

"I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke in me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive"....Malcolm X

In the highest civilization, the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity. A nation survives & becomes civilized when its citizens can access trustworthy & impartial sources of information, when it can discern lies from truth. And with the decimation of reading & the increasing fusion of news & entertainment, the retreat by many readers into the **ideological ghettos of the Internet are leaving them deaf, dumb & blind.**

Amazon's Kindle e-book reader will fail, Jobs said in 2008, because Americans simply don't read. "It doesn't matter how good or bad the product is, the fact is that people don't read anymore," he said. "Forty percent of people in the US read one book or less last year. The whole conception is flawed at the top because people don't read anymore." Jobs was wrong. More digital books are being bought.

Don't use the gift of reading on romance books as it originates in **dissatisfaction** & embodies a valid, if limited, protest...in the imagination of women. The poison of these books enters gradually into the soul; it first makes itself master of the understanding, then infects the will, and in the end kills the soul. There is no means more efficacious & secure of sending a young person to perdition than the reading of such poisoned works. Flush the offending volume down the toilet, which is the best place for the undigested excreta of dubious nourishment. The first discipline of education must be to refuse resolutely to feed the mind with canned chatter. The author of pernicious writings & art is the devil, who artfully conceals the poison. The reading of such works kindles the concupiscence of the senses, and awakens the passions; these easily gain the consent of the will, or at least render it so weak that when the occasion of any dangerous affection occurs the devil finds the soul already prepared to allow itself to be conquered.

There are women in middle life, whose days are crowded with practical duties, physical strain & moral responsibility...they fail to see that some use of the mind, in solid reading/study, would refresh them by its contrast with cares & would prepare interest & pleasure for their

GOOD READERS BECOME GREAT LEADERS!

later years. To effect better social relations & illuminate a path to a better future read books with substantial artistic & intellectual value.

The perfection of the great is beset upon the perfection of the small & unless the atom were perfect the Whole would be imperfect. If any particle were omitted the aggregate would cease to be. The universe is perfect because the smallest star is perfect; the equilibrium of the earth is perfect because the grain of dust is perfect. Were the small things out of balance the whole would fall to pieces – it would cease to be. If we neglect the small, first word of Revelation "Iqra" we would cease to become anything of value. We would remain small & insignificant in the eyes of God no matter the amount of wealth acquired.

When you learn to read, you will find that earth is crammed with Heaven. Otherwise life is dry & barren. Spurn reading & it impedes the healthy growth of the mind. Thought reading is like the circulation of the blood...transport of nourishment to the soul/body. Ben Franklin talks about teaching himself to write by reading good writers & then emulating their style as well as the quality of their thought.

Reading is a means of thinking with another's mind; it forces you to stretch your own that it never goes back to its original dimensions. How many a person has dated a new era in their life from the reading of a book! The book exists for us, perchance, that will explain our miracles & reveal new ones. The unutterable things we may find somewhere written. Like instruments we await the right touch. Ready to respond in the majesty of harmony to the master hand. We are the sensitive strings that shall resound joyously in myriad overtones to the dominant chord of a true & ringing thought. **This is the value of a book, that its thought shall make us vibrate. Not to read is to become unresponsive like a neglected instrument** – to lose the feeling & sympathetic quality of tone. Such is the purpose of reading, to strike a true note, that the overtones shall respond, and within us may resound a higher octave than ever before, perchance a deeper one; the spiritual range is extended, the gamut of heart & intellect increased, and impelled to search deep within; new visions of truth & beauty arise before us, and life assumes noble & majestic proportions.

That which is true of books is true of all education, which should aim to lead out rather than to pour in, – to unfold the possibilities of the mind, to develop capacity to act, work & to think originally. To this end, and **as a means only**, the study of another's thought serves as a training, a suggestion – it may be an inspiration; as a means it is a stepping-stone to self-

CRAVE FOR KNOWLEDGE THAN FOR RICHES!

development, **but considered as an end** it proves a stumbling block to original thought. And hence the **not rare anomaly of men of much learning & but little wisdom, & of unlettered men of profound insight; of polished men of shallow views, & of men of rough exterior & deep, rugged thoughts.** Pseudo-education takes in much & contributes little.

TV viewing versus reading: TV tells a story in a way that requires **no imagination**; the picture on the screen & the sound provide all we need to know – there is nothing to fill in. TV watching should more properly be called staring; it engages eye & ear simultaneously in a relentless & persistent way & leaves no room for daydreaming. This is what makes **watching such an inferior form of leisure** – not that it's passive, but that it offers little opportunity for reflection & contemplation. Reading a book, our attention shifts at will. The mind wanders. The imagination stimulate thoughts, memories & reflections. These interruptions are an integral part of the experience of relaxing. Watching TV is focused, structured, scheduled.

"God elevates to high positions those who are faithful & those who have acquired knowledge". (58:11) Education without spiritual content is education without a purpose. Without reading, life has no meaning. Without meaning, learning has no purpose. Without a purpose, schools are **houses of detention**, not attention. Many people educate themselves **who cannot afford education** by reading all they can. Those who have read good literature have lived more than those who cannot read.

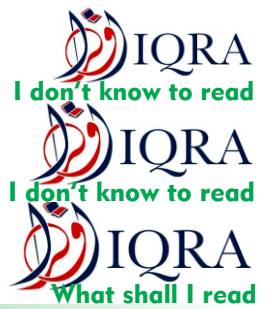
This is joke loaded with meaning: **Two trucks loaded with a thousand copies of Roget's Thesaurus collided as they left a publishing house. Witnesses were stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, appalled, surprised, shocked.** One copy of the Quran colliding with an open mind will educate, excite, challenge, stimulate, invigorate...*Iqra*...can you be the next Shakespeare, immersed in doing something literary great; or are you consumed by mindless drivel on social media. Memes and tweets don't count as READING.

On Judgment Day: Be prepared to **read** your Book of Life! Or will you shockingly ask: **"What manner of Book is this..."** It won't be a mindless recitation in the way you treated the Quran...as "foolish nonsense."

Iqra!!! All of humanity, all the angels & God await! Hopefully you have a book of mostly good deeds to read & not just a leaflet listing your empty "enjoyments."

"Do they not Ponder on the Quran...?"
(QURAN 47:24)

The Revelation that changed a moment that changed a man that changed humanity



Profound intelligence is the only foundation FOR immortality

Scriptures, inspired texts, great writings & sayings offer guidance on the course of action to be followed, the **ethical considerations** to be heeded, the **decisions** to be made under certain **pressures, crises, or confrontations** – decisions whose consequences are often quite grave.

Who can price the value of such readings at such times?

The uncertainties & complexities of existence are **not** due to qualities inherent in life, but to the **error of minds yet undeveloped**. Man needs to be taught. Spiritual reading & prayer are the arms by which hell is conquered & paradise won. No one can be devoted to the service of God who do **not** practice constant reading. **The reading of spiritual works is as profitable as the reading of bad books is noxious.** As the former has led to the conversion of many sinners, so the latter is every day the ruin of many persons. Just as the human needs breast milk for proper development, so also they need spiritual milk from the breasts of divine books. To feel beautifully alive means to be reading something interesting, ready always to apprehend in the flow of language the sudden flash of insight. **By reading, life assumes noble & majestic proportions...** A book: an effective tool against intolerance & ignorance as was meant to be via God's Call...**IQRA**. There are **three** levels of reading: **structural** reading, in which the reader becomes familiar with how a particular book is organized; **interpretive** reading, in which the reader attempts to understand that book; and **critical** reading, in which the reader enters a conversation about the arguments the author makes in the book. Together, these three levels are a key that can unlock many shades of meanings. **Memorization is not knowledge. It can never be a bridge to understanding.**

In the Name of your Lord, who created. He created man from an embryo. Read & your Lord, Most Exalted, Teaches by means of the pen. He teaches man what he never knew.

During the sacred month of Ramaḍān and in all moments of life, the one who seeks to follow the Prophets' example (sunnah) must engage in the intense remembrance (dhikr) of God's Names. In doing so, the spiritual seeker responds to the Calling (al-da'wah) – thereby perfecting his or her human soul to attain direct communion with the Holy Spirit – the Spirit which inspired the Prophet to “RECITE the Name of your Lord who created” (iqra' bi-smi rabbika'lladhi khalaqa).

Humans are complacent & easily swayed with one level of Truth...this is the **danger zone** actually... being stuck at one level of insight. And that's why many Muslims give the Quran the poor man's “reading.” They are stuck...with the belief they are earning “rewards” for every letter they “read.” It doesn't matter if they don't think about & act upon what they read. Reading in this manner is like eating the ingredients that go into a stew instead of cooking them together in the pot. You eat the carrots, then the potatoes, then the meat. You won't go away hungry, but it's not quite satisfying. Only a thoughtful contemplation gives you the hot meal.

The Oxford Dictionary makes a very important distinction between Reading & Reciting. Read: 1. Look at & comprehend the meaning of (written or printed matter) by mentally interpreting the characters or symbols of which it is composed. 2. Speak (the written or printed matter that one is reading) aloud, typically to another person. Recite: Repeat aloud or declaim (a poem or a passage) from MEMORY before an audience.

In the Arabic language also, there are TWO distinct words describing the two actions of Reading & Reciting. IQRA means to Read – to comprehend meanings. Tatlu on the other hand, means *You never used to Recite* – that is to declaim words from memory. “**You did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise the falsifiers would have had cause for doubt.**” 29:48

God commands Iqra...Muslims practice tatlu/tilawah. We need Iqra. The Quran is the only Book in the world recited by so many. NO other book has ever been read as many times. Unfortunately, the Quran is also read by many **without** understanding. NO other book has been dealt in this meaningless way, **ever!** Listen: “**This is a Book full of Blessings that we have revealed to Ponder upon its verses & that persons of intellect may Reflect.**” (38:29) “**Do they not Ponder on the Quran...?**” (47:24)

The excellence of faith lies in acquiring knowledge & acting upon it. “We have made it an Arabic Quran so that you may **UNDERSTAND** it.” 43:3 It is not in any foreign tongue but in the Arabs' own language; therefore, they can have no difficulty in assessing its value & worth. Its each word is clear: its each passage & discourse, both in language & in theme, is plain.

How do we use the Quran? “**And the Messenger will say: 'O my Lord! Truly my people took this Quran for just foolish nonsense.'**” (Quran 25:29-30) Is the Prophet's cry falling on our foolish heads? To drive the point home: “Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of God are those **who do not use REASON.**” 8:22 Let's keep driving the point of understanding more deeply: “A party of non-Arabs was allowed by the Prophet (p) to recite prayers **in their own language** until they learnt Arabic.” For what: so they understood what they were saying.

Socrates: The more I learn, the more I learn how little I know. Classrooms are anemic & forlorn wastelands. Teachers have become lethargic in relation to empowering kids to ponder deeply. To give them an education of the heart & soul as well as of the mind, aimed at reviving & invigorating the whole being to achieve competence. Books lift children from their immediate surrounding with the fragrant breath of the hills & the valleys, the glory of the sunshine, the vastness of the skies, the splendour of the meadow. The massive mountain range with snow clad peaks, the rushing mountain streams, falling in rocky cascades & mighty waterfalls; the sunrise & sunset, and the wonderful canopy of stars; the wonderful variety of wild flowers – those little messengers of cheer – which cover the fields with beauty – all these aspects of Nature prove to us the care of God. Children cannot come to know of God's majesty if they do not read. To read is to fly: to soar to a point of vantage which gives a view over wide terrains of history, ideas, human variety, shared experience & the fruits of inquiries.

A very profound quote by Hemingway: “All my life I've looked at words as though I were seeing them for the first time”. It's really sad how irresponsibly we look at words & use them nowadays. There are many books where words are well-matched, the phrases flow, the meaning is clear. They engage the reader, make them think. Good writing ride on a wave of rhythm, a flow that carries us along from phrase to phrase, chapter to chapter. They weave from powerful words all that can be found in the human soul, emotions, ideas, sympathy, shame, pride, fear, desire, greed, kindness, good & evil. All of those & many more. For that is the power of words well wrought. When the mind is braced by labour, the page of the book we read become luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant.

Learning to read is much more difficult than what is taught or naturally acquired in early education. Reading involves coming to terms with the writer, i.e. understanding their words. It involves a familiarity with what is referred to in logic as material fallacies (erroneous reasoning that has the **appearance** of soundness); they crop up in modern thought more abundantly than weeds in a wasteland. Critical eyes need refined minds, and the place to refine them is at school. But our schools have failed...churning out students that cannot comprehend. This loss is impoverishing discourse & leaving them less connected to the world. The steady decline of reading means larger parts of society are plunging into dark holes & opening up greater opportunities for **corruption, disinformation & the abuse of power.** Reading is a **vaccine against such evils.** Whilst God commands us to “Read”, our schools command us to “**Reacidicid**”: **the systematic killing of the love of reading.**

There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is **not** reading them. Follow Gandhi's advice: “It is the duty of every cultured person to **read sympathetically** the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty.”

It pays to **read**: you end up with enlarged ideas & grander conceptions of your duties in this world. **For those who burn & disrespect the Quran** & then offer insipid apologies, they should do what this American did in one year. Read his amazing blog “christianreadsquran.wordpress.com” for his stunning achievement & his

conclusions: “I was tired of **hearing** what others had to say about Islam, others who often were **uninformed & loaded with an agenda that was anything but charitable** to people different from themselves.”

Confucius: No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance. Teachers must speak up for the development of kids even if the system defangs, demotes or drives them out. Be a true voice for literacy. Continue to shape & refine the educational philosophy as a teacher. If kids cannot read it becomes difficult for them to separate illusion from reality, fact from opinion, reality from fantasy. They are birds without wings. Don't shatter their dreams. Like dreaming, reading performs the prodigious task of carrying us off to other worlds. But reading is not dreaming because books, unlike dreams, are subject to our will: they envelop us in alternative realities by our explicit permission to do so. Books are the dreams we would most like to have, and, like dreams, they have the power to change consciousness, turning sadness to laughter and anxious introspection to the relaxed contemplation of some other time & place.

A study titled “Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills & Poverty Influence High-School Graduation,” based on an analysis of 4000 children studied over ten years, concluded that those who don't read “proficiently” by third grade are less likely to graduate high school, and those who live in poverty & also do not read “proficiently” by grade three are even less likely to graduate high school. **ALL KIDS DESERVE BETTER.**

Libraries definitely matter & they matter a lot. Even in this Kindle age. Libraries should be a kid's candy store. It has been established that more access to books results in more reading & more reading leads to better literacy development. This prediction has been confirmed by a number of studies showing a positive relationship between library quality & reading achievement. All schools should make sure their students are members of the public library. And with the way things are they should make sure the parents are also members too. What a school thinks about its own library is a measure of what it thinks about education. From Adam (p) who was commanded to teach the angels, to Muhammad (p) commanding us to read, one suspects that Paradise is one huge library.

This is a Book full of Blessings that we have revealed

to Ponder upon its verses & that persons of intellect may Reflect

(QURAN 38:29)

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