

SUMMER IMMERSION PARABLES IN THE QURAN



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Continuation of Parable #1: The Parable of a Tree - Surah Ibrahim

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُعَهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾
تُؤْتَيِ الْأُكْلَهَا كُلَّ جِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأُمْثَالَ 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)

- The concept of using مَثَل (examples) is to reinforce what is being taught -- using examples is one of the ways to teach prophetically
 - Just as there are examples used in the Quran, so are they in Hadith
 - Example: A believer is like a honeybee...
 - Allah (SWT) uses examples throughout the Quran to drive points home
 - All the kings of the world wouldn't be able to come together to even create something as small as fly
 - Those learned and knowledgeable individuals who still do not believe are like donkeys carrying gold (to show they are not benefitting from the knowledge they carry)
 - When Allah (SWT) gives examples in the Quran, they are relevant and relatable to the Arabs that were receiving the revelation
- The word ضَرَبَ has 11 meanings in Arabic; all of them related to striking something
- "Good word" كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً

- Both of these words are indefinite, showing it can be anything good
- THE **كَلْمَةُ طَيِّبَةٌ** is La Ilaaha Illallah - the statement of faith
 - This is the purest statement one can utter
 - This is the greatest of dhikrs
 - The best dhikr is La Ilaaha Illallah
 - The best dua is Alhamdulillah
 - Because when we thank Allah, He gives us more
 - Every Prophet was sent with the same message of La Ilaaha Illallah
- “Good tree” **شَجَرَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ**
 - Rasulullah (S) read this verse to his companions and asked them if they knew which tree this referred to
 - Ibn Umar (R) thought to himself this may be a date palm tree but did not answer in the gathering because the senior sahaba around him didn't speak up to answer, those that did didn't answer correctly. Then Rasulullah (S) told them the answer.
 - When the gathering ended, Ibn Umar (R) told Umar (R) that he knew the answer but didn't answer because senior sahaba around hadn't answered
 - Umar (R) said he should've answered and it would have made him so proud for the Prophet (S) to be proud of his son for knowing about tafseer and the answer to his question
 - This is a lesson to us that if we think we know the answer, we should answer - be humble and honest.
 - If we look at a date palm tree, there are a lot of factors that are similar to humans:
 - Life expectancy of ~60 years
 - Cutting their head off kills them
 - Rasulullah (S) said Salah is like the head of a believer, cutting it off is like cutting the head of a believer off
 - Rasulullah (S) said the believer is like a date palm tree:
 - Sticking close to it is beneficial
 - It gives off fruit (dates) - Maryam (A) benefits from the dates of a date palm tree while she's experiencing labor pains
 - The shade is beneficial

- Very pleasant to look at
 - They are well kept and clean (maintenance isn't hard because they aren't always shedding or need shaping up)
 - Everything about a date palm tree is beneficial/useful
 - Even a dead date palm tree gives off useful wood
- "Having its roots firm" أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ
 - Firm imaan is like the roots of a tree
 - The stronger the roots, the better the tree
 - Even in gardening, when the tree needs treating, the roots are what is treated
- "And its branches in the sky" وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ
 - The actions of the believers are like the branches of the tree
 - Imaan has 70 branches
 - The greatest of these branches is La Ilaaha Illallah
 - This is a faith based branch
 - One of the lowest branches is to remove something harmful from the path (i.e. making things easier for someone else)
 - This is a character based branch
 - Modesty is part of imaan
 - This is both a faith and character based branch
 - How do we keep imaan healthy?
 - Our company plays a key role in everything
 - Good company at a restaurant can be more restorative to our imaan than going for umrah with bad company
- "It brings its fruits at all times with the will of its Lord."

تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ

 - The date palm tree is not seasonal; we can benefit from it year round - a believer is the same
 - People are of two types: consumers and givers
 - Some people will drain us while others recharge and uplift us
 - We should aim to be people that are always benefiting others no matter what

وَمَثَلٌ كَلِمَةٌ خَيْثَةٌ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَيْثَةٌ أَجْتَثَتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ يُتَبَّعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الْثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضْلِلُ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾

And the parable of a bad word is like a bad tree, removed from the top of the soil, having no firm root. Allah keeps the believers firm with the stable word in the worldly life and the Hereafter; and Allah lets the unjust go astray; and Allah does what He wills.

- “Allah keeps the believers firm with the stable world in the worldly life and in the Hereafter يُتَبَّعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الْثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ”
 - Sometimes we see fallen trees that look otherwise healthy but they're blown down with a storm because they didn't have firm roots
 - Similarly, those who do not have firm imaan will easily fall into their desires.
- “Allah keeps the believers firm with the stable world in the worldly life and in the Hereafter يُتَبَّعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الْثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ”
 - The firmness of our faith keeps us stable in this world
 - Our belief in Allah (SWT) is what stabilizes us and will give us firmness in our grave
 - The best thing we can do before we die is say La Ilaaha Illallah
 - The firmness of one's imaan is most visible at the time of death
 - Rasulullah (S) said whoever's last statement is La Ilaaha Illallah will enter Jannah
 - Never traverse in areas that could be detrimental to our imaan
 - The healthier our imaan, the closer we are to Allah (SWT), the more sensitive we are to places and spaces that are void of Him
 - The more afraid we are to lose the sweetness of our ibaadah that took us so long to attain -- it's a defense mechanism to protect our imaan
 - A truly healthy person also keeps the people around them healthy as well - our environment impacts us. A healthy tree surrounded by dead trees will catch death soon too. Be connected to good people.
 - Amr ibn Al-'Aas asked the sahaba to stick around after he's buried to give him comfort while he is questioned in the grave -- this shows the importance of good company, we should surround ourselves with people who will pray for us and push us to do good.

- There are 5 channels that directly impact the heart of a believer
 - The eyes
 - What we see impacts our heart too
 - Scholars of the past would lower their gaze when they saw the luxuries of this world because they didn't want their heart to create space for anything other than Allah (SWT)
 - The ears
 - What we hear and listen to (even in passing)
 - The mouth
 - What we say, what we eat (tayyib, halal food has an impact on us)
 - The mind
 - Everything we see, hear, speak is registered in the mind and impacts our heart
 - The hands
 - Some scholars say the hands and what we're touching/engaged in