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# CONTENTS

## Articles

Rethinking *Tadabbur* (Contemplation) al-Qur'ān through the lens of *Tajdīd* (Renewal) Approach 1  
*Fatmir Shehu and Bilal Boudjemline*

Economic Life of the Jews of Koya, 1918-1951 15  
*Bzhar Othman Ahmed*

The Cultural Identity of Finnish Muslim Converts: Challenges and Realities 35  
*Iman Ahmad and Fatmir Shehu*

## Viewpoints

Charting the End Times: Imran N. Hosein and the Return of Islamic Eschatology 50  
*Gjergj Totozani*

## Book Reviews

The Correct Response for Those Who Altered the Religion of Jesus 55  
*Akeem Olayinka Kazeem*

# Rethinking *Tadabbur* (Contemplation) al-Qur'ān through the Lens of *Tajdīd* (Renewal) Approach

Fatmir Shehu<sup>1</sup> and Bilal Boudjemline<sup>2</sup>

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**Abstract:** This study seeks to examine the rethinking of *tadabbur* (contemplation) through the lens of the *tajdīd* (renewal) approach emphasising its appropriate implementation while dealing with Allah (ﷻ)'s Speech, al-Qur'ān, revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) as a divine miracle for all times. Al-Qur'ān was not revealed for the mere recitation and memorisation; rather, its purpose was *tadabbur* of its text in a deep sense, including the application of the extracted rulings to various aspects of life. Its aim is to revisit the concept of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān as practiced by the Prophet (ﷺ), his *Ṣaḥābah*, and *Tābi'īn*, and how it later shifted toward a focus on recitation and memorisation, often at the expense of deeper reflection. Descriptive and analytical methods are used in the entire paper. This paper discusses *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān and other related terms, sharia ruling on it, and *mufasssirūn*'s consensus on its necessity, importance, and purposes, including its effect on *Ṣaḥābah* and its practical impact on one's *īmān* (conviction) and personality. The findings show that through the *tajdīd* (renewal) approach, *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is apprehended as more than just a mere recitation or textual reading. It becomes a transformative instrument in which al-Qur'ān engages people's hearts and intellects, enabling them to shape their attitudes, develop their personalities, mature their decisions, and understand their life direction.

**Keywords:** Al-Qur'ān, *tadabbur*, *tajdīd*, *īmān*, rethinking

## Introduction

The contemporary rapid development has made most Muslims face difficulties in *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān as greater emphasis is placed on correct recitation and memorisation, while deeper reflection and understanding receive less attention. For non-Arabic speakers, the language barrier can make it difficult for them to access al-Qur'ān's meaning directly by limiting it to surface-level reading. Educational approaches focus more on *ḥifẓ* (memorisation) and *tajwīd* (recitation) than on how to internalise and reflect upon the Qur'ānic message and guidance. Also, most interact with al-Qur'ān by reading selected portions mainly for prayers, without seeing its message as a complete and interconnected whole. A gap is created between knowing and living al-Qur'ān when recitation of the text does not always translate into practice. If awareness of these issues is not created and proper solutions are not provided, *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān will lose its transformative aspect. Hence, dealing with the revealed text of al-Qur'ān, it is important to understand *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān and its implementation. Rethinking the time when al-Qur'ān was revealed, it is significant to know what Allah (ﷻ)'s plan was in revealing it as the final message for the whole world. Indeed, Allah (ﷻ)'s Divine Plan in sending al-Qur'ān

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as the final Revelation and preserving it until the Hour was to show through it His Mercy to the creation as a whole, test human beings with it, and to hold responsible all those who do not accept its message and punish them for neglecting, misusing, misunderstanding, and abusing the meaning of its text.

*Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān enables people, especially Muslims, to have a deep understanding of the Divine Message and extract Divine Rulings and Commandments beneficial for their intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of life. Indeed, al-Qur'ān plays a great role and occupies an important place in the life of every human being, especially a Muslim, who wants to live in peace and happiness in this life and the Hereafter. Therefore, *tadabbur* of the Qur'ānic text is one of the duties to be upheld by every human being with the purpose of understanding its message deeply, as the guidance of al-Qur'ān is for all people. Such guidance cannot be attained, and Muslims cannot truly engage themselves in proper *tadabbur* of Allah (ﷻ)'s commands or refrain from what He has forbidden without a correct and reflective *tadabbur* of the Qur'ānic text. It is not sufficient and effective to merely memorise its words, recite it beautifully, or perfect its pronunciation. Rather, true and correct *tadabbur* lies in understanding al-Qur'ān's meanings deeply and living in accordance with its guidance and message.

This research is very significant as it aims to rethink the concept of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān as practiced by the Prophet (ﷺ), his *Ṣaḥābah*, and *Tābi'īn*, to differentiate it from the later developments that focused on mere recitation and memorisation or the art of recital competition. This research employs qualitative methodology through the descriptive approach used to describe the concept of *tadabbur* in its literal and technical meaning, including its later developments by referring to various scholars. The analytical method is used to analyse the concept of *tadabbur* as addressed by selected scholars in their writings while dealing with the Qur'ānic text to understand their approaches and make them relevant to the contemporary context in the light of the *tajdīd* (renewal) approach. This paper seeks to address *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān and other related terms, sharia ruling on it, and *mufasssīrūn*'s consensus on its necessity, importance, and purposes, including its effect on *Ṣaḥābah* and its practical impact on one's *īmān* (conviction) and personality. This study offers some clarification on the correct understanding of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān and its distinction from other related terms. Additionally, it provides insightful information for all those who do not know how to use proper techniques of *tadabbur* while dealing with the Qur'ānic text. To understand *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān, it is very important to explore its literal and technical definition.

## **Definition of the Concept of *Tadabbur***

This section includes the linguistic and technical definitions of the concept of *tadabbur*. It also explains its distinction from other similar terms that share a related meaning in its technical definition, while being used in dealing with the Qur'ānic text.

### ***First: The Linguistic Definition of Tadabbur***

The Arabic dictionaries show that the word *tadabbur* is derived from the three-letter verb *dabara*, which denotes “the end and back of something.” *Al-Dubbur* is the opposite of *al-Qubul*. *Al-Tadbir* signifies that a person manages his affairs; that is, he looks at what his outcome and end will be (Ibn Fāris, 1979, v.2, p.324).

## ***Second: The Technical Definition of Tadabbur***

Tadabbur has several synonymous meanings in technical terms, as explained by the exegetes of al-Qur'ān in their exegesis. Some of these meanings include the following:

*Tadabbur* means bringing the heart to focus on al-Qur'ān when reciting it. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah (*Raḥimahullah*) said, “As for *tadabbur* in al-Qur'ān, it is the gaze of the heart to its meanings and the gathering of thoughts to ponder and understand it. This is the purpose of its revelation, not merely reciting it without comprehension or *tadabbur*” (Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, 1996, v. 1, p. 450). This is supported by Allah (ﷻ)’s saying: “[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded” (al-Qur'ān, 38:29).

*Tadabbur* means reflecting on the subtle aspects of the Qur'ānic discourse and striving to act upon its rulings. Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭāhir (*Raḥimahullah*) said, “Reflect on the subtle aspects of the Qur'ānic discourse, seek to abide by its rulings, understand its meanings, and embrace it wholeheartedly” (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, v. 19, p. 38). Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī (*Raḥimahullah*) said, “*Tadabbur* means ... reflecting on the rulings and seeing the signs in the verses” (Abū Ḥayyān, 1420H, v. 9, p. 153).

*Tadabbur* signifies a reflection on the meanings and wisdom of al-Qur'ān. Al-Khāzin (*Raḥimahullah*) said, “*Tadabbur* is...reflecting on its [al-Qur'ān] wisdom, and seeing what is in its verses” (al-Khāzin, 1415H, v. 1, p. 402).

*Tadabbur* denotes looking into the Qur'ānic verses to arrive at their meanings and the knowledge and rulings that result from them. Mas'ūd bin Sulaymān al-Ṭayyār said, “*Tadabbur* means using a focused mind to *tadabbur* of the Qur'ānic verses to understand their meanings and to investigate the knowledge, rulings, sciences, and actions that result from them” (Mas'ūd al-Ṭayyār, 2013, p. 77). Some researchers have provided a comprehensive meaning for the concept of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān, which is “a comprehensive contemplative process of the verses of al-Qur'ān aimed at understanding its meanings and acting according to its guidance, involving the tongue, mind, heart, and limbs, where the tongue recites, the mind understands, the heart receives admonition, and the limbs act” (Zakūb, 2018, p. 5).

It is evident from the above-mentioned technical definitions that the concept of *tadabbur* requires several steps to be considered by those who seek to apply it while dealing with the Qur'ānic text. Those steps include:

- Listening, then reading, whether by looking or memorising.
- Knowing the meanings of words and interpreting them even in a general way.
- Knowing Allah (ﷻ)’s purpose and the objectives of the verses in terms of commands and prohibitions.
- Having a present heart when reciting al-Qur'ān, being affected by it, and being humble before it.
- Reaching the overall and detailed meanings.
- Application by striving to act according to it (al-'Awajī, 2016, p. 53).

## ***Third: Terms related to the Meaning of Tadabbur and their Differences***

The concept of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is explained in relation to other related terms, which denote approximately similar meanings to *tadabbur* in their usage while dealing with the explanation of the deep meaning of the Qur'ānic text. These related terms are explained as follows:

**Istinbāt.** It means extraction and is derived from the word “*nabt*,” which means extracting the hidden (al-Azharī, 2001, v. 13, p. 250) and (Ibn Fāris, 1979, v. 5, p. 381). Therefore, *istinbāt* means extracting the hidden meanings that strike the minds from the texts after effort, *tadabbur*, and using one of the means of indicating it (al-‘Awjī, 2016, p. 56). The relationship between *istinbāt* and *tadabbur*: *Istinbāt* is more specific than *tadabbur*, and *tadabbur* is the origin of *istinbāt* (Sarhān, 2013, p. 205).

**Tafsīr.** It is derived from “*al-fasr*,” which means explanation and uncovering what is covered. It is said that he interpreted something by breaking it down, and he explained it by emphasising it (al-Azharī, 2001, v. 12, p. 283; Ibn Manẓūr, 1414H, v. 5, p. 55). *Tafsīr* is defined as the science of understanding the Book of Allah (ﷻ), revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), explaining its meanings, and extracting its judgments and rulings (al-Zarkashī, 1957, v. 1, p. 13). *Tadabbur* differs from *tafsīr*, as the original purpose of *tafsīr* is to explain the intended meaning of the Speech of Allah (ﷻ), and the purpose of *tadabbur* is to reflect and take lessons from it (al-Wahbi, 2008, p. 111). The process and acts of *tafsīr* and *istinbāt* are limited to a specific group of people, mostly those of *ijtihād* among the scholars, while *tadabbur* is for everyone. Not every person doing *tadabbur* is a *mufassīr* (al-‘Awjī, 2016).

**Ta’wīl.** It is derived from “*al-awal*,” which means return. It is said that a thing is interpreted by returning to its beginning. It also means interpretation. Therefore, *ta’wīl* has two meanings: the first is to return, and the second is to explain *tafsīr*. *Ta’wīl* differs from *tadabbur*, as *tadabbur* is more general than *ta’wīl*. This is because *tadabbur* is related to all the Qur’ānic verses, whether they are clear or ambiguous, and all those who are accountable are addressed by it, unlike *ta’wīl*, which is intended for a specific group of scholars who are experts in the field. The most specialised part of *ta’wīl* is the unseen truth(s), whose interpretation only Allah (ﷻ) knows (Sarhān, 2013, p. 200).

**Tafakkur.** It means reflection and deep thinking or *ta’amul*. When a person thinks about something, it denotes that he uses his mind by organising some of what he knows to arrive at something unknown (Ibn Manẓūr, 1414H., v. 5, p. 65). Therefore, *tafakkur* means using the mind, while *tadabbur* is to arrive at an inevitable conclusion or solution to a particular problem. The difference between *tadabbur* and *tafakkur* is that *tadabbur* engages both the intellectual and spiritual aspects dealing with meanings related to the positions of worship and approaching Allah (ﷻ). In contrast, *tafakkur* is related to the intellectual side only.

**Ta’amul.** It is the act of establishing oneself firmly in observation (Ibn Manẓūr, 1414H., v. 11, p. 27). It is said, “I practice *tadabbur* of the thing,” meaning that one looked at it carefully. Therefore, *ta’amul* signifies observing something closely to verify, learn a lesson from and remember it. The difference between *tadabbur* and *ta’amul* is that *ta’amul* is more comprehensive than *tadabbur*. It requires a longer time, patience, and continuous observation, unlike *tadabbur*, which is an act of the heart alone and does not require continuity. *Tadabbur* deals with the significance and implications of the meanings related to insight, while *ta’amul* can occur through sight alone, followed by *tadabbur* (al-Dihān, 2009).

The concept of *tadabbur* al-Qur’ān and its connection with other related synonymic concepts as shown in the discussion above, make *tadabbur* a comprehensive concept that touches upon all verses of al-Qur’ān. Additionally, it has a great impact on the development of people’s personalities and involves the interaction with their lives in their various domains. Indeed, it is a broad concept that differs from mere recitation and understanding and moves into a practical-experiential dimension.

## The Sharīa Ruling on *Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān

The Islamic ruling regarding *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is that it is obligatory for all believers based on their abilities and capacities. Allah (ﷻ) said, “[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded” (al-Qur'ān, 38:29). It is noteworthy that the word “*tadabbur*” is mentioned in al-Qur'ān in four places:

1. In *Sūrah* al-Nisā', verse 82, Allah (ﷻ) says, “Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'ān? [i.e., its meanings and its objective] If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction” (al-Qur'ān, 4:82).
2. In *Sūrah* Muḥammad, verse 24, Allah (ﷻ) says, “Then do they do not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?” (al-Qur'ān, 47:24).
3. In *Sūrah* al-Mu'minūn, verse 68, Allah (ﷻ) also says, “Then have they not reflected over the Word [i.e., the Qur'ān], or has there come to them that which had not come to their forefathers?” (al-Qur'ān, 23:68).
4. In *Sūrah* Šād, verse 29, Allah (ﷻ) says, “[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded” (al-Qur'ān, 38:29).

These four verses are mentioned in the context of addressing disbelievers and hypocrites, criticising them for not involving themselves in *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān and pondering over its meanings. From this, it can be understood that believers are the first ones to be addressed with these verses because they are the ones who benefit from *tadabbur*, taking into consideration that they act upon the Qur'ānic worldview.

## *Mufasssirūn's Consensus on the Necessity of Tadabbur al-Qur'ān*

The above-mentioned verses and what they imply indicate the necessity of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān, and most *mufasssirūn* (exegetes) also agreed on that. This section deals with some of their sayings on this subject (al-Dawsarī, 2022, p. 7):

Al-Ṭabarī (*Raḥimahullah*) said that Allah (ﷻ) urges His worshippers/slaves to reflect on al-Qur'ān's exhortations and evidence. This shows that they must understand the interpretation of what is unclear to them in the verses because it is impossible to tell someone who does not understand what is said to comprehend its interpretation or to practice *tadabbur* on what he did not understand. Instead, it means that they should understand and comprehend it, then perform *tadabbur* on it, and take note of it (al-Ṭabarī, 2000, v. 1, p. 45).

Al-Qurṭubī (*Raḥimahullah*) said, “Allah (ﷻ)'s saying: ‘Then do they not reflect upon al-Qur'ān?’ [al-Qur'ān, 47:24], indicates the necessity of *tadabbur* on the Glorious Qur'ān so that its meaning can be understood” (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, v. 5, p. 290).

Ibn 'Aṭīyyah al-Andalusī (*Raḥimahullah*) said regarding Allah (ﷻ)'s saying, “Then do they not reflect upon al-Qur'an?” [al-Qur'ān, 47:24], that this is a command to look at and derive evidence (al-Andalusī, 1422H).

Abū al-Sa'ūd al-Imādī (*Raḥimahullah*) said that their denial and aversion are due to their failure to reflect on al-Qur'ān and their turning away from *tadabbur* of the obligations of faith found within it (Abū al-Sa'ūd, 2001, v. 2, p. 207).

Al-Shawkānī (*Raḥimahullah*) said that Allah (ﷻ)'s saying, "Then do they not reflect upon al-Qur'ān or are there locks upon [their] hearts?" [al-Qur'ān, 47:24], indicates the necessity of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān so that its meaning can be understood. If they practice *tadabbur* as they should, they will find it harmonious, with no contradictions, sound in its meanings, strong in its foundations, and excellent in eloquence to the highest degree (al-Shawkānī, 1414H v. 1, p. 491).

Al-Suyūṭī (*Raḥimahullah*) said that *tadabbur* of speech without understanding its meanings is impossible. Also, people usually do not read a book on a science they are unfamiliar with, such as medicine and mathematics, because they cannot comprehend them. So how can they do that with Allah (ﷻ)'s Speech, which is their protection, salvation, happiness, and the establishment of their religion and worldly affairs? (al-Suyūṭī, 1974, v. 2, p. 469).

Al-Zarkashī (*Raḥimahullah*) said, in summary, that Allah (ﷻ) did not reveal al-Qur'ān except to be understood, known, and comprehended. And for this reason, He addressed it to the people of understanding, those who comprehend, those who know, and those who practice *tadabbur* (al-Zarkashī, 1957, v. 2, p. 8).

Since the rethinking of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān on the Speech of Allah (ﷻ) is necessary and influential on goodness and success in human life, then its renewal is necessary. Al-Qur'ānic verses on *tadabbur* emphasise the way to engage with the Qur'anic text by using *tadabbur* with full contemplation of Allah (ﷻ)'s Speech. This is from His mercy upon His worshippers/slaves, who follow His guidance with complete sincerity and devotion.

## The Significance of *Tadabbur* of al-Qur'ān

Al-Qur'ānic verses that address directly the concept of *tadabbur* show how significant *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is. The question is: Why have those verses come in the form of commands that contain encouragement to do so and prohibit abandoning it? To answer this question, there is a need to understand the importance of *tadabbur* from several aspects.

Allah (ﷻ) made *tadabbur* one of the purposes and goals of revealing al-Qur'ān, as in His saying, "[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded" (al-Qur'ān, 38:29). Commenting on this verse, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shanqīṭī pointed to this meaning, saying, "As for the *tadabbur* of its verses, it is one of the wisdoms behind its revelation. Allah (ﷻ) has alluded to it in some of the verses by urging *tadabbur* of it and rebuking those who do not practice *tadabbur* of it, such as His saying, "Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?" (al-Qur'ān, 47:24)" (al-Shanqīṭī, 1995, v. 6, p. 345). This indicates the obligation of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān to understand its meanings and act accordingly. This position is supported by Imam al-Ṭabarī, who indicated in his interpretation of the verse by saying, "That they might reflect upon Allah (ﷻ)'s proofs contained therein and what He has legislated in it from His laws so that they would benefit and act upon them" (al-Ṭabarī, 2000, v. 10, p. 576).

Al-Qur'ān is an overflowing sea of goodness and mercy to the world. Diving into this overflowing sea by practicing *tadabbur* enables people to extract solutions to the problems that arise in all ages, which is called Islam's universality for every time and place. *Tadabbur* is a means of charging the soul toward good and preventing it from evil. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to repeat one verse dozens of times to ponder and reflect on it. It denotes the significance of understanding, applying, and practicing what is learned from al-Qur'ān. Hence, this is the most important point in the nation's life. This is supported by Umar Ubeid Hassanah's assertion:

“When we *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān, we transfer it to the fields of practice, at least to the fields of behavior” (Hasanah, 1995).

What happens when there is recitation or listening to al-Qur'ān with *tadabbur*? It enables those who engage with it to generate knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) and increase their admiration for Him, and then their soul becomes rational in avoiding pitfalls. Allah (ﷻ) says, “Indeed, those who fear Allah when an impulse touch them from Satan, they remember [Him], and at once they have insight” (al-Qur'ān, 7:201). Recitation or listening to al-Qur'ān with remembrance softens the hearts and gives them peace, and then it instills in them a sense of piety, hope, and awe (Zakūb, 2018). Allah (ﷻ) says, “Allah has sent down the best statement, a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And one whom Allah sends astray, there is no guide for him” (al-Qur'ān, 39:23).

Furthermore, recitation or listening to al-Qur'ān with deep understanding of its meanings and what is intended by it necessitates the love of Allah (ﷻ) for His servant (Zakūb, 2018). Ibn al-Qayyim considered it one of the ten reasons that bring about love for Allah (ﷻ) and cause it, as he said, “Reading al-Qur'ān with *tadabbur* and understanding its meanings and what is intended by it, is like the *tadabbur* of the Book that the servant memorises and explains, to understand the intention of its author” (al-Jawziyah, 1996, v. 3, p. 18).

The significance of *tadabbur* is expressed in the above discussion accordingly. The virtues, status, and need of people to contemplate al-Qur'ān are shown and they cannot do without it. Their recitation of al-Qur'ān is made with the intention to contemplate and practice.

### **The Purposes of *Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān**

The significance of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān displays its obligation upon believers. Besides its significance, there are intended purposes and objectives by Allah (ﷻ)'s commandments regarding *tadabbur* of His Speech. Among the most important purposes are as follows.

The first purpose: Increasing the level of *īmān*. The essential purpose of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is that the reader feels an increased level of *īmān* in his heart when al-Qur'ān is recited with *tadabbur*. Indeed, the measure of *tadabbur* is known by an increase in his level of *īmān*. For instance, a Muslim feels an increase in his level of *īmān*, which means his level of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is high, as Allah (ﷻ) said, “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord, they rely” (al-Qur'ān, 8:2). This is because they listen to it attentively and prepare their hearts for *tadabbur*, and hence, their level of *īmān* increases. This happens as *tadabbur* is an act of the heart, and it is necessary to explain to people a meaning that is not known, or to remind them of what is forgotten, or to create in their hearts a desire for good and a yearning for the honor of their Lord, or to create in them awe of the punishments and disgust for sins, and all of these play a very significant role in increasing their level of *īmān*. The early believers, when a Sūrah of al-Qur'ān was revealed, they had their level of their *īmān* increased and affirmed (Zakaria-Bafadel, 2024, p.16).

The second purpose: Acting with good deeds. The second purpose of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is to engage oneself in good deeds and obedience to Allah (ﷻ)'s commands and prohibitions. It is the fruit of *īmān* and the result of *tadabbur*. Therefore, to achieve *tadabbur* in al-Qur'ān, there must be an intention to act and obey its rulings. Even if a person recites al-Qur'ān and does not act upon it, he cannot say that there has been a practice of *tadabbur* in it.

Al-Qur'ān has urged people to act and obey what is in it: “Those to whom We have given the Book recite it with its true recital. They [are the ones who] believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it, it is they who are the losers (al-Qur'ān, 2:121); “[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded” (al-Qur'ān, 38:29). Al-Ṭabarī explains, “That is, so that they may *tadabbur* the evidence of Allah that is in it and what He (ﷻ) has ordained therein of laws and thus be admonished and act accordingly” (al-Ṭabarī (2001, v. 21, p. 190). The purpose is for al-Qur'ān to guide action and behaviour because whoever ponders upon the Speech of Allah is motivated to act, and whoever does good deeds will attain high ranks in this world and the Hereafter (al-ʿAwjī, 2016, p. 130). This is supported by the Prophetic saying: “Indeed, Allah raises some people by this book and lowers others by it” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 1, p. 559, Ḥadīth: 817).

The third purpose: Guidance toward truth and righteousness. As it is discussed above, the first objective of *tadabbur* is to increase *īmān*, and the second objective is acting with righteous deeds, which are the fruit and result of *īmān*. They are interdependent, as there is no *īmān* without deeds and no deeds without *īmān*. The first alone is incomplete, and the second alone is unsupported. Hence, the first two objectives of *tadabbur* have set the foundation for the achievement of the third objective, namely, guidance towards truth and righteousness. Allah (ﷻ) says, “Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward” (al-Qur'ān, 17:9). *īmān* and deeds are the two authentic foundations upon which guidance is built. It is also confirmed that guidance depends on action and continuous follow-up, as Allah (ﷻ) says, “By which Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace [i.e., security, well-being, integrity and escape from Hellfire; Literally, “freedom from all evil.”] and brings them out from darkness into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path” (al-Qur'ān, 5:16). This means that if a person follows the guidance that comes from Allah (ﷻ) through His messengers, he is protected from any misguidance in this world and will not suffer in the Hereafter. If he is saved from misguidance in this world, he will also be saved from misery in the Hereafter (Zakaria-Bafadel, 2024, pp. 23-24).

The fourth purpose: To acquire beneficial knowledge. This is also important for achieving the previous three objectives so that *īmān*, good deeds, and guidance are based on knowledge and on following what sharia rules. The original and excellent source of knowledge for a student of knowledge is al-Qur'ān, which is abundant in beneficial knowledge for human life in this world and the Hereafter. Allah (ﷻ) says, “And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims. [Those who have submitted themselves to Allah]” (al-Qur'ān, 16:89). Allah (ﷻ) says in another verse, “Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end” (al-Qur'ān, 6:38). On the other hand, it is feared that the state of those who read and memorise al-Qur'ān without *tadabbur* is like those among nations whom Allah (ﷻ) has criticised for their attitudes: “And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but (see therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture” (al-Qur'ān, 2:78).

The fifth purpose: To demonstrate al-Qur'ān's blessings and benefit from them. There is no doubt that the blessings of al-Qur'ān lie in many things, including its numerous commands and prohibitions, the diversity of its appeals and warnings, its stories and news, its wise sayings, and what it contains of promises and warnings. This is intended to guide the servant to make up for any shortcomings and increase his eagerness and devotion to obey Allah (ﷻ), thus achieving happiness in this world and the Hereafter (Al-ʿAwjī, 2016). Therefore, “reading al-Qur'ān with *tadabbur* and understanding is the greatest objective and the most important requirement. It is through this that hearts are expanded and illuminated” (al-Suyūṭī, 1974, v. 1, p. 140). Al-Qur'ān is a vast ocean of goodness and a gift from the Most Merciful to humankind.

It gives you countless meanings in limited words. This vast ocean filled with unlimited meanings cannot be fully explored except through *tadabbur* (al-'Awjī, 2016). This is supported by the Qur'ānic verse: “Say, ‘If the sea were ink for [writing] the words [the words of Allah’s unlimited knowledge or words describing His attributes and His grandeur or praise of Him (ﷺ)] of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it in [continual] supplement’” (al-Qur’ān, 18:109).

The sixth purpose: Explanation of the universality and reality of the Qur'ānic message. Al-Qur'ān claims its universality: “Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner” (al-Qur’ān, 25:1). Ibn Kathīr comments on this verse, “He specifically mentioned it (i.e., al-Qur’ān) to specify it with the message to those who seek shade under the greenery and travel on the dry desert, just as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘I was sent to every red and black (person)’” (Ibn Kathīr, 1419H., v. 6, p. 92). Hence, the message of al-Qur’ān became universal since its first verse was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ). Al-Qur’ān is a guide, a glad tidings, and a warning to all people. This universality endures over time because of the deep, realistic meanings it carries that reflect life in its most balanced and authentic form, and that speak directly to the human soul in all its diversity. It moves beyond abstract theories that people often discuss without truly understanding or experiencing. Instead, it engages with realities that can be felt and lived. As a result, the reader does not encounter distant idealism or purely intellectual notions detached from the real world, but rather ideas that resonate with genuine human experience and true understanding. Only by *tadabbur*, can one perceive the meanings that soothe the soul (al-'Awjī, 2016).

It is remarked from its purposes that *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān leads to higher ends by granting worldly benefits and great achievement, as well as salvation from the Hellfire in the Afterlife. Al-Qur'ān offers goodness in all its meanings and guidance to real life, where success and true happiness can be achieved and sustained for the Hereafter.

### **The *Ṣaḥābah* and *Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān**

This section provides information on how *Ṣaḥābah* used to deal with *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān emphasising its various effects on their personalities.

### ***The Effect of Tadabbur on Ṣaḥābah's Hearts***

Contemplation has a great effect on the Muslim human being and is one of the most important means of spiritual, behavioral, psychological, and moral development of the individual. Contemplating the Speech of Allah (ﷻ) was one of the most important pillars and foremost means of formulating the personality of the Companions [May Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with all of them] (al-'Awjī, 2016). They were the first generation to engage with *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān by extracting rulings from Allah (ﷻ)'s Speech and acting upon them in their daily lives.

**Being affected and crying out of fear of Allah (ﷻ).** This is addressed in the Qur'ānic verse: “When the verses of the Most Merciful were recited to them, they fell in prostration and weeping” (al-Qur’ān, 19:58); “Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it [i.e., the righteous among the People of the Scriptures who recognise the truth contained in the Qur’ān], when it is recited to them, they fall upon their faces in prostration. And they say, “Exalted is our Lord! Indeed, the promise of our Lord has been fulfilled. And they fall upon their faces weeping, and it [i.e., al-Qur’ān] increases them in humble submission” (al-Qur’ān, 17:107-109); and, “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord,

they rely” (al-Qur’ān, 8:2). They are described as among those who fear Allah (ﷻ) and avoid His disobedience, as well as having awe of Him when He (ﷻ) is mentioned. It is because of their strong conviction and consideration of their Lord as if they stood before Him. In another verse of al-Qur’ān, Allah (ﷻ) says, “Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah (ﷻ). That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And one whom Allah sends astray; there is no guide for him (al-Qur’ān 39:23). This verse describes the impact that listening to al-Qur’ān has on its listeners, causing their skins to shiver and contract due to fear and awe of Allah (al-Shawkānī, 1414H., v. 4, p. 652). Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr [may Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with them] said, “The *Ṣaḥābah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) would shed tears, and their skins would shiver when they listened to al-Qur’ān” (Tha’ālibī, 1418H., v. 4, p. 55). This is the result of *tadabbur* al-Qur’ān with deep understanding, feeling, perseverance, and action.

**Presence of the heart and mind with a focus on the meanings.** *Tadabbur* of the meanings of al-Qur’ān requires the presence of the heart and mind with a focus on the meanings of the verses. Allah (ﷻ) says, “And those who, when reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind” (al-Qur’ān, 25:73), and Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah (ﷻ). That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And one whom Allah sends astray; there is no guide for him (al-Qur’ān 39:23).

**Joy and happiness while reading verses of promise, bliss, and contentment.** Al-Qur’ān brings joy and excitement through the verses of promise, bliss, and paradise. This is due to the hope in the reward from Allah (ﷻ): “And whenever a sūrah is revealed, there are among them [i.e., the hypocrites] those who say, ‘Which of you has this increased in faith?’ As for those who believed, it has increased them in faith, while they are rejoicing” (al-Qur’ān, 9:124).

**Fear and awe while reading verses of warning of punishment, humiliation, and loss.** The sincere believer always lives between fear and hope. He does not despair of mercy even if he goes through difficulties and trials, nor do his good deeds delude him. Allah (ﷻ) says, “Indeed, they who are apprehensive from fear of their Lord. And they who believe in the signs of their Lord. And they who do not associate anything with their Lord. And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful [lest their deeds not be acceptable] because they will be returning to their Lord” (al-Qur’ān, 23:57-60). It was narrated that Aishah (رضي الله عنها) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the meaning of this verse (al-Qur’ān, 23:60) saying, “Are those who steal, commit adultery, and drink alcohol?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “No, O daughter of Abu Bakr, they are those who fast, pray, and give charity, and they are afraid, but Allah does not accept their deeds” (Tirmizi, 1975, v. 5, p. 327, Ḥadīth: 3175).

**Increase of *īmān* and tranquillity.** Allah (ﷻ) says, “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord, they rely” (al-Qur’ān, 8:2). The believers are described in this verse as being filled with fear and awe when His name (ﷻ) is mentioned, and this is because of their strong and higher level of *īmān*. Ibn Kathīr asserts that “al-Bukhārī and others have used this verse as evidence for the increase of faith and its superiority in the hearts, as this is the view of the majority of the Ummah” (Ibn Kathīr, 1419.H, v. 2, p. 379).

## Practical Effects of *Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān

A believer does not stop by simply hearing and being affected by al-Qur'ān but goes beyond that to action and response to Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). This is an excellent principle of *tadabbur*, and some of its practical effects include the following:

First, prostration, submission, and humility in reverence for Allah (ﷻ) and His greatness, as stated in al-Qur'ān: “Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it [i.e., the righteous among the People of the Scriptures who recognise the truth contained in the Qur'an], when it is recited to them, they fall upon their faces in prostration” (al-Qur'ān, 17:107).

Second, acting upon it, as stated in al-Qur'ān: “And when it is recited to them, they say, ‘We have believed in it; indeed, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed, we were, [even] before it, Muslims [i.e., submitting to Allah]’” (al-Qur'ān, 28:53). The righteous predecessors were an example in acting upon al-Qur'ān, obeying its commands, and avoiding its prohibitions. The *Ṣaḥābah*, may Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with them, followed the Prophet (ﷺ). It is reported that once 'Aishah (رضي الله عنها) was asked about Prophet (ﷺ)'s character or personality. She (رضي الله عنها) replied, “Do you not read al-Qur'ān? I said, Yes. Upon this she said, “Indeed, the character of the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah (ﷻ) is al-Qur'ān” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1422H.- 2001C.A., v. 6, p. 182, Ḥadīth: 4981). This hadith is evidence of the Prophet's approach to dealing with al-Qur'ān, embodying its values and acting upon its commands.

Third, understanding its meanings and acting upon them, as reported by Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه): “When one of us learned ten verses, he would not go beyond them until he had learned their meanings and acted upon them” (al-Ṭabarī, 2000, v. 2, p. 122). This indicates the approach of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Righteous Companions [may Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with them all], in learning how to deal with *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān, which involved combining knowledge with understanding and acting upon it.

## The Effects of *Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān on Building One's *Īmān*

The effects of *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān on building one's *īmān* are evident in reflecting on the verses that state creed and *īmān*. Such a study shows that they are based on the following:

First, building knowledge and achieving guidance. Through *tadabbur* of the recited verses and their correlations to the universe while implementing their meanings, the knowledge about the Oneness of Allah (ﷻ) and His exclusivity in worship is achieved. Ibn al-Qayyim said, “(This includes) a clarification of the heard verses and a clarification of the seen verses, and both are evidence and signs of the Oneness of Allah (ﷻ), His Names, Attributes, Perfection, and the truthfulness of what His messengers informed about Him. For this reason, Allah (ﷻ) invites His servants with His recited verses to *tadabbur* His visible verses and encourages them to reflect on this and that. This explanation is what the messengers were sent with and what was transmitted to the scholars afterward” (al-Jawziyah, 1996, v. 1, p. 66). Besides, Allah (ﷻ) misguides whom He wills: “And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray [thereby] whom He wills [i.e., those who refuse His guidance] and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise” (al-Qur'ān, 14:4).

Second, directing human beings to reflect on the wonders of Allah (ﷻ)'s creations: Through *tadabbur* human beings can go beyond the perception of the senses, starting with the simplest and closest to their environment and surroundings. Allah (ﷻ) says, “Then do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And in the sky, how is it raised? And in the mountains,

how are they erected? And on the earth, how it is spread out?" So, remind (O Muhammad), for you are only a reminder" (al-Qur'ān, 88:17-21).

Third, focusing on the meaning and repeating the thought with the clarity of the evidence, such as looking at the verses and their influential meanings regarding Allah (ﷻ) deserving of worship and no one else. Also, this includes a continuous reflection on the verses dealing with the unseen and the reality of the resurrection and all matters related to *īmān*. All these have been addressed in al-Qur'ān with the most precise explanation and the most truthful proof, with certainty that leaves no room for doubt or hesitation in the believer's heart.

### **The Impact of Rethinking of *Tadabbur* al-Qur'ān on Building a Muslim's Personality**

Rethinking *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān through the lens of *al-tajdīd* (renewal) is one of the most important approaches used to enable a believer to increase the level of *īmān*. This is achieved through its eloquent sermons that stir and ignite emotions, resulting in a harmonious interaction between the mind and the heart: "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord, they rely" (al-Qur'ān, 8:2). This shows that *tadabbur* is an act of the heart, and it must clarify the meaning that was previously unknown or forgotten or trigger a desire for good and a longing for the honor of their Lord or a fear of punishment or a disdain for sins. All this leads to an increase in the level of *īmān* (al-Sa'dī, 2000, p. 315), which elevates a believer's personality to the highest level that pleases his Creator. This is further elaborated as follows:

First, creating a balanced Muslim personality. The personality of a Muslim who is devoted to reciting and practicing *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān is formed in a balanced manner, without excess or negligence, based on a correct understanding of al-Qur'ān as understood by the generation of the Righteous Companions [may Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with them all], who adhered to moderation and balance.

Second, refining talents and developing intellectual abilities. Regular *tadabbur* of al-Qur'ān instills in a person the ability to think and observe, as well as enhances his way of handling issues, being able to judge with a moderate approach even when opinions and ideas differ (Kamāl, 1995, p. 197). This is supported by the Qur'ānic verse where Allah (ﷻ) says, "Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?' Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding" (al-Qur'ān, 39:9). The Righteous Companions with the continuous *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān were able to equip themselves with intellectual abilities, as well as achieve what their knowledge could not uncover. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said, "If I lost the reins of my camel, I would find them in the Book of Allah" (al-Suyūṭī, 1988, p. 15). This indicates that their *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān refined their talents and improved their intellectual abilities.

It is remarked from the above-discussion on *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān show how significant it is to rethink or revisit the way the Prophet (ﷺ) used to engage with al-Qur'ān with continuous and steadfast *tadabbur*, and *Ṣaḥābah's* sincere and dedicated approach to *tadabbur* of the Speech of Allah (ﷻ) through the lens of *tajdīd* (renewal) offers a model for contemporary context of dealing with the Qur'ānic message. *Tadabbur* requires a focused approach to have a deep understanding of the meanings derived from the verses of al-Qur'ān. It is very important for the contemporary Muslims to rethink and revisit *tadabbur* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Righteous Companions, only then they will be able to increase the level of their *īmān*, enhance their intellectual abilities, and develop their personalities. Such renewal approach to *tadabbur* al-Qur'ān will enable Muslims to feel, think, and act according to what pleases Allah (ﷻ) and be

able to unite among themselves, which can assist them in providing sound solutions to all contemporary conflicts concerning themselves and humanity.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that one of the most critical aspects of building a Muslim's character is the way of *tadabbur* through which al-Qur'ān is recited, comprehended, and applied. Such *tadabbur* helps Muslims to strengthen and increase their level of *īmān* in Allah (ﷻ), foster a balanced and moderate personality, avoid extremism and negligence, and enhance their intellectual abilities by reflecting on the meaning of the signs and miracles of al-Qur'ān. Qur'ānic teachings also provide guidance and direction for humanity, especially Muslims to follow in all aspects of their lives, leading them to understand themselves and their purpose in life better. Moreover, through al-Qur'ān, Muslims can improve their relationship with Allah (ﷻ), comprehend His Message and Commands, and strive to live a righteous life that pleases Him by following the footsteps of His Messenger (ﷺ). Al-Qur'ān's profound effect on a Muslims' character development demonstrates its significance and value in their lives as true believers. Among the important findings this research has arrived at, are the following: (1) differs from the concept of interpretation as it is a phase that follows interpretation and understanding; (2) requires a common understanding and knowledge among all readers of al-Qur'ān. To achieve some measure of contemplation to the extent that this level of understanding and expansion is increased in the sciences of al-Qur'ān, the principles of interpretation, and the sciences of the Arabic language, as much as the rate of contemplation increases; (3) applies to all Muslims, as it is decided in the verses which have been ordered to contemplate; and finally, (4) is not limited to theory and knowledge, rather, it includes the practical meaning of the verses.

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