



A 111 Uloom Al- Quran – Lecture No. 8

INTRODUCTION TO ULOOM AL- QURAN SCIENCES OF THE QURAN

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Agenda

- ❑ The Miraculous Nature of The Quran–I’jaaz Al–Quran/ Literary forms
Mathal (simile, proverb, and metaphor)
- ❑ The Qasam (oath), The Jadal (debate)
- ❑ Stories of the Quran (Qissah)(narrative)/ Translation of The Quran)
- ❑ The Interpretation of The Quran – Tafseer/Ta'weel.
- ❑ The Types of Tafseer. Tafseer Based on Narrations/ Based on Opinion
- ❑ The Famous Tafseer Books based on Narrations/ Books based on Opinion
- ❑ Contemporary Tafseer / Translated Books

LECTURE 8

I'jaaz al-Quran

*(The miraculous nature
of the Quran)*

Mathal (Parables)

The Miraculous Nature of the Quran

Ijaz al-Quran

Definition

Ijaz refers to miraculous acts performed by prophets, which are beyond human ability to imitate. The word *'mu'jizah'*, derived from the same root, means 'miracle'. A miracle is an extraordinary event that God Almighty brings about at the hands of a Prophet to prove his Prophethood, strengthen the believer's faith, and break the unbelievers' obstinacy.

'Mu'jizah' refers to the act itself, while 'I'jaz' refers to the concept of these acts.

It means miracle.

Imam Ahmad was the 1st to use the term, and it is not found in the Quran or Sunnah, nor did the Companions use it.

The concept of Ijaz:

Based on the idea that certain acts are extraordinary and beyond human capability.

Means "to be weak" or "to be incapable of", to render powerless.

Ex: a miraculous act is the transformation of Musa's staff into a serpent,

Mujiza, also known as 'ayah' or 'bayyinah' in the Quran.

The proof for 'Ijaz

'Mu'jizah' refers explicitly to the miraculous act itself.



The miracles the Prophets brought were tailored to the areas of knowledge that their people surpassed, making communication more effective.

Ex: Prophet Musa (Moses) was raised among the Egyptians and is known for their mastery of the occult arts, sorcery, and magic. One of Prophet Musa's miracles was to place his hand in his cloak and extract a brilliantly shining hand.

When sorcerers and magicians were gathered to challenge Prophet Musa, they cast their staffs, which appeared to the audience as snakes. However, Allah turned Prophet Musa's staff into a vast, real snake that devoured the fake snakes of his opponents. This defeat was sufficient proof for the magicians and sorcerers, who knew that no one could change the nature of a stick as Musa had done.

They fell on their faces in submission and sincere belief in God.

“Then We inspired Moses, “Throw down your staff,” and—behold!—it devoured the objects of their illusion!”(7:117) وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

The proof for Ijaz

Ex: The Jewish doctors were highly respected for their medical skills in healing wounds, mending bones, and curing the sick, but Prophet `Essa's miraculous abilities surpassed theirs. He could heal the blind and the lame and even bring the dead back to life by the Will of Allah. **“And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allah” (3:49).** He could also create birds out of clay and make them fly by the permission of Allah.

EX: The Arabs were renowned for their exceptional literary skills. They used to organise annual contests during festivals, where participants would recite speeches and poems from memory. Their language had reached the pinnacle of development, and eloquence was considered the most valuable quality for an individual to possess.

The Prophet Muhammad's miracle was the Quran itself.

The miracles the Prophets brought were tailored to the areas of knowledge that their people surpassed.

Prophet Muhammad's miracle was the Quran



AYAAT ILM ACADEMY
أكاديمية آيات للعلوم الإسلامية

- The Prophet ﷺ stated: "All prophets were given something which would cause people to believe in them. The thing that I was given is none other than a revelation (the Quran) that Allah revealed to me. So, I hope I will have the most followers on the Day of Judgment." Bukhari
- Quraish challenged the Prophet ﷺ, saying, "We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or until you have a garden of palm trees and vineyards, and cause rivers to flow abundantly in it, or cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face," (Isra, 17:90-91)

• "وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبوعًا أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا (الاسراء: 90-92).

Other Miracles during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad

- Splitting of the moon at his tribe's request.
- The outpouring of water from his hands when he and his companions were short of water.
- The phenomenon of pebbles and rocks greeting him with the phrase "as-salaam `alaykum" was limited to the people of his time.
- However, the literary miracle of Muhammad ﷺ was consistent with Allah's support to the prophets before him.

Conditions to be considered a mu'jizah

- Scholars have identified conditions for an act to be considered a mu'jizah.
- It must occur with the command of Allah.
- It must be an extraordinary occurrence of nature.
- Any person or object cannot replicate it.
- The act must be performed by a person who claims prophethood.
- The act must match the claim of the prophet.
- (For instance, if a prophet claims to turn a staff into a snake but turns into a different creature, it will not be considered a mu'jizah).
- It is also essential that the act does not disprove the prophet's statement. (For instance, if a prophet claims that a particular stone will speak, and the stone does speak, but it accuses the person of lying about being a prophet, this will not be considered a miraculous event (mu'jizah).

Types of Supernatural Acts

A Karama is a supernatural act performed by a devout person. It is a type of miraculous act gifted to the followers of a prophet, but it is less miraculous than mu'jizah. The occurrence of a Karama is evidence of the prophet's truthfulness.

One of the stories of Karama involves two companions who were guided by a light that split into two and led each individual to their respective homes, as reported by (al-Bukhari).

Magicians who perform supernatural feats are not performing miracles but rather magic (Sihr) with the help of jinn.

The Quran as I'jaaz



- The Quran is a miraculous book that possesses a unique quality known as I'jaaz, which is unparalleled. This miracle is not bound by time or space and can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, and at any time, breaking through geographical and temporal barriers. It doesn't matter if you're from the past or the future; you can still witness and experience the miracle for yourself.
- No other book or poet, no matter how knowledgeable or well-versed they may be, can replicate or produce anything similar to the Quran.
- This is because the Quran is the Speech of Allah, and the difference between the Speech of Allah and that of His Creation is as vast as the difference between Allah and His Creation.

The Quran as I'jaaz



- The Quran is a miracle due to its eloquent Arabic language, unique structure, and meaningful text, the beauty in its expressions and the greatness in its style. Arabs recognise its eloquence in harmonious styles, sentences, words, and letters.
- Mu'jizah is an Arabic term associated with the forms in the Quran. It encompasses abundance, blessings, fertility, strength, and evidence-based knowledge. The Quran's words have multiple layers of meaning and purposeful order. Even non-believers acknowledged its superior quality.

I'JAZ OF THE QURAN AND THE CHALLENGE

The non-believers of Mecca accused Prophet Muhammad ﷺ of fabricating the Quran.

To counter this accusation, Allah challenged them to create a book, ten chapters or even one chapter similar to it.



Despite their well-known eloquence and literary abilities, they could not replicate the Quran.

This challenge was presented to the Arabs and, ultimately, to humanity in three stages.



The Challenge!

The Quran's challenge to mankind and the Arabs to reproduce something like it was presented in three stages.

1. **The whole Quran:** Say, 'O Prophet,' "If 'all' humans and jinn were to come together to produce the equivalent of this Quran, they could not produce its equal, no matter how they supported each other. (Isra':88).

• قُلْ لَّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا (الاسراء: 88)

"Or do they say, "He made this 'Quran' up!"? In fact, they have no faith Let them then produce something like it, if what they say is true" (At-Toor, 52:33-34)

• أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ ۗ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ (الطور: 33-34)

2. **Ten surahs:** Or do they say, "He has fabricated this 'Quran'!"? Say, 'O Prophet,' "Produce ten fabricated surahs like it and seek help from whoever you can—other than Allah—if what you say is true!" (hud: 13)

• أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ ۖ وَأَدْعُوا مَنْ أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ " (هود: 13)

The Quran is a miracle in itself and challenges humanity to produce something similar in five verses, known as the verses of challenge. These verses demonstrate the miraculous and unmatched nature of the Quran.



The challenge!

3. One surah:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a surah like it and call your helpers other than Allah, if what you say is true” (2:23-24)

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّمَّنْ مِثْلِهِ ۖ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ" (البقرة: 23-24)

“Or do they claim, “He made it up!”? Tell them ‘O Prophet’, “Produce one surah like it then, and seek help from whoever you can (other than Allah)if what you say is true!” (Yunus, 10:38).

• أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۖ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (يونس: 38)

The Works against the Challenge of the Quran

Many have tried to produce a text comparable to the Quran throughout history.

False prophets and artists made attempts, but all were met with ridicule, even by their followers.

Musaylima al-Kadhdhab is also known as "the liar. He claimed that the angel Rahman had brought him a revelation.

Aswad al-Ansi, Nadr b. al-Harith, Ibn al-Muqaffa, Ahmed b. Yahya Abū al- Hasan al-Rawandi, Ahmed b. Husain Mutanabbi and Abu 'Ala al-Ma'arri.

However, none of these attempts were successful, and some of the challengers even admitted the superior excellence of the Quran.

Types of Ijaz in the Quran

- The Literary Miracle of the Quran
- The Predictions of the Quran: past, future, and the unseen
- Scientific Miracles in the Quran
- Legislative Miracles in the Quran

The Literary Miracle of the Quran

The Quran was revealed to an audience that took pride in their language.

The style of the Quran is the most potent manifestation of this. It demonstrated the superior power of the Arabic language and showed the Arabs that the Arabic used in the Quran was far superior to any Arabic they knew.

- Al-Waleed ibn al-Mugheerah testified about the eloquence of the Quran.
- He said, "I swear by Allah, Muhammad's speech, which means the Quran, does not resemble anything I know. I also swear by Allah that this speech is very sweet and adorned with beauty and charm. Its first part is fruitful, and its last part is abundant, meaning that it is full of deep meanings. It conquers all other speech and remains unconquered.

The Literary Miracle of the Quran

The Quran's literary miracle includes five unique aspects of the Arabic language.

First, it places a particular word in a perfect context over its synonyms, giving it better connotations.

Second, it uses a unique sentence structure and syntax, which varies throughout the Quran, making each style unique with a clear and resounding rhythm.

Third, it uses different tenses (past vs. present, plural vs. singular, etc.) to give deeper meanings to a passage.

Fourth, the pronunciation of a word matches its context, using words that are easy to pronounce and harmonious to hear when discussing encouraging topics and bearing glad tidings, and vice-versa.

Finally, it perfectly combines conciseness and detail; when the subject requires elaboration, the Quran discusses the topic, and when a short phrase suffices, it remains brief.

Legislative Miracles



- The 'Aqedah and shari'ah of Islam are further proofs of the jazz of the Quran since they provide a perfect code of beliefs and system of laws for all of humanity.
- The Quran guides humanity in defining true beliefs ('Aqedah) about the Creator and implementing them in a system of laws (shari'ah) that benefit creation in this life and the next. Its perfection in 'Aqedah and shari'ah indicates its truthfulness.
- **In 'Aqedah**, the focus is on the Creator - His existence, Names, attributes, and His right to be worshipped.
- **Shariah is Allah's complete and perfect law**, covering all aspects of life, revealed to Prophet Muhammad. The Quran's inimitability is evident in the shariah.
- The Quran provides a comprehensive overview of the legal laws governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance and the roles and status of men and women in Islam. Upon careful study of these laws, we come to realise that the Quran is a genuinely divine book that provides guidance and direction to its followers on how to lead a just and fulfilling life.

The Laws and Sharia Principles

Shariah is Allah's law, revealed to Prophet Muhammad over fourteen centuries ago. It remains immutable and perfect, covering all aspects of life, including personal hygiene, familial life, societal roles, financial transactions, and political dealings. The I'jaaz (inimitability) of the Quran is apparent in all aspects of the shariah.

The Quran brought laws and sharia principles, emphasising good morals and conduct.

Say, 'O Prophet, ' "Come! Let me recite to you what your Lord has forbidden to you: do not associate others with Him 'in worship'. 'Do not fail to' honour your parents. Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for you and for them. Do not come near indecencies, openly or secretly. Do not take a 'human' life—made sacred by Allah—except with 'legal' right.¹ This is what He has commanded you, so perhaps you will understand. (Al-An'am, 6:151).

Following these rules leads to a better life in this world. The hereafter, it is impossible for any human to create a set of laws that can be applied perfectly to any society at any given time and place, except for the Sharia.

This is the only set of laws that is a perfect example of such a system. The Quran is the only set of rules that can be applied universally, regardless of the society, time, or place.

Quran has been Preserved No Contradictions in it

- Unlike other religious books, the Quran has remained unchanged, as predicted and promised by Allah. "It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it." (al-Hijr: 9) "إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لِحَافِظُونَ"

The Quran challenges its readers to find any errors if they do not believe it is really from God.

- "Will they not consider the Quran carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would have found many contradictions in it." (an-Nisaa' (4):82).

• أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا"

- The fact that the Prophet delivered all of his messages over 23 years without any contradictions is a testament to the divine origin of the Quran. Allah himself says there would have been many contradictions if it were of human origin.

Memorising the Quran

- Another miraculous aspect of the Quran that we often overlook is the ease with which it can be memorised. It is a miracle we take for granted, but we all know people who have memorised the entire book.
- It is impossible for a human being to memorise a book the size of the Quran word for word, letter for letter. This is considered to be a miracle from Allah.
- The Quran is a collection of noble verses preserved in people's hearts through memorisation. Allah says: **“But this ‘Quran’ is ‘a set of’ clear revelations ‘preserved’ in the hearts of those gifted with knowledge. And none denies Our revelations except the ‘stubborn’ wrongdoers”** (Ankabot, 29: 48-49), **بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ ۚ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ (العنكبوت: 49)**
- Memorising the Quran in its entirety is a significant accomplishment and is considered to be a miracle in and of itself. Many individuals have memorised portions of the Quran and learned the entire book.
- Also, the Quran is easy to memorise and contains deep and meaningful messages that always stay varied and varied, no matter how many times one reads it.

The Predictions about the Unseen Truths



The Quran provides explanations of divine truths and information about the creation of the universe, shedding light on many unknown aspects. It also gives valuable insights into the afterlife, including events, conditions, and stages that can not be learned otherwise but can be understood through the Quran. **Examples: Descriptions of Natural Phenomena**

1. Expansion of the universe: Allah says; "And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander." (Adh-Dhariyat, 51:47) وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ

In 1925, an American astronomer, Edwin Hubble, presented observational evidence that indicates all galaxies are moving away from each other. This implies that the universe is expanding and has become an established scientific fact.

2. Formation of galaxies from gas/smoke, Allah says: "Then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke..." (Fussilat, 41:11) ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ

The Quran accurately predicted the Romans' (Byzantines) military victory over the Persians. Allah says: "The Romans were defeated in the nearest land.; and after their defeat, they will conquer, within a few years". (Ar-Room, 30:2-4).

The Predictions about the Past

The Quran is a book that powerfully describes the essential experiences of Prophets from Adam to the Islamic period and their mission.

It provides information that agrees with previous scriptures and corrects their corrupted forms, making it valuable for understanding history.

Its unique way of describing past events focuses on essential parts and presents its argument through those key points.

The language used in the Quran is easy to understand, direct, concise, and avoids jargon and legal language.

The Predictions about the Future Scientific Miracles in the Quran

The Quran's inclusion of scientific facts, which were unknown over 1400 years ago, provides undeniable evidence that it is the Word of Allah and the ultimate proof of the authenticity of Islam. Not the prophet's fabrication.

These miracles encompass various topics, and their discovery continues to strengthen the faith of many. Allah the Almighty says: "Soon will We show them our signs in the furthest horizons, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth" (Fussilat, 41: 53)

سُرِّيهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ" (فصلت: 53).

□ "O mankind! If you have a doubt about Recreation," (22:5) then here is the evidence: "Surely We created you out of dust, then of a sperm-drop, then of a leech-like clot, then out of a lump of flesh, formed and unformed, that We may make clearer (Our signs) to you; and We establish in the wombs what We will, till a stated term, then We deliver you as infants, then that you may come of age; and some of you die, and some of you are kept back unto the vilest state of life, that after knowing, they may know nothing..." (Al-Hajj, 22: 5)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى، ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا، ثُمَّ لِنَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُتَوَفَّىٰ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يَرُدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِّن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْنًا [سورة الحج 5]..

Scientific Miracles in the Quran

- **2. The Sensation of pain and how it affects the skin.**
- **The Quran states, "Those who reject our signs, We shall cast into the fire; as often as their skins are roasted through. We shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the punishment; for Allah is Exalted in power; Wise." (An-Nisa, 4:56)**
- **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نَصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كَلَّمًا نَضَجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا (النساء: 56) "**
- Allah did not say as often as their skins are burned, as burning could be partial, but instead said: **"as often as their skins are roasted through"**, i.e., totally burned with all nerves of sensation and pain. So, when someone is burned, the pain is associated with the skin that loses its function and structure. As it heals, new tissues form and a new skin layer replaces the damaged one. Nerve endings responsible for heat and burn sensations regenerate, making the person feel the pain again. This is the punishment described in the Quran.



Other scientific Miracles

- Other scientific miracles were revealed to him by God. including but not limited to:
- Recent scientific discoveries related to the intestines.
- Hearing is essential compared to sight, the origin of creation and its mysteries.
- The uniqueness of fingerprints and their significance.
- The fantastic healing properties of honey.
- The harmful effects of carrion, blood, and pork, the health benefits of ablution, prayer, and fasting, and the Quran, healing, and mercy.
- For further details, see Dr Sharif Kafai-Ghazal, Medical Miracles of the Quran, Islamic Foundation, Leicester, UK.

Three significant opinions for the minimum portion of the Quran that can prove its miraculous nature and is referred to as I'jaaz

1) The first opinion was held by some of the Mu'tazila, where some scholars believe that the miracle of the Quran is dependent on the whole Quran. In other words, a surah alone is not miraculous – only the Quran, taken in its entirety, is considered a miracle.

2) Most scholars believe that the miracle of the Quran is present in every surah, whether short or long. Similarly, any group of verses equivalent to a small surah also qualifies as having a miracle. This means that a few verses are enough to prove the miraculous nature of the Qur'an. Since the smallest surah is three verses long, it is believed that three small verses (or their equivalent) are enough to qualify as a miracle.

3. The third opinion by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, the miracle of the Quran, is present throughout the book, even in small portions that form a comprehensible phrase or sentence. This means that even the most minor part of the Quran is a miracle by itself. If a phrase or a sentence can be recognised as part of the Quran, it is considered an example of this miracle.

The Quran challenges anyone to bring forth a book similar to it (17:88), or even a single chapter (10:38), or any speech equivalent to it (52:34). All of these opinions have proof in the Quran. This opinion is the strongest.

Literary Form Of The Quran

- ❑ The Quran features various unique literary forms exclusive to the Arabic language and its constructs.
- ❑ Some of these literary forms are complex and require expert knowledge in linguistics and literature to appreciate fully.
- ❑ We will be focusing on the primary literary forms found throughout the Quran:
 - The mathal (simile, proverb, and metaphor)
 - The Qasam (Oath)
 - The Jadal (Debate)
 - The Qissas (Narrative).



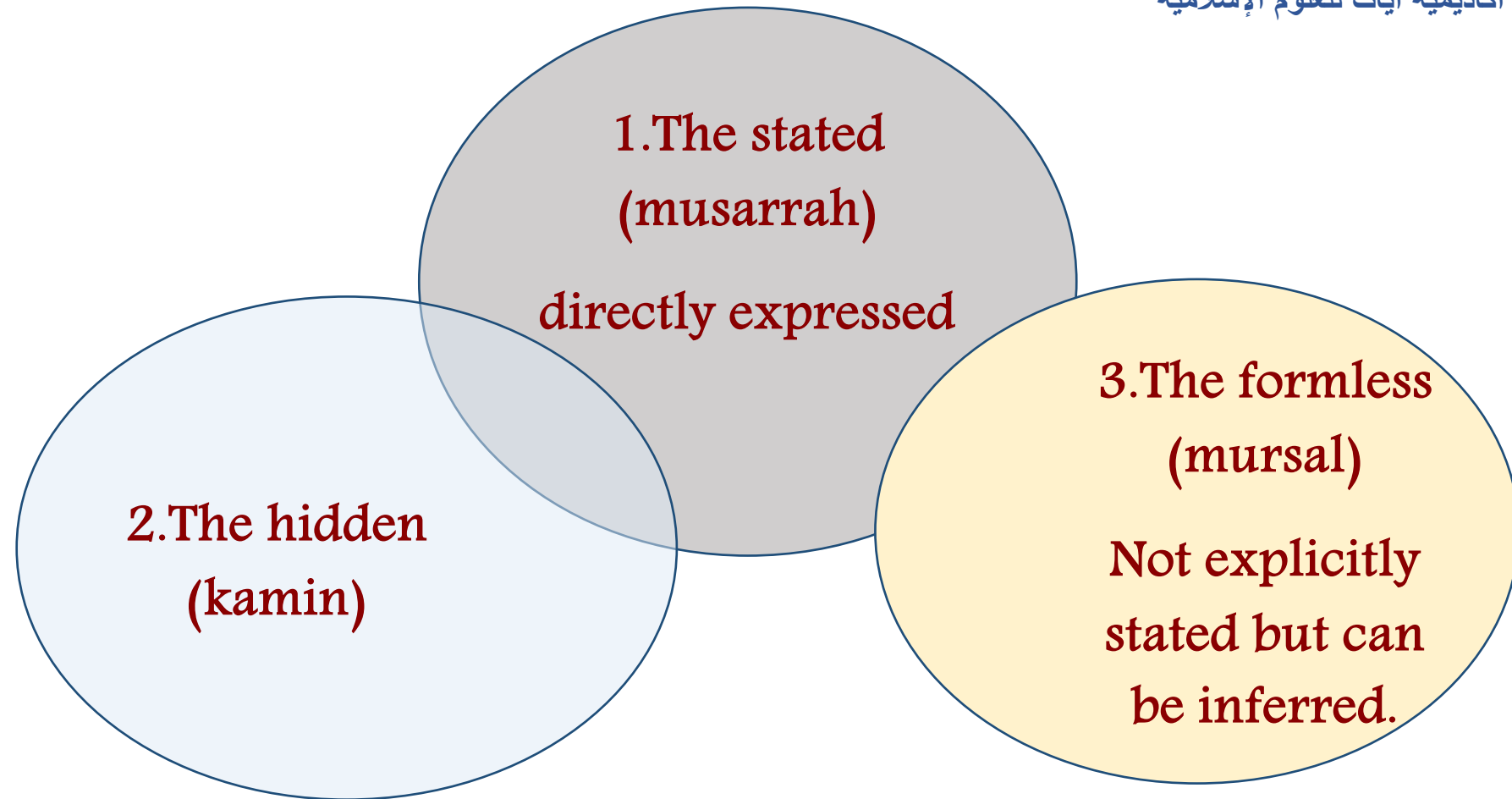
There are Three Types of Mathal found in the Quran

In the context of the Quran, the term "mathal" encompasses more than just similes and metaphors.

It includes sayings and ideals as well.

A mathal parable is a literary expression that is both concise and impactful.

It conveys an idea memorably, regardless of its construction.



The Mathal Musarraḥ (Stated)

This type is widely used in the Quran.

Such examples may be found in the fire and water similes and metaphors used about the hypocrites who faked Islam: Allah says:

“They are like one who kindles a fire; when it lights up what is around him, Allah takes away his light and leaves him in total darkness in which he cannot see (anything). They are deaf, dumb, and blind; hence, they will never return to the path. Or, like a dark rain cloud, thundering and flashing lightning in the sky, (during which) they stick their fingers in their ears from the thunderclap, fearing death. But Allah surrounds the disbelievers. The lightning almost snatches away their sight, but every time it lights up (the area) for them, they walk, and when it becomes dark, they stand still. If Allah had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and sight, for certainly Allah is able to do all things.”(al-Baqarah (2):17-20).

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ، صُمُّكُمْ بَعْضٌ عَمِيٍّ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ، أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْأَبَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ، يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ" (البقرة: 17-20).

The Mathal Musarraḥ (Stated)

It explicitly indicated using the comparative preposition "like" and the words "comparison, parable, simile." This leaves no room for doubt as to the intention of the passages.

• Allah says: "He sends down water from the skies which flows in valleys according to their capacities, and the flood carries swelling froth on its surface; there is a similar froth in the (ore) which they heat in the fire in order to make ornaments or implements. In this way, Allah makes a comparison between truth and falsehood. The froth is thrown away and disappears, while that which is beneficial to man remains on earth. In this way, Allah makes parables." (ar-Ra'd (13):17).

• أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِبًا ۚ وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حُلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهٗ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ۚ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذٰهَبُ جُفَاً ۗ وَاَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ " (الرعد: 17)

• The process of revelation, which brings life to hearts, is often compared to water, which brings life to plants and the earth. Human hearts are like valleys of different sizes where the flood of revelation flows accordingly. Just as the physical flood carries the impurities and scum of the earth in its currents, the flow of guidance and knowledge upon the hearts washes away base desires. Hearts are then compared to different types of ores, like gold, silver, iron, copper, etc., which are purified by the heat of the fire. In this process, impurities rise to the surface in the form of foam and scum, which are discarded, leaving the pure metal behind. Similarly, when believers' hearts are exposed to the heat and light of revelation, evil desires are cast off, and their hearts are purified.

The Mathal Kamin/ Hidden

Also known as Hidden Comparison, is a literary device that doesn't use direct comparisons. Instead, it conveys Islamic ideals that are readily acceptable to natural human instincts due to the deep and impressive meanings they imply.

Example: the concept of finding a middle ground between two extremes is beautifully expressed in many verses of the Quran. When it comes to spending, Allah praises those who strike a balance between extravagance and stinginess. Allah says:

“They are those who spend neither wastefully nor stingily, but moderately in between.”(al-Furqaan (25):67)

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا" (الفرقان: 67).

And in the case of salat, Allah advises: “Say, ‘O Prophet, ‘Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Compassionate—whichever you call, He has the Most Beautiful Names.” Do not recite your prayers too loudly or silently but seek a way between. (17:110)

قُلْ أَدْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَانَ ۖ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا" (الاسراء: 110).

The Mathal Mursal (Formless)

The Mathal Mursal (Formless). This form of writing consists of short verses that convey lessons, commonly known as proverbs. Unlike the mathal kamin, this form does not contain expressions or similes, although comparisons may be implied or made clear examples of this type of mathal.

"Fighting has been made obligatory upon you 'believers', though you dislike it. Perhaps you dislike something which is good for you and like something which is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know." (2:216).

"كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ" (البقرة: 216)

"Is there any reward for goodness except goodness? ar-Rahman (55):60

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ" (الرحمن: 60)

"Say, 'O Prophet, 'Good and evil are not equal, though you may be dazzled by the abundance of evil. So be mindful of Allah, O people of reason, so you may be successful.'" (5:100)

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ" (المائدة: 110).

The benefits of using mathal

- The use of mathal (metaphors) in the Quran has numerous benefits.
- Abstract concepts are presented in a tangible format to make them easier to understand and remember.
- The Concepts that may be difficult to grasp theoretically become quickly understandable when explained in terms of everyday human experiences or natural processes.

For instance, the simile that one who gives money for show gains no reward is a clear way of conveying this idea.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا ۖ صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ ءَآخِرِ ۗ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ ءَٱلْكَافِرِينَ " (البقرة: 264).

- O believers! Do not waste your charity with reminders 'of your generosity' or hurtful words, like those who donate their wealth to show off and do not believe in Allah or the Last Day. Their example is that of a hard, barren rock covered with a thin layer of soil hit by heavy rain—leaving it just a bare stone. Such people are unable to preserve the reward of their charity. Allah does not guide 'such' disbelieving people." (2:264).

Using Proverbs in the Quran

- ❑ Using literature examples resembling real-life situations is a common and expected practice. However, scholars advise against using sayings from the Quran in everyday conversations.

It is considered inappropriate to recite a verse of proverbs from the Book of God when discussing any matter, as this is done to preserve the dignity of the Quran and its position in the hearts of believers.

- ❑ Abu Ubaid has advised against using the phrase "I have come according to a destiny, O Moses" as a joke when meeting a friend or discussing a matter of concern. This phrase is extracted from the verse "Then you came here as pre-destined, O Moses!" (Taha, 20:40) and belittles the Quran.
- ❑ Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri has also emphasised that the Book of God or the Sunnah of the Messenger of God should not be compared with any other words or deeds.

Lecture 9

Literary Form Of The Quran

*The
Qasam
(oath),*

*The
Jadal
(debate)*