

Koran's Constant Oration: For Fulfillment of Moral Excellence¹

His Excellency Hajj Dr. NourAli Tabandeh Majzoub Alishah

There are numerous ways of utilizing water, for instance, drinking and washing. Water has various effects in our lives. I remember, perhaps 30 years ago Russian scientists made lot of researches on water and its effects and wrote extensive reports. In one of the verses of the Koran it is also said: **“From water everything is alive”**², everything is alive with water; life is due to water. For this reason, in some Gnostic sermons in the dignity of His Excellency Ali it has been said: **“Ali is the fountain head of water-based life”**. Ali is the fountain of water-based life, the fountain of water is life, water which always keeps humans alive. But despite of all this acquaintance and familiarity with water, and in spite of that water like air is most accessible to us, with all plainness and extensiveness that water has, if someone asks us: what is water, describe it? We cannot answer. The Koran is also like this, the same position water has in nature; the Koran has in metaphysics. All these debates and views, all these inquiries, all these researches which have been made about the Koran, from the lexicography of the words and phonetics debates, its methods of recitation till mystical subtle subjects, about the contemplative elegance of the Koran, juristic discussions and decrees of verses till the composing of Koranic calligraphy, the floral decoration and ..., all of them are topics and subjects of Koranology. Many of us Muslims are familiar with the Glorious Koran and read it as the words of God and as a religious holy book. One of the commands in Sufism is to daily read the glorious Koran and to ponder and contemplate on it, but with all this familiarity with the glorious Koran and researches and investigations about it, the truth of the Koran is not known to us and if someone asks us about this divine book, we do not know what it is, let alone, say something unevaluated and incorrect about it. As we witnessed in the history of Islam, that abundant mental misuse has been made of Koran particularly from the self-opinioned interpretation.

The Koran's verses have various aspects and classifications and a comprehensive explanation exists in the introduction of the “Bayan-o-Sa'adeh” noble explanation of the Koran. One of the most important of these is the subject of descent and allegorical interpretation of the Koran. Regarding the allegorical interpretation of the Koran, there have been said different subjects about of praiseworthy and blameworthy interpretations, difference among allegorical interpretation and explanation, and personal-opinion-based explanation and The term “allegorical interpretation” itself, terminologically means “to

¹ As lectured on 19/3/1384 Solar Hijri.

² Surah of Al-Anbiya, verse 125. مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

return back” and “go back to the origin and source”. “Descent” also terminologically means to bring down or to move downwards (landing). The Koran’s verses have “descent specifications” and allegorical interpretations. The descent of the Koran is its descent from superior ranks to the rank of it being written down and compiled as a book. The interpretation of the Koran's verses is to return them back to the original and initiative meanings. The Glorious Koran during twenty three years was revealed to the Prophet and he announced them. The question arises here that: who has the knowledge of interpreting the Koran.

In Koran, the verse 5 of the Surah of Ale-Imran, says: "*And none knows its interpretation save Allah, and those firmly rooted in knowledge. They say: we believe in it, it is all from our Lord*".³ This verse is about the interpretation of allegorical verses and - in other respects - it is the interpretation of the entire Koran and in fact, who knows the interpretation of them. Some interpreters read this verse as such: "*Nobody knows the interpretation save Allah*" and put a full stop here. Therefore, according to this reading, no one knows the interpretation of the Koran, except God. Those firmly rooted in knowledge, are also those regarding the submission to God say: We have brought faith in them, and all of them are from the part of our omnipotent God, but they do not know the interpretation of the Koran. But a group also says that the “**and**” in the beginning of the sentence “**and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge**” is for connection and this sentence, is a connective sentence and continuation of the same first sentence. According to this recitation, God and those firmly rooted in knowledge know the interpretation of the Koran. Adherences of each of the both recitations, in the explanation of their views have brought reasons that in this place there is no time to mention them.

But according to the precise saying, based on the views of the author of Bayan-o-Sa’adeh nobody except God and the impeccable (peace be on them) know the interpretation of Koran in absolute manner, but other Messengers and Mystics who are in position of being firmly rooted in knowledge know its interpretation relative to their spiritual rank and position. But interpretation – as a more general meaning - is right for all believers.

For understanding this subject let us look at another Koranic subtle saying, that is the subject of its external being and internal being. In a prophetic tradition, it has come that, the Koran possesses external and internal aspects and its internal aspects have another internal aspect up to seven internal levels.⁴ The most external meaning of each verse is the descent conditions of its revelation it has and the descent of the Koran pertains to this same rank. The reader of the Koran and the one who deliberates on it according to his spiritual understanding and perception from the external face of the verses finds a way to their internal. It is this, that in the narrations it was said: **Read and go up**⁵, means reach the higher spiritual and mystical ranks.

Interpretation as general meaning is to return the external of the Koran to its internal aspects. That is exactly in the same manner that the Koran as the words of God in its revelation in the descending journey from the position of divine unseen and internal became manifested and more manifested in the sense that the creatures of God became addressees of them; these addressees and readers of the Koran in the journey of ascension, according to

³ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا

⁴ إن للقرآن ظهرا و بطنا و لبطنه بطن إلى سبعة أبطن

⁵ اقرأ و ارتقا

their Gnostic ranks understand it more and more.

Someone asked His Excellency Aba-Jaffar (peace be upon him) about this narration that: **“In the Koran, there is no verse that does not have external and internal aspects”**. Hazrat said:⁶ **“The external of it is what has been sent down and internal of it is its interpretation”**. Now if we restrict the Glorious Koran to the external aspects of the verses and the instances related to the condition of descent, the oration of the Koran will be limited to the only 23 years of the mission of the Blessed Messenger and the same Muslims and faithful during the advent of Islam and the same events and happenings and affairs propounded for the people of that age and just for the Arabian peninsula. But if we pass over from this external meaning (descent) and return to the source and origin of the verses (interpretation), all human beings, in all periods of time and in all places can be addressee of divine oration. Thus, in the narration it has also come that: **Read the Koran in such a way as though, it has been sent down on you**. In this situation all proclamation: **O mankind, O people, O believers**⁷ do not only concern humans of 1400 years before in the period of the prophet's mission. Based on the difference between decent and interpretation, it can also be said that the interpretation of the Koran is the knowledge of the descent of the verses, that is knowing the descent position of the verse and subjects of juristic and terminological discussions about the verse. And the interpretation of the Koran is to return it to the meaning that conforms to the external form of the verse and probable meaning. A simple example of this subject in the present social lives of mankind is that: usually in the parliament approved laws, special target is mentioned and according to that target says i.e. “for reaching justice it is written that ...”. This section of reaching justice is permanent (of course in regular meaning) but regulations conform to time and place for the same purpose. About this subject, some examples of the Koran are mentioned in a simpler explanation.

In the verse 43, of Surah of Al-Nisa it is said: **“O you who believe, go not near prayers when you are intoxicated until you know what you say”**.⁸ The external meaning of this verse is: “don't go near prayers when you are intoxicated until you know what you say”. This verse from the viewpoint of the conditions of descent is related to the first stages of prohibition of wine drinking. Because the Lord, has not forbidden drinking of wine all at once, on the contrary right from the beginning has said, during prayers, do not be intoxicated, but the explicit prohibition of it is in the Surah of “The Cow” verse 219 which says: **“O Messenger, they ask thee about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them is great sin and benefits for people and their sins are greater than advantages”**.⁹ About this someone - with one incorrect interpretation - had asked if someone in spiritual wayfaring exits from the state of awareness is he considered as intoxicant in this verse? The answer is: if someone be in this state of unawareness or spiritual intoxication does not understand anything and is not aware of himself, he is like a man who is in coma or unconscious confined to bed. In this state, he also has no will power. But from this verse such is understood that, the addressee is someone who possesses will power and can pray. This could be one inner (interpretation) meaning- of course incorrect.

In one other meaning (interpretation) about the sentence **until you know what you**

⁶ صفار قمی، بصائر الدرجات، تصحیح حاج میرزا محسن کوچہ باغی تبریزی، چاپ کتابخانه آیت اللہ مرعشی، ص ۱۹۶.

⁷ یا ایہا الناس، یا ایہا الانسان، یا ایہا الذین آمنوا.

⁸ یا ایہا الذین آمنوا لا تقربوا الصلاة و انتم سکاری حتی تعلموا ما تقولون.

⁹ یسئلونک عن الخمر و المیسر قل فیہما اثم کبیر و منافع للناس و انہما اکبر من نفعہما.

say it can be said: it means, it is necessary in prayers to do know what you are saying and your speech should not be spoonerism of tongue or hallucination. For instance when you say: **Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help**¹⁰ know what you are saying and to whom you are saying.

These could be of various inward degrees of understanding this verse. Of course, some of them are in various ranks and some of them are details of the others. These interpretations as far as are not in contradiction to external passages in the position of descent can be acceptable and proved, but unfortunately some misuses have been made by interpretation of the Koran and therefore for some people interpretation has got blameworthy meaning and they have known it as external-contradictory interpretation. Thus about some, who are well-known as Bateniyeh have taken place. They without taking notice of the external aspect of the verses and conforming of the internal to the external have interpreted the Koran.

Another evidence from this misuse is the commitment of a group of prolocutors in interpretation of the Koran. They have committed misinterpretations about the context of the verses which understanding of them do not fit in their external understanding such as predestination and free will or seeing of God. Mollana to these people says:

You have interpreted the virgin oration
Do interpret yourself not the speech
You do interpret the Quran according to your will
The great meaning became distorted and wrong because of yours¹¹

Of matters concerning the descent of the Koran and verses, is the problems of Surahs and verses of Mecca and Madina. About the difference of these two, various topics have been said, but whatever briefly can be understood is that: whatever has been descended upon the Prophet in Mecca is Meccan and one of the attributes of the Meccan verses is that, because it concerns the initial invitation of the Prophet to Islam, includes the principles of religion and comprise of moralistic subjects. In comparison with the Meccan verses, it can be said that whatever have been descended in Madina is Madinite, and because these verses are related to the time that the Prophet had established Islamic community in the city of Madina and with the necessity to manage this community it was necessary that laws and regulations to the minutest details be legislated, thus Madinite verses and Surahs comprise of the minutest laws and regulations. Present day example of this matter is for instance, whenever crime increases in a country, to avoid crime happening laws are increased and enacted upon correspondingly. During the time of establishing Islamic government in Madina, God too regarding to various happenings also legislated some decrees and in some verses where decrees was not legislated, the Prophet used to say: act upon the decrees which have come in the Torah and “**there is decree of God there in**”¹². But whenever there was a necessity, some verses consisting of decrees would descend and till the time these verses were not nullified they were in force. But this referring was not permanent. For this reason in the Koran addressed to the Prophet (S) it has been said: **And consult them about the affairs and whenever you decide to do,**

¹⁰ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ.

¹¹ Moulavi's Masnavi, Nicholson's Farsi print, Book one, couplet 1080-81.

¹² Surah of Maedeh, 43. التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ

then rely on your Lord.¹³ Orders the Prophet that he should even hear the viewpoints of the opponents, but the final decision rests on the Prophet. About the community of the faithfuls, in Surah of Al-Shura, the believers are described as such, **“their affairs is to consult among themselves”**. Therefore, whatever has not been said in the Koran, concerns to the consultation of the believers. But regarding the verse of: **“Certainly you have in, the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar”**.¹⁴ The tradition of the Prophet of God also is as like as the laws. Moreover, it must be considered that which one of the Prophet’s behavior is tradition and which behavior of his Holiness is classified as those conforming to the verse: **“Say, I am only a human being like you”**.¹⁵ Therefore, we cannot say that because His Excellency used to ride camel we also should ride camel at the present time. Recognizing this topic is of the matters that are worthy for considering and about them there are different views.

In this regard, in the Meccan verses external events that are reason of descend and therefore are restricted to time and place are less often instances of consideration. Therefore, legislative commandments for instance in financial affairs are less in them unless in brief and general that still the aspects of morality are dominated. For instance among the attributes of those who pray, in Surah of Al-Ma’arj, verses 24 and 25 says: **“And in whose wealth there is a known right for the beggar and the destitute.”**¹⁶ Those who consider portions from their wealth for the beggars and deprived. One of the presumptions which can be made from this verse is this: if you are the addressee of this noble verse, whenever you help a beggar and deprived, do not hold him under obligation since he has right on your wealth and in reality, you give him his right. This part of the verse is permanent and not changeable. Because it considers the moral aspect of the case. But whatever was witnessed during the time of the Prophet in practice, afterwards was subject to change practically. For example, the wealthy which are liable to alms (poor rate), today’s city dwellers have less of them it cannot be said that bank notes are not liable to alms or interest. The solution of this problem is with those who are professional jurists in solving and concluding problems; according to the verse: **Their affairs, is to consult among themselves.**¹⁷

Although Madinite verses observe more decrees, but in them also, the oration of the Koran, are not restricted to the conditions of descent of these verses and does not only concern about the same time and the same events, on the contrary all laws and regulations concerning that affair should be in the direction of the wisdom of the decree, because the wisdom of legislation of that decree is general and is related to all times and all instances that are similar to that, but has been descended for particular condition. For instance the case of Efk, can be mentioned, that in it, in the 6th year of Hijri, the mother of the faithfuls (the Prophet’s wife) Ayesha was accused. Of course this event was not a conspiracy against Islam, which if it was, the Prophet would have expelled the conspirators. In truth, it was a plot that the some of the Prophet’s wives, mothers of the faithfuls, made against his other wife mother of the faithfuls Ayesha.

¹³ Surah of Ale-Imran, verse 159. وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّابِقِينَ

¹⁴ Surah of Al-Ahzab, verse 21. لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

¹⁵ Surah of Kahf, verse 110; and Surah of Fosselat, verse 6. قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

¹⁶ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّابِقِينَ

¹⁷ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّابِقِينَ

Regarding this matter, the Prophet consulted with some persons and among them more with Ali (AS). Ali (AS) once told the Prophet, such is not the case so because **“the miscreant men for miscreant women and sanctified women for sanctified men”**¹⁸; you are pure and spotless; you are not to be allotted except the pure.¹⁹ According to the opinion of some commentators on the occasion of Efk case the verse **“Surley they who concocted the lie are a party from among you. Deem it not an evil to you. Nay, it is good for you ...”**²⁰ was descended and the extent of accusation²¹ and the decree of Lyan was mentioned and reminded. But according to the saying of the followers of jurisprudence: the particularity of the condition of descent does not cause the particularization of the command.

About the decree of Lyan,²² it is also well known, that it was issued in the 9th year and its condition of descent was this that: one of the companions (related to the great companion Saeed Bin Ma'az or Sa'd Bin Ebadeh) said to the Prophet that you have said that: the verdict of lashing for adultery will not be issued unless there are four witnesses who should testify or confess and if other than this, the accuser should be lashed 80 times? His Excellency confirmed this. At this time, one of the Muslims (cousin of Sa'd) arrived and said, he saw his wife in the state of indecency. His Excellency said who are your witnesses? He said: I do have any witness. His Excellency said: Lash him. In this state, his friends (cousin of Sa'd) were disturbed and said: He at present is disturbed about his wife; does he deserve to be lashed too? His Excellency said: The decree of God cannot be suspended. In this situation, the condition of descent of revelation on the Prophet occurred. The companions knew that in the state of revelation, it was possible that the verdict be changed or a new verdict be descended. Therefore, they hesitated. After the state of revelation on the Prophet was finished, said: Let him go free and the decree of Lyan between husband and wife was legislated.

Now can we say: This decree was only related to the time of the Prophet? Or presently if such a situation comes up, the same verdict of God is to be executed?

Of course, some verses of the noble Koran, for example **“Say He is Allah, The One”** does not have condition of descent and have not descended for a situation because it announces news from the timeless and placeless world. Many of the Meccan verses also are such, but for those verses which are witnessed to special time and place and has a special occasion for descent, their decrees are general and are in force for all times. Of course, regarding the eternal decrees of God, these two points, should also be paid attention to, that:

1) Whatever conforms to the spirit of Sharieh law, because it is compatible with nature is durable; however the external manifestation of creatures is changeable according to time and place. For example, the principle of marriage for humans - and even living creatures - is the law of nature, resulting in every faith and custom it is fulfilled with a particular

¹⁸ Surahof Nour, verse 26: Unclean men for unclean women, and clean women for clean men. **الْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ**

¹⁹ In Financial affairs also the same example is true. That:
If the world becomes full of blood,
A man of God will never eat except lawful.

²⁰ Surah Nour, verse 11. **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاؤُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَكُمْ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ**

²¹ Efk and Qazf terminologically mean to blame someone.

²² Lyan in vocabulary means to keep far away and expel and in juristic terminology means God's curse on those who lie as it has come in religious rules.

outline and corresponding to the social and geographic conditions that should be considered. About the age of maturity of girls and boys, the Koran does not specify a specific age. The universality of maturity whether in marriage and whether in worship conform to instinctive intellect and innate nature, but in every geographic region is different. The age of maturity for a girl or boy for example ten years in Africa and equatorial regions is different with the same age in Siberia and Scandinavian countries.

2) In the science of law – either on the subject of lawmaking or on the subject of judgment – it is believed that the lawmakers should write law in such a manner that not even a very rare occasion and exception be out of his sight. But, if the case after the years and centuries did not occur, we cannot say that the verdict is nullified, but it should be said that it has not found application. Some decrees are such, although not cancelled but has no possibility of execution. Design of such regulations, shows the skill and dominance of legislator on all needs of society. The problem of permission of multiple spouses in Islam is of such affairs. Of course, in the beginning we must pay attention to this points that in our judgment or self exercising be as justification of this couplet of Masnavi that:²³ When you read the command “eat” then surly read the remainder of the command: “**don’t exceed the limit**”.

In the same law that this permission has been issued legally from the religious morals viewpoint says: **And if you cannot do justice....**²⁴ Pay attention that not only an order for plurality of spouses has not been issued, rather it has been prohibited to an extent and from this viewpoint, not to mistake permission from order.

About slavery also is such. At the beginning, let me explain that in the past era slavery had existed in different societies with varied stipulations and therefore according to what historians say in the year 1863 AD coinciding with the civil war in America was abrogated by Abraham Lincoln. Despite of this, the abrogated promulgation had become an instrument for colonization and exploitation for a long time and in this manner old slavery changed form to exploitation and servitude and factories substituted for feudal masters. About Islam the truth is that Islam did not establish slavery, rather set up regulations for the existing rule that gradually was limited and eventually abolished. Islam instead of abolishing all at once and dismissing thousands of servants and slaves who did not know to do their jobs, and freeing all of them at one time would disorganize the society’s economy, established abundant compulsory and recommended ways for their freedom; and for its completion narrowed the way to slavery and after the absence of the Imam of the Age it was stopped totally and if these commandments were enacted upon, not one slave would have existed after one century.²⁵

The eternity of divine oration is not only about the social decrees; moral example of it is one of the Meccan verses. The beginning verses of Surah of Abasa is this: **He frowned and turned away, because the blind man came to him, and what would make thee know that he might purify himself.**²⁶ The condition of descent of these verses is this that: one day the Prophet was advising a group of arrogant Meccans. At this time Ibn Omm-e-Maktum who

²³ Masnavi Manavi, Book five, couplet 1407.

²⁴ Surah of Al-Nisa, verse 129. ... وَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا

²⁵ For more explanation of this subject see the paper: برده داری در اسلام، عرفان ایران، شماره ۱۹، صص ۱۸-۱۰. نگارش

حضرت آقای حاج دکتر نورعلی تابنده، مجذوبعلیشاه.

عَبَسَ وَ تَوَلَّى أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكَّى

was a special companion of the Prophet and blind entered walking and did not see the Prophet who was speaking and inviting them to Islam and from far requested the Prophet that read of the Koran for me, to purify me. His Excellency did not say anything and he also repeated his request few times. The Prophet frowned and turned his face away, he departed towards his house too, and these verses were descended. The Prophet immediately ran after him and called him and consoled him. Of course, some commentators also say that since these verses consists of harshness and harshness is under the dignity of the Prophet, they are not about His Excellency. In contrast such matter under no circumstances not only reduces the dignity of the Prophet, rather brings it up. The descent of this verse is what it was said, but its interpretation, is harshness to all those who turn their faces from their brothers in faith. Therefore, here also, the noble Koran in the same way has mentioned other stories for training of the Muslims; has mentioned this event and has requested that we draw conclusions by ourselves. That conclusion is not liable to nullification and the verses themselves are received as citation of the events, not the juristic and canonical commandment, and it is for this reason, if it is said: “The oration of the Koran is eternal”.

It is not such that the addressee of the verses of the Koran, both Meccan or Madinite, be the Muslims of the time of the Prophet. Moreover, there should be those whom it be addressed, be interpreted and make it to be orated as Ali (AS) says: **This Koran is nothing more than handwritten between two binding covers and does not speak by itself**,²⁷ and must be interpreted. Those who interpret it by tongue. It is from this visage that Ali (AS) about himself said: **I am the vocal Koran and proof of the truth**. The great Messenger (S) said to Ali (AS) you will fight for the interpretation of the Koran, just like me that I fought for its descent.

The reason that we have been commanded to read the Koran and to ponder and contemplate in it is to become the Koran’s addressee, to comprehend and attain its eternal meaning. God willing.

²⁷ Najul Balaghe, sermon 125. وَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ إِنَّمَا هُوَ حَظٌّ مَسْطُورٌ بَيْنَ الدَّقِيقِينَ لَا يَنْطَلِقُ بِلِسَانٍ وَلَا بُدَّ لَهُ مِنْ تَرْجُمَانٍ وَإِنَّمَا يَنْطَلِقُ عَنْهُ الرَّجَالُ