

MODULE 1

Class Title: Introduction to the Qur'an- Part 2

Aim of the lesson: Last part of the two series of

Category: Scripture

Lesson Format: Power point presentation

(**Note to teacher:** some slides in the power point presentation are hidden, as they were not used for this session. They have not been deleted as you may want to use them for your class.)

Greeting to students) *Assalamalaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*
(*Ta'oodh*) *A'oodhubillahi 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)

Slide 1:

Can anyone tell me what we were discussing last week?

We were playing pretend. And we were pretending about going on an adventurous journey into the Qur'an. Today we will take this topic further and see how we can equip ourselves for this journey.

Slide 2:

There are certain preparations one must do before starting to read the Qur'an or before coming to a Qur'anic class because Qur'an is no ordinary book.

The first one is to physically cleanse oneself, by doing *wudu*. It is not compulsory like it is for *salah* but it is highly preferable because Allah (swt) showers His blessings on the one who is in the state of *wudu*. So it's like a win win situation. You are reading the Qur'an and you are doing so in a state of *wudu*.

Slide 3:

However, physical cleanliness is only one aspect; one should also be clean from the inside, i.e. spiritual cleanliness. Islam stresses on pure intentions. But what are pure intentions?

When you begin to open the Qur'an, the intention should be for Allah's sake as it is He whom you want to obey. If you are reading it to show off to somebody, then Qur'an will not benefit you.

Read it with the aim of reforming yourself as a Muslim and getting to know Allah (swt). This will eventually guide you to the ultimate reward, *Jannah*!

The Qur'an must never be studied with a perverted mind, hunting for loopholes in it.

Slide 4:

Another requisite is involving one's feelings. This is very important. What happens when you guys read a story book or watch a movie? You get involved right?

Student: You act as if you are that person.

Teacher: You involve your mind so deeply in the story that you imagine yourself to be part of it. Your emotions get caught up with it; you laugh at a funny scene, you get upset when there's a sad twist in the story or you get scared if it's a horror scene.

On the other hand, if you are detached from the story/movie you might be reading it on the surface but it never strikes your heart. Similarly, when you read the Qur'an immerse yourself completely with it.

We talked about Alice going in her wonderland in the first part. She didn't go there physically but went there with her mind and heart. Make an earnest effort at developing an interest so that when Allah (swt) speaks of Hell and His wrath, your heart trembles with fear. When Allah (swt) describes *Jannah* and its blessings, you visualize them and they excite you and you develop a craving for them. When Allah (swt) narrates stories of Prophets and their nations, you are moved by them.

Student: What if we don't understand?

Teacher: Very apt question. Our feelings won't be involved in the Qur'an if we can't understand it. It's like watching a Spanish or Chinese movie.

If you don't understand what the Qur'an is saying, then learn Arabic. Most of us want to learn new languages like French or Spanish etc. but as Muslims we should learn Arabic first because it will facilitate in comprehending the Qur'an. Without understanding Arabic we cannot understand the Qur'an. Having said that, read the translation in English or Urdu or whichever language you prefer, but to have a deeper understanding, it is important to understand Arabic. Nowadays, *Alhamdulillah*, there are so many Arabic classes being conducted, so it is really easy to learn if one wills.

Slide 5:

Another thing is that one should be able to relate to it. This means that you should take it upon yourself that the Qur'an is for me. It addresses me as an individual and I will extract lessons from it for myself.

Be in the Qur'anic mode only and forget everything else. Until and unless you take it upon yourself and you relate to it, you can never benefit from the Qur'an.

Slides 6-9:

Teacher: What is *ta'oodh*? Does anyone know?

A'oodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem is called *ta'oodh*. Why should we read *ta'oodh* before reading the Qur'an?

So that Satan runs away and you don't get distracted. Satan is really happy and relaxed if you are doing a sin or if you are not doing a good deed, but the minute you start doing a good deed he is on high alert. He is after you and he just has to distract you one way or the other. He makes you remember that TV program you might be missing or that video game you left or Mum's fudge brownie on the kitchen counter waiting to be devoured!. You know all those silly things that come in your mind. So *ta'oodh* is the weapon that Allah (swt) has told us to use.

Slide 10:

Satan is so smart; he makes you forget the actual reason for reading the Qur'an! He will take you headlong in his whirlpool of trivial thoughts that you might end up reciting the Qur'an or attending a lecture as a formality or because someone has forced you to and not because you were going to do it for Allah's sake.

Why, if you come here and you don't shield yourself with the *ta'oodh*, your mind can be on the snacks served after the class!

Slide 11:

Another tactic of Satan is that he often diverts you to worldly things which are not sins but good deeds that can be delayed. For e.g. you may be think that I should make that phone call to my grandmother or my pet needs a walk or I want to read a book or bake some cookies. Doing all of the above is fine, but not when you had thought of doing some Qur'an recitation.

Slides 12 & 13:

He also makes us feel sleepy. You'll never yawn as much you do when reading the Qur'an! Has that ever happened to you? You are perfectly awake and chirpy and the minute you pick up the Qur'an – an attack of lethargy, drowsiness over comes you. That's Satan!

He also makes you feel bored. Sitting in this class do you ever think:

- When will the class end!
- Why did mom send me here!

- I know all of it!
- This is for kids not me!

Slide 14:

And he gives you a hundred and one reasons why you should not read the Qur'an. This is baby stuff, this is so boring ... I know this stuff already.... if I have read through the Qur'an once, why should you read it again??

- I'm too young,
- I could be catching up on my sleep instead,
- I have to get ready to go out with friends,
- What difference does it make?
- My favorite TV show is on!

So now that we know of his tactics, I think we should say *a'udhubillahi* before proceeding. Loudly!

A'oodhubillahi min AsShaytnir Rajeem

Student: Will *shaytan* go away?

Teacher: Allah (swt)'s help will come to you against *shaytaan* because you are taking His refuge but you should be on high alert all the time. Even when you are at home, you are reciting the Qur'an or listening to it or you are at any other Qur'an class you should try to make this effort of constantly driving him out of your mind.

Slides 15-19:

So what is so unique about the Qur'an? It is a living book. It actually speaks to you. If you read the Qur'an or attend any Qur'an class for understanding it, you will feel it directly addressing you. It is as if Allah (swt) is directly talking to you. It is the only book of its kind in the world.

Slides 19-20:

A miracle of Qur'an is that it has unending meanings disclosed in its ayahs. Every time you open the Qur'an you find a new meaning, a newer aspect to understand from an *ayat*, you find something deeper that Allah (swt) is saying to you and believe me it's very interesting. *Shaytan* might make you think it's very boring but it is a captivating book; you want to read it again and again.

Slides 21-23:

Teacher: A book can be altered in two ways. Can anyone tell me in which two ways?

Student: good and bad?

Teacher: No, not good and bad.

Like there's an index in the beginning and then there's the text. Right, so you can switch the chapters around or you can change the text. Just as a book is of 365 pages, you can make a replica of the same book of one fifty pages, you can change the text and you can summarize it. Or you can switch chapter 4 with chapter 6. This can be done with worldly books but not with the Qur'an. The Qur'an has never been changed because Allah (swt) has promised to keep it secure and original.

Slide 24:

Teacher: So where is the actual Qur'an preserved?

Student: In our hearts.

Teacher: No. It's in *Loh e Mehfooz* which is a place on the seventh and final heaven, where Allah (swt) is. The Qur'an that we have are copies and it was from the *Loh e Mehfooz* that Hazrat Jibril would recite the Qur'an to the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Slide 25-26:

So now let's discuss the division of the Qur'an. You have these *huroof*, which is the plural of *harf*. These are letters like you have ABC's in alphabets. There are twenty seven alphabets or you can say *huroof* in the Arabic language.

Teacher: What is the smallest unit of the Qur'an called?

Student: An *ayah*

Teacher: An *ayah*. Exactly, very good! *Qul huwalla hu Ahad* is an *ayah* right. Sometimes an *ayah* contains many sentences. Usually there is a pause in meaning at the end of an *ayah*

Slides 27-28:

Do you know what how many ayahs there are in the Qur'an? There are 6250 *ayaats* in the Qur'an.

Teacher: What do a few *ayaats* form?

Student: *Surah*

Slides 29-30:

Teacher: *Surah* very good! Every *surah* is like a city, different from each other. It has its

own unique quality, like every city/ country has different characteristics and landmarks etc, so each *surah* has a different central theme.

Slide 31:

The *surahs* are separated from each other with *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*. You know that a new *surah* is starting when you see *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*. Is there any *surah* which doesn't have *Bismillah* in the beginning?

Student: *Surah Tauba*

Slide 32:

Teacher: *Masha Allah*. Every *surah* has a central theme, for example, *Surah Tauba* talks about war and the different circumstances that occur in a war. Similarly, *Surah Nisa* talks about laws of inheritance etc.

Slide 33:

Teacher: Which is the smallest *surah* of the Qur'an?

Student: *Surah Kausar*

Slide 34:

Teacher: Which is the longest *surah*?

Student: *Surah Baqarah*.

Teacher: *Surah Al-Baqarah*, exactly. It has 286 *ayahs*.

Slide 35:

Teacher: There are 540 rukoos. These are logical divisions according to meaning.

Teacher: And how many *surahs*?

Student: 114.

Slide 36:

Teacher: And what is a *para*. We say *para* or *sipara* in Urdu. *Sipara* is a Persian word. What do you say in Arabic? It is called *Juzz* in Arabic.

Slides 40-48:

Teacher: Now who can tell me why the Qur'an was revealed on Arabs?

Student: Because the prophet was from Arab?

Teacher: Allah (swt) revealed it on them because of their impeccable personality traits. Now let us evaluate their traits. Arabs were very hospitable. They were very warm and welcoming. They catered to the guests very nicely. If they had nothing to eat and they just had a goat in the back yard as cattle, they would slaughter it for the guest. Imagine that! This was their only investment. In today's time and as belonging to an elite stratum of society- *Alhamdulillah*, we can't imagine an example near to that. But let's say we have nothing special to serve our unexpected guests except for the pizza delivered for dinner. And your parents serve it without any hesitation and you don't fuss over it either. Difficult isn't it? We cringe at the sight of unexpected guests and to top it off, the pizza that we were looking forward to devour, just went on the trolley in the drawing room. *Alhamdulillah*, we are so affluent that we can order another pizza, whilst back then most Arabs would've gone to sleep on an empty stomach. But what I'm trying to explain here is the cordial feeling and the joy of receiving guests. Sacrificing everything for their guests was engrained in them. So when the time came to present Islam to others, they did it in a very warm and welcoming manner.

Another trait of their personality was that they fulfilled their oaths. They stuck to their words and didn't breach pledges. People gave weight to their words because of their honesty and loyalty.

They were hard working people, rugged and tough by nature. People who were invited towards Islam didn't think that the Arabs were doing it for some worldly gains.

As you can see from the map, Saudi Arabia is situated in such a way that Egypt, Persia (Iran) and Greece surround it. These civilizations were quite modern and super powers of that time. Their education and technological advancement surpassed the Arabs. Saudi Arabia was a desert full of nomads and unlettered people. This protected them from invasion and conquest. It meant that they were saved from the slave mentality.

Do you know what slave mentality is? When you become a slave of somebody you start to think like that person, you adopt their mannerisms. Their traditions and rituals subtly seep into your customs.

You may detest them for bossing you around and usurping your rights but because you can't do anything about it, you pretend that you like them. You are at their mercy hence you end up buttering them up and flattering them. Flattery is a flaw because it's like being a hypocrite.

Arabs were independent and courageous. Slavery generates inferiority complex and low self-esteem.

A slave mentality makes you greedy because you want what your master has. There is a clear cut difference in the lifestyle and living standard of a master and his slave, a slave will yearn for what he doesn't have. And that will make him greedy and lead to further flaws like jealousy and stealing. Arabs were above all of that.

They were a clean slate. What is a clean slate? It is having the capacity to take on something new. Like if you teach a baby several languages as he/she grows up, he/she will learn them very easily. A baby learns from his parent's lifestyle and his surroundings

quickly. Since these Arabs were not influenced by any other nation they could adopt the Qur'an and adapt to the traditions of Islam very easily. They lived in the desert so were close to nature. So for them to relate to the Qur'an was easy because the Qur'an appeals to the nature of a human being.

Slides 49-50:

So then what was their weakness? They had all the good qualities as we just discussed. They were confident, hardworking, tough yet hospitable but what was their only weakness.

Student: They were involved in *shirk*.

Teacher: Exactly. They associated partners with Allah (swt). They had 360 idols in Ka'bah alone! So this was their only weakness which the Qur'an sorted out. Remember we said that Makki *surahs*, talked about oneness of Allah (swt). So that is what Islam did; it sorted out that weakness of *shirk*.

Slide 51:

However, having said all that, Allah (swt) knows best why He chose the Arabs, we can only speculate.

Slides 52- 57:

Teacher: How was the Quran compiled?

When the Qur'an was revealed, the *sahabas* did not have paper; remember we said theirs was not a proper civilization like Egypt. They did not have paper or inks or any stationery. They just had stones to carve upon, bones, wood pieces, dry leaves and leather pieces so that's what they would write ayahs on. What happened during Hazrat Abu Bakr's (ra) time was that a battle took place in which a lot of *sahabas* who had memorized the Qur'an were martyred. For fear of loss of the Qur'an, Hazrat Umer (ra) proposed the compilation of the Holy Text. They began gathering the bits of leather, bones and woods etc on which Qur'anic Ayahs were carved or written and confirmed it with the *Hufaaz* in an effort to compile the Qur'an. So it was in Hazrat Abu Bakr's time that Qur'an was compiled in a book form. Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit (ra) was appointed to do this task and Allah (swt) guided the Prophet (pbuh) about the sequence of *surahs* Himself. It was not left to the Prophet's (pbuh) discretion.

Later copies were sent to other regions outside Saudi Arabia.

Aeraab meaning *zabar*, *zair*, *pesh* were added to the text because only the Arabs knew how to correctly pronounce each word.

Also the Prophet (pbuh) did *Daura e Qur'an* with Jibril(as) for his revision and retention.

Slide 58:

Teacher: Do you know who kept the original Qur'an?

Students: No

Teacher: Hazrat Umer's daughter who was also Prophet's (pbuh) wife, Hazrat Hafsa (ra). By original I mean the first worldly book compiled by *Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit* (ra). The original Qur'an is not in this world. It is in *Luh e Mahfooz*. Further copies were circulated to all the Muslim countries.

Even today Qur'an is being recited and read in the same way. There is no change in the sequence of the *surahs*, you have never seen a Qur'an which has *Surah Baqarah* first and *Surah Fatihah* later. Not even one *ayah*, or *zabar zeer* has been changed.

Student: Misprint?

Teacher: A misprint is a mistake. It is a human or technical error. People are very very careful when they are typing and printing the Qur'an. It is re-checked. Above all, Allah (swt) has promised to keep it safe and original, so there can never be a mistake.

Student: What is *wahee*?

Teacher: It's the revelation of Qur'an to the Prophet (pbuh) through Angel Gabriel.

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

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