

The Justice of GOD

العدل الالهي

Objectives >>>

Students should:

Lesson 1

- Review the meaning of Allah's Justice
- Discuss the question of 'did God create evil?'
- Discuss the reasons why there is 'evil' in the world

Lesson 2

- Further discuss why seemingly evil things occur

Lesson 3

- Be able to understand the reasons for tests
- Discuss patience and endurance in helping us react to tests in a positive way

Lesson 4

- Discuss trust in Allah and submission to Allah as ways of dealing with tests positively

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

INTRODUCTION

Reviewing the Pillars of Islam

These five beliefs are:

- There is one Unique God- in Arabic this is called *al-Tawhid*

التوحيد •

- God is Just- *Al-'Adl*

العدل •

- God sent us Prophets to guide us- *Nubuwwah*

النبوة •

- God sent us Imams to guide us, the Imams continue the message of the prophets- *Imamah*

الامامة •

- The Hereafter: after we die, we will be brought back to life and face the consequences of our actions – *al-Ma'ad*

المعاد •

In our previous lessons, we discussed the Unity of Allah and some of the attributes of Allah (SWT). In this lesson, we will discuss another important attribute, which is the Justice of Allah. As followers of the Ahlul Bayt, we believe that Allah (SWT) is Just. Justice is to give everyone and everything their due right. It is something whose goodness is innately clear to us. Therefore, Allah, who is Absolutely Just, also orders us to be just too, especially in the way we deal with people around us.

FACETS OF THE JUSTICE OF ALLAH (SWT)

As we discussed earlier, we believe that Allah (SWT) is absolutely Just. There are three major facets of His Justice:

- 1- **Justice in Creation:** We believe that Allah (SWT) has created every creature with its own attributes and strengths in order to fulfil its purpose in the world.
- 2- **Justice in legislation:** We believe that Allah is just in His laws. Allah (SWT) has created us and therefore knows us and our limits.
- 3- **Justice in reward and punishment:** Allah (SWT) is absolutely just when He punishes and rewards in this world and in the Hereafter.

REVISION

Before we begin this discussion let us quickly review some of the principles that we learnt in the previous years:

Q1. What is the meaning of 'Adl'?

A1. 'Adl' means justice. It means to give each one his right.

Q2. Where Allah (SWT) is concerned, what does 'Adl mean?

A2. We believe that Allah (SWT) is *Ādil*, i.e. He is Just and does not oppress His servants. If a servant has done something good then he will be rewarded. On the other hand, if he does evil and does not repent, he will be punished.

Q3. What is the opposite of 'Adl?

A3. Dhulm is the opposite of 'Adl.

Q4. What is the meaning of dhulm?

A4. Dhulm means to oppress someone, or to treat someone unjustly.

Q5. When does a person oppress?

A5. An oppressor oppresses for one of two main reasons:

- When he is weak and insecure about someone/something
- When he is ignorant about something.

Q6. Why does a person oppress out of insecurity and weakness?

A6. When a person feels weak and insecure, then he does injustice to avoid whatever makes him feel weak and insecure. For e.g., when Fir'aun learnt that a child from Bani Isra'il would one day kill him, he became very fearful. He ordered his men to kill all infants of Bani Isra'il. Here, Fir'aun oppressed others to protect his own life, about which he felt weak and insecure. Similarly, when Yazid feared for his government from Imam Ḥusain (as), he demanded his (as) allegiance (bay'at) and finally killed him.

Q7. Why does a person oppress out of ignorance?

A7. When a person is ignorant he does injustice, as his knowledge about the matter is incomplete. For example, once a caliph ordered a mad woman to be killed for a crime that she had committed. Just when the caliph's men were about to kill her, Imam 'Ali (as) interrupted them and ordered them to release her. He reminded the caliph that, under Islamic law, a mad person could not be punished for any crime. The caliph remembered this law, and released the woman.

Q8. Why can Allah (SWT) never be an oppressor?

A8. As explained in the previous two answers, fear and ignorance are the two main causes of oppression. But as we have studied in the chapter of Tawhīd, Allah (SWT) is All-Powerful and He is All-Knowing. Therefore, there is absolutely no reason for Allah (SWT) to oppress.

EVIL IS RELATIVE

IT IS NOTHING BUT THE ABSENCE OF GOOD

This philosophical premise is best explained by an incident that happened in a regular university class in a conversation between a student and his professor.



Figure 1: If you look closely, you would be able to read the word 'evil' and without good

An atheist professor of philosophy speaks to his class on the problem science has with God, The Almighty.

He asks one of his new students to stand and asks...

Prof: So you believe in God? **Student:** Absolutely, sir.

Prof: Is God good? **Student:** Sure.

Prof: Is God all-powerful? **Student:** Yes.

Prof: My brother died of cancer even though he prayed to God to heal him. Most of us would attempt to help others who are ill. But God didn't. How is this God good then? Hmm? (Student is silent.)

Prof: You can't answer, can you? Let's start again, young fellow. Is God good? **Student:** Yes.

Prof: Is Satan good? **Student:** No.

Prof: Where does Satan come from? **Student:** From...God...

Prof: That's right. Tell me son, is there evil in this world? **Student:** Yes.

Prof: Evil is everywhere, isn't it? And God did make everything. Correct? **Student:** Yes.

Prof: So who created evil? (Student does not answer).

Prof: Is there sickness? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All these terrible things exist in the world, don't they?

Student: Yes, sir.

Prof: So, who created them? (Student has no answer.)

Student: Professor, is there such a thing as heat? **Prof:** Yes.

Student: And is there such a thing as cold? **Prof:** Yes.

Student: No sir. There isn't.

Student: Sir, you can have lots of heat, even more heat, superheat, mega heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat. But we don't have anything called cold. We can hit 458 degrees below zero which is no heat, but we can't go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold.

Cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it.

Student: What about darkness, Professor? Is there such a thing as darkness?

Prof: Yes. What is night if there isn't darkness?

Student: You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light....But if you have no light constantly, you have nothing and it's called darkness, isn't it? In reality, darkness isn't. If it were you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?

Prof: So what is the point you are making, young man?

Student: Sir, my point is your argument is flawed.

Prof: Flawed? Can you explain how?

Student: Sir, you are working on the premise that good and evil both have real true existence. However, things that we call evil do not in fact exist; they are nothing but the absence of good in a certain situation. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life: just the absence of it.

From the above, we can conclude that evil does not have a real existence. The next question is why did God create a world in which good can be absent, leading to suffering and hardship, such as when a baby is born with a major disability, or when an innocent person suffers great oppression? In fact, why did God allow Satan to exist?

WHAT IS THE REALITY OF EVIL?

In order to fully understand and grasp this problem, it is important to understand what evil is and is not

1) Evil is a non being

We have discussed the fact the evil is a non-being in reality. It cannot exist by itself. Evil is the lack of something. A non-being cannot be created! But there are actions that are the cause of evil, like earthquakes, volcanoes, snakes etc. These things actually exist but are not evil in themselves. They may be considered evil in relation to other creatures.

2) Evil is relative

Natural disasters are only evil if they affect us. The cockroach is evil for some women, but is awesome to a scientist! Similarly, volcanoes are spectacular to watch, if we are safe and sound but 'evil' if the fire is falling on us!ⁱ Something cannot be evil for itself, for the earth, the earthquake is not evilⁱⁱ.

3) Evil disappears in bird's eye view

When looked at broadly, the universe is huge, containing millions of creatures, each moving towards its own perfection. The universe as a whole is also moving towards its perfection. If we ever had the ability to see this reality, we would see nothing but beauty. However, sometimes as different creatures move towards their perfection, their journeys collide, and this collision leads to something that seems evil or detestable. Looking at it from our viewpoint, we only see an unsightly collision, but looking at it from above we see an encompassing beauty as both the whole and each part moves towards its beautiful perfection.



Figure 2: The unquestionable beauty of our galaxy, the Milky-way

Once all the pieces are fitted together, each piece makes its indispensable contribution to its beauty! Imam 'Ali (as) says:

*"Behold! This world could not be established unless in the way that God has made it with all its **blessings and calamities** and rewards in hereafter, and whatever He may wish, that you do not know. Thus, should any part of it confuse you blame only your ignorance."ⁱⁱⁱ* Therefore, for instance, if there was no death, there would be no life^{iv}. If there was no evil whatsoever, we would not be able to grow and develop^v. We only appreciate a blessing from the Almighty when we are deprived of it.

4) Evil – a platform to perfection

We have discussed in previous lessons that the reason for our creation is that we attain perfection. It is not for apparent material pleasure! Those things that appear to be evil are actually blessings (hidden blessings). Allah (SWT) says in the Qurān:

TO MEMORISE:

وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا
وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know” (2:216)

The point is further stressed when Allah (SWT) says: “Surely with difficulty is ease. With difficulty is surely ease” (94: 5-6).

Allah (SWT) in this verse is stating a fact and hence has even repeated it for emphasis!

We can understand this concept better through an incident:

There was once a king who put his subjects through a test. He went out onto the main road of his kingdom and he had a large stone placed in the middle, thereby making the road difficult to cross. After having placed the large stone he hid himself nearby to watch the reaction of the people.

He saw the dignitaries of his court and the wealthy cross by, and as they did so they managed it only with great

difficulty. While they did so, they cursed the rock and said to each other, why doesn't the King move this rock? All of the wealthy aristocrats went along in the same manner, cursing the rock and wondering in amazement at the incompetence of the King to have placed such an obstacle in their path, because it only brought them hardship.

Then along came a poor old man carrying a heavy load on his back, and the King watched him intently. The old man stopped in his tracks and looked at how the stone was blocking the road. He put down his load and began, with great difficulty and tremendous effort, to move the stone off of the road. Using all his strength and ability he finally accomplished his task. When he went back to the road and looked at the spot where the stone had been, he saw a bag, picked it up, opened it, and found it to be full of jewels and a note from the King indicating that the jewels was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway.

The old man learned what many others never understand. He placed his load on his back along with his new treasure and went on his way. This story illustrates a fact of life, that there is no ease or success or progress or elevation without some sacrifice and hardship along the way. But once the end is reached that hardship would no longer be seen as unbearable.

Similarly, there have been many people in history who have struggled very hard and had very difficult lives but at some point Allah (SWT) granted them respite and in fact made them kings!

The best example is the story of Prophet Yusuf (as). He suffered rejection from his brothers, being sold as a slave, being imprisoned, being accused etc. In the end, though, Allah (SWT), the Wise, granted him position, prestige and grandeur! This ease will definitely come in the Hereafter, but many times it comes in this world too.

Review Questions

1. Give 2 explanations as to why evil in itself does not exist

Lesson 2: More on Evil

In our previous lesson we discussed evil and saw that it in fact does not really exist. We also discussed why apparently 'evil' things happen. Let us look at some more reasons for this.

WHY DOES EVIL HAPPEN?

Although we have partially discussed the reason for 'evil', we shall discuss the other reasons for the absence of good from the perspective of the Qur'an and narrations.

1) Evils are trials to elevate ourselves and purify ourselves. Allah (SWT) says:

“and We shall trial of you with evil and with good as a test, and to Us you will be returned.” (21:35).

Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

“Indeed a believer will be examined by calamities, as gold will be examined by fire.”

These things that seem evil to us are often tests so that we may better ourselves.



Figure 3: Just like gold is purified by fire, we are purified by difficulties and things that seem evil

2) Evils are a form of partial retribution (punishment) for the sins we may have committed. It is far better to pay off the sins in this world than pay for them in the Hereafter!^{vi} Allah, the Almighty, says in the Qur'an:

TO MEMORISE

وَلَنذِيقَنَّهِنَّ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَذْيِ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“And most certainly We will make them taste of the nearer chastisement before the greater chastisement that they may turn.” (32: 21)

This means that the punishment in this world is to give us an opportunity to turn back to lives of obedience to the Almighty.

3) We see situations as evil due to our ignorance: Allah (SWT), in the story of Moses and Khidhr demonstrated to us what we perceive to evil due to our ignorance may in fact be very good! (Surah al-Kahf 18:65-82). Whenever things around us do not make sense, Allah (SWT) teaches us to have patience and the secrets behind the difficulties will automatically reveal themselves.

4) Evils are a natural reaction to our actions. We often are the creators of the 'evil' either unknowingly, or deliberately^{vii}

“Evil has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned, then He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return.” [Surah Rūm 30:41].

Therefore oppression, war, famine and disease are often not a creation of God, but a consequence of people's actions. Still, God forgives most of our mistakes and does not punish us for them, but the above 'evils' are a consequence of our worst mistakes.

5) Evils will be compensated for and the judgement for people who have suffered a 'relative' evil will be different as discussed earlier. Imam Ṣādiq (as) has said:

“Then there is so much reward for those who became the victim of some calamities after their death- given they had been patient- that had after their death they been given the opportunity to return to this world to experience those calamities, they would have chosen to return to gain more reward.” And in another place he said “Indeed, when a believer is affected by fever, his/her sins drop like the leaves of a tree. Then if he/she moans in bed, his/her moaning is glorification of God and his/her cry is declaring the Unity of God.”^{viii}

6) A secret sign of divine love: When Allah (SWT) loves someone, He purifies him by giving him difficulties in order to bring that one He loves closer to Himself by helping him ascend the ladder of perfection through tests and trials.

THEN WHY DO SOME BAD PEOPLE HAVE SO MANY BLESSINGS?

There are two major reasons for this:

1) Those who were heedless of the hardships they went through and made no change to their evil ways. Many times Allah (SWT) then grants His apparent material blessings to these ungrateful people such that they become so arrogant and go further and further from God. This is called gradual seizure (*al-istidrāʿ*)

2) Similarly, He grants them reprieve due to his infinite Mercy and postpones punishment for them as the punishment of the Hereafter is far more severe than the punishment in this world. Sayyida Zaynab (as), quoted the verse of the Qurān from surah Ale-Imrān verse 178, in the court of Yazīd (la) when he mocked her. Allah (SWT) says:

“And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement.”

WHY ETERNITY IN HELL?^{ix}

We have discussed the concept of evil and why it happens. One other question that arises is that why does God punish someone for eternity in hell when he only disbelieved at most 100 or so years his life here on earth? How is that fair. There are two answers to this question:

1) This question is like asking why a man has to suffer as a quadriplegic, unable to use his arms and legs for the rest of his life, when he was only speeding in his car for a couple of minutes. The reality of the action that he committed was that he has to suffer that punishment. Similarly, the reality of the action determines the punishment and its length!

2) Some people are such that their 'evil' behaviour becomes their character or nature (*al-khulq*) such that even if they were given a chance to come back to the earth after the reality was exposed to them, they would still continue their disbelief, or if they had lived in this world forever, they would have been sinful forever.

Review Questions

Task 1: Using any resources you may have at your disposal including the Qurān, outline the story of Khidr and Prophet Musa (as). Use the Qurān as your primary reference.

Task 2: Give three reasons why some people may suffer more than others in this world.

Lesson 3: The Furnace of Trials Part I

So far, we have discussed that ‘evil’ is relative and not really an existing thing. We have also discussed why there are hardships and difficulties in life. In the next two lessons, we will apply what we have learnt to see how we should deal with these hardships.

WHAT IF THERE WERE NO TESTS?

Before, we enter our main discussion; let us take a quick look at what the world might be like without tests and trials. Describing such a situation, Imam Ṣādiq (as) says^x:

“Man’s conceit and selfishness would have led him to the conduct which would not have been in consonance with religion or his religious life. Just as you find persons nurtured in luxury and comfort who mostly forget their manhood and their state of having been brought up by somebody. They forget that they can receive some injury or sorrow or that some calamity may befall them. They even forget whether they have to sympathise with some weak person or to pity some needy person. They are not amenable to feeling sorrow at another person's trouble or feeling compassion for the weak or showing kindness towards troubled souls.”

In short, the ‘humanity’ from a human disappears, making him or her more like a heartless monster, a phenomenon repeated in history from the Pharaohs of Egypt- who thought they were gods- to countries who believe they are ‘invincible’. Surely, even if we have not experienced, we may have heard of or seen this, be it at school or elsewhere, where the rich, smart or strong person becomes arrogant and only become humble once they are tested.

REACTIONS TO DIFFICULTIES

NEGATIVE REACTIONS:

Whenever a person is faced with any person, there are a number of reactions that a person may have toward such this difficulty. Often, the lower the level of knowledge, faith and understanding the more negative a person’s reaction is^{xi} (figure 4).

In the infinite Wisdom and Mercy of Allah (SWT), He has advised that if we want to live healthy and happy lives, we have to try our best to avoid the negative reactions to difficulties as these are sins which lead to greater and greater sins, eventually leading to suicide!

On the other side, Allah, the Compassionate, has made it such that not only do we have the capacity to remove the negative reactions to difficulties, but also to surpass them and in fact use them as a stepping stone to reach our perfection and be rewarded handsomely in this world and the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qurān:

TO MEMORISE:

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ
رَاجِعُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

(Those) Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of

Imam Ali (as) has also said:

“Verily if you are patient, the trials of destiny will befall you and you will be rewarded for them, whilst if you are anxious, not only will the trials of destiny still befall you, but you will be sinful^{xii}”

POSITIVE REACTIONS:

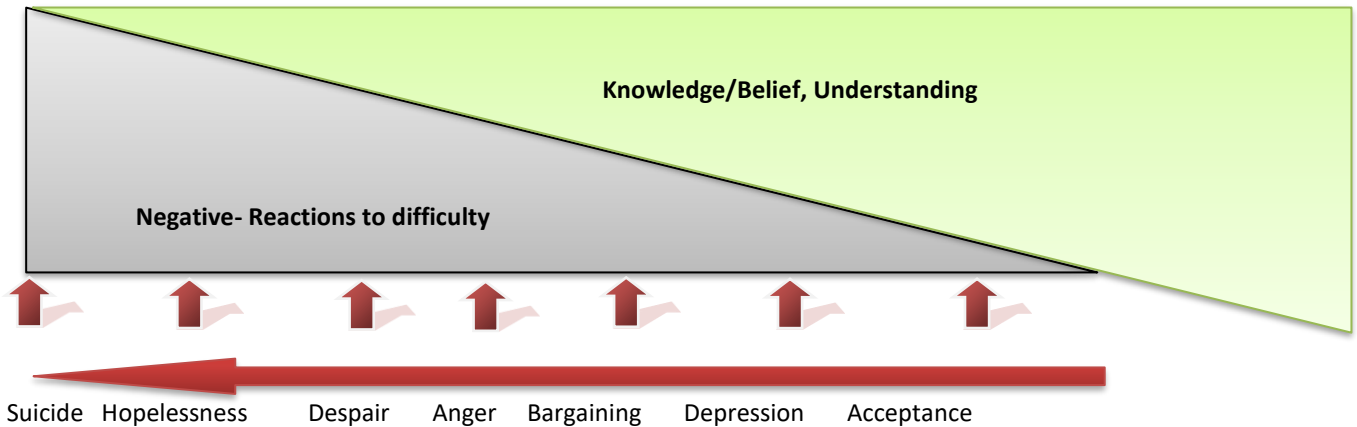
As much as there are different levels of negative reactions, there are different levels of positive reactions to difficulties and as the knowledge, faith and understanding of the human being increases, the easier it becomes to face these tests and grow because of them. The highest forms of these reactions were practiced by our Imams and Prophets, and their examples still shine.

TACKLING DIFFICULTY THROUGH PATIENCE

Although the details of patience are discussed elsewhere, we will briefly review it here. Patience in the Qurān and hadith is defined as the resistance shown by man on the road towards perfection, against mischief, corruption and degradation^{xiii}.

after the young children who are traumatised, as well as the mothers, sisters and daughters who had lost loved ones and who were now being tortured.

Figure 4 The more negative our reaction to difficulty, the less knowledge and faith we possess.



Take the example of a mountain climber who is trying to reach the top of a mountain. He has to overcome numerous internal (will power, fear, despair etc...) and external (gravity, rocks, thorns, animals etc.) obstacles to reach his goal. Having the resistance to overcome these obstacles is called patience. We will discuss three means of achieving patience in the face of difficulty.

1 - ENDURANCE

It is clear that in order to reach perfection, one must overcome barriers; some of these are external, such as difficulties or situations beyond one's control (losing a loved one, being involved in an accident) whilst others are internal (losing hope, determination or will). Patience against calamities means not to surrender to these obstacles but to persevere with courage, endurance, enthusiasm, and high morale which begins with a strong belief that Allah (SWT) will never forsake us. Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

"The origin of patience is to have strong conviction in Allah (SWT)"^{xiv}

One needs only to look at the example of Zaynab (as), the sister of Imam Husain (as). Having seen so much tragedy in her life, she finally comes to Karbala where she experienced the most horrible ordeal. After the day of 'Ashura, she was taken captive along with Imam Sajjad (as), from city to city in a caravan. Zaynab (as) had to look

Yet at night, when Imam Sajjad (as) walked into the tent of his aunt, he found her sitting on the floor, offering the Night Prayers (*Salatul layl*), and offering thanks to Allah (swt). When she saw him, she said: "I always stand to offer my night prayers, but tonight I am unable". What great patience and endurance such that having gone through all of this, she will not even miss her night prayers and will simply say: "O Allah, accept this sacrifice from us". These are the shining examples we have to strive to emulate in our lives!

2 – REMEMBERING THOSE WITH GREATER DIFFICULTIES

Khabbab bin Al-Arth was a very high ranking official who accepted the invitation to Islam by the Holy Prophet (saw) and due to this, lost a large proportion of his wealth. He went to complain about this loss to the Prophet (saw). The Prophet was reclined against the Ka'ba with his robe on the ground. As soon as Khabbab complained, the Holy Prophets' composure changed, he sat up and said "your predecessors (earlier Muslims) sometimes were slaughtered by an iron saw cutting their skin, veins and flesh to the bone, but they remained committed to their faith, and never complained, even when in some cases they were cut into two pieces!" This fiery speech instilled in Khabbab the spirit of resistance and an iron will^{xv}.

Additionally, comparing his situation with others who were much worse off and have had the patience to continue made his calamities and difficulties seem small and insignificant, we can use a similar technique to gain patience.

3- CONVERTING DIFFICULTY INTO COMFORT AND EASE

In the story of prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (as), the wife of the chief would not accept that prophet Yusuf would not incline towards her and so she imprisoned him for disobeying her. Prophet Yusuf replied:

“My Lord! the prison house is dearer to me than that to which they invite me; and if You turn not away their (evil)plots from me, I will yearn towards them and become (one) of the ignorant.”(12:33).

Regarding this incident, Abu Başir quotes from Imam Ja'far Şadiq (as):

"A free person is free in all situations, if a terrible tragedy befalls him he is patient, and tragedies and inflictions cannot break him. He might be arrested, chained and tyrannized but converts hardships into comfort like Prophet Joseph the righteous, whose freedom was the least affected by oppression, tyranny and imprisonment".^{xvi}

Clearly, it is our perception of an incident that makes it bearable or unbearable, not always the incident itself!

Review Questions

1. **Ponder over some of the difficulties you have faced in your life, and try to see how much good has emerged from them and how they have shaped you as a person. If there are examples you are willing to share, bring them with you to class next week.**
2. **Find 5 other benefits of tests and hardships of life. Write them in your book and give them to your teacher. Use your own mind and intuition to figure these out. Hint: remember the hadith that states a believer is tested as gold is burned.**

Lesson 4 The Furnace of Trials Part 2

In our last lesson, we discussed that one of the major ways of dealing with tests was to show patience. In this lesson, we will discuss another two major ways of dealing with tests: submission to Allah (SWT) and trust in Allah (SWT).

SUBMISSION IN THE FACE OF TESTS

The Holy prophet (saw) has said “*patience is satisfaction (with Allah’s decree)*”^{xvii} which brings us to the second positive reaction to facing difficulty.

One of the most exemplary definitions of this submission as a result of patience was demonstrated on the plains of Karbala by Imam H̄usain (as) and his companions. Before his martyrdom, Imam H̄usain (as) prostrated before his Lord, and said

“My Lord, You are my witness that I have fulfilled my mission in life without hesitation, without shying away, without faltering, without complaining. My Lord, and the Lord of the universe, I submit unreservedly to Your decree and resign myself to Your dispensation”



Figure 5 An illustrative depiction of Imam Hussein in Karbala

This was a clear message to all that there are some difficulties and calamities that are beyond the control of a person. We have to strive as hard to overcome them but we reach a point where we have to accept what is beyond our control and move on.

Similarly, Sayyida Faṭīma Zahrā (as), throughout her difficult life, was delighted with whatever Allah, the Almighty ordained for her. During the difficult stages of her life, Faṭīma (as) was content with the fear, oppression,

deprivation, poverty, sorrows and pains, which Allah (SWT) tested her with.

Therefore, she was worthy of being included with those mentioned in the verse:

"To the righteous soul will be said: O (you) soul, In (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back to thy Lord.–well pleased (yourself) and well pleasing unto Him!" (89: 27-28).

This was because she was satisfied with Allah's rewards and grants to her, and was satisfied with Allah's will in this world, such that Allah (SWT) was well pleased with her.^{xviii}

TRUST IN ALLAH (SWT)

The core of submission has to be the realisation that we have to TRUST Allah (SWT), the Almighty, in all our affairs, especially those which are beyond our control. Having believed in the Existence and Might of Allah(SWT) we have to now rely on Allah(SWT), meaning "referring all affairs to the owner of these affairs and trusting Him"^{xix} The Holy Prophet (saw) asked the angel Gabriel what trust in Allah(SWT) meant, to which Gabriel replied,

"The truth behind the principle of trust and reliance on Allah is that man should know that: the creature can neither cause benefit nor harm, neither gives nor withholds. When you do not rely on people, but rather rely on Allah, you will fear nobody, you trust in nobody but him."^{xx}

TO MEMORISE

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۖ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيْلًا

"...and put your trust in Allah. And Allah is Ever All-Sufficient as a Disposer of affairs." (4:81)

Once you have full trust in Allah (SWT), you have to be certain that Allah (SWT):

- 1- Will not give you a burden you cannot carry
- 2- Will never forsake you
- 3- You will get what is best for you
- 4- You will get what you need at a time when you need it most and when it is the right time for you to receive it^{xxi}. Allah (SWT) tests people until their patience is about to end, at which time his relief arrives, saving that person from the furnace of that trial.

THE RESULTS OF HAVING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS TESTS

Understanding tests and reacting to them in the appropriate way not only has benefits in this world, but has far reaching benefits in the Hereafter as well. One of the fundamental benefits of tests is that it builds character and personality.

The Holy Qurān says that unpleasant events and accidents in life are the danger signs for man. It is said that if the road is smooth and straight, the driver falls asleep. Difficulties not only help to build up man's personality but the experience of the past difficulties also does the same.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qurān to His holy prophet:

"Did He not find you as an orphan and take care of you? Did He not find you perplexed and show you the way? And did He not find you in need and enrich you? So do not oppress the orphans, and do not drive the beggars away, and proclaim the bounties of your Lord."
(93:6)

Allah (SWT) considers it good to revive the memory of past difficulties and hardships.

ADVANTAGES OF BELIEVING IN THE JUSTICE OF ALLAH (SWT)

There are many advantages in believing in the pure justice of Allah (SWT) and we have discussed some of these in previous years, here we will discuss a few more and talk about them:

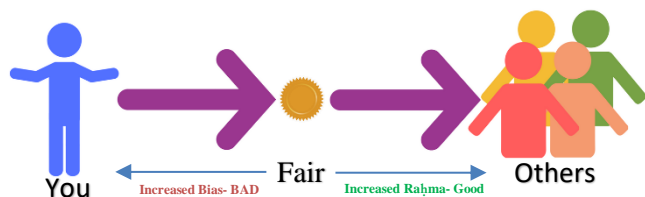
Self-restraint: From the point of view of self-control and abstaining from sins. Especially when one knows that his words and deeds are in the knowledge of Allah (SWT) and not even a fraction of his deed however small it may be is ignored from being taken into account. Further, he will be paid back for his noble and evil deeds, he will then not consider himself independent in this world. This realisation will restrain one from committing sins and will encourage one to do good actions.

Cheerful Outlook: Anyone who has belief in the Justice of Allah (SWT) in all worldly affairs possesses a cheerful outlook on life and does not become anxious or despair. This is because, at the end of the day, he knows that everything thing is in the hands of Allah (SWT), the Almighty and all Knowing.

Justice Plays its Role in Individual and Collective Life: The faith in the Justice of Allah (SWT) helps to lay the foundation of justice in individual and collective life. Such a person prepares himself to accept justice in his personal

and social life. Further, he will act with justice with everyone around him and give them a 'fair go'.

Avoiding Bias: Al-Inṣāf is to be just and equitable (being fair). If we believe and understand the Justice of Allah (SWT), we will naturally incline toward Al-Inṣāf and not be biased (have al-ʿaṣabiyyah). Being fair means you make judgments or conclusions without taking your own interests into account. As illustrated in the diagram below:



We must to be as fair as possible towards all other Muslims. If we can go beyond this and give them the benefit of the doubt and show them mercy, this is even better! This character of being fair is considered one of the fundamental virtues in Islamic ethics (akhlāq).

Review Questions

What helps us build trust in Allah? What are the benefits of having absolute trust in Allah?

ⁱ This point here can be elaborated on to drive it home. There are many examples such as the venom of a snake can be evil for the one who gets bitten but its protection of the snake. A volcano can destroy thousands of lives but can throw up wonderful minerals and can stabilise the earth. Even in terms of humans, when the US attacks Afghanistan or Iraq, they are doing it for their own best interest but those being bombed and shot consider this to be evil (this

will be discussed in little more detail in the next section) Taking an injection for a vaccine may seem evil due to the pain but it is eventually good.

ⁱⁱ God and His attributes, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lāri

ⁱⁱⁱ Nahjul Balagha Sermon 7

^{iv} Again there can be many examples the teacher could use here. An example of a typical food chain would be useful. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_chain

^v Again examples of this could be numerous from the fact that humans would become complacent like when there is no need of any kind there is no invention, when there is no difficulty, there is no generosity and humanity, when there is no pain there is no pleasure. We can appreciate the blessings of God only when it is deprived from us.

^{vi} A discussion on the statement 'what goes around comes around' could be used here as well as discussions on this concept of 'karma' ensuring that not all of life is based on this concept but SOME perhaps could be explained by it.

^{vii} Climate change is a prime example.

^{viii} eHawza Semester 2 course 2, lesson 22

^{ix} eHawza, Semester 1, course 3, lesson 5

^x Tradition of Mufaddhal – Chapter 4 - <http://www.al-islam.org/mufaddal/>

^{xi} Stages of grief adapted from the Kubler-Ross model of grief- Kubler-Ross, E. (2005) *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss*, Simon & Schuster Ltd, Information can be found summarized on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model

^{xii} Mizān-ul-Hikmah tradition 3454

^{xiii} Discourse on patience, Sayyid Khamenai.

^{xiv} Mizān-ul-hikmah, tradition 3459

^{xv} Discourses on patience- Sayyid Khamenai

^{xvi} al-Kāfi vol. 2 p. 89

^{xvii} Mizānul Hikmah tradition 3448

^{xviii} Fatima the gracious - <http://www.al-islam.org/gracious/>

^{xix} Manazilus Sairīn – Description of Tawakkul

^{xx} Behar ul Anwār, Vol 69 P373

^{xxi} Teachers can use the following stories to illustrate the point further:

--Maryam as is not given the water and dates to help her give birth until she almost gives up and says 'I wish I had never been born'

--Pr Musa standing with his people before the Nile and it splitting only moments before Pharaoh's army

--the woman who comes to Imam Ṣādiq thrice to ask him to pray for the return of her son. He tells her to be patient each time, but after the third she says she can no longer be patient. He tells her 'go home, your son just arrived'

Also, maybe a story to show how we reach perfection through our tests, particularly one in which the test directly leads to the perfection gained.