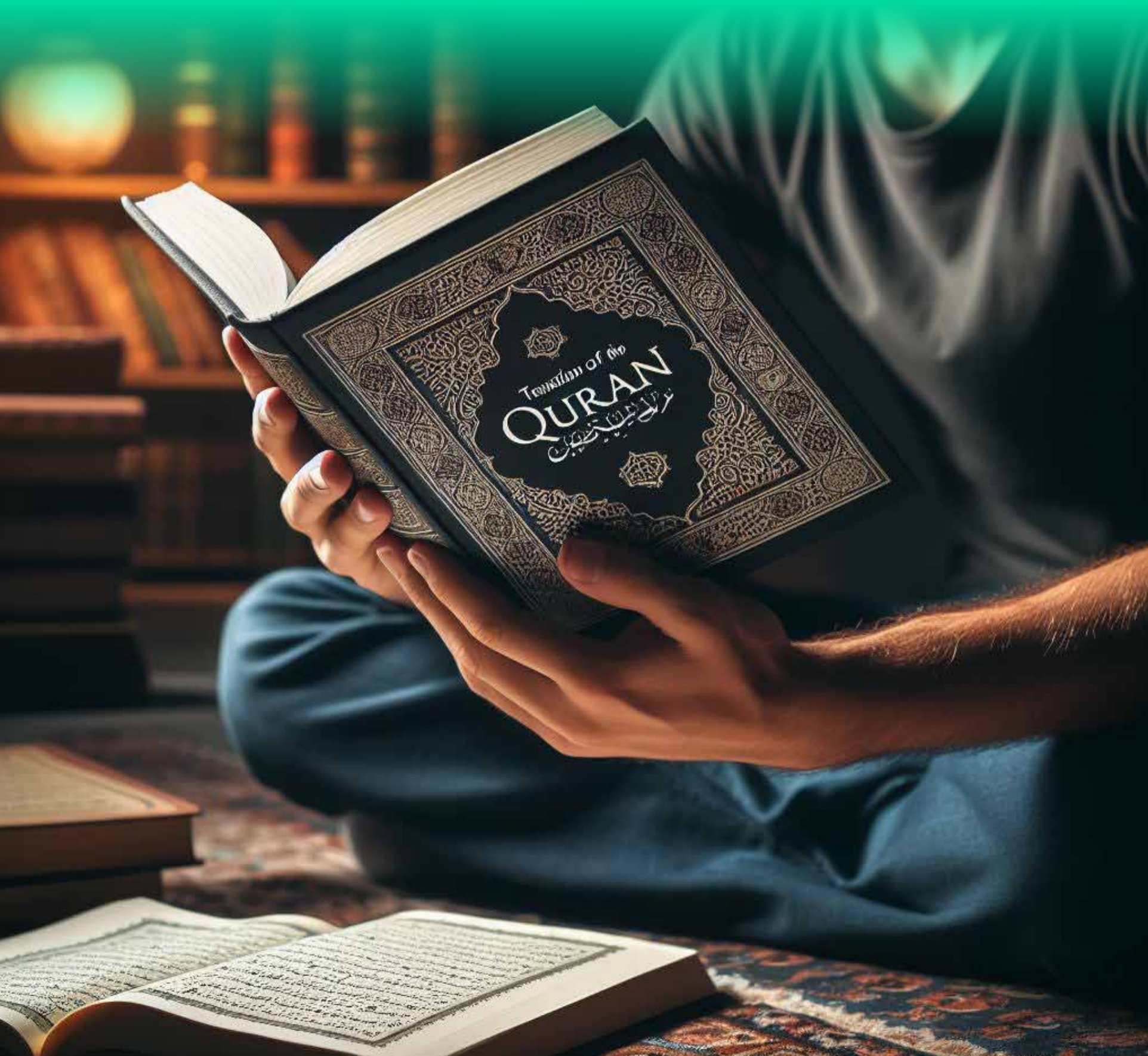


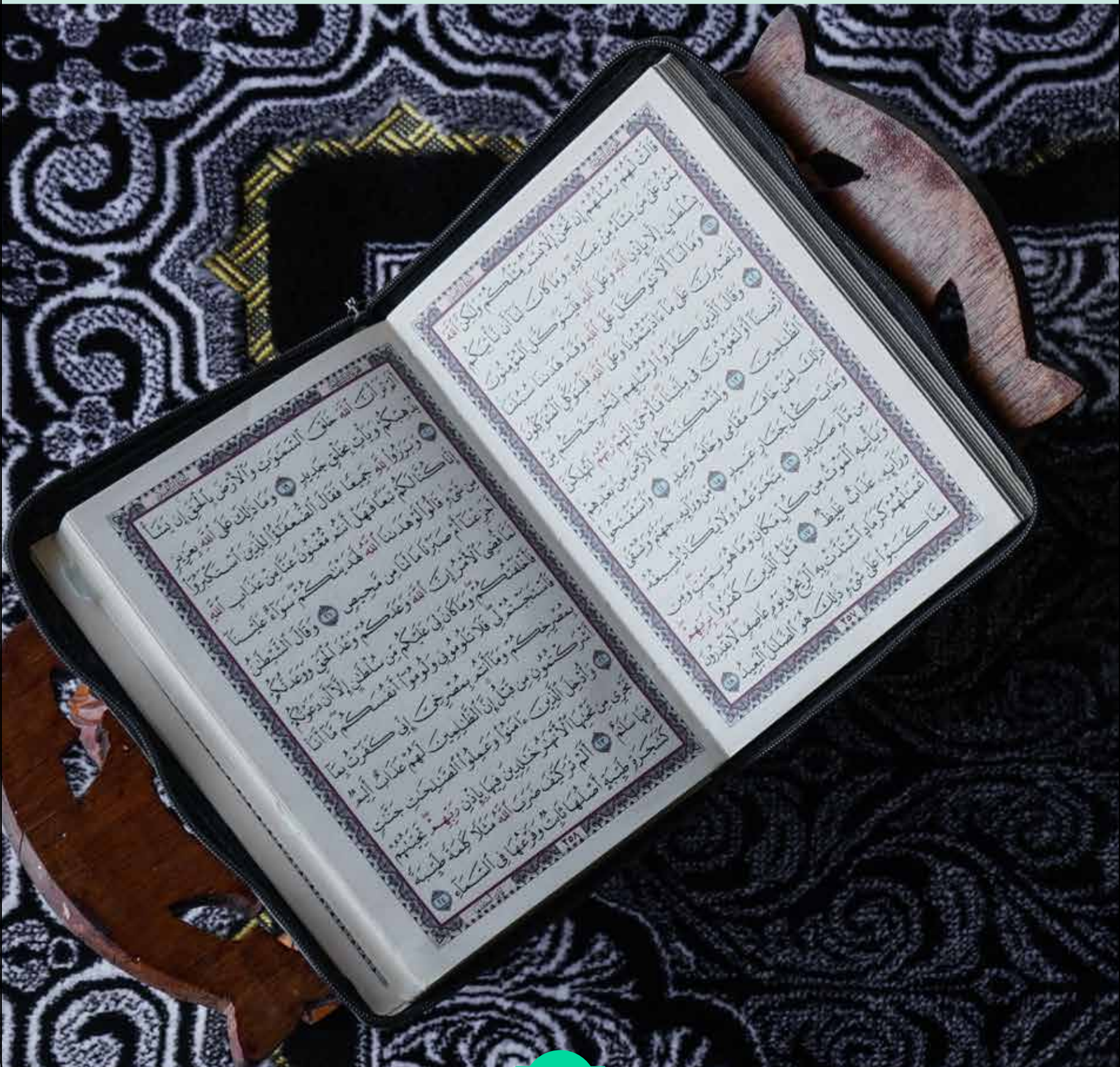


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IMPORTANCE OF CONTEMPLATING THE QURAN



There are many different ways we have been commanded to connect with the Quran. These ways include reciting and reading the Quran, memorizing the Quran, studying it, acting upon its teachings, and calling others to its guidance and lessons. One of the most important ways of connecting with the Quran is through contemplation and reflection. Contemplating the Quran means to first understand its meanings, and then to reflect upon these meanings.



Contemplating the Quran enables us to better appreciate the words of God. It increases our faith and shows us the beauty of the lessons and principles contained in the Quran. God says, “This is a blessed Scripture which We sent down to you [Muhammad], for people to think about its messages, and for those with understanding to take heed.” [38:29] In this passage, God tells us that the Quran was sent down for people to ponder over its messages and lessons, and for people to take heed.

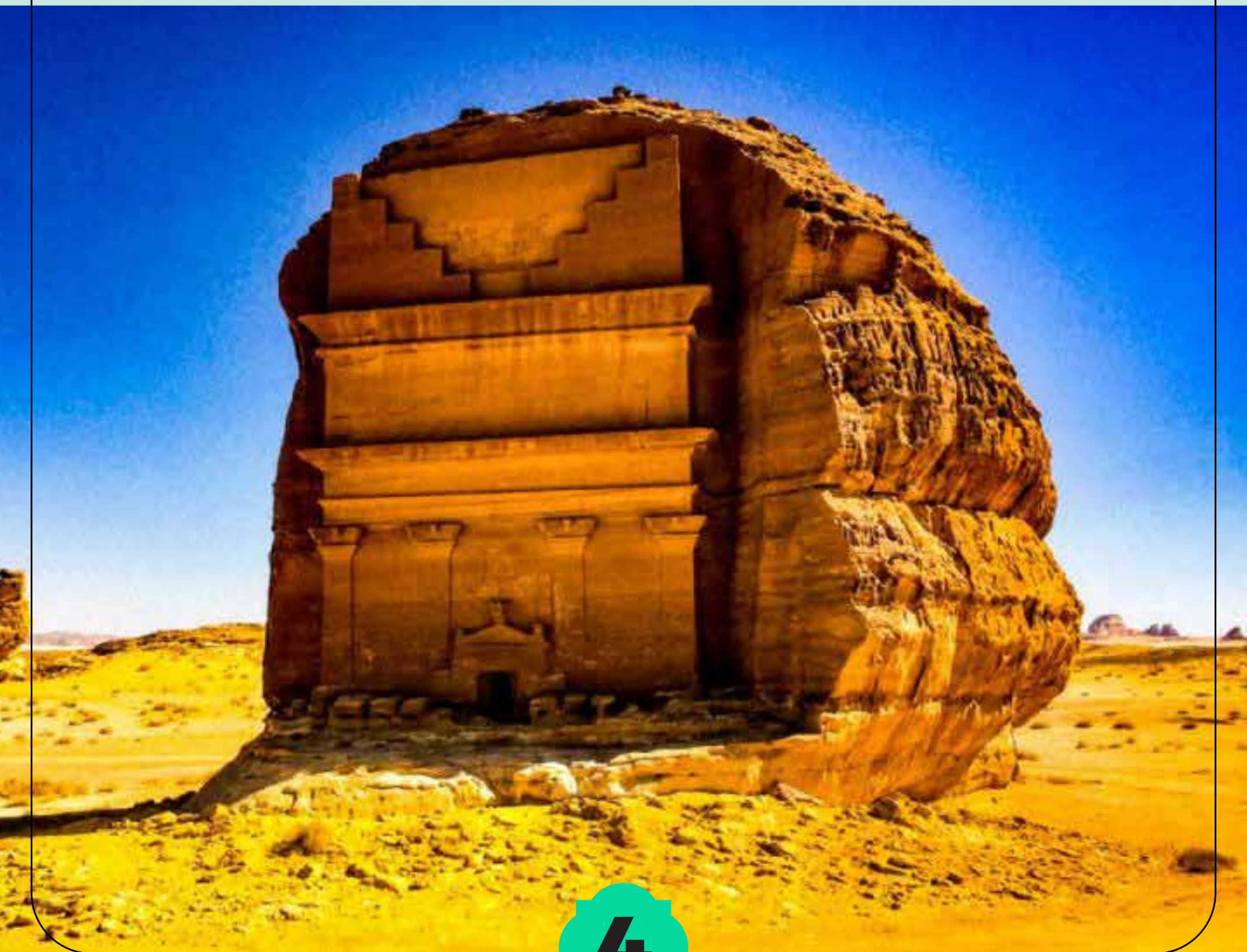
In another passage, God says, “Will they not contemplate the Quran? Do they have locks on their hearts?” [47:24] This is because contemplation of the Quran brings about a stronger connection with the speech of God and His commandments. The Messenger Muhammad used to contemplate the Quran as he was reciting it. He would encourage his disciples to do so too.



On one occasion, the Messenger Muhammad asked one of his disciples by the name of Ibn Masud to recite to him from the fourth chapter. When he reached the following passage, “What will they do when We bring a witness from each community, with you [Muhammad] as a witness against these people?” 4:41, the Messenger Muhammad told him to stop and Ibn Masud saw the messenger crying. If we reflect on this verse, the Messenger Muhammad is being told that he will be made to be a witness over all of mankind on the Day of Judgement. This is a serious task and responsibility, and the Messenger Muhammad was remembering this.

In another narration, the Messenger Muhammad was offering the optional nightly ritual devotion and crying as he was reciting the Quran. When asked what made him cry, he said that it was the final passage of the third chapter that made him cry, bemoaning those who recite it and don't contemplate its meaning. God says, “There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding, who remember God standing, sitting, and lying down, who reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth: ‘Our Lord! You have not created all this without purpose- You are far above that! - so protect us from the torment of the Fire.’” 3:190-192

On a third occasion, the Messenger Muhammad's closest disciple, Abu Bakr, said to him one day, "O Messenger of God, some of your hair is turning white." The Messenger Muhammad responded, "It is the chapter named after the messenger Hud, (Chapter #11), and similar chapters that have turned them white." If we reflect on Chapter 11, it speaks about God's punishment on the past nations who turned away from God and rejected their Messengers. The Messenger Muhammad feared punishment for his people too.



Contemplation needs a few things in order for it to be effective. Firstly, we need time alone without distractions and disturbances.

Contemplation is to reflect, and this requires us to think and ponder. Find a time during the day or a couple of times a week when we are alone, and can ponder, even if only for 15 minutes. Choose a passage of the Quran that resonates with you. It is a good idea to start with the chapters that you have memorised and read often, such as the first chapter or the last few in the Quran.

Contemplation requires understanding, as we cannot contemplate something that we don't understand. Therefore, first read the translation of that passage. Read it multiple times and try to understand the words. Remember, there is no hurry. Contemplating one passage at a time is enough. For example, in passage 1 of chapter 1, what does it mean to praise God? What is praise and how is it achieved? Why do we praise God?

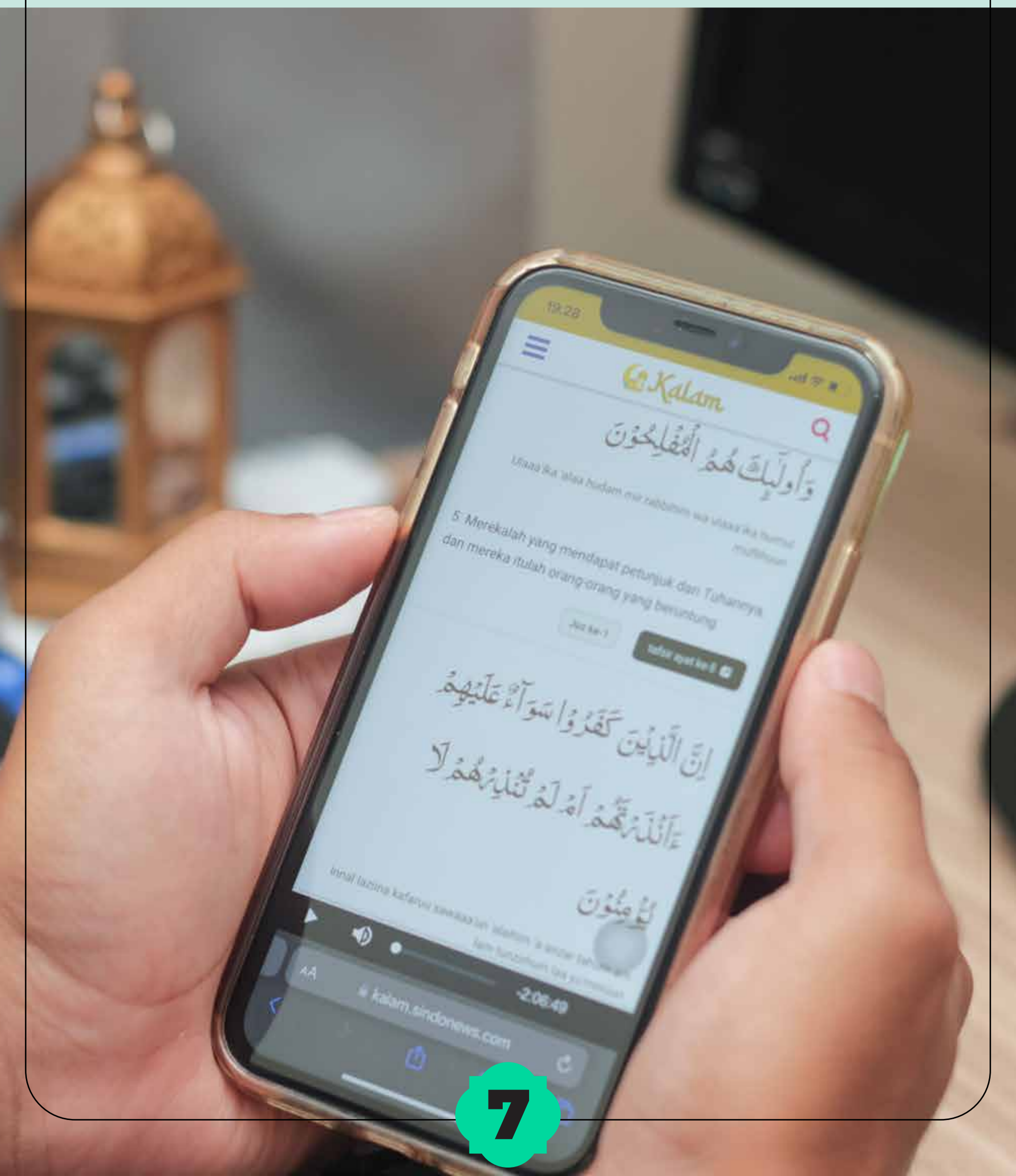


To further your knowledge in this, you will need to read and study more. Find a lecture that gives an explanation of the chapter. There are lecture series on YouTube, and books that focus on the science of explaining the Quran and its deeper meanings. This additional knowledge will allow you to better contemplate the passage. For example, praise is to glorify God with love, veneration and humility. Praise is done through speech and words of praise, but also by actions by worshipping God. We praise God because He is our Creator and Lord, worthy of our worship, and for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us, not least of which is the blessing of faith.

Do the above process for passage 2 of chapter 1. At the end of your contemplation of passage 2, try to reflect on the connection between the first two passages. In passage 2, God describes Himself with two names. The first name shows God's vast grace to all of His creation, down to the smallest insect and plant. The second name is God's specific grace to the believers that God shows to them in this life and the next.

You can now reflect on both passages. God wants us to praise Him, as He alone is worthy of all worship, the Bestower of all blessings. God is merciful and gracious to all of His creation, but especially so to the believers. God wants us to know Him by learning about His attributes and names. In this way, we can work through the passages, until the end of the chapter.

Contemplation is an amazing act of worship and one of the greatest ways of connecting with the Quran. It is a process that takes time. It can be very enjoyable and satisfying as we begin to appreciate the beauty and depth of meanings found in the Quran.





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