

KIFLAYN STUDY GUIDE

Some of us are students, many of us are professionals, and others may be enjoying their retirement. Yet we know that the believer is a lifelong student, which is why all of us are participating in this tremendous course. In order to gain the maximum benefit from it, it may be helpful to share some tips on how to ‘study’ for this course.

Preparation

Read the thematic summary of the Surah found in *The Quran Beheld*.

Read the translation of the verses that will be taught.

Underline in pencil any passages or words that catch your attention, and consider how reading this verse or page impacts your relationship with, and understanding of, Allah.

Notes

When it comes to note-taking, there are different strokes for different folks. This is a general guide, but folks will have their own methods that suit them.

Note-taking cannot capture every detail of a class.

Some people like to write down linguistic details about specific words and expressions; others prefer to follow the Sheikh’s lesson with their personal copy of *The Quran Beheld* and record the Sheikh’s remarks about the broader meanings of the revelation. Some even combine these two approaches.

Remember that Kiflayn provides summaries of each lesson, so don’t feel anxious about documenting every single point the Sheikh makes. Use your notes, but utilize Kiflayn’s summaries.

Personally, I annotate around the margins of my copy of *The Quran Beheld*. I have a sheet of A5 paper ready in case my notes become slightly longer. This paper, along with subsequent sheets, can be stapled together and kept inside one’s copy of *The Quran Beheld*.

When the Sheikh makes a point about the specific meaning of an Arabic word (its pattern, root, etymology, multiple meanings), I underline the word and insert my notes in the margins on the page containing the Arabic. When the Sheikh refers to the views of the exegetes, explains his reasoning behind the use of certain English words and expressions, highlights the moral upshot of Allah’s revelation, all these I note down on the page containing the English translation. These notes and meanings of the Quran are now in my copy of *The Quran Beheld*, which I use for tadabbur (reflection and understanding) as opposed to daily recitation.

Some will want to keep their copies free of any markings. In that case, a good old-fashioned notebook will do. At the top of the page, jot down the Surah in question. On the left-hand side of

the page, in the margins, write down the verse numbers in red, leaving a space of two lines in between. This way, you can make notes on each verse using a blue/black pen. The verses and notes are now easily distinguishable.

Study

Before retiring to bed, spend ten minutes that same day reading the translation of the verses covered in the lesson and reviewing your notes.

At some point before the next lesson, go through the slides prepared by Kiflayn, and add to your notes if you feel the need to do so.

The Long View

As Sheikh Nuh Keller has explained, tafsir is arguably the greatest science of the Islamic disciplines. These notes are supposed to build up over time. The terms, style, and vocabulary of tafsir may be new to us now, but over the coming months and years, they will become more familiar. It was not too long ago that many of us knew nothing about the madhhabs, fiqh, and juristic terms and details. It took works like *Reliance of the Traveller* to be translated, taught, and introduced to us over the years; soon thereafter, we learnt to implement *fiqh* in our lives. *The Quran Beheld* is similar in this respect. It is introducing us for the first time to the science of tafsir, the majesty of Allah's final revelation. It may be challenging at first, as all important subjects should be. But over time, we will be able to comprehend these meanings in our lives, with the tawfiq of Allah.

BASIC GLOSSARY

This is a basic and simplified glossary of terms often cited during the course. Students should build on this glossary, adding new terms and their definitions as and when they are provided by Sheikh Nuh Keller. It may be helpful to have a separate sheet of paper for terms and definitions. Students are advised to consult the Introduction to *The Quran Beheld*, which explains several key terms and concepts (adverbs, conjunctive particles, demonstrative pronouns, and so on and so forth).

Form patterns

Every Arabic verb corresponds to a verb stem form (*wazn/lawzān*). Textbooks speak of ten main verb forms, though there are more. Each verb form implies a certain nuance of meaning, something with Sheikh Nuh Keller is constantly drawing our attention to in his lessons. The ten verb stem forms are:

إِسْتَفْعَلَ	إِفْعَلَ	إِفْتَعَلَ	إِنْفَعَلَ	تَفَاعَلَ	تَفَعَّلَ	أَفْعَلَ	فَاعَلَ	فَعَّلَ	فَعَلَ
X	IX	VIII	VII	VI	V	IV	III	II	I

Verbal nouns (*masdar*), active and passive participles are then derived from these stems (*taṣawwuf*, for example, is a verbal noun derived from Form V).

<i>ḥarf al-ʿatf</i> (conjunctive particle)	= و، ثم، ف
<i>badal</i> (substitute)	= stands in apposition for the previous referent
<i>damir al-fasl</i> (pronoun of separation)	= هو، هم
<i>fa al-fasiha</i> (use of <i>fa</i> to omit an antecedent that is so obvious it need not be mentioned)	
<i>ghayba</i> (third person speech)	
<i>hal</i> (adverbial of circumstance)	
<i>idhhar</i> (making explicit)	
<i>idhmar</i> (making implicit by omission)	
<i>iltifat</i> (a sudden digression)	= often reflected by a shift in pronouns
<i>ism al-faʿil</i> (active participle)	
<i>istiʿara</i> (metaphor)	
<i>istifham</i> (interrogative particle)	= literal or rhetorical
<i>khitab</i> (direct speech)	
<i>lam al-tawkid</i> (emphasis)	= ‘verily’
<i>lam al-taʿlil</i> (causality)	= ‘because of’
<i>mahdhuf</i> (omitted)	
<i>mubalagha</i> (hyperbole)	
<i>sifa</i> (attribute, adjective)	
<i>taʿkhir</i> (to delay a word)	
<i>taʿkid</i> (emphatic)	
<i>nun al-ʿadhama</i> (royal ‘We’ of insuperable might and majesty)	
<i>tankir</i> (indefinite)	
<i>taqdim</i> (bring a word forward)	
<i>tarakhi rutabi</i> (disparity in rank)	
<i>waw al-ʿatf li al-munasba</i> (<i>waw</i> of contrast)	