

DAILY QUR'ANIC REFLECTIONS

From Juz' 3: The Living Book

الَمْ . اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ .

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

Alif, Lām, Mīm. Allah—there is no god except Him—the Living One, the All-sustainer. He has sent down the Book to you with the truth, confirming what was [revealed] before it, and He had sent down the Torah and the Evangel.

(Aal-i-Imran: 1-3)

Reflections:

The Qur'an refers to itself as a kitāb, commonly translated as a book. Linguistically, the word kitāb signifies a collection of words and sentences. The Qur'an is called a kitāb because it is a compilation of signs, stories, parables, laws, and sciences.

This may lead the reader to assume that the Qur'an is like any other book—merely a verbalization of an author's thoughts and ideas. In conventional books, once an author has composed and published their work, the text becomes static and detached from its author. The book contains a fixed set of ideas, and the author can no longer introduce new meanings or interpretations.

To prevent this misconception, many chapters of the Qur'an begin by clarifying its true nature. This is especially evident in chapters that open with the Ḥurūf al-Muqatta'āt (disjointed letters). In Surah Aal-i-Imran, Allah (S) first declares His divine attributes before elaborating on the nature of the revelation. This highlights that the Qur'an is not merely a written text; rather, it is a continuous manifestation of Allah's (S) attributes. Therefore, the very attributes of Allah (S) also become attributes of the Qur'an. The second verse introduces us to two Divine names:

The Living One: According to some scholars, this is the most principal name of Allah (S). Since the Qur'an is a manifestation of the All-Living, it too is a living reality. Imam al-Sadiq (a) states: "Surely, the Qur'an is alive and will not die."¹ This idea transforms our understanding of the Qur'an. It means that the Qur'an is actively conversing with the reader during recitation, fully aware of the reader's needs, states, and circumstances.

The Self-Subsisting: Al-Qayyūm refers to the One upon whom all rely, while He Himself depends on no one. Similarly, the Qur'an is a text that clarifies other texts and sciences, yet it requires no external sources to clarify its verses. Of course, the reader must be properly trained in extracting the deeper meanings through guidance from the Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-bayt (a).

To ponder: How does knowing the Qur'an as a living reality change the manner in which we recite the Qur'an?

References: Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Qur'an dar Qur'an*.

¹ Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, v. 2, p. 203