



Fitra Foundation and Sayyida Nafisa Seminary present the first installment of the
“This is our Tradition” series entitled, “The True Recitation”.

In these lessons, we’ll feature the exegesis of 40 verses of the Quran that shape the fundamental
spiritual attitudes with which we are to approach the Divine Speech.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ وَأَتَمُّ التَّسْلِيمِ
عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد نور الأنوار وسر الأسرار وترياق الأغيار ومفتاح باب اليسار
سيدنا محمد المختار وآله الأطهار وأصحابه الأخيار عدد نعم الله وفضاله

1.4 The True Recitation : Adab

In our previous lesson we spoke of methodology, the role of the Arabic language in preserving Islamic tradition, and the need to aspire to ever-increasing levels of Quranic understanding.

Imam Junayd said,

فتح كل باب شريف بذل المجهود

“The opening of every noble door is the exertion of effort.”

Still, exertion – when misplaced — is not only a waste of time, but a door to deviance, so every student of sacred knowledge should be keen on **adab before ‘ilm**.

Islamic Tradition teaches us the “before-state” of sacred knowledge, a preparatory phase akin to the initial descent of the Quran from al-lawh al-mahfūdh (the Preserved Tablet) to the lowest heaven of the temporal world. This phase was intended to magnify the glory of the divine speech and the momentous event of revelation.

Adab, as a term, is oft-repeated, rarely understood. Adab is a faith-based demeanor which can only be learned from true scholars. In spirit, it represents complete deference to God and His Messenger ﷺ. In form, it is expressed through the sanctification and glorification of all things divine, not in a superficial sense, but in a real functional way.

Allah - Most High – says :

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمَ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

All this [is ordained by God]: those who honor God’s symbols and rites, indeed, it is from the piety of hearts. [surat al-Hajj, verse 22]

A key point of understanding, though, is that **the form must always follow the spirit**, not the reverse, and so, adab is – before ever appearing to others – a silent trustworthy spirit, much like ar-rūh al-amīn (the angelic messenger) that descended upon ar-rasūl al-amīn (the human messenger). ﷺ

Adab is to sacred knowledge what the angel Gabriel is to the Qur’ān. Adab is the mediary between sacred knowledge and the heart. The greater the adab, the greater the receptivity to the revelation.

In so much as the heart leans to the angelic, will it be a receptacle of divine meanings. This is the divine wisdom in the association between fasting and the revelation of the Qur’ān, for it is a form of worship that eclipses the heat of desires and causes the cool moon of the believers heart to reach fullness.

Cognitive intelligence is often associated with brilliance in sacred knowledge. However, such smarts alone are not sufficient. Spiritual intelligence is the key to unlocking prophetic inheritance and it is what distinguishes the scholars of the hereafter from their opposite.

When students sit with true scholars, in the measure of the purity and openness of their hearts to the divine, will be the quantity and quality of their humble receptivity and radiant creativity. This is the secret of traditional continuity.

As for the greatest of God’s creation, our Master Muhammad ﷺ, he informed about his own blessed self saying,

أدبني ربّي وأحسن تأديبي

“My Lord, Himself, undertook instilling adab in me.”

This report was related with several chains. It was mentioned by Imām Suyūti in al-Jāmi’ as-Saghīr and others. There is weakness in the chain while the meaning is agreed upon as correct.

جاء بعدة روايات ذكرها العسكري في كتابه “ الأمثال ”، والسرْفُسطيُّ في كتابه “ الدلائل ”، والسيوطي في كتابه “ الجامع الصغير ”، وابن السمعاني في “ أدب الإملاء ”، وأبو نُعيم الأصفهاني في تاريخ أصبهان . والظعن في سنده لا في معناه.

So, there is no greater adab with which to approach the Quran than his divine adab, his Sunnah ﷺ.

That’s precisely what the Sunna is. It is the loftiest, most refined, most beautiful, most direct means to Allah, to the exclusion of all others. It is for this reason that we will [build a correlation between the core reports of the Sunna and Qur’ānic understanding in our upcoming lessons.](#)

Gabriel, to him ﷺ, was the means. He, to us ﷺ, is the means.

Prophets converse with angels.

Scholars converse with prophets.

Students converse with scholars,

and – in a complete circle of divine Care – all believers converse with God.

This is our Quran.

This is our Tradition.

In our next lesson, we’ll feature the **fourth** element, which is **context**.