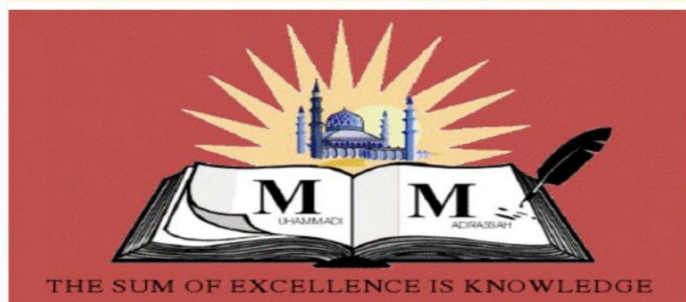


S3
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S2

This book belongs to

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5. Metaphors in the Holy Quran

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1. Introduction to Holy Quran

1.1 Ahadith on the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran itself is not the only source that we have with us. In Fact, it is not sufficient to have only the Holy Quran. We need the Ahlulbayt(a.s) as well. The Ahlulbayt(a.s) explain to us in more detail, what the Quran only tells us in brief.

The famous hadith of the Holy Prophet(s.a.w), known as the hadith of Thaqalayn, before the Prophet(s.a.w) left the world, where he said:

'I have left behind two precious things- the Holy Quran and the Ahlulbayt.'

The words of Allah sometimes have more than one meaning; some meanings may be ambiguous- as the famous verse in surah Ale-Imran, verse 7. (Refer to the verse)

In other verses, Allah uses metaphors to explain some things. For example it is mentioned in the Quran- 'The hand of Allah' This doesn't mean that Allah actually has a hand; it is just a metaphor. Metaphors in the Quran will be covered in chapter 5.

Thus some verses should not be taken literally. The kharijites at the time of Imam Ali(a.s) did exactly this! They interpreted the Qur'an literally, and didn't use rationality to understand what the Quran was saying. In chapter 2, we will discuss the importance of tafseer and how to carry out tafseer.

The Quran affects the heart of people. In history we have so many stories where people were affected by the words of the Quran and changed their whole life just by hearing one verse.

Al Fudayl bin Ayyad was a highway robber and thief. He was well known to be a person who did his job very well, once once he said he would do something, it would happen.

Once he was climbing a wall to get into someones house, when the man next door was reciting the Quran loudly. When Fudhayl was climbing, the man was reciting the verse from Surah Hadid Vr:16;

As soon as he heard the verse something struck him. He said, 'Indeed my Lord, it is time.'

He climbed back down and went into an abandoned building to seek shelter for the night. As he entered, he heard some travellers discussing whether they should move on. The travellers were saying that they should wait till morning as Fudhayl bin ayyan operates in that area, and so he might rob them.

As soon as Fudhayl heard this he thought to himself: 'I spend the night in sin, and there are some muslims who fear me; I think that Allah led me to them so that I might take lesson and stop what I am doing. Oh Allah, I have repented, and as part of my tawba, I will live next to Bayt Al Haraam- Makkah.'

That night Fudhayl repented and become a true Muslim. He then went on to become a great scholar

This story shows us how just one verse of the Holy Quran can transform a person from being a robber and a sinner, to a great scholar and a true servant of Allah.

Do you ever get lonely, and feel alone?

What does Imam Sadiq say about loneliness when he has the Quran?

The Quran should change us!
Has the Quran changed you in any way?

Do you know other people who have changed because of the Quran?

Exercise.

- Is the Quran the eternal message?

- How does it apply in your daily life?

-
-
-
-
-
- Talk about the different subjects in the Holy Quran such as science, poetry, history, philosophy e.t.c
-
-
-

1.2 Ettiquete

What to do before reciting the Holy Quran
Explain why we do each of the following

- Wudhu
 - effects of it (why is it done)
-
-

- Seeking refuge (إستعاذا)

- Basmala

- Reciting in a quiet place

- Reflection

- How should we recite the Holy Quran

- How much of the Holy Quran should we recite

1.3 Reflection (التفكر)

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. So we need to reflect and ponder upon it, so that we understand what Allah is telling us to do.

Why do you think it is important to reflect on the Holy Quran.

In many places in the Quran, Allah tells us to reflect on the Holy Quran.

For Example:

- Surah Yusuf Vr: 24

- Surah Saad Vr: 29

- Surah Tariq Vr: 86

- Surah Ale Imran Vr: 191

We also have ahadith which encourage us to reflect and to ponder.

الإمام الصادق (عليه السلام): تَفَكَّرُ سَاعَةً خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ سَنَةٍ «إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ».

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) said, 'Thinking for an hour is better than worshipping for a year, for "Only those who possess intellect take admonition"[Quran 39:9].'

[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 71, p. 327, no. 22]

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): التَّفَكُّرُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَالْعَمَلِ بِهِ.

Imam Ali (AS) said, 'Thinking instigates goodness and action upon it.'

[al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 55, no. 5]

أُمُّ أَبِي ذَرٍّ - وَقَدْ سُئِلَتْ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ أَبِي ذَرٍّ -: كَانَ نَهَارَهُ أَجْمَعَ يَتَفَكَّرُ فِي نَاحِيَةِ عَنِ النَّاسِ.

The mother of Abu Dharr when asked about the worship of Abu Dharr, said, 'He spent his whole day thinking in a place far away from people.'

[Tanbih al-Khawatir, v. 1, p. 250]

The reason why Tafaqqur is recommended so much is because it causes a change in a person's life. A moment of reflection can change a person's life altogether.

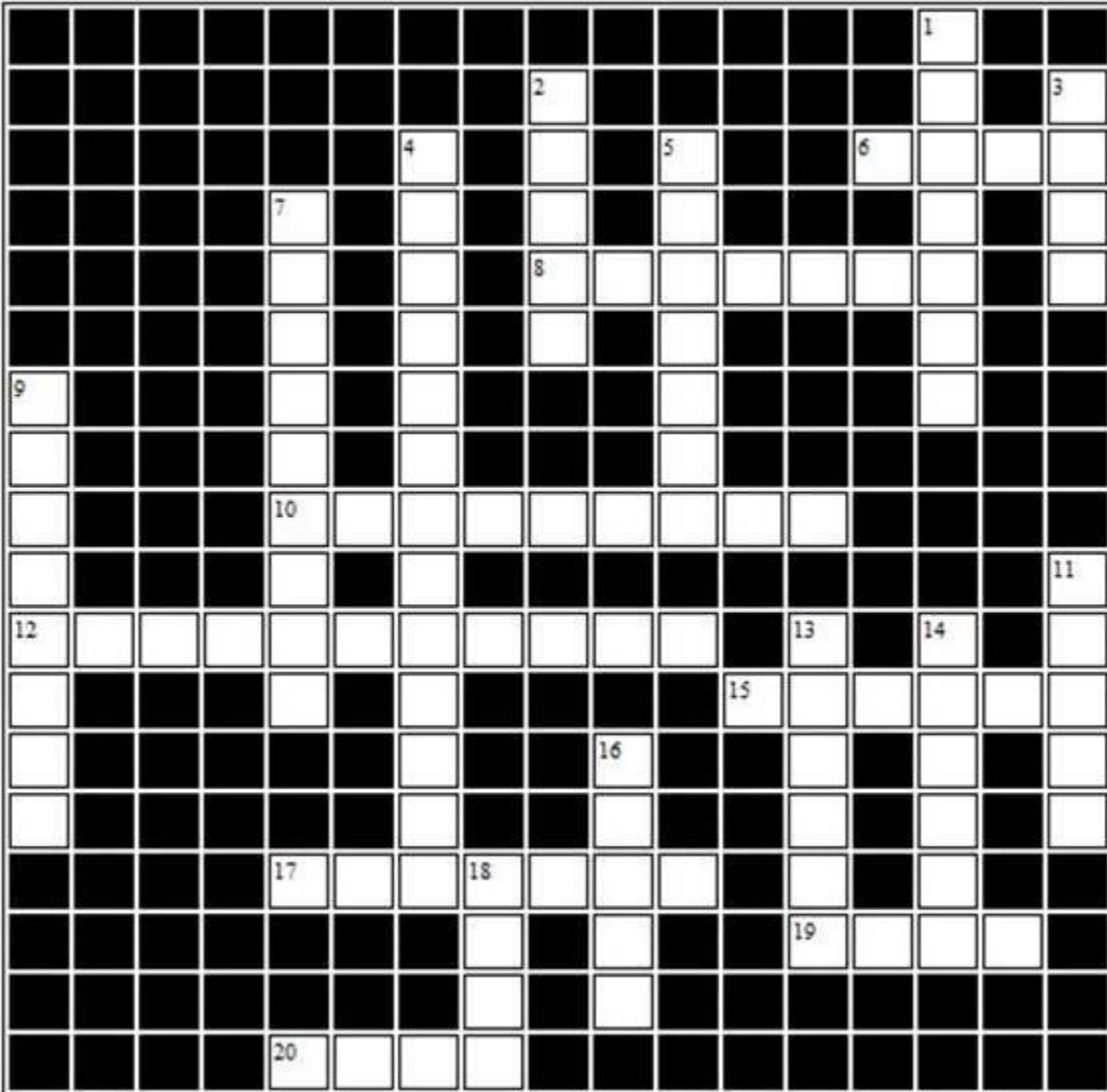
We should endeavour and try our best to reflect and ponder on the verses of the Holy Quran. In Chapter 3, we will try and learn how to ponder on the verses of the Holy Quran practically.

Exercise

- Explain in your own words why you think Tafaqqur is so important

- Try and find other verses and ahadith which talk about Tafaqqur

General Knowledge Quran Crossword:



Across	
6.	Name the Prophet who faced Firawn, and saved the people of bani-Israel
8.	Which surah has Ayatul Kursi in it
10.	Which uncle of the Prophet is cursed in the Holy Quran
12.	How many Prophets are mentioned in the Holy Quran
15.	Verses of the Quran are in 2 groups: Makki verses and....
17.	In Salaah, Suratul Feel is recited with which other Surah
19.	What is the last surah in the Quran
20.	The verses from which surah were the first to be revealed to the Holy Prophet

Down	
1.	What is the shortest Surah in the Quran
2.	Which surah does not have a bismillah
3.	Which surah has 2 bismillahs
4.	What is the night in which the Quran was revealed in, called
5.	What is the longest Surah in the Quran
7.	Which did abraha use to destroy the kaaba mentioned in Surah Feel
9.	There are one hundred and _____ surahs in the Quran
11.	What was the name of firawns wife, who was a believer in Proohet Musa, and was later killed by her own husband
13.	Which surah is called the heart of the Quran
14.	Which is the first surah in the Holy Quran
16.	Which surah narrates the story of Prophet Yusuf
18.	There are 4 surahs in the Quran where sajdah is wajib. Name the surah in the 30th chapter where sajdah is wajib

2. Introduction to Tafseer

2.1 What is Tafseer?

- تفسیر (Tafseer) comes from the root word فسّر (fasára) which means to explain; to interpret; to comment; to expound.

Thus the word تفسیر means (Tafseer) interpretation; commentary; explanation of the holy quran

A person who does tafseer is called a (Mufassir) مفسّر

2.2 Why do we need tafseer?

Need to know what Author- Allah wants us to do.

Hadith of Prophet- left behind 2 things- Quran and Ahlulbayt. Need Ahlulbayt to explain the Quran

Verses called آيات (àayaat) which means signs. signs guide us to our destination. In this case destination is (Al Haqq) الحق- The Truth; who is Allah.

Another problem we (non-arabs) have is not knowing arabic.

Solution- study Arabic, or rely on translations which can come close to the meaning but not exactly, as very difficult to translate word to word from arabic to english. Words lose meaning in translation.

Quran is book of guidance.

Refer to verses:

2:2;

7:203

12:111

16:102

17:9

27:2

2.3 Different types of tafseer

1) Tafsir al quran bil quran- with quran.

Use certain verses to explain other verses. Famous example Al-mizan by Allamah Tabatabai

Why do tafsir of quran with the Quran

- From the hadith القرآن يفسر بعضها ببعض - Parts of the Quran, explain other parts
- To get context of it
- To avoid verses that were abrogated
 - لا تقربوا الصلاة و أنتم سكرى - 'Do not approach Salaah when you are drunk....'

We need to look at the context of the verse; the reason why the verse was revealed; when it was revealed e.t.c

We compare the verse with other verses to get a full picture. Its like bring bits of a jigsaw together and creating an image of what happened.

This will help us to misinterpret verses and take them out of context,

2) Tafsir al quran bil hadith- Use traditions of the Prophet and Ahlulbayt.

Problem- not all ahadith authentic. Some have weak chains

- Example abasa wa tawalla

3) Tafsir al quran bil ray- Using reason.

Certain verses can be easily interpreted using logic and reasoning.

3. Quran as a practical guide

Quran is a practical guide. Applies today as much as it applied 1400 years ago; and will apply for future generations to come.

Always look at quranic verses and see **how I can apply them practically in today's age**- what does Allah want me to do today!

How to approach verses

The verse
What I understand
How Will apply this in my practical life

Example:

Sura Najm (The Star) 53:39

The verse

A man can have nothing but what he strives for;

What I understand

We have to strive and work hard at all times to be successful in the world and the hereafter.

How will I apply this in my life

- 1. I will not waste unnecessary time on the
COMPUTER and TELEVISION**
- 2. I will read more books and gain as much
knowledge as possible**
- 3. I will spend more time with the family**
- 4. I will do as many good deeds as I can.**
- 5. I will make sure I work hard in everything I do, especially when it comes to matters of the
hereafter.**

Make every verse relevant.

Verses to study:

1) 53:39

2) 99:7

3) 99:8

4) 74:4

5) 26:83

6) 31:19

7) 2:172

8) 49:10

9) 33:56

10) 2:82

Homework: Write tafseers for each of these verses, and present in class.

1) 96:14

2) 29:2

3) 18:30

4) 41:53

5) 4:78

4. Parables in the Holy Quran

A statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison, analogy, or the like. (dictionary.com)

Method of approaching parables:

- Read the verse
- What do you understand from the parable
- How do you apply it in your practical life

Reflect on each of the following parables.

What do you understand from them and how can you apply it in your practical life?

4.1 Parable of the donkey

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ۚ
بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ {5}

The example of those who were charged with the Torah, then failed to carry it, is that of a donkey carrying books. Evil is the example of the people who deny Allah's signs, and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing lot. (62:5)

4.2 Parable of the dog

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۖ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ
الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ۚ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ {176}

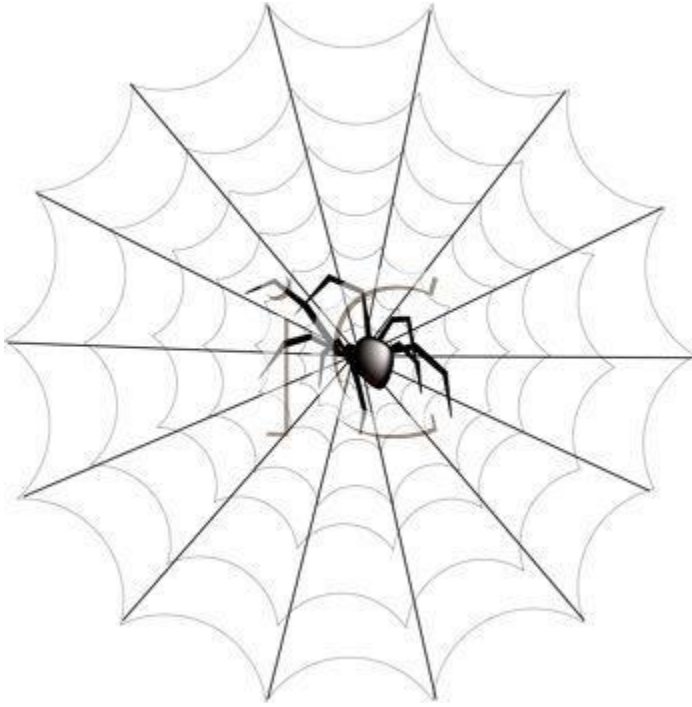
Had We wished, We would have surely raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his [base] desires. So his parable is that of a dog: if you make for it, it lolls out its tongue, and if you let it alone, it lolls out its tongue. Such is the parable of the people who deny Our signs. So recount these narratives, so that they may reflect.

(7:176)

4.3 Parable of the spider

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ
بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ {41}

The parable of those who take guardians instead of Allah is that of the spider that takes a home, and indeed the frailest of homes is the home of a spider, had they known!
(29:41)



4.4 Parable of blowing ashes

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۖ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ {18}

A parable of those who defy their Lord: their deeds are like ashes over which the wind blows hard on a tempestuous day: they have no power over anything they have earned. That is extreme error (14:18)

[illegible]

4.5 Parable of the good tree

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ
وَفُرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ {24}

Have you not regarded how Allah has drawn a parable? A good word is like a good tree: its roots are steady and its branches are in the sky. (14:24)

تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ {25}

It gives its fruit every season by the leave of its Lord. Allah draws these parables for mankind so that they may take admonition. (14:25)

4.6 Parable of precious metals

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا
وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهٗ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ
يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ۚ فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۖ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ
فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ

He sends down water from the sky whereat the valleys are flooded to [the extent of] their capacity, and the flood carries along a swelling scum. And from what they smelt in the fire for the purpose of [making] ornaments or wares, [there arises] a similar scum. That is how Allah compares the truth and falsehood. As for the scum, it leaves as dross, and that which profits the people remains in the earth. That is how Allah draws comparisons. (13:17)

5. Metaphors in the Quran

What is a Metaphor?

A figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance, as in "A mighty fortress is our God." (dictionary.com)

Metaphors are used to give a strong meaning to what you want to say, but they do not mean exactly what is said.

For example, if you want to say: 'My mother is a tower of strength to me' it does not mean that your mother is a tower, it just means that your mother supports you and without her you will not be able to deal with life.

Other metaphors commonly used:

1. I have moved mountains
2. You are the apple of my heart
3. I could eat a horse
4. Sitting on the fence.

The Holy Quran uses metaphors to give a strong and deeper meaning to things. Some metaphors used in the Quran:

1. God is the light of the heaven and the earth (**24:35**).

This does not mean that God is really the light, it just means that without God the creation does not make sense.

2. Only the face of God will remain on the day of judgement. (**55:27**)

This does not mean that God has a face and that His body will not remain on the day of judgement. It means that on the final day everything in creation will only be insignificant. God is significant and important, and everything else in comparison is insignificant and less important.

3. God created the world in six days (**7:54**)

This means that God created the universe in step by step manner. It does not really mean that it took Him literally six days.

4. The throne of God rested in water (**11:7**)

This does not mean that God has a throne. It means that the first creation of God was from water.

5. The angels do tawaf of God.

This again does not mean that they walk around God. It means that they obey God in everything they do.

Exercise:

Find the following metaphors in the quran and explain in your own words what they mean. (You can use the index at the back of the Quran to look for the words)

- 1) They are deaf and blind

- 2) We have placed a cover on their hearts

3) They have locks in their hearts

4) Their hearts are harder than stones

5) And Allah's hand is in their hands

6) Quran is the light for the believers
