

Highest Signs: Translating the Quran Beheld

Lesson 2

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The Once and Future Hermeneutic – Part 2



Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

5. *Qabl, Min Qabl, Ba'd, Min Ba'd*: Adverbs of Chronology

- Appears in previous translations as *previously, before, aforetime, of old....etc*

A) Entirety of all times before the referent

(*istighraq jami' al-azmina al-qabliyya*) استغراق جميع الأزمنة القبلية

- E.g. The House of Imran: 164 ﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ﴾
﴿وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾
 - min qablu as: *the whole time before*
- E.g. The Prophets: 6 ﴿مَا ءَامَنَتْ قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا ۗ أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾
 - qablahum as: *ever....before them*

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

5. *Qabl, Min Qabl, Ba'd, Min Ba'd*: Adverbs of Chronology

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B) Immediacy before the time of the referent

الْقَبْلُ الْقَرِيبُ (*al-qabl al-qarib*)

- E.g. The Cow: 25 ﴿وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا ۖ قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا ۖ وَهُمْ فِيهَا أزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾
 - min qablu as: *just before*

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C) Immediacy before something is missed

(*min qabli fawat al-awan*) مِنْ قَبْلِ فَوَاتِ الْأَوَانِ

- E.g. Counsel: 47 ﴿سَتَجِدُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ﴾

﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَكِيرٍ﴾

- min qabli as: *in time before*

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D) Metaphorical immediacy before the time of the referent

(*al-qabl al-qarib majazan*) القبل القريب مجازاً

- E.g. The Stars: 50-52 ﴿وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَىٰ﴾ ﴿وَتَمُودَ فَمَا أَبْقَىٰ﴾ ﴿وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ

كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَىٰ﴾

- min qablu as: *but before*

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E) The entirety of all times *after* the referent

استغراق جميع الأزمنة البعدية (istighraq jami' al-azmina al-ba'diyya)

- E.g. The Amassing: 10 وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا ﴿١٠﴾

بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

- min ba'dihim as: *who ever came after them*

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F) Immediacy after the time of the referent

(*al-ba'd al-qarib*) البعد القريب

- E.g. Counsel: 14 ﴿وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ﴾
 - min ba'di as: *but just when*

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5. *Qabl, Min Qabl, Ba'd, Min Ba'd*: Adverbs of Chronology

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- Additional examples: فوق / تحت / من فوقهم / من تحتهم

- E.g. The Laden Table: 66 ﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ مِنَ رَّبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ﴾
﴿وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

- min fawqihim as: *from right above them*
- min tahti arjulihihim as: *beneath their very feet*

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5. *Qabl, Min Qabl, Ba'd, Min Ba'd*: Adverbs of Chronology

- Appears in previous translations as *previously, before, aforesaid, of old....etc*

- Additional examples: فوق / تحت / من فوقهم / من تحتهم

- E.g. Bees: 26 ﴿قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَى اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

- min fawqihim as: *right on them*

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

6. *Jam' al-qilla and jam' al-kathra*: Plurals of Paucity and Plentitude

- Previously unnoted in prior translations

A) The Plural of Paucity: (jam' al-qilla) جمع القلة

- E.g. Bees: 121 ﴿شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعَمِهِ ۚ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

- an'umihī as: *the most insignificant of His blessings*

- E.g. Expounded: 15-16 ﴿فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۗ وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ﴾ ﴿فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ لِنُنذِرَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْحَزَنِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلِعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَىٰ ۗ وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ﴾

- fi ayyamin nahisatin: *for a paltry few luckless days*

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

6. *Jam' al-qilla and jam' al-kathra*: Plurals of Paucity and Plentitude

- Previously unnoted in prior translations

B) The Plural of Plentitude: (jam' al-kathra) **جَمْعُ الْكَثْرَةِ**

- E.g. Defraudment: 6 **ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَاتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا اَبَشْرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا ۗ**

وَاسْتَغْنَى اللّٰهُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ غَنِیٌّ حَمِیْدٌ ۙ

- rusuluhum as: *their many messengers*
- E.g. Kneeling: 18 **ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ**
- ahwa' as: *innumerable vain fancies*

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

7. *Ishtiqaq and Lughah*: Arabic Lexicology and Etymology

- Previously missed in prior translations

	Previous Translations	Quran Beheld
A) janna جَنَّة	garden	<i>lush-shaded grove</i>
B) nuzulan نُزُلًا	everlasting hospitality or reward	<i>as but the first round of hospitality</i>
C) mar' مَرء	man	<i>even a very able man, or even a real man</i>

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

7. *Ishtiqaq and Lughah*: Arabic Lexicology and Etymology

- Previously missed in prior translations

	Previous Translations	Quran Beheld
Di) zawj زَوْج	wife	<i>their wedded mates (azwajuhum)</i>
Dii) imra'a اِمْرَأَةٌ	woman/wife	<i>the estranged wife</i>
Ei) sana سَنَةٌ	year	<i>thousand dreary years or hard years</i>
Eii) 'am عَام	year	<i>excellent year or fifty good years</i>

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

7. *Ishtiqaq and Lughah*: Arabic Lexicology and Etymology

- Previously missed in prior translations

		Previous Translations	Quran Beheld
F) qadam sidq	قَدَمٌ صِدْقٍ	a sure footing or high footing	<i>A flawless exalted standing for which they strove</i>
G) muddakir	مُدَكِّرٍ	rememberer or who is mindful	<i>anyone to heed, fear, and remember</i>
H) munib	مُنِيبٍ	(servant) who turns to Allah or penitent creature	<i>who turns to his Lord from every error in sincerity and love</i>

Seven Key Areas of Arabic Meaning

7. *Ishtiqaq and Lughah*: Arabic Lexicology and Etymology

- Previously missed in prior translations

	Previous Translations	Quran Beheld
I) tazakka تَزَكَّى	purifies themselves	<i>whoever strives to grow to full purity in faith and deed</i>
J) khushubun musannadatun خُشْبٌ مُسَنَّدَةٌ	blocks of wood propped up and (draped over) in striped cloaks or Worthless planks of wood leaned against a wall	<i>a bunch of fair-seeming great planks of wood, worm-rotten inside, left sitting for useless against the wall</i>

Outstanding Matters

- the word Lord for “*rabb*”
- the use of ellipses
- the word verse for “ayah”
- dhallam
- cadence and emphatics
- inimitability (i’jaz)
- translating vs. unpacking
- clarity