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(all materials in this document are drafts)

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Inara

Discover Meaning.

Inara Principle: Accurate Language, Aligned with the Science. Learn science well and use scientifically accurate words to describe findings. Doing so will naturally align the science to meaning and revelatory data, when students are ready for it.

Example Text:

The first definition we'll take up in chemistry is that of **matter.** The scientific definition of **matter** is anything that **has mass** and **takes up space**.

While it is common to hear the statement, "things are made of matter", this statement is scientifically inaccurate. The chair you are sitting on, the computer you are using to read these words, the cells in your hand, are not *made of* matter. Rather, they *have* matter: because matter is a very small percentage of what makes them what they are.

The visible things of this universe are all made up of chemical compounds, which in turn are made of elements, which in turn are comprised of atoms. Each atom is made of a central unit called a nucleus, and has electrons around it that allow the atom to have relationships (form bonds) with other atoms. The distance between the electrons and the nucleus is equivalent to the distance between a ball placed at the center of an American football field (the nucleus) and another ball placed outside the stadium (the electron). This analogy illustrates what scientists have calculated to be the case: the atom is 99.9999% empty space, with no matter in it.

In that empty space there do exist certain forces, which do not have mass. There may also be certain kinds of subatomic particles present between the nucleus and the electrons, however these also have no mass. Recall that matter is anything that **has mass** and takes up space. From a strictly scientific standpoint the majority of what makes physical things what they are, is massless and thus cannot be considered to be matter. Thus, a more accurate statement would be: everything in the visible world *has* matter.

Sami is on hard times. He only money he has is a single dollar bill in his pocket. However, someone looks at him from a distance and say, "Did you hear about Sami? He's got money!" which gives the impression that Sami has a *lot* of money. In fact, Sami only has a dollar. The more accurate statement is, "Sami has a very small amount of money." Similarly, it's not accurate to say that things are made *of* matter, rather than things *have* (a small amount of) matter.

Furthermore, many of the most foundational things about our daily life, are not made of matter. For example, gravity, which holds planets together and holds you to the earth, has no matter. Light, one of the fundamental realities of the universe, has no matter. Magnetic and electric fields, which exist in nature and are the basis of all of our modern technologies, and are some of the most fundamental realities of the universe, have no matter. Energy, which relates to everything you will study in all the natural sciences, including chemistry, does not have matter in the way we are discussing here, (but we will learn more about that later!) The mathematics that underlies all the laws of nature that we have learned, also, has no matter. The things you see all around you—the ocean, the sky, the stars, the bodies of animals, and the substances we study in chemistry—is mostly not matter, but rather small amounts of matter formed and held together by invisible, massless, forces.

The scientifically accurate statement is: all things in the visible universe *have* matter, though much of the foundation of things is matterless.

"As if You See…"

Uniting Knowledge

A Special Word

The foundation of Inara's approach to resolving the Two-Bucket Syndrome is one idea. This idea represents the highest form of knowing. It is the form of knowing that the greatest men and women aspire to. It is represented by a word that encompasses the highest aspiration of every believer. A word that lies at the heart of everything Islam is about.

The word?

"Seeing."

Seeing is the most direct, most certain and convincing way of knowing. It results in "*ayn al-yaqin*"—certainty by seeing for oneself—to put it in Quranic terms. It is the surest way to attain knowledge. This is why there is a lengthy discussion among scholars about whether one's faith is even valid if they believe based on someone else's report *as opposed to seeing it for themselves*. They considered seeing for oneself to be the surest and most certain source of knowing.

Different Kinds of Seeing

There are different kinds of seeing, and these different kinds of seeing play an incredibly important role in our understanding of the Quran and in the practice of our faith.
We will start with the most foundational: the statement that enters us into Islam. *Ash-hadu an lā ilāha illAllah, wa ash-hadu anna Muḥammadur Rasūlullah.* Though this is often translated as "I bear witness," at the core of this meaning is the meaning of "I see." After all, to be able to bear witness simply means that you have seen something and are now letting

others know about it. Thus, the *kalimah*, from the standpoint of knowledge, could just as well be understood as "I *see* that there is no god but Allah."

Obviously, one is unable to see Allah with their eyes. Rather, God's existence is something that makes sense to them. They reason that there must be a creator, and that there can only be one creator, and so on. In other words, one who enters Islam *sees* through use of *reason* that there is no god but God. The word for "reason" itself, in the Muslim intellectual tradition, is *naẓar*, which according to Imam Raghib means "the turning of sight or inner insight to understand or see something." Reasoning is a type of seeing (at Inara we call this, "reason-perception"), and when one initially takes their shahada, they are **reason-seeing the oneness of God and the messengerhood of Rasulullah ﷺ .**

Once one has entered Islam, accepting the Quran as true, they may read a verse like this: "Have you not seen what your Lord did with the People of the Elephant?" or "have you seen the one who gives lie to their *dīn*?" In both these uses of the word, seeing is not used in the literal, physical sense. It is not possible for us to visually see what Allah did to the People of the Elephant, anymore than it was possible for the Prophet ﷺ to have seen it, since this was an event that occurred before his birth. Nor is the verse, "have you seen the one who gives lie to their *dīn*" referring to some specific person standing over there in a corner of the room. Obviously, this is referring to the idea of one who "gives lie to their religion." These are ways of using the word "seeing" that are conveying an important point, without the word meaning physical seeing.

Finally, we come to a very special kind of seeing. This is the kind of seeing that every believer aspires to. This is the ultimate fruit of the *dīn* in this life, even before the even greater fruit in the next: this special kind of seeing is made available to the believer who fully acts upon the injunctions of Islam, practicing it inwardly and outwardly with high degrees of devotion and perfection.

When the Prophet ﷺ was asked "What is *iḥsān*?" he responded:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

Usual translation: that you worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, you know that He sees you.

However, the Arabic here is interesting. As pointed out by scholars, the word "*takun*" is the verb "to be", implying that one is in a *state* of seeing. So, a more accurate translation, when all evidence is considered, would be:

> And if you [are not in a state wherein] you see Him,
> then [at least] you know that He sees you.

In other words, if your level of knowledge is not the highest—the state of direct seeing—then the next best level (which still counts as *iḥsān*) is that you know with certainty that Allah sees you.

The entire matter revolves around *seeing*.

When one has purified their lives of the *ḥarām*, purified their hearts of its diseases, when they devote themselves to Allah in the way pleasing to Him, then they can, as the Prophet ﷺ has taught us, *see Allah*. This, too, is obviously not a seeing that happens with the eyes. Rather, it is a seeing that happens with the qalb—the spiritual heart. It is a *literal* seeing, even if it is not a physical one.

> فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى ٱلْأَبْصَـٰرُ وَلَـٰكِن تَعْمَى ٱلْقُلُوبُ ٱلَّتِى فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ
> (22:46)
> For indeed, it is not their eyes that are blind rather it is the hearts within the chests.

And in a hadith:

> "Indeed Allah Ta'ala has reserved certain individuals among the inhabitants of earth as his containers. The containers of your Rabb are the hearts of his pious slaves, and the most beloved of hearts to Allah are the softest and most tender."[1]

This seeing of Allah Ta'ālā—the kind that happens even in this life, is a blessing that Allah bestows upon whom He wills, of His slaves who strive in His paths with utmost sincerity. The best, however, is saved for the *ākhirah*.

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[1] Al-La-alil Manthurah, hadith: 111 & Al-Maqasidul Hasanah, hadith: 990) https://hadithanswers.com/hadith-on-the-hearts-being-exclusively-able-to-contain-the-love-of-allah/

For all the immense delights and pleasures of Jannah, the moment that every person in Jannah will delight in the most, will be every Friday when they are permitted to *see their Lord.* And for those who have the highest rank—in Jannat al Firdaws—they are granted the perpetual *seeing* of Allah.

Our faith starts with a statement of seeing: I see that there is no god but God, and I see that Muhammad is the Messenger of God ﷺ.

It finds its highest expression—in *iḥsān*—in terms of seeing: that you reach a state where you see Him (but if you cannot then at least know that He sees you).

And it rewards the believers in the *akhirah* with nothing less than seeing Allah Himself. May Allah grant us this!

The highest knowledge is the knowledge of Allah, and the highest form of knowing, is seeing.

An Epistemology[2] of: "As if You See"

In the hadith of Jibrīl (peace be upon him), even the one who reaches the state of seeing Allah is not seeing Allah with her eyes, but rather her heart. Hence the phrase, "worship Allah *as if you see* Him." Taken together it gives a simple, general meaning of: "*Iḥsān* is that you worship Allah until you see Him—in the way that it is possible to see Him."

We now have the first two principles for an Epistemology of Seeing, or, an Epistemology of "As if You See." (Epistemology means: "the study of *how* we know something to be true").

1. Seeing for oneself is the highest form of knowledge.
2. There are different kinds of seeing, depending on what one is looking at.

This can be generalized to all subjects of study. In fact, it could be said that the highest aim of *any* course of study is nothing less than: helping students see for themselves why [the thing being studied] is true. For our purposes, let's apply this principle to the natural sciences.

For those truly interested in microorganisms, a proper education will help them have direct perception of microorganisms by teaching them to reason about the evidence for their

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[2] The presence of this word violates the Inara principle of avoiding complex philosophical terminology. We have been granted permission to use it once every quarter.

existence and by showing them how to use a microscope. Once they do that, they will have "seen" a bacterium for themselves. They will then have seen them in the way that it is possible to see them.

For those truly interested in the molecular structure of things, a proper education will help them have direct perception of molecules by teaching them to reason about the evidence for their existence and by showing them how to use a spectroscope or a magnetic resonance or the Stanford Linear Accelerator. They will then have seen them in the way that it is possible to see them.

For those truly interested in atoms, a proper education will help them have direct perception of atoms by teaching them to reason about the evidence for their existence and by showing them how to use an atomic force microscope. They will then have seen them in the way that it is possible to see them.

For those truly interested in quantum particles, a proper education will help them have direct perception of quantum particles by teaching them to reason about the evidence for their existence (including mathematical reasoning) and by showing them how to use the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. They will then have seen them in the way that it is possible to see them.

And for those truly interested in Allah, a proper education will help them have direct perception of Allah by teaching them to reason about the evidence for His existence, and by showing them how to use their heart. They will then have seen Him in the way that it is possible to see Him.

Understanding all knowledge through the lens (no pun intended) of "what it means to see" can unite all forms of knowledge.[3]

What else would one expect when our faith begins with seeing, finds its highest expression in seeing, and grants the highest rewards to the believers in Paradise… with *seeing*.

May Allah make us of those who see Him.[4]

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[3] We have given examples here of natural sciences, however "seeing for one's self" is the true purpose of any science. However, not all individuals need to take their learning of every science to its highest leve. Everyone does not need to see the evidences for the truth of fiqh propositions for themselves; nor does everyone need to see the evidences for the truth of quantum physics for themselves. The only science where the scholars have differed regarding whether it is permissible to not see for oneself is the science of aqidah. Even iḥsan, by definition, is not "mandatory." Yet, for those who earnestly travel the path of spirituality, "mandatoriness" or otherwise is no longer a matter of consideration.

[4] *Āmīn*. Once one has understood this, the only thing left to do is to decide which thing it is they want to devote their lives to seeing for themselves. A proper education should facilitate the seeing of Allah, through whichever of His signs the slave chooses, or Allah facilitates

for them. The paths to Allah are as many as the breaths of humanity. But what a terrible shame if, due to one's journey in seeing some aspect of *creation* for themselves, one becomes unable to see *Allah* for themselves. Inara is devoted to making sure this never happens to any believer through education. And our success is only with Allah.

Meaning & Right Relationship in Science Education

The Foundation of Reality: Allah's Names

Every Muslim sees that Allah ﷻ is the source of all existence. One in His Essence, Attributes and Actions. And though His Essence is utterly beyond comprehension, we see that He has made Himself known to us through His Names. We connect with Him through His blessed name "Allah", through *al-Raḥmān*… and through all His Names—both the ninety-nine, and others. These Names are not mere descriptors. They are the root of everything in existence other than He. Everything reflects His Names and Attributes.

However, creation is not the Names themselves. What we encounter in the world—whether in nature, in people, or in our own thoughts—are *reflections*, *traces*, or *effects* of the Divine Names. Just as a mirror reflects light but is not itself the source of light, so too everything we see *reflects* Allah's Names.

Now, observe: the words of this essay, and the meanings that you comprehend from them, are also part of creation. Thus, the meanings you are reading this very moment are not excluded from this analysis. The meanings we use, the categories of our thought, the feelings in our hearts, and the very language we use to describe the world—are all ultimately rooted in the Names. And this is the starting point for a truly integrated understanding of meaning, reality, and science.[1]

Where Do Meanings Come From?

If everything in creation is a reflection of Allah's Names, then this must include our language. Every word we use—*mercy*, *power*, *gentleness*, *stability*, *expansion*—has a meaning that ultimately traces back to one or more of Allah's Names.

We often think in reverse: we experience a mother's embrace, recognize a meaning from it (mercy, love), and then, when learning our aqida, think of our human experience of love as we say, "Allah is Al-Wadud (The Loving)," while recognizing that His love is not

[1] For those philosophically inclined, Iman heals the Kantian gulf—but even before invoking the Names, such a gulf does not even exist, for those who understand the usuls well. This footnote is left intentionally ambiguous for those for whom it is ambiguous, because it is not the main point of the writing.

like created love, because of *laysa kamithlihi shay'* (there is nothing like Him) as well as by dint of reason. However, this sequence is backwards.

In reality, the love we observe between a mother and her child is already a reflection of the Divine Name *Ar-Raḥīm, Ar-Raḥmān, Al-Wadūd*. That's why we recognize it as love in the first place. The meaning of the word "love" arises *from* the Name—not the other way around. What we are witnessing is a reflection of God's attribute, designed to teach us what love *is*. There is no conception of love, no meaning of love, nor any meaning at all, without Allah's Names.

As one of them said, everyone is witnessing Allah's Names reflecting before them—the difference between the true knower of Allah and others is that the knower of Allah simply knows what it is they are looking at.

Reading the World Through Names

Once this metaphysical orientation is understood, the world transforms. A single leaf becomes a field of meanings: its soft texture and delicate hold on morning dew speak of Lutf (Subtle Kindness). Its curves, chosen by Allah to be smooth rather than jagged, speak of Jamal (Beauty). Its greenness soothes the eye, rather than overpowering it—Rifq (Gentleness), Hilm (Forbearance), Karam (Generosity) all shine through. In this way any given object that we look at, is, so to speak, *composed* of meanings that are reflections of Allah's Names.

We are not imagining or projecting these meanings onto the leaf. They are already there, because the leaf, in its form, color, texture and behavior, has been specified by Allah exactly the way that it is. Its appearance to our unaided senses, and even its scientifically measurable features (insofar as they are accurate) are all āyāt—signs pointing beyond themselves. What we are doing is learning to read these signs.

This doesn't apply only to natural things. Once, my children asked me how a "Names analysis" could be done of a human structure, like a home. A home is made of wood, nails, glass, etc. But each of these is a theater of Names. The nail is firm, piercing, sharp—evoking the Jalal, firmness, strength and power of Allah—*aL-Matin, al-Qawiyy*. Glass is transparent, allowing light through—*al-Baṣir*, *al-Latīf*. The spoon of honey destined for a cup of tea is a remarkable reflection of numerous Names. Its curved elegance, its inability to severely cut or harm, its ability to gently hold honey for as long as one needs—reflects beauty, gentleness, generosity, kindness. Meaning lives not only in nature, but in form—wherever it may be found.

This same principle applies even more deeply to revelation. Every verse of the Quran is an āyah, not just in name, but in function: it is a sign bearing pure meaning from Allah. Take the verse from Sūrat al-Fātiḥah:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
"Guide us to the Straight Path."

This simple du'a opens a window to a constellation of Names. The very request for guidance invokes al-Hādī (The Guide). The notion of a path, *ṣirāṭ*, implies structure and purpose—al-Ḥakīm (The One who puts everything in its place), al-Khāliq (the Creator of this path), al-Alīm (the All-Knowing, who knows what "straightness" entails) al-Raḥmān (the One who created the path to begin with and made it straight). Allah refers to Himself in the Quran as "the splitter of the grain and date-stone", and so He is also, in fact, "the One who makes things straight", as well as "the One who makes things crooked" since He is the One who creates everything in creation just the way it is—though we do not call upon Allah by these Names.[2] Observe how many Names have come to us through this single ayah!

Each ayah of the Quran, thus, reflects meanings in their purest form. These meanings are the roots of all reality, for they are uttered by none other than Allah Himself.

Understanding all of this we realize that we have been misled about the composition of the universe. Scientists have missed an entire dimension of data: the revelatory data set. Once we take all evidence into account, we arrive at a foundational truth: **meanings are the true building blocks of the world and ourselves. They are the basis of creation; and they are also the soul of language.** Language, then, serves as a bridge between revelation and creation, providing us a window into the deepest aspect of the created world—its meanings. Carefully engaging with revelation, reason, and our senses—through the mediation of language—reveals to us that a leaf is meaning, manifest.[3]

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[2] We only call upon Allah and designate those Names to Allah that He Himself has designated. However, we do also understand that since everything single thing in creation is an action of Allah, it is in fact He alone who "makes the leaf green," and "makes the sky blue," (just as He says in the Quran that He is the "Splitter of the grain and the date-stone," (6:95)).

[3] This is why, in our Inara Chemistry graduation ceremony, our students posed the following question to their parents (the question takes the form of a Unifying Statement, a statement wherein one cannot differentiate whether they are referring to a higher reality or a lower reality, since the meaning is the same). Here's the question: Everything in creation is made of these fundamental elements. What are they?

A. The reflections of the Names of Allah
B. The elements of the periodic table
C. Both

Meaning, Language & the World Outside Our Heads

The same Divine Names behind creation are the same Divine Names behind the meanings that we use in our speech and thought. When we describe a tree as beautiful or a spoon as generous, we are not being poetic or metaphorical. When we perceive meanings, we are perceiving real features of things, features that reflect the metaphysical truths of the Names.[4]

Since every idea from revelation is spoken by Allah Himself, their meanings have the highest truth. Pure revelation is the greatest gift, for it provides us access to pure meaning. Thus, when we find a correspondence between the meanings in revelation and the meanings present in nature, we are, in fact, finding the *same meaning*, but simply in a different form. In revelation, it is uncreated, and in creation it is, well, created. Thus, when revelation conveys the meaning that, "the unseen is far, far greater than the seen," and we then learn that:

1. The other side of "mass" (**seen**) is "energy" (**unseen**), and that the unseen side is far, far greater, or that,
2. A **single visible** human is composed of **trillions** of **invisible** entities called cells, or that,
3. The **hundreds** of **visible** stars in the night sky are nothing compared to the **200 billion-trillion stars we do not see**, or that
4. Each **cell** (**visible** by microscope) in the body is composed of **tens to hundreds of trillions of molecules** (**invisible** by microscope), or that
5. What we **see** (via light) is **only 0.00035%** of the entire (**invisible**) electromagnetic spectrum…

…this should prompt us to realize that what we are witnessing is nothing but the same meaning—"the unseen is far, far greater than the seen"—manifesting repeatedly at

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The answer of course, is both.

[4] The reason attributing "generosity" to a spoon comes across as "personification" is because the human being itself is a higher, clearer reflection of the Divine Names—thus, we use the "script" we can understand (the world of the human being) to interpret the "script" we do not understand (the world of non-human things). Revelation provides a foundation of the clearest, purest access to meaning—thus when we see the meanings present in something in creation through the lens of *both* the human experience as well as revelation, we have anchored the world "script" in the human "script", and we anchored the "human script" in the script of revelation. It is personification if there is no revelatory anchor. It could potentially be reality if anchored in revelation. With the interpretive principle of "Start with What You See", however, we come to realize that our everyday experience is, in and of itself, a valid source of meaning from Allah. It is these meanings that, when matched with the meanings present in revelation, transcend mere personification.

every level of creation, all of it ultimately reflecting the fact that Allah, "your Lord unseen"[5] is far, far greater than "the seen"—the creation in toto.

Thus, language—properly used and properly anchored in revelation—becomes a tool for *discovering real truths about the world*. Our words and their meanings are not disconnected from the world outside our heads. There is a genuine, real link between language and extra-mental reality. But this link only holds if we are using meanings that have not been distorted.

This is why revelation is essential. Mathematics gives access to reality too—it yields powerful insights precisely *because* it is rooted in meaning. But it can only ever provide a *partial view* of reality, because it is a limited "language," lacking the full range of meaning as afforded to us by language proper. Mathematics is open to all people, but language-based access to reality *in its fullness* is only available to the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ—because only we have access to the preserved, pure meanings of revelation. We are not just the inheritors of a Book, but the inheritors of the data set needed to understand reality as it is.

Those with access to pure meaning, can use language to learn, truly, about the world around us. Those with access to partial meanings alone, will always only ever have a partial perspective.

Have You Ever Metaphor[6] You Didn't Like?

Every scientific theory is guided by metaphors. Metaphors are powerful carriers of meaning. Mary Midgley called them "the imaginative scaffolding of science." The dominant metaphor of our time is the *machine*. This metaphor does a great deal of work: machines are reliable, efficient, productive, and analyzable. And so, we find ourselves saying, "the brain is a machine," "genes are programs," "the body is a system of circuits."

The metaphor serves as the fertile soil which grows hypotheses, models, and measurements. Science works reliably because *we chose* a metaphor that emphasizes reliability. A machine gives the same result each time, reliably. We know when and we know how, we are going to get a certain output for a certain input. We conceived of nature as such and then developed a system of knowledge that could pick up this meaning.

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[5] 67:12

[6] "phor" from the Greek means "to carry" as in, carrying a meaning from one place to another. The pun here can be read as, "have you ever met (as in greeted) a carrying (of meaning) you didn't like?"

The meanings we adhere to can generate as well as impair our hypotheses and observations about the world. Midgley argues that a misleading metaphor from Victorian economics shaped early evolutionary hypotheses. Herbert Spencer (not Darwin) introduced the idea of life as "hostile competition", by importing a laissez-faire economics metaphor into biology. Spencer's mantra that "all you need for progress is savage competition" (expressed in Tennyson's poem as, "Nature, red in tooth and claw"), was picked up from economics, turning the struggle of the European marketplace into a hypothesis about nature. Midgley calls this, "a fantasy about [life], because organisms cooperate constantly." For those familiar with the history of evolutionary thought, it is known that the "problem of altruism" is still very much a subject of discussion. One cannot help but wonder to what extent the entire edifice of evolutionary thought has been informed and shaped by its foundational metaphors.

Science Education: Teaching Kids (and Adults) to Play with Blocks

و مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِين

"And We did not create the heavens and the earth
and whatever is between them in play."
44:38

As people who recognize the centrality of meaning in all things, we must ask probing questions regarding one of the most foundational metaphors in science education: the building blocks metaphor. Which meanings does this metaphor habituate our minds to seeing in the world with? Are those meanings accurate? Do they correspond to reality?

We hear the metaphor of "building blocks" constantly: atoms are the building blocks of matter. DNA is the building block of life. We speak of constructing molecules, assembling materials, engineering tissues—as if the world were a child's toy set, and we are simply stacking plastic pieces together according to our desires.

But let us examine the metaphor more closely. What does it imply? It implies that reality is made of pieces, and that we—through our will and skill—can assemble those pieces in any configuration we like. It imagines the scientist as architect, the world as LEGO. This idea is not entirely false—but it is profoundly misleading.

Yes, things in the world have parts. There is structure, and there is composition. But the idea that we can simply "build" whatever we like from the parts is not true in any essential sense. In real industry, in chemistry, in the making of medicine, textiles, materials— we are not building in the sense of commanding passive pieces into form. Rather, we are understanding the natures of the substances involved. We study their

capacities, their tendencies, their relational behaviors. We do not force sodium and chlorine to bond; we create the conditions in which they will naturally join. We do not assemble a diamond—we create the high-pressure, high-temperature environment in which carbon atoms will align in a specific relational pattern.

What emerges from these processes is not a product of "stacking things up the way we want them." It is the result of relational harmony. The diamond and graphite are both made of nothing but carbon. What makes a diamond the most valuable stone in the world is not its carbon—but rather how its carbon atoms are *related.* And what makes graphite common, is how its carbon atoms are related. The the essence of what something is lies not in its parts, but in how its parts relate.

The flaw with the building blocks metaphor is not that it is false, but that it is only partially true. It tells us that things have parts, but it falsely implies that those parts are neutral and rearrangeable at will. It ignores the most important truth: *relationship* is what gives rise to reality.

This metaphor, and the meanings it habituates our minds to accessing, commits the error of:

أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ

"Do you believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in another part?" (2:85)

It reflects a devotion to a subset of meanings, and ultimately, to a subset of Allah's Names (those, perhaps, related to control, will, power).

To use modern language: relationship is the true architecture of emergence. And this is what the building blocks metaphor blinds us to. If we shift our metaphor—if we begin not with building, but with harmonizing, cultivating, aligning—then we will also begin to generate new hypotheses. We will ask different questions. We will stop imagining ourselves as sovereign assemblers and begin seeing ourselves as *khulafā'*—as caretakers and readers of signs, participating in the relational unfolding of meanings.

Then perhaps we may be able to:

ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً

"Enter into submission completely." (2:208)

The Most Comprehensive Meaning

Since our language is composed of meanings which are ultimately reflections of the—the Names of Allah—we cannot help but feel the echo of something deeply fundamental in our discussion of "relationships."

Everything in the cosmos and everything in our religion is centered around relationship. Allah is unknowable in His Essence, but He has made Himself known to us through His Names. Allah is "al-Khaliq", the Creator, even if He never created anything, yet it is through His Names that we, and thus all of creation, have a relationship with Him. Every act of creation is a relationship: first between Creator and created, but then between form and meaning, or, between one thing and another. Nothing in creation is known by itself. And regarding our Creator: "We are unable to praise You, You are as You have praised Yourself." In other words, Allah is the only One that is known, by Himself to Himself—not relative to anything other than Him. As for creation, we can only know Him—and thus anything in reality—by relation.

The entire religion, when understood deeply, is about relationship. Fiqh governs *ibādāt* (our relationship with God) and *muʿamalāt* (our relationship with others). Aqida is the right relationship between thought and truth. Tazkiyah and adab refine our relationship with the self, others, the world, the context, and ultimately, the Creator. The heaviest thing on the scale on the Day of Judgment will be *ḥusn al-khuluq* —noble character, which is nothing but rightly ordered relationships.

Even scientifically, this is where clarity lies. The difference between liquid water, ice, and steam is not the H_2O molecules themselves—it is how they are related. The difference between a healthy cell and a cancerous one is not in the genetic "building blocks" alone, but in the regulatory relationships between proteins, signals, and surrounding cells. Even ecosystems function not by dominance, but by delicate relational interdependence. The reality of the world is not composition, but relation.

And so here we may have the most fundamental Unifying Statement[7] of all:

To understand reality, one must understand the nature of its relationships.

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[7] In Inara terms, a Unifying Statement is a string of conserved meanings that could be applied to any layer of existence, with only one or two key operative words being altered, indicating a consistent meaning manifesting at various levels of existence.

Does this statement refer to:

1. Our relationship with Allah?
   "To understand Reality, one must understand the nature of His relationship with us."
   That we recognize Who He is, and act accordingly.

Or does it refer to:

2. The relationship between things in creation?
   "To understand the reality of atoms, animals, cells or societies, one must understand the nature of their relationships."
   This is the essence of science: understanding the systems, structures, and patterns by which things influence and depend on one another.

Or does this statement refer to:

3. The relationship between meanings and forms?
   "To understand the reality of forms, one must understand the nature of their relationships to meaning."
   To know something truly is to perceive the meaning reflected in its form.

Or does it refer to:

4. The relationship between revelation and the world?
   "To understand the reality of revelation, or the reality of the world, we must understand the nature of the relationship between the two."
   Revelation gives us access to pure meanings. When we see the same meanings manifest in the world, we recognize the world itself as a commentary on the Qur'an. This is the method of reading creation as āyāt.

Or to:

5. The relationship between our actions and their unseen consequences?
   "To understand the reality of our action (or any "action" in the physical sense), we must understand its relationship to its unseen consequences."
   In both ethics and physics, there is no isolated act. Every action ripples through relational fields—material, moral, and spiritual.

Or, does this statement apply to:

6. The relationship between the layers of the self?
   "To understand the relationship between the body, nafs, heart, intellect, spirit, we must understand their relationship between them."

These are not disconnected faculties but dimensions that must be rightly ordered, relative to each other and to Allah.

And this list could continue endlessly—because everything in creation is clarified by understanding it in terms of relationship.

These examples are not isolated—they point to a single underlying truth: reality is not a set of things made of atoms—rather all things, including atoms, are relationships that reflect the relationships between the Names.[8] The uncreated Qur'an is the purest connector between us and Allah—and contains the purest, most comprehensible access to His Names. When we read an *ayah* of the Quran we are reading an expression of Allah Himself—His Names, thus, are purely and perfectly present and interwoven in every *ayah*. This is what allows us to have a *relationship* with Him. And on the created side, whether a chemical reaction, a human soul, or a leaf in the wind, the principle remains the same: what a thing is cannot be separated from how it is related—to other things, to unseen realities, and ultimately, to Allah. When this truth dawns, the work of the teacher is transformed. We are not merely conveyors of facts or analyzers of objects, nor are we makers of meaning. We are guides who help others see what was always already there: meaning, in various forms, as reflections of Allah's Names.

Conclusion: Meaning as Access to Reality

To teach meaning is not to teach metaphor. It is to teach *reality*. Because if the world is built on meanings, and meanings are reflections of the Names of God, then studying meanings—through language, through revelation, and through creation—is a valid and rigorous path to knowing truth, and ultimately—The Truth.

As teachers in the Inara model, we do not assign meaning to creation. We uncover it. We do not impose a religious lens—we reveal the Divine grammar already etched into the fabric of the world. And because we have access to the most pure data set of meaning—the preserved meanings of revelation—we are uniquely positioned to help our students see. To see that the universe is not a heap of parts, but a "field of Names, reflected." To see that science is not a rival to faith, but a possible map of Divine relationships. To see that meaning is not decoration—it is the very basis of all things.

May we be among those who teach with clarity, see with reverence, and guide with humility—so that others may come to recognize what was already there: a world alive with meaning, lit up by Allah's Names, and always inviting us to relate rightly to the One behind it all.

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[8] In fact, the notion of *relationship* itself, finds its origin in none other than the Names themselves, since they are the only "things" in existence in reality to begin with (with all created things being reflections of them with no intrinsic reality in themselves).

SML Lab: The Meaning of Chemical Properties

Background

We know that everything is a sign of Allah and thus has meaning. In this laboratory we will use the SML method to get a sense of the **meaning** of the scientific concept: chemical properties [of a substance].

Materials

1. Revelatory data set
2. Scientific text

Procedure

1. Read the provided meanings from the Selected Revelatory Data Set.
2. Extract the key meanings from the Selected Revelatory Data Set.
3. Read the provided section from the chemistry text on "chemical properties."
4. Translate the provided chemistry text into its SML form.
5. Look for meaning-matches between the selected revelatory data set and the chemistry SML's extracted from the chemistry text.

Selected Revelatory Data Set

Akhlaq in Arabic is translated as "character", but doing science means being a bit more precise. Akhlaq is the plural of the Arabic word "khuluq", which refers to one's inherent nature or temperament. You might say Ahmad has a calm temperament or Sara has a fiery one. The word "khuluq" comes from the root, "kh-la-qa", which means "to create" or "to make." So the whole meaning of khuluq signifies a person's inherent nature, character or disposition. It's who they are, or how they have been made. Ahmad has been made calm. Sara has been made fiery.

Khuluq, then, is what a person is made of.

- **Root Meaning:** The root "kh-l-q" (خ-ل-ق) fundamentally conveys the act of bringing something into existence, or creation.
- **Khalaqa (خَلَقَ):** This verb form means "he created" or "created".
- **Khalq (خَلْق):** This noun form refers to "creation" or "created thing".
- **Khalik (خَالِق):** This noun form refers to "creator" or "the one who creates".
- **Makhluq (مَخْلُوق):** This noun form refers to "creation" or "created thing"
- **Khallaq (خَلَّاق):** This noun form refers to "One who creates repeatedly"
- **Ikhtilak (اِخْتِلَاق):** This noun form refers to "Fabrication (lies that are made up)"
- **Khuluq (خُلُق):** This noun form refers to "Character (what a person is made of

Akhlaq, being the plural of khuluq, literally means, “those qualities a person is made up of.”

Learning about One’s Akhlaq

Read the following two passages. After each passage, summarize how the akhlaq of the individual was made known.

Passage 1

Hani loves reading books and drinking tea. He sits in his study all day and reads books, drinking tea. He does this for days on end. Hani lives a life of peace and quiet. He considers himself to be a good person—a “nice guy”—since after all, he doesn’t hurt anyone.

One day, Hani heard a knock on his door. Annoyed, he reluctantly put his book down and scuffled to the door. “Who is it?” he grumbled.

“It’s your new neighbor!” came the voice from the other side of the door.

Hani rolled his eyes and opened the door a few inches, just enough to poke his head out, and mumble a salam.

“Wa alaykum assalam wa rahmatullah! My name is Sulayman, I just moved in next door. How are you?” Sulayman extended his hand, bright-eyed and smiling.

Hani stared at his new neighbor’s face for a moment, before dropping his gaze to Sulayman’s extended hand, slowly contributing his limp hand to the offered handshake.

“I’m Hani.” He paused, searching his mind for the next thing to say, and decided to stay silent lest his words result in more conversation.

“Uh, nice to you meet you Hani… do you…” Sulayman stumbled a bit, being struck by Hani’s awkwardness. “How long have you been here?”

Feeling terribly annoyed that this person was interrupting his reading time (and every time was reading time for Hani), he decided to put an end to this interaction. “A long time, thank you.”

Hani slammed the door shut in Sulayman’s face before he could get another sound out, about-faced, and hurried back to his study.

After a pause of silence, he heard Sulayman’s footsteps track away from his door.

Hani felt a sense of palpable relief.

Question:

Hani lived a quiet life. How was Hani’s akhlaq made known to us?

Passage 2

Ahmad is a family man. He is a faithful Muslim and believes that Allah alone is Al-Razzaq, The Provider. He prays regularly, recites the Quran daily, and goes to the masjid as often as he can. Ahmad has been working at the same job for fifteen years. When he goes for juma prayer he hears the Imam say, "Whether you get your income from a salary or from running a business, we all know as Muslims that Allah alone is the One who provides, and our provision is written!" Ahmad nods his head in agreement. He acknowledges this to be true.

Shortly thereafter, Ahmad gets laid off from his long-standing job. He now does not have a means to provide for his family.

The next day, Ahmad reads in his daily reading of the Quran:

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٢

˹He is the One˺ Who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds. And He is the Almighty, All-Forgiving.

He is reminded that life is a test, and feels supported by Allah through the Quran.

Ahmad begins to look for a job. He does so for two months but is unable to find one. He is now running out of savings to provide for his family. He increases in dua.

Ahmad's cousin, unfortunately, owns a liquor store. He calls Ahmad up and says, "Why don't you just work as a cashier for me for a while until you find your own job, Allah does not expect you to starve. You can repent later if you really feel that's necessary. I won't have you restock the alcohol or work in the back."

Ahmad remembers the hadith: "Allah has cursed alcohol, the one who drinks it, the one who pours it, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who squeezes (the grapes etc), the one for whom it is squeezed, the one who carries it and the one to whom it is carried." He remembers the statements of scholars who know the Quran and hadith better than him, who had said that clearly it is haram to sell alcohol, even if one is not drinking it. Even transporting alcohol from one place to another is prohibited. Ahmad knows all of this.

He is now faced with a choice. Does he take the job temporarily to provide for his family? Or does he decline, knowing that since Allah is Al-Razzaq and his provision is written, he need not engage in haram. He remembers his teacher explaining that rizq (provision) will come to one inevitably. He feels like this is a moment of truth—a test of His faith in Allah as Al-Razzaq.

Questions:

If Ahmad decides to accept his cousin's offer, what has Allah taught him regarding his belief that Allah is Al-Razzaq?

If Ahmad decides to reject his cousin's offer, what has Allah taught him regarding his believe that Allah is Al-Razzaq?

How was Ahmad's relationship with Allah as Al-Razzaq made known to him/us?

What is a Test?
The word for test in Arabic is "bala", and in other places in the Quran, "ibtila" which both come from the same root and mean, to be tested, subjected to difficulty, to come to know. As in:

هُنالِكَ تَبْلُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ما أَسْلَفَتْ
Every soul will come to know, then and there, what it did in the past. They will be returned to God, their rightful Lord, and their invented [gods] will desert them. (Yunus, 30)

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى ٱلسَّرَآئِرُ
On the day all secrets will be laid bare
(86:9)

The Quran is essentially informing us of the nature of Allah's tests of us. A test from Allah (an ibtila') is when someone is subjected to some kind of:

(1) Situation or circumstance that Allah sets up, by which
(2) Something previously unknown becomes known.

As the scholars point out, Allah is not learning anything—He is al-Aleem, the All-Knowing. Rather, it is *we* who learn about ourselves when we are tested. When Allah tests us, what is becoming known is what is hidden inside ourselves.

Extract Key Meanings from Selected Revelatory Data Set
After having read the selected meanings from revelation above, you are now ready to extract the two key meanings present therein. To find those meanings, ask yourself the following question: **What are the two ways by which someone's akhlaq can be made known?**

Answer Key:
1. Through interaction with other people.
2. Through being put to test/difficulty.

Selected Lower Data Set

Chemical Properties of Matter (Chemistry: Matter & Change pg 74)
Some properties of a substance are not obvious unless the substance changed composition as a result of its contact with other substances or the application of thermal or electric energy. The ability or inability of a substance to combine with or change into one or more other substances is called a chemical property.

Translate into SML

Properties
Substance
Not Obvious | Made Obvious
Composition

Conduct Meaning-Matching Tests

As you read the definition of "chemical properties" from *Chemistry: Matter & Change*, do you find any meaning matches between the Selected Revelatory Data Set (see your "Key Meanings" above) and the Selected Lower Data Set (the definition of "chemical properties").

List the meaning matches here:

Write Your Unifying Statement

A unifying statement is a sentence whose overall structure could be equally applied to a topic from science and a topic from revelation. For example, look at the following Unifying Statement:

Most living things must be continuously connected to the unseen, otherwise they will die or suffer severely.

Does this sentence refer to people and their relationship with Allah, who the Quran calls "your Lord unseen"?

Or

Does this sentence refer to living creatures and their relationship with air, which is unseen?

Or

Does this sentence refer to living creatures and their relationship with angels, which are unseen as well.

Write a Unifying Statement for this lab.
Ask yourself: is there a single sentence that you could write that would capture the meanings present both in the understanding of akhlaq (provided to us by revelation) and in the understanding of chemical properties (provided to us by natural science)?

Answer Key:

Some properties of things are not obvious unless the thing has changed composition as a result of its contact with other things, or the application of some kind of test. The ability or inability of one thing to combine with or change into one or more other things is called a:_____.

Since this Unifying Statement is in the form of a definition, the final blank is going to change dependent upon what we are referring to—however the entire sentence structure stays the same, whether we are referring to human beings and their akhlaq (i.e. what they are made up of) or elements and their properties (i.e. what they are made up of).

Are we talking about human beings?
Some properties/characteristics of people are not obvious unless the person has changed as a result of its contact with other people, or the application of some kind of test. The ability or inability of one person to have a relationship with another or change their character is called akhlaq.

Or are we talking about substances?
Some properties/characters of substances are not obvious unless the substance has changed as a result of its contact with other substances, or the application of some kind of test. The ability or inability of one substance to combine with or change into one or more other substances is called a chemical property.

Reflection

Why do you think Allah created things in this way, such that there is such a tight link between how we know about the akhlaq of people vs. how we know about the chemical properties of a substance?

Physics: Principles & Problems
Page 10
(**McGraw Hill Education**)

Commentary

This is a working text for Inara students who have been/are being trained in the Inara system of learning, which introduces essential ontological, epistemological and cosmological concepts in a piecemeal fashion without using philosophical terminology. Those not trained in this system or without the requisite background may not understand all the references, but insha Allah may still benefit. Please also note that we are "building the plane while flying it."

The goal of an Inara approach to science learning is to cultivate Quranic mental habits *through* the study of the natural sciences, by restoring the centrality of meaning in a principled, systematic manner.

Inara
Discover Meaning.
www.inaraeducation.org

Main Text: Mathematics in Physics

(An Excerpt from the first chapter of a McGraw Hill Physics textbook)

"Physicists often use the language of mathematics. In physics, equations are important tools for modeling observations and for making predictions. Equations are one way of representing relationships between measurements. Physicists rely on theories and experiments with numerical results to support their conclusions." (Pg. 10)

Commentary

Physicists often use the language of mathematics.

Albert Einstein, in a lecture delivered in 1921, asked a question.

"How can it be that mathematics, being after all a product of human thought which is independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality?"

Many other physicists, scientists, philosophers and mathematicians have wondered the same. The question that confuses them, in simpler terms, is: how is it that something that just occurs in the mind of the human being—the logical operations of mathematics—have such a deep connection and reveal so much about the world?

This will continue to remain a question for those who do not access revelatory knowledge. For those who do:

Since the world is a mirror of Allah's Names and Attributes and since Allah has expressed Himself using **language** there an intrinsic and special link between the world and language. The reason mathematics can be used to understand the world is because of this special link, because mathematics shares certain features of language.

The next question to consider, however is: what kind of "language" *is* mathematics? What features does it share with regular language? And what makes it different from regular language? We call the numbers, variables, their relationships and their underlying logic "Mathematical Language", and we refer to regular language—with words—as "Whole Language." Mathematics language is to whole language as a **map** of a mountain range is to the actual mountain range itself. The map is a series of two-dimensional lines on a paper. The actual mountain range with all its beauty—its trees, variety of plants, animals, insects, winding paths, rocks, boulders—all of its majesty and beauty, is quite something else. Another analogy might be: Mathematics language is to Whole language as the rule of grammar are to a story. The essential purpose of the story is not to learn the rules of grammar (though stories can be used to teach grammar). The purpose of the rules of grammar, is to that you can become so good at them that you can tell a story wherein you never notice

them at all. If someone is listening to a story but all they focus on is grammar rules, they are missing the point.

The primary purpose for studying the natural world is to reflect upon the mountain itself. Or, in the second analogy, it is to tell the story. If science is about studying the natural world, then Mathematical Language needs to be understood in the light of Whole Language. This is what we aim to do in this class/text.

Question

1. What should be the purpose of studying modern science as Muslims?

In physics, equations are important tools for modeling observations and for making predictions. Equations are one way of representing relationships between measurements.

Equations such as F = ma (Force = mass x acceleration), express **relationships.** Understanding relationships is central to understanding science as well as reality itself.

But we must ask: relationships between what? And what is establishing those relationships?

Since there is a link between language and reality, and since mathematics is a limited kind of language, understanding it in reference to Whole language will give us an understanding of what kind of picture of nature Mathematical Language gives us.

The basic mathematical operations that you will be studying in your high school physics equations are the ones you already know well: multiplication, division, addition and subtraction (though in Inara Physics you will be introduced conceptually to calculus, which carries a profound meaning). These mathematical operations are what **establish the relationships** between things like "mass" and "acceleration."

Recall that the *ḥarf* (or relating particle) and the *f'il* (the verb) has the same SML meaning in Whole Language as many of these mathematical operators have in Mathematical Language. For example, "take away from," "combine", "add to", "increase", "decrease", "increase in proportion to", "decrease in proportion to", etc. All the mathematical operators can be expressed in Whole Language form with using only relating particles and verbs. Note there are also some *ism al-ma'ana* (abstract nouns) here. All mathematical operations in the Mathematics Language are comprised of meanings that mirror relating particles and verbs in Whole Language (and a few abstract nouns). These are what establish relationships in formulae such as F = ma. "Force" is equivalent to "mass" which increases or decreases in proportion to "acceleration." Mathematical operations, relational particles and verbs establish relationships.

But what do they establish relationships between? What kinds of "words" do the concepts of "Force", "mass", and "acceleration" represent in the mirror of Whole Language?

Recall that in physics, mathematical operations only establish relationships between what in Whole Language we would call abstract nouns. They do not establish relationships between

nouns of essence. Recall that there are two types of nouns. Ism al-dhat—nouns of essence (person, place or thing)—and ism al-ma'ana—abstract nouns—meanings like force, hope, love, fear, mass. There are *no* nouns of essence in physics.

Thus, we see that the kind of picture of nature that Mathematical Language provides us of nature is limited, when seen in the context of Whole Language. The example we had provided was as follows:

Mathematical Language Picture
Motion flows when danger surrounds. Fear grips, end nears. Help appears, speed circles, force strikes until threat withdraws. Trembling follows, life remains. Gratitude rises, realization dawns: dismissal fades, honor forms for living presence.

Whole Language Picture
A man was swimming in the sea when a group of sharks surrounded him. Fear gripped his heart, and he thought his end was near. Suddenly, dolphins appeared, circling him and striking the sharks until the predators turned away. The man reached the shore, trembling but alive. Sitting on the sand, he wept in gratitude, realizing that these animals had been his protectors. He remembered the story of the camel that complained to the Prophet ﷺ, and he understood that animals are not to be dismissed, but honored as living beings of their own right.

We see what kind of picture Mathematical Language provides. The limited perspective of the mathematical picture of nature is precisely the way it is due to what is mentioned in the text above. "Equations are important tools for modeling observations and making predictions." A model is created to highlight a particular end-goal (*ghayah*). If one's goal is to create a model of person that makes us remember the exact likeness of the individual, one may choose to use wax and color and create an exact, realistic replica of the model of a human being, as seen at certain wax museums. If one has the end-goal of highlighting the anatomy of the human body, the model would look different. In this case, we are observing nature with the goal to *make predictions*. The definition of prediction is, per Oxford, "to say or estimate that a specified thing will happen in the future." But this is just one way of looking at the world. One does not always need to look at the world in terms of our ability to predict it. To turn this into the single perspective by which we see nature is to see nature only in terms of how we can control it. But this is not the entire purpose of nature. The fundamental purpose of nature is to be a means of reflection and connection to the Divine. Once one is established in this, then one may also learn the specific relationships present in it that allow us to control aspects of it, for Allah's sake.

Question
On page 18 of your text, it says:

"When you perform an experiment, is important to change only one factor at a time. The factor that is manipulated during an investigation is the independent variable. The factor that depends on the independent variable is the dependent variable."

Based on the commentary above, what does this kind of experiment tell us about the *goal* of the designer of the experiment? Why does he or she only want to change one variable at a time while holding all others constant?

Equations are one way of representing relationship between measurements.

Equations are like glasses that allow us to see nature through the lens of Mathematical Language. The way they do this is by establishing relationships between abstract nouns. However, they do not establish relationships between all kinds of abstract nouns. Love is an abstract noun, but no equation will establish a relationship between love and "other variables" in the way that equations do. This is because equations are only properly used between abstract nouns that can be in some way represented by **measurement in the form of number.**

There are different ways to measure, and some ways of measuring capture certain aspects of reality better than others. The measure, [Extent of sacrifice], is a **qualitative measure** of the love for one's beloved. If Ahmad crosses a desert to reach Layla, the measure of his love is far greater than if he tells her to take an Uber from the train station because the AC in his car is broken and it is hot outside. Equations are unable to capture important aspects of reality.

Equations are only able to capture relationships between **numerical measurements.** The reason **numerical measurement** was chosen as the type of measure for science is historical. It relates to the history of certainty. In order to understand something about the history of certainty, and why some people chose to use numerical measurements to understand the world, we must first understand something about certainty itself.

Allah is Certain, and since Allah has created everything about us to seek Him, our Heart is constantly searching for "that which is certain." Allah Himself, of course, has no need for the categories of certainty, or its opposite, doubt. Certainty and doubt only pertain to human knowledge. Allah's knowledge is not like our knowledge. His knowledge is the *basis* for reality being the way that it is. Our knowledge simply *shows us* what reality is. It is due to the universal human drive to be close to and see Allah that philosophers, scientists and others have sought to establish all knowledge in certainty. It is also because of this universal human drive that the current intellectual climate of wide-spread doubt ("doubt everything!") results in so much disillusionment.

As you have studied, the Quran wants everyone to attain this certainty, and in the Quranic language, this certainty is associated with "seeing." We enter Islam with the *shahadah* which literally means, "I see that there is no god but Allah and I see that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." The highest commitment to Allah manifests as what the Messenger of

Allah ﷻ referred to as, "*iḥsān*", which is the "state wherein it is as if you *see* Him" (but if you do not see Him, then at least you know with certainty that He sees you).

One can attain certainty without seeing for oneself by hearing the report of a trustworthy person. However, seeing for oneself results in higher certainty. We know with certainty that the Prophet ﷺ hugged a tree that cried because of his absence. We know this with certainty from objectively verified reports from innumerable trustworthy reporters. However, this degree of certainty is not the same as if we had been there and seen it for ourselves. Had we been there, not only would our certainty have been the highest possible, but we would have fallen within the category of "*Ṣaḥābah*", the definition of which is: someone who *saw* the Prophet ﷺ while having faith in him.

There are three ways to see something for oneself and thus attain differing degrees of certainty.

1. Seeing with the five senses
2. Seeing with Reason (in Arabic, "reasoning" is translated as *naẓar* which means "sight")
3. Seeing with the Heart ("It is not their eyes that are blind but it is their hearts in their chests that are blind." Quran 22:46)

The first requires the least effort—everyone is given this method of seeing "for free", except those tested by Allah with blindness or deafness, may Allah relieve them and preserve everyone.

The second requires effort to think carefully, using the rules of logic. It becomes easier to make mistakes with this mode of seeing. For example, some began worshipping idols due to faulty reasoning such as, "Anything that benefits me greatly must be God. This idol benefits me greatly. Therefore, this idol is God." Or, in our time, "All observations need something other than it to explain its existence. The world is something we observe. But since there cannot be anything other than the world (i.e. God), the world does not need anything other than it to explain its existence." One of the great reasons for the Prophets being sent to humanity is to help guide our reason, since we can make errors in reasoning. Muslim theologians, such as Imam Ash'ari, Imam Maturidi and Imam Ghazali have shown that if the rules of logic are used correctly, and people are honest with themselves, logic is in concordance with Quranic and Prophetic teachings.

The third mode of seeing requires effort to act carefully, in accordance with the commands and prohibitions of Allah, and the example of the Prophet ﷺ inwardly and outwardly, and

requires devoting the Heart to the remembrance of Allah, such that the Heart becomes purified. This then opens the Heart's ability to see Allah and unseen realities. This results in the highest degree of certainty. Imam al-Ghazali and many others have spoken about this at length. Imam al-Ghazali says in *The Alchemy of Happiness:*

> "Do not suppose that the window of the Heart to the kingdom of [the unseen] does not open without sleep and death; that is not so. Rather, if one practices spiritual discipline when awake and removes the heart beyond the grasp of anger, lust, ill nature, and the necessary of this world and sits in a secluded place, closes one's eyes, suspends the work of sensory organs, connects the heart to the empyrean by continuously repeating "Allah, Allah" with the heart and not the tongue until one is unaware of one's self and has no report of the entire world or of anything except Allah Most High; if it is thus, then the window of the heart will open even though one be awake and one will see while awake what others see in sleep…
>
> …wonderful things beyond description will be seen by one to whom this way is opened. As the Prophet ﷺ said, "The earth was unrolled before me and I saw its farthest eastern and western regions." And Allah Most High has said: *Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he might be one of those possessing certainty. (6:75).*
>
> As Allah, may He be glorified and exalted says: *Remember the name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him with a complete devotion.* (73:8)

It is established that seeing with the senses and the reason can result in certainty and that seeing with the Heart provides the highest certainty. Yet, the path to opening the eye of the Heart is difficult, and is not easily attained by all, whereas anyone can be trained to think and reason properly. Furthermore, the report of the Prophet regarding unseen realities is of a much higher quality of evidence compared to the Heart's direct seeing of unseen realities that any non-prophet may have. Therefore, that which comes from the Quran and from the Prophet ﷺ provides us definitive evidence of the unseen side of the world. If one were to, for example, state that their Heart has seen that the "alif", "lam", "mim" at the beginning of Surah Baqarah are actually names of certain angels, then they are entitled to this certainty for *themselves*, since this does not contradict anything explicitly mentioned in the Quran—the Quran is silent on the meaning of these letters. Yet, no one else is obliged to believe them or accept their statement as true since neither the Quran nor the Prophet ﷺ specify the

meanings of those special letters, and nothing in the Quran or hadith contradicts such a statement.

Heart-based seeing that is in *concordance* with what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ have informed us, deepens our certainty of the unseen side of the world. If Heart-based seeing contradicts anything from Allah and His Messenger (salAllahu alayhi wa sallam), it is not accepted. If it neither contradicts nor is explicitly confirmed, and the Quran and hadith are silent on it, then we leave it as the private witnessing of the particular individual who was granted such a vision. That is a gift that Allah granted them privately. No one is held accountable to act upon or believe such reports. The only reports regarding the unseen that are definitive come from Allah and His Messenger salAllahu alayhi wa sallam.

Having understood that certainty comes in three modes, we can now apply this to the understanding of nature. The dominant scientific method used until around the 17th century was based on the reasoning of Aristotle, and the great Muslim philosophers who understood, critiqued and built upon his system. These were the likes of Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, and others. Their study of the world was referred to as "natural philosophy", which was the original phrase for "science" as we use it today. However, their scientific method differed.

Since they sought certainty, they started from what are called "first principles." These are foundational truths from which one can then use logic and observation to derive other truths. Imagine you want to build a house. You do not start by putting up curtains or picking furniture. You start with the foundation—the ground that holds everything else up. In philosophy, first principles are like that foundation. They are the most basic truths that everything else is built upon. For example, philosophers like Aristotle and Ibn Sina would ask, "What is the most basic thing we know for certain?"

- Example 1: "A thing exists." (you can't deny that without also admitting it exists to be denied).
- Example 2: A thing cannot be both true and false in the same way at the same time (law of non-contradiction).

Starting from these "first truths," they would then observe the natural world — plants, animals, stars — and apply reason step by step.

Thus, their scientific method was as follows

1. Start with first principles (undeniable truths).
2. Observe carefully.
3. Use rational deduction (the rules of logic) to connect what you observe back to the first principles.

That's how they reached conclusions about motion, causes, medicine, and even unseen matters (what they would have called "metaphysics").

Aristotle and those after him, including Muslim natural philosophers, used this kind of method to draw conclusions about the natural world. They did so using rigorous logic, producing careful definitions that would clarify the essences of things.

It was their system of analysis that produced many ideas that influenced scientific thinking for centuries and still do today. For example, the idea of fundamental elements such as earth, water, air and fire—an idea shared in various forms by almost all pre-modern civilizations from Chinese to Indian, Greek to Islamic—have been operationalized in effective systems of medicine to this day.

Example: Starting with Euclid's First Principles

Step 1: Start with a First Principle (Definition)

Euclid begins with the simplest, undeniable definition:

- **"A point is that which has no part."**
  👉 In plain English: a point is a position, not a thing with size. You can't break it down further.

This is a **first principle** — a foundation stone.

Step 2: Add Another Principle

- **"A line is breadthless length."**
  👉 It's just a stretch of points. Again, you can't break it down further.

Step 3: Make an Axiom

- **"A straight line is the shortest distance between two points."**
  👉 This feels so obvious you don't prove it — you just recognize it as true. That's what an axiom is.

Step 4: Build From There

Now Euclid uses these first principles and axioms to *prove* things.

For example:

- If you have an equilateral triangle, all sides are equal (by definition).
- Then, using the axiom of equality, all the angles opposite those sides must also be equal.
  👉 Suddenly, from a tiny seed (point → line → axiom), you can build whole theorems about triangles, circles, and geometry.

Ibn Sina, a great expositor of this type of natural science developed an in-depth categorization of types of motion that occur in nature. He built on the Aristotelian categorization of motion as:

1. Motion of Quantity – when something grows or diminishes.
2. Motion of Quality – when something changes in color, temperature, etc.
3. Motion of Place (locomotion) – when something changes its position in space.

He added a fourth category, Motion of Position – when something is not changing position in space, but is, for example, rotating in one place like a spinning orb. The reason he added this category of motion was because clearly, such an object is moving, but it is not changing position in space—only the relative position of its parts are undergoing change.

As you can see, in pre-modern physics, the concept of "motion" was really akin more to our concept of "change." In modern physics, we only consider motion of place, or locomotion—though many scientists from the Aristotelian/Ibn Sinan tradition considered that locomotion was the primary form of change.

Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd and others developed an extensive system of natural philosophy that in many ways concorded with the Quranic worldview. However, there were certain conclusions that they had arrived at, using reason, that were contradictory to explicit references from the Quran. For example, some Muslim natural philosophers held that the evidence of reason indicated that the universe itself had no beginning, but this contradicted the Quran which clearly states that Allah created everything from nothing. The natural philosophers of the time were similar to the scientists of our time. If scientists start saying things that contradict revelation, then though theoretically there is no issue with this, it can start to become a problem for those who look up to the scientists and their methods and do not understand the proper relationship between revelation and reason.

At this point, Imam Ghazali, wrote a treatise in which he showed that if one uses reason correctly, they will arrive—through natural philosophy—at the same conclusion as the Quran. He showed the problems with the reasoning in Ibn Sina's approach, corrected them, and further clarified that when it comes to revelation or unseen matters, reason can only go so far. Furthermore, he noted that to understand higher realities about the world, the Heart is another means of seeing that grants more certainty than even reason—though the two work together, and both must always be guided and constrained by revelation because revelation is the strongest evidence we have.

As for when numerical measurement became the means by which we understood nature, we need to move to another civilization and another time. Though the entire historical analysis could fill books, for now it suffices to say that the commitment to looking at nature in terms

of numerical measurement came from a French philosopher by the name of Rene Descartes, who was faced with a high degree of uncertainty that was "in the air" during his time. This uncertainty came from people who had begun to question the Aristotelian way of reasoning about the world. It also came at a time of European religious wars during his time, which made him begin to question the role of authority in knowledge. This created a deep uncertainty within him. Due to this uncertainty, he searched for what could grant him complete certainty, and he reasoned that the most certain statement that he could make: "I am thinking, so that must mean that I exist." This was one of the first decisive steps in the Western tradition of looking at the world in terms of "I" and "my knowledge" instead of looking at the world as it is. After establishing his existence based on the fact that he was thinking, he reasoned to the existence of God. Then, being troubled by the possibility that nothing outside of his thoughts existed, he reasoned that God would not deceive us, and that the world outside his head actually *did* exist. However, he observed that many people said many different kinds of things about the "world outside" (our heads), and thus he needed to find something that no one could disagree about. He realized that ultimately no one could disagree on **number**—we can all easily agree that there are 5 apples on the table, not 4, just by looking—no matter what our faith or culture. Descartes therefore proceeded to see if he could see *everything* in nature in terms of number. This is, in great part, the root for why numerical measurement became the means by which we look at the world today.[1]

Descartes went through deep doubt, and came out with the conclusion that we can all agree on numbers, so let us see the world in terms of what we can measure. He then developed a system that would become the basis for applying mathematics to the world.

Interestingly, Imam al-Ghazali also underwent a crisis of doubt, but he came to a very different conclusion. His conclusion, as we have alluded to above, was that reason has its place, however the greatest certainty comes through action in accordance with the commands and remembrance of God, which polishes the Heart, allowing one to see with the eye of the Heart, and granting certainty that simply cannot be shaken. Then, by seeing with all three—the five senses, Reason, and the Heart—all under the guidance of revelation, one could arrive (with Allah's Tawfiq) to seeing reality as it really is.[2]

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[1] This was actually part of a dramatic change in the very notion of "number" itself, but that is a discussion for another time (note: the Arabic language preserves the original, pre-modern understanding of number).

[2] It is also important to note that at this time there was no crisis of religious authority in the Muslim world relating to the Quran as there was in the Chrisitan world at the time of Descartes, where the Reformation had pitted "Bible-only" interpretations versus the Catholic Church's.

It is due to the historical circumstances that were specific to the West that the study of nature and the modern understanding of certainty developed in the way that it did. It is due to such historical considerations that *numerical* or *quantitative* measurement between abstract concepts became the "language" of modern science.

Thus, equations establish relationships between abstract concepts that we can in some way measure *numerically* or *quantitatively.*

The Meaning of Quantity

Since it is clear that taking such an approach—using equations to establish relationships between numerical measurements of nature—can be quite powerful, we know that this perspective must have some truth to it. The problem is that we also know that whatever it is, it must be a partial truth, because the Mathematical Language simply cannot give us an accurate picture of reality. "*Motion flows when danger surrounds,*" is not entirely meaningless, but it is very difficult to discern what the meaning exactly is, since Mathematical Language uses no nouns of essence.

However, we *could* discern the meaning if we had access to the actual sentence: *A man was swimming in the sea when a group of sharks surrounded him.* We can only get "the whole sentence" or the whole picture, from revelation. Once we have that, we can do a comparison:

Motion flows when danger surrounds
A man was swimming in the sea when a group of sharks surrounded him.

Starting with what the Mathematical Language (the "language" of science) tells us, we would recognize the term "motion" as a key phrase in this sentence. When we then search the Whole Language paragraph, we would look for a meaning match that matches the overall context (in this case "swimming"). The SML Method allows us to do exactly this.

Yet, we can go further and ask an even more fundamental question: if physics uses **quantitative measurements** of things in nature, then what is the *meaning* of **quantity?**

Of course, this question only makes sense to you because you have been trained to recognize that anything that is not Allah is a sign of Allah, and all signs point to a meaning which ultimately leads back to the reflections of His Names and Attributes. Quantity is a sign of Allah, and thus it has a meaning (it could have more than one meaning as well, of course).

Once we understand the meaning(s) of the sign of "quantity", we will be able to see its meaning in *all* the physics equations we use.

To begin:
Allah is One without partners. This "One" does not mean "quantity" or the number "1". It means "completely unique.

Quantity is a creation of Allah. It does not apply to Allah.

Allah created The Realm of Quantity and Measurement (Alam al-Shahadah) so that we could know and recognize Him. Quantity is other than Allah. Therefore, it is a sign of Allah.

The Spectrum reminds us that numbers can allow us to access Unseen realities on the left side of the line of sound report.

To understand the meaning of quantity as a sign of Allah, there are two **Unifying Statements** that are central.

Recall that Unifying Statement is a **set of meanings that are true across all layers of existence.** These meanings originate from reflections of Allah's Names and Attributes. We then observe those same meanings in the unseen and seen realms, and in both the microcosm (the human world) and the macrocosm (the rest of creation). We know that the meaning must be the same across all layers of existence due to the **Law of Conservation of Meaning**, which you have already studied.

The Meaning of Quantity, Unifying Statement #1: hidden realities are made knowable through quantity.

This is a **unifying statement**. See if you can find the Unifying Statement "hidden realities are made knowable through quantity," at all three levels of existence:

Allah is The Hidden Reality who made Himself known to us through His names reflecting in the creation—a creation of quantity. Allah—to whom quantity does not apply—is the creator of creation and quantity. Quantity exists in both the unseen and the seen layers of His creation, but connect us to Him in different ways. By reflecting on quantity in the unseen

and in the seen, we can become closer to Allah by increasing in our recognition of Him. In this way, Allah is The Hidden Reality revealed to us through our study of quantity (and of everything else in creation).

The Alam al Ghayb is filled with hidden realities that are known to us through unseen creations that are associated with numbers, that give us a sense of how great those creations are. The purpose of these numbers is to increase our sense of greatness of Allah, and to motivate us to become closer to Him. For example, the Bayt al-Ma'mur has 70,000 angels that circumambulate around it daily. Angels have any number of pairs of wings. Our deeds have realities that are multiplied by number-values to give us a sense of how great their realities are (a prayer, for men, in the masjid in jama'ah is 27x more valuable than prayed at home). In this way, number gives us a sense of the greatness of things in the unseen realm and motivates us to connect ourselves to that unseen realm and to Allah Himself.

The same principle is seen in the **Alam al-Shahada** (or, the **Realm of Quantity and Measurement**)—there are many hidden realities that are known to us through quantity. Furthermore, we are able to subject things to our control through mastering the measurement and quantification of things.

This leads us to the second **unifying principle** relating to meaning of quantity.

The Meaning of Quantity, Unifying Statement #2: Quantity and measurement relates to power and control.

The unseen root of all control and power that we see in this world, whether belonging to us or to things around us is Allah's power over all things.

Believing in Allah's *qadr* or *taqdīr* is one of the central facts that Allah has informed us of regarding Him. Qadr means "to measure out, calculate, to be able, to have power."

"Measurement indicates power and control" is a **unifying statement**. This means it is a set of meanings that apply across all layers of existence.

1. **Allah Himself** "measures out" all things. In other words, He has complete control over everything. **Quantity and measurement relates to power and control.** This meaning originates with Allah's measuring out of all things, and is then reflected in all layers of creation.

2. In the **human being**, we use numbers to control our *nafs* through motivation. Our *nafs* does not want to go to the masjid for *ṣalāh* in *jamā'ah*. Reminding ourselves of the fact that the salah in *jamā'ah* is worth 27x more than *ṣalāh* by oneself, motivates us to do so. In this way we gain control over our own selves through the use of quantity. **Quantity and measurement relates to power and control.** The meaning is conserved (in accordance with the Law of Conservation of Meaning).

3. In **Alam al-Ghayb** it is unclear (to me) how quantity and measurement relate to power and control. However, given the Law of Conservation of Meaning it must somehow be true, and Allah knows best. One example that comes to mind is the following: in the hadith about the man who killed 99 people and then went on his way to the city of the pious people to repent, he died, and the angels quarreled, by Allah's command, over whether he should be taken by one of them to Jannah or the other to Jahannam. A mediator angel was sent who advised that they measure the distance between the man and the place of piety. Since he was closer, he was thus sent to Jannah. In this example we perhaps have a glimpse of how measurement in the realm of the unseen is associated with power and control—in this case the control over where this soul will go. **Quantity and measurement relates to power and control.** And Allah knows best.

4. In the **Realm of Quantity and Measurement** (Alam al Shahadah), by measuring things we gain control and power over them. Of course, our control and power through measurement is nothing compared to the measurement, control and power Allah has over all things. In this world we believe that we have power over things because we can measure and thus control them, and as a result we have become heedless of Allah's measurement, power and control. While we are busy with our measurements and manipulations in this layer called Alam al-Shahadha, or **Mulk**, when Allah brings creation to a close He will roll it up in His Hand and say, "Li man il-mulk al yawm?" Who's Mulk is it today? Meaning: O you who thought you had power over everything with all your measurements, now who has the power?" Of course, this is a rhetorical question, because Allah *always* had the power. It is just that in this life He loaned us an infinitesimally small portion of some for a period of time. **Quantity and measurement relates to power and control.**

Quantity in the Realm of Quantity and Measurement thus serves two purposes:

1. Since it reveals hidden realities, quantity—like all other signs—serves to connect us to the unseen and ultimately to Allah.
2. It allows us to gain power and control, through measurement.

Physics and science in general will only focus on number two, without making the link between measurement and power/control. This is because modern science is structured to only accept those methods that permit control. As Muslims, we do not have a problem with this control, if we use it for Allah's sake, as informed by the ethics and guidelines of Allah's commands. The problem is not in the control, but in mistakenly believing that this is all nature is for, or that looking at nature through the lens of control is same thing as seeing things as they really are. Modern science allows us to see nature through the lens of control, but as we have seen, that is a very limited view of reality. Your job as you move through your science journey is to learn quantification of the world while recognizing that this quantification is just one view that we use when we need to achieve a noble end.

Finally, the greatest gift the Ummah can provide the world today is to show people the meaning of quantity, so that when they do need to measure and control, they are seeing this quantification as a manifestation of higher unseen realities that connect them to Allah, as they use this knowledge to spread truth and beauty in the world.

Physicists rely on theories and experiments with numerical results to support their conclusions.

You now should understand why in physics we use numerical results to support conclusions. Behind this statement of the text there is a connotation that, "since physicists use numerical results" their knowledge is true, authoritative and objective. The use of numbers *does* provide a certain level of objectivity, because, again, everyone can agree on a way to measure things and then measure things for themselves (there are 5 apples there, not 4). If by "objective" we mean "anyone can look at this and see that it is the case, without disagreement based on the qualities of the individual doing the looking," then this connotation is correct. Though, it is important to recognize that in the case of physics, its practitioners are *agreeing to look at nature in terms of numerical measurement.* Within that context, it can be objective (if everyone is honest about their measurements).[3]

If by "objective" we mean "reality the way that is really is," then this is objectivity is only known to Allah. And this is why the Prophet ﷺ made dua, "O Allah show me reality as it really is, and give me the ability to follow it." Objective knowledge of reality requires seeing with what Allah has given us to see with (revelation, reason and senses), and submitting to Him.

[3] Outside of that context it is not. As Muslims we honor the human project of coming together and agreeing to see things a certain way, if that way is not in contradiction to what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ have brought. Whether the perspective modern science and physics provides is in accordance with what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ have brought is a subject of much discussion in Muslim intellectual circles today. The correct view according to us is that, if freed of language that hides the truth, it conveys only a partial truth. Considering a partial truth to be the whole truth means we are guilty of "Do you believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in (other) parts?" (Quran, 2:85). Thus, understanding the world from a purely modern scientific lens without seeing the "Whole Language" picture of nature is clear error, and this is why it harms our faith to do so.

Seeing the Unseen

Why Inara?

As Muslim educators, we all share a concern that science—and every subject—be taught from "an Islamic worldview." At Inara, we believe Muslims already have a sound worldview: every Muslim affirms Allah, His Messenger, the angels, His books, the Day of Judgment and Allah's decree. What we are feeling the absence of is something we call a "mental habit."

Muslim science teachers (and students) have iman, yet science education as it currently stands tends to cultivate a mental habit of viewing the seen world as a closed system—one that seems to leave "no real need" for the unseen or for meaning. In this setting, any "Islamic reflection" risks feeling like a sprinkling on top of an otherwise self-contained body of information.

This intensive equips participants to break that pattern. It helps them begin to form a Qur'anic mental habit—so that they and their students begin to see science not as a closed system, but as signs reflecting the unseen, and ultimately connecting us to Allah. Best of all, it does this using the clarity and simplicity of the Quranic language—without complex, philosophical terms.

Inara aims to build a bridge. It relies on the same rigorous foundations referenced by scholars, translating them into an intuitive, experience-based language that any Muslim teacher who knows their religious basics can understand.

In fact, Inara was initially developed for an eleven-year-old.

The Inara Foundations Intensive

The Foundations Intensive can also serve as a professional development course for Islamic school educators, since before a teacher can teach students to see the world differently, they themselves must do so.

Unit	Title	Core Focus	Select Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
Intro	What is a Mental Habit?	Mental Habit vs. Worldview	✅ Define the difference between a worldview and a mental habit ✅ Explain how current science pedagogy shapes mental habits ✅ Differentiate between horizontal, direct vertical, and indirect vertical mental habits ✅ State the goal of the Inara Foundations Intensive
1	The Spectrum of Creation	Knowledge between seen and unseen	✅ Construct a unified framework for "religious" and "scientific" subjects by plotting knowledge on a seen–unseen spectrum ✅ Identify the different modes of direct perception of truth ✅ Explain how these modes change along the spectrum ✅ Analyze the role of trust/report in both scientific and religious knowledge
2	The Human Being: Intellect, Heart, and Layers of the Self	The tools of knowledge; Types of perception; Contingency.	✅ Differentiate the roles of *qalb*, *ʿaql*, *nafs*, *khayal* and *ḥiss* in learning ✅ Explain how scientific reasoning entails belief in a Creator ✅ Justify why true learning must address the heart as well as the mind ✅For ELA teachers: explain why having an accurate map of the human being is foundational for literary analysis ✅For ELA teachers: apply the map and develop initial exploratory concepts for a new approach to literary analysis
3	Layers of Creation and the Meaning of Āyāt	The unseen structure of the cosmos & how nature reflects it	✅ Describe creation as existing in layers ✅ Explain the shared role of meaning in language, mind, and creation ✅ Apply the principles of **Start with What You See (SWYS)** to interpret scientific content ✅ Use the **Simple Meaning Language (SML) method*** to uncover unseen meanings in scientific facts

*Rooted in a luminous insight found in Imām al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, the Inara "SML method" uncovers unseen meanings behind the ayahs/signs of Allah in nature.

A New Way of Seeing

The above SLO's convene on a single goal: to show us how it is possible to develop a Quranic mental habit—of connecting the seen, to the unseen, to Allah—*through* their engagement with science.

Inara helps teachers and students see how the unseen, meaning and language are central to the study of science and nature. We do this by helping participants realize the implications of what they already believe—with help from our intellectual and spiritual tradition. [1]

The culmination of the course is in Learning the SML method—but even this is just the beginning. Inara invites educators to collaborate in shaping a future where science is reimagined as an exploration of meaning—meaning that connects even the most abstract of scientific facts back to Allah in a coherent and compelling manner.

Who Is This For?

- Muslim Science Teachers seeking to teach biology, chemistry, or physics from a Quranic lens.
- Curriculum Developers & School Leaders ready to rebuild a unified Islamic educational philosophy.
- Any Teacher (of any subject) who senses a disconnect between their belief in their hearts and the way they have been educated to think.
- Any Muslim who experiences the same as the above.

Format

- The Inara Foundations is an intensive. It was originally designed as a semester long course taught two hours a week. We have **condensed it** to: eight, 3-hour, in-person sessions, delivered in one of two models:
    1. Across two weekends (Friday evening, Sat/Sun)
    2. Over one full week (weekday evenings plus weekend).

    See sample schedules below.

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[1] At Inara, we avoid philosophical jargon. For those philosophically inclined, however: the course guides participants to establish a universal epistemology by helping them apply Imam al-Nasafī's framework to both scientific and religious knowledge in a creative and engaging way. It operationalizes Qur'anic teachings about the heart as a faculty of perception, explored alongside a layered understanding the roles of the intellect, as well as other faculties. It introduces a layered Qur'anic cosmology and shows how these foundations illuminate scientific facts—especially through a deep exploration of the word *āyah*. Qur'anic interpretive principles are applied to natural phenomena in a way that guards against ontological reductionism. Imam al-Ghazali's method, present in his *Mishkat al-Anwar,* of searching for correspondences, via language, between the layers of creation is systematically deployed for a rational, revelatory-bounded method of approaching the unseen meanings behind scientific content. Importantly, none of this requires philosophy—only Qur'an, hadith, scholarly synthesis and guided conversation.

Model 1: Two-Weekend Intensive (Fri–Sun | Sat—Sun)

Day	Session	Time Breakdown	Topics
Weekend One			
Friday	1	6:00 – 7:15 pm (75 min) 7:15 – 7:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 7:35 – 8:50 pm (75 min)	Intro: What is a Mental Habit? The Spectrum of Creation 1
Saturday	2	8:00 – 9:15 am (75 min) 9:15 – 9:35 am (Break, 20 min) 9:35 – 10:50 am (75 min)	The Spectrum of Creation 2 Spectrum 3 | Heart-Perception
	Lunch Break	11:00 – 12:00 pm (60 min)	
	3	1:00 – 2:15 pm (75 min) 2:15 – 2:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 2:35 – 3:50 pm (75 min)	Intellect-Perception 1 Intellect-Perception 2 | The Raji'un Model of the Human Being
Sunday	4	8:00 – 9:15 am (75 min) 9:15 – 9:35 am (Break, 20 min) 9:35 – 10:50 am (75 min)	The Layers of Creation 1 The Layers of Creation 2
	Lunch Break	11:00 – 12:00 pm (60 min)	
	5	1:00 – 2:15 pm (75 min) 2:15 – 2:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 2:35 – 3:50 pm (75 min)	Created-Ayah Tafsir Principle: Start with What You See Created-Ayah Tafsir Principle: Every Sign in its Place
Weekend Two			
Saturday	6	8:00 – 9:15 am (75 min) 9:15 – 9:35 am (Break, 20 min) 9:35 – 10:50 am (75 min)	The Layers of Creation 3 (Shooting Stars/Time) The SML Method (The Meaning of $E=mc^2$)
	Lunch Break	11:00 – 12:00 pm (60 min)	
	7	1:00 – 2:15 pm (75 min) 2:15 – 2:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 2:35 – 3:50 pm (75 min)	Language, Meaning & Science The SML Method (The Meaning of Gravity)
Sunday	8	8:00 – 9:15 am (75 min) 9:15 – 9:35 am (Break, 20 min) 9:35 – 10:50 am (75 min)	The SML Method (The Meaning of the Dead Sea Transform) The SML Method ("Noble" Gases & Introduction to Cross-Cutting Meanings)

Model 2: Weekday Evenings + Weekend

Day	Session	Time Breakdown	Topics
Monday	1	6:00 – 7:15 pm (75 min) 7:15 – 7:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 7:35 – 8:50 pm (75 min)	Intro: What is a Mental Habit? The Spectrum of Creation 1
Tuesday	2	6:00 – 7:15 pm (75 min) 7:15 – 7:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 7:35 – 8:50 pm (75 min)	The Spectrum of Creation 2 Spectrum 3 | Heart-Perception
Wednesday	3	6:00 – 7:15 pm (75 min) 7:15 – 7:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 7:35 – 8:50 pm (75 min)	Intellect-Perception 1 Intellect-Perception 2 | The Raji'un Model of the Human Being
Thursday	4	6:00 – 7:15 pm (75 min) 7:15 – 7:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 7:35 – 8:50 pm (75 min)	The Layers of Creation 1 The Layers of Creation 2
Friday	5	6:00 – 7:15 pm (75 min) 7:15 – 7:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 7:35 – 8:50 pm (75 min)	Created-Ayah Tafsir Principle: Start with What You See Created-Ayah Tafsir Principle: Every Sign in its Place
Saturday	6	8:00 – 9:15 am (75 min) 9:15 – 9:35 am (Break, 20 min) 9:35 – 10:50 am (75 min)	The Layers of Creation 3 (Shooting Stars/Time) The SML Method (The Meaning of $E=mc^2$)
	Lunch	11:00 – 12:00 pm (60 min)	
	7	1:00 – 2:15 pm (75 min) 2:15 – 2:35 pm (Break, 20 min) 2:35 – 3:50 pm (75 min)	Language, Meaning & Science The SML Method (The Meaning of Gravity)
Sunday	8	8:00 – 9:15 am (75 min) 9:15 – 9:35 am (Break, 20 min) 9:35 – 10:50 am (75 min)	The SML Method (The Meaning of the Dead Sea Transform) The SML Method ("Noble" Gases & Introduction to Cross-Cutting Meanings)

High School Students & Schedule Restrictions

For High Schoolers we reduce some of the content and offer the intensive in **five** (**not eight**), **3-hour sessions across a single weekend, or M-F in the evenings.** We can offer the same for adults if neither of the above two intensive options work, though it is (of course) more intensive.

Fees

Course Fees $375 per participant. Includes a 160+ page text with online supplementary material. However, we do not want fees get in the way of this work, which is of utmost importance. The fees mostly cover cost, with some extra to help Inara grow. We are happy to discuss fees further with admin if this cost is restrictive. Again, the work is more important than any other consideration.

Universal Principles

Our goal is to help your teachers learn a Quranically grounded, meaning-centered science pedagogy.

However, we have had the blessing of teaching the Inara Foundations Intensive to Darul Ulum students, college students, high schoolers and parents, including people who work across a variety of fields—not just science. While our focus is science, the foundational principles taught here are universal and can ultimately be applied to any subject area. We pray that in the future we will be able to offer focused courses for each subject, helping students, teachers and parents apply the principles learned in this intensive so that they might see the meanings of the signs in nature, literature, history or mathematics—reconnecting modern knowledge with a new—yet ancient—perspective.

We ask Allah for His aid.

If you are interested in scheduling an Inara Foundations Intensive, please get in touch: saleem@inaraeducation.org.