

THE ART OF TARANNUM



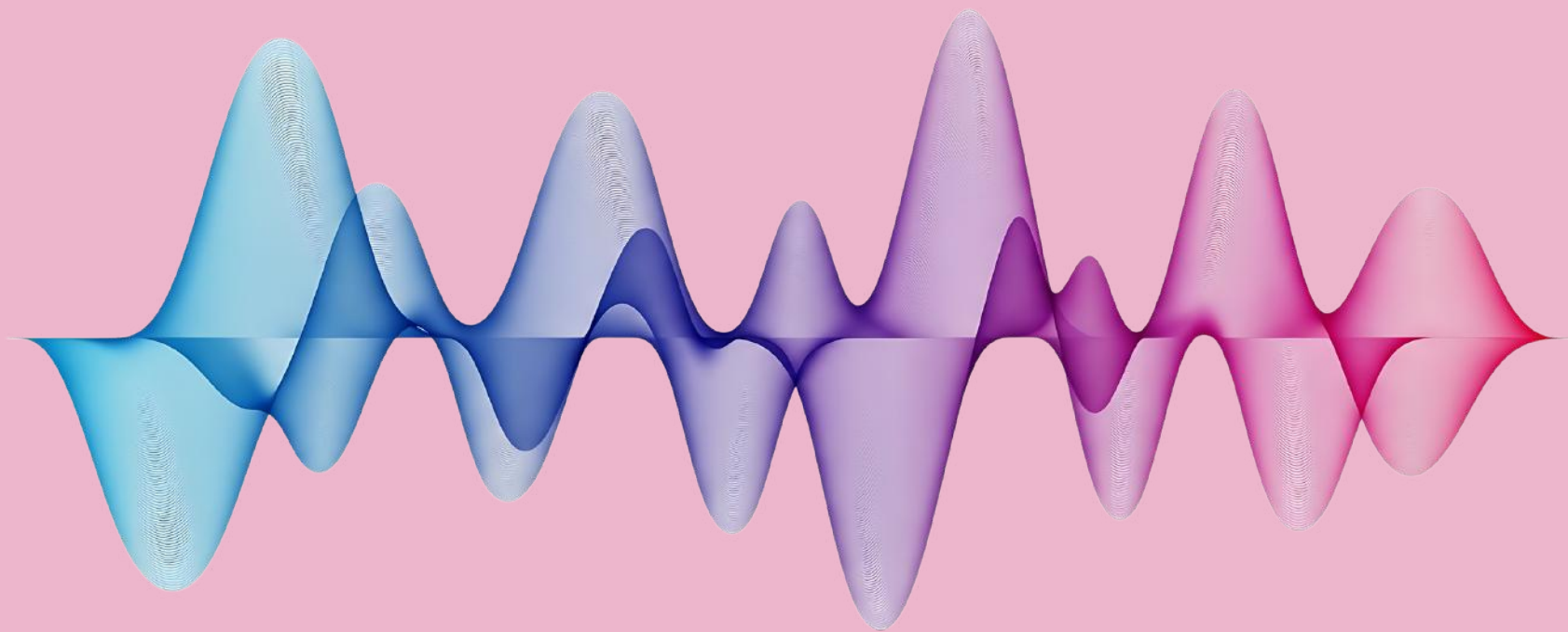
How to Deepen our Connection
to the Quran Through Melodic Recitation

with Ustazah Atiqah Suhaimi



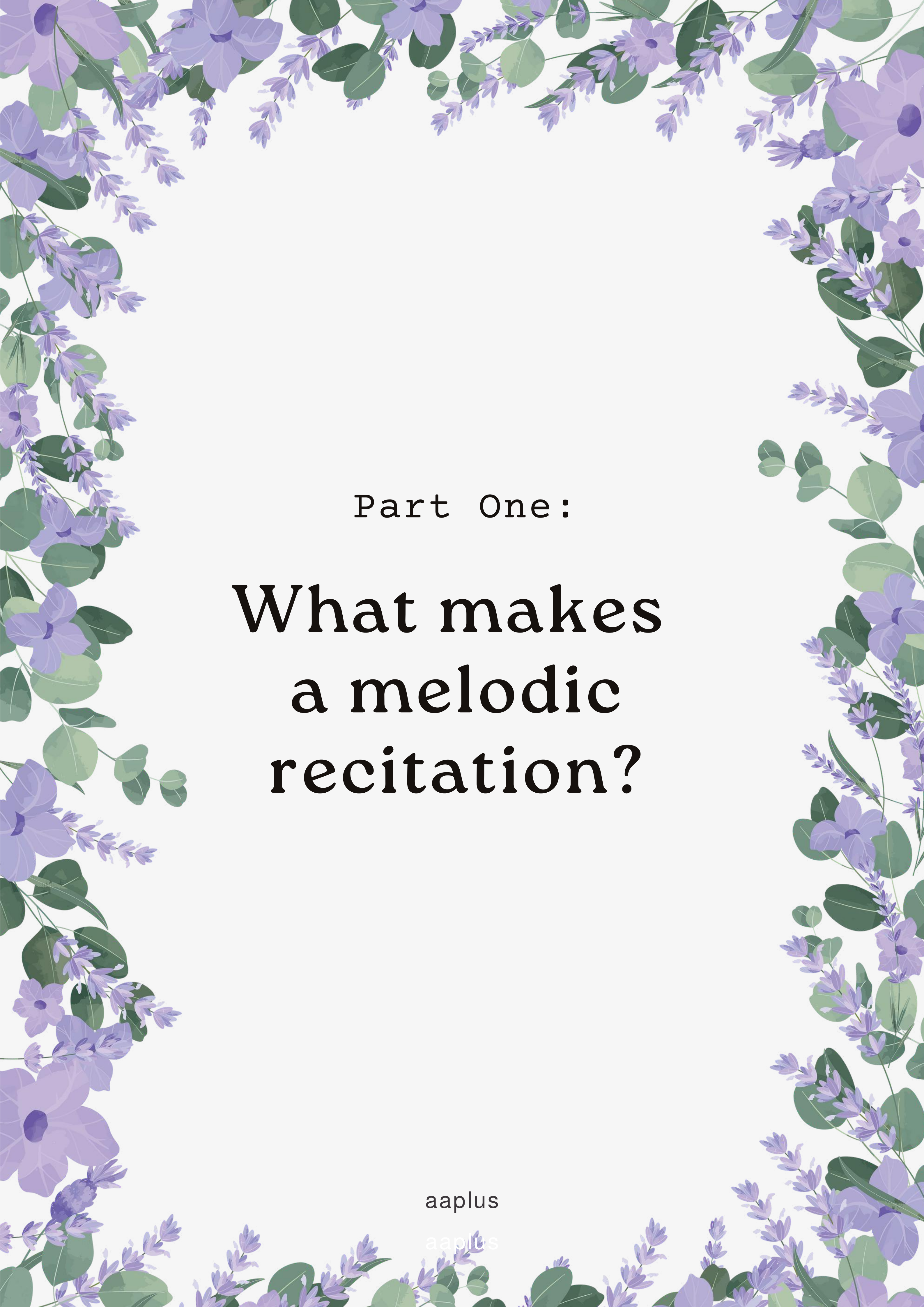
Quranic recitation is
a *sound-centred*
journey, and how
sound becomes
meaning, and
meaning becomes
reflection, and the
act of reciting
becomes a *deeply*
enriching experience.

Layers of Sound in the Quran



When we listen to the Qur'an,
we perceive multiple layers of sound.

When listening to a Quran recitation at
the beginning of the session, some
Champs expressed how uplifting and
joyful it feels, while others commented
on the Tajweed, and some connected to
the meaning of the verses.



Part One:

What makes a melodic recitation?

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The Sound of Arabic Language

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ
وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. (Al-Hujurat 49:13)

For example, the highlighted letters do not exist in some languages, like Malay. Hence, when we are learning to recite the Qur'an, we are essentially acquiring a new skill, particularly if we have not previously spoken Arabic before. We develop the ability to read and articulate Arabic phonetics.



Sound of Tajwid

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ
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In Tajwid , there is elongation (Madd) and the application of Ghunnah (nasal sound produced entirely from the nasal cavity), among other rulings, which we don't practice if we read a regular Arabic textbook. When reciting the Qur'an, these Tajwid rulings must be followed and applied, as they create the rhythm of Qur'an.



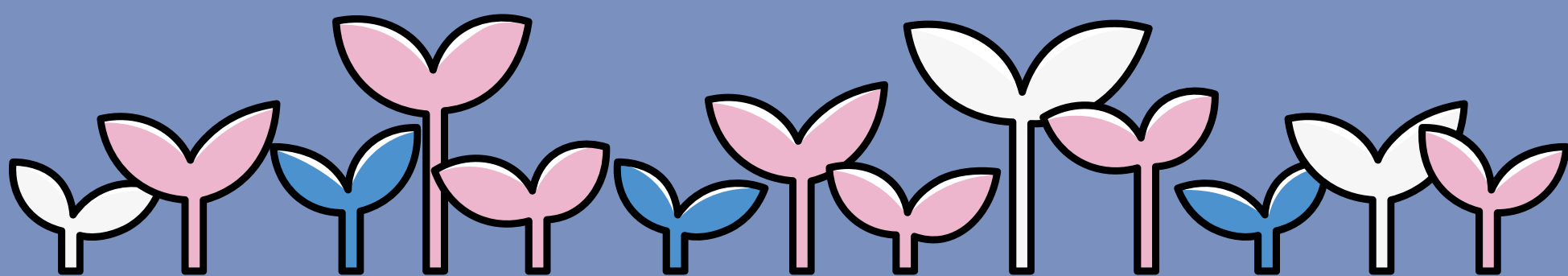
Sound Anchors

Sound anchors are parts in our recitation that we naturally emphasise, whether we realise it or not. Interestingly, anchors exist even in a very basic recitation.

If we listen to our recitation, we can identify specific words that we tend to elevate or lower in pitch, or a point in our reading where our voices hold a bit more weight.



*Sound of Arabic
Language
+
Sound of Tajwid
+
Sound Anchors
=
Natural Melody of
a person's Quran
recitation*



Melodic Recitation

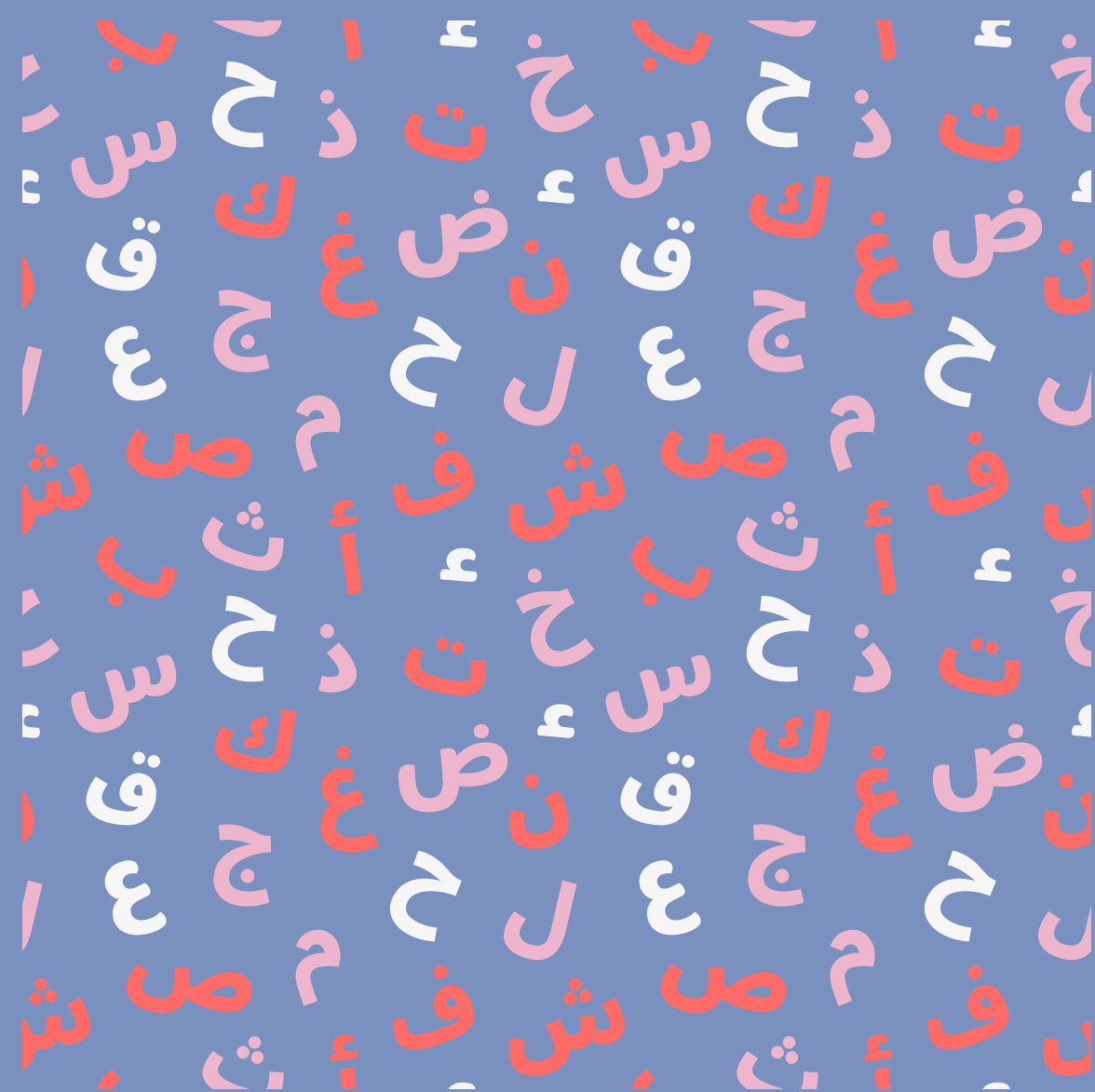
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O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes **so that you may 'get to' know one another.** (Al-Hujurat 49:13)

When we start becoming more aware of the sound anchors and intentionally utilise them, the practice of melody recitation emerges.

These anchors are intentionally placed by the reciter to express the meaning of the words.

Step #1:



To recite the Quran,
we must first learn
to enunciate the
Arabic letters well,
because the Quran
was revealed in the
Arabic Language.

Step #2:



Once we pronounce
the letters correctly,
we need to apply
Tajwid, the set of
rules that governs
how each sound
should be recited in
the Quran.

Step #3:

Once we've taken care of the Tajwid, it is time to look at the meaning of the verse.

From there, we ask ourselves:
“How can the sound and melody help to express the meaning?”

If you were the reciter, which word would you naturally want to emphasise for this Ayah?

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ

الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ

الْكَافِرُ يَلِيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرْبًا

Indeed, We have warned you of an imminent punishment—the Day every person will see ‘the consequences of’ what their hands have done, and the disbelievers will cry, “I wish I were dust.” (An-Naba 78:40)



Part Two:

The 8 Major Modes (Maqam)

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Each Maqam Has Its Own Emotional Voice

Maqamat are like melodic families,
each with its own tone, structure,
and emotional feel.

Each Maqam carries a **distinct emotional flavour**:

- Some sound gentle and comforting,
- Others sound intense and pleading,
- Some feel majestic.
- Others feels sad or reflective.

The 8 Major Modes (Maqamats) are:

A wooden easel with a sign listing the 8 major Maqamats. The sign is surrounded by decorative flowers, including a large pink flower on the left and several purple and pink flowers on the right.

Ajam
Nahawand
Hijaz
Kurd
Rast
Bayyati
Soba
Sikah



Ajam Mode

Maqam of **joyful and uplifting**. It expresses happiness, gratitude and closeness to Allah SWT.

Examples are verses about divine mercy and answered prayers:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ مُّجِيبٌ
دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

When My servants ask you 'O Prophet' about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one's prayer when they call upon Me. So let them respond 'with obedience' to Me and believe in Me, perhaps they will be guided 'to the Right Way'. (Al-Baqarah 2:186)



Nahawand Mode

Maqam of **melancholic and reflective**. It expresses sadness, longing and hope. Examples are verses about stories of struggles:

قَالَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا نَخَافُ أَنْ يَفْرُطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ يَطْغَىٰ

They both pleaded, “Our Lord! We fear that he may be quick to harm us or act tyrannically.” (Ta-Ha 20:45)

قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا ۖ إِنَّنِي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَىٰ

Allah reassured ‘them’, “Have no fear! I am with you, hearing and seeing. (Ta-Ha 20:46)



Hijaz Mode

Maqam of **intense and powerful**. It expresses urgency, reverence, warnings and divine power.

Examples are verses about reminders of Judgement Day:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا
قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ

O believers! Be mindful of Allah and let every soul look to what 'deeds' it has sent forth for tomorrow.¹ And fear Allah, 'for' certainly Allah is All-Aware of what you do. (Al-Hashr 59:18)



Kurd Mode

Maqam of **solemn and introspective**. It expresses regret, humility and grief. Examples are verses about lessons from mistakes:

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ
يُورِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ^ج قَالَ يَوَيْلَتَى أَعْجَزْتُ أَنْ
أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُورِيَ سَوْءَةَ أَخِي^ص
فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّدِمِينَ

Then Allah sent a crow digging 'a grave' in the ground 'for a dead crow', in order to show him how to bury the corpse of his brother. He cried, "Alas! Have I 'even' failed to be like this crow and bury the corpse of my brother?" So he became regretful. (Al-Hashr 5:31)



Rast Mode

Maqam of **majesty and triumph**. It expresses awe, grandeur and wonder. Examples are verses about the creation of the universe:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason.

(Ali 'Imran3:190)



الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ
جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

‘They are’ those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth ‘and pray’, “Our Lord! You have not created ‘all of’ this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire.

(Ali 'Imran3:191)



Bayyati Mode

Maqam of **warm and devotional**. It expresses peace, nostalgia and trust. Examples are verses about daily prayers or foundational verses:

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (٣) مَلِكُ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ
نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥) أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)

All praise is for Allah—Lord of all worlds, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. You 'alone' we worship and You 'alone' we ask for help. Guide us along the Straight Path, the Path of those You have blessed—not those You are displeased with, or those who are astray. (Al-Fatiha 1:1-7)



Soba Mode

Maqam of **deep sorrow**. It expresses grief, lamentation and yearning. Examples are verses about emotional supplications:

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

He replied, “I complain of my anguish and sorrow only to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know. (Yusuf 12:86)



Sikah Mode

Maqam of **mysterious and contemplative**. It expresses wonder, reflection and intimacy. Examples are verses about calls to reflect on creation:

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (١٧) وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ
كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ (١٨) وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ (١٩) وَإِلَى
الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ (٢٠) فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ (٢١)
لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (٢٢)

**Do they not ever reflect on camels—how they were
‘masterfully’ created; and the sky—how it was raised
‘high’; and the mountains—how they were firmly set up;
and the earth—how it was levelled out? So, ‘continue to’
remind ‘all, O Prophet’, for your duty is only to remind.**

You are not ‘there’ to compel them ‘to believe’.

(Al-Ghashiyah 88:17-22)



May our
intention to
beautify the
words of Allah
SWT earn us
His Pleasure!