



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

## 1.5 The True Recitation : Context

In our previous lesson, we spoke of adab as a pre-requisite to proper receptivity to the revelation.

True scholarship teaches us the why and how of sacred knowledge, but Tradition is the key to understanding where, meaning where each point of knowledge fits within the context of both learning and practice. Non-traditional approaches to Islamic study are devoid of this holistic understanding and, as a result, often take Islamic teachings outside their proper internal context.

Fiqh, or deep understanding of the religion, entails the mastery of both internal and external context. It is untenable to presume an ability to understand and practice Islam in our current context without a pre-requisite mastery of the internal context of Islamic tradition from centuries past.

**A believer isn't concerned with placing verses where they please, even where they don't belong, but rather keen to place themselves in the verses, where they belong.**

With that, we begin our Arabic lesson script.

أورد الإمام السيوطي – رحمه الله تعالى - في كتابه (الإتقان في علوم القرآن) تحت النوع الثامن والعشرين في الوقف والابتداء رواية عبدالله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: لقد عشنا بُرْهَةً مِنْ دَهْرِنَا، وَإِنَّ أَحَدَنَا يُؤْتَى الْإِيمَانَ قَبْلَ الْقُرْآنِ، وَتَنْزِلُ السُّورَةُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَيَتَعَلَّمُ حَلَالَهَا وَحَرَامَهَا، وَمَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُوقَفَ عِنْدَهُ فِيهَا كَمَا تَعَلَّمُونَ أَنْتُمْ الْقُرْآنَ"، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ رَجَالًا يُؤْتَى أَحَدُهُم الْقُرْآنَ، فَيَقْرَأُ مَا بَيْنَ فَاتِحَتِهِ إِلَى خَاتَمَتِهِ مَا يَدْرِي مَا أَمْرُهُ وَلَا زَجْرُهُ، وَلَا مَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُوقَفَ عِنْدَهُ مِنْهُ، يَنْثُرُهُ نَثْرَ الذَّقْلِ"، وَهُوَ الرَّدِيُّ مِنَ الثَّمَرِ وَمَا لَا فَائِدَةَ فِيهِ.

Imām Suyūti reports in his *al-Itqān fī ‘ulūm al Qur’ān* the report of Abdullah b. Umar (may Allah be well pleased with them both) that he said, “We lived a part of a lifetime when a man would be given faith before the Qur’ān. A chapter would be revealed upon Muhammad ﷺ so he would learn its rulings of permissibility and prohibition and what necessitates attention in the way that you, now, learn the Quran (devoid of that). Indeed, I have witnessed men who are granted the Qur’ān such that he can recite from its opening chapter to its last, without knowing its commands and interdictions and in oblivion of what requires attention, uttering its words like one spits out low quality dates.”

وهذا من فقه الإمام السيوطي إذ نبه على ما ينبغي البدئ به والوقف عنده وبذلك أظهر المقصد الأعظم من تلاوة القرآن وكيفية إلهام بذور العرفان بذور الإسلام والإيمان والإحسان  
فإن أول ما يرد على الأذهان في الوقف والابتداء أنه من موضوع علم التجويد فوضّح الإمام أن أحكام التلاوة اللفظية إنما هي جزء واحد مما ينبغي الوقوف عنده من أوامر الله تعالى ونواهيه فحق التلاوة ليس بتزيين اللسان وإنما بتلقيح العقول بالمعاني وتعمير الأوقات بالطاعات

The choice of this report illustrates the fiqh of Imam Suyūti and his deep understanding in that he draws attention to the real meaning of when to begin and stop recitation. Through that, he elucidates the greater objective behind the recitation of the Qur’ān and the method by which it imbues the seeds that grow into gnosis — the seeds of Islam, Iman, and Ihsan.

Reflect upon the fact that the first association that comes to mind regarding the art of beginning and stopping is that it is a subtopic under the discipline of tajwīd. Thus, Imām Suyūti clarifies that the rulings of outward recitation are just one aspect of the commands that we are to attentively ‘stop’ upon.

So, he leads us to grasp that the true recitation is not achieved through the embellishment of the tongue, but by pollination of the mind with divine meanings and the population of one’s time with divine deeds.

**In summary, finding one’s self in the Quran is the goal, but it necessitates a proper approach. The why, how, and where of that journey is what true scholarship and Tradition provide. When that spiritual map is drawn, then life – itself – becomes the recitation. The beginning is true faith. The pauses are upon God’s commands and prohibitions. The destination is God, Himself. This is the true recitation.**

**This is our Tradition.**

In our next lesson, we’ll discuss the **fifth** element which is **content**.