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How to Understand the Qura'an

One of the most glaring issues in the muslim community is the lack of reference to the very book at the core of our religion; the Qura'an. The Qura'an, being from Allah (SWT) should serve as a guide as to how one should lead their lives, however, more often than not, other sources, ~~so~~ are significantly more tempting, allowing for a distortion of the religion, as the knowledge gained would depend entirely on the intention and ~~the~~ credibility of the source. In part, this aversion to our holy text can be accredited to its sheer vastness. Although not a particularly large text, the variety of topics covered from surah to surah is easy to get lost in. The question, then, is how to go about understanding the Qura'an, if simply reading it will not do.

One method for understanding the Qur'an is to try to break it up. Generally, each Surah - the story that it tells can be placed in one of ~~five~~^{five} categories: reflection, history, admonishing, instructing or about rewards.

The first category is reflection. ~~An example~~ These Surahs are meant to make a person realize their dependancy on God.

~~For example~~, An example of this would be water. Water, which is so easily dismissed as a commonplace thing, but, if one stops to think about it, they would realize it's importance to survival. Human life is completely dependant on such a simple thing as water, and, therefore, is even more so dependent on the provider of this sustenance; Allah. Other examples of reflection include human dependency on livestock (for food, transportation, clothes, etc), and our access to seafood, the bounty of the ocean.

The next category, in which a

references, each with knowledge to be gained from them.

For example, in the story of prophet Musa, the pharaoh thought himself to have powers/deserve reverence similar to God, and therefore, to put it frankly, got screwed over. The society of prophet Hud engaged in sexually depraved behavior, forgetting the females. Their society was therefore doomed and destroyed. Other examples include prophet Noah and the arc, proving that belief is not hereditary and Allah's orders are to be followed, among other things.

A smaller portion of the Qura'an is spent talking about specific instructions. Surah Israah, for example, contains many of these instructions, including 'respect your parents', and 'believe in one god.'

To both encourage and, to some degree, scare a person to use the knowledge gained

These surahs are usually very allegorical, discussing how mountains will turn to cottonballs.

Lastly, the 'heaven/hell' category talks about rewards (or punishments). If one is to follow the advice in the Qura'an, the Qura'an contains examples of the lavish rewards found in heaven. If not, it also discusses hell.

By categorizing surahs into one of the aforementioned categories and ~~reading~~ interpreting it with common sense, an understanding of the context and belief + sincerity, one can begin to understand the Qura'an better.