning of goodness accompanied by intention. So, not all acts of goodness are *birr*.

الْبَرّ



**Al Barru** is one of the the Names of Allah (swt) - **e.g. Sūrah al-Tūr (52:28)**. *Al Barru* is an inclusive word containing all attributes of goodness, benevolence and charity. *Al-Barr* does not do anything ugly or abominable, and never ceases giving benevolently because of disobedience to Him.

The well of Zamzam is called *barra* due to the abundance of its benefits and water.

*An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 19  
The Ninety-Nine Attributes of Allah, Yasin T Al-Jibouri*

# Ayat al-Birr

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ  
آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى  
حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ  
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي  
الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

SŪRAH AL-BAQARAH (2:177)

Reference to the controversy that arose after the change of qiblah



BELIEF

DEEDS

MORALS

mustahab & wājib

“Piety is not to turn your faces to the east or the west; rather piety is [personified by]

- ▶ those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets,
- ▶ and those who give their wealth, for the Love of Him\*, to the relatives, the orphan, and the needy, the traveller and the beggar, and for [the freeing of] the slaves,
- ▶ and maintain the prayer
- ▶ and give the zakat,
- ▶ and those who fulfil their covenants, when they pledge themselves,
- ▶ and those who are patient in stress and distress [i.e. poverty and sickness] and in the heat of battle.

They are the ones who are true [to their covenant], and it is they who are the Godwary.”

\* This could also mean ‘despite their love of it’ (the wealth).

# Ayat al-Birr

- ▶ It is cited in *Al-Mizān*, that Prophet Muhammad (saw) said everyone who acts according to this verse has a complete faith.
- ▶ This verse provides a holistic view of righteousness, emphasizing a balance between belief, ethical conduct, charitable actions, prayer, financial obligations, integrity, patience, and truthfulness.
- ▶ The reference to believing, doing good, truth and patience echoes to an extent the message in **Sūrah al-Asr (103:3)**:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Except those who have faith and do righteous deeds, and enjoin one another to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience.

# The Reward for the Abrār

Surāh al-Insān (76) introduces and describes the attributes of the Abrār, and details their rewards in heaven. Verses 7-10 give us an insight into the purity of their intention:

**Verse 7:** *They fulfil their vows and fear a day whose ill will be widespread.*

**Verse 8:** *They give food, for the love of Him\*, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner,*

**Verse 9:** *[saying,] 'We feed you only for the sake of Allah.  
We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks.*

**Verse 10:** *Indeed we fear from our Lord a day, frowning and fateful.'*

Literally the face or countenance of Allah – a metaphor for dedicating an action to God alone. Also see 2:272 and 18:28.

\* This could also mean 'despite their love or **need of it**' (the food) or refer to their love of the act of giving.

# Context: Surah al-Insān

**Verses 1-4:** Man's lowly beginning, test and punishment for rejectors

**Verses 5-11:** Introduction of and attributes of the Abrār

**Verses 12-22:** Great rewards in heaven for the Abrār

**Verses 23-26:** Instructions for the fulfilment of God's command

**Verses 27-31:** This is an admonition, but you choose the way

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) said,

*“There are ten signs of a righteous person:*

- 1. he loves for the sake of Allah,*
- 2. hates for the sake of Allah,*
- 3. befriends for the sake of Allah,*
- 4. abandons for the sake of Allah,*
- 5. he becomes angry for the sake of Allah,*
- 6. becomes pleased for the sake of Allah,*
- 7. works for the sake of Allah,*
- 8. beseeches Allah,*
- 9. submits to Allah, and*
- 10. acts kindly for the sake of Allah.”*



# Reflections

- ▶ Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) has said *"The sincere act is one for which you do not desire the praise of anyone but Almighty God."* (Kulayni, al-Kafi, 2/16). How pure are my intentions when I perform good acts? Am I performing good deeds purely for Allah (swt) or do I add in other factors which negate the purity of my intention?
- ▶ Birr includes giving away what I love. Do I do this or are my acts of charity limited to those amounts I won't miss or those things that I don't need? Do I prioritise the plight of others over my own comfort like the Holy Ahlulbayt (as) did?
- ▶ The Holy Ahlulbayt (as) personified the highest level of righteousness, and were wary of the Day of Judgement and the displeasure of Allah (swt). Am I conscious of my return to my Lord in my daily life, and do I fear the Day of Judgement in a way that influences my actions?

# Making a Change

- ▶ Tadabbur means reflection and pondering on the message of a verse, internalising the implicit meaning of the verse, taking admonition and making changes.
- ▶ **What changes will I make in my life as a result of our reflections on these verses?**

How will I elevate my deeds to the level of true righteousness?