

SUMMER IMMERSION PARABLES IN THE QURAN



Mufti Abdul Rahman Waheed

SESSION 1

Introduction

- We will study the examples in the Qur'an. Every single letter and word in these examples are very profound.
- After 17 verses of explaining a concept at the beginning of the Qur'an, Allah begins using one example. All the examples in the Qur'an are connected.
- Reasons Allah gives examples in the Qur'an:
- To summarize and paint a picture of multiple complex discussions in one example. Therefore, even if we forget everything else, we will remember this example.
- A good teacher uses examples to explain complex ideas. Allah is the greatest teacher and hence He uses the right examples to simplify complex ideas and He teaches us to learn through these examples.

Example #1: Surah Ibrahim

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾
تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Do you not see how Allah compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches reach the sky, 'always' yielding its fruit in every season by the Will of its Lord. This is how Allah sets forth parables for the people, so perhaps they will be mindful. (14:24-25)

- There are two meanings of أَلَمْ تَرَ:
- #1. The intended recipient is one person, whereby the mufasssirun say is the Prophet (ﷺ). Hence, it means that Allah is speaking to the Prophet (ﷺ) himself.

- For example, in Surah Al-Fil, Allah similarly uses أَلَمْ تَرَ. Although the Prophet (ﷺ) did not witness the event, he was living in a time where people saw it and he was having conversations about it.
- This means Allah is telling us to do something that the Prophet (ﷺ) was doing himself. Hence, observing this example in this verse, is also a Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).
- Allah told the Prophet (ﷺ) to observe a tree and reflect and contemplate over it. Hence, when we should do the same thing.
- #2. The second recipient is a collective understanding of the ummah – everyone has a responsibility (i.e. what we can do for the ummah).
 - In the Quranic worldview, Allah always brings the intended message back to us individually.
 - Allah is speaking to us directly and hence we should not look at the other person or the world, but look to ourselves.
 - Allah is showing us the power which one person may possess within themselves. Meaning, whatever one does is what they are responsible for. One is not responsible for whatever what anyone else is doing.
- كَيْفَ – Refers to how; The how matters, hence we should not get lost in the example in itself. We should start thinking about how Allah has given this example to us and how He presented it to us.
- ضَرَبَ – Means to strike. It refers to a striking example. Meaning, Allah wants to draw our attention to something immediately.
- كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً – Means a good word. This entire example is a good word. Tayyib also means pure.
 - This word that Allah is giving an example of is not the tree, but the seed that is planted to grow the tree.
 - When we send a good message, even if it's concise, it's more than enough. We will never know how one word of ours can change someone's mind and affect their lives.
 - From the word itself, Allah is telling us that the quality is more important than the quantity in anything in life (i.e. conversations).
- Other meanings of طَيِّبَةً:
 - Sweet water
 - Food that's pleasant

- A land that's purified prior planting seeds
- A combination of the different meanings of tayyib denote that it is not just about what we say with our words, but how we say it. What we say has to be pleasant and the way we say it has to be equally pleasant.
- For example, there are many different ways in which one may greet others with 'Salam' – either with insincerity, enthusiasm etc.
- In order to live a blissful life, it is important to be mindful of how we convey our message to others.
- For instance, sometimes it is better to call instead of texting someone if the message may be wrongly interpreted or deemed offensive.
- كُلَّ حِينٍ – Means all time or every season.

