

MODULE 1

Class Title: Introduction the Qur'an- part 1

Aim of the lesson: To introduce the salient features of the Qur'an and equipping ourselves to understand it

Category: Scripture

Lesson Format: Power point presentation

Greeting to students) *Assalamalaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(Ta'oodh) Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem

(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

(Du'a) Rabbishrahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Today we will talk about the Qur'an and enlighten ourselves with some of the basic information about it.

Can anyone tell me why we will talk about the Qur'an?

Student: Because it's the holy book and a manual for mankind.

Teacher: You are pretty much right. Qur'an is one of the source through which we learn of our *Deen*. But the question is, do we really know what the Qur'an is? I mean, yeah we are Muslim *Alhamdulillah* and we know, we have been told that this "book" the Qur'an is very important for us, it is the book of Allah (swt), we learn to read it as kids and so on.

The word "Quran" in Arabic means "Recitation" (not written word).

Slides 1-3:

Now we will play a "Pretend" game. How many of you have played pretend when you were small? How many of you pretended to be someone?

Teacher: What did you pretend to be?

Student: A Diver

Student: Doctor

Slide 4:

Well, today, we will pretend to be "Alice". Who has read Alice in Wonderland? Did you like the story? What did you like?

Student: It was very imaginative.

Teacher: Yes, it was about a magical world where the main character shrinks herself.

So what sort of an idea do you get about her?

Student: Bold, Curious.

Slides 5-7:

Teacher: At first look it was such a scary world. It had a huge cat. I would have been scared so I feel she was very daring. She liked to try new things. Do you guys like to try new things? Are you guys courageous?

She was sick and tired of her boring life and wanted a break from her monotonous life. She was looking for fun, something magical so she went into her make-believe world.

Slide 8:

Today all of you will be Alice, ok? We will not do a role play. We will do something even better. We will get into the mode of playing pretend. I will take you to a wonderland. It's not like Alice's. It's even better. You will imagine like Alice did.

Slides 9-12:

You know our lives can be so droning at times. I wake up in the morning; go through the same old boring routine. Do you guys feel that way? How is it with you guys? Waking up early in the morning? Going to school? Tuitions maybe? The same repetitive pattern. That's how Alice felt. Didn't she? Same old boring life!

What happens when you don't have school? I think life becomes dull even if you have vacations. You can't go to friend's house every day. You can't invite them over everyday. Then you get tired of "same old boring Facebook, Twitter and games". Right?

The excitement and fervor of new things in our lives eventually fizzle out. When you get a new cell phone or something, you tell your friend, you tell the whole neighborhood because you are so thrilled. You use it all the time but slowly the excitement and enjoyment wears out. If I get a computer game I really like, I am addicted to it. I put all my chores aside. I hate it if someone disturbs me because I want to play that game all day long.

It is just the same with a new book. You can stay awake the whole night to read that book. You take your book to school as well so you read it in your free periods but eventually even that finishes... or you get bored and leave it halfway.

I love to sleep. I can sleep and sleep. During school days you guys probably wait for vacation to start so you can sleep and sleep but even that can't be endless and you probably end up with a headache because of excessive sleeping.

So we have come to this conclusion that even exciting stuff eventually becomes tasteless.

Slides 13-14:

But today we will see how we can add zest to our lives and try to sustain it.

Slide15:

We will EXPLORE the Qur'an.

You know Qur'an can be fun if you want it to be. In fact Qur'an is so enchanting, every time you delve into the meaning of its verses, you'll discover something new. Like we were talking about the fact that we want something new to happen every day, don't we? Qur'an is what would add something exciting in your life everyday but there is a catch to it...

Slides 16-18:

Alice could not enter her magical world easily, why? She was oversized. So what did she do?

Student: She had a magical potion so she drank it and found her solution.

Slide 19:

Teacher: Right. We too can't enter our world of Qur'an that easily. We face this hindrance when we try to read the Qur'an or understand the Qur'an.

What is that problem? Can anyone tell me why we don't take enjoyment from it?

Student: It's like reading a French book which you don't understand.

Student: Rules are repeated and I don't really know what's happening so I lose interest.

Slide 20:

Teacher: Even in the holy month of Ramadan if you want to read the Qur'an, understand it, your inner voice says it's too boring, it's in French; I don't understand it. Why bother? Or you might not agree with its rules or commandments which may seem unnecessary, *Naodhoobillah* and most of you would say that I'm too young to read the Qur'an. All these thoughts are from the Satan whose sole purpose is to misguide us. He distorts our inner self.

Slide 21:

Alice had a potion; we do too. I am going to say a few words so please close your eyes and absorb my words; this will be your potion.

“I will give in for others’ sake... for others happiness... think less about myself. Become selfless. I will learn to be less sensitive”.

Slides 22- 25:

So do you have that in your heart? When she had her potion, she went in her magical world and you are going to enter yours today with me as we start with the basic questions about Qur’an.

Slide 26:

What is the Qur’an? It’s the last message of Allah (swt). Qur’an is a form of communication through which Allah (swt) communicates with us and directly speaks to us.

And this is the last book, like the final edition. You have editions of your school books. The first edition, second edition and final edition etc. You follow the final edition because that is the one that is updated. You never follow the previous edition which is obsolete. What will happen if you follow a previous edition? You will miss out on stuff. The new one is according to your syllabus; it’s updated. In the previous edition maybe there wasn’t enough research done or maybe new studies have come up. Which are the previous editions of the Holy Books? *Zaboor, Torah, Injil*. Qur’an is the one that is the final edition which we are to follow, after it there to be no book.

Slide 27:

The second question is how was the Qur’an revealed to us?

It has been transmitted to us in a form of a chain. We cannot see or hear Allah (swt). If Allah (swt) spoke to us directly, our humanly bodies aren’t capable of hearing Him or even looking at Him so He appointed an angel Jibril (as) who brought it in the form of revelation to our Holy Prophet (pbuh).

What do you say when the Prophet’s name is mentioned? Yes, you send blessings to him so it is through this chain that we got the Qur’an and after Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) it came to us.

Slide 28:

The Qur’an is revealed in Arabic. Allah (swt) chose Arabic over all languages. He knows

best why but Arabic is the most extensive and rich language. One word can have several different meanings.

For those who don't understand Arabic, transliterations in other languages have been done. Transliteration is an effort to translate. In order to understand the Qur'an it's wise to learn Arabic otherwise it's like reading a foreign language like French and when you do not understand a language you lose interest.

Slide 29:

The revelation of the Qur'an began in the Cave of Hira. Today this is how it looks.
(slide shown)

Afterwards it was revealed in various parts of Arabia.

Slide 30:

Teacher: Now the most important question- why was the Qur'an revealed?

Student: Allah (swt) wanted to guide us.

Teacher: Exactly. Without it, we wouldn't even know how to pray. Qur'an is like an instruction manual. When you purchase an electronic gadget or something, there is an instruction manual with it which has instructions and warnings. Don't put it in water or don't take it near the fire etc. So Qur'an is like an instruction manual for man. It tells us the optimum way we should live our life. He is our Creator so He knows best how we should lead our lives so that we get the best of this world and the next.

He also warns us against wrong behavior and bad deeds. And in doing so, informs us of perished nations and the consequences of their disobedience and defiance of Allah (swt). At the same time, He gives good tidings for those who obey Him.

Qur'an is also called *Tadhkira*. *Tadhkira* comes from the root word *dhikr* which means to remind us repeatedly of our aim in life, of what we should be striving towards and what we should avoid.

Slide 31:

Who has this Qur'an come for? It is for everyone. When I say every one, understand that this is a Book that has specially come for me. It's a gift for me. When you understand the value, the worth of something, only then can you develop interest in it and understand it.

Slide 32:

The other source of Divine learning apart from the Qur'an is *Sunnah*. Qur'an is the Word of Allah (swt). So what is *Sunnah* then? It is the action, words and tacit approval of the

Prophet (pbuh) as guided by Allah (swt). The Prophet (pbuh) felt it in his heart, you know like an intuition but not any random intuition; it was a very reliable and authentic one. The relationship between the Qur'an and *Sunnah* can be understood as being two legs of a body. If both are there, the body functions properly. It can walk, run or whatever. If one is missing the person is handicapped.

Many a times it is difficult to interpret Qur'an alone as different meanings can be deduced from it since Arabic is such an extensive language. This is where *sunnah* is needed. It serves the purpose of the lens of a magnifying glass through which you learn about the Qur'an.

For e.g. the word *Salah* has several meanings in the Arabic dictionary. One meaning is to heat one's hands against the fire. Is that how we say our *salah*? Certainly not! So we take help from *Sunnah* and establish our *salah* as was taught by the Prophet (pbuh).

Slide 36:

How long did it take for the Qur'an to be revealed? Does anyone know?

Student: 23 years exactly. 13 years in Makkah and 10 years in Medina.

Teacher: Right on!

Slides 37-38:

So let's come to the *Makki surahs* first. Do you know which are the *Makki surahs*? Those that were revealed before the Prophet's (pbuh)'s migration to Medina. Please don't confuse them as being the *surahs* which were revealed in *Makkah*. Because what distinguishes a *Makki surah* from a *Madani* one is the Prophet's (pbuh)'s migration.

Slides 39-42:

What is their central theme? *Makki surahs* revolve around three subjects; Allah(swt), *Rasool* Allah (pbuh) and life after death. These *surahs* give a gist of Islam. When Islam was newly presented to people they wanted to know what Islam was all about. Thus the *Makki surahs* serve the purpose of introducing Allah (swt) the Creator, Sustainer, the Manager of this Universe and the position of Mohammad (saw) in Islam. They further shed light on the purpose of our creation which is to strive to do good deeds for the life after death. The choice of words is so marvelous that many people reverted to Islam upon hearing the recitation. There are a total of 89 *Makki surahs*.

Slides 43-47:

Teacher: What are *Madani surahs*?

Students: *Surahs* that were revealed in Madinah.

Teacher: No, not necessarily revealed in Madina. Go back to the definition of Makki *surah*.

Students: The *surahs* before *hijrah* (migration).

Teacher: Yes so *Madani surahs* are those that were revealed after *hijrah*. Please keep this in your minds.

The central theme of these *surahs* is obedience of Allah (swt), obedience of the Prophet (pbuh) and legalities of Islam and various social values. A new society came into existence after the migration and when a society is newly established, norms, traditions, way of life need to be chalked out. One has to know as Muslims what is expected of them, how to get married, what are the rituals if somebody dies, what are the laws of inheritance, what are the rights of people around you . These *surahs* address each and every aspect of a person's life and how they should be dealt with according to Allah's desire. There are twenty five *Madani surahs*.

Inshaallah, we will continue our discussion next week.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika RabbulIzzati 'amma yasifun
wasalamun 'alalmursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalamalaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*