

Question: Is it true that Tidjani practitioners claim that the prayer called Salat Fatihi is superior to reading the noble Quran?

Answer: This affirmation is absolutely wrong. In the book **Djawahirou-l-Ma'ani**, Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) said :

“The prominence of the Quran over all other words, whether they are formulas of Zikr or prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), including Salat Fatihi, is more radiant than the sun. This radiance is implementing in the very principles of the Shari’a itself (Quran and the authentic prophetic hadith).

This prominence has two main reasons:

1- Firstly, because the Quran is the very word of the Supreme Being, and thus is superior to all other words.

2- Secondly, because the Quranic commandments are unique and above all other commandments.”

Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) classifies the benefit of reading the noble Quran in four categories according to the state of the reader:

The first category concerns holy people who live in the ocean of Divine Truth, those who extract all the merit from the reading of the Quran. For this category, reading the Quran is above all zikr.

The second category includes those who perfectly understand the meaning of the Quran and who, when reading it, are moved to such an extent that they believe that they are hearing the Supreme Being HimSelf dictating it, and whose life is a realization of the Sacred Texts. The benefits that he gains from reading it are almost the same as those of the first category.

The third category includes those who attentively read the noble Quran but do not understand it and who are moved by this reading to the point of believing that they hear The Lord and they scrupulously follow the commandments taught by the Holy Book while inquiring, consequently these people benefit greatly from reading it but not as much as those of the two preceding categories.

The fourth category includes those who read the noble Quran without paying any attention, whether they understand or not the reading, and indulge in bad deeds with no care for the commandments of the Quran, the work of these people leads to their loss and they commit a sin every time they read it as is said in the following passages of the Quran:

“And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord but turns away from them and forgets what his hands have put forth? Indeed, We have placed over their hearts coverings, lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness. And if you invite them to guidance - they will never be guided, then - ever.” (Surate 18 The Cave, verse 57)

“And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind. He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allah] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.”” (Surate 20 TA-HA, verses 124,125,126)

Only for the fourth category of people, the prayer upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is more beneficial than reading the Quran, because from this kind of reading they only attract the wrath of The Lord.

On the other hand, every time they recite the prayer upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), The Lord, the angels and all creation pray upon them 10 times. Because of this, they have everything to gain by praying upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and everything to lose by reading the noble Quran.”

The famous « tabi'i » (follower), the pious salaf Hassan Bassri (may ALLAH be pleased with him) said: “Some of the worst people are those who read the Quran and do not put its principles into practice and do not follow its path, these people are cursed by ALLAH and cursed by the cursers.”

As for Hassan Basri (may ALLAH be pleased with him), he had classified the readers of the Quran as follows:

“The readers of the Quran are classified into three categories:

- Those who consider it like merchandise with which they seek to acquire the possessions of other people.
- Those who are masters of recitation and ignore its instructions, who use it to extort money from the authorities and in order to flatter their own pride in front of others –many of these people know the Quran by heart - May ALLAH (The Glorified, The Exalted) limit their number...
- And lastly, those who read the Quran and meditate on its verses, who heal themselves with its remedies, who look to its remedies for a cure, and who apply it the ills of their heart. By their intermediary, we request the rain, and it is thanks to them that blessings are obtained, and it is through their invocation that misfortune is repelled. They represent the party of ALLAH and the party of ALLAH will be victorious.”

We should understand the following words of Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) in the light of these explanations: “One recitation of Salat Fatihi is the equivalent of six thousand times the merit of reading the Quran.” What is meant by this is that for one recitation of Salat el Fatithi, ALLAH inscribes for the servant six thousand times the reward for reading the entire Quran.

Similarly, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said :

« For the servant who recites Surah Yasin, ALLAH inscribes ten times the reward of reading the entire Quran. »

What is meant by this is that for one recitation of Surah Yasin, ALLAH (The Glorified, The Exalted) inscribes for the servant the reward for reading the Quran ten times.

Consequently, given that reading a single letter of the Quran is equivalent to at least ten good deeds, as it is stated in the Hadith related by Tirmidhi in which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said : « Whoever reads one letter from the Book of Allaah will earn thereby one

good action. One good deed is equal to ten good deeds the like of it. I do not say that *Alif-Lam-Mim* is one letter, but *Alif* is one letter, *Laam* is one letter and *Meem* is one letter. »

It suffices, therefore, to multiply the number of letters of the Quran by at least ten to obtain the basic reward of the reading of the whole Quran.

This reward is then multiplied by ten for he who recites the Surah Yasin and is inscribed for this person according to the prophetic hadith. The same method applies to Salat el Fatihi, except that, in this case, the reward for the reading of the entire Quran should be multiplied by six thousand.

On this subject, it is written in Djawahiru-l-Ma'ani that Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) said:

« It is highly possible that ALLAH shows the reward of Salat el Fatihi to some of those **narrow-minded** people, who do not know the immensity of Divine Grace and Generosity, the reward of Salat Fatihi. »

So he (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) was asked: « If this is the case, given the importance of Salat el Fathi, should we concentrate all our efforts on it to the detriment of all other forms of Zikr and even the reading of Quran? »

He (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) answered: « No! The reading of the Quran takes priority and is required by the revelation. The Quran is the container of grace, the foundation of the Shari'a and the basis for the connection with the Divine, and one must not forget the strict interdiction to neglect the reading of it. It is therefore strictly forbidden to forsake the recitation of it. As for the blessings of Salat el Fatihi that we have mentioned, neglecting it is without consequences because it is considered as a meritorious act. »

In another passage of Djawahiru-l-Ma'ani, Seyyidina (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) said:

“The noble Quran is the best Zikr provided that, when reading it, the follower considers inwardly that, in fact, ALLAH Himself is talking to him. If the follower remains in this state and ultimately realizes this, he will have access to complete spiritual annihilation. Then, he will reach the door of Divine Proximity. ”

Our Master Seyyidina (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) also said:

« For he whose deeds and states have been purified with a view to God, the Quran is certainly the best way to approach ALLAH. »

He (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) also asserted:

« If you reply: « The reward for reading the Quran is accounted for independently of the reader, and this reward is even granted to the sinful » then this is my answer: “It is possible that ALLAH grants him the reward for the reading of the Quran, but on the other hand this reward will be cancelled because he has not acted in conformity with the precepts of the Quran.”

Reciting the Quran without putting it into practice is a situation which falls within the scope of the parable that ALLAH gave in his book concerning the people of the Torah: “The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books].” (Surate The congregation Friday 62, verse 5)”

Evidently, the donkey does not benefit from carrying the books on its back. Then, know that when He says: “and then did not take it on” means that they have not acted in conformity with the instructions of the Torah.

ALLAH also said : « Those to whom We have given the Book recite it with its true recital. They [are the ones who] believe in it. » (Surate 2 The Cow, verse 121)

Reciting it properly implies acting upon these instructions. He who turns away from this, has not really read it. »

Seyyidina (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) also said :

« If you want to know how much love for ALLAH and His Messenger you actually have, look at the love you have in your heart for the Quran, [and see] whether the pleasure you have listening to it is superior to that of listening to distractions, songs and melodies. » Djawahirou-l-Ma’ani

What right do you have to affirm unscrupulously that by means of Salat el Fatihi, Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) wanted to turn Muslims away from reading and studying the Quran? Is this not a shameless lie ?

It is totally false and culpable, as some have tried to make others to believe that Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) would have claimed that the merit of Salat Fatihi is superior to the merit of the Quran and that he would have encouraged his disciples to forsake the recitation of the Divine words. The aforementioned words of Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) demonstrate the contrary. Seyyidina himself was diligent and very attached to the recitation of the Quran which he has memorized since the age of seven.

It is related in the **El Ifadat-l-Ahmediya** that when Seyyidina (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) paused during the recitation, he began the verse again and when he was questioned about the reason for this, he replied (or words to that effect): “ALLAH has allowed me to realize what each and every letter is accountable for, and so I cannot overlook it.”

In El Ifadat el Ahmediya, it is also related that Seyyidina Ahmed Tidjani (may ALLAH sanctify his precious secret) said: “The holder (who knows the Quran by heart) of the Quran should recite at least two sections (hizbayne) everyday” thus conforming to the words of the two Sheikhs according to AbdALLAH ibn Amrou (may ALLAH be pleased with them): “Read the whole Quran in one month.”

No disciple of the Tariqa Tidjaniya and its teachings neglect reading and studying the Quran. On the contrary, the Zawiyas Tidjaniya throughout the world are centers for the study and meditation of the noble words of ALLAH.

The merit of all deeds belongs to ALLAH (The Glorified, The Exalted). ALLAH can grant more merits to a certain thing without this meaning that this deed is superior to or can replace another

one. Thus, as we will demonstrate, some have received specificities in certain fields without this necessarily implying that they are superior to those who have not received these specificities.

Similarly, with regards to the merits of deeds, some hadiths could emphasize prayer, some of them emphasize combat in the path of ALLAH (The Glorified, The Exalted), some of them could emphasize evocation and so and so forth... In fact everything depends on the context and the situation. Indeed, when confronting the enemy, Jihad becomes the best deed. In other circumstances, it is prayer, and so on...

This is exemplified in the following words of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him):

« Whoever accomplishes the dawn prayer in congregation and then sits to evoke ALLAH until sunrise and then performs two rak'at of prayer, receives a reward equals to that of a perfect, perfect, perfect Hajj and a perfect, perfect, perfect Umra » (Tirmidhi, according to Anas, may ALLAH be pleased with them - Sahih)

« An Umra (performed) during Ramadan is equivalent to a Hajj » (Bukhari - Sahih)

This merit does not mean that the Umra is the same as the Hajj and that it exempts us from the obligation of accomplishing it. Equally, it does not mean that if we have accomplish the deeds mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in the first hadith, we have no need to accomplish the Hajj, nor that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) encourages us to neglect the accomplishment of the Hajj, because he rewards us for a perfect Hajj and Umra. Only an ignorant person could come to such conclusion.

Then, some people affirmed that it is only allowed to pray upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) with the Ibrahimiyah prayer, because this is the prayer that he taught to his companions (may ALLAH be pleased with them).

When his companions asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): « How can we pray upon you », he (peace and blessings be upon him) taught them a way of praying upon him (using Salat Ibrahimiyah), but this does not signify that it is forbidden to pray upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in a different way.

He who upholds this ignorant stance, opposes the instruction of ALLAH (The Glorified, The Exalted) when He says: “Indeed ALLAH and His angels pray upon the Prophet, o you who believe pray upon him and salute him with a worthy salutation”. ALLAH never says: “... and only pray upon him in this particular way...” Likewise, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) never forbade anyone to pray upon him differently, he just taught the companions who asked him, one way of praying upon him.

The instruction concerning the prayer upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is presented generally in the following verse: “Indeed ALLAH and His angels pray upon the Prophet, o you who believe pray upon him and salute him with a worthy salutation” (Surate 33 The Combined forces, verse 56), and this is the only verse which mentions this order.

Likewise, in the hadiths, the instructions concerning the prayer upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) are all presented in a general and universal manner. It is said by the scholars of Oussoul (foundation) that the (basic) rule is as follows: everything that is presented as a generality in the Book and the Sunnah should stay that way until its specific aspect has been proved.

In other words, as long as it has not been proved that this instruction can only be obeyed by means of a sole specific formula, then it is permissible to pray upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) with any formula.

Research and translation by Zawiya Tidjaniya el Kubra in Lyon, France

