

Original Research Article

Semantic Analysis of Didacticism in *Al-Mathal* of Quranic Verses

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Article History

Received: 09.04.2021

Accepted: 22.05.2021

Published: 06.06.2021

Abstract: One of the most frequent words in the Quranic surats is *مثال* (mathal), which is commonly employed to predict different meanings associated with conspicuous images, examples, and tales. Mathal gives various types of comparison so as to tackle perceived phenomena using significant and extraneous stuff like ant, spider or fly, etc. and hence abstract ideas could be mesmerized. This paper aims at detecting the different didactic senses that the word mathal displays in the Quranic verses aayas (verses), illustrating the purposes behind these senses. An investigation of didactic loads of the word mathal in the whole Quran is made. It concludes that mathal and its plural derivative amthal are used in Quranic surats to analogously express various meanings such as comparison, likeness, description, similitude, example and parable, in cases where two entities display something in common. The aim behind these meanings is to preach, guide, clarify or teach certain morals.

Keywords: Didacticism, mathal, proverb, Quranic verses, parable.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the literature available, didacticism has been so far observed in the area of establishing and amending besmirched morals in the peoples' demeanors. In fact, the term didacticism has always been associated with moral and ethical tendencies that are directed towards instructional, recommended and purified propensities. Regularly, it becomes a crucial innovative term employed to highlight any literary work loaded with instructive, straightforward and dramatic information. Therefore, it is often attributed to wisdom reflected in texts that are intended to offer preaches, instructions, regulations and guidance. Further, it incorporated in folk texts, such as fables, riddles, saws and proverbs (amathal) which are generally meant to connote extensive didactic implications. Actually, proverbs (amthal) are often exploited as instruction mechanisms to communicate ethical standards and communal beliefs and norms. They are essentially used to emit didactic inclination, enrich the humankind with the remedy for the societal immorality and downfall societies. One common example is the Arabic mathal, "رأس الحكمة مخافة الله" and its English counterpart "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God."

Relationally, the word mathal is copiously employed in Quranic aayas to evince various meanings associated with the various connotations that mathal and its derivatives (*مثلاً* mithlu, *مثالاً* mithaalun and *مثالون* mathalun) convey. This paper intend to detect the dictactic senses underlining the word mathal and its associated forms, highlighting the purposes behind the use of these forms. But before indulging in the data analysis, it is important to give account of theoretical background concerning, the language of Quran, didacticism, proverbs in general and definition and details of the Arabic term mathal and it derivatives.

2. LANGUAGE OF THE QURAN

The Glorious Quran illustrates its perfectness emphasizing that all of its utterances, phrases and words are all Allah's words. In the beginning of Surah Al- Baqarah, Allah has says: " *ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* " ["This is the Book. There is no doubt in it, it is guidance for the righteous"]. In this verse, Allah (GBTH) uses the utterance (the book) referring to the Glorious Quran connoting the notion that the Glorious Quran is an eternal, complete guidance for human beings to follow. The Glorious Quran, in the light of this verse, has been protected from any kind of speculation, guess or

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doubt since it is Allah's absolute words. This verse also introduces the ultimate objective of this Book which is to teach human beings the righteousness via science, history, philosophy and proverbs.

The uniqueness of the Quran's wording lies in its eloquence, clarity, wisdom, innate melody, tranquility, majestic style. These features can be easily embodied in the assortment of the exact words over their synonyms in its very context, letting alone the distinctive sentence structure and syntax. However, these outstanding attributes have made the Glorious Quran of decisive authority and reference work for the Arabic grammar, syntax and rhetoric. Artfully, the Glorious Quran resorts to an adversity of ways to inform its legislations such as throughout using straight threat, reproach, reminders, past stories and throughout proverbs and parables. The Prophet (PBUH) said: *ان القرآن نزل على خمسة : حلال، وحرام، ومحكم، ومتشابه، وأمثال، فاعملوا بالحلال، واجتنبوا الحرام، واتبعوا المحكم، وأمنوا بالمتشابه، واعتبروا بالأمثال* "أوجه" ["The Quran has been revealed in five aspects: permissible, prohibited, rigid, parallel, and proverbs, so work by the lawful, avoid the forbidden, and follow the rigid, believe in the parallel, and consider the parables"].

Coining parables, then, is one of the strategies that the Glorious Quran and the traditions of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) resort to. Rather than just telling stories for entertainment, Allah (GBTH) promotes parables for people so that they might bethink themselves, reflect on them and to be mindful. These purposes and others are illustrated in some verses: *"وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ"*. In the light of verses mentioned, obviously, the didactic potentials are behind devising parables.

3. DIDACTICISM

Generally speaking, all literary genres have inherently designed to teach, inform and instruct audiences through witty and informative implements. It could be said that textbooks, books inscribed for children, dram, religious sermons, allegory, and proverbs are all examples of teaching means. As being one of these genres, didacting literature has ever since been a pioneer in the field of diagnosing and amending corrupted ethics in the folks' conducts. Thus, the term didacticism has always been allied with an ethical attitude that highlights advisory and instructional potentials. Etymologically, the notion of didacticism has taken its root from the primeval Greek term *διδασκτικός* meaning the same and correlating with schooling and education. That rigid and instructive tendencies of didacticism, in the 19th century, made the term become as a critic innovatory term used to criticize any literary work that is fully loaded with educational, truthful and expressive information. It also describes any work with a preachy tendency. Since then, the ultimate pre-occupational theme of didacticism has been associated with wisdom which is characteristically incorporated into proverbs to signify a wide-ranging didactic inference (Obelkevich, 1994, p. 213).

Thus, in accordance with the didactic roles performed by proverbs, Mieder asserts (2004, p. 146) that "proverbs have been used as teaching tools for centuries to teach moral values and social skills". Then, proverbs have always been utilized as didactic means to enrich the humanity with the remedy for the social corruption befallen societies. A massive number of proverbs, in all aspects of life, can be seen scattering here and there in literature to illustrate a certain phenomenon. For instance, to name but few, the English proverb "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush" is used wisely to denote that it is better to grip onto something you have rather than to take the hazard of attaining something better which may come to nothing. The didacting reference in *"لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين"* ["The believer is not bitten from the same hole twice"] has a connotation that people should be watchful, and not be cheated by people's appearances. The wisdom shown in the above proverb presents moral guidance based on people's experience in correlation with the practical experience drawn from societal understandings of daily life. Functionally, the characteristics found in proverbs meet the needs of didacticism to practice its commitments. Along with phonetic and structural properties, the luck of obscurity, explicitly of messages and the conciseness of discourse are all shared merits between didacting discourses and proverbs. This synchronization has led didacting genre to use proverbs heavily.

4. PROVERBS

Generally, people use the Arabic mathal to signify a proverb, utilized to predict wisdom, morals, experience, guidance associated with events and actions taken place in everyday life. So, it seems necessary here to give some details and definitions concerning proverbs. One of the historical implements used to gain communicative competence, cultural knowledge, metaphorical understanding and teaching principles is proverbs. Culturally, there is almost no culture that has no proverbs in its heritage. The need of using proverbs, seen by the paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder, does not confine to scattering wisdom, knowledge, and truths, but to manipulate didactic teaching tools due to their educational content (Mieder, 2004, p. 146). Formally, proverbs are concise pieces of language and almost rhymed to some extent that make them easy to remember. Nevertheless, giving a precise definition of a proverb is a controversial matter due to the discussions that have been among specialists in this concern. After having tested fifty- five people to answer the question, "what the proverb" is, Mieder has managed to set the following definition:

"A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (2004, p. 3).

This definition states that proverbs have been enrolled from generation to generation to be a heritage of different cultures. It also implies the fact that proverbs are marked by their stylistic features such as alliteration, rhyme and metaphor, etc., which make the proverbs easy to memorize. In the same vein, Grzybek (2014) illustrates that proverbs are often manipulated to afford an assembly of wise sayings taken from humankind's communal experiences. He also adds that proverbs usually utilize archaic words that have manifold meanings which are determined via the context which is also important when analyzing proverbs.

Empirically, the proverbial virtues can be easily noted in the following English proverbs and their Arabic counterparts: "No pain, no gain *من جد وجد*; friend in need is a friend indeed, *الصديق وقت الضيق*; All things come to he who waits *من صبر ظفر*, A stitch in time saves nine *درهم وقاية خير من قنطار علاج*, Knowledge is power *المعرفة قوة*, Better an open enemy than a false friend *عدو عاقل خير من صديق جاهل*, A little learning is a dangerous thing *نصف العلم اخطر من الجهل*, Allah (God) respites but never neglects *أن الله يمهّل ولا يهمل*. Practically, the conscious and active participants, the thorough attainment of knowledge, and the principle of intuition as didactic features are greatly available in the form and the nature of proverbs. That is why the didactic works have resorted to proverbs whose features and nature are applicable to the natural objective of didacticism to achieve the astute and advisory ends. Nevertheless, didacticism is not only confined to proverbs to deliver its teaching outcomes; many other literary genres can play the same role. Drama, lyric, epic, allegory, myth, fables as well as parables have also in their nature didactic intents.

5. AL- MATHAL (المثل)

Arabic dictionaries expound that the word mathal *مثّل* has several meanings denoting analogy, equivalence, example, a simile, and similitude. Besides, derivatives of the root letters (م / ث / ل) are utilized for several senses. The most common derivatives of this root are (مثّل) mithlu, (مثال) mithaalun and (مثال) mathalun. According to Fayrouzabadi, mithlun denotes something that is alike, similar, analogous resemblance, semblance, a requital or an equivalent. Mithaalun means a model, quality, mode, pattern or example. Mathalun means condition, state, a case, a description by way of comparison, (Ibn Mandhour, 1999, p. 49). He also states that *مثّل* mathala is a root verb that means to resemble, imitate, or compare someone with or to someone else or to bear likeness. Mithl *مثّل* means likeness, like, similar or resemblance. *مثّل* Mathal is a noun meaning parable, likeness, similitude, like, reason or proverb, (Vol. 4, p. 22). Saeed ((2006, p. 100, cited in Khalaf, 2016, p.5) points out that the word mathal is "an outstanding sample of a text type where a literal reading is not proposed at all". He adds that the word mathal may refer to likeness, simile, similitude, analogy or parable.

The Glorious Quran uses amthal (أمثال) (the plural form of *مثّل* mathal) immensely with striking images, instances, and anecdotes. It offers many amthal in terms of comparison to tackle detected phenomena using substantial and irrelevant stuff like ant, spider or fly so that abstract ideas could be captivated. This trend of amthal has been explicitly announced by Almighty Allah when He says in a verse that: *ويضرب الله الأمثال للناس لعلهم يتذكرون* ["Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition"] (14:25)

In accordance with the function of the entire Glorious Quran, the instructive objectives of using amthal are illustrated either explicitly or implicitly through the verses in which the notion mathal is mentioned; once they foster the essence of reverence, remind of Allah's knowledge and power and recall to the mind of people the goodness and evil. Other amthal are intended to sponsor the reason of concord and harmony. The spiritual relationship between Man and His Lord has also been depicted via amthal to make that intellectual affiliation comprehensible for normal individual. The truth of revelation and Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) have been portrayed in Quranic parables aiming at convincing the unbelievers as well. All the connotations associated with the word mathal or amthal will be disclosed in the data analysis concerning the investigation of the various senses that the word mathal predicts in Quranic verses.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

Since the main aim of the paper is to detect the didactic meanings of the word *مثّل* mathal in the Quranic verses, a careful examination of the source root of the term *م ث ل* in the Glorious Quran shows that this term has been used in seven different derivatives with seven different senses. This diversity corresponds with the eloquence of Arabic language in general and with the language of the Glorious Quran in particular. The following are the seven derivatives with their connotative meanings as appeared in the Glorious Quran.

1. The term acts as a verb once in the form of (تمثّل) [tamathala] in Surat Maryam "فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا" ["...Then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared Before her as a man in all respects"]. In this verse, Allah (GBTH) says that He has sent down Angel Gabriel representing Him in a shape of a man who tells Mary that she is going to get pregnant with a purified boy whose name is Jesus. This representation of the Holy Spirit (The Angel of Gabriel) has been referred to by the verb (تمثّل) [tamathala], meaning portrayed in the form of .

2. The term also appears once in the form of nominative in accordance with Arabic syntax (أَمْثَلُ) [amthal] in Surat Tā-Hā (20:104): “... إِذْ يَقُولُ أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا يَوْمًا ...” [“When their leader most eminent in conduct says, Ye tarried not Longer than a day”]

In this aaya, the addresser, who talks on behalf of other disbelievers, informing them about the short period of the world and the speed of the Resurrection, in reply to their inquiry about the period they spent in life. Then, the speaker, the most reasonable of them, says you only stayed one day. In this verse, the word أَمْثَلُهُمْ [amthaluhum] with its plural possessive pronoun connote the superlative degree of the best among disbelievers.

3. The trilateral root (م ث ل) [mathulāt] also has the form of nominative feminine plural noun (المثَلات) [mathulāt]. The singular form of this term is مَثَلَةٌ [mathula] which means a punishment. “... وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثَلَاتُ...” [“Yet have come to pass, before them, (many) exemplary Punishments!”]. This form also appears once in the Glorious Quran. Allah Almighty informs His Messenger (PBUH) that the polytheists rush Him with penalty before prosperity though they knew what occurred to those who had been before them from the nations that challenged their Lord and refute their messengers. Thus, Allah Almighty made these polytheists suffer in the same way that had occurred for people who did the same deed with the same punishment.

4. The root (م ث ل) also appears once again as adjective (مُثَلًى) [muth'lā] in the Holy aaya “إِنَّ هَذَانِ لَسَاحِرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَاكَ مِنْ أَرْضِكَ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكَ الْمُتْلَى” [“These two magicians ... Their object is to drive you out from your best traditions”]. In Surat Taha, aaya (63), the magicians that Pharaoh summoned up to defeat Moses and His brother Aaron compared notes secretly, one with another then they announced to the other magicians that “they (Moses and Aaron) are two wizards who want to mislead you and drive you out from your perfect country and your perfect religious traditions”. In this verse, the adjective, derivative word الْمُتَلَى [al-muth'lā] has been utilized to connote the typical or exemplary way of practicing magic.

5. Another derivative which is mentioned twice in the Glorious Quran is the plural noun (تَمَائِيل) [tamāhīl] whose meaning in both verses is statues or images of gods. In Surat Al-Anbiyāa, aaya, 52 “إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَائِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا” [“He said to his father and his people, “What are these statues to which you are devoting yourselves?”]. In this aaya, the speaker, (Abraham PBUH), addresses His father and his people criticizing their idols which had been worshipped at that time. He refers to their false gods describing them as statues. He also sarcastically refutes the didacting worship of his people to these images.

6. The noun (مِثْل) [mith'l] is used intensively with almost the meanings of ‘like’ or ‘similar’. In surat Al-Ma'idah, aaya 27, Allah Almighty mentions “وَلَيْتَى أَعْجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوَارِي سَوَاءَ أَجِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ” [“Woe is me!” said he: “Was I not even able to be as this raven and to hide the shame of my brother? Then he became full of regrets”]. The speaker in this aaya is Cain the son of Adam and Eve who committed first homicide in the earth. The murder, Cain, who had killed his brother Abel out of jealousy, sorrowfulness, regretting his deed. After killing his brother, Allah (GBTH) sent down a raven to show Cain how to bury his brother’s body corpse. Then he said “Alas I am unable to be like this raven to bury my brother”.

7. The most commonly used derivative of the root term of (م ث ل) is the nominal form of (مِثَال) [mathal]. This form appears eighty-eight times with diverse senses. It appears in the senses of parable, example, likeness, comparison, similitude and description, as illustrated in the following pages.

6.1 MATHAL AS PARABLE

The Glorious Quran has used the root (م ث ل) [mathal] and its derivatives in the sense of parable more than any other senses. The use of this sense and almost all other related senses have been utilized to reflect the most common didactic purpose of simplifying what is complicated by presenting it concretely and perceptibly to the addressees. This didactic end is well shown in Surat Al- Ankabūt, (the Spider) in the aaya (41) “مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ” [“The parable of those who Take protectors other than God Is that of the Spider, Who builds (to itself) A house ; but truly The flimsiest of houses Is the Spider’s house ; If they but knew.”]

Allah (GBTH) coins this (مِثَال) [mathal] for the disbelievers who pursue deities for backing, forgiveness, nutrition and help so as to simplify the matters of belief, faith and occult, which Allah (GBTH) represented in the Glorious Quran whose absorption was difficult for ordinary people who were indulged in purely materialistic and tangible acts of worship of idols such as rocks and wood. The worshipped deities are compared to the spider’s web whose fragility and frailty provide neither power nor protection. In return, resorting to deities as supporters, feeders and protectors are fruitless. From physical prospective, the spider’s web does not make a good shelter that protects from heat, cold, and rain. Spiritually, the houses of spiders, which are built by the female members, are the most breakable houses due to the scientific fact that their houses have no concepts of love and mercy. In their very nature, the female spiders

kill the male directly after the reproduction process. In some cases, the female eats its offspring or vice versa. This ruthless and violent house, which lacks all kinds of kinship, is compared to the relation between the disbelievers and their idols. Moreover, the spider's web is both a place where a spider dwells and a trap that the spider hunts its preys to feed on. Likewise, those followers of false gods have been victimized by these idols (ابن الشريف: 107).

This parable drives an individual to contemplate and think as it goes along with the educational purposes of sharpening the mind and stimulating all mental processes, including thinking, measuring, remembering, imagining and meditating. This didactic purpose has been explicitly stated in the aaya that follows the aaya in question in which Allah (GBTH) says "وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ لَضَرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالَمُونَ" ["And such are the Parables We set forth for mankind, But only those understand them Who have Knowledge."]

6.2 MATHAL AS EXAMPLE

In the sense of example, Allah (GBTH) has set aayas coining examples utilizing the term **مثال** [mathal] in different situations. In Surat At-Tahrim (aaya, 10), Allah Almighty says in the Glorious Quran:

”صَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِن عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ“

[“God sets forth, For an example To the Unbelievers, the wife of Noah And the wife of Lūt: They were (respectively) Under two of Our righteous Servants, but they were False to their (husbands), And they profited nothing Before God on their account, But were told: Enter ye The Fire along with (Others) that enter!”].

There is a consensus that all Quranic uses of the term (**مثال**) [mathal] are to simplify what is complex by presenting it concretely to the listeners, (الجربوع, 2003, p.156). This didactic purpose is the most significant one and covers all Quranic uses of this term. Yet, other didactic aims of coining this term can also be embodied in other aayas. In the light of this aaya (10), Allah sets an example of two women for those who disbelieve. Throughout humankind history, women played a vital role as prototypical example of virtue as well as of dishonesty. Accordingly, this aaya exposes the story of the two Prophets' wives namely the wives of Prophets Noah and Lut, presenting them as a practical model for betrayal. The point in this aaya is that in spite of being wives of two righteous husbands, these betrayed wives were told to enter the hell [“Enter ye The Fire...”]. The didactic lesson given for disbelievers is that the affiliation with the righteous people is not sufficient enough to count as a privilege for them. Another lesson is that everyone is a subject to Divine Justice and no one has immunity from Divine retribution rather than their good deeds. The aaya also serves as a warning to all believers that they have to be aware of their ties since such ties may be a cause of Divine torments. This warning has been stated explicitly in Surah Tagābun (aaya: 14) “يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَرْوَاحِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ” [“O ye who believe ! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them!”].

6.3. MATHAL AS LIKENESS

Since the Glorious Quran does not address intellectuals alone, it uses likeness to approximate meanings when referring to sensual matters to explain abstract ideas. In this respect, the Glorious Quran also uses the term (**مثال**) [mathal] in the sense of likeness to deliver didactic lesson of approximating the meaning to the addressee as a fundamental didactic purpose. The concept of likeness appears in the following aaya: ”يَبْتَغُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي ”يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَبْذُرُوا مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا إِلَّا بِغَيْرِ رِئَاءِ اللَّهِ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ“

[“O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury like those who spend their substance to be seen of men but believe neither in God nor in the last day. They are in Parable like a hard barren rock on which is a little soil; on it falls heavy rain which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And God guideth not those who reject faith”].

The concept of charity [sadaqah] according to its Arabic root (ص د ق) [saad-dal-qaf] is associated with truthfulness. This aaya, then, warns the believers that the charity will be nullified when it is traced by hurt or reminders. Accordingly, this aaya resembles the ones who spend their money with harm and reminders to the ones who spend their money boastfully to show off. This aaya continues describing the claimants as disbelievers in Allah and the Last Day. People of this kind, in this aaya, are likened to a flat huge stone **صفوان** [Safwan] covered with dust. This big stone has been poured with heavy rain **وابل** [Wabil] and been left bare **صلدا** [salda]. This likeness of sowing a grain on a bared rock which has been coated with soil stands for spending money for the sake of showing off whose reward is null.

The didactic lesson hidden in this aaya notifies that charity is invalidated if it is followed by mischief, reminders and insincerity. The aaya also didactically tells us that such a kind of charity is considered as a hypocritical trait. The other hidden lesson in this aaya connotes the principle of intention in accepting and rejecting the deeds.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of the didactic meaning of the word mathal in the Quranic verses has arrived at the following findings:

1. Mathal and its plural derivative amthal are used in Quranic Surats to analogously express various senses such as comparison, likeness, description, similitude, example and parable, in cases where two entities display something in common. The aim behind these senses is to preach, guide, clarify or teach certain morals.
2. The Quranic mathal is set to approximate what is abstract, reasonable, or far from perception, to the sensible, simplified and understandable vision to the addressee. It gives proofs, arguments, and miracles that call for contemplation, and urge addressees to understand and contemplate them.
3. The principle of carrot and stick in Quranic mathal is once used to beautify matters such as faith and good deeds, i.e. what Allah (GBTH) has prepared for the obedient on the one hand. On the other hand, Quranic amthal are employed to intimidate blasphemy and all kinds of bad deeds stirring up feelings of contempt, disgust and hatred of committing such deeds.
4. Quranic mathal, in certain aayas, is manipulated to highlight a typical model for consideration. This model may be so righteous that everybody has to imitate or bad that addressees should avoid.
5. The Quranic use of mathal, as a whole, allocates the greatest importance to the belief in the unseen and monotheism as they are the basis on which other sub-goals such as the proof of resurrection and the Day of Judgement are built. Quranic Amthal also achieve the behavioral or devotional goals represented by good deeds, religious rituals, and hearty and physical worship.
6. What distinguishes Quranic mathal is its diversity in terms of the images it emits; these images are reflected in the category of inanimate objects. To name but few, Allah (GBTH) uses the stone (الصفاوان), the tree (شجر), the lantern (المشكاة) and natural phenomena of the universe as rain (مطر) wind (ريح) and storm (عاصفة). The categories of animals and insects take part in coining Al- Amthal. Strikingly, all animals and insects, being used to coin Amthal, live in the environment of the Arabian Peninsula and its inhabitants. The spider (العنكبوت), the dog (الكلب), and the donkey (الحمار) are depicted in Amthal. Allah utilizes Amthal to describe people. Some of them are women and others are men; some of them are the good and others are spoilers; some of them are known and others are unknown, and some of them are the prophets and others are the messengers, e.g. two men (رجلين), the villagers (أصحاب القرية) and Jesus (عيسى).

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APPENDIX: DATA COLLECTION

Mathal as Comparison

No.	No. verse	English verses	Arabic verses
1.	11: 24	These two kinds (of men) May be compared to The blind and deaf,	مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى وَالْأَصَمِّ
2.	25:9	See what kinds of comparisons They make for thee ...	انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ
3.	36:78	And he makes comparisons For Us	وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا

Mathal as Description

No.	No. verse	English verses	Arabic verses
1.	13:35	A description of the Paradise which is promised ...	مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ
2.	47:15	A description of the Garden which is promised	مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ

Mathal as Example

No.	No. verse	English verses	Arabic verses
1.	7:177	Evil as an example are people who reject Our signs ...	سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِنَا
2.	24:34	an illustration from (the story Of) people who passed away Before you,	وَمَثَلًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
3.	43:56	And We made them (A people) of the Past And an Example To later ages.	فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِلْآخِرِينَ
4.	43:57	When the son Of Mary is held up As an example	وَلَمَّا ضَرَبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا
5.	43:59	And We made him An example to the Children Of Israel.	وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
6.	66:10	God sets forth, For an example To the Unbelievers, the wife of Noah	ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحَ
7.	66:11	And God sets forth, As an example To those who believe, The wife of Pharaoh :	وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ
8.	74:31	“ What symbol Doth God intend by this ? ”	مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا

Mathal as Likeness

No.	No. verse	English verses	Arabic verses
1.	2:214	without such (trials) as came to those who passed ...	وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
2.	2:264	They are in Parable like a hard barren rock	فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ
3.	2:265	And the likeness of those who spend their substance seeking to please God	وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ
4.	3:117	What they spend in the life of this (material) world may be likened to a wind which brings a nipping	مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ
5.	6:122	be like him who is in the depths of darkness	كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
6.	6:160	Whoever will come to Allah with a good deed shall have ten times as much,	مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا
7.	7:194	servants like unto you:	عِبَادَ أَمْثَالِكُمْ
8.	10:24	The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain	ثَمًا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ
9.	17:48	See what similes thy strike	انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ
10.	43:17	he sets up As a likeness to (God) Most Gracious,	ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا
11.	47:10	and similar (Fates await) those who Reject God.	وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَالُهَا
12.	47:38	then they Would not be like you !	ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالِكُمْ
13.	56:23	Like unto Pearls Well-guarded.	كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ
14.	56:61	In that We will change your likenesses	عَلَى أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ
15.	59:14	Like those who lately Preceded them,	كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
16.	59:15	(Their allies deceived them), Like the Evil One,	كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ
17.	76:28	We can substitute The like of them	بَدَلْنَا أَمْثَالَهُمْ

Mathal as Parable

No.	No. verse	English verses	Arabic verses
1.	2: 171	The parable of those who reject faith	وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
2.	2:261	The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of God is that of a grain of corn	مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ
3.	13:17	God (by parables) Show forth Truth and Vanity.	كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ
4.	14:18	The parable of those who Reject their Lord	مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ
5.	14:24	God sets forth a parable ?— A goodly Word	ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً
6.	14:25	So God sets forth parables For men	وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ
7.	14:26	And the parable Of an evil Word	وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ
8.	14:45	We put forth many Parables In your behoof ! ”	وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ الْأَمْثَالَ
9.	16:75	God sets forth the Parable Of: a slave	ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا
10.	16:76	76. God sets forth (another) Parable Of two men...	وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ
11.	16:112	God sets forth a Parable : A city enjoying security	وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً
12.	18:32	Set forth to them The parable of two men	وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ
13.	22:73	O men ! Here is A parable set forth ! Listen	يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضَرِبْ مَثَلًا فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ
14.	24:35	The parable of His Light Is as if there were a Niche	مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ
15.	25:39	To teach one We set forth Parables and examples	وَكَلَّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ
16.	29:41	The parable of those who Take protectors other than God Is that of the Spider	مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ
17.	29:43	And such are the Parables We set forth for mankind,	كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ
18.	30:58	Verily We have propounded For men, in this Qur-ān. Every kind of Parable	وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالَ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ
19.	36:13	Set forth to them, By way of a parable, The (story of) the Companions Of the City.	وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
20.	39:27	We have put forth For men, in this Qur-ān Every kind of Parable,	وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ
21.	39:29	God puts forth a Parable— A man belonging to many Partners	وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
22.	43:8	has passed on The Parable of the peoples Of old.	ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ
			وَمَضَى مَثَلُ الْأُولَيْنِ

Mathal as Similitude

No.	No. verse	English verses	Arabic verses
1	2: 17/ 18	their similitude is that of a man who kindled a fire;	مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ
2.	2: 26	Allah disdains not to use the similitude of things lowest as well as highest.	إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةٌ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا
3.	3:59	The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam:	إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ
4.	7:176	His similitude is that of a dog:	فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ
5.	16:60	To those who believe not In the Hereafter, applies The similitude of evil :	لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ
6.	16:74	Invent not similitudes For God :	فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ
7.	17:89	And We have explained To man, in this Qur-ān, Every kind of similitude :	وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
8.	18.:54	We have explained In detail in this Qur-ān, For the benefit of mankind, Every kind of similitude :	وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
9.	25:33	And they bring thee no similitude	وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ
10.	30:27	To Him belongs the loftiest Similitude	وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى
11.	30:28	28. He does propound To you a similitude From your own (experience)	ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
12.	47:3	God set forth For men their lessons By similitudes.	يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ
13.	48:29	This is their similitude In the Taurāt ; And their similitude In the Gospel	ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ
14.	57:20	Here is a similitude : How rain and the growth Which it brings forth, delight (The hearts of) the tillers	كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكَفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ
15.	59:21	Such are the similitudes Which We propound to men	وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالَ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ
16.	62:5	The similitude of those Who were charged With the (obligations Of the) Mosaic Law...	مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حَمَلُوا التَّوْرَةَ

CITATION: Moayad Mohammad Hassan & Abbas Lutfi Hussein (2021). Semantic Analysis of Didacticism in *Al-Mathal* of Quranic Verses. *South Asian Res J Art Lang Lit*, 3(3): 41-49.