



A SUMMARY OF SCIENCES OF QURAN

By:
Team Alkarbala.org



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Introduction

The Holy Qur'an stands as the primary and most essential source for Islamic belief and legislation. To approach its meanings accurately, it is not enough to rely solely on translation or surface-level reading. A comprehensive understanding requires familiarity with a range of preparatory disciplines—later collectively termed as *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (the Sciences of the Qur'an). These sciences include knowledge of revelation circumstances (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), abrogation (*naskh*), similarities and dissimilarities (*mutashābih wa muḥkam*), contextual interpretation (*siyāq*), and more.

Over the centuries, scholars have compiled independent works exploring these topics in depth. Among the most notable efforts in the Shia tradition is the comprehensive work *al-Tamhīd*, a monumental project that took over 25 years to complete. This was later summarized in two volumes and further abridged into a student-friendly version titled *Mukhtaṣar al-Tamhīd* by Sheikh Mahmoud al-Malaki al-Isfahani.

This document is a refined and expanded translation of a research project originally authored by a sister who is a student of Islamic knowledge (ṭāliba ‘ilm) from the holy city of Karbala. Her work, titled *Mukhtaṣar ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Summary of the Sciences of the Qur’an), is a summarized presentation of the renowned book on Qur’anic sciences by ‘Allāmah Hādī Ma‘rifat. It offers valuable insights into the foundational disciplines necessary to understand the Qur’an.

May Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) reward this noble student for her dedication and sincere efforts in the path of Qur’anic knowledge. May He increase her in wisdom, grant her success in this world and the next, and accept her work as a service to His book and His path.

اللَّهُمَّ زِدْهَا عِلْماً وَفَهْماً وَتَقَبَّلْ سَعْيَهَا فِي خِدْمَةِ كِتَابِكَ الْمُبِينِ

Chapter 1: The Phenomenon of Revelation (وحي)

The Quran was revealed through "وحي" (Wahi), a divine communication from Allah to His chosen messengers. "وحي" refers to a form of revelation that is swift, hidden, and serves as a means of guiding humanity. This chapter explores the concept of "وحي," its linguistic meaning, its uses in the Quran, and the different ways it was delivered to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

1. Revelation in the Arabic Language:

In its linguistic sense, "وحي" refers to a quick and secret communication. Allah (SWT) describes this in the Quran when He says:

"Then he came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signaled to them to glorify Allah morning and evening." (Quran 19:11).

Here, "وحي" is not through spoken words but through symbols and signs, showing how Allah's messages can be communicated in a way that is subtle yet impactful.

2. Revelation in the Quran:

The Quran uses "وحي" in four primary meanings:

- **Linguistic Meaning:**

In this sense, "وحي" refers to secret or swift communication. A clear example is found in the verse:

"Then he came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signaled to them to glorify Allah morning and evening." (Quran 19:11).¹

This demonstrates the idea of a hidden or non-verbal form of communication.

- **Instinctive Command (Fitrah):**

"وحي" can also be an instinctive command, as shown when Allah instructed the bee:

"And your Lord inspired to the bee, 'Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees, and in which they erect.'" (Quran 16:68).²

¹ [Surah Maryam, Verse 11](#)

² [Surah An Nahl, Verse 68](#)

This type of revelation is not limited to humans but extends to the natural world, directing creatures according to their nature.

- **Inner Inspiration (Ilham):**

Revelation can take the form of inner inspiration or subconscious guidance. A notable example is the story of Prophet Musa's (Moses) mother, when Allah says:

“And We inspired to the mother of Moses, ‘Suckle him.’” (Quran 28:7).³

This type of revelation provides guidance on a deep, personal level, often influencing a person's actions without the need for outward communication.

- **Prophetic Revelation (Risālī):**

The most significant form of revelation is the prophetic revelation, where Allah communicates directly with His prophets. This is evident in the verse:

“We relate to you the best of stories through what We have revealed to you of this Quran.” (Quran 12:3).⁴

This revelation is the primary means by which Allah conveys His guidance, laws, and wisdom to humanity through His chosen messengers, particularly the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

3. Different Forms of Revelation:

The Quran reveals that revelation comes in various forms:

- **First Form:** Direct inspiration placed into the heart of the Prophet.
- **Second Form:** Communication through a veil, where the Prophet does not see Allah but receives His words indirectly.
- **Third Form:** The angel Jibril (Gabriel) delivers the message, either appearing physically to the Prophet or communicating in an unseen form.

³ [Surah Al-Qasas, Verse 7](#)

⁴ [Surah Yusuf, Verse 3](#)

Chapter 2: Forms of Revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) occurred in three primary forms. Each form carried a distinct mode of divine communication, ensuring the delivery of Allah's message in various ways. These forms include revelations through dreams, direct communication from Allah, and communication through the angel Jibril (Gabriel).

1. True Dreams (رؤيا صادقة):

The first form of revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was through true dreams. Imam al-Baqir (AS) explains that the Prophet would experience dreams similar to those seen by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), which were precursors to the actual revelation. These dreams were a part of the preparation for the Prophet's mission, giving him glimpses of the divine message before the arrival of Jibril. The dreams were clear, meaningful, and would later come to be verified by events in the real world.

Imam al-Baqir (AS) stated:

وأما النبي فهو الذي يرى في منامه، نحو رؤيا إبراهيم و نحو ما كان رأى رسول الله من أسباب النبوة قبل الوحي حتى أتاه جبرائيل من عند الله بالرسالة

"And as for the Prophet, he was one who saw in his dreams, like the vision of Ibrahim and like what the Messenger of Allah saw from the signs of prophethood before the revelation came to him until Jibril came to him with the message from Allah."⁵

This demonstrates how the Prophet's dreams were part of the divine preparation before the formal revelation began.

2. Direct Communication from Allah:

The second form of revelation was direct communication from Allah without any intermediary. In this form, Allah spoke to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) directly, bypassing any angelic mediator. This form of revelation was rare, but when it occurred, it was a powerful and intimate experience. Imam al-Sadiq (AS) describes this form of communication, stating that when Allah addressed the Prophet without any mediator, it was a moment of direct engagement, where the Prophet received guidance without the need for any intermediary.

⁵ [Alkafi.vol 1. P176](#)

We read in Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah:

The Prophet ﷺ used to be among his companions when he would suddenly faint, and he would begin to sweat profusely. Then, when he regained consciousness, he would say: *Allah the Almighty has said such and such, He has commanded you with such and such, and prohibited you from such and such.* Most of our opponents (i.e., differing sects) say that this would occur during the descent of Jibrā'il (Gabriel), peace be upon him.

So, Imām al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) was asked about the fainting that used to come over the Prophet ﷺ was it when Jibrā'il descended upon him?

He replied: *No. When Jibrā'il would come to the Prophet ﷺ, he would not enter upon him without first seeking permission. And when he did enter, he would sit before him like a servant sits. Rather, what [caused the fainting] was the direct address from Allah the Almighty to him — without any interpreter or intermediary.*⁶

This shows the special and unique nature of such moments of direct communication from Allah, where even Jibril would wait for permission before entering the Prophet's presence.

3. Revelation through Jibril (Gabriel):

The most common form of revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was through the angel Jibril (AS). Jibril would appear to the Prophet, often in his true form, though sometimes he would assume the appearance of a human being. The angel delivered the divine message from Allah to the Prophet, guiding him in matters of faith, law, and governance. Jibril's appearances are described as grand and majestic, with the Prophet encountering him at various times in his life. The Quran itself refers to Jibril's presence as being in "**the highest horizon**" (Quran 81:23), symbolizing the angel's proximity to divine knowledge.

Jibril's role was crucial in transmitting Allah's message to the Prophet, serving as a medium between the Divine and the human. The angel's role was not only to

⁶ [Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, V1, P114](#)

convey Allah's words but to also offer guidance on how the Prophet should interpret and implement these revelations in his life and the lives of his followers.

Chapter 03: The Prophet's (PBUH) Stance on Revelation

1. How did the Prophet (PBUH) know that the one who came to him with the message was from Allah and not a devil? How did he become assured that it was Jibril (Gabriel)?

It is obligatory upon Allah — according to the principle of **Divine Grace (lutf)** — to associate His prophethood with **clear, undeniable proofs**, as Allah says:

"Indeed, We will support Our messengers and those who believe in the life of this world."

(Surah Ghafir, 40:51)⁷

Zurarah ibn A'yun reported:

I asked **Imam al-Sadiq (AS)**: *"How did the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) not fear that what came to him from Allah might actually be from Satan?"*

The Imam (AS) replied:

"Indeed, when Allah chooses a servant to be a Messenger, He sends down upon him tranquility (sakinah) and solemnity. So, what comes to him from Allah becomes as clear to him as if he sees it with his eyes."⁸

The Prophet (PBUH) was only chosen by Allah for Prophethood **after his intellect and conduct had been perfected**. Allah refined his manners, taught him the **secrets of the heavens and the earth**, until **truth came to him at the age of forty**. He was the **noblest of the prophets**, the **best of the messengers**, and the **seal of the emissaries of the Lord of the worlds**. Allah honored him too greatly to leave him to himself in that critical moment.

2. Is it possible for the Prophet (PBUH) to err in distinguishing revelation from personal illusions or satanic whispers? Could Satan cast something into his heart that seems like divine revelation?

⁷ [Surah Ghafir, Verse 51](#)

⁸ [Bihar al-Anwar, Vol18, P262](#)

No, it is **impossible**. Allah's **justice and wisdom** prevent such confusion. The Prophet (PBUH) **receives only pure and protected revelation**. Revelation is safeguarded, and Allah guarantees clarity and security in what He sends down.

Refuting the Myth of Waraqah ibn Nawfal's Role

Some stories, like that of Waraqah ibn Nawfal, claim that the Prophet (PBUH) was frightened after the first revelation and that **Waraqah reassured him by comparing it to the Torah**. However, this tale is **mythical** for several reasons:

1. **Allah is far too merciful to frighten His Prophet at the moment of the most significant turning point in his life.**
2. **How can they give more weight to the intellect of a woman (Khadijah or Waraqah's female relative) who had no access to the knowledge of prophethood over the intellect of a fully-developed man (the Prophet), whom Allah had prepared and honored with divine secrets?**
3. **If this story were true, why didn't Waraqah ibn Nawfal accept Islam after confirming that Muhammad (PBUH) was indeed a prophet? He lived long enough after the Prophet's mission began but died without embracing Islam.**

Refuting the "Gharaniq" (Cranes) Myth

The so-called "Story of the Gharaniq" — which alleges that the Prophet (PBUH) mistakenly recited words inspired by Satan — is a **fabrication by storytellers**, falsely attributed to some **Tabi'in (second-generation Muslims)** and **Companions**, including Ibn Abbas.

This story is **rejected both in chain and in meaning**:

As for its chain (sanad):

The narration never reaches any **Companion** but is instead attributed to a **group of Tabi'in**, some of whom **did not live during the Prophet's lifetime**.

The hadith is **mursal (disconnected)**. Even **Ibn Abbas**, whose name is often attached to the story, was born **three years before the Hijrah**, so he did not witness the alleged event.

Chapter 04: The Revelation of the Qur'an (نزول القرآن)

The Holy Qur'an, the final revelation from Allah ﷻ, was sent to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as guidance for all of humanity. The process of revelation (wahy) began in the sacred month of Rajab and continued over a span of 23 years, shaping the foundation of Islamic belief and practice.

1.The Beginning of Revelation:

It is narrated that:

Imam Jafar(as), *"Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, sent Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) as a mercy to the worlds on the twenty-seventh of Rajab. So whoever fasts on that day, Allah will record for him the fasting of sixty months."*⁹

This marks the official start of the Prophet's mission and the initial descent of revelation.

2.The Two Stages of Revelation

The Qur'an was revealed in two distinct stages:

- **Stage 1: Complete Revelation to the Lowest Heaven**

The entire Qur'an was sent down at once from the Preserved Tablet (al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz) to the lowest heaven (Bayt al-'Izzah) during Laylat al-Qadr:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

"The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an..."

— Surah Al-Baqarah (2:185)

- **Stage 2: Gradual Revelation**

The Qur'an was then revealed gradually, piece by piece, to the heart of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through the Angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) over a period of 23 years. This allowed for its teachings to be internalized and applied contextually throughout the Prophet's life.

⁹ [Wasa'il us-Shia. Vol10 . P448](#)

3.The Early Years in Makkah

Imam al-Şādiq (peace be upon him) said: *“The Messenger of Allah remained in Makkah for thirteen years after the revelation from Allah. Three of those years were in secret, fearful of declaring the message. He only began to publicly declare his mission when Allah commanded him to proclaim what he was commanded.”*¹⁰

4.The First Revelation

The first verses to be revealed were from Surah al-‘Alaq:

“Read in the name of your Lord who created—created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous—Who taught by the pen—taught man that which he knew not.” Surah Al-‘Alaq (96:1–5)

These verses emphasize knowledge, learning, and the divine nature of revelation.

5.Dispute Over the First Surah

Some scholars, such as al-Zamakhsharī, held the view that:

“Most of the exegetes are of the opinion that al-Fātiḥah was the first to be revealed.”

While the mainstream and historically stronger position holds Surah al-‘Alaq as the first revelation, some scholars argued in favor of Surah al-Fātiḥah due to its central role in Islamic worship.

6.The Last Revelation

Scholars also differed regarding the last verse or surah to be revealed. The following are among the opinions:

¹⁰ [Bihar al-Anwar. Vol18. P177](#)

a. Surah al-Naṣr:

“When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest...”

— Surah al-Naṣr (110:1)

b. Surah al-Tawbah (or Barā’ah):

Some consider the final verses of Surah Barā’ah among the last to be revealed.

c. Verse:

“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah...”

— Surah Al-Baqarah (2:281)

d. Verse of the Completion of Religion:

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you...”

— Surah Al-Mā'idah (5:3)

Chapter 05: Makki and Madani Revelation

One of the essential classifications of the Qur'anic revelation is the distinction between verses and chapters that were revealed in Makkah (Makki) and those revealed in Madinah (Madani). This classification helps in understanding the historical context, legal content, tone, and purpose of the verses.

Scholars have held three main views (نظريات) to define what is Makki and what is Madani:

1. First Theory: Based on the Time of Revelation

This theory is the most widely accepted among scholars of Qur'anic sciences. It classifies revelation according to time:

- Everything revealed before the Hijrah (migration to Madinah) is Makki.
- Everything revealed after the Hijrah is Madani, regardless of whether it was revealed in Makkah, Madinah, or elsewhere.

2. Second Theory: Based on Place of Revelation

This theory classifies revelation by geographic location:

- Anything revealed in Makkah or its surrounding areas is Makki
- Anything revealed in Madinah and its surrounding areas is Madani.

3. Third Theory: Based on the Style and Audience

This theory relies on the language and style of address in the verse:

- Verses beginning with “يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ” (“O mankind”) are considered Makki.
- Verses beginning with “يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا” (“O you who have believed”) are considered Madani.

This is because:

- Makki verses addressed a general audience — mostly non-Muslims — and focused on foundational beliefs like Tawhīd, resurrection, and Prophethood.
- Madani verses were directed at the Muslim community and often dealt with legal rulings, societal organization, and ethical conduct.

Chapter 06: The Causes of Revelation (أسباب النزول: “Asbāb al-Nuzūl”)

The Qur'an was revealed gradually over twenty-three years in response to real-life situations, questions, and incidents that occurred during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This dynamic nature of revelation gave rise to what is known as Asbāb al-Nuzūl (the Causes of Revelation), or more precisely, Sha'n al-Nuzūl (the Occasion of Revelation). Understanding the context behind a verse helps clarify its intent and remove ambiguity. It also guides the interpreter in applying rulings correctly, whether the verse is general or specific in scope.

Significance:

- Helps understand the context of verses.
- Clarifies ambiguous meanings.
- Differentiates between general and specific rulings.

Example:

When people questioned the direction of prayer (Qiblah), Allah revealed:

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا

“We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah with which you will be pleased...”

-Surah Al-Baqarah (2:144)

Chapter 07: Al-Tanzīl wa al-Ta'wīl (التنزيل والتأويل)

The Holy Qur'an is a book of immense depth, revealed not merely to recite but to reflect upon and live by. A central Shia doctrine emphasizes the distinction between al-Tanzīl (revelation of the text) and al-Ta'wīl (its inner interpretation). While Tanzīl refers to the literal descent of words upon the Prophet ﷺ through Jibrīl (a), Ta'wīl refers to the true and often hidden meanings of those words. A profound statement is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):

“There is not a single verse in the Qur'an except that it has an outer meaning (ẓāhir) and an inner meaning (bāṭin).”¹¹

Explanation:

- Al-Zāhir (outer meaning): the literal, direct meaning understood by the general audience.
- Al-Bāṭin (inner meaning): the hidden, spiritual, or allegorical dimension understood through divine insight and taught by the Ahl al-Bayt.

This dual layer makes the Qur'an a timeless and multidimensional guide, always relevant to new generations and contexts.

¹¹ [Tafsir al-Safi, Vol 1, P31](#)

Chapter 08: "Iyyāka A'nī wa Isma'ī Yā Jārah" – Indirect Address in the Qur'an

Among the literary features of the Qur'an is its use of indirect address, a rhetorical technique known in Arabic as تعريض (ta'rīḍ) or كناية (kināyah). This form of communication allows the Qur'an to address one audience explicitly, while conveying a deeper or broader message to another.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) said: ***"The Qur'an was revealed with the style of 'It is you I address, so listen O neighbor!'—a metaphor for when someone speaks to one person but intends another, using indirect speech and allusion."***¹²

Meaning:

Many verses seem to address certain individuals (e.g., the Prophet ﷺ, disbelievers, or people of the Book), but their real message is meant for the entire ummah.

This style requires insight to interpret correctly and calls for humility in understanding divine language.

Example:

Verses that seemingly address the People of the Book often carry guidance and warnings for Muslims as well, such as:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

Surah As-Saff (61:2): "O People of the Book, why do you say what you do not do?" This indirectly warns Muslims against hypocrisy."

"Iyyāka a'nī wa isma'ī yā jārah" is not simply a poetic phrase; it encapsulates a method by which Allah speaks beyond the literal, inviting hearts to listen between the lines.

¹² [Mizan al-Hikmah, Vol 3, P2535](#)

Chapter 09: The Compilation and Arrangement of the Qur'an

The preservation and arrangement of the Qur'an is a miraculous aspect of the Islamic tradition. From the precise choice of words within verses to the order of chapters (sūrahs) within the muṣḥaf (codex), every level of organization was carried out under divine guidance. Allah Himself affirms in the Qur'an:

Surah al-Hijr (15:9)

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder (Qur'an), and indeed, We will be its Guardian.”

This chapter discusses the different levels of the Qur'an's organization and the roles played in its compilation by the Prophet's family and companions.

1. Divine Arrangement of the Qur'an

The Qur'an was not a human composition. Rather, each level of its structure was directly orchestrated by Allah:

- The arrangement of words into eloquent phrases and rhetorical structures within each āyah (verse) was divinely revealed.
- The compilation of these verses into suraḥs was also guided by revelation. The Prophet ﷺ would instruct the scribes where to place each newly revealed verse within a particular surah.
- Even the arrangement of the suraḥs in a complete muṣḥaf was guided by divine inspiration, and ultimately formalized by the Prophet's Companions after his death.

Thus, the entire structure — verse, surah, and muṣḥaf — reflects Allah's will, preserved for all time.

2. The Compilation by Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (عليه السلام)

After the passing of the Prophet ﷺ, the first person to gather the Qur'an into a complete book was Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (عليه السلام).

The first person to compile the Noble Qur'an after the Prophet's death — and by his instruction — was 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him).

According to narrations, Imam 'Alī stayed at home for a period after the Prophet's demise, arranging the Qur'anic text in chronological order of revelation and

explaining the contexts and meanings of its verses. This version, however, was not officially adopted by the Muslim community at large.

3.The Compilation by Zayd ibn Thābit

In the early years following the Prophet's passing, many Muslims who had memorized the Qur'an (ḥuffāẓ) were martyred in the battles of Yamāmah and elsewhere. This raised concerns about the preservation of the Qur'anic text.

It is reported that:

Due to the strong opposition to the muṣḥaf of Imam 'Alī (peace be upon him), the people felt a growing necessity to compile the Qur'an in an official form.

Thus, Caliph Abū Bakr, on the advice of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, appointed Zayd ibn Thābit — a chief scribe of revelation — to collect and compile the Qur'an into a single volume. Zayd collected verses from parchments, bones, leaves, and the memories of the Companions, verifying each verse with two witnesses.

This compilation eventually formed the basis of what became known as the standard Qur'anic text.

4.The Existence of Other Ṣaḥābah Muṣḥafs

During this period, several prominent Companions also compiled their own muṣḥafs (codices). These versions reflected differences in verse arrangement, order of surahs, and in some cases, dialectal variations.

In the period following the Prophet's death, a group of prominent Companions compiled their own versions of the Qur'an, each arranged in their own preferred order and referred to as a muṣḥaf.

Notable among them:

- Muṣḥaf of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd
- Muṣḥaf of Ubayy ibn Ka'b
- Muṣḥaf of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī

These muṣḥafs served as personal references and were eventually abandoned in favor of a unified official version under Caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, who commissioned multiple copies of the standardized muṣḥaf and sent them to different regions.

Chapter 10: Chapter: Standardization of the Qur’anic Codices and the Emergence of Qirā’āt (Readings)

1. Standardization of the Muṣḥafs (توحيد المصاحف)

As previously noted, after the Prophet’s ﷺ death, leading Companions undertook the compilation of the Qur’an’s surahs and verses based on their own knowledge and capacity. Consequently, the various muṣḥafs differed in style, arrangement, recitation, and other features.

Such divergence undoubtedly led to differences and disputes among the people.

2. The Emergence and Development of Qirā’āt (القراءات في نشأتها وتطورها)

Differences in recitation (qirā’ah) were also widespread. To manage this, Caliph ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān not only standardized the official text but also sent reciters along with each muṣḥaf to teach people the approved reading.

This led to regional associations of Qur’anic readings, such as:

- The Reading of Makkah (قراءة مكة)
- The Reading of Madinah (قراءة المدينة)
- The Reading of al-Shām (قراءة الشام)
- The Reading of Kūfah (قراءة الكوفة)
- The Reading of Baṣrah (قراءة البصرة)

Thus, the various regional readings emerged but were still rooted in the official Uthmānic muṣḥaf.

3. Factors Behind the Emergence of Variations (عوامل نشوء الاختلاف)

Several technical and historical factors contributed to the early differences in Qur’anic reading and interpretation:

1. بداءة الخطر (Badā’at al-Khaṭar) — The onset of danger (possibly referring to loss of ḥuffāẓ or doctrinal disputes).

2. الخلو عن النقط (Al-Khulū ‘an al-Nuqāṭ) — Absence of diacritical dots in early Arabic script.
3. التجريد عن الشكل (At-Tajrīd ‘an ash-Shakl) — Lack of vowel marks (ḥarakāt) in the initial manuscripts.
4. إسقاط الألفات (Isqāṭ al-Alifāt) — Omission of certain alifs due to script conventions.
5. تأثير اللهجة (Ta’thīr al-Lahjah) — The influence of regional dialects on pronunciation and reading.
6. تحكيم الرأي والاجتهاد (Taḥkīm ar-Ra’y wa al-Ijtihād) — Applying personal opinion and independent reasoning in interpretation.
7. غلو في الأدب (Ghulūw fī al-Adab) — Excessive emphasis on literary style or rhetorical embellishment.
8. شذوذ نفسي (Shudhūdh Nafsī) — Psychological abnormality or personal bias in understanding.
9. عوامل أخرى (‘Awāmil Ukhrā) — Other contributing factors, including:
 - a. زعم خطأ النسخة (Za‘m Khaṭa’ an-Nuskha) — Alleging a mistake in the manuscript copy.
 - b. تخليط التفسير بالنص (Takhliṭ at-Tafsīr bi an-Naṣṣ) — Confusing the interpretation (tafsīr) with the actual text of revelation.
 - c. أهداف سياسية (Ahdāf Siyyāsiyyah) — Political motivations influencing interpretation or narration.
 - d. نظرات كلامية (Naẓarāt Kalāmiyyah) — Theological perspectives from speculative theology (‘ilm al-kalām) that color one’s reading.
 - e. عدم معرفة القارئ بقاعد اللغة والأدب (‘Adam Ma‘rifat al-Qārī’ bi Qawā‘id al-Lughah wa al-Adab) — The reader’s lack of knowledge of linguistic and literary rules.

Chapter 11: Types of Differences in Qirā'āt (Recitations)

Ibn Qutaybah said: The differences in Qur'anic recitations fall into seven categories:

1. اختلاف في إعراب الكلمة أو في حركة بناتها

Difference in the grammatical inflection (i' rāb) of a word or in the vowel marks (ḥarakāt) attached to its suffixes.

2. اختلاف إعراب الكلمة وحركات بناتها

Difference in both the inflection of the word and the vowelization of its extensions.

3. اختلاف في حروف الكلمة دون إعرابها

Difference in the letters of a word without affecting its grammatical structure.

4. اختلاف في الكلمة بما يتغير صورتها في الكتاب

Difference in the word in such a way that its written form is altered.

5. اختلاف في الكلمة بما يزيل صورتها ومعناها

Difference in the word that changes both its form and its meaning.

6. اختلاف بالتقديم والتأخير

Difference due to variation in word order (advancement and postponement).

7. اختلاف بالزيادة والنقصان

Difference involving addition or omission of words.

Chapter 12: The Criterion for Accepting Qur'anic Readings (Qirā'āt)

Conditions for Accepting a Reading:

The scholars of Qur'anic recitation set three main conditions for accepting a reading:

1. **Authentic Chain of Transmission (Sanad)**
2. **Conformity with the Uthmani Script (Rasm)**
3. **Soundness of Language According to Arabic Grammar**

A reading that does not meet these conditions is considered **irregular (shādh)** and **not valid** for recitation, whether in prayer or otherwise. Thus, the matter of selecting an acceptable reading is fundamental.

Chapter 13: The Mutawātir Nature of the Qur'an

The standard for verifying a valid reading is its **conformity with the original text preserved among the generality of Muslims**.

Criteria for Sound Readings:

1. Conformity with the known, widely accepted version of the Qur'an among Muslims
2. Agreement with classical, eloquent Arabic
3. Absence of any definitive rational or textual contradiction

Chapter 14: The Chosen Reading

1. It has been **adopted continuously by Muslims** throughout generations
2. There is **consensus among jurists** on its permissibility
3. It is supported by **numerous reports from the Imams (peace be upon them)**, instructing the people to follow what is with the public and widely recognized by Muslims

Chapter 15: The Seven Readings (Al-Qirā'āt Al-Sab'ah)

During the early period of Islam, Muslims would recite the Qur'an as they received it from the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Among the first major scholars to formally compile the authentic readings was **Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām al-Anṣārī (d. 224 AH)**, a student of al-Kisā'ī.

The Seven Famous Readers (Qurrā'):

1. **'Abdullāh ibn 'Āmir al-Yahṣubī** – Reader of al-Shām (d. 118 AH)
2. **'Abdullāh ibn Kathīr al-Dārī** – Reader of Makkah (d. 120 AH)
3. **'Āṣim ibn Abī al-Najūd al-Asadī** – Reader of Kufa (d. 128 AH)
4. **Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' al-Māzinī (Zabān)** – Reader of Basra
5. **Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt** – Reader of Kufa (d. 156 AH)
6. **Nāfi' ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Laythī** – Reader of Madinah (d. 169 AH)
7. **'Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā'ī** – Reader of Kufa (d. 189 AH)

Later scholars added three more to complete the ten canonical readings:

8. **Khalaf ibn Hishām** – Narrator of Ḥamzah and reader of Baghdad (d. 229 AH)
9. **Ya'qūb al-Ḥaḍramī** – Reader of Basra (d. 205 AH)
10. **Abū Ja'far Yazīd ibn al-Qa'qā' al-Makhzūmī** – Reader of Madinah

Chapter 16: Hafṣ and the Reading We Use Today

The common Qur’anic reading in use from the early generations until today is **the reading of ‘Āṣim narrated by Ḥafṣ**, who received it from **Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī**, who in turn received it from **Imām ‘Alī (peace be upon him)**.

Imām ‘Alī would not recite except in accordance with the **divinely revealed, widely transmitted text**. The reading of Ḥafṣ is particularly prominent among **Shi’a Muslims**, as it was transmitted through Imām al-Ṣādiq’s companions. Ḥafṣ was known as the most precise and knowledgeable of ‘Āṣim’s students.

Chapter 17: Abrogation (Naskh) in the Qur’an

Definition of Abrogation:

Naskh refers to the **removal of a previous ruling** which, based on its apparent wording, was understood to be permanent.

Reality of Naskh:

Naskh in the divine sense is actually the **manifestation of a new ruling**, not a true cancellation. The original ruling was temporary from the beginning due to divine wisdom. So, what appears as abrogation is in fact a **change of law based on evolving needs**.

Difference Between Abrogation and Specification:

- **Abrogation:** Terminates a ruling **after** it has been acted upon for some time.
- **Specification:** Restricts a general rule **before** it is implemented, applying only to a subset.

Conditions for Naskh in the Qur’an:

1. Actual conflict between two rulings
2. The conflict must be total and not partial
3. The earlier ruling must **not** be time-bound explicitly
4. Abrogation must relate to **legal rulings**, not **narratives or factual reports**
5. The **subject matter must remain the same**—a change in the subject is not considered abrogation

Types of Abrogation:

1. **Abrogation of both recitation and ruling**
2. **Abrogation of recitation only, ruling remains**
3. **Abrogation of ruling only, recitation remains**

Chapter 18: The Reality of Ta'wīl (Interpretation)

Meaning of Ta'wīl:

Ta'wīl refers to **interpreting a similar or ambiguous word or action** to return it to a rational, acceptable meaning. It comes from the root "awwala," meaning **to return**. When a scholar performs ta'wīl, they direct the meaning toward a truth that aligns with reality. The Qur'an mentions ta'wīl, such as in the story of **al-Khiḍr and Prophet Mūsā**, where al-Khiḍr explains the hidden meanings behind his actions.

Difference Between Tafsīr and Ta'wīl:

- **Tafsīr**: Clarifies the **apparent meaning** of the words
- **Ta'wīl**: Uncovers the **deeper or hidden meaning**, removing doubt

Types of Ta'wīl in Religious Texts:

1. **Clarifying Ta'wīl**: Interpreting the text to match the correct meaning based on external evidence
2. **Inner or Esoteric Ta'wīl**: Finding meanings **not apparent** in the verse, but understood through deeper knowledge

The Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Imams (peace be upon them) taught that **every verse of the Qur'an has an apparent and a hidden meaning**, which includes context, reason of revelation, and extended implications.

Chapter 19: Who Knows the Ta'wīl?

Due to the existence of **ambiguous verses** in the Qur'an, people of desire may misinterpret them to serve their interests. Therefore, there must be **divinely guided scholars** in every age to **protect these meanings from corruption**.

The Qur'an says:

“And no one knows its interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge.”

This raises the question:

- Is the conjunction “and” inclusive (shared knowledge) or separating (only Allah)?
If **inclusive**, then those firmly rooted in knowledge **do know** the interpretation.
If **separating**, then **only Allah** knows it.

But the context of the verse suggests that the **firmly rooted in knowledge** do understand the ta'wīl, as they possess deep understanding of the Qur'an and its jurisprudential and theological implications.

Who Are the "Firmly Rooted in Knowledge"?

They are the **truthful scholars** who have understood the essence of religion. At the forefront is the **Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)**, followed by **Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him)** and the other **Infallible Imams**. In every era, there are **divinely trained scholars** who carry this knowledge and protect the religion from misinterpretation. The hadith states:

“This knowledge will be carried by righteous scholars in every generation, who will remove the distortions of extremists and the lies of the falsifiers.”

Ta'wīl is a deeper level of understanding of religious texts that goes beyond superficial explanation to uncover timeless meanings. It is a **science possessed by those firmly grounded in knowledge**, who dedicate their lives to understanding and protecting the faith. Through them, the Qur'an is preserved from false interpretations, and the **core of true religion** remains intact.

Chapter 20: Definitive (Muḥkam) vs. Ambiguous (Mutashābih) Verses

- **Muḥkam (Definitive):**

From the root meaning “firm” or “precise,” it refers to speech whose meaning is clear and unambiguous—statements that do not allow for multiple interpretations.

- **Mutashābih (Ambiguous):**

From the root meaning “to resemble,” it refers to expressions that allow for multiple interpretations due to their similarity or complexity. Example:

“The cows look alike to us.” (Qur’an 2:70) – where the similarity causes confusion.

Chapter 21: Causes of Ambiguity in the Qur’an

One key reason for ambiguity is **the depth and loftiness of the meanings**, which are **above the average level of human understanding**.

Example:

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.” (Qur’an 24:35)

Here, “light” is the most subtle and precise term that can approximate understanding of the Divine Essence.

Chapter 22: The Nature of Ta'wīl (Interpretation)

- **Literal Meaning:** Derived from *awwala* (to return), it means returning the ambiguous expression to a firm and acceptable meaning.
- **Scope of Ta'wīl:**
This interpretive process applies to **all of the Qur'an**, not just ambiguous verses. It includes interpreting **visions**, **metaphors**, and **hidden truths** behind apparent commands.
- The Qur'an has:
 - **Zāhir (outer meaning):** Literal explanation (tafsīr)
 - **Bāṭin (inner meaning):** Hidden or timeless interpretations applicable across ages

Chapter 23: Are There Ambiguous Verses in the Qur'an?

Yes. The Qur'an contains:

- **Clear verses (muḥkamāt)** with obvious meanings
- **Ambiguous verses (mutashābihāt)** that may confuse some readers

Reason for ambiguity:

The Qur'an uses the language of the Arabs, but expresses divine concepts that surpass their worldly understanding. Hence, it employs **metaphor, allegory, and figurative speech**.

Some verses were not problematic initially, but **sectarian polemics and theological disputes** made them appear confusing.

Examples:

- *"Looking toward their Lord"* (Qur'an 75:23): Some took this literally as seeing God, while the intended meaning is **awaiting His mercy**.

- “*He rose over the Throne*” (Qur’an 20:5): Initially understood as divine sovereignty, later misinterpreted anthropomorphically by literalist groups.

Chapter 24: Ta’wīl Clarified Again

Ta’wīl: Redirecting an ambiguous expression to a correct and acceptable interpretation. It **removes doubt and obscurity**.

- **Difference from Tafsīr:**
 - Tafsīr clarifies the **apparent** meaning
 - Ta’wīl reveals the **hidden or deeper** meaning
 - Ta’wīl can include **secondary meanings** that apply across time

Chapter 25: Firmly rooted Knowledge

Of course, **Allah knows it**, but **so do righteous scholars**. Some people follow ambiguous verses to create confusion and misguide others.

Therefore, **God-appointed scholars must exist in every age** to:

- Explain these meanings
- Defend the Qur’an from distortion

“No one knows its interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge.” (Qur’an 3:7)

The conjunction “**and**” implies inclusion—those **firmly grounded in knowledge** know the interpretation **along with** their faith in it.

Chapter 26: Who Are the Firmly Rooted in Knowledge?

They are:

- **Truthful, pious scholars** who deeply understand Islamic law and reality
- **Guided by God** through insight and rigorous effort
- The **Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)**, his **successors**, and **upright scholars in every era**

Traditions instruct Muslims to return to such scholars to understand ambiguous verses correctly.

Chapter 27: The Inimitability (I'jāz) of the Qur'an

Definition of I'jāz

Linguistically, "i'jāz" refers to the inability to do something. In Islamic terminology, it refers to a supernatural phenomenon brought forth by God through His Prophets as proof of their truthfulness, paired with a challenge to others, and free from any possible opposition.

Types of I'jāz:

1. **Sensory I'jāz:** Physical miracles, like the she-camel of Ṣāliḥ and the staff of Mūsā (Moses).
2. **Rational I'jāz:** Miracles that appeal to intellect, such as prophecies and the linguistic or scientific inimitability of the Qur'an.

Chapter 28: The Qur'an as a Perpetual Miracle

- The Qur'an is the eternal and ultimate miracle of Islam, suited to all nations and times.
- The Arabs, despite their eloquence, failed to challenge it, proving their incapacity.
- The Qur'an issued multiple levels of challenge:
 - First: produce a scripture like it.
 - Then: produce ten chapters.

- Then: even a single chapter.
- Finally: declared its inimitability, even if all mankind and jinn collaborated.

Chapter 29: Characteristics of Qur'anic Inimitability

- Combines eloquence, rhetorical beauty, legislative depth, and scientific hints.
- The challenge is universal—not limited to Arabs or any specific group.
- Despite centuries passing, no one has matched it.

Chapter 30: Dimensions of the Qur'an's I'jāz

1. Linguistic and Rhetorical Inimitability

- Matchless eloquence and harmonized diction.
- Each word fits precisely in its place, producing emotional and intellectual impact.
- **Examples:**
 - Theft vs. fornication: In verses on theft, the male is mentioned first due to its social context. Similarly, in adultery, male is also mentioned first, reflecting societal roles.
 - Mention of “you hear” for night and “you see” for day in the same verse, highlighting context-based diction.
 - Use of metaphor and euphemism, e.g., “old age flaring up” (for Zakariya’s grey hair), or “maraawada” as a euphemism for seduction.

2. Scientific Inimitability

- Contains scientific insights unknown at the time of revelation.
- **Examples:**

- Water as the source of life: *“And We made from water every living thing”*.
- Human creation from gushing fluid: reference to sperm and embryology.
- Expanding universe: *“Indeed, We are expanding [the universe]”*.
- Cosmic order: *“By the sky full of pathways”* — interpreted as referencing gravity.
- Movement of mountains: *“And you see the mountains, thinking them stationary, while they pass like clouds”* — referring to Earth’s motion.

3. Legislative Inimitability

- Qur’anic laws are wise, just, and fit for all times.
- **Examples:**
 - Systems for charity, inheritance, and economic justice.
 - Emphasis on fairness and human dignity.
 - Protection of family rights and care for orphans and the poor.
 - Balanced approach to freedom and social responsibilities.

Chapter 31: The Ghayb-related Inimitability of the Qur’an

Ghaybī I’jāz refers to Qur’anic revelations concerning the unseen—past, present, and future—unknown to the Prophet ﷺ and his people.

1. Past Unseen Events

- **Examples:**
 - Maryam and Zakariya: *“This is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you...”* — details not known in Arabia.
 - Story of Nūḥ and the Flood: *“That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you...”*

2. Present Unseen Events

- **Examples:**

- Hypocrites building a harmful mosque (*Masjid al-Dirār*): Revealed to the Prophet despite his unawareness of their true intentions.

3. Future Unseen Events

- **Examples:**

- Victory of the Romans: *“The Romans have been defeated... but they will be victorious within a few years...”* — which came true.
- The Qur’an’s challenge: *“And if you are in doubt... then produce a surah like it...”* — a challenge that remains unmet.
- The spread of Islam: *“Allah has promised those who believe... that He will surely grant them succession on earth...”* — fulfilled historically.