

Tadabbur — reading for meaning

Tadabbur is the Qur'an's own word for what it asks of a reader: to stay with a verse until it lands, rather than to finish the page.

★ The question it puts

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ

"Then will they not reflect upon the Qur'an?" — asked of people who already had it in front of them.

Qur'an 4:82

★ Or are there locks

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?" The obstacle named is the heart, not the language.

Qur'an 47:24

★ What it was sent down for

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

"A blessed Book which We have revealed to you, that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded."

Qur'an 38:29

★ Skin, then heart

تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

"The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it; then their skins and their hearts soften at the remembrance of Allah." Both motions, in that order.

Qur'an 39:23

★ If a mountain had taken it

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ

"If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and split apart from fear of Allah."

Qur'an 59:21

★ A cure, and a loss

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down the Qur'an as healing and mercy for the believers" — the same words, the same reader, two different outcomes.

Qur'an 17:82

★ He stopped at the verses

Hudhayfah prayed a night behind him: al-Baqarah, then an-Nisa', then Al 'Imran, unhurried. At a verse of glorification he glorified; at a verse of asking he asked; at a verse of refuge he sought refuge.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab Salat al-Musafirin

★ One verse until morning

إِنْ تَعَذِّبِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

Abu Dharr: the Prophet ﷺ stood reciting one verse and repeating it until morning came — "If You punish them, they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, You are the Exalted, the Wise."

Sunan Ibn Majah 1350 • hasan

★ Slow enough to understand

"He who recites the Qur'an in a period less than three days does not understand it." A reading rate given as a limit on comprehension, not on reward.

Sunan Abi Dawud 1394 • sahih • Sunan at-Tirmidhi 2949 • sahih