

# **ALI 210: Session 1**

## **Understanding Divine Message**

This course will cover Qur'anic vocabulary, simple rules of Arabic grammar and lessons on understanding the Qur'anic text using *Arabic Through the Qur'an* by Alan Jones. We also plan to use *Qur'anic Language Made Easy* by Haifza Iffath Hasan to supplement some of the difficult Arabic grammar concepts. Any one who can read the Holy Qur'an text can register for the course; you do not need any prior knowledge of Arabic language. We will also study basic Hadith and passages of Du'as in Arabic.

# Understanding the Arabic text of the Holy Qur'an

- We will concentrate on learning classical Arabic (and not Modern Arabic)
- We will try to quote examples from the Qur'an both for lessons & exercises
- Occasionally we will use phrases from Hadiths and Du'as
- We do not plan to cover how to converse in Arabic

# What is required for the course?

- Ability to read the Qur'an is essential for the course
- Text for the course: *Arabic Through the Qur'an* by Alan Jones
- Holy Qur'an with English translation (preferably by Ali Quli Qarai)
- Practice writing Arabic words, phrases and verses from the Qur'an
- Other texts which may be of great use  
*Qur'anic Language Made Easy* by Hafiza Iffath Hasan  
*Access to Qur'anic Arabic* by AbdulWahid Hamid).

## Our efforts *inshaa Allah* will be greatly rewarded

- All learning carries a lot of reward. The Holy Prophet (s) has said: *He who seeks knowledge is as one who spends his day fasting and his night praying. Verily a chapter of knowledge that a man learns is better for him than for him to have as much gold as a mountain and give it all away in the way of Allah.*[Munyat al-Murid, p. 100]
- Learning to understand the message of the Holy Qur'an is a must for Muslims and carries enormous rewards.

# The Holy Qur'an on itself

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ

17:9 Surely this Quran guides to that which is most upright

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ  
حِجَابًا مَسْتُورًا

17:45 And when you recite the Quran, We place between you  
and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden  
barrier

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ  
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ

35:29 Surely they who recite the Book of Allah and keep up  
prayer and spend out of what We have given them secretly  
and openly, hope for a gain which will not perish.

# Merits of Reciting and Studying the Qur'an

Holy Prophet (s): The Qur'an is rich, and there is no richness without it, and no poverty after it.

Imam Zaynul Abidin (a): If everyone from the east to the west was to die, I would not feel lonely if I had the Qur'an with me.

Holy Prophet (s): You must learn the Qur'an, and recite it a lot.

# *Tanwin* is sign of indefiniteness

*Tanwin* means that the last letter of the word carries double vowel signs (*fathatayn, kasratayn, dammatayn*). For e.g. قرآن، آية، كتاب

*Tanwin* in most nouns and adjectives indicates that the word is indefinite

There are a number of words in Arabic that do not take *tanwin* despite being indefinite, e.g. أول 'first,' آخر 'other,' دُنْيَا 'world,' بُشْرَى 'glad tidings/news'.

It is incorrect to add *tanwin* to words that do not take double vowels.

Adding the article ال i.e. 'the' would make a noun or adjective into definite. A definite word automatically loses *tanwin*, thus carries only one vowel sign on the last letter. E.g. العبد the slave

# Use of the definite article *al*

In English article 'the' is a separate word, but in Arabic ال is prefixed inseparably to a definite word

Saying *assalamun alaykum* is grammatically incorrect for we are assigning both definite article to word *salam* and ending it with tanwin, which is a sign of being indefinite.

Alif of ال is only pronounced if it is at the beginning of a sentence, otherwise it would be silent

Some Qur'anic (and Arabic) texts add *wasla* sign on top of alif to indicate that it's a silent alif



# The Moon and the Sun letters

Arabic alphabet has 28 letters; or 29 letters if letters *alif* and *hamza* are counted separately

The following 14 letters are the Moon Letters:

ا، ب، ج، ح، خ، ع، غ، ف، ق، ك، م، ه، و، ي

The following 14 letters are the Sun Letters:

ت، ث، د، ذ، ر، ز، س، ش، ص، ض، ط، ظ، ل، ن

The *lam* of ال is only pronounced if it is attached to Moon letters. In Sun letters the *lam* is assimilated by adding *shadda* to the sound of the letter to which it is attached to. Therefore we say *al-baqara* (the 2<sup>nd</sup> sura of the Qur'an) and *an-nisaa* (the 4<sup>th</sup> sura of the Qur'an).

## Use of *al* with *lam*

### The Divine Name ‘Allah’

In the text of the Holy Qur'an when ال is prefixed to a word beginning with *lam*, only one *lam* is written instead of two. So we see اَللَّيْلُ and not اَللَّيْلُ in the Qur'an. (FYI, in modern Arabic both *lams* are written).

The Divine Name اَللَّهُ which appears over 2,000 times in the Qur'an is composed of ال + إِلَه. Literally it means ‘the God.’ It never carries tanwin because it is a definite word.

# Gender: Masculine and Feminine

Most Arabic words can be categorized as being either masculine or feminine, irrespective whether they refer to animate or inanimate things.

To form a feminine adjective from a masculine, *taa marbutah* (ة) is added. Thus كَبِيرٌ which is masculine & means 'big' becomes كَبِيرَةٌ in feminine form. Similarly شَدِيدٌ 'strong' becomes شَدِيدَةٌ

A small number of words are feminine through meaning, such as أُمُّ 'mother' and أُخْتُ 'sister.'

Some words are feminine through convention, for e.g. أَرْضٌ 'earth,' نَارٌ 'fire,' شَمْسٌ 'sun,' etc.

Adjective follows the noun in:  
definiteness and gender

الْكِتَابُ الْمُبِينُ - the manifest book (12:1)

كِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ a manifest book (5:15)

الْقُرْآنُ الْمَجِيدُ - the glorious Qur'an (50:1)

قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ - a glorious Qur'an (85:12)

رَحْمَةٌ وَاسِعَةٌ - an ample mercy (6:147)

الْأَرْضُ الْمَيْتَةُ - the dead earth (36:33)

# Non-verbal sentence

In Arabic, you can form a complete sentence without a verb. These are non-verbal sentences. For e.g. <sup>عَزِيزٌ</sup>اللَّهُ Allah is Mighty, and <sup>قَوِيٌّ</sup>اللَّهُ Allah is strong. Note in both these cases definite noun is followed by an indefinite adjective. Also, the verb 'is' is not present in the Arabic but understood.