

A Call to Devotion: Reading the Qur'an as a Modern Muslim

devotion noun: love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person or activity; religious worship or observance; profound dedication

Devotion, and Its Fruits

She would then spread the prayer-mat, a beautiful soft Persian piece, its direction towards the East. She was now going towards the corner in the room where wrapped in green silk lay the Qur'an. She would take out the Qur'an and hold it to her heart. Her eyes then were full of tears. She was holding a book which she loved and respected so much and yet she was unable to read. She would then recall, crying like a child, that moment when the Voice repeatedly said to the Prophet in the cave of Hira: Read, Read in the name of the Lord. And the Prophet had said in utter helplessness: I cannot read.

Then she would return to the prayer-mat, lifting the Qur'an above her head, saying as though: O Book! You are above my understanding. My head is nothing more than a place whereupon you rest.

Having sat down not occupying the entire prayer-mat but a part of it, for to occupy the whole of the prayer-mat was to her an act of arrogance, she would open the book knowing only to keep the right side up, and to begin where she had left the previous day.

For a long time she would allow her eyes to rest on the two open pages before her. The letters in green ink from right to left, row beneath row, each shape mysteriously captivating, each dot below or above a letter an epitome of the entire scripture, each assembly of letters a group of dervishes raising their heads in zikr, each gap between two enigmatic shapes a leap from this world to the next, and each ending the advent of the Day of Resurrection.

She would thus see a thousand images in the procession of that script and would move from vision to vision.

After spending much time just looking at the open book, she would then, with a

*strange light glowing on her face, lift her right hand and with the right finger start touching the letters of each line, then another line, to the end of the page. What transpired between the book and that touch, and what knowledge passed, without any mediation of conscious thought, directly into her soul, only the Qur'an and that strange reciter could know. The entire world stood still at this amazing recital without words, without meaning, without knowledge. With that touch a unity was established between her and the Qur'an. At that moment she had passed into a state of total identity with the word of God. Her inability to read the scripture was her ability to hear once again: Read! Read, in the Name of thy Lord!*¹

Like the woman from India described in the excerpt above, my grandmother's most precious possession was her copy of the Qur'an. My grandmother's copy of the Qur'an was large, maybe 14" by 10", and was never far from her bed. She had a routine of reading particular chapters at the recommended sunnah times (*Surah al-Kahf, Surah al-Waqi'ah, Surah Ya Sin...*), and she would do so with great regularity and commitment.

Aside from regularity, there was also love. Her Qur'an was her companion. When any of her grandchildren were born, she would record their Islamic calendar birthdate inside her Qur'an (as a child, I only knew I was born in Sha'ban because of that). She slept with it by her pillow each night, and when she had to move to a care facility in the last couple years of her life, one of the only things she took with her was her Qur'an, even though she could no longer sit up well enough to read it!

My grandmother was also originally from India, born some time around 1919 in Hyderabad. I don't know what kind of education, if any, she'd had, but it's clear that her religiously literate father had managed to instill in her a love of God, His Prophet ﷺ, and His Book. My grandmother respected the fact that I spent time learning with 'ulama and would often ask me for points of clarification (e.g. at what point can a weak old person suffice with making tayammum, rather than wudu?). At the same time, her relationship with the Qur'an was not knowledge-based or intellectual, in the way we think of knowledge and intellect today. She knew no Arabic and had not studied Qur'anic commentaries, though she could, unlike the other Indian woman described above, read its script and recite it. My grandmother read the Qur'an out of pure devotion, as a means to

connect regularly with her Lord.

Such devotion is inspiring and fills the heart of the onlooking believer with a desire to also connect with Allah. But there are some Muslims today, particularly in the West, who may not fully understand this devotion. Where is reflection, and understanding? Is there any benefit to such love and respect, when one is constantly just reading Arabic words one cannot understand?

To a degree, such a query is commendable. Allah Most High Himself says: Will they not meditate on the Qur'an? (4:82). And the Prophet ﷺ commanded us: "Analyze the language of the Qur'an, and seek out its marvels." Some might wonder why later Muslims should search for the pearls in the Qur'an, when its meanings have already been extracted by earlier generations of scholars. In the words of the North African Sheikh al-'Alawi:

To this I reply, this would mean that we would lose out on our share of meditation [tadabbur] on it—God forbid!—which no intelligent person would suggest, nor anyone graced with faith. If this were so, then the people of the second generation would not have spoken about it since the first generation had already done so, and the same thing for the third generation and so on. This shows that the Almighty Real did not single out any generation to meditate on it to the exclusion of others. Moreover, if only some had been singled out for this, it would mean that the meanings of the Qur'an had been exhausted, when this is clearly not the case given that the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) said that 'the Qur'an's wonders never cease.' One of these wonders is that the one who meditates on it sees new marvels each day that he did not see the day before.²

These marvels unfold in ways not easily explainable for every believer. Each verse, each letter, has the ability to inspire even the ordinary Muslim to reflect on his condition and improve his relationship with Allah. Of course, those most learned in the religion and in the knowledge of Allah have a greater share of such inspiration, since "the 'ulama are the inheritors of the Prophets,"³ and what they gain of understanding of the Book cannot be compared to the one not possessing Sacred Knowledge nor a close relationship with Allah.

What must be pointed out however is that benefiting from the literal meanings of

the Qur'an is not the only way one can benefit from it. The following ahadith are ample proof that the marvels of the Qur'an truly never cease, and are not limited to the human attempt at intellectually understanding it:

*Whoso recites a letter of the Book of God earns thereby a good deed, and every good deed is rewarded tenfold. I do not say that alif-lam-mim is a letter; rather alif is a letter, lam is a letter and mim is a letter.*⁴

*It is related on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri radi Allahu 'anhu that Allah's Prophet ﷺ said, "The Almighty says, 'Whoever is diverted from supplicating Me owing to their preoccupation with recitation of the Qur'an, will be granted the best of what I grant to those who supplicate.'"*⁵

*It is related on the authority of 'A'isha radi Allahu 'anha that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "One who has mastered the Qur'an shares the rank of the noble, pious scribes. While one who recites the Qur'an falteringly, who finds it difficult to recite, for such a one there is a two-fold reward."*⁶

*It is related on the authority of Usayd ibn Hudayr radi Allahu 'anhu that as he was reciting one night from the second chapter of the Qur'an, near where he had tethered his horse for the night, the horse suddenly sprang up [apparently for no reason]. Usayd radi Allahu 'anhu then stopped his recitation, and the horse grew still. When Usayd radi Allahu 'anhu began reciting again, the horse sprang up another time. So he stopped, and the horse grew quiet. Usayd radi Allahu 'anhu again began to recite, and again the horse sprang up. Then, since his son, Yahya radi Allahu 'anhu, was sleeping nearby the horse, Usayd radi Allahu 'anhu got up and moved him away. It was then that he happened to raise his head up to the sky when, lo and behold, he saw something like a cloud with lamps lit up inside of it. In the morning Usayd radi Allahu 'anhu related all this to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said, "Do you know what that was?" "No," Usayd radi Allahu 'anhu replied. The Messenger ﷺ said, "Those were angels approaching at the sound of your recitation. If you had continued reciting, the people would have risen this morning and seen them, and they would not have been invisible!"*⁷

It is related on the authority of Abu Huraira radi Allahu 'anhu that Allah's Prophet ﷺ said, "Never will a group of people gather in a house from among

the houses of Allah for the recitation of Allah's Book, or to study it among themselves, except that a state of spiritual tranquility, sakina, will descend upon them, and they are overcome by Divine Mercy, and they are surrounded by angels, and they are mentioned by Allah as being among those closest to Him.”⁸

It is related on the authority of Abu Sa'id who, in his narration of the events of a journey he had taken, told the story of a [unbelieving] man who was bitten by a poisonous snake and then cured by a member of Abu Sa'id's party. Abu Sa'id relates that when the man asked what charm he had used to cure the victim, he replied, "The only charm I used was the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an." Later, when the victim had recovered, he gifted the Muslim party a hundred goats. Abu Sa'id said, " So we said to one another, 'Let us not do anything about these goats until we have asked Allah's Messenger ﷺ about the matter.'" When we returned from our mission, and told Allah's Messenger ﷺ what happened with the snakebite victim, he said to us, "How did you know it was a charm? Distribute the goats among your party, and give me a share too!"⁹

From these narrations of the Prophetic Traditions, we see that among those the Qur'an benefits are: the one who recites even a single letter; the one who recites well and the one who struggles with reciting; the one who recites singly and the one who recites in a group; the group that studies it as well as the group that simply recites; and the one who uses it as a "charm" or source of healing.

Unfortunately, the reality of some Western¹⁰ and Western-influenced Muslims is that they ignore these latter modes of benefiting from the Qur'an, and value only the command to ponder its meanings. On top of this, they limit the meanings that need to be pondered to its literal meanings, by parsing the verses word by word, as if by understanding the lexical and grammatical aspects of the Qur'an, they'll be granted the "discernment" (*furqan*) of knowing all that it contains. And in the midst of this focus on language and meaning, the critical function of devotion can become "lost in translation."

From Humble Reverence to Intellectual Domination

Such an attitude is not without a history. There is a reason why Westerners—Muslims and non—tend to exalt reason and rational understanding.

It is because the same was done by the 18th century philosophers of the Enlightenment, those men who set the stage for the modern and liberal era to come. For these philosophers, “Reason was understood as the faculty that distinguishes human beings from other animals,” and “the term ‘reason’ was invoked to imply an independent, critical spirit of inquiry.”¹¹ The famous 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant defined enlightenment as a release from humankind’s immaturity, and he defined immaturity as “the inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another.”¹² In other words, you are immature if you can’t figure things out yourself, without the help of a higher religious or spiritual authority.

It is this privileging of independent human understanding that brought Western thinkers to clash with established religion, such that we now see sections of American and especially European societies where belief in God, let alone orthodox religious practice, are rare. This philosophical movement “swept away the medieval world-view and ushered in our modern western world,”¹³ and through it was established the firm belief that self-direction and the use of one’s own intellect was the true route to a better, more fulfilled human existence.

Even the very act of reading changed with the Enlightenment. Traditional, “intensive” reading was abandoned in favor of modern “extensive” reading:

*According to this dichotomy, the “intensive” reader was limited to a closed body of texts that were read and reread, memorized and recited, heard and learned by heart, and transmitted from generation to generation. Such a manner of reading bore a strong imprint of sacredness, subjecting the reader to the authority of the text. The “extensive” reader was completely different: he or she consumed numerous, new, and ephemeral printed works; read them quickly and avidly; and approached them with a distanced and critical regard. A relationship with texts that was communal and respectful would thus have been succeeded by a free, casual, and irreverent reading.*¹⁴

Considering how widespread this shift in attitude toward reading is, it behooves the contemporary Muslim to search his own heart as to why he seeks to learn the language and meanings of the Qur’an, and why he might not appreciate those who simply recite with reverence God’s Book, even if “falteringly,” with little

understanding of the Qur'an's language. Muslims have traditionally had an "intensive" relationship with the Qur'an, where (as stated above) it was "read and reread, memorized and recited, heard and learnt by heart, and transmitted from generation to generation." However, like everyone else exposed to modern Western philosophical ideas, contemporary Muslims also feel the pressure to exalt human reason over Divine and Prophetic guidance. This shift in thought subtly influences many things in our lives, including how we read the Qur'an. To some of us, it now seems religiously immature to simply have a devotional attachment to the Qur'an, where it is read solely for blessing and reward. Reflecting Kant's words above, we want to read the Qur'an now to understand, and not with the guidance of any other!

Our distaste for pure ("mindless") devotion today is linked to the post-Enlightenment elevation of human reason over divine guidance. In light of this, it is useful to consider how the earliest Muslims approached the Qur'an. Even though the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ were fluent in the language of the Qur'an, only a few of them were considered to be learned in its meanings. Those who studied its meanings under the tutelage of the Prophet ﷺ, such as 'Uthman b. 'Affan and 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (Allah be well pleased with them), would study only ten verses at a time, and would not move beyond a set of verses before mastering all that could be gleaned from the verses in terms of knowledge and practice. In their own words, "We learned the Qur'an—and knowledge—and practice, at one and the same time." Thus it comes with no surprise that one of the most learned Companions, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (Allah be well pleased with him), took no less than eight years to memorize the chapter *al-Baqarah*. And in the words of Anas (Allah be well pleased with him), "If any one of us completed reading [i.e. studying] the chapter *al-Baqarah* or the chapter *Aal 'Imran*, we would consider him to be of a very high rank."¹⁵

What do we see in the approach of the Companions (Allah be well pleased with them) to the Qur'an other than devotion! There is no hint in such descriptions of "casual and irreverent" reading. The goal was not to use one's intellect to conquer the meanings of the Qur'an or to be able to speak freely on what it has to say. Instead, there was a sense of awe in the face of the Divine, an idea that this Book holds within it the key to worldly and eternal success, and that the duty of the believer was to submit himself as wholly as possible to what could be found within it.

Even though we as contemporary Muslims continue to seek out the meanings of the Qur'an, our lack of devotion and reverence for what it really is (the word of God!) has led many of us to have a casual, irreverent, "extensive" relationship with the Qur'an, and we are not even conscious of this fact. We want to read the Qur'an for ourselves, assuming that some basic Arabic language training and some history of the Prophetic period allows us to start commenting on aspects of the Qur'anic message. We forget that there are two types of verses in the Qur'an. The first are those that provide general spiritual advice, recount moving stories and parables, and describe topics that give warning and good tidings. Any Muslim who understands Arabic can benefit from pondering these verses. But the second type of verses—that relate to matters of Sacred Law and belief—are those that must be left to scholarly interpretation and extrapolation.¹⁶

I contend that it is the lack of a reverential attitude toward the Qur'an that has allowed the modern Muslim to become confused between these two types of verses. We now approach the Qur'an not to see "What is it that God wants *from* me?" but instead "What is in the Qur'an *for* me?", or, even more arrogantly, "What do I find interesting in it, and how I can convey this to others?" Instead of submission, we find in ourselves smug consideration. Instead of allowing the Qur'an (and its legitimate interpreters) to direct and conquer our intellects, we want to be the ones to intellectually conquer it. It is thus of no surprise that in the 21st century, we find Muslims with little or no knowledge of even the language of the Qur'an (let alone the sciences of grammar, hadith, Sacred Law, and theology), making casual pronouncements on its meanings and rulings, calling into question on whim basic, long-agreed upon matters of faith and law. As contemporary Muslims, we must remind ourselves that it is no small matter to engage in casual interpretation of the Qur'an, since the Messenger of God ﷺ himself cautioned us: "Whoever comments on the Qur'an without knowledge, let him take his seat in the Fire."

The Return to Loving Devotion

As much as we may honor the example of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, it is still hard for us as contemporary Muslims to give up our "right to interpret." We are a people who feel naturally entitled to seek out our own interpretation of the meaning of anything and everything, including those contained within the Qur'an. The Enlightenment was a major break from the human being's intellectual past. It

represented the start of a period where authority should be questioned and not obeyed, where humility equals oppression and not spiritual contentment. As Muslims in the contemporary age, we need to become aware of this historical development, and understand that it is not to our ultimate benefit to privilege ourselves and our intellects over humble devotion to God.

Though it may seem difficult, we can ease our way to this understanding by remembering that humble devotion does NOT negate having an active relationship with the Qur'an. While pre-Enlightenment Christian thought may have entailed a high level of passivity, Muslims have always been called upon to actively interact with the Qur'an on their own individual level. This interaction, however, must necessarily be accompanied by a reverential attitude.

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an:

وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

And whoever holds in honor the symbols of Allah, verily this is from the piety of heart. (22:32)

The word for piety used in this verse is *taqwa*, which can be also translated as Godfearingness, or to have “awe and dread for Allah’s might and power, and fear of overstepping His limits.”¹⁷ If the “symbols of Allah” are interpreted to be all those matters that are known to be intrinsic to His Religion,¹⁸ then one could say that the greatest of these matters is the Qur’an itself, as it contains the Speech of Allah. As a premier symbol,¹⁹ the Qur’an points to Allah, His Existence, His Power, His Might, in a way that nothing else does. Not every Muslim is expected to (or even capable of) interpreting the Qur’anic verses at a scholarly level, as mentioned above.²⁰ But every Muslim, in their own way, can reflect on the signs of Divine creation throughout the universe; can be reminded of Allah’s Greatness, Generosity, Mercy and Power; and can exalt the Qur’an as one of the symbols of God that inspires awe and dread for the Divine.²¹

Notice how Imam al-Haddad elucidates the etiquette of reciting the Qur’an in his Book of Assistance:

You must have a wurd of recitation of the Mighty Book to be read every day. The

least you should do is read one juz' [one thirtieth of the Qur'an] so that you complete it once a month, and the most is to complete it every three days...Beware of concentrating, while reciting, on reciting a large amount to the exclusion of reflection and correct recitation. You must reflect and comprehend while you recite; slow, melodious recitation will assist you in this. Feel in your heart the Magnitude of the Speaker (Transcendent and Exalted is He!) and that you are before Him, reciting His Book to Him, in which He addresses His commands, prohibitions, counsels and exaltations to you. When reading verses on unification and glorification be full of reverence and awe, when reading verses of promises and threats be full of hopeful expectation and apprehension, and when reading the commands and prohibitions be thankful, acknowledge your shortcomings, ask for forgiveness and determine to show ardour...²²

If there is something beautiful in the examples of the devout women described at the start of this essay, it is not that they were unable to understand the language of the Qur'an. What is beautiful about those women, and what attracts the believing heart to them, is that despite their inability to understand its language, they still were able to have a level of awe and dread of Allah's might and power; they still exalted the great symbol of Allah which is the Qur'an; they still were able to connect with Allah through His Book despite their ignorance. This is the goal of our existence—to come to the realization that we are His slaves and Allah is Lord—and the one who takes the greatest means to fully realize *taqwa* or Godfearingness in their lives is the one who has truly succeeded.

Rather than exalt our intellect, and thereby our own selves, the believer should exalt those things that Allah has commanded us to glorify, thereby exalting Allah Himself! This is a subtle point, and in fact the point of this entire essay—that despite the many paths to connecting with the Qur'an, we cannot benefit from the Holy Book when our hearts are full of arrogance and lacking in submission to the Divine. As one of the *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) scholars has stated with regard to the *tadabbur* verse (4:82) mentioned above:

[The benefit attained from] meditating on the Qur'an is according to the level of purity of one's soul. Thus, to the extent the heart is cleansed of love for the dunya and base desires, the secrets of the Speech of the Lord are manifest. And to the extent that the mirror of his heart accumulates the imprint of

created things, he is veiled from the secrets of the meanings of the Qur'an, even if he happens to be from among the greatest scholars of [the Arabic] language.²³

This point is captured most succinctly at the very start of the Qur'an as well, when Allah says:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book in which there is no doubt, in it is guidance for those who fear God. (2:2)

That is, the Book of Allah is perfect, unlike any other book in existence, and holds great guidance, but only for the one who has *taqwa* of Allah, who has awe and dread of Him, who is humble and fears overstepping the limits set by God.

Finally, what is worth noting is that the meanings that descend upon the heart full of *taqwa* are not limited to those found within the lexical, or even exegetical, study of the Qur'an. In the hadith cited above, who taught the Companion (Allah be well pleased with him) that the *Fatiha* could be used for healing the sick? Similarly, when an ordinary, non-Arabic speaking Muslim is shaken to the core upon hearing the recitation of the Qur'an in the night prayers of Ramadan, where did this "meaning," this understanding that "God is Great and I must submit," come from? What we see from these examples is that the fruits of loving the Qur'an with one's heart and soul are limitless. Through this love and veneration of the Qur'an, each person will be rewarded according to his level of effort, and be guided to one of the multiple paths of connection that lead to Allah.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And whoever bears patiently up for Our sake, verily shall We certainly guide them the momentous paths to Us; And truly Allah is wholly on the side of those who excel in goodness. (29:69)

¹Hasan Askari, *Alone to Alone: From Awareness to Vision* (Leeds: Seven Mirrors, 1991), 113, as cited in Tim Winter, "Reason as Balance: The Evolution of

'Aql," <http://cambridgemuslimcollege.org/download-papers/CMCPapers3-ReasonAsBalance.pdf>.

²Williams, Khalid (trans.), *The Qur'an and the Prophet in the Writings of Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawi*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2013, p.8.

³Hadith.

⁴Williams, 7. This hadith is related by al-Tirmidhi.

⁵Thanawi, Maulana Ashraf Ali, *A Sufi Study of Hadith: Haqiqat al-Tariqa min as-Sunna al-Aniqa*, translated by Shaykh Yusuf Talal Delorenzo. London: Turath Publishing, 2010, 51. This hadith was related by al-Tirmidhi.

⁶Ibid., 52. This hadith was related by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, and Tirmidhi.

⁷Ibid., 53. This hadith was related by Bukhari.

⁸Ibid., 50. This hadith was related by Abu Dawud.

⁹Ibid., 140. This hadith was related by Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and Abu Dawud.

¹⁰As should be clear from the discussion of post-18th century Western philosophical thought below, I am using the term "Western" here as a broad categorization to include not only a geographical space, but also a particularly rationalist, read "modern," approach to knowing and being. Some of these Western tendencies are obvious to the person who bears them, while many a sincere, devout, dedicated Muslim is unaware of the ideas they have imbibed from Western intellectual culture. It is to bring light to these hidden influences among Muslims today that this article has been written.

¹¹Hatfield, Gary, "Reason," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, v. 3, 404.

¹²Bristow, William, "Enlightenment," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online), 2010, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/>.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Chartier, Roger, "Reading and Reading Practices," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, v. 3, 400.

¹⁵Usmani, Muhammad Taqi, *Aasaan Tarjuma-i Quran*, Karachi: Maktaba Ma'arif al-Qur'an, 2016, p. 35.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Keller, Nuh Ha Mim, *Sea Without Shore: A Manual of the Sufi Path*. Amman: Sunna Books, 2011, p. 417.

¹⁸See: Al-Qurtubi, Muhammad b. Ahmad, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi, al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Sha'b, 1810, v. 7, p. 4448. And Ibn 'Ajiba, Ahmad. *Al-Bahr al-Madid fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2010, v. 4, p. 413.

¹⁹According to Shah Waliullah, the most exalted of the *sha`a'ir* or symbols of Allah are: the Qur'an, the Ka`bah, the Prophet ﷺ, and the Prayer (*salah*). <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-773/page-94>

²⁰و يحرم تفسيره بغير علم و الكلام في معانيه لمن ليس من اهلها و الاحاديث في ذلك كثيرة و الاجماع منعقد عليه

al-Nawawi, Zakariyya Yahya ibn Sharaf, *al-Tibyan fi adab hamalat al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Dar ibn Hazm, 1994, p. 165.

²¹Usmani, *Aasaan Tarjuma-i Quran*, p. 35.

²²Al-Haddad, Abdallah ibn 'Alawi, *The Book of Assistance*, trans. Mostafa al-Badawi. London: The Quilliam Press, 1989, p. 24.

²³تدبر القرآن على حسب صفاء الجنان، فبقدر ما يتطهر القلب من حب الدنيا والهوى تتجلى فيه أسرار كلام المولى، وبقدر ما يتراكم في مرآة قلبه من صور الأكوان، يتحجب عن أسرار معاني القرآن؛ ولو كان من أكابر علماء اللسان

Ibn 'Ajiba, Ahmad. *Al-Bahr al-Madid fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid*. Beirut: Dar al-

Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2010, v. 2, p. 75. (emphasis added)