



Islamic

School Syllabus

MANUAL

LEVEL
3
2015

Term Four



THEOLOGY

JURISPRUDENCE

SOCIAL-ISLAM

Teacher's Name: _____

Student's Name: _____



IMAM MAHDI SCHOOL



AHL AL-BAIT ISLAMIC CENTRE
مركز أهل البيت الإسلامي أستراليا



NOOR ACADEMY



Islamic
School Syllabus



THE UNITY OF GOD

التوحيد

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Revise what it means to believe (using examples)
- Be able to explain the term 'Allah' and its meaning
- Understand that Allah is known through His Attributes
- Be introduced to the idea of cause and effect, and the proof of causality for the existence of God
- Discuss the concept that Allah is not only our Creator but also our Lord, looking after all our affairs
- Be reminded of the importance of worship and admitting slavery to Allah
- Learn several of the Attributes of Allah and their brief meaning
- Be introduced to the concept that God is not limited in time and place
- Discuss the belief in the Unity of God in practice, particularly through the story of Prophet Ibrahim (as)
- Discuss how constant remembrance of Allah- both in words and action- can help us on the path of worship
- Learn a short phrase of remembrance
- Discuss that God urges us to contemplate His signs in ourselves and the world around us
- Watch a video explaining some of the wonders of creation in our world
- Understand that God is All-Merciful and has surrounded us with blessings
- Understand that God expects us to thank him for these blessings, for our own good
- Understand the different meanings or levels of thanking Allah
- Be introduced to the concept that gratefulness to Allah brings about more goodness
- Be introduced to the concept that all the blessings we get in our life are really from Allah, and it is He who allows or withholds the causes which lead to our blessings

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The basis of our religion is the concept of the Unity of God. All of the other pillars of religion stem from this central base of our faith. Take the example of a building, before we construct its walls, it must have a strong foundation. This is the same for Islam, the strong foundation is the concept of the Unity of God. This concept differentiates Islam from all other philosophies and religions.

THE LAW OF CAUSALITY

Whenever we see or experience something, we naturally ask 'why?', or 'what is the reason?'. Whenever we see something happening in nature, such as a bird making a nest or an ant touching another ant as it walks past we ask 'why?' or 'what is the reason?'. Our whole life revolves around this question of 'why?'. We always want to know the cause for things. For example, imagine you are reading a very exciting and interesting book. If someone told you that the book just came about randomly and that the letters all put themselves in the right spot on their own you would not believe this at all. You would automatically ask about the author of the book, which is another way of asking about the cause of the book.

The reason we ask this question of 'why?' is because we all know within ourselves that all the things we see and hear must have a cause, and that a thing can't come from nothing, meaning someone must have created or made it.

THE LAW OF CAUSALITY PROVES THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

As we said above, we know within ourselves that everything must have a cause. Now, when we look at the world around us, we also ask ourselves: 'what is the cause for this world', and 'who made it'. Just like that book could not have just come out of nowhere, and could not have made itself, this world also could not have just come out of nowhere and could not have just made itself. Therefore, it must have a Creator who created it. This Creator is Allah.

THE PROPHET AND THE MAN FROM THE DESERT

One day, the Prophet (saw) met a man who lived all his life in the desert. This man began talking to the Prophet about Allah and saying that he believed strongly in Allah. The Prophet asked him why he believed in Allah. The man said: 'When I see the footprints of a camel in the sand, I know that a camel made these footprints, and when I see the footprints of a horse in the sand, I know that a horse made these footprints'. Such a simple man, who had never studied or read anything, innately knew that everything must have a cause and that all the creatures in this world were like footprints or fingerprints that show us that there must be a Creator.

Memorisation Activity

Memorise the following ayah from the Qur'an by next week:

أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

"Is there doubt about Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth?" (14:10)

THE PROOF OF ORDER AND DESIGN

When we look at the world around us, we not only see that it exists, but also that it runs according to a perfect system, where everything has its special place and runs smoothly. The fact that the world is created in such a perfect way tells us that there must be a Designer who made it. Again, none of us would believe that a machine that works perfectly made itself randomly. Someone intelligent and wise must have made it. Similarly, a Creator who is Wise and All-Knowing must have created this world, because it runs so perfectly. This Wise Creator is Allah.

EXAMPLES OF ORDER AND DESIGN IN THE WORLD

We will look at many examples of the perfect order in this world in the next few lessons. However, for now, let us look at one major example: rainwater. The properties of something so simple as rainwater are perfect for the development of the earth. If they were a little different, the entire structure of the earth would change. Different liquids have different degrees of viscosity (how easily a liquid flows, e.g. honey is more viscous than water). However, the viscosity of water is perfect for the use of all creatures. If it was a little more viscous than it is, plants could not have used it for transporting the nutrients vitally important for survival and they would all die out. If the viscosity of water were lower than it is, the flow of rivers would have been a great deal different, hence the mountain formations would have changed, valleys and plateaus would not have formed, and rocks could not have disintegrated to form soil.ⁱ

So how is it that rainwater has exactly the right properties? There must be a Wise Creator who made all these things the way are.

WORSHIPPING ALLAH

Once we know that there is a Creator, and that He created us and the world around us in such a perfect way, the next thing we have to find out is what He expects from us. He must have created us for a reason. One of the reasons for which He created us was to worship Him.

To worship Allah means to do things that bring us closer to Allah. To get closer to Him, we must follow His orders. We should do what He asks and stay away from what He says is forbidden for us.

ALLAH, THE NAME OF MAJESTY

As Muslims, we know that we worship Allah. But what exactly does this word mean? Why did God choose this word for us to use when referring to Him? Allah literally means 'the one who is worshipped'ⁱⁱ. Therefore, we understand from this that Allah expects from us to worship Him, in all times and situations. It is often best to use this term even when speaking in English.



وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should worship Me. (51:56)

THE REWARDS OF WORSHIP

Once Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) told his students: "on the Day of Judgement, a group of people will come and knock on the door of paradise. They will be asked: 'who are you?' This group of people will say: 'we are the people who showed patience by doing what Allah ordered us to do, and staying away from what Allah ordered us not to do.' Allah Himself will then say: 'they are telling the truth, let them into paradise'."ⁱⁱⁱ

Homework

Do some research, and come up with three other examples of the perfect order in this world.

Review Questions

Q1. The law of causality proves the existence of God because it tells us that:

- a) Everything must have a cause and so this world must have a cause
- b) It is important to ask why
- c) Mother nature is the cause for everything

Q2. The fact that the world around is so perfect indicates that:

- a) It created itself
- b) It came together randomly
- c) It was created by a Wise Creator

Q3. The word 'Allah' literally means:

- a) The Great One
- b) The One who is Worshipped
- c) The First One

LESSON 2: ALLAH, THE ONE CREATOR AND CHERISHER

In our last lesson, we proved that Allah exists and that He created this world. In this lesson, we want to prove the fact that there was only one Creator for this world and that this was Allah.

We will also discuss the fact that Allah is our Cherisher, meaning that not only did He create this world but He also looks after all of its affairs.

ALLAH, THE CHERISHER

One of the names of Allah is the Cherisher

الرب

A cherisher not only creates something, but looks after all its affairs. Allah (SWT) did not just create us then leave us on our own. He created us and continues to look after us in every way. When we eat, it is Allah who gives us food, when we drink, it is Allah who gave us water, when we pass a test, it is Allah who allowed us to pass. Even though we buy food, and we go to fetch water, and we study to get good marks, all this can only happen if Allah (SWT) gives His permission. If He did not give His permission, all of this could be taken away from us. Therefore, Allah (SWT) asks us to work hard in this world and to try to achieve things, but at the same time to always remember that none of these things can happen without His permission.

THE ILL MAN AND THE PLANT

One day, a pious man became ill and had a very painful stomach-ache. He prayed to Allah to heal him. Allah (SWT) ordered him to find a certain plant and eat it. He did this and felt much better. A few days later, he became ill again and his stomach became very painful again. This time, he did not pray to Allah and went straight to the plant and ate it. This time nothing happened and he did not feel any better. So he asked Allah: 'Why did the plant not heal me this time?' Allah answered him: 'The first time, you believed that I was healing you through the

plant, and so I gave my permission to it to heal you, but the second time you went straight to the plant and thought *it* was healing you so I did not give it permission to work’.

Memorise the following Āyah from the Qur’ān before next week’s lesson.

TO MEMORISE:

إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا

“Surely, your Lord is One, The Cherisher of the heavens and the earth and what is between them...” (37: 4-5)

ALLAH IS ONE – THE UNITY OF GOD

Now that we know that the Creator is Allah (SWT), the next question is, how do we know whether there is only One God who created this world and looks after it, or whether there are many gods?

If there were more than one god in this world, then there would be chaos everywhere because there would be two designers with different ideas and different ways of making things which would result in things not running perfectly in the world. For example, imagine if the air that people breathed in one side of the world is different to the air that people breathed in the other side of the world, because each god decided to design different type of air, how would we all be able to live and travel on this planet? Or imagine if one god ordered us to do one thing, while the other ordered us to do something else, which one would we have to obey? This is why Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’ān that if there were more than one Lord the world would break down and be destroyed.^{iv}

OUR WORLD HAS ONE ORDER

When we come to look at this amazing and perfectly designed universe that we live in we see that everything is designed and built in a uniform manner. The gravity of the earth is the same in all parts of the planet, the air we breathe has exactly the right concentration of gases that our lungs need to inhale and this is the same around the world, and many other examples.

Another important point is that all the objects in this world are made out of tiny little atoms that contain the same basic ingredients (neutrons, protons and electrons). Look at something as big as the sun and something as small as an ant, all these things are made out of the same basic ingredient which is atoms put together. This proves that the Creator who made all these things, and the Cherisher who looks after them is One and has no partner.

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is true?

- a) ‘The Creator’ and ‘the Cherisher’ means the same thing
- b) The Creator creates something while the Cherisher also constantly looks after all its needs
- c) Both of the above

Q2. Our universe:

- a) Has one creator but many cherishers
- b) Has many creators but one cherisher
- c) Has One Creator and One Cherisher

Q3. Which of the following is true?

- a) We do not need to work hard in our life because everything comes from God
- b) We should work hard and try to achieve but remember that everything happens by the permission of Allah
- c) We do not need to pray to Allah because we can get everything through hard work

LESSON 3: THE UNITY OF GOD IN PRACTICE

BELIEF IN THE UNITY OF GOD

In this last lesson, we learnt that there is only One Lord, Allah, and that He has no partner. Once we know that Allah is One and has no partner, we have to act in a way that matches this knowledge. Think about the following situations:

1. You are playing with your friends and they decide to bully another student. You know that Allah (SWT) does not want you to bully this person, but you also know that your friends will tease you if you don’t join in. What should you do? A person who really believes that Allah is the Lord and that everything only

happens by Allah's permission will not worry if his friends tease him, as long as he is doing what God wants.

2. Your parents blame you for something that your brother did and this upsets you. Again, you know that Allah (SWT) does not allow you to be angry with your parents or be rude to them. Should you follow your desire or should you follow God's orders? Again, a person who truly believes that there is One Lord will follow His Lord and not his own desire.

Brainstorming Activity

Think of other situations in which you have to choose between what Allah wants and between what others or your desire wants?

PROPHET IBRĀHĪM (AS): A TRUE BELIEVER IN THE UNITY OF ALLAH

When Prophet Ibrāhīm was still a young man, the people of his land used to worship idols. They would make statues out of stone or wood and worship them. They believed that these statues would somehow help them. Prophet Ibrāhīm told them: 'Why do you worship these idols when they are just pieces of stone and wood which you made yourselves?' They did not listen to him and continued to worship these idols.

One day, when the people of his land had left the town, Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) took an axe and smashed all the idols. He then put the axe on the shoulder of the biggest statue. When the people came back and saw their idols smashed, they called Prophet Ibrāhīm and asked him if he had done this. He said that the big statue with the axe on its shoulder had done it. They said: 'How can that be true? That statue cannot move or do anything?' Suddenly, they realized how wrong they were, and that they were in fact worshipping something totally useless. However, they were very stubborn and still refused to believe. So they decided to make a huge fire and to throw Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) into this fire.

Now, Prophet Ibrāhīm (as), in his youth, had a choice between what God wanted from him and what people wanted from him. His belief in Allah was so strong that he knew that no one could hurt him if Allah did not wish for him to be hurt. Therefore, he did not change his mind about the idols and got ready to be thrown into the fire. As he was being thrown into the fire, Allah (SWT) turned

the fire into a pleasant and cool garden, and Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) landed there safe and sound. Because of the strong belief that the prophet had shown in Allah, Allah (SWT) did not give the fire permission to burn Ibrāhīm (as), and instead turned it into a pleasant garden.^v

This story shows that if we also have strong belief in Allah, Allah will protect us from any real harm, and will always be there to save us, no matter how scary the situation we are in seems to be.

REMEMBERING ALLAH

Unfortunately, sometimes we become weak and forget about the Unity of God and the fact that we should only obey Him. In order to help us remember, Allah (SWT) has asked us to always remember Him, by reciting certain words of remembrance. This helps us to remember that Allah is watching, and that He must be the only One we obey.

Also, Allah (SWT) rewards those who remember Him with gifts that are beyond our imagination. The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

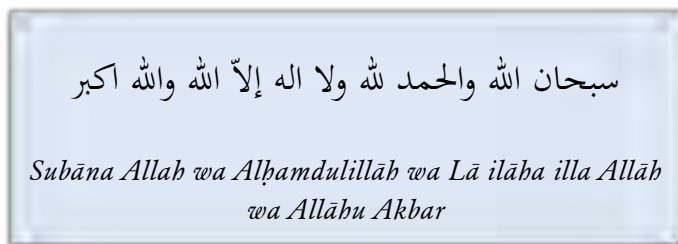
"When I ascended up to the highest sky I entered Heaven where I saw pieces of land with Angels building from bricks made out of gold and silver and suddenly they would stop. So I asked them: Why did you stop? They replied: We are waiting for the supplies to reach us. So I said: And what are your supplies? They said: The believer saying "Subāna Allāh wa Alḥamdulillāh wa Lā ilāha illa Allāh wa Allāhu Akbar" and if the believer stops saying these words we stop too."^{vi}

How beautiful would it be to have prepared castles and houses in Heaven made out of luxurious gold and silver! It's very simple but we just need to repeat these words and one day we will see the superb rewards of our actions.

For this reason we should try to remember Allah (SWT) and use these words in our spare time as much as we can. There are many times in the day which we can remember Allah (SWT) with these beautiful words. For example, while walking to school or sitting in the car or waiting in line at the shops. Wouldn't it better to occupy ourselves with these words and at the same time please Allah (SWT) and receive His magnificent rewards?

Memorisation Activity

Memorise the following words of remembrance by next week and try to repeat them as much as possible over the next few days.



Review Questions:

Q1. A person who truly believes that God is One:

- a) Always puts what God wants before what people want
- b) Sometimes puts what God wants before what people want
- c) Never puts what God wants before what people want

Q2. According to the narration from the Prophet (saw), the rewards of mentioning Allah's name and remembering Him are:

- a) A river in paradise
- b) Castles built in paradise
- c) Tasty food in paradise

Q3. The main message of Prophet Ibrāhīm was to:

- a) Be good to others and treat everyone nicely
- b) To worship the One True God and stop worshipping useless idols
- c) Not be scared of fire

LESSON 4: THE SIGNS OF ALLAH IN HIS CREATION

In this lesson, we will watch the following video, which shows us just how amazing some of the creatures of Allah are. How could these creatures have been created randomly? Surely, their amazing design shows that a Wise Creator must have created them.

FOR MEN OF UNDERSTANDING

This video can be found at:

[Link 1](#) or [Link 2](#)

LESSON 5: THANKING ALLAH

In this lesson we will discuss the importance of being grateful to Allah (SWT) and try to understand that all of the bounties and blessings that we are surrounded with are from Him.

THE MERCY OF ALLAH

We are always surrounded by the blessings of Allah, but we often forget this. Look, for example, at the food we eat. Allah, the Merciful, could have given us only one type of food in this world, just to keep us alive. Instead, though, He created a world with millions of different types of food for us to choose from and enjoy. He could have also created us as lonely creatures, living separate lives. Instead He created us with mothers to love us, fathers to look after us, and brothers, sisters and friends to share our life with. When we stop and think about our life, we see that Allah (SWT) has provided us with so many blessings that we take for granted. In fact, if we were to try to count these blessings, we would never succeed because they are countless.

وَأِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“And if you would count the graces of Allah, never could you be able to count them. Truly! Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (16:18)

Class Activity

As a class try and make a list of as many of the blessings of God upon you that you can think of. There are many! Begin with every breath that you take!

THANKING ALLAH

As soon as we recognise the blessings of Allah the Exalted, we naturally feel like we should show our appreciation and thank Allah. When someone does something good for us, we naturally feel like we should show our appreciation, so imagine how much appreciation we should show towards Allah for all the blessings He gave us.

HOW DO WE THANK ALLAH?

One of the easiest ways of thanking Allah is to say words of gratitude with our tongues. Just like we say 'Thank you' to our parents when they give us something, we can say the same to Allah (SWT) with special words. In previous years, we learnt to say:

Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah)

الحمد لله

Now, we would like to learn another way of saying thanks to Allah (SWT):

Shukran lillāh (Thanks to Allah)

شكرا لله



One of the best ways to thank Allah is through Sujūd

THE IMAM'S GRATEFULNESS

One day, Imam al-Kaẓim (as) was riding his horse along with one of his students. Suddenly, the Imam (as) stopped, got off his horse, sat on the floor and performed prostration. He remained with his forehead on the ground for a very long time. His student was very surprised with this and when the Imam finally got up he asked what had happened. The Imam (as) said: 'I remembered one of the blessings of Allah upon me, and I did not want to pass without showing my gratefulness'.^{vii}

THANKING ALLAH THROUGH OUR ACTIONS

However, to say thanks with our tongue is just the first stage of being thankful. The best way of being thankful to Allah (SWT) is to show this through our actions. If there was someone who you helped out a lot and did a lot of good things for, and in return he would always say 'Thank you' to you; you would be pleased by what he is saying. But if he would say he appreciates what you are doing, but at the same time would tease you, lie to you and insult you, would you say this person is thankful or not? Similarly here, if we say thanks to Allah but our actions do not match, we are not really being thankful.

The way to be thankful in our actions is to use every blessing we receive in the way that it is supposed to be used. What is the correct use of our eye, or our ears, or our tongues? Each of these blessings has certain things for which it is supposed to be used, and certain things for which it is not supposed to be used.

Class Discussion

Complete the following table:

Blessings	Proper Use	Improper Use
Eyes		
Ears		
Tongue		
Mind/Brain		
Parents		
Health		

THE PROPHET'S GRATEFULNESS

One night, the Prophet's wife woke up in the middle of the night and found that the Prophet (saw) was not in his usual sleeping place. She was worried and so she went to look for him. She searched and finally found him prostrating on the floor, crying and whispering to Allah (SWT). She was surprised by this and said to the Prophet: 'O Prophet, you have no sins and you are a prophet, why do you wake up in the middle of the night, give up your sleep and cry so much?' The Prophet (saw) said: 'should I not be a grateful slave?' The Prophet (saw) realized just how many blessings Allah had given him, and this overwhelmed him so much that he could not even lay in bed at night without getting up to thank Allah.

THE BENEFITS OF GRATEFULNESS

In the Qur'an, Allah (SWT) promises us that if we show that we are thankful both in our words and our actions, then He will keep giving us more blessings. Let's listen to the following story:

Imam Ja'far Al-Ṣādiq (as) was at Mina (near Mecca) when a beggar approached him to ask for something. The Imam (as) ordered that a bunch of grapes be given to him. The beggar said, 'I do not need these, if possible give me money.' The Imam (as) did not give him anything but said, 'May Allah make you self-sufficient.' After this another beggar approached. The Imam (as) then picked up three grapes from the bunch and offered them to him. The beggar picked them up and said, 'Alḥamdulillāh, (praise be to Allah) who has given me this blessing.' The Imam (as) said, 'Wait', and he placed as many grapes as his hands could hold. Twice again he gave him the same quantity of grapes. The beggar thanked Allah again. Imam (as) again stopped him, and then turned to his servant and asked how much money he was carrying. The servant replied, 'Twenty dirhams.' The Imam (as) ordered him to give these to the beggar. The beggar took the money and said, "Alḥamdulillāh. O Allah You are the Sustainer, You are One, there is no partner to You'. The Imam (as) again stopped him. Then the Imam (as) removed his shirt and gave it to the beggar and said, 'wear it'. The beggar put

the shirt on and thanked Allah who had bestowed him with the dress and made him happy. At this stage the beggar turned towards the Imam (as) and said 'O slave of Allah may Allah reward you for this'. After this he went his way. The narrator says that if the beggar had continued to thank Allah directly, the Imam (as) would have continued to give him gifts because he was thanking Allah. However, when the man began to thank the Imam himself, the Imam did not feel the obligation to give him more.^{viii}

TO MEMORISE:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

"If you give thanks I will give you more" (Holy Qur'an, 14:7)

Review Questions:

Q1. Shukran lillāh means:

- a) Thanks to Allah
- b) Praise be to Allah
- c) God is Great

Q2. The best way to show thanks to Allah is:

- a) To use the blessings He gave us in the proper way
- b) To not use the blessings He gave us in the wrong way
- c) Both of the above

Q3. If we show thanks to God:

- a) He will accept our thanks but not give us anything else
- b) He will give us more blessings
- c) He will take away His blessings from us

ⁱ www.harunyaha.com

ⁱⁱ Tafsirul Mizan, Commentary on Suratil Fatiha

ⁱⁱⁱ Mishkatul Anwar fi Ghurail Akhbar, narration no. 555

^{iv} The Holy Qur'an, 21:22

^v The Holy Qur'an, various chapters

^{vi} Jawahir Al Bihaar, Vol 1, Chapter 8

^{vii} Mishkatul Anwar fi Ghurail Akhbar, narration no. 107

^{viii} eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 6, Lecture 5

THE JUSTICE OF GOD

العدل الالهي

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to the importance of the attribute of Justice and its definition
- Understand that Allah is Just and never oppresses His creatures
- Understand that Allah tests us according to our ability
- Understand why we are tested
- Discuss the way we should deal with tests
- Discuss the Hereafter and Allah's Justice in the Hereafter
- Discuss the importance of keeping account of our own actions

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GOD'S JUSTICE

In our previous lessons, we discussed the Unity of Allah and some of the attributes of Allah (SWT). In this lesson, we will discuss one of the most important attributes, which is the Justice of Allah. As followers of the Ahlul Bayt, we believe that Allah (SWT) is Just and is never unjust in His actions.

DEFINING JUSTICE

What is justice? Justice is to give each person their right. This means that people should be rewarded according to their actions. If a person does good deeds, he will be rewarded with good, and if a person does evil, he will be rewarded with evil. Allah, the Exalted, confirms that He is Just in this way. For example He says in the Holy Qur'an:



"So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it." (99:6-7)

Justice also means to not discriminate between people based on their characteristics such as race, nationality, lineage, age, or sex, no matter how much their particular society deems that attribute highly. Allah (SWT) is the most Just and He never discriminates or favours one group over another.

He looks at all equally and the only reason for Him to look at one person more favourably than another is because of their piety. This is very just because this means that *all* people have an equal opportunity to earn Allah's satisfaction and to be the best.

TO MEMORISE:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

"Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa (piety). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (49:13)

THE IMPORTANCE OF JUSTICE

Justice is something that we all like and hope for. No person likes being treated "unfairly" and when they are treated like this, they become upset. Imagine if your friend at school speaks while the teacher is speaking, but you get blamed for this. You would become very upset with this. Or Imagine that someone at school treats you unfairly because of your race, or that you do well in a test but someone else who did not do as well as you receives an award instead of yourself. All of these things make us upset. When the opposite happens and we are treated fairly and get rewards according to what we did, we feel satisfied and happy. This shows us that justice is something we are all born to like. Once we know this, it is easy to see that we should also treat other people with justice. The Prophet (saw) and the Imams (as) have taught us how to be just with other people and to "treat others as you would like to be treated."

IMAM ALI'S JUSTICE

When Imam Ali (as) was the Caliph of the entire Muslim nation, an interesting event occurred. A Jewish man stole Imam Ali's shield and when the Imam saw him holding his shield, he asked him to give the shield back. However, the man denied that he had stolen it. When this happened, Imam Ali went to court to argue that the shield was his, while the Jewish man was adamant that it was not Imam Ali's shield. When the judge asked Imam Ali if he had any witness, the Imam said 'no', whereas the Jewish man brought forward false witnesses who testified that the shield was his. Imam Ali then gave up and accepted the judge's decision. The Jewish man was happy he had won his court case. Soon though, the Jewish man found out that the person he stole the shield from was the leader of the entire Muslim nation. He was so amazed that Imam

Ali didn't just use his powers to get the shield from him and punish him, but instead was fair and used the system in a just manner, just like everyone else would have to. The Jewish man felt so embarrassed and ashamed that he gave back the shield to Imam Ali and also bore witness to how much of a just person Imam Ali was.

Now, if we all like to be treated justly and fairly, and if we know that justice is a good thing, we should aim to become just and fair ourselves, and also work hard against injustice.

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah; even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be they rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector to both." (4:135)

This verse highlights the importance of justice so much so that Allah tells us no matter what, even if it is difficult and will cause us suffering, still we must aim to be just and fair.

ALLAH DOES NOT OPPRESS

As mentioned earlier, Allah is the All-Just. By this we mean that He is Just with "everyone and everything" and always. Never does He oppress anyone nor treat anyone unfairly. Allah states in the Qur'an...

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned" (2:286)

This verse tells us not only that Allah (SWT) will never be unfair to us in any situation, but he will be Just when it comes to responding to our actions. That is, He will reward our good deeds but punish us for our bad deeds, either in this world or the Hereafter or both.

Review Questions:

Q1. Justice means:

- Giving everyone their rights
- Not discriminating against people based on their race, skin colour, or any other reason
- Both a & b

Q2. In God's eyes:

- The best people are those who are pious
- The best people are the wealthiest
- The best people are those who look and speak the best

Q3. When we say Allah is Just, we mean:

- He treats people according to their actions, rewarding those who do good and punishing those who do evil
- That God punishes and rewards people randomly as He likes
- Both a & b

LESSON 2: ALLAH (SWT) TESTS US

As we discussed in our last lesson, Allah (SWT) is Absolutely Just and fair. However, sometimes we see that bad things happen in our life, or that some people have easy lives while others have difficult lives. Does this mean that Allah (SWT) is not just or fair? Let us try to answer this question.

THE REASON FOR TESTS

The difficulties that some people face in their lives are tests for those people. By working hard and overcoming these tests and difficulties, these people can achieve so much. For example, look at our Prophet Muḥammad (saw). For so many years of his life, he was:

- Orphaned at a young age
- Mocked and teased by his people
- Thrown out of his hometown
- Lost his wife and two dear uncles
- Had to live in a valley in starvation and terrible living conditions for years
- Had to endure many wars and battles

However, despite all these tests, he stayed patient, and never lost his faith and trust in Allah. At the beginning, it was only he, Imam Ali (as) and Khadija (his wife) who would stand and pray, alone. Imagine how those three people felt at that time, alone against the whole world. But they stayed patient. What was the result? Within a few years, Islam spread throughout all of the prophet's country, and in fact soon it spread around the whole world. Because the prophet worked through the hardships he faced and never gave up, the result was so amazing.

Let's look at an example of a scientist. Thomas Edison was told he was too 'dumb' to go to school and was expelled.

He had to stay home and had no one to teach him. So he decided to teach himself and after a while he thought of producing electricity to light a lamp. He started to work on this in his garage, but he faced so many tests. In fact, his diary shows that he failed 9999 times, and was only successful on the 10,000th time. What was the result of working so hard and enduring through so much hardship? He made some of the greatest inventions in history and is now one of the most famous and respected scientists.

So you can see that when people have tests or hardships in their life, this is not necessarily a bad thing. These tests are a way for people to improve themselves and become better people. So if you think you have more tests than others in your life, then be glad, because this means you have an opportunity to become an even better person.

TESTS HAVE REWARDS

Every test we face in this world has its own special reward. This reward can come both in this world and the Hereafter. So if a person has more tests and hardships in this world, it means more rewards either later on in their life or in the Hereafter. Look at some examples from the Qur'ān and the narrations:

- Imagine one day you are walking home and there is no way inside the house, and only you have the keys to get in. You reach into your right pocket and you realise the keys are not there. This frightens you and so you quickly reach into your left pocket and find the key there and say 'pheww...'. Our Imams tell us that even such a small hardship which scared us just for a few seconds will cause lots of sins to drop from us. Imagine how many sins would drop from us and how much reward we will get when we are faced with bigger tests in our lifeⁱ
- On the Day of Judgment, when people see the rewards they are getting for the hardships they faced in this world, they will wish to get back to this world and go through the same hardships againⁱⁱ
- The Prophet (saw) had a son with his wife Khadija. This boy's name was Ṭāhir. Unfortunately, Ṭāhir passed away while he was still an infant. The Prophet (saw) told Khadija not to cry. However, one day, Khadija saw something that really reminded her of her baby and so she cried. The Prophet (saw) said to her: 'don't you want to find him waiting for you at the door of paradise, and when he sees you, he will take your hand and take you into the best place in

heaven?’ She said: ‘if this will happen, then yes, I would like it’. The Prophet (saw) said: ‘Allah is far too generous to take away the loved one of a servant of His then punish him, if that person is patient, trusts God and thanks God.’

TO MEMORISE:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“Surely, Allah is with those who are patient: (2:153)”

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH TESTS?

As you just heard from the Prophet (saw), the rewards that we talked about are only given to people who know how to act when they are tested. People who become angry at God and give up on His Mercy and accuse Him of being cruel are not rewarded for these tests. However, people who are patient and who keep their hope and trust in Allah will receive those rewards. Here are some tips to remember for the next time you are going through a tough test in your life:

- We should keep patient and remember those who are much less fortunate than us
- The difficulty we are going through is only a trial and with patience and perseverance, we will come out successful
- No matter how much we are going through, we can always be grateful that God has also given us faith in Him to keep us going
- We should remember Allah, because by remembering Him, we can become at ease and feel more confident that we are not alone.
- We should remember that God tests those whom He loves. This is why the Prophets and Imams went through the toughest tests of all. When Allah (SWT) tests us, He is showing His love for us, and is helping us to get closer to Him.

Review Questions:

Q1. Allah (SWT) tests people:

- So that they can achieve more in their lives
- So that they can get closer to Him
- Both a & b

Q2. When we are going through a test:

- We should remain patient and not get angry at God
- We should remember that Allah is with us and we are never alone
- Both a & b

Q3. Which of the following is true?

- We are not rewarded for the tests and hardships we face in our life
- We are rewarded for the tests we face in our lives, but only if we remain patient
- We are rewarded for the tests we face in our life, whether we remain patient or becomes angry and anxious

LESSON 3: JUSTICE IN THE HEREAFTER

In the last lesson, we learnt why we are tested, and how we should deal with tests. In this lesson, we will look at a different aspect of Allah's Justice. We will discuss what happens after we die, and how Allah (SWT) rewards or punishes us for our actions fairly and justly.

THE JUDGEMENT DAY

After we die, we are brought back to life in the Hereafter and judged for the actions that we performed in this world. Those who did good will be rewarded with good, and those who did evil will be punished. The rewards and punishments we receive are the direct result of our actions. If our actions were good, we create rewards for ourselves and if our actions are evil, we create punishments for ourselves. Let us look at some examples:

- If we make people around us happy, then when we are raised from our graves, we will have a beautiful friend to protect us. While other people will be terrified by all the horrifying things that are happening on that day, this friend will walk ahead of us and protect us from all of these scary things.ⁱⁱⁱ
- When people are in Hell, they will be attacked by vicious dogs. The food for these dogs is the words of people when they are backbiting. When we speak about someone behind their back, we are feeding the dogs of the Hell-fire which will attack us.^{iv}
- When we remember Allah (SWT) and recite words of remembrance like 'alḥamdulillāh' or 'la ilāha illa Allāh' then we are building bricks for our castles in paradise or we are planting trees for ourselves in paradise.^v

ALLAH'S JUSTICE IN THE HEREAFTER

As you can see, Allah (SWT) gives us the rewards and punishments that we created with our own actions. This is another example of Allah's Absolute Justice. He gives us rewards and punishments only according to what we have done, and He does this with complete fairness.

In fact, any person who does not receive justice in this world will receive justice in the Hereafter. For example, our Imams (as) tell us that on the Judgement Day a person will be raised with all the people who knew him. Then he will be able to take any right he had from those people, and they will be allowed to take any right they had from

him. For example, if someone had spoken about him behind his back, he would be able to take from the good deeds of that person. However, if he had spoken about someone behind their back, that person would have the right to come and take his good deeds.

Therefore, we must be extremely careful in all our actions and make sure we remember that every action will be judged and we will have to answer questions about everything we did.

KEEPING AN ACCOUNT OF OUR ACTIONS

Since we know that after our death, we will be asked about all of our actions, we should begin to ask ourselves about our own actions so that we can fix them before we are asked about them after our death. Every night, before we go to bed, we should think about all our actions. We can make a table like the following one that has been made for you and write down all of our good actions and all of our evil ones. For our good actions, we should thank Allah (SWT) and protect these actions by continuing to perform them and not wrecking them with evil deeds. For our evil actions, we should:

- Ask forgiveness from Allah
- Fix whatever harm we have done (for example, if we bullied or hurt someone, we should apologise to them until they forgive us)
- Making up for any missed actions (e.g. missed daily prayers) where necessary
- Promise to Allah that we will not do such actions again

We should keep a track of our actions with this diary and try to increase the number of good deeds we do, but decrease the number of evil deeds that we do. Always remember that whatever you are doing in this world will be waiting for you in the next world. To help you remember this very important fact, try to repeat this ayah as much as you can and memorise it by next week.

TO MEMORISE:

وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ

"And let every person look to what he has sent forth for its tomorrow" (59:18)

KEEPING AN EYE ON OUR ACTIONS

Once our Holy Prophet (saw) was travelling with his companions when he stopped at a deserted place where there was nothing growing. The Holy Prophet (saw) told his followers to go and collect wood. They replied that they would not be able to find any wood in such a deserted place. The Holy Prophet (saw) told them that they should still go and try to find some. So they went and brought back whatever little they could. In a short while there was a big heap of wood stacked in front of the Holy Prophet (saw). The Holy Prophet (saw) then told them that their sins could just as easily be searched for and collected. The Holy Prophet (saw) was teaching them about self - accounting. In the same way that the wood was collected although it could not be seen before collecting, people's sins are not easily seen or remembered. But when they are looked for and accounted, they may make a long list.



Review Questions:

Q1. In the Hereafter:

- We see the direct results of our actions
- We end up in hell or heaven based on our actions
- Both a & b

Q2. Why is it important to keep an account of our actions?

- So that we can be more aware of our sins before they pile up
- So that we can fix our sins before they become too difficult to fix
- Both a & b

Q3. The Holy Qur'ān teaches us that:

- We should be careful of what actions we are sending for our Hereafter
- We should not worry about our actions too much
- Both a & b

Homework – Keeping an Action Diary

Date	My Deeds Today	Good for	My Sins for Today	Deeds that I was not sure about
.../.../...				
.../.../...				
.../.../...				
.../.../...				

ⁱeHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, lecture 5

ⁱⁱIbid

ⁱⁱⁱSheikh Mansour Leghaei, Journey to the Unseen World, Lectures on the Law of Reflection

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:181

PROPHETHOOD

النبوة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand why we need prophets
- Understand that all prophets teach the same religion: Islam, in different stages
- Understand the difference between a prophet (Nabi) and a Messenger (Rasūl)
- Understand some of the qualities shared by all prophets
- Discuss at least one story from the life of one of the Prophets that shows the good moral conduct of Prophets
- Understand the concept that the belief in all the past prophets and their holy books is an essential part of our faith and that past prophets received Divine Books
- Understand that these books have not remained safe from distortion, unlike the Qur'ān which has
- Be aware that Islam was never spread by force so we should not force others to believe as we do
- Understand the basic etiquette of dealing with people from other faiths in terms of avoiding debate until we have proper knowledge, avoiding vain debate, avoiding insults and mockery
- Understand that we should not take non-Muslims as leaders or role models

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: WHY DO WE NEED PROPHETS?

In this lesson, we will discuss the role of prophets and why we need them.

WHY DO WE NEED PROPHETS?

All creatures on Earth act with a purpose. An ant moves about the way it does for a particular reason, birds migrate the way they do for a purpose and even flowers open and close their petals for a purpose. People also have a purpose. We all do things for a reason. If we do things without any reason, we would be called mad or crazy. One who acts without purpose is unwise.

We know from our previous lessons that Allah (SWT) is definitely Wise. Therefore, when He created us, He did it for a purpose. Part of the purpose was to test us. Allah (SWT) tests each person to see whether they choose the path of good or the path of evil.

When there is a test or examination, there needs to be a teacher or a guide. Just like we have a teacher in school who prepares us for the examination, it is necessary for us to have a teacher and guide in this world to help us pass the tests we will face. Allah (SWT) has sent us prophets to act as teachers and guides for us, and to teach us what Allah (SWT) wants from us.

Allah (SWT) wants us to move closer and closer to Him through these tests He gives us, and He has sent us prophets to help us through them.

Imagine the following situation: a person invites you to his home in a different city and you start making the journey. On your way there, you get to a fork in the road and you don't know which way to go.

You realize that you should have brought a guide, or at least asked for directions. You walk on, but another fork in the road comes, and this keeps happening until you realize that you will be completely lost unless you have a guide or you get directions from someone who knows the way. The Prophets are our guides on the journey towards Allah. Imam ‘Ali (as) says about Prophet Muḥammad:

“Whenever anyone became tired or distressed and stopped (on the path) the Prophet would stand with him and help him until he reached his goal.”ⁱ

The Prophets give us directions and help us along the path on our journey to Allah (SWT). They do this by teaching us about the rules for how we should live in this world and which actions will help us in the Hereafter.

Memorisation Task

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ

“He it is who sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion” (48:28)

HOW DO THE PROPHETS GUIDE US?

The Prophets (as) guide us in a number of ways:

- The Prophets teach us what Allah (SWT) wants us to do and what He does not want us to do. For example, the Prophets have taught us that God wants us to live purposeful lives and not waste our lives simply playing.
- They also teach us what actions are right and what actions are wrong. Lying and stealing are wrong actions and telling the truth and giving charity are good.
- They also teach us about things we cannot see or understand, such as Hell and Heaven, angels and jinn.
- The most important way the Prophets (as) teach us is by being good practical examples for us. By seeing how they live their lives and what they do, we learn how to live our life as well.

THE PROPHETS ARE THE BEST ROLE MODELS

As we are growing up, it is important for us to have the right role models and ‘heroes’. Many of us know a lot about the lives of sports players, actors and musicians. We follow their lives and their activities and without knowing it, we begin to think their qualities are good qualities. Unfortunately, many of these people lead very empty lives. Many of them end up depressed, most lose their families and more than a few end their life by committing suicide. The more rich and famous they are, the more troubled their life seems to be.

So instead of taking these people as role models, we should take lessons from the lives of prophets and take them as role models. The Prophets of Allah have real achievements: their names are still mentioned on the tongues of millions of people thousands of years after their death. They guided so many people, and they sacrificed their life not for wealth or fame, but for the sake of justice and the truth.

When we come to a choice in our life, we should try to copy the prophets in the choices they made. For example, we know that Prophet Muḥammad (saw) used his time very effectively. He had a set routine which he would follow every day so that he could look after all the different aspects of his life. He put time aside for worship, for his family and for his work. He did not waste time playing aimlessly or ‘mucking around’. Yes, he did also make time for activities like horse riding, and he would even race his companions. However, he did this with a purpose and reason in mind, he didn’t do it just to ‘kill time’. We should learn from this, for example, that we too should not waste our time or ‘kill time’ by spending endless hours moving between the television, computer games and internet surfing. Instead, we should make time for the most important things like our religion, our family and our studies. Yes, we need time to play and have fun, but we can do this in ways that benefit us somehow.

In general, we should learn more about the lives of our prophets, and use them as role models when we make choices in our lives.

Review Questions

Q1. The Prophets (as) were sent to us by Allah (SWT) in order to:

- Guide us to the true religion
- Teach us right from wrong
- Both a & b

Q2. The best role models we can take in our life are:

- The prophets
- Sports stars
- Famous celebrities

Q2. Prophet Muḥammad (saw):

- Spent all his time having fun and racing horses
- Spent all his time praying
- Balanced his time between worship, family, work and other activities

LESSON 2: LEARNING MORE ABOUT OUR PROPHETS

In this lesson, we will learn more about our prophets. In particular, we will learn about their characteristics and their miracles.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPHETS

PROPHETS ARE CHOSEN BY GOD

The most important thing to remember is that all prophets are chosen and sent by Allah (SWT). They do not choose themselves and they are not chosen by other people. Allah (SWT) Himself chooses them. This means that they are definitely the right people to follow and take as guides.

PROPHETS ARE SINLESS (MA'ṢŪM)

Another important fact is that prophets are sinless (ma'ṣūm). They are given special knowledge from Allah (SWT), allowing them to see the reality of sins and the spiritual consequences of sins. This helps them avoid sin, and so they live their whole lives without sinning. This is important because if they are messengers from Allah and they are the role models for us, we need to be sure that they do not make any mistakes. This is why Allah (SWT)

gave them a special knowledge to protect them from ever sinning.

THE MIRACLES OF THE PROPHETS

Allah (SWT) gave permission to His prophets to do certain amazing things that other people could not do. This was to help prove to people that they really were chosen and sent by Allah (SWT). In the Qur'ān, a miracle is called a sign (āyah). However in the Arabic language it is common to refer to a miracle as mu'jizah (plural: mu'jizāt).

The miracle of each prophet matched his time. For example, the staff of Mūsā (as) turned into a serpent and his hand would shine very brightly after he put it into his pocket and took it out again. These miracles were given to him because his people, the Egyptians, were expert magicians.

Prophet 'Īsā (as) was able to cure the sick and bring back to life the dead. This is because the people of his time were making great advances in medicine.

Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was sent to the Arabs who were experts in poetry and literature. The eloquence of the Qur'ān was a challenge to them at that time and is a living miracle till today. From that day until today, no one has ever been able to produce something like the Qur'ān in terms of its eloquence and style.

PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS

So by now we have come to learn that Allah, the Merciful, has sent us guides to help us make the journey to Him. These guides were humans like us, and they are called prophets. No community or nation has ever existed without having a prophet at some point to guide them and teach them how to live in the best way possible.

Many Prophets were sent to one or two villages, while others were sent to bigger areas or whole nations. What we must remember is that they were all prophets, and that believing in them is the third fundamental of our religion.

In Arabic, a prophet is called a nabi. Some prophets were also messengers. In Arabic, a messenger is called a rasūl. A messenger is a prophet who also comes with a Holy Book from Allah (SWT), to update what was taught in the last Holy Book.

- Prophet *Mūsā* was a messenger who was sent with the book called *al-Taurāt* (the Old Testament)
- Prophet *Dawūd* was a messenger who was sent with the book called *al-Zabūr* (The Psalms)
- Prophet *ʿĪsā* was a messenger who was sent with the book called *al-Injīl* (The New Testament)
- Prophet *Muḥammad* (saw) was the Final Prophet and Messenger who was sent with the book called *al-Qurʾān*

When these books were revealed to these Prophets, their followers originally followed them. Over time though, after these Prophets left their people, the leaders, for selfish reasons, started changing the texts to suit their own purposes and to support their own ideas.

In some cases though, the rules that the previous prophet brought were not relevant for the people anymore. In those cases, Allah (SWT) sent another book with His prophet with 'updated' rules.

The Jews initially followed the book of Prophet Moses (as). Unfortunately after he passed away, the Jews began to change the book to suit their own purposes. After a while, they had strayed very far from what Prophet Moses (as) had taught them. Therefore, Allah (SWT) sent His Prophet Jesus (as) with a newer book to confirm what Moses (as) had originally taught and to update some of the rules. Unfortunately, after Jesus (as) was taken up to heaven by Allah (SWT), his book was also destroyed by the people of the time. Therefore, we do not know what was in the original Book that Allah (SWT) revealed to Jesus (as). This is why today there are so many different versions of 'The Bible'. All of these have been written by people who were not alive at the time of Prophet Jesus and who simply wrote their account of the life of Jesus (as) and his teachings.

So again, Allah (SWT) sent us another prophet with another book, the Holy *Qurʾān*. This is the final book and the most perfect one, and we will never need any other book from Allah. To this day, after 1400 years, The *Qurʾān* has not changed at all. This is because the *Qurʾān* is especially protected by Allah (SWT), and contains the highest teachings and instructions from Allah (SWT).

Review Questions

Q1. A Messenger:

- Is not a prophet
- Is the same as a prophet
- Is a prophet who was sent with a Holy Book from Allah (SWT)

Q2. The Prophets are:

- Chosen by people to be prophets
- Chosen by God to be prophets
- Declare themselves to be prophets

Q3. The Prophets:

- Committed some sins
- Did not commit any sins
- We are not sure if they committed sins

LESSON 3: ISLAM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

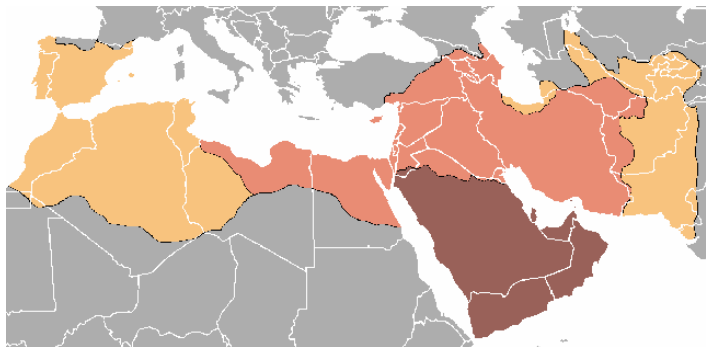
In the last lesson, we learnt about the previous prophets like Prophet Moses and Prophet Jesus and the books that Allah (SWT) sent down to them. In this lesson, we will learn more about Islam, other religions and how to deal with people of other religions.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

After Prophet *Muḥammad* (saw) passed away, Islam spread to many different parts of the world. This did not happen through wars or by force. Instead, people were becoming Muslim because they could see the beauty of the *Qurʾān* and the religion of Islam. They would meet Muslims through travel, trade and work, and would be impressed by the values of Islam. Within a couple of hundred years, Islam reached all the way to Spain in the west, India in the east, Turkey in the North and Yemen and Sudan in the South.

Class Activity

How many countries can you name from this image that had become Muslim? Can you identify where Medina is? Can you identify where Damascus is? Can you identify where Karbala is? From where on this map do you or your parents originally come from? Which of these countries is still Muslim?



HOW SHOULD WE TREAT NON-MUSLIMS?

Now that we know how Islam spread, let us look at how we should treat non-Muslims in order to help Islam spread further. The Holy Prophet taught the Muslims to treat non-Muslims with justice on many occasions. He said:

“Whoever annoys a Dhimmi (a Jew or Christian living in an Islamic country) then I am his enemy and whoever I am his enemy Allah will be his enemy in the hereafter.”ⁱⁱ

For the last eleven years of his life, the Prophet (saw) lived in Medina. Most of the people who lived in Medina were Muslims. However, there was a small group of Jewish people. The Prophet (saw) spoke to them and signed a treaty with them. This treaty was a promise by both Muslims and Jews to treat each other well, help each other, and let each other practice their religion. If you would like to read the text of the actual treaty, it is there for you in the endnotes of the lesson.^{iii, iv}

This clearly shows that the Prophet did not force people to accept Islam. He did his utmost to teach people and convince them of the truth of Islam, but he did not force the people of the Book to become Muslims. So while he taught that Islam is the only true religion, he invited people to it in a peaceful and logical way, without using force.

Today, the country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia. There were never any wars to bring Islam to Indonesia and no armies were ever sent to this country. The people of Indonesia met Muslims by trading with them, and slowly most of them became Muslims.

Just as the Prophet did not force Islam on people, we have no right to force our beliefs on any one. We have to use the same ways that the holy prophet used. He showed

good character, kindness, justice, nobility and gave good advice to guide people to the truth.

Having said this, it is important to always remember that we believe Islam is the *only true* religion. This is why we invite people to Islam.

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER FAITHS?

In the Qur’ān, Allah (SWT) has on many occasions invited people from other religions to open discussions and debate in a peaceful and logical manner. Allah says in the Qur’ān:

“Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and debate with them in ways that are best and most gracious.” (16:125)

It is important to follow certain rules and etiquettes when we talk to non-Muslims. These include:

- 1- Avoid debating without knowledge: The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt used to train specific people for debating. Often we get into a debate and do not have enough knowledge of our own religion or the other person’s religion. This can cause us to have doubts in our faith. So before we debate with anyone, we have to make sure we have sufficient knowledge about what we are talking about.
- 2- Avoid vain debate: If there is no hope of the other person being able to see or accept the truth, we should not debate with them for the sake of debating. Also, it is not a good habit to argue just to show that we are right. Sometimes, it is good to agree to disagree. It is also important to remember that we should only debate about topics which are important and would make a difference to our lives.
- 3- Avoid Insults and mockery: insulting or mocking a person or a person’s faith does not lead to any positive outcome, and in fact usually makes a person hate us and our faith. Therefore, we should avoid doing this.
- 4- Pray for others’ guidance: whenever we meet with a non-Muslim and he/she is stubborn with their beliefs, we should stop debating in vain and pray to Allah for their guidance. It is only with the Mercy of Allah that a person will believe.

5- Do not take them as role models or leaders: the Prophet (saw) tells us that on the Judgement Day we will be placed in the same group as the person we took as our leader. Therefore, we should always remember never to take a non-believer as a leader or role model in our life, because we may end up going down the same wrong path that they did.

6- Be just and fair to others: we as Muslims have to be kind to all people, including Non-Muslims. Imam 'Ali (as) was passing by a road. He saw an old beggar asking people for help. He asked his companions who the man was *"He is a Christian"*, replied the companion. Imam 'Ali became upset and said: *"You used him as much as he could work for you, and now that he is old and unable, you have left him behind! Make sure you provide him a reasonable life from the treasury."*

Let us finish with an example of a debate between one of our Imams, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) and a non-Muslim person (an atheist, in fact). One of the leaders of an atheist sect had kept some mud and water in a glass bottle. After some days worms grew in it and he claimed to be their creator. One day he came to Imam (as) and said that he had created the worms. The Imam (as) said: *"If you are their creator, tell us how many of them are male and how many female?"* He said: *"I don't know"*. The Imam (as) said: *"If you can't do that, command the worms going one way to crawl in the opposite direction"*. He said: *"I cannot do it"*. The Imam then said: *"All right, then tell us what is the weight of each of them?"* He replied: *"I do not know"*. The Imam (as) eventually said: *"When you have neither any knowledge about them, nor any control over them, then how can you be their creator?"*^v

What we can see in this example is that the Imam (as) used logical reasoning and a sound argument against the atheist. He did not yell or scream at the man, and he did not insult him in any way. We should remember that if we

do ever enter into a debate with a non-Muslim or a person with different beliefs, we should remain calm and logical and not get angry or become abusive in any way.

Review Questions

Q1. When debating with non-Muslims:

- a. It is okay to make fun of them and insult them
- b. We should never make fun of them or insult them
- c. We should never debate with them in any situation

Q2. When it comes to non-Muslims:

- a. We should never take them as role models
- b. We can take them as role models
- c. It is better not to take them as role models

Q3. Islam was spread:

- a. By war and violence
- b. Through peaceful teaching and setting a good example
- c. Neither of the above

ⁱ Nahjul Balagha, sermon 102

ⁱⁱ Living in harmony- Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

ⁱⁱⁱ "The Jews who enter into this covenant shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right as our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches of 'Aws, Najjar, Harith, Jashim, Tha'labah, Aws, and all others domiciled in Yathrib (i.e., Medina) shall form with the Muslims one composite nation. They shall practice in their religion as freely as the Muslims.

The clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Yathrib (i.e., Medina) against all enemies. The interior of Yathrib shall be a sacred place for all who accept this Charter. The clients and allies of the Muslims and of the Jews shall be as respected as the principals..."

^{iv} Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi - <http://www.al-islam.org/how-did-islam-spread/>

^v Akhlaq e-A'imma, Morals & Manners of the Holy Imams by Sayyid Zafar Hasan Amrohi

THE HOLY QURAN

القرآن الكريم

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded of the fact that the Qur'ān is a gift from Allah (SWT)
- Be introduced to the fact that there has never been any distortion in the Qur'ān, and that this is one of the proofs of its authenticity
- Understand the fact that the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic
- Understand that each verse or āyah is a sign from Allah (SWT)
- Be able to find āyāt in the Qur'ān when given the sūrah and āyah number
- Be introduced to three examples of social etiquette from the Holy Qur'ān
- Be reminded of the etiquette of reading and handling the Qur'ān

Discuss the importance of the intellect in Islam and how the Qur'ān encourages us to consider and judge everything based on our intellect,

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

In this lesson, we will talk about the Holy Qur'ān and learn some of the most important things about this miraculous book.

WHAT IS THE QUR'ĀN?

The Holy Qur'ān is a book which contains the actual, exact words of God. Allah (SWT) revealed these words to His Prophet Muḥammad (saw) through the angel Gabriel. Allah (SWT) would send Gabriel to deliver the words of the Qur'ān to the Prophet gradually. This happened over the last 23 years of the Prophet's life. The Qur'ān is a book that was sent by Allah (SWT) to guide us through our life. It tells us:

- The best way to live in this world (that we live in now)
- How to gain Allah's pleasure and avoid His displeasure
- About the Hereafter and other things we cannot see or hear such as angels



THE FIRST REVELATION



Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was a Muslim and a believer in Allah throughout his life. He would often go to the cave of Ḥira to think and to worship Allah (SWT). He used his time away from people to think about things more clearly and try to understand why people did what they did in the busy city of Mecca.

When the Prophet reached forty years of age, he received the first revelation. While he was in the cave of Ḥira, Allah (SWT) sent Gabriel with the first words of the Holy Qur'ān:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

“Read in the name of your Lord Who created” (96:1)

Gabriel asked the Prophet (saw) to recite these words, and once the Prophet did this, Gabriel said: *“You are the Messenger of Allah and I am Gabriel”*. As the Prophet left the cave of Ḥira after this incident, he felt a great sense of responsibility because he had been given such a great task to perform. When he arrived home, he discussed what had happened with his great wife, Khadijah (as). He was worried by the great task that he had been given by Allah (SWT) as he was not sure how the pagans would react. Khadijah tried to help by saying: *“You are kind to your relatives, you treat your guests well, and you are not afraid of going through hardship for the sake of Truth. Allah will help you.”* The Prophet (saw) then felt very exhausted. He went to bed and asked his wife to cover him. While he was wrapped and covered in bed, he received the next revelation, asking him to begin spreading the message of Islam.ⁱⁱ

HOW CAN WE PROVE THE QUR'ĀN IS THE WORD OF GOD?

You might be asking yourself, how can I prove to myself or to non-Muslims that the Qur'ān really is the word of God? Here are some of the main proofs you can use:

- When the Qur'ān was being revealed, people accused the Prophet of making it up himself. So Allah (SWT) told the Prophet to challenge them by asking if any of them could make something similar to the Qur'ān. If they could, then it was possible that the Qur'ān is the word of a human like the Prophet. But if they couldn't, then it must be the Word of God. Of course, no one could write anything similar to the Qur'ān at that time, and till now no one has been able to do such a thing.
- Today, there is only one version of the Qur'ān existing. Any Qur'ān you pick up anywhere in the world has exactly the same words and letters in the same order. No other book in history has been kept the same for 1400 years. Look at the Bible for example, there are hundreds of versions of the Bible now, and it changes every twenty or so years. The fact that the Qur'ān has never been changed over such a long time proves that it is the Word of God. If it was not the Word of God, it would have been amenable to distortion. Furthermore, this proves that the Qur'an has a special protection from God.
- The Qur'ān has many scientific miracles. For example, the Qur'ān says that the universe is getting bigger 1400 years ago, but scientists only found this out 80 years ago. If it really was made up by a human being 1400 years ago, how could he have known that the universe was getting bigger?

THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'ĀN

Now that we know that the Qur'ān is the Word of God, let us see what it teaches us and try to apply it in our life. In this lesson, we are going to look at one of the ways that the Qur'ān teaches us to be better people and try our best to follow this advice.

GOODNESS TO PARENTS

In many different parts of the Qur'ān, Allah (SWT) orders us to be good to our parents. Here is one example:

فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

“(Be good to your parents)...and do not even say ‘uf’ to them and do not be rude to them, and speak to them respectfully”
(17:23)

In this āyah of the Qur'ān, you can see that:

- We are not even allowed to show the slightest rudeness to our parents by saying something so small as ‘uf’. So Imagine if a person yells at their parents, or says something hurtful to them.
- We must always speak to our parents respectfully, no matter what the situation is.

One day, a man came to Imam Sajjād (as) and said that for the last few days, he had taken his mother to Hajj. He had carried her on his back the whole time as he went around the Ka'bah and walked from one mountain to the other. He had fed her, clothed her and looked after all her needs. He then said to the Imam, *“Have I done my duty towards her?”* The Imam (as) said, *“You have not even made up for one of the pains she felt when she was giving birth to you.”* Imagine then how much we have to do to repay our parents for all they have done for us.

In another story, a man heard the Imam (as) saying:

“If a good child looks at his or her parents with love, they will get the reward of an accepted Hajj.” The man was very surprised by this and said, “What if I look at them with love a hundred times during the day”. The Imam (as) replied, “You will get that reward each time you look at them with love.” iii

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is true:

- There is and has only ever been one version of the Qur'ān
- There have been different versions of the Qur'ān as some parts have been removed
- There are a few different versions of the Qur'ān

Q2. The Qur'ān is:

- The exact word of God
- The Prophet's words
- The words of another human being

Q3. The Prophet (saw) received his first revelation through angel Gabriel at the age of:

- 20
- 40
- 63

LESSON 2: FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE QUR'ĀN

In this lesson, we will learn more about the Qur'ān and what it teaches us.

THE QUR'ĀN WAS REVEALED IN ARABIC

The Holy Qur'ān was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad in Arabic. There were a number of reasons for this:

- Arabic is a very eloquent language, and the Arabs were known for their brilliance in eloquence. The Qur'ān was revealed in this language because Allah, the Exalted, wanted one of the major miracles of the Qur'ān to be its eloquence and so He revealed it in a language known for its eloquence
- The people among whom Prophet Muḥammad (saw) lived were Arabs

There are two important points to remember here:

- The fact that we know the original language of the Holy Qur'ān and have access to very early copies of the Qur'ān means that we know exactly what Allah (SWT) revealed to His prophet. Other religions do not have this knowledge, because some of them do not even know the original language in which their holy book was written.
- The fact that the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic does not mean it is a book only for Arabs. It is a book for all people, no matter what language they speak. However, it had to come in some language, and we already discussed the possible reason why Arabic was the choice.

THE QUR'ĀN CONSISTS OF ĀYĀT (SIGNS)

Each segment of the words of the Qur'ān is called an 'āyah'. The literal meaning of 'āyah' is 'sign'. The plural of 'āyah' is 'āyāt' (signs). This name has been given to the segments of the Qur'ān by Allah (SWT) Himself. This shows us that every single expression of the Qur'ān is a sign or miracle from Allah, the Exalted. There are two possible meanings for this:

- Each expression, because it cannot be matched by people, is a sign that these are the words of God and a sign of His Power
- Each āyah gives us a sign or proof about Allah (SWT), the message of the Prophet, the Hereafter or other important things

HOW TO FIND A SŪRAH AND ĀYAH IN THE QUR'ĀN:

Let us do some exercises to get more familiar with the Qur'ān.

As we know from before the Qur'ān has 114 Chapters or 'sūrah'. The number of āyāt in Qur'ān is 6205. Sometimes, when someone wants us to know where an āyah is in the Qur'ān they give us the sūrah number and the āyah number. For example, let us try to find the āyah about being good to our parents that we talked about last week. Remember, the sūrah number was 17, and the āyah number was 23, so usually it would be written like this:

17:23

Now, try to find the following āyāt in your copy of the Holy Qur'ān:

- 78:3
- 10:30
- 2:225
- 3:55
- 4:90

THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'ĀN (CONTINUED)

Like we discussed in our last lesson, the Qur'ān teaches us lessons on how to live our life. The first lesson we learnt was about being good to our parents. Let's see what other lessons the Qur'ān has for us.

HAVING GOOD MANNERS WITH PEOPLE

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا
الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

“Good and evil are not the same. Respond to evil with good, then the one who between you and him there was enmity, will be as if he were a close friend.” (41:34)

In this āyah, Allah (SWT) teaches us that it is very important to treat people with good manners, even if they don't do the same towards us. We should treat all people like this, but we should also have particular respect for fellow Muslims.

If we follow the teachings of the Qur'ān and treat people better than they treat us, even people who do not like us and have a problem with us will become our best friends. The Prophet and the Imams (as) have taught us some ways of showing good manners towards people:

- Smiling to people when we meet them - this will help us enter paradise
- Meeting people with a happy cheerful face - the Prophet says this will make people love us and bring us closer to Allah (SWT)
- Having a good temper and being easy to get along with - this will help us gain Allah's mercy.

The Prophet (saw) himself was famous for these things. He would always be cheerful and smile at people, and people loved being around him because of this. His companions loved to spend time with him and talk to him. The Prophet (saw) would always try to give people a chance to speak to him. He would head to the mosque early, so that if anyone wanted to stop and talk to him or ask him something they would have a chance and he

would not be in a rush. If he saw children on the way, he would smile at them and play with them.

It's very important for us to also follow the commands of the Qur'ān and try to make others feel good by smiling at them, meeting them with a cheerful face and not getting angry at them.

Review Questions

Q1. The expressions of the Qur'ān are called āyāt or signs because:

- No one could reproduce something like even one āyah of the Qur'ān and therefore each one is a sign that this is a Book from God
- Each āyah gives us special knowledge from God about this world or the next
- Both of the above

Q2. The Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic. This means:

- It is a book for Arabic people only
- It is a book for all people, it is only in Arabic because this was the language of the Prophet's people
- It is a book only for those who can learn Arabic

Q3. What does the Qur'ān teach about how we should treat people who treat us badly:

- Treat them back the same way
- Treat them back even worse so they won't do it again
- Repay them with goodness

LESSON 3: THE ETIQUETTE OF INTERACTING WITH THE QUR'ĀN

In this lesson, we will learn the most important rules for reading and handling the Holy Qur'ān. Since the Qur'ān is the Word of God, we need to show a lot of respect towards it when we are handling it or reading it.

THE ETIQUETTE OF HANDLING THE QUR'ĀN

- The words of the Holy Qur'ān should only be touched after performing wuḍū'. This is an obligatory rule.

The following are recommended etiquettes:

Always begin the recitation by seeking refuge with Allah from Satan, by saying the following words:

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

"I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan"

- Then recite

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"In the name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful"

- Even if you know the āyāt by heart, it is better to recite while looking at the words on the page and reading them, as this increases the rewards many times.

- The Holy Qur'ān should be recited without rushing, and in a clear manner.

- When the Qur'ān is being recited, listen attentively and do not eat or talk.

- Do not leave the Holy Qur'ān open and unattended or in a place where it may be disrespected. Recite from it regularly and do not leave it unread on the shelf.

- Worn-out pages of the Holy Qur'ān or paper with verses of the Holy Qur'ān must not be thrown in the bin. They should be maintained in such a way that they remain respected.

PUTTING THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'ĀN INTO PRACTICE

Even though we have learnt some important rules about the Qur'ān so far today, the most important one that we have to remember is that the Qur'ān is not just there for us to read. It was sent to us so that we can put it into practice after reading it. So whenever we read an āyah, we should ask what it means for our life. If we really think about each āyah, we will see that each one can make such a significant change to our life.

THE STORY OF FUḌAYL IBN 'AYĀN

This is a story of a man who really put the words of the Qur'ān into practice. His entire lifestyle changed because of only one āyah in the Qur'ān. Fuḍayl was a gangster. He led a gang of thieves who would threaten people, hurt them and rob them. Fuḍayl himself was very arrogant. He would simply walk up to people and tell them that he would be coming to their house that night to rob them or hurt them. One day, he said this to one family, and the family were terrified because of this. Fuḍayl got ready to rob them and waited outside their house till night came. When it was dark, he began to jump over the fence. However, at that moment, Fuḍayl heard the neighbour reciting this āyah from the Qur'ān:

"Hasn't the time come for those who believe, that their hearts should become humble by the remembrance of Allah and the Truth He has revealed?"^{iv}

When Fuḍayl heard this āyah, it suddenly overwhelmed him and he realized how arrogant he had been. Right at that very moment, he decided to change his entire lifestyle. He jumped back over the fence and left the house without robbing it or hurting anyone. He never robbed or hurt anyone again, and in fact he became one of the most pious people in the history of Islam.

We should try to ponder the words of the Qur'ān and not simply let them pass us by. We should try to apply them to our own lives as much as possible.

Review Questions

Q1. The most important thing to remember when reciting the Qur'ān is:

- We should apply it to our own lives
- We should recite it slowly
- We should remember the rules of recitation

Q2. We need to perform Wuḍū' before:

- Reciting the Qur'ān
- Touching the script of the Qur'ān
- Holding the Qur'ān

Q3. We should recite the Qur'ān:

- Every once in a while
- Only at funerals
- Regularly or every day

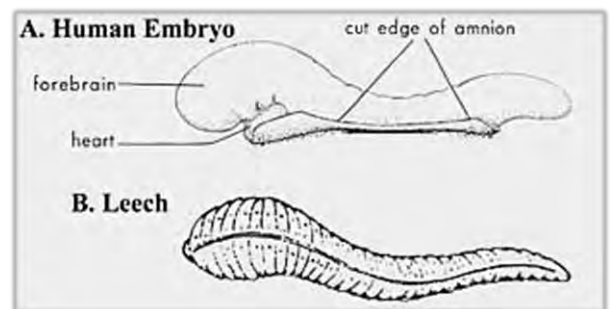
LESSON 4: THE MIRACLES OF THE QUR'ĀN

In our previous lessons, we said that the main proof that the Holy Qur'ān is the word of God is that no one has ever been able to produce anything like it, and that it has never been changed. In addition to this, there are also other proofs for the fact that the Qur'ān is the Word of God. Some of these proofs are scientific and numerical miracles. In this lesson, we will discuss these.

SCIENTIFIC MIRACLES OF THE QUR'ĀN:

One of the main scientific miracles of the Qur'ān is the way it describes a small baby growing inside its mother's womb. Even though at the time when the Prophet (saw) lived, people had no idea about how the baby grew inside its mother's womb, the Qur'ān gives a very detailed description of this.

- The Qur'ān says the baby grows under 'three layers of darkness'. Scientists have confirmed that there are three layers covering the baby if we were to look from the outside: the mother's abdominal muscles, the wall of the womb, and the membrane covering the baby
- The Qur'ān says that the baby then looks like a leech. Scientists have confirmed that a week after the baby is in the womb it actually does look like a leech.
- The next stage the Qur'ān describes is that the baby



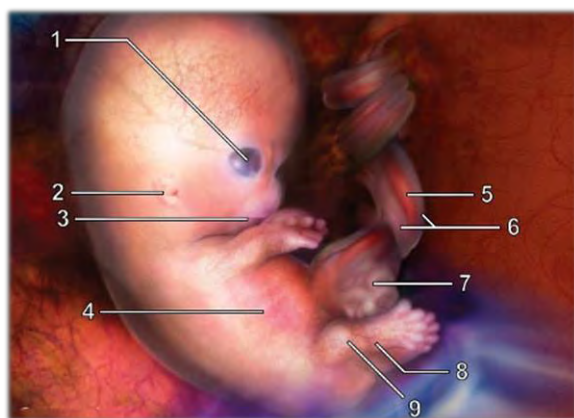
looks like a chewed lump and this has also been confirmed by scientists.

A. Embryo

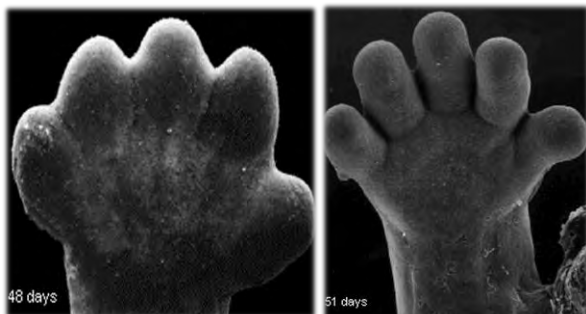


- Then the Qur'ān says that the baby's bones are covered

by flesh and this is also true. A skeleton formed of young bone [made mainly of cartilage at 6-8 weeks] forms before recognizable muscle begins to wrap itself around this skeleton in a process called myogenesis.



Note how by just 7 weeks the young skeleton is beginning to form knee and ankle joints! [8, 9]



The hand by day 48 [7 weeks] with a distinct shape formed by the embryos early skeleton

Just 3 days later it begins to look much more recognisable!

- Finally, the Qur'ān says that the baby develops the ability to hear, see and feel, and scientists have confirmed that a baby gets those senses in that exact order.



“And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, Then We made him a small mixed-drop (nutfa) in a firm resting-place, Then We made the seed a clot (or leech-like clot), then We made the clot a (chewed) lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.” (24:12-14)

NUMERICAL MIRACLES OF THE QUR'ĀN

The number of times that certain words are used in the Qur'ān is also miraculous. If the Qur'ān was the word of a human being, and he said it to people over 23 years, how could he possibly have kept count of all the words he had used over the last 23 years? Therefore, these miracles prove that this could not have been the word of a human being, but the Word of God.

The numerical miracles Of Qur'ān are also many, but let us look at some examples:

1. The word 'hour' is mentioned 24 times, the word 'month' 12 times and the word 'day' 365 times.
2. The word 'man' is mentioned 24 times, as is the word 'woman'.
3. 'Life' is mentioned 145 times, as is 'Death'.
4. Land and sea are mentioned in the Qur'ān. 'Land' is mentioned 13 times and 'sea' 32 times. Now if we add these up we see the total is 45, and then if we see the percentage of each we get the following:

$$32/45 \times 100\% = 71.11111111\%$$

$$13/45 \times 100\% = 28.88888888\%$$

We know today that the percentage of this Earth that is made up of water is about 71% and that which is made up of land is 29%. How could anyone have known this 1400 years ago and then kept such good count of the words they were using?

THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'ĀN (CONTINUED)

Today, we will try to learn another one of the teachings of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān tells us to use our intellect, or minds. In other words, it tells us to think about things properly and make judgements based on sound reasoning, not based on what we feel like, what other people are doing or what we are expected to do by our friends or society.

One of the best examples of the Qur'ān asking people to use their intellect, is the story of Prophet Ibrāhīm (as). Prophet Ibrāhīm's people used to worship statues which they had made themselves. Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) thought this did not make sense, so he said to them:

“Do you worship that which you have made yourselves...when it is Allah who made you and these things that you make?”
(37:95-96)

Even though his argument was logical and made sense, they did not listen to him. He (as) tried another approach. He smashed the idols that the people of his town used to worship, and left only the biggest idol standing with an axe on its shoulder. When the people asked him what had happened, he told the people that the big idol had smashed them. They suddenly said: *“You know these statues do not talk!”* So Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) said:

“So you worship these things instead of Allah, when these things can't benefit you or harm you...don't you think?”
(21:63-67)

Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) tried as much as he could to get his people to think. However, they had seen their fathers and their grandfathers doing the same thing and so they did not want to change, even though they knew they were wrong. They would say to him, *“We found our fathers worshipping them”*.

Also, their desires overcame their intellect. They were used to this way of life. They made money from these statues and they set up their society around these statues. If they agreed with Ibrāhīm (as) all that would change, so they decided to ignore their minds and follow their desires.

We have the same challenge they did. We see our friends doing certain things, and they pressure us to do the same as they do without thinking. They encourage us to dress

in a certain way, to cut our hair in a certain way or to do dangerous or hurtful things just because they do them. When we are in a situation like this, we have to stop and *think*. We have to think about the advantages and disadvantages of what we are about to do and what could happen to us or other people.

Also, we have to always put our mind before our desire. No matter how much we feel like buying that very expensive shoe, or teasing that boy at school, or being the class clown, we have to use our mind and see whether that desire is more important or what our mind is telling us is more important.

Following our desires can lead us to have many problems in our life. Imagine always following the desire to watch television and playing on the computer, and ignoring our mind which tells us to study? We would end up always failing at school. Imagine always following the desire to hit someone when they make us angry and ignoring our mind which tells us to solve the problem a different way? We would probably end up expelled from school and in trouble with the police one day. We have to learn to make our mind stronger than our desires, so that we can be successful in life and stay out of trouble. In any situation in life, we have to remember to weigh up the advantages and the disadvantages of the two things we are choosing between by using our intellect, and then we must choose the one that is right, not the one that our desire is urging us to choose.

Review Questions

Q1. The scientific miracles of the Qur'ān:

- a. Are the main miracles
- b. Are not the main miracles but help us prove the Qur'ān is the Word of God
- c. The Qur'ān has no scientific miracles

Q2. The number miracles of the Qur'ān:

- a. Are the main miracles
- b. Are not the main miracles but help us prove the Qur'ān is the Word of God
- c. The Qur'ān has no number miracles

Q3. The Qur'ān teaches us to:

- a. Use our intellect to think about things
- b. Not follow our desires, and control our desires with our intellect
- c. Both of the above

ⁱ References:

-Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, eHAWZA Course: Sciences of the Qur'an

ⁱⁱThe Message, Ayatollah Subhani, chapter 11

ⁱⁱⁱ Mishkatul Anwar, chapter on goodness to parents

^{iv}The Holy Qur'an Surat al-Hadid, ayah no. 16



IMAMAT

الإمامة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded briefly of the idea of leadership and that leadership is essential to society
- Understand the meaning of Imamat
- Be reminded briefly of the basic beliefs regarding Imamat, including that they are 12 in number, they are sinless through divine protection (ma'sūm), and they are appointed by Allah
- Be introduced to the idea that Imams have other unique characteristics, one being the fact that they were the most superior in all aspects at their time
- Know the names of the 14 ma'sūmīn
- Be reminded briefly to the incident of Ghadīr
- Memorise the two āyāt that were revealed regarding the incident of Ghadīr
- Understand briefly the story of Mubāhalah

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO IMAMAT

In our previous lessons, we discussed the prophets and their roles. In this lesson, we will talk about the leaders of the Muslims after the Prophets. Once Prophet Muḥammad, who was the last prophet, passed away, the Muslims needed a leader, and Allah (SWT) is too Wise and too Merciful to leave them without a leader. Therefore, Allah (SWT) appointed Imams to lead the Muslims after the Prophet (saw) passed away.

IMAMAT

The word 'Imāmat' literally means leadership, but in religious sciences we use it to refer to the people who were chosen by Allah (SWT) to be the leaders of the Muslims after the Prophet (saw) passed away. So we call a leader who is chosen by Allah an 'Imam'. Just like we needed prophets to guide us and teach us how to live our everyday life, we need Imams to do the same thing after the Prophet has passed away.

The Imams have access to the same knowledge that the Prophet (saw) had. They protect this knowledge and teach it to us, so that we can follow the true teachings of the Prophet. The main difference between a Prophet and an Imam is that a prophet receives revelation from Allah (SWT), but an Imam does not. So the main job of the Imam (as) is to protect the revelation that the Prophet (saw) has taught us.

To live our life the way Allah (SWT) wanted, we must follow the Imams and obey them. To do this, we first have to know who they are.

WHO ARE THE IMAMS?

We have discussed the reasons why the community needed Imams. Now, let us see who these twelve Imams are. Allah (SWT) ordered the Prophet to appoint twelve Imams after himself.

"...The Imams will be twelve according to the number of the (Twelve) Leaders of Bani-Israel..."ⁱⁱ

These Imams were:

1 st Imam	Imam 'Ali (as)
2 nd Imam	Imam Ḥasan (as)
3 rd Imam	Imam Ḥusayn (as)
4 th Imam	Imam 'Ali Zainul 'Abidīn
5 th Imam	Imam Muḥammad al Bāqir
6 th Imam	Imam Ja'far al Ṣādiq
7 th Imam	Imam Musa al Kāḍim
8 th Imam	Imam 'Ali al Riḍa
9 th Imam	Imam Muḥammad al Jawād
10 th Imam	Imam 'Ali al Hādī
11 th Imam	Imam Ḥasan al 'Askari
12 th Imam	Imam Muḥammad al Mahdi

THE IMAMS WERE THE BEST PEOPLE OF THEIR TIME

The Imams were the best and most superior people of their time in all aspects, such as faith, morals, knowledge and bravery. This was because they were chosen by Allah, the Exalted and were always connected with Allah (SWT). In particular, the Imams were the most knowledgeable and the bravest people of their time.

KNOWLEDGE

Imam 'Ali (as) was superior in knowledge to all those at his time and he would demonstrate this on numerous occasions. As the Prophet (s) had stated:

"I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate"ⁱⁱⁱ

This was true for all of the Imams (as). Each of them was the most knowledgeable of their time.

BRAVERY

This could be seen in so many incidents at the times of all of the Imams (as). The story of al-Ma'mūn's (the king of the time) first meeting with Imam Muḥammad al-Jawād, the young son of Imam Ali al Riḍa (as) is interesting. Once, when our ninth Imam was only nine years old, he was walking down a street of Baghdad, when al-Ma'mūn and his soldiers came by. All the other children on the street ran away but the Imam did not.

Noting this, the king stopped his carriage and asked, "Young man, why did you not run away like the other children?"

Imam al Jawād (as) replied calmly, "I have not committed a crime, nor was I blocking the way. Why should I have run away or be afraid? And I also know that you will not cause any unnecessary trouble when your way is not blocked."

The king was surprised with this mature reply and asked, "What is your name?"

"Muḥammad...the son of Imam Ali al Riḍa (as)."

THE IMAM OF OUR TIME

The twelfth and final Imam is our current Imam, Imam Muḥammad Al-Mahdi. He is alive with us on this Earth, but hidden from us. He is in hiding because the Muslim community is not ready for him. He is protected by Allah (SWT) and will reappear when Allah wills. Just like Prophet Jesus (as) was protected by Allah and is to come at the end of days, so is the Imam of our time. However, we must not forget that he is living and amongst us. It is important to have love for the Imam and to know as much as possible about him, because he is the Imam of our time.

Review Questions

Q1. The name of our ninth Imam is:

- Imam al Riḍa
- Imam al Jawād
- Imam 'Ali

Q2. The Imams:

- Were very knowledgeable but not the most knowledgeable of their time
- Were the most knowledgeable of their time
- Had average knowledge

Q3. An Imam is chosen and appointed by:

- The people of his time
- Allah (SWT)
- The Imam before him

LESSON 2: THE AHLUL BAYT

Revision Activity

Last week we learned the names of the twelve Imams. Let us see how many of us can remember the names of all twelve Imams.

List the names of the twelve Imams (as):

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.

THE AHLUL BAYT

In our last lesson, we learnt about the twelve Imams and we learnt that they were from the family of the Prophet. While the Prophet himself was alive, there were four other members of his family who were *Ma'sūm*. Three of them were Imams, while the fourth, Sayyeda *Fāṭimah* (as) was not an Imam but still a role model and example for us all. These five people (including the Prophet) have a very high status in the eyes of Allah (SWT). They are:

- Prophet Muḥammad (saw)
- Imam 'Ali (as)
- Sayyeda *Fāṭimah* (as)
- Imam *Ḥasan* (as)
- Imam *Ḥusayn* (as)

Allah (SWT) announces in the Qur'ān that he has purified these five people, and the narrations tell us that they are the best of all of Allah's creatures. The Prophet (saw) has taught us that if we want to be saved from going astray and remain on the right path, we should follow only the Ahlul Bayt (as):

The Holy Prophet (saw) said: "The likeness of my Ahlul Bayt amongst my Ummah (followers) is similar to Noah's Ark. Those who embarked on it were rescued and those who rejected it perished..."^{iv}

LOVE FOR AHLUL BAYT

Allah, the Exalted wants the hearts of the believers to be connected with those whom He loves. This is because we will take those people who we love as role models and so if we love the Ahlul Bayt we will take them as role models and follow them. This is why love for the Ahlul Bayt is considered the very best form of worship.

One way of developing love for the Ahlul Bayt (as) is to be happy when they are happy and sad when they are sad. Imam 'Ali (as) said:

"Surely, Allah has chosen for us followers (Shi'a), who assist us and are happy at our happiness and are sad in our sadness."^v

So in times of sadness for the Ahlul Bayt, such as the anniversary of the martyrdom of the Imams, we should try to respect these occasions and feel sad at this time. In times of happiness, such as the anniversaries of the births of Imams, we should try to celebrate and feel happy.

TRUE LOVE FOR THE AHLUL BAYT

True love for Ahlul-Bayt (as) should not just be in words, but should also be seen in action. At the time of Imam *Ḥusayn* (as), the people of Kufah sent 24,000 letters to the Imam saying that they were prepared to support and defend him. At the end however, there were only 100 or so loyal companions with the Imam. The others all betrayed the Imam either because they were greedy or because they were scared. This shows us that words alone are not enough and that we should prove that we love the Imams through our actions. When we perform good deeds, we are making our Imams happy. When we commit a sin, we are hurting the Imam of our time. Therefore, we should show our true love by pleasing our Imam and making him happy, and not hurting him by sinning.

In a poem by one of our great scholars it is said:

"Our sins strike him like arrows.

When he examines the scrolls of our deeds,

He weeps at our sins."

If we really love our Imam, we will not hurt him with our sins and we will try our best to avoid sinning. Truly loving the Ahlul Bayt is the very best form of worship.

Imam al Ṣādiq (as) said: "Verily, there are various degrees of serving Allah, but love for us, the Ahlul Bayt, is the highest one."^{vi}

THE AHLUL BAYT ARE THE PUREST EXAMPLES OF ISLAM

During the life of the Prophet (saw), there was one particular event that showed the status of the Ahlul Bayt and their closeness to the Prophet. This was the event of Mubāhalah. In the early days of Islam, Najran was a place in which many Christians lived. The Holy Prophet (saw) sent letters to the heads of different countries inviting them to Islam. The people of Najran decided to send a group of their most knowledgeable scholars to the Prophet, to study the claim of his prophecy. When they came they were amazed and silenced by the logic and truth of the Prophet, as he responded to each of their arguments.

But they continued to argue because they were not willing to enter Islam. Then the following ayah was revealed:

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا
نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا
وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

"But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars." (3:61)

This was an order to the Prophet (saw) to challenge the Christians to Mubāhalah. This is when two people both pray to God and ask Him to curse the one who is lying.

The Christians consulted each other and announced their acceptance of the challenge. At the arranged time, the Prophet (saw) presented himself to the Christians. With him were some blessed people. He held Imam Ḥusayn (as) in his arms and he held Imam Ḥasan (as) by his hands. As ordered in the āyah, these were his 'sons'. Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) came behind him, as his 'women', and Imam 'Ali (as) came behind her as the 'self' of the Prophet (saw).

The Christian leaders, on seeing the beautiful and shining faces in front of them became spellbound. Their hearts trembled and they began to shake on seeing the power radiating from Ahlul Bayt (as). Their leader asked someone, "who are these persons, who have come with Muḥammad?" The man told him the names and their relationship with the Holy Prophet (saw).

He could hold his patience no longer and he cried out,

"By God, I am seeing such faces that if they were to pray to God to move the mountain, God Almighty would move the mountain for them. O' you people of Najran, if you contest with Muḥammad in this prayer of invoking curses on the liars, then I warn you that all of you will be destroyed and not a single soul of you will remain on this earth. I feel that it would be better to surrender to them and obey them."

So you can see that when the Prophet (saw) wanted to bring the most pure and good people and the people he loved most, he brought no one but the Ahlul Bayt (as).

Review Questions

Q1. In the event of Mubāhalah, who did the Prophet (saw) bring as 'his self'?

- Himself
- Imam 'Ali (as)
- Imam Ḥasan (as)

Q2. The five members of the Ahlul Bayt are all:

- Imams
- Ma'sūm (divinely protected from sinning)
- Neither of the above

Q3. True love for the Ahlul Bayt means:

- Taking them as role models
- Doing good deeds which please them and avoiding sins which hurt them
- Both of the above

LESSON 3: INTERCESSION

In this lesson, we will continue our discussion about *Imamat* and discuss intercession, one of the more important aspects of *Imamat*.

WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

Imagine that you have a very special request from your father. However, you are too shy to tell him yourself, or think that if you ask him then he might not agree. But you know that if your mother was to ask him for you then there is more of a chance he would accept your request and get you that special gift or give you permission to go on that special excursion. So you go to your mother and get her to ask your dad. This is an example of intercession between humans.

Intercession with Allah (SWT) is when we want something from Allah (SWT) and in addition to asking him directly, we also ask people who are very close to Allah (SWT) to ask on our behalf, so that the chances of our request being accepted are greater. So, if we want Allah (SWT) to forgive us for a mistake or sin, or we have a special need in our life, we should ask Allah (SWT) directly, but also ask him through people who are very close to him and have a special status with Him. Allah (SWT) is more likely to listen to their request and to grant our needs if they intercede for us and ask Allah (SWT) to help us.

Intercession also applies to the Hereafter. On Judgment Day, the Prophets and Imams can intercede on our behalf. God may overlook or forgive the sin of a person upon the request of a Prophet or Imam, out of honour for that Prophet or Imam.

WHO CAN INTERCEDE FOR US?

The people who have a very high status with Allah (SWT) are the Ahlul Bayt (as). They are the very best people who can intercede for us. As we learnt in the last lesson, Allah (SWT) has purified them from all sins and has a special love for them. Therefore, if we want our requests to be granted, we should ask Allah (SWT) through the Ahlul Bayt. Here is an example of asking Allah (SWT) through the Prophet (saw). It is from *Du'ā' al-Tawassul*.

"O Allah I ask you and turn to You through Your Prophet, the Prophet of Mercy, Muhammad (saw). O Abul Qāsim, O Messenger of Allah, O Imam of Mercy, Our Master and

Leader, we turn to Allah, and seek intercession and seek the help of Allah through you..."

EXAMPLES OF INTERCESSION BY THE AHLUL BAYT

There are many examples where the Ahlul Bayt (as) have come to people's rescue by praying to Allah (SWT) on behalf of those people. They can intercede for us both in this world and the needs we have here and in the Hereafter.

Let us look at an example from the Hereafter. On the Judgement day, Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as), just before she enters paradise, will stand at its door of paradise and ask Allah (SWT) to allow her to take with her anyone who had love for her in their heart. Allah (SWT) will then command her:

"Daughter of My beloved! Go back and look for everyone in whose heart was love for you or for any of your progeny; take their hand and lead them into paradise!"

Imam al-Bāqir (as) then says: "By Allah...she will pick her Shi'ah (followers) and those who love her just like a bird picks good seeds from bad seeds..."

As you can see, Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) will intercede for us in the Hereafter if we have love for her and the Imams (her children).

Now let us look at an example of how the Imams can intercede for us in this world. A man who lived at the time of Imam al-Hādī (as) faced a big problem. He was a jeweller and the king of the time, who was a ruthless man, had given him a very precious stone and asked him to decorate it. The king, however, warned the man that if he would damage the stone, he would punish him very severely. Unfortunately, while the man was working on the stone, he accidentally broke it in half. He was petrified now and was sure the king would kill him or throw him into prison.

He went straight to Imam al-Hādī (as) and asked for help desperately. The Imam (as) simply said to him: 'go home and your problem will be fixed'. The man was still very scared and said: 'but what should I do?' Imam al-Hādī (as) said: 'because you have asked me for your need, consider it done'. The man went home and soon after the king called him to his castle. The man arrived at the castle extremely scared. Then something amazing happened.

The king said to the man: ‘my two daughters have been fighting about this jewel that I gave you and they will not stop. It is driving me mad. I want you to cut the jewel into two equal halves, decorate each half and bring it to me’. The jeweller, amazed at this request, agreed and went home very happy. He went straight to the Imam (as) to thank him and thanked Allah (SWT) very much for helping him through the holy Imam (as).

SINCERITY

Now that we know the importance of Imamat, let us learn one of the main lessons that the Imams taught us. One of the main teachings of the Imams was to do things purely for the sake of Allah, and to not wreck our intention by doing things for the wrong reasons such as pride, a good reputation or money. One of the main reasons that the Imams have such a high status and are able to intercede for others is that they were sincere and did things only for the sake of Allah (SWT).

It is not how much we do, but the quality of what we do. So for example, if someone goes to the Mosque and prays 1000 prayers but only so others can praise him, then this action is nothing and is not sincere. But someone who prays only one prayer but sincerely for the sake of God, this person’s prayer is worth more than one who prayed a lifetime but for the wrong reasons.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) tells us that those who are best in their deeds are those who are the most sincere and not those who do the most. Then he tells us:

“It is harder to continue performing an action until it becomes sincere than to do the action itself. Sincerity is when you should not want anyone to praise you for your action except Allah, the Almighty...”

There are many examples in the lives of the Imams (as) where those who claimed to be the Shi’ah of the Imam were tested. When these tests came, it was seen that they were not sincere- that is, they were not doing things for the sake of God only and so they went astray.

At the time of Imam Ḥasan (as) thousands had pledged allegiance to defend the Imam. There were up to 20,000 soldiers on the side of the Imam, while on the side of Mu’āwiyah there were possibly 60,000. But when Mu’āwiyah, May the curse of God be upon him, deluded them with the simple pleasures of this life they stopped supporting the Imam. The state of the ‘followers’ of Imam

Ḥasan (as) was so dreadful that his own army began to steal and destroy his own camp, with narrations telling us that the prayer mat of the Imam was ripped off from underneath him during his prayer! Why did all this occur? Because the people at the time of the Imam, said mere words, they announced that they loved the Imam, but they were not sincere. When things became difficult, they showed they were not doing things purely for the sake of Allah, and actually had other motivations which stopped them from doing the right thing.

One day, a man came to Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) and said: “O Imam, you have ten thousand supporters just waiting for you to rise up, and they will support you”. The Imam (as) responded: “Are you sure of this,” and the man said that he was. There was a large furnace burning near where the Imam (as) was sitting. The Imam (as) asked this man who had come to see him “to prove your support to me, follow my orders and enter this large burning furnace”. The man was stunned and began to make excuses. He was amazed at how the Imam (as) could ask him to simply enter a large burning furnace and he refused.

Soon after, one of the Imam’s close students entered. The Imam (as) asked him to “enter the furnace”. The student simply took off his shoes and entered the burning furnace. The man who had been sitting with the Imam (as) was stunned by this. He ran over to the furnace to check on the Imam’s student, and to his amazement, found him sitting comfortably in the furnace. The fire had disappeared and he was safe and sound.

The Imam (as) said: “You claim I have ten thousand supporters, but how many supporters do I have who are like this man?”

This student of the Imam (as) showed his real sincerity. His intentions were purely for the sake of Allah and he was willing to do anything for the sake of his religion without thinking of any other motivations. However, most other people would not be able to do such a thing, because they are not so sincere.

We should all try to be as sincere as we can in our actions and try to do things for the sake of Allah (SWT). As much as we can, we should practice doing things for Him and not for own benefits and interests, especially when it comes to religious issues.

That is why Imam al-Jawād (as) said:

“Sincerity is the best worship.”

Review Questions

Q1. Sincerity means:

- a. Doing things correctly
- b. Doing a lot of something
- c. Doing things purely for the sake of Allah (SWT)

Q2. We ask the Ahlul Bayt (as) to intercede for us:

- a. Because they are the closest people to Allah (SWT)
- b. Because if they pray for us with Allah, our request is more likely to be answered
- c. Both of the above

Q3. The Ahlul Bayt (as) can intercede for us:

- a. Only in this world
- b. Only in the Hereafter
- c. Both in this world and the Hereafter

ⁱ Ehawza, Semester 1, Course 3 (Lectures 10-11)
The Message, by Ayatollah Ja'farSubhani pg. 200-202
http://www.jafariyaneews.com/articles/2k4/20mar_azadari.htm
The Holy Qur'an
ⁱⁱ[al-Majlesi, Beharul-Anwaar, vol. 36 p.290]

ⁱⁱⁱDua al-Nudba, Mafatiful Jinan
^{iv} *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 27, p. 113
^v (Ghurar al-Hikam, Vol: 1/ pg.: 235)
^{vi} *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 27, p. 91



JOURNEY TO THE UNSEEN WORLD

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the fact that there are things in the world which we know exist but which we cannot see
- Discuss the fact that we know about these things through our 'soul' 'or heart', and that just like we can feel physical pain and pleasure we also feel spiritual pain and pleasure
- Understand the fact that just as our body has foods which benefit it and foods which harm it, our soul has the same
- Discuss the idea that we are born with a pure soul which inclines towards pure goodness, but that our sins slowly corrupt it
- Know examples of things which are harmful to the soul and things which are beneficial to the soul
- Discuss that if we always follow our desires and do what we wish then we will be embarrassed and humiliated
- Know that the human being is really the soul and moves from this world to the next through death
- Know that death is a natural process in all living things and life is only a loan from God
- Know that death is the beginning of the journey to the Hereafter, and that this needs continuous preparation
- Understand that the type of death depends on belief and actions in this world
- Know that there is questioning, punishment and reward in the grave
- Know what the provisions for the Hereafter are, and effects of the remembrance of death in this life
- Understand that death is real and that what knowledge we have of Barzakh, death and resurrection can only come from divine revelation
- Know that Barzakh begins upon death and that the Sakratul Mawt, the pressure of the grave and the questioning in the grave is part of Barzakh as well
- Understand that Barzakh is the journey one takes till they are brought to life on the day of resurrection
- Understand that Barzakh has some properties of the world and some of the hereafter
- Understand that the Reality of our actions in this world will be manifested in Barzakh
- Understand that if we wish to obtain the benefits of Barzakh and avoid the hardships, we have to supervise ourselves and protect our actions till the day of judgement. The best way to ensure this is to be conscious that Allah is always watching.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: THE SOUL

Over the next few lessons, we will be discussing the last of the fundamentals of our religion, which is the Resurrection. Our belief in the resurrection can be summarized like this: after we die, our body is destroyed in the grave, but our soul lives on in another world called Barzakh. After the world of Barzakh, we are brought back to life, our body and soul are reunited and we experience the Day of Judgement and then enter either Hell or Paradise. The first thing that we need to discuss in this topic is the soul.

There are different words used for the soul in the Arabic language. The most important ones that you need to know are:

- Al-Rūḥ: this refers to the soul by itself, when it is separate from the body
- Al-Nafs: this refers to the soul, when it is still with the body

THE WORLD BEYOND THE SENSES

Before we begin to discuss the soul, we need to have a short discussion about the world in which we live. Most of us think mostly about the things we can see, hear, smell or feel in this world- things we can experience with our senses. However, there are also many things in this world that we do not experience with our senses, such as emotions. We know for example that we feel love, anger or fear, but we can't see or touch these things, we can't say 'they are here' or 'they are there' or 'they are this big' or 'that small'.

We call the things that we can see, hear, smell, touch or taste material things. These things have shape, colour and size.

We call things that we cannot perceive with our five senses but which we can experience or think about *immaterial* things. These have no shape or size or colour.

Let's listen to the following story:

One day, a teacher was teaching his class and said:

Teacher: can you see my arm? Yes? That means it exists.

Can you see my nose? Yes? That means it exists.

Can you see God? No? That means He does not exist

One of the students raised his hands and asked if he could add something. The teacher allowed him.

Student: Can you see the teacher's ears? Yes? That means they exist

Can you see the teacher's hair? Yes? That means it exists.

Can you see the teacher's intelligence No? That means he has no intelligence!

The class laughed at this, but the student was trying to make the point that there are many things that exist, like our 'mind' which we think with, or our 'heart' which we feel emotions with, that we cannot see. Just because we cannot see or touch something, it does not mean that it does not exist.

THE SOUL

Now that we know there are things in this world which exist but which we cannot see, let us talk about the soul. The soul is what makes you 'you'. Think about the following situation. You have a friend called Zayd. As Zayd grows up, he loses all the cells in his body and gets new ones. In fact, Zayd changes so much in appearance that if you had not seen him for a few years and then ran into him on the street, you might not even recognise him. Now all the cells in his body are different to the old ones and he looks totally different. Is he still Zayd? Yes.

So if it is not his body parts or the cells of his body that make Zayd 'Zayd' what is it that makes him 'Zayd'? What makes a person who they are is their soul. The soul is something that we can't see or experience with our five senses, but it is something that we all know is there within us. We know that a person remains the same no matter what happens to their body because something

about them stays the same. That something is the soul which is the 'spirit of life' that they have.ⁱ

THE PURE SOUL

Every human being is born with a pure soul. Allah (SWT) teaches the soul of every person what is good for it and what is harmful to it. This is why we know without being told that certain things, like being fair to people are good and certain things like being unfair to people are evil.

However, when our soul is attached to our body, it has two different paths that it can take. On the one hand, the soul encourages a person to sin and follow their desires. If a person does this, they will end up worse off than an animal. On the other hand the soul has good instincts, which encourage a person to do good and to make themselves as perfect a person as possible. This can make a person better than an angel.

The purpose of our life is to struggle against our instincts to do evil things, and to follow our instincts that tell us to do good things. Look at the following situation:

A poor woman with young children has two neighbours, one to her left and one to her right. Both of her neighbours know that tonight this poor woman has no food for her children. The neighbour on the left thinks about giving her food for the night to her neighbour. A battle starts between her good instincts and her evil ones. The good instincts tell her to stay hungry herself so that her neighbour's young children who need the food more can eat, but her evil instincts tell her that she should look after herself before anyone else. She eats the food herself and sleeps that night with a full stomach, but there is a voice that tells her she did something that was not quite right. The neighbour on the right has the same battle between her good and evil instincts. She makes a different decision though. She brings her food for her neighbour's children to eat. She sleeps hungry that night, but she knows that she did something good and that makes her feel good and happy inside.

In every situation in life, we have a choice to follow the good or evil instincts or our self. This is like a battle that we have to fight all of the time to make sure that we do not go down the wrong path and end up worse than animals. Let's spend the rest of the lesson looking at some tactics and strategies to win this very important battle.

THE PAIN AND PLEASURE OF THE SOUL

There are certain things that hurt our soul and cause it to lean more towards evil things. These things are the sins which Allah (SWT) has forbidden us to do. There are other things that give pleasure to our soul and which cause it to lean towards good things. These things are the obligations and recommendations which Allah (SWT) has ordered us to perform. Let us look at how sins affect our soul:

- *Imam al-Sadiq (as) says: "There is no man who does not have a white spot in his heart. When he commits a sin a black spot emerges from this spot. If he repents, the blackness goes away but if he sinks in sin and continues to sin the blackness keeps on increasing till it surrounds the whiteness of the heart completely. When the white spot is totally covered by the blackness, the owner of this heart will never revert towards goodness."*ⁱⁱ
- Being disrespectful to one's parents makes the soul so impure that Allah (SWT) does not speak to that person on the Judgement Day and does not allow him to even smell paradiseⁱⁱⁱ
- Listening to or playing haram types of music makes a person's soul rot just as moisture causes mould to grow on things. It makes a person lose their dignity and positive shyness^{iv}
- Lying causes a person to 'lose the taste of faith' in Allah (SWT) and the religion of Islam^v

So just like we worry about which food tastes good, and which food is good for us and which is bad, we should also worry about what is good for our soul and what is bad for our soul. Imam Hasan (as) says he is surprised by a person who worries about his physical food for his body, but does not worry about the immaterial food for his soul. ^{vi} Just think and reflect on how these things affect you after you have done them, how do you feel after you lie, after you listen to haram music or after you disrespect your parents?

THE DANGER OF DESIRES

Our desires lead us to do things which are harmful to our soul if we do not control them by following Allah's laws. We need to control and tame our desires before they go out of control and overcome us. The problem with following our desires is that they never end. One desire leads to the next and we never feel like we have enough. Imam Musa al-Kāḍim (as) says:

"This world is like the water of the sea. No matter how much a thirsty person drinks from it, it only makes him thirstier until it kills him".^{vii}

We often think that if we achieve some of the goals we have in this world like being rich or being popular or being comfortable or being famous, then we will be happy. Unfortunately, a lot of people reach these goals but feel miserable because they find they just want more and more, and no matter how much they get they can't seem to be happy. Look at how many actors and pop singers commit suicide, go into depression or lose their families and destroy their lives.

Also, the more evil things we do, the more we get used to them and the more difficult it becomes to change. After a while, we lose the sense of what is good and what is evil, and it becomes normal to do evil things. Therefore, we must be very careful to avoid evil things in the first place.

TRAINING THE SOUL

We need to make sure that we are always battling against our evil desires, and training our soul by keeping it away from bad things like lying, haram music and disrespect of parents. In our next few lessons, we will discuss some of the best ways to train our soul for this major battle.

Review Questions

Q1. Immaterial things are those that:

- We cannot touch, hear or see but that exist
- Things that do not exist
- Things that we can see, touch and hear

Q2. Which of the following is true?

- We are all born with a pure heart or soul, but we taint it by sinning
- We are all born sinful, but we have to train ourselves to be good
- We are born neither pure nor sinful, but somewhere in between

Q3. If a person follows their desires:

- They will always have fun
- They will be destroyed by following their never-ending desires
- They will live happy in this world but suffer in the next

LESSON 2: DEATH

Death is a normal fact of life and is a natural process in all living things. In the previous lessons we learnt that the human body also has a soul, which is really who we are. Our body is only like a tool to help us perform actions and achieve goals. Once Allah, the Almighty decides, our soul enters another world. Just like we entered this world through birth, we enter another world through what is called death.

In this lesson, we will learn more details about the process of death and how we have to prepare for it, so when we enter that other world, we will be ready.

DEATH

This is the time when the soul comes out of the body. For example, when the driver is in the car, it moves, but when the driver comes out of the car, the car stops. Death is the same for the body. When the soul comes out of the body, the body stops working, and the soul is the one that is alive and it is the source of life and movement for the body.

Another way to explain it is this: suppose there is a room having many holes of different shapes in the wall. If a lamp is placed in it, its light will go out through those holes. But as soon as that lamp is moved out of that room it will make the room dark. Similarly, so long as the soul remains in the body it shows life and movement through the organs like eyes and ears etc. But as soon as this lamp of soul is removed from the body, all its parts also stop and the body becomes dark^{viii}.

LIFE: A GIFT FROM GOD

All of us know that we did not come into this world by ourselves. The source of our life and the giver of this life is God. Similarly, it is God that can and does take life and allows us to enter the world of the Hereafter.

All living things that have been created will at one point die. Death is seen in plants, animals, insects, birds and all other living things. One of the basic rules of the creation of physical things is that whatever comes into being will also have to die. The created do not live forever.

When God takes our soul from our body, He does not take our life because our life is in the soul which moves

from one world to another. It is only our body that stops working because we no longer need it for our work in the other world. Everyone is happy when they hear of the birth of a new baby, similarly those who have gone to the next world are happy of our arrival there, but we are sad because we leave the people in this world behind.

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

God, The Almighty created us out of His mercy for a purpose. In order for us to achieve this goal, we have to perform certain actions.

Our life in this world is like a school, where God tells us what to do for us to be successful in this world and the future, where we will live forever – in the Hereafter. If we don't follow His rules, we will always remain miserable and live in difficulty in both worlds. So for us to live a happy life, we must prepare for this journey, follow the rules of God and learn our lessons so we can pass the exams and use our provisions to continue on our journey. Also, because this journey has already started, and we don't know when we will die, we have to always prepare and collect what will be useful for us in the next world.

TYPES OF DEATH

Human beings generally will face either of two deaths –

1. A painful and difficult one or
2. An easy and pleasant one.

The type of death we will face depends on our actions and beliefs in this world. If we were good people, who did good things and repented when we did wrong and if our beliefs were truthful, then by the grace of Allah, we will face an easy and pleasant death. It is important to note that the ease or pain involved in death cannot be seen physically. For example a martyr may seem to have a painful death when in fact he may only experience pleasantness.

But those people who are proud, who did not believe in Allah, the Exalted, in the Prophets, Imams and day of Judgement because they didn't want to obey, and those who do bad deeds deliberately and did not admit their mistakes– these people generally face a difficult and painful death as part of the punishment for their behaviour and beliefs in this world.

Here is a description from Imam 'Ali (as) about the death of a person who did not care about the Hereafter:

"What is happening to them cannot be described. The pains of death and grief for losing (this world) overtake them. Their limbs become paralysed and their complexion changes. Then death increases its grip over them.

In some, it stands in between him and his power of speaking although he lies among his people, looking with eyes, hearing with his ears, with full wits and intelligence!

He then thinks over how he wasted his life and in what (activities) he passed his time. He recalls the wealth he collected and how he had blinded himself in getting it, and how he got it through legal and illegal means. Now the consequences of collecting it have overtaken him. He gets ready to leave it. It would remain for those who are behind him. They would enjoy it and benefit by it...Death would go on affecting his body till his ears too would behave like his tongue (and lose function). So he would lie among his people, neither speaking with his tongue or hearing with his ears..."

HOW TO PREPARE FOR DEATH

The Holy Prophet and the Imams (as) were sent to us as guides to teach us what to do and what not to do in this world, for the sake of our happiness both here and in the Hereafter.

According to an old story, a man made an unusual agreement with the angel of death. He told the angel that he would be willing to accompany him (as though he had a choice) only if the angel would send him a notice well in advance. The agreement was made. Weeks became months and months became years. One bitterly cold night, as the man sat alone thinking of his success in life, the angel tapped on his shoulder.

"You are here too soon" the man cried out. "You sent no messenger. I thought we had an agreement!" The angel whispered "Notice your hair, once it was full and black, now it has streaks of silver in it! Observe your face in the mirror and see the wrinkles. Yes! I have sent many messages through the years! I have kept my promise. I am sorry that you are not ready for me but the order of Almighty Allah (SWT) cannot be changed!"

The way to prepare is to constantly remember that you will one day die, and that day could be anytime. Death does not know the difference between young and old, it comes to anyone. So by remembering it often, we can

always prepare for it and judge our actions and thoughts according to that.

We can prepare for death by starting to practise good habits and actions at a very young age or immediately. This early preparation makes good actions as our habit and therefore it prevents us from being deceived by Satan. Many people have grown old and regretted that they should have done this or that good deed when they were younger – but it doesn't help – it only makes them sadder.

One of the best ways is to be good to our parents, kind to our teachers and respect our elders. It is these simple things that will take us far and give us much success in both worlds.

By constantly remembering death, we are able to focus on our end and make sure that we don't get distracted with things that take us away from our goals and objectives which are to serve Allah, The Exalted. Remembering death also helps us overcome unlawful temporary desires that cause us loss in this world and the next.

Review Questions

Q1. Death is:

- a. The end of our life
- b. When our soul leaves our body and moves to the next world
- c. When our soul dies

Q2. The best way to prepare for death is to:

- a. Organise funeral insurance and life insurance
- b. Repent and start performing good actions
- c. Neither of the above

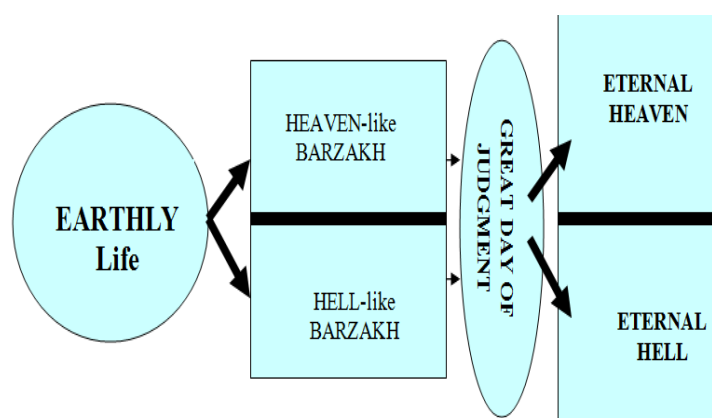
LESSON 3: BARZAKH

Practical: students should begin to keep an action diary, where they record all their good deeds in one column, and all their lesser good deeds in other columns...the teachers can suggest different formats for the diary or table and students should keep this as a completely confidential record for their own self-supervision

INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson, we discussed the last stages of our life in this world and learnt that death is the separation of our soul from our body. Once we die, our body is placed into a grave in the ground and decomposes. However, our soul remains alive and continues its journey without the body. After separating from the body and leaving this world, the soul enters the world of Barzakh, a world which is a barrier between this world and the Hereafter. The souls of human beings remain in this world until the Resurrection Day (yawmul qiyāmah) when everyone will be brought to life again and have their soul joined to the same body they had in this world.

In this lesson, we will discuss the world of Barzakh. Of course no one has visited the world of Barzakh and come back, so the only information we have about this world comes from the Holy Qur'ān and the narrations from the Holy Prophet and the Imams. We will see what life in the world of Barzakh is like and how our actions in this world will affect our life in that world.



THE WORLD OF BARZAKH

After we die, our souls enter the world of Barzakh and remain there until the Day of Judgement. In the world of Barzakh, our souls are attached to bodies similar to the bodies we have in this world, but which are not quite the same. Just like we need a physical body for our soul to

exist in this world, we need a body compatible with the world of Barzakh for our soul to exist in that world. Even though the body is different, it is somehow similar and people will still be able to recognise each other in the world of Barzakh.^{ix}

In the world of Barzakh, we begin to see the results of our actions. The believers who performed good deeds have graves that are very similar to Paradise, while the disbelievers and those who did evil deeds have graves that are very similar to Hell. Imam al-Sajjād (as) was asked about Barzakh, and he said

“The Barzakh is the grave. By Allah the grave is either one of the Gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell.”^x

“(In the world of Barzakh) the souls of the believers are in chambers in Paradise eating and drinking from its foods and drinks. They visit each other saying: Our Lord! Start the Hour (the Day of Judgement) for us to fulfil what you promised us (Paradise). The souls of the disbelievers are exposed to the Hell-Fire, saying: Our Lord! Do not start the Hour for us and do not fulfil your promise to us.”^{xi}

THE QUESTIONING IN THE GRAVE

One of the first things that we experience in the world of Barzakh is a tough interrogation. Two angels, named Munkar and Nakīr visit the person who has just died and begin to ask him some questions. In this new world, this person cannot lie or get around the questions; he or she always tells the truth to these angels because in this world it is the heart that speaks. Our Imams (as) have told us that this is one of the toughest stages of life after death^{xii}.

The two angels ask the following questions:

- Who is your Lord?
- Who is your prophet?
- What is your religion?
- Who is your Imam?

ACTIONS COME TO THE RESCUE

The interrogation by Munkar and Nakīr is very frightening. However, good deeds that we have performed during our life can come to our rescue and help make this stage easier.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says: “When a believer enters the grave, his prayer will be on his right side and his charity will be on his left side, while goodness stands over him. His patience will be standing to one side. When the two angels come to interrogate the person, patience says to prayer and charity: stay at your friend’s side, but if you are not able to help him then I will come and stand at his side (to help him)”.^{xiii}

THE PRESSURE OF THE GRAVE

In the world of Barzakh, there is a particular type of punishment that almost all people experience. It is called ‘the pressure of the grave’. Certain actions cause this type of punishment. The main ones are:

- Bad conduct with one’s family at home
- Being careless about Najasah^{xiv}

There is a famous story from the time of the Prophet (saw) that tells us a little about the pressure of the grave. It is the story of Sa’ad ibn Mu’ādh. Sa’ad was one of the leaders of the Muslims and one of the closest people to the prophet (saw). Unfortunately, Sa’ad was wounded severely by an arrow during the Battle of Ḥṣāb and passed away soon afterwards. During his funeral procession, the Prophet (saw) would carry different corners of his coffin, moving from one corner to the next, as a mark of great respect for him. The Prophet (saw) even said there were many angels who had come to join the procession of Sa’ad. When they reached the graveyard, the Prophet (saw) himself entered the grave and prepared it for Sa’ad. When Sa’ad’s mother saw all this, she was very happy and congratulated her son. However, the Prophet (saw) said that it was too soon to speak, because Sa’ad would likely suffer the pressure of the grave. When asked why this would happen even though the Prophet had so much respect for him and he was such a great man, the Prophet (saw) responded: ‘He was ill-mannered with his family’.^{xv}

We can see from this story that the pressure of the grave is often a way for Allah (SWT) to purify people from some of their sins before the Hereafter. Even though Sa’ad was a great person, he would still be

tortured in the grave because of his ill manners towards his family, and this would hopefully purify him and save him from punishment on Judgement Day.

SUPERVISING OUR ACTIONS

As we can see from the lesson so far, we will reap the rewards of our actions in the world of Barzakh, even before we reach the Day of Judgement. This is another reminder for us about how important it is to be very careful about the actions that we perform in this world. Allah (SWT) watches over us all of the time, and has complete knowledge of all of our actions. After we die, we will see the consequences of all our actions and we will be questioned about them.

The Prophet (saw) and the Imams have advised us to keep a very close eye on our actions in this world, so that we are not surprised at our book of actions in the Hereafter and so that we are conscious of our actions so we can do more good and avoid evil actions. At the end of every day, we need to look back at our day and assess our actions: what good did we do, what bad did we do, and how can we improve?

One good way of doing this is to make a private actions diary. This is a diary that you can use to record your actions for the day. Before you go to bed each night, open this diary in private and draw up a table for your actions that day. Write the good actions in the good column, the sins or mistakes in the bad column, and also have a column on how you can improve your actions in the coming days. Here, we have provided a sample table. You can use this one or you can make your own table, but make sure that at the end of every day, you are assessing yourself and all of your actions.

Review Questions:

Q1. Which of the following is a major reason for feeling the pressure of the grave?

- a. Not caring about Najāsah
- b. Being rude to one’s family
- c. Both of the above

Q2. Barzakh is:

- a. The Day of Judgement
- b. A world between this world and the Day of Judgement
- c. The world we lived in before we entered this world

Homework

	My good Deeds	My Bad Deeds	How I can improve tomorrow
Saturday			
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

ⁱ Journey to the Unseen World, lecture 2

ⁱⁱ Greater Sins, Ayatollah Dastaghaib, chapter 2

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, chapter 8

^{iv} Ibid, chapter 17

^v Ibid, chapter 19

^{vi} Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 84

^{vii} Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 311

^{viii} **Ayatollah Dastaghiab Shirazi**, The Hereafter – Ma’ād, Chapter 1

^{ix} eHAWZA, Islamic Theology, lecture 12

^x al-Borhan 5:355

^{xi} Behar 6:234, al-Kaafi 3:245

^{xii} Mostadrak, 2:113

^{xiii} Al-Kafi, 3:240

^{xiv} Journey to the Unseen World, lecture 15

^{xv} Ibid.

RESURRECTION

المعاد

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that we will be brought back to life, body and soul, on the Resurrection Day
- Understand that the Hereafter has a number of stages, and know some of these stages
- Understand that we will see the reality of actions in the Hereafter
- Discuss the differences between this world and the Hereafter
- Understand that this world can mislead us into forgetting about the Hereafter but can be used to get eternal happiness
- Be reminded that both our body and soul will be resurrected and will live in Hell or Heaven
- We will see our actions in the Hereafter, as they will make our Heaven or our Hell
- Discuss the fact that Hell and Heaven have levels
- Learn some examples of people who are promised Hell and people who are promised Heaven
- Discuss fear and hope as two motivators in our life
- Discuss the balance between fear and hope

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: THE RESURRECTION

As you know, we have been discussing the last fundamental of our faith in the previous lessons: The Resurrection (al-ma'ād). So far, we have discussed the stage of death as well as the stage of Barzakh, and now we come to the resurrection itself.

THE RESURRECTION

Resurrection means bringing back to life, and in this lesson we will discuss how after our death and after we pass through the world of Barzakh, our body will be brought back to life and joined together with the soul again. This happens in the world of the Hereafter (al-ākhirah). Before this happens, all creatures will die, even the angel of death himself. The only Being to remain alive and who never dies is Allah, the Eternal (SWT).

When we are brought back to life in the Hereafter, our soul will be joined again to exactly the same body that it had in this world. We will then go through various stages in the Hereafter where we are judged by Allah (SWT), and given the just rewards of our actions. After we go through these stages, we enter either Hell or Heaven, depending on our actions.

One of the important things to remember is that even though we all die at different times, we are all brought back to life together in the Hereafter. Everyone is raised from their graves at the same time, and people are judged not only individually, but also as communities and groups.

We know from the Holy Qur'ān and the words of our prophets and Imams (as) that the day of resurrection is a frightening day with many horrors, to such an extent that the Qur'ān says:

“Surely they see (that day) as being far, but We see it as near, on the day when the skies will be like molten copper and the mountains will be like tufts of wool, and friends shall not ask about each other, even though they will see each other. The guilty person would sacrifice his children to be saved from the punishment of that day, and he would even sacrifice his wife and his brother and his nearest relatives who used to shelter him, and everyone on earth, wishing that they might save him...” (70:6-14)

The Holy Qur’ān also says:

“Therefore leave them alone to go on with their lies and their games until they meet that day which they are promised. On that day, they will come out from their graves hurrying, as if they are rushing towards a target, their eyes will be cast down, they will be completely humiliated, this is the day that they were promised” (70:42-44)

STAGES IN THE HEREAFTER

THE BOOK OF ACTIONS

As we mentioned, after we are raised from our graves, we will pass through a number of stations of judgment. One of these stations is the station of the Book of Actions. Each person will be given their book of action, which will contain every detail of their actions. No action is forgotten and no action is ignored. Every deed, small or large will be recorded in this book. The believers will be given their books in their right hand, whilst the disbelievers are given their book in their left hand or behind their backs. Let us look at how the Holy Qur’ān describes the reactions of people when they receive their book of actions:

“On that day, you shall be exposed, none of your secrets will remain hidden. At that time, those who are given their book in their right hand will say: ‘here, read my book, I knew that I will come to this day where I would have to account for my actions’. This person will live a life of pleasure...As for the people who are given their book in their left hand, they will say: ‘I wish my book was never given to me, and I did not know what my account was. I wish this was my end. My wealth has not helped me, my power has gone from me’. Take him, and put a chain on him, then throw him into the burning fire...” (69:18-31)

Remember that no action of ours will be ignored by the angels who record our actions, even though we might forget about some of these actions. Once, an elderly religious man passed away. After his funeral, his

daughter, who was not very religious, had a dream about him. In the dream she asked him how he was. He said: ‘I am fine, but every Friday morning they come to me and put a burning hot iron on my tongue’. His daughter was horrified by this and said: ‘but father, you were a good man’. He said: ‘yes, but when I was young, I would go out on Friday mornings with my friends and pick fruit from people’s gardens without asking their permission, and then I would eat this fruit. So now, every Friday morning I am punished for that action’. Even though the elderly man had forgotten about his actions when he was young, the angels who recorded his actions had kept the record of that action in his book of deeds, and he was being punished for that action.

AL-SIRĀT: THE PATH

Al-*Ṣirāṭ* literally means the path. This is another stage in the Hereafter and is another reflection of our actions. It is a path that passes over the fire of Hell. The people who believed and stayed on the right path in this life will be able to pass over this path. Some will cross as quickly as lightning because in this world they always stayed on the right path, while others will stumble, fall and get up again, because this is how they were in this world. The disbelievers will fall from Al-*Ṣirāṭ* and plunge into the fire of Hell.ⁱ

THE ACCOUNTING

Another of the stages of the Hereafter is the stage of accounting (al-*Ḥisāb*). Every person will have to stand before Allah (SWT) to answer questions about all of his action.

Here, it is important to note that God does not have a body. As we learnt in previous units, God is not material like us. So we won’t see Allah in a physical sense of seeing.

At this stage of the Judgement Day, no action is ignored and no action is forgotten. Allah (SWT) reminds us that this day is coming very soon, and that we should not ignore it. The best way to prepare for it, as we have learnt, is to take account of our actions now so that our accounting will be easier in the Hereafter.

“The time of accounting has come near to men, but they are heedless of it and turn away” (21:1)

When we are being questioned by Allah (SWT), we cannot deny or lie about our actions as we do in this world. This is firstly because Allah (SWT) has seen them and has full knowledge about them, and secondly because our own organs will testify against us. If we sinned with our tongue, our tongue will testify to all the sins we performed with it. If we sinned with our hands or our ears, they will also testify against us. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) says:

“On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did.” (24:24)

The Holy Qur'an also says:

“And they shall say to their skins: Why have you testified against us? They will say: Allah Who makes everything speak has made us speak” (41:21)

Review Questions

Q1. On the Day of Resurrection, our soul:

- Will be brought back to life but our body will not
- Will be brought back to life and joined to a different body
- Will be brought back to life and joined to the same body we had in this world

Q2. The Book of Actions in the Hereafter:

- Has a record of all of our deeds, large or small
- Has a record of only our major deeds
- Has a record of only the things we did in public

Q3. Al- Al-ŞIRĀṬ means:

- Heaven
- Hell
- The Path that people must cross on the Judgment Day

LESSON 2: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER

As we learnt in our last lesson, the world of the Hereafter is very different to the world in which we live now. When we compare this world to the Hereafter, we see two major differences:

- In the Hereafter we see the reality of everything. In this world, we often don't see things the way they really are. For example, a boy might think that real happiness is in being popular. However, when that boy becomes popular he realises that he is still not happy and there is something else out there that he is missing. So he goes in search of the next thing that he thinks will make him happy, but again he finds that this is not what he really wanted. This is why the Holy Qur'an says that this world is like a mirage that a thirsty person thinks is real and will satisfy him but never actually does. The Hereafter, though, is the world of realities, where things appear in their real form. If a person works for a pleasure in the Hereafter, he will receive exactly what he hoped for (and more) and he will be truly happy and pleased with it.

The Hereafter is the world of truth, where no one can lie or make false excuses or escape punishment, whereas in this world people use all sorts of tricks to try to justify things to themselves and escape justice. No one can lie in that world because their body parts, their very actions, the places they were at etc...are all witnesses against them. More than that, the Judge Himself, Allah (SWT), is also the witness of our actions, and so there is no way we can get away from our deserved punishment.

- In the Hereafter, things last forever, whereas in this world things last only a short time. If a person enters Heaven, they will be there forever, and if they enter Hell, they may also be there forever. The pleasure of Heaven lasts forever, while the pain of Hell lasts forever. However, in this world, both pain and pleasure last a short period of time only, especially in comparison to forever.

RESISTING THE TEMPTATIONS OF THIS WORLD

Allah (SWT) asks us to think about those differences and to give up the short-lasting fake pleasures of this world for the real, ever-lasting pleasures of the next world, and to go through the short-lasting pains of this world to save ourselves from the ever-lasting pain of the next world.

However, the world around us is so tempting sometimes that we ignore this fact and we start chasing after the world. How comfortable we are, how much fun we have, how rich or famous we are become more important than preparing ourselves for the Hereafter.

Abu Dhar al-Ghifāri was one of the companions of the Prophet (saw). He was a very pious man. One day someone asked him: ‘Abu Dhar, why do we hate death?’ He replied: ‘you hate death because anyone would hate moving from a mansion to a wreck. You have built up this world of yours until it is like a mansion, but you have ignored your Hereafter so much so that it is a wreck’. Abu Dhar is advising us to make sure we do not get carried away with this world and ignore the Hereafter because in that case, when we die it will be as if we are going to live in a wreck and that is something none of us want.

The other important thing we need to remember about this world is that it draws us in very cleverly or cunningly. The more we get into it, the more it sucks us in. There was a man who lived at the time of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) who would always be at the mosque and pray in congregation with the Prophet (saw). He was a poor man who could not find a job. His poverty made him very sad and he would always ask the Prophet (saw) to pray for him so that he would no longer be poor. The Prophet (saw) would ask him if he was sure this was what he wanted, and he would say that yes, he was sure he wanted to no longer be poor. So the Prophet (saw) prayed for this man and a little while later this man managed to start up a business in raising sheep and selling them. He started with one sheep. Then the one sheep became two and so on. Little by little, this man’s visits to the mosque became less and less. The Prophet (saw) would ask what was happening, and he would say that he was busy with his business. After a while, his business grew so large that he stopped visiting the mosque completely and would never see the Prophet (saw) anymore. This man, who used to be poor, was now wealthy and had more than enough to look after himself and his family, but he could not make time for the mosque or for his religion anymore, because the world had drawn him in and was not letting him go. The more wealth he got, the more he wanted. The bigger his business got, the bigger he wanted to make it and so he could never stop working for this world. Eventually, the Prophet (saw) sent some people to collect Zakāt- wajib charity- from this man. When they reached his farm and

asked him for the Zakāt he refused to even pay it!. This upset the Prophet (saw) very much. This man, who used to be at the mosque all the time, had now been completely sucked in by this world, and he could no longer save himself.

This is why Imam al Kāḍim (as) tells us:

“This world is like seawater. The more a thirsty person drinks from it, the thirstier he gets, until it eventually kills him”.ⁱⁱ

Now that we know all this, there is something very important that we need to remember. This world and all the good and pleasurable and fun things in it are not evil. They can be good or evil depending on the way we use them. This world is a fantastic thing if we use it to get rewards and prepare for Heaven, but is a terrible thing if we use it for evil purposes and prepare for a life in Hell. The important thing to remember is to not get attached to this world, so that we never forget that the point of being here is to get ready for the Hereafter.

Practical Activity

To practice breaking our attachment to this world, and to see what we mean by loving this world, we will perform an activity. Next week, bring something that you own and to which you are very attached. We will each bring something and then we will leave it for one week at a safe place in the centre. Let’s see how we go without it for one week. Why are we so attached to such things? Will this affect our life in the Hereafter?

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is true?

- The pleasure of this world and the Hereafter both last forever
- The pleasure of this world lasts a short time, while the pleasure of the Hereafter lasts forever
- The pleasure of this world lasts longer than the pleasure of the Hereafter

Q2. In this world:

- We get everything that we want and end up happy
- We often get what we chase but find it does not make us happy
- We never get what we want

LESSON 3: HEAVEN AND HELL

In this lesson, we will discuss Hell and Heaven, the two final destinations in our Journey to the Unseen World. We will also discuss fear of Allah and hope in Allah, the two characteristics that Allah (SWT) has given us to help us avoid His punishment and to gain His rewards and blessings.

HEAVEN AND HELL

We have all learnt in previous years that our final destination in the journey of life is either Heaven or Hell. After we are brought back to life from the grave, both our body and soul will be brought together again. The soul returns to exactly the same body, and then it goes through the stages of the Hereafter (that we talked about in our last lesson) until it reaches either Hell or Heaven. Therefore, in Hell and Heaven, it is both our soul and body that either suffer together or live comfortably and happily together.

Let us see what more we can learn about Heaven and Hell.

HELL AND HEAVEN ARE THE DIRECT RESULT OF OUR ACTIONS

The actions that we perform in this world have direct results in another world. Do you remember when we were learning about dhikr (remembrance of Allah SWT)? In that lesson, we mentioned the following story:

When the Prophet (saw) was raised to Heaven, he saw a group of angels laying gold and silver bricks for castles in Heaven. Every now and then, they would stop. He asked them why they stopped. They said that their supplies ran out. When the Prophet (saw) asked what their supplies were, they said: 'when a person on earth says 'subhāna Allah, wal Ḥamdu lillāhi wa lā ilāha illa Allāh wa Allāhu Akbar' we receive our supplies from him'. We can also build trees for ourselves in Heaven by saying dhikr.ⁱⁱⁱ At the same time, it is important to remember that we can destroy these buildings and trees through our sins. If we do not control our anger or jealousy, for example, a fire burns these heavenly trees.

We can see from this story that it is almost as if our actions have a photocopy in the world of the Hereafter. Whatever we do here has a reality that is created over

there. Our good actions build good things for us in Heaven, but our evil actions build places and forms of torture for us in Hell. Look at this example: we know from the narrations that backbiting is the food for the dogs of Hell^{iv}. Therefore, when we backbite, we are in fact providing energy for those dogs to attack us and terrify us. Here are some other examples:

- deceiving people brings to life flames of the Hell-fire
- not paying charity is a snake that hangs around the neck of the person eating his flesh^v

We can see from all these examples that our actions are in fact creating comforts and blessings for us in Heaven, or terrors and tortures for us in Hell.

HELL AND HEAVEN HAVE LEVELS

Both Hell and Heaven have a great number of levels. Some narrations tell us that the levels of Heaven are equal to the number of the ayaat of the Qur'an^{vi}. The levels of Heaven and Hell are also a result of our actions. Let us look at the following story to get an idea of the levels of Heaven:

A great scholar of recent times had a very religious, loyal and helpful wife. After both he and his wife passed away, one of their children had a dream about them. In the dream, the child saw the mother and asked how she was. She said: 'I am in Heaven and I am happy'. The child asked: 'where is our father? Do you see much of him?' The scholar's wife said: 'O no, your father is on a much higher level of Heaven than me, I only get to see him some of the time'.

We can see from this story that although two people are both good and both enter Heaven, they will be in different levels of Heaven according to their actions. Let's look at another example:

One day, the Prophet (saw) told his companions that a person who 'loses his 'Aṣr prayer' will be 'mawtūr'. They asked what he meant by this, and he said: 'the person who delays his 'Aṣr prayer until it is so late that the sun is about to set will be alone in Heaven without his family, and will have no wealth in Heaven either'.^{vii}

This story shows that the better we perform our obligations, the higher the level of Heaven we gain, and the more comfortable we will be there.

Remember that in all levels of heaven, even the lowest, the person would be living in eternal bliss, and would get all of their desires and whatever they wish for.

We will learn more about Heaven and Hell in our next lesson.

Review Questions

Q1. The reality of refusing to pay charity is:

- Being poor in Hell
- Being thirsty in Hell
- A snake that hangs around the neck, eating the flesh of the person in Hell

Q2. Heaven and Hell

- Have very little to do with our actions
- Are a reward or punishment for our actions in this world
- Are the direct reflection of our actions in this world

Q3. Heaven:

- Has only one level
- Has only seven levels
- Has a large number of levels, perhaps to the number of the *ayāt* of the Qur'ān

Let us look at one example of a person who is promised Heaven by Allah (SWT) Himself in the Holy Qur'ān. A long time ago, in a city called Antakia, Allah (SWT) sent prophets to guide people to worship Allah (SWT) rather than the idols they were worshipping. These people did not listen to their prophets and in fact, after a while, planned to kill them. They all gathered in the town square to attack the prophets. At this time, a man who lived on the outskirts of the city- called *Ḥabīb al-Najjar*- rushed to the centre of Antakia to stop his people from doing this horrible deed. He told them: '*why do you not follow these prophets who want nothing from you, and why do you worship idols who do not benefit or harm you, when Allah (SWT) is the one who created you?*' They became very angry with his words, and according to the narrations, they either trampled him to death or stoned him to death. As they were murdering him the only thing he was saying was this: '*O Allah, guide my people*'. Some narrations say that by distracting his people like this, he allowed the prophets to escape while others say that the people of Antakia also killed their prophets. Once this man died from the attack of these people, Allah (SWT) says the following to him:

"it was said to him: 'enter Heaven'. (The man said): 'I wish my people knew how my Lord had forgiven me and made me one of the honourable'"^{viii} (36: 26-27)

This man received a direct entry into Heaven because:

- he believed in Allah (SWT) and the message His prophets brought
- he performed a good action by defending the prophets and trying to guide his people

In contrast to this amazing man, his people met the opposite fate. Due to their terrible actions, Allah (SWT) destroyed them with a severe punishment. People enter Hell because of their disbelief and arrogance against the truth. These people ignored the truth no matter how obvious it was and never truly believed in Allah (SWT). They also performed evil actions like killing prophets.^{ix}

We have to remember that whatever our background is, even if we are learned about Islam, or we come from a religious family, at the end, Allah will judge us on our own actions and our faith. If we have been doing bad things and defying Allah's commands we will be punished and if we have been obedient to Allah and doing good things we will be rewarded accordingly.

LESSON 4: LEARNING MORE ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL

THE PEOPLE OF HEAVEN

In the Qur'ān, Allah (SWT) says that there are two main criteria that allow a person to enter Heaven. These two things are always mentioned together in the Qur'ān and are never separated. Without these two things, no one can enter Heaven. The two criteria are:

1. faith in Allah (SWT)
2. doing good deeds

Memorisation Task

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ يَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

*"And give good news to those who believe and do good deeds:
they shall have gardens from under which rivers flow..."*

(2:25)

A SHORT TOUR OF HEAVEN

Let us take a short tour of Heaven by looking at some of the pleasures promised to the people of Heaven:

- living in comfortable, cool gardens with various types of food
- being in the company of good people whom we love
- having a choice of special Heavenly drinks like Heavenly milk
- never feeling any pain or sadness again

A SHORT TOUR OF HELL

Now let us have a brief look at life in Hell:

- having to eat food that does not satisfy and that tastes and smells awful and in fact burns the insides
- being among terrible people who dislike one another
- when thirsty, being given drink that is boiling and tastes awful
- always being in pain and never being relieved from it

FEAR AND HOPE

As we have learnt so far, Heaven is a place in which we would all hope to be, and Hell is a place which we all fear. Allah (SWT) wants us to always have the fear of Hell and other punishments, as well as hope in Heaven and other rewards.

Part of being a believer is to have absolute fear of Allah's punishment and to have absolute hope in His Mercy. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) tells us that Luqmān gave the following advice to his son:

“Fear Allah such that you believe that even if you bring as many good actions as all the humans and jinn He may punish you, and have so much hope in Him such that if you came with as many sins as the humans and jinn, He may have mercy on you”.^x

We need always keep this balance between hope and fear. When we feel that we are going well and performing good actions, we need fear to balance out the hope for reward and to stop us from becoming arrogant or thinking ‘we have made it’ or ‘we are the best’. When we are not doing so well and may be committing sins we need hope to balance out the fear of punishment and stop us from feeling hopeless and giving up on ourselves. Let us finish the lessons with two short stories:

- *A man called Ḥabīb ibn al-Ḥarith came to the Prophet (saw) and said: ‘I am a man who commits many sins’. The Prophet (saw) said: ‘repent’. He said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I repent but then I go back to the sin’. The Prophet (saw) said: ‘every time you sin, repent’. He said: ‘what if my sins become many?’ The Prophet (saw) said: ‘the Mercy of Allah is greater than your sins, O Ḥabīb ibn al-Ḥarith’.*^{xi}

This story shows that we have to always keep the hope that Allah will forgive us but at the same time we need to always remember the possible punishment of our sins and therefore always try to repent and avoid the sin.

- Prophet Dawūd (as) would be so much in fear of Allah (SWT) that people would come to visit him thinking he was sick. However, he was not sick; it was just that he was so much in fear of Allah (SWT).^{xii}

Similarly Imam al-Sajjād (saw) would turn yellow out of fear when he heard the adhān or when he was performing his Wuḍū’.

These two stories show just how much we should both fear Allah and hope in Allah (SWT).

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is true?

- We should have more fear of Allah than we have hope in Him
- We should have more hope in Allah than we have fear of Him
- We should hope in Allah and fear Him in equal amounts

Q2. The people of Heaven are those who:

- Have faith
- Have faith and do good deeds
- Do good deeds

ⁱ Al-Ma’ad, Dastghaib Shirazi, section on Siraat

ⁱⁱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 311

ⁱⁱⁱ Journey to the Unseen World, lecture 24

^{iv} ??

^v Ibid

^{vi} Haydari, lectures on Divine Justice, lecture 55

^{vii} Wasailul Shia, chapter 9 from the chapters on the prayer times, narration 10

^{viii} The Holy Qur’an, 26:26-27

^{ix} Tafsirul Amthal, commentary on Surat Yasin

^x ??

^{xi} Mishkatul Anwar, no. 595

^{xii} Ibid, no. 592



PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص)

LESSON 1: THE EARLY LIFE OF THE PROPHET

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Recall that the Prophet's parents passed away when he was very young and he was brought up first by his grandfather then his uncle.
- Understand that even before being made Prophet, Muḥammad was trustworthy and truthful and these were his titles.
- Know briefly some of the customs of the Age of Ignorance
- Understand that the prophet got married to Khadijah and had a daughter named Fāṭimah
- Understand that Islam does not accept that a person be treated differently because of his skin colour, gender, family relations etc...
- Remember the description of the First revelation and the be aware of the incorrect narrations
- Understand that the Holy Prophet ascended the heavens (me'rāj) in many different occasions
- Understand that the Holy prophet was 'unlettered' and in fact this is a virtue for him
- Understand the difficulties the Prophet and some of his companions faced during the period of the spread of Islam including the loss of his first wife and uncle and the treaty that the Holy Prophet made with the pagans at that time
- Understand that the Prophet taught and practiced the highest levels of patience against calamities
- Appreciate the loftiness of patience from its benefits
- Know the reasons for the migration of the prophet to Medina and the way the Prophet left Makah
- Know the history of the battle of Ūḥud
- Understand that in-order to protect faith from being corrupted, it is compulsory on us to speak up when something wrong is happening (even if it means fighting for our rights) and assist in the doing of good
- Know the definition of 'amr bil ma'rūf' as enjoining what is good and 'Nahy 'anil Munkar' as forbidding the evil and also
- Understand briefly the benefits of enjoining good and forbidding evil and the harms of not doing them
- Understand the very basic rules of this especially not humiliating others in public.

As we learnt in the previous lesson, the Holy Prophet lost both his parents when he was at a very young age. His father 'Abdullāh passed away two months before his birth and Āminah, his mother, died when the Prophet was only five years old. About two years later, Abdul Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Prophet died and the Prophet was looked after and grew up in the house of his uncle, Abu Ṭālib. With such losses at such a young age, it can be said that Allah (SWT) was carefully preparing His Prophet for a future full of hardships.

WHAT WAS THE COMMUNITY LIKE BEFORE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD?

The Arabs at that time were mostly uncivilized in their behaviour. Here are some examples:

- They used to worship idols made of wood or stone. They would make the idols themselves and then worship them, which of course did not make any sense
- If they had daughters, they would often bury them alive. They were ashamed of having daughters
- They used to mistreat women and not give them any rights or respect.
- They drank excessive amounts and were often drunk.
- They used to engage in long and violent wars for no good reason
- They were very racist and used to look down upon certain races and take them as slaves

The Holy Prophet on the other hand was so well-mannered that even the hard-hearted and selfish people in Mecca were naturally attracted to him. His exemplary character shone like a bright flame in a dark cave. Whenever they used to travel, they would leave their valuables with the Prophet in trust, and on returning they would collect all their belongings without anything missing. They also realised that whenever the Prophet spoke, he spoke only the truth. For these reasons, they gave him the title of 'al-Amīn' which means 'The Trustworthy' and 'al-Ṣādiq', meaning 'The Truthful'. The Prophet made no distinction between rich and poor, male and female, black and white. He treated everyone equally and also preached the same.

THE PROPHET'S MARRIAGE AND THE BIRTH OF HIS ONLY CHILD FĀṬIMAH

When the Holy Prophet became a youth, Abu Ṭālib arranged a job for him with Khadijah's trade caravans. Khadijah, who was one of the wealthiest and most generous persons among the Quraysh, readily accepted the Prophet because she had heard of his sublime character. She sent a caravan with the Prophet to Syria and asked two slaves to accompany him and to report back to her about the Prophet. When they returned from Syria, Khadijah noticed that the profit generated from this caravan more than all previous trips made and also, the slaves testified to the spirituality and greatness of Muḥammad. The trip to Syria made Khadijah increasingly interested in the Prophet's skill and courage. Because of her piety, she wanted to marry only a pious man and she saw no one appropriate other than Muḥammad. Soon after, they married, and a few years later, Fāṭimah (as) was born from this marriage.

THE PROPHET DID NOT TOLERATE DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

One of the main parts of the Prophet's message was that everyone, whether male or female, black or white, rich or poor, Arab or foreign, were all equal and only the more pious would enjoy greater superiority over others in the eyes of Allah. The Prophet did not differentiate between these classes and this was most annoying to the arrogant people of the Quraysh. They were asked to sit and dine together with the poor, accept their proposals of marriage to their daughters and also to share positions of leadership with them.

These messages were not taken very well by that community because it meant that they would have to change their old habits and attitudes at the onset of accepting Islam. The oppressed loved these teachings but the oppressors detested them. The short incident below is an example of how particular the Prophet was in ensuring that equality prevailed.

Once the Prophet was in the presence of a man who had two children. The man kissed one of his children but did not kiss the other. The Prophet asked: 'Why do you not treat your children equally, you kissed one but not the other'. The man replied: 'But one of them is sleeping, O Messenger of Allah!'. The Prophet (saw) said: 'Even so, you should always do your best to treat them equally. The story demonstrated the care the Prophet took to treat people equally.

Another story that also highlights this point:

A rich person dressed in clean and elegant clothes arrived in the presence of the Prophet (saw) and sat down before him. A short while later, a poor person wearing old and tattered clothes, appeared, saluted the assembly, and sat down upon finding a vacant place.

The Prophet (saw) had taught them that all Muslims were brothers and in an assembly one should sit wherever one finds a place, regardless of any status. Now, it so happened that this poor man was seated next to a very rich man. The rich man felt very disturbed and tried to collect the edges of his dress around himself, so that the poor man didn't touch them.

Having observed this, the Prophet (saw) remarked to the rich man: "Did you fear that the poor person next to you might make your clothes dirty?"

"No," replied the rich person.

"Then why did you behave so?" asked the Prophet (saw).

"I admit that was the most undesirable thing to do. It was an error and I confess my guilt. I have a companion (soul) that makes good deeds appear evil to me and vice-versa. O' Prophet of Allah! As a punishment for this reprehensible act of mine, I gift half of my wealth to the poor man."

Turning to the poor man, the Prophet (saw) inquired, "Do you accept the offer?"

"No, O' Prophet of Allah," said the poor man.

People present were taken by surprise, they thought that the poor man was a fool, but then he explained: "O' Prophet of Allah, I refuse to accept this offer because I fear that I might then become arrogant and treat my Muslim brothers in a bad way as he just did to me."

Another problem in the Arab community was that they treated people of different races (for example Africans) badly. To show them this was a wrong thing, the Prophet (saw) gave the very important task of reciting the Adhān to Bilāl, an African slave. When people complained that Bilāl's accent was not pure, the Prophet (saw) said that Allah (SWT) considers the words of Bilāl to be in pure Arabic because of his faith.ⁱ

Review Questions

Q1. Before the Prophet brought the message of Islam, the Arabs used to worship;

- One God
- The Idols
- The Sun

Q2. Throughout his life, the Prophet was known as:

- The Strong and Tough
- The Truthful and Trustworthy
- The Powerful and Wealthy

Q3. When it comes to racism, Islam teaches us that:

- Racism is always wrong
- Racism is sometimes okay
- Racism is okay because every country is different

LESSON 2: LIFE IN MECCA

THE FIRST REVELATION

"By the age of forty, the Prophet (saw) would often go to the Cave of *Ḥirā* to worship Allah and to think about life. On one special day, while the Prophet was in the cave, he received the first ever message from Angel Gabriel. The following *āyah* was read to the Prophet:

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created (all things). He created man from a clot of blood! Recite, your Lord is the Most Bountiful One, Who by the pen taught man what he did not know" (96: 1-5)

After receiving this first revelation, the Prophet (saw) felt a great responsibility on his shoulders. The first people he told about this were Imam 'Ali (as) and Khadijah, his wife. They were also the first to believe in the message of Islam.

THE FIRST PUBLIC CALL TO ISLAM

After the Prophet received the message, he began spreading the message first to his family, near relatives and then to the masses. One day he took his place on a high rock and said aloud: "*Yā Ṣabāḥah*"!ⁱⁱⁱ This was the traditional call to warn people of danger.

The Holy Prophet's call received attention. Some persons belonging to different families of Quraysh ran up to him. Then he turned to those assembled there, and said: "O people! Will you believe me if I tell you that your enemies have taken positions on the other side of this hill and intend to attack your lives and property?" All of them said, "We have never heard anything false from you throughout our lives". Then he said: "O people of Quraysh! Save yourselves from the fire. I cannot do anything for you in the presence of Allah. I warn you of a painful torture!" Then he added: "My position is like that of a watchman, who observes an enemy at a far-off point and immediately runs to his people for their safety and warns them of the impending danger".^{iv}



Class Activity

Students should be split into two groups. Each group should spend some time planning and then acting out the above scene. The teacher should allocate extra roles as well (e.g. for Imam 'Ali, Ja'far etc...)

THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

When the powerful men of Quraysh heard this message, they immediately began to fear for their positions and wealth. They began to plot and plan to stop the Prophet from spreading his message. They tried all kinds of things to stop the Prophet and the Muslims:

- They would torture them in all sorts of ways
- They stopped non-Muslims from dealing with the Muslims and even kicked the Muslims out of Mecca at one stage
- They tried to bribe the Muslims, including the Prophet, with promises of power and wealth

None of these tactics worked and the influence of Islam and the Prophet (saw) continued to spread.

PATIENCE

Considerable emphasis has been given to patience both in the Qurān and aḥādīth and it has been described as the main ingredient of success. We often find ourselves in situations where, if we don't react in a patient way, our actions can have disastrous consequences.

BENEFITS OF PATIENCE

In many situations in life, patience is our best friend.

Think of when your parents are arguing and the house is full of tension and you feel terrible. In this situation, you have two options. You can also get angry and become rude or disrespectful towards your parents and blame them. Or you can be patient and try to tolerate what is happening and make it better by treating everyone nicely and trying to make peace.

Or think of when school work is hard and you really don't feel like doing homework. You can give up in this situation, or you can think of the benefits of studying and doing your homework and be patient and finish it.

Patience is important in other situations too: to avoid fights at school, to make and keep friends and to be successful in life in general.

Another area where we can practice patience is when we feel small within ourselves because other people seem richer, smarter, thinner or taller than us. Assuming that you were a very short person and every person makes fun of you. Will complaining about your height to yourself or to your parents make you any taller? In fact this way you will feel even worse.

The best way to approach this situation is to thank Allah (SWT) for whatever He has given you and be grateful for the bounty because anything from Him is beautiful. Practice patience in difficult circumstances and believe that there are others in worse situations. If you think and act so, Allah will open up innumerable ways for success both in this world and the hereafter. Consider the narration below:

"Patience is that a man bears whatever afflicts him and swallows his anger"^{2v}

Islam has become the fastest growing religion in the world today simply because in the face of all adversaries and hardship, the Holy Prophet remained patient.

HOW CAN ONE DEVELOP PATIENCE?

The best way to develop patience is to remember:

- That God sees everything that is happening to us and has a plan for us
- That God will not leave us alone and will always come to our rescue
- That God has promised that He is with those who are patient
- If we are not patient, we will only cause more problems for ourselves and make our troubles worse

Review Questions

Q1. When the Prophet (saw) invited people publicly to Islam for the first time:

- a. Most of them believed in him
- b. Most of them rejected his call
- c. Most of them were undecided

Q2. One of the ways of gaining patience is to:

- a. Know that Allah (SWT) has a plan for us and He only wants the best for us
- b. If we are not patient, we will only cause more problems for ourselves
- c. Both of the above

LESSON 3: THE MIGRATION

In this lesson, we will discuss the Prophet's migration to the city of Medina.

HIJRAH (MIGRATION)

The enemies of Islam realised that the only way they could stop the message of the Prophet from spreading further was to kill him. Therefore, they decided to attack him in the night when the Prophet would be asleep. The Holy Prophet was informed of this plot by Allah (SWT). He and Imam 'Ali (as) made a plan to save the Prophet (saw). The Prophet escaped from his house at night without being seen, while Imam 'Ali (as) slept in the Prophet's bed. This made the disbelievers think the Prophet was in his bed, while he was in fact making his way to Medina. When they charged into his room in the morning, they found Imam 'Ali (as) and realised they had failed.

When the Prophet reached Medina, he received a very warm welcome and everyone was delighted to see him. One of the first things that the Prophet did was to develop a bond between the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār (the supporters). The Muhājirīn (immigrants) were the Muslim emigrants from Mecca who had followed the Prophet to Medina to safeguard their faith and to escape persecution from the infidels. They had become Muslims early on in the mission of the Prophet and had faced all the hardships we talked about in our last lessons.



The Anṣār were the people of Medina, who welcomed the Prophet and his companions and made so many sacrifices for the success of Islam. Medina was to become the new home of the Prophet.



At the time of the Hijrah most of the Muhājirīn were poor and possessed nothing. However, when they arrived in Medina, the Anṣār shared everything they had with the Muhājirīn. They shared their property and wealth with them, and even helped them to get married.

Allah, the Exalted describes these two groups in the Qur'ān as follows:

"And as for the first and foremost of the Muhājirīn (emigrants) and the Anṣār (helpers), and those who followed suit in good deeds; Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him; and He has prepared for them gardens watered by running streams, therein dwelling forever; that is a supreme triumph." (Holy Qur'an 9:100)

A MUSLIM NATION AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

Once the Prophet (saw) moved to Medina, he began to establish a Muslim community. The social rules of Islam were slowly introduced to people and gradually things like alcohol, gambling and immodesty were removed from society. People began to live an Islamic lifestyle, including daily prayers, fasting, paying charity and so on. At the head of this Muslim nation was its leader and guide, Prophet Muhammad (saw).

At first, the Muslims of Medina faced attacks from the disbelievers of Mecca. After years of fighting, the Muslims were successful in defending Medina from all the attacks. After this, a peace treaty was signed with the Meccans and the Prophet used the time of peace to spread Islam to the rest of Arabia. Tribe after tribe began to convert to Islam, and soon Islam had spread throughout Arabia.

'AMR BIL MA'RŪF' AND 'NAHY 'ANIL MUNKAR'

Encouraging others to good and forbidding others from doing evil are obligatory acts in Islam. Whenever we see something bad happening, it is our obligation to speak out against it. This might be something as simple as encouraging someone not to waste water, or as great as protesting against one country oppressing another. This helps to keep people from doing evil things. If we were all quiet when we saw evil happening, then it would spread and there would be no way of stopping it.

Imagine you are at school and there is one smaller boy who is constantly bullied for wearing glasses, being a 'nerd' or being 'uncool'. You know inside yourself that he is hurt by this bullying and that it is wrong. You know that if everyone stood up to the bullies then they would stop and leave this boy alone. Unfortunately, most people would join in the bullying and laugh. In this situation, you have to make a very important decision. You have a very important opportunity to enjoin good and forbid evil.

Class Activity: Role Play

Split the class into three groups and act out the above situation. Encourage the students to use their creativity to come up with ways of handling such a situation.

THE CORRECT WAY OF ENJOINING GOOD

We should also remember that when we do correct someone or teach them something, we should do it in a polite way that won't hurt them. Let us listen to the following story:

When they were young, Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusain (as) saw an old man performing Wuḍū' incorrectly. Caring for the feelings of the old man, and instead of correcting him directly, the Imams asked the man to judge who between them as to who was performing the more correct Wuḍū'. After the Imams finished their Wuḍū', they asked for the judgement. The old man felt embarrassed and admitted that he was the one who was doing his Wuḍū' incorrectly and that theirs was perfect!

The Prophet (saw) dedicated his life to enjoining good and forbidding evil. He fought against many evils like oppression, discrimination, slavery, poverty, cheating and he enjoined many good deeds like charity, justice and good manners. This is one of the most important obligations in our life.

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as) says:

"Verily the enjoyment of good and the prohibition of evil is the path of the Prophets, the way of the righteous, a great obligation on which all other obligations are founded and on which ideologies are secured, by which earnings are made lawful, by which inequities are redressed, through which the earth flourishes, justice is sought from enemies and all affairs are kept upright"^{vi}

Review Questions:

Q1. The Prophet (saw):

- Migrated from Mecca to Medina
- Migrated from Medina to Mecca
- Never migrated

Q2. The people of Medina who helped the Prophet (saw) were called the:

- Tawwabin
- Anṣār
- Muhajirīn

Q3. When enjoining good:

- It is okay to humiliate someone
- We should never humiliate a person
- Neither of the above

-
- ⁱ The Message by Ayatollah Ja'far Subhani
 - Prophet Muhammad (saw) – A concise biography by Mahmood Hussein Datoo
 - eHawza – Semester 3, course 1 – Muhammad, a mercy to the worlds – Lesson 10
 - <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/hazrat.mohammed.asp>

ⁱⁱ References

The Message by Ayatollah Ja'far Subhani
Prophet Muhammad (saw) – A concise biography by Mahmood Hussein Datoo
<http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/hazrat.mohammed.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ Instead of ringing a bell of danger the Arabs used these words and generally began alarming reports with them.

^{iv} The Message – page 205.

^v (Mizanul Hikmah, no. 3449)

^{vi} (Mizanul Hikmah, no. 4734)



IMAM ALI

امام علي (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn one of the titles of Imam 'Ali (as) and its meaning
- Learn the concept of Submission to Allah
- Understand Islam as a religion of submission
- Use the quality of submission to Allah in Imam 'Ali and learn from it

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

IMAM 'ALI (AS): AN INTRODUCTION

BASIC FACTS

Name – 'Ali

Title – Amīrul Mu'minīn- the Commander of the Believers

Other name - Abul Ḥasan

Born - 13th of Rajab, in the Holy Ka'bah

Father's Name - Abu Ṭālib

Mother's Name – Fāṭimah bint Asad

Died – at the age of 63 years, in Kūfah, on the 21st of Ramaḍan in the year 40 AH.

Buried - in Najaf, near Kūfah

AMĪRUL MU'MINĪN- THE COMMANDER OF THE BELIEVERS

This title was given to the Imam (as) on the day of Ghadīr, when Prophet Muḥammad (saw) announced that Imam 'Ali (as) would be his successor. This happened as the Muslims were returning from Ḥajj. Some narrations say that there were over 100,000 people there that day to hear this announcement.

After a detailed speech, the Prophet (saw) said to the Muslims: "Whoever considers me their master shall consider 'Ali (as) as his master".

All the people congratulated Imam 'Ali (as) for getting this title.



Imam 'Ali Shrine - Najaf Ashraf (Iraq) 1



Imam 'Ali Shrine - Najaf Ashraf (Iraq) 2

LESSONS FROM IMAM 'ALI'S LIFE

Imam 'Ali's (as) life was a true example of submission and devotion to Allah, the Almighty. Imam 'Ali (as) never went against the will of His Lord and Creator. He also showed extreme devotion to the Prophet (saw), which is another way of showing submission to Allah (SWT). He was so devoted to the Prophet (saw) that he says: "I followed the foot-steps of Prophet Muḥammad (s) like a baby camel follows the foot-steps of its mother"ⁱ

This submission allowed him to develop many amazing and unique traits. We cannot discuss all of them in this lesson, but the following are two famous stories in which the Imam's submission towards Allah (SWT) was witnessed by his companions:

PAIN OF THE ARROW

During the Battle of Uḥud, Imam 'Ali (as) was struck by an arrow which lodged in his leg. He fought on till the end of the battle and defended the Prophet (saw). At the end of the battle, the arrow was still in his leg, and it had to be taken out. Pulling an arrow out of one's body is usually extremely painful, so the Imam's friends and family were wondering how to best do it. At this point, the Imam's wife, Fāṭimah (as) suggested something. She said that when 'Ali (as) is praying, he does not pay attention to anything else and it is impossible to distract him, so she suggested they pull the arrow out while he was praying.

They waited for Imam 'Ali (as) to start praying and then the arrow was pulled out. Amazingly, the Imam (as) did not even feel the arrow coming out and did not pay any attention to it.

This shows the amazing devotion of Imam 'Ali (as) and how close he was to His Creator.

IMAM 'ALI (AS) DEFINED ISLAM

One day, the Imam (as) promised his companions that he would define Islam for them as it had never been defined before. He began this definition by saying: 'Islam is submission'. By doing this, he showed them that the most important aspect of being a Muslim is to submit to Allah's Will. Submission is to give up control to someone else. The Imam (as) was encouraging them to give up control of their lives to Allah, the Wise, by following His commandments, and by preferring the decisions Allah made for them over the decisions they made for themselves. The Imam concluded the definition by saying that submission eventually leads to appropriate action. Here, he was teaching his companions that we cannot be true Muslims by simply saying that we submit. Rather, our actions should show that we are submissive. When we really want to do something but know that Allah has forbidden it, we should show our submission by acting according to Allah's rules and not our own desires. Only in this way can we be true Muslims.

SUBMISSION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The only way to make sure that we live happy, successful lives is to submit to Allah (SWT). Let us look at some examples:

- It's lunchtime at school and my friends all head to the canteen to buy lunch. They all buy chicken

sandwiches which smell very good. But I know that the chicken in my canteen is not halal. Here I have a choice. Do I listen to my desire and eat this chicken which is not halal? Or do I listen to Allah (SWT) and control my desires?

- Later at lunchtime, my friends gang up on one of the boys and start to tease and bully him. I don't feel comfortable about what they're doing, because he looks hurt by what their actions, and I know it's wrong to hurt people. Should I listen to my friends and submit to them and join in the bullying? Or should I submit to God and help the boy out or at least not join in the bullying?

If we want to live good lives, we should always put what Allah (SWT) wants before what we want. This is true submission to Allah (SWT).

Review Questions

Q1. Amīrul Mu'minīn means:

- The Leader of the Men
- The Leader of the Muslims
- The Leader of the Believers

Q2. Submission to Allah (SWT) means:

- Doing what Allah wants and not what we want
- Saying we believe in Allah
- Saying that we obey Allah

Q3. Imam 'Ali (as) defined Islam as:

- Pride
- Knowledge
- Submission

LESSON 2: IMAM 'ALI (AS) AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUBMISSION

When we submit ourselves to Allah, we see many benefits in our life. Let us discuss some of these benefits.

DEALING WITH TESTS IN LIFE

The first benefit of submission is that we can deal with tests better.

We have been put into this world to be tested, and we have discussed this in previous lessons. Sometimes, Allah (SWT) tests us with things that are out of our control. For example, we become sick, or we lose a family member, or we become suddenly poor. How should we react to these hardships?

Non-believers see these hardships as random things and part of the 'cruelty' of life. You see that non-believers turn to drugs, alcohol and sometimes even kill themselves when they are faced with hardships because to them it makes no sense and has no greater purpose. However, as we have discussed before, these are tests which have great benefits for us. Therefore, we should deal with them with patience and gratefulness. When we are tested, we should avoid complaining too much and we should not give up on the mercy of God. We should remember that every test has some good in it for us eventually and so we should thank Allah (SWT) in every state.

In the end, if we are believers, whatever Allah sends our way is good for us and so we should try to develop the habit of always asking for the best from Allah, rather than asking for what we want and what we think is best.

We had the opportunity of seeing something similar in our lifetime. Imam Khomeini, towards the end of his life, was in great pain due to his disease. However, when he would pray, he was so devoted in his prayers that it would be as if the pain had all disappeared. Here is a video which shows how content he was near the end of his life :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJZehMWTRqI>

BRAVERY

Once we submit to Allah, we will do what He says, no matter what anyone else says. We will not be scared or embarrassed from people, and will follow Allah's orders no matter what. Here is an example of this from the life of Imam 'Ali (as)

The first occasion on which Imam 'Ali (as) offered his services to the cause of Islam was when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was first ordered by Allah (SWT) to preach Islam openly. This occasion is known as Da'wat al-'Ashīra - Holy Prophet Muhammad's (saw) first public invitation.

Prophet Muḥammad (saw) preached Islam in small secret groups for three years. After this, Allah (SWT) ordered him to start preaching more publicly to his family.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) organised a feast for his closest family members and invited them all to gather so that he could deliver the message to them. About forty of them accepted the invitation and came, but Abu Lahab, made the company break up before Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) had an opportunity to speak. The next day, a second invitation was issued and when they came, the Prophet took the opportunity to pass on the message.

Then Prophet Muḥammad (saw) rose and declared his sacred mission and said:

"O sons of Abdul Muṭṭalib. Almighty Allah (SWT) has assigned me to warn you of the painful torments of the wrongdoers and give you the good news of His reward to the pious believers. Become Muslims and follow me so that you can be saved. I swear by Almighty Allah (SWT) that among all Arabs I do not know anyone who has brought his people anything better than what I have brought you"

After the Prophet (saw) passed on the message, he asked for help from his family. He asked:

"Now which one of you is willing to help me with the task...anybody who announces his readiness to help me to bear this burden will be my brother, my successor, and the executor of my will, as Aaron was unto Moses?"

The assembly remained silent with astonishment, not one wanting or daring to accept. After a long silence, Imam 'Ali (as), a young man of 13 at the time, stepped

up and said that he would take this position. The older men in the gathering, like Abu Lahab, mocked him, but he did not stand down.

He said: *"O Prophet! I will, though I am indeed the youngest of those present... O Messenger of Allah (SWT)! I am your assistant. I am your supporter."*

Prophet Muḥammad (saw) asked him to sit down. He (saw) repeated the same saying three times but no one except Imam 'Ali (as) replied to him. On this, locking his arms around the generous and courageous youth, and pressing him, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) declared: *"Behold my brother and my successor and the executor of my will among you. Listen to him and obey him."*ⁱⁱ

Despite his young age, Imam 'Ali (as) was never lazy in his tasks to assist the Messenger or lazy in spreading the message of Islam. Nor did he ever fear anyone. Because of his total submission to Allah (SWT), he did not care what anyone said, as long as he was following the orders of Allah (SWT). This is why he was the bravest warrior and the greatest defender of the Prophet (saw).

THE ETIQUETTE OF SUBMISSION

We have seen some of the great benefits of submission. Now, let us see how we can show our submission to Allah in everyday life:

- Praying on time
- Doing as many good deeds as possible (smiling, helping others, talking nicely) and keeping away from as many evil deeds as possible (anger, swearing, fight, back biting)
- Always being honest
- Thanking Allah, the Merciful, for what He has given us
- Remaining patient during difficulties and not complaining too much
- Avoiding questioning Allah's Will and Laws

Review Questions

Q1. When the Prophet asked for a supporter from his family, who responded?

- a. Abu Lahab
- b. Abu Bakr
- c. Imam 'Ali (as)

Q2. One of the effect of submission to Allah (SWT)

is:

- Being scared of people
- Being brave in the way of Allah
- Being poor

LESSON 3: IMAM ALI- WORKING FOR ALLAH (SWT)

In the previous lesson we have discussed the life of Imam 'Ali (as) and some of his titles. Imam 'Ali (as), as we have learnt, can be considered the best of the students of the Holy Prophet (saw). He was the most learned after the Prophet and was the closest to the Prophet (saw) such that the Prophet said "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate". In this lesson we shall learn some of the characteristics of Imam 'Ali (as) that made him such a great personality, which is the characteristic of hard work and self-reliance. Before we talk about that, let's learn some more about his life and childhood.

THE CHILDHOOD OF IMAM 'ALI (AS)

Imam 'Ali (as) was born six years after the marriage of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) with Sayyedah Khadījah (sa). Although Imam 'Ali (as) lived with his father and brothers for six years, he (as) moved to Prophet Muḥammad's (saw) house because of the financial crisis which befell his father, Abu Ṭālib (as). Since that early age, Imam 'Ali (as) lived with the Messenger of Allah (saw). It was there that he spent his adolescence, and during this time he was a close observer of all the developments that happened in the life of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Imam 'Ali's (as) education was not an ordinary one, nor one which a normal child receives from his father, or elder brothers. The training and instruction he received was very special and it suffices to know that he followed the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) like his shadow.

Imam 'Ali (as) says:

*"...you know what my relations with the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) were? From the very beginning of my life, he loved me and I loved him...He never found me lying nor weak and wavering."*ⁱⁱⁱ

Imam 'Ali (as) was the first to believe in the Holy Prophet (saw) and was taught everything first-hand from the Prophet himself from a very young age. Even later, when Allah (SWT) first ordered the Prophet to introduce Islam to his relatives, Imam 'Ali (as) was the first to defend Islam and assist the Prophet (saw).

HARD WORK IN ISLAM

Imam 'Ali (as) was one of the best examples of working hard in everything we do. He demonstrated to us that as Muslims, we should work hard to get what we want and need while not taking advantage of others.

Working hard means that we do not give up when things become difficult to bear. In school, for instance, if we are having difficulty with mathematics or science, we should not quit and give up. Rather, we should work hard to learn and get help when needed.

Imam 'Ali (as) was a very hard-working man. He worked hard while farming and cultivating orchards. He developed several plots and orchards and then gave them all away for the sake of Allah (SWT). One day, Imam 'Ali (as) acquired a piece of barren land outside Madīnah which he wanted to cultivate. In order to do this, the Imam (as) decided to dig a well, he chose a suitable place and putting his hopes in the grace of Allah (SWT), he began to dig. Several days went by, but still there was no sign of any water coming out of the well.

One day, Imam 'Ali (as) picked up a pickaxe, entered the well and using all his strength and energy worked very hard for a while, but still there was no sign of water. Exhausted, he came out of the well, wiped away the sweat of his brow, rested for a while, and then re-entered the well. The Imam (as) was swinging the pickaxe with such vigour that the sound of his breathing could be heard all around. After receiving a strong, hard blow with the pickaxe, the ground suddenly split open, and fresh, clear water bubbled up.

Imam 'Ali (as) climbed quickly out of what had now become a wonderful well in the dry desert which would soon turn the surrounding area into a lovely orchard. Soon the people gathered around to see it. Each of them was commenting on it. 'What a hard-working man is Imam 'Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib (as)'.

One said: 'Since Imam 'Ali ibn Abu T̄alib (as) is a good and generous man, Allah (SWT) has been generous to him and given him goodness'. Another said: 'Imam 'Ali ibn Abu T̄alib (as) and his descendants have become rich forever'. Some congratulated Imam 'Ali (as), while some were jealous.

"Bring me a paper and pen!" said Imam 'Ali (as). When they had done so, the Imam (as) sat down and wrote:

"I have endowed this well and the land surrounding it in charity; for its income to be used as follows:

In helping the poor and destitute.

In helping the travellers far away from their homes.

In providing the means for the marriages of orphans.

In providing medical care for the poor.

In the doing of good works of public benefit."^{iv}

What we learn from this lesson of the Imam is that when we want something, it's not enough to pray for it, we have to work really hard to try and get it for ourselves. Its only when we help ourselves will Allah (SWT) help us.

SELF-RELIANCE

Imam 'Ali (as) also taught us another very important lesson, that of self-reliance. Self-reliance means that when we are able to do something ourselves, we do not rely on others to do those things for us. Imam 'Ali (as) mended his own clothes and his own shoes, milked his own goats, drew water from the wells, and loaded and unloaded the camels of the caravans even though he was the leader of the community! We have to remember that to be self-reliant, we have to try to reduce our wants and only be reliant on others when we need something that we cannot obtain ourselves.

Class Activity

There are many examples of self-reliance in our lives, from self-reliance in small things to very big things. In the table below, identify what is self-reliance and what is not.

Situation
Ordering my little brother to give me a glass of water when I can get up and get it myself
Asking my mother for \$15 for a game I don't need
Working hard to mow the lawns of my neighbours to earn some money to get the new pair of shoes I like
Borrowing money from a friend to buy a kebab
Going to the library to study to improve my marks in maths rather than claiming I am not good at maths and giving up (or cheating in my exam).
Ordering mum to prepare a snack for me when I am capable of doing it myself
Taking youth allowance from the government because I don't feel like working

WE ARE ALL RELIANT ON ALLAH (SWT)

We should always remember that Allah (SWT) has given us the gifts of life, energy, hands, eyes etc. so that we can use these to help ourselves to the bounties He has kept on the earth. If man wants gold, he has to use his energy to dig it up from the ground, if he wants food, he should grow it or hunt it. We have to remember that Allah (SWT) is the provider of all the bounties and gifts and that we are eventually all reliant on Him.

Review Questions

Q1. Self-reliance:

- Is highly encouraged in Islam
- Is not encouraged in Islam
- Has nothing to do with Islam

Q2. Islam teaches us that:

- We do not need to work hard, we only need to pray for things and we will get them
- We need to work hard and pray for what we want or need
- We should work very hard and if we work hard enough, we won't need to pray to get what we want

Q3. Imam 'Ali (as) worked as a:

- Farmer and cultivator
- Had no job
- Tailor

ⁱ Nahjul Balagha

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/service.to.islam.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ Khutbat Al- Qaasiya

^{iv} <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/imam'Ali>



يا فاطمه الزهراء يا بنت محمد يا فرقة بين الرسول يا سيدتنا و مولانا
انا نوجهنا و استشفقنا و توسلنا بك الى الله و فجعناك بين يدي حاجتنا

SAYYIDAH FATIMAH (AS)

سَيِّدَةُ فَاطِمَةَ (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to her title of – Rādhīyah - with its brief meaning
- Review the biography of her young years
- Discuss the different aspects of chastity in more detail:
 - Chastity in dress
 - Chastity in looking at opposite gender
 - Chastity in speaking with the other gender
- Be introduced to chastity from the life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as)
- Understand the benefits of chastity in terms of respect and better relations
- Discuss Sayyidah Fāṭimah's (as) title of Al-Mardhiyya, with its brief meaning
- Discuss the great status of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) and the importance of love for her
- Learn the importance of practicing goodness to parents, which is an Islamic obligation
- Understand the benefits of being good to parents and the consequences of not practicing goodness to parents

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: FĀṬIMA'S (AS) CHASTITY

In previous years we were introduced to, Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as), the greatest woman in history- the leader of all women of the worlds. In this lesson we will learn more about her life and see what lessons she taught us.

FĀṬIMA AR-RĀDHIYA (AS)

One of the most important titles that were given to her was that of Al Rāḍīyah which means the: 'One content with Allah's Will'.

She was given this title because throughout her life she did not complain at all about the hardships she suffered for Islam and for her family. She was at all times happy with the Will of Allah, and she was fully and sincerely obedient to Him. This is seen in her lifestyle as, Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) lived in a simple house made out of clay, wore simple garments from head to toe, ground wheat and barley with her bare hands to prepare meals for her family, and attended to her four children with utmost love and mercy.

SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH'S (AS) EARLY YEARS

When Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) was a child, she did not pass her time in playfulness, wasting time and making mischief. Rather, as a child she learnt as much as she could from her father and this knowledge prepared her for her role in helping her father spread the message of Islam. Once a non-believer who had come to visit Prophet Muḥammad (saw), threw dirt and garbage on the Prophet. Prophet Muhammad (saw), acted as if nothing had happened, forgave him, and returned home. When Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) saw what had happened to her father, she ran to him with some water

and washed his head and face. We see many acts like this that show that Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) as a child had the characteristics of kindness and compassion.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) was brought up and trained in the family of Prophet (saw) and took advantage of the knowledge and wisdom of the Prophet (saw). She used to hear the recitation of Quran from the Prophet (saw) and learnt it by heart.

CHASTITY

One of the most important characteristics that Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) had was chastity. Chastity has many examples, but basically it means that we should dress appropriately in public and interact with the opposite gender appropriately,

Islam does not forbid men and women to interact, as long as they keep the rules of modesty.

Class Discussion

- Do you talk to the opposite gender?
- What do you talk about?
- Do you set any limits?
- Is talking to someone of the same gender the same as talking to someone of the opposite gender?

CHASTITY IN DRESSING

This sort of chastity means respecting and valuing the body by covering it properly so as to avoid creating distractions and unnecessary attraction that lead to sin. Women practice chastity by covering their bodies except their face and hands while men practice chastity by wearing decent clothes.



CHASTITY IN LOOKING

This type of chastity is to lower and limit our gaze. It means to avoid ogling and lustful look at the opposite gender. Allah, the Exalted says:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ

“Tell the believing men to lower (and limit) their gaze and to cover their private parts. That is purer for them.” (24:30)

We have to realize that any woman is somebody’s daughter, mother or sister. So, as we like the females of our family to be respected we should respect the females of others.

CHASTITY IN SPEAKING

This type of chastity means speaking to the opposite gender respectfully with kind and decent words and only when necessary. Each should avoid talking in a way that will seduce the opposite gender. It includes avoiding laughing loudly, making jokes and speaking in a playful manner.

Allah, The Exalted, says:

...فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

“...then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery, etc.) should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner...” (33:32)”

BENEFITS OF CHASTITY

Respecting the Opposite Gender

The following story from the life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) demonstrates how *Hijāb* can bring about respect between men and women.

One day, a blind man asked for permission to enter Fāṭimah's house, but she kept a veil between them.

The Messenger of Allah noticed her actions and asked: "Why did you keep a veil between you when he cannot see you?" Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) answered: "Messenger of Allah, it is true that he cannot see me, but I can see him and he can smell my fragrance."ⁱⁱⁱ From this we can see that it isn't only the way we dress that has an effect on the other person, and that *ḥijāb* includes a number of other aspects also.

Stronger families

Chastity results in stronger, stable and more loving families that last for a lifetime. Chastity creates trust between family members and leads to a healthy respect for each other.



The importance of chastity, is seen from this hadith by Imam Baqir (as):

"Chastity and faith are wound together. If one goes, so does the other."

Review Questions

Q1. Chastity refers to:

- The clothes we wear only, and whether they are suitable or not
- All things related to how we relate to the opposite gender
- Being pleased with the Will of Allah

Q2. Chastity leads to:

- Respect of members of the opposite gender
- Stronger families
- Both a & b

Q3. As Muslims, we are:

- Not allowed to talk to members of the opposite gender at all
- Allowed to talk to members of the opposite gender, but have to set limits
- Allowed to talk to members of the opposite gender just as we talk to someone of our gender

SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH (AS) AND HER PARENTS

In the previous lessons we were introduced to one of the most important personalities in history who showed the best characteristics of modesty and chastity. This was the daughter of the Prophet of Islam Muḥammad (saw), Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as). In this lesson, we will look at Fāṭimah's (as) relationship with her father, and see what lessons we can learn from this.

SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH (AS) AND THE PROPHET

Fāṭimah (as) was not more than six years of age when her mother Sayyidah Khadija (as) passed away. After the death of her mother, she always looked after the comfort of her father at home. Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) was such a daughter who followed the footsteps of her father in all actions. The streets of Mecca were full of those who teased, insulted and tortured the Prophet (saw). Whenever her father returned home, sometimes injured or hurt, she would wash the blood off his sacred face and dress his wounds and encouraged him with her sweet conversation.

It was in difficult times when only Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) pleased and consoled the heart of her father with her sincere love and affection. That is the reason why the Prophet used to say, "May your father sacrifice his life for you" or that he would call her the "mother of her father", because, she was like a mother for her father.

GOODNESS TO PARENTS AND ITS BENEFITS

In Islam it is obligatory for us to practice goodness to parents and be kind and compassionate to them at all times.

Our parents have brought us up. They have lived for us. They gave us love and attention, they taught us the difference between right and wrong, they gave us food, clothes and toys and so many other things for our comfort and happiness.

If there was ever a time when there was only enough food for one person, they would give it to the child. Our mothers carried us for 9 months, day and night before we were born.

This is the reason why Allah says in the Qur'ān

"Worship Allah and do not join any partners with Him; and do good to your parents." (4:36)

Our parents work so hard for us and our happiness because they only want us to grow up being healthy and happy. Since they work so hard for us, to make us better people, shouldn't we also love, respect and obey them?



The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said:

*"One, who follows the orders of Allah with regards to obeying parents, shall have two doors of Paradise opened up for him. And if there happens to be only one parent, one door of Paradise shall open up for him."*ⁱⁱⁱ

There are many ways to respect our parents, some of them are:

- ✓ Talk to them gently
- ✓ Do not call them with their names
- ✓ Do not raise our voice above theirs
- ✓ Fulfil their needs
- ✓ Thank them and pray for them
- ✓ Do not sit when they are standing.
- ✓ Do not walk in front of them unless told to do so.
- ✓ Do not speak when they are speaking.
- ✓ Never correct them in front of others.
- ✓ Do not displease them or make them angry.
- ✓ Never insult, argue or shout at them.
- ✓ Speak to them nicely even if they are not Muslims
- ✓ Pray for them – here, we can recite the following verse as much as possible.

Memorisation Activity

A prayer for parents from the Holy Qur'an to memorise:

رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

"My Lord! Bestow on them (my two parents) Your Mercy just as they cared for me in childhood." (17:24)

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT PRACTICING GOODNESS TO PARENTS

In the Holy Qur'ān Allah, The Exalted, says

"Your lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. Whether one of them or both of them become old in your life, do not say (even) 'uf' to them or repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: "My Lord! Bestow upon them your mercy just as they cared for me in childhood." (17:23-24)



Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:

"Had Allah known of a thing more trivial and insignificant than the word 'uf', he would have forbidden it (to be spoken to the parents). Uttering 'uf' (to the parents) is the mildest form of ill conduct towards the parents. One of the ways in which a person can be regarded as 'āq (having cut the bond of relations) with their parents is that he casts a hard and stern look upon them."^{iv}

Imam al-Ṣādiq said:

"Allah shall not accept the prayers of a person who looks at his parents with hatred, even if they have been unfair to him!"^v

Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

"One who causes his parents to become sad has indeed been 'āq (cut relations) with them."^{vi}

From all these narrations we can clearly see that displeasing one's parents is a great sin in Islam and it denies the child who disrespects his or her parents the Mercy of Allah and only brings great punishments.

A STORY ABOUT A FATHER...

An old man was sitting in the courtyard of his house along with his son who was highly educated. Suddenly a crow perched on a wall of the house. The father asked the son: “What is this?”

The son replied: “It is a crow.” After a little while the father again asked the son: “What is this?”

The son said: “It is a crow!”

After a few minutes the father asked his son the third time: What is this? The son said: Father, I have just now told you that this is a crow. After a little while the old father again asked his son the fourth time: what is this? By this time some statement of irritation was felt in the son's tone when he rebuffed his father: Father! It is a crow, a crow! A little later the father again asked his son: What is this? This time the son replied to his father with temper. Father: You are always repeating the same question; although I have told you so many times that it is a crow. Are you not able to understand this? The son had raised his voice.

The father went to his room and came back with an old, dusty diary. Opening a page, he asked his son to read what was written. What the son read were the following words written in the diary:

‘Today my little son was sitting with me in the courtyard, when a crow came there. My son asked me twenty-five times what it was and I told him twenty-five times that it was a crow and I did not at all feel irritated. I rather felt proud of my innocent child.’

The son felt ashamed of himself. He had raised his voice and also lost his temper. He came close to his father and said: “Please forgive me. I’m very sorry. I should never have spoken to you in this tone.”

The old man hugged his son and smiled. “I forgive you.” He said.

It is our duty to be good to our parents all the time.

ADDRESSING PARENTS RESPECTFULLY

We will end the lesson with a story from the life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as):

Some of the people living with the Prophet had rough manners and would disrespectfully address him by his first name, rather than addressing him as ‘the Messenger of Allah’. Allah (SWT) revealed an ayah in the Qur’an (24:63) commanding them not to call the Prophet by his first name like they would with each other.

After this āyah was revealed, the Prophet came to visit Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) and she, out of the great respect she had for her father, addressed him as ‘Messenger of Allah’ instead of for example saying ‘O father!’ When the Prophet (saw) heard this, he was touched by her respect, but explained to her that she was not included in this command, and that she could continue to call him father, saying the following to her:

“My daughter, this āyah was not revealed about you nor your family. You are from me, and I am from you...your saying ‘O father’ is more beloved to my heart, and more pleasing to the Lord...you are the best of children’ Then he kissed her face...”^{vii}

This shows the extent of the respect that Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) had for her father (saw), and the mutual love that existed between them.

Review Questions

Q1. In the Holy Qur’an, the next order God gives us after the order to worship Him is:

- To pray on time
- To be good to our parents
- To fast

Q2. A person who is rude and disrespectful to their parents but who prays and is otherwise religious:

- Is doing okay and is not displeasing God
- Is still displeasing God and risks his deeds not being accepted
- Neither of the above

ⁱ **References**

- Holy Quran
- Moral Stories for Children, <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/zahra.asp>
- Fatimah al-Ma'sumah (as): a role model for men and women, al-Marji' Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah, <http://www.al-islam.org/fatimahrolemodel/index.htm>
- Hijab, The Muslim Women's Dress (Islamic or Cultural?), Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, <http://www.al-islam.org/hijab/>
- Holy Quran
- Moral Stories for Children, <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/zahra.asp>
- Fatimah al-Ma'sumah (as): a role model for men and women, al-Marji' Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah, <http://www.al-islam.org/fatimahrolemodel/index.htm>
- www.madressa.net
- Forty Hadith on Parents, Translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi, <http://www.al-islam.org/FortyParents/>
- The Islamic Modest Dress, Murtadha Mutahhari, <http://www.al-islam.org/modestdress/>

ⁱⁱ Fatima al-Ma'suma, by Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah

ⁱⁱⁱ Kanzul 'Ummal, Volume 16, Page 67

^{iv} Al-Kafi, Volume 4, Page 50

^v Al-Kafi, Volume 4, Page 50

^{vi} Biharul Anwar, Volume 74, Page 64

^{vii} Narrated in al-Burhan fi Tafsirul Qurna, from the Book al Manaqib al Fakhira (Sayed Radhi)



SOCIAL ISLAM

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Islam has specific teachings on how we should deal with and treat all the people we come across in our life
- Understand that Islam has specific teaching on how we should deal with all creatures in this world
- Memorise the verse from the Holy Qur'ān (2:83)

SOCIAL RULES IN ISLAM

'Islam is a complete and perfect religion. It teaches not only how act in relation to our Lord Allah, but also how to treat everyone and everything around us. In our 'Social Islam' lessons, we will be learning these rules in some detail.

TREATING ALL WITH GOODNESS

All creatures of Allah (SWT) are special because Allah (SWT) created them. Everything has been created for a purpose and everything is a creature of God, therefore we must respect all things in this world.

The following story is about Prophet Moses (as). He was asked by Allah (SWT) to come to a certain place, and to bring with him a creature he was certain was lower than him in status. Prophet Moses (as) could not find anyone or anything he could consider lower than himself, until he came past an ill, dying dog. He thought 'surely, this creature is lower in status than me', so he leashed the dog and brought him along. However, a little later, he realised that he could not be certain that even this dog was lower than him, so he set the dog free. When he reached his destination, Allah (SWT) told him: 'if you had brought anyone or anything along, I would have no longer considered you a prophet.'

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Since everyone and everything deserves our respect and has certain rights, Islam has specific teachings on how we should treat everyone and everything. In this lesson, we will examine some of these duties.

OUR DUTIES TOWARDS PEOPLE

We should respect the people around us – whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim, related or not related, young or old! We should always remember the most important rule throughout all of our ‘Social Islam’ lessons: we should always speak and do good to people. We learn this rule from the Holy Qur’ān.

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

“Speak (and do) good to people” (2:83)

The Qur’ān orders us to speak good words to people and maintain good relations. It does not specify that we should only be good to Muslims or only to our family. Rather Allah (SWT) uses the very broad and general expression of ‘people’, to show us that all are included in this command.

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Let’s take a very brief look at the most important social obligations we have.

- Maintaining ties with our family is obligatory in Islam. It is known as *Ṣilatul Raḥim*. When it comes to our immediate family, this is major obligation and we have to make sure we always have good relations with our parents and siblings. As for other relatives, we should keep in touch by visiting them, calling them or asking about them regularly.
- Respecting our elders is another very important aspect of social Islam. We need to respect, help and obey our elders.
- Our neighbours also have a right upon us. We must treat them nicely and not be a nuisance to them.

DUTIES TOWARDS OUR ENVIRONMENT

We also have rules of care towards animals, as they are creatures of Allah (SWT) too. Islam has very specific rules when it comes to slaughtering an animal. For example, you must make the animal drink water before you slaughter them so they do not pass away thirsty. Also, you cannot use a blunt knife- you must use a sharp knife to minimise pain. All these rules are examples of the care we should show fellow creatures of Allah (SWT).

Imam Khomayni (ra), perhaps the greatest scholar of recent years, never used to kill a fly or insect. Instead, if it would bug him, he would just flick it away. Someone asked him why he doesn’t just kill them and he would reply by saying ‘why should I kill them if I can get rid of them by just flicking them away?’

Remember, they are important creatures of Allah (SWT) as well...

Lastly, we should remember that the environment is very important in Islam too, and we should do our part to stop or reduce global warming and other things that harm the creatures on Earth. Our duties to the environment include simple and very easy tasks such as recycling and decreasing our carbon footprint by making use of the public transport system as opposed to the car. These tasks are so simple and easy to do and we hope to be rewarded for them by Allah (SWT).

Homework

List two ways, apart from the ways mentioned in the text, that we can fulfil our duties towards:

- Our neighbours
- Animals/Insects
- The environment

Review Questions

Q1. As Muslims, we believe:

- Only some creatures of God deserve respect
- Only humans have rights
- All creatures of God deserve respect and have rights over us

Q2. The most important principle to remember in our Social Islam series is:

- Be good to Muslims only
- Treat people the way they treat you
- Always speak and do good to people

Q3. Which of the following are examples of important social obligations in Islam?

- Being obedient and respectful to our parents
- Not doing anything to harm our neighbours
- Both of the above

¹ References:

-Rules of Socialisation in Islam series, Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, lecture 1
<http://www.madressa.net/akhlaq/class-7/240-respect-parts-1-3>
<http://quran.al-islam.org/>



TAQLID

التقليد

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Engage in a discussion on scholars and their importance
- Learn about taqlid and its definition
- Revise the commonly used terms in jurisprudence
- Learn the signs of Taklif

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO TAQLID

WHO IS A SCHOLAR?

A scholar is someone who has a lot of (or the most) knowledge about something.

Just like a dentist knows the most about teeth and a doctor knows the most about the body, there are also scholars who know the most about religion (Quran and the teachings of the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt). The scholars of Islam teach us how to live an Islamically healthy life.

WHY DO WE NEED SCHOLARS OF ISLAM?

The only way to know how to live our life is through the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (saw) and Ahlul Bayt (as). Sometimes it is a bit difficult to understand exactly what Allah (SWT) tells us in the Qur'an and through the Prophet (saw), so there are certain scholars who have dedicated their lives to studying and understanding Islam and then teaching the rest of us.

Some of these scholars reach a very high level of knowledge and expertise in understanding the Holy Qur'an and narrations of the Prophets and Imams. They become a reference point for us to refer to when we want to know the rules of our religion. We call such a scholar a **MARJA'**

In the same way we go to a doctor when we are sick, or to the dentist when we have a toothache, we turn to a Marja' to help us with our Islamic issues, such as knowing

exactly how to pray, fast, what we can and cannot eat and so on.

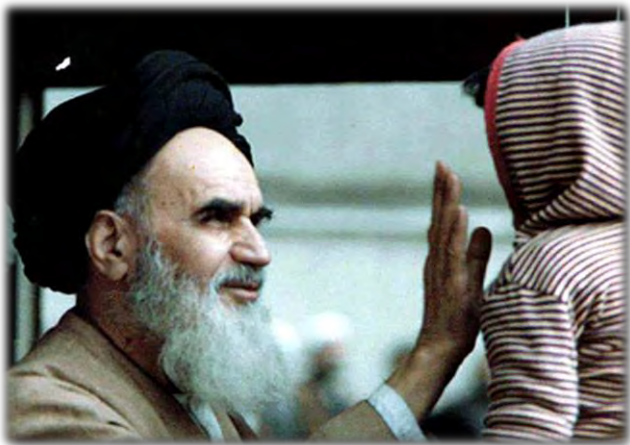


Figure 1. Imam Khomeini - A perfect example of a scholar who dedicated his life to understanding, teaching, and applying Islam

For example, imagine I was playing in the school playground and found some money. What am I supposed to do with it? Can I keep it or do I have to try to find the owner or give it to charity? To know the answer, I need to refer to a Marja'. There are many situations we come across every day that we need to refer to a Marja' about, and therefore, they play a very important role in our lives.

THE SCHOLARS ARE THE HEIRS OF PROPHETS

Prophets pass on knowledge, and the people who inherit that knowledge from the prophets are the scholars. Again, this shows just how important a scholar is to us.

Imam a-lṢadiq (as) says:

“The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets.” (The Scale of Wisdom, p 773)

WHAT IS TAQLĪD?

Taqlīd means to refer to a certain Marja' when it comes to our practical Islamic life.ⁱ If you think back to the example about finding money, we can go to the Marja's website and see what he says about the rules of finding money on the ground. Referring to a Marja' with the intention of finding out an Islamic rule is called Taqlīd.

Review Questions

Q1. Taqlīd means to:

- a) Ask a friend about Islamic rules
- b) Imitate someone's actions
- c) Refer to a highly qualified scholar to learn the practical rules of Islam

Q2. A Marja' is:

- a) A highly qualified scholar who is able to understand the Qurān and the Ḥadith and get rulings from them
- b) Any sheikh
- c) The sheikh who leads the prayer in our community or mosque

Q3. What do Prophets leave as inheritance?

- a) Wealth and property
- b) Knowledge
- c) A good name

Homework

Do some research and find out some facts about the life of a famous scholar who lived in the past or who is alive today. Write one paragraph about his life.

LESSON 2: CHOOSING A MARJA'

In our last lesson, we learnt that it was very important to refer to a highly qualified scholar, a Marja', to learn the practical rules of Islamic life. In this lesson, we will learn how we can choose a Marja'.

HOW DO WE CHOOSE A MARJA'?

There are two main ways for us to know which Marja' to follow:

1. Ask two qualified sheikhs to recommend who is the most knowledgeable
2. If a scholar is so famous in the community for being a Marja' that you become sure that he is one.

Discussion Activity

1. Do you know the name of a Marja' or more than one Marja'?
2. Do you know which sheikh you can ask to recommend a Marja' to you?

LEARNING SOME DEFINITIONS

When we want to find out whether we should perform a certain action or stay away from it, we can refer to our Marja's website or book. There are some words that we will come across which we need to know the meanings of:

WĀJIB (Obligatory): something that we have to do, for example: prayers, fasting and Hajj. Things are *wājib* for us to do because there is a benefit in these actions for us (either physically, spiritually or both). We are rewarded for performing these acts. If we do not do them there will be a punishment for us.

MUSTAḤAB: something that is recommended to do, for example reciting the *adhān* before prayers. We do not have to perform *Mustaḥab* acts and we will not be punished for not doing them. However, there will be extra rewards and benefit for us if we do them. They also help to bring us closer to Allah (SWT) and improve our spirituality.



Figure 2. Praying is **WĀJIB**; Praying in **Jamā'ah** is **MUSTAḤAB**

MUBĀH (permissible): something that we are allowed to do and that has neither reward nor punishment. For example, drinking a cup of tea in normal situations is *Mubāh*.

MAKRŪH (disliked): something that is better not to do. If we stay away from it, we get reward, but if we do it, there is no punishment. For example, it is *makrūh* to urinate while standing or to eat too much. These actions are harmful for our body and spirit.

ḤARĀM: something that is forbidden to do, such as eating pork or drinking alcohol. Allah has made it forbidden to do so that we can stay protected from any type of physical or spiritual harm. There is punishment for committing a *ḥarām* act and rewards for staying away from it.

Review Questions

Q1. We can find a Marja' by:

- a) Asking two qualified sheikhs to recommend a Marja' to us
- b) Finding out if there is anyone who is widely known as being a Marja' among our community
- c) Both a & b

Q2. Wājib means:

- a) Something that is recommended to perform
- b) Something that we must perform
- c) Something that we should not do

Q3. Ḥarām means:

- a) Something forbidden and that we should not do
- b) Something that we must perform
- c) Something that is better not to do

LESSON 3: TAKLĪF

WHEN DO WE NEED TO START FOLLOWING THE ISLAMIC LAWS?

We need to start following the rules in Islam by the age of taklīf. This means the age at which we become responsible for all the actions that we perform.

TAKLĪF

- Taklīf means the time at which we become responsible for our actions. This is when the commands of Allah (SWT) apply to us.
- It is the time in our life when Allah (SWT) is inviting us to the honour of worshipping Him. Allah (SWT) says that at this time, we are able to get to know Him and serve Him with all our actions. We usually try to impress and do as much as we can for a best friend or someone we think is extremely important. What about trying to impress and serve the One who created us, protected us, and guided us so caringly throughout our life?
- When we become responsible for our actions, we have to do the *wājib* (obligatory) things and stay away from the *ḥarām* things.
- The angels start to write down all our good and bad actions. The record of our actions will be shown to us in the next world.
- When we reach the age of taklīf, we become **MUKALLAF** (for a boy) or **MUKALLAFA** (for a girl).

WHEN DO WE BECOME MUKALLAF?

GIRLS:

Taklīf for girls begins when at least one of the following occur:

- She completes 9 lunar (Islamic) years
- Growth of rough hair on the pubic area

It is important to note that for girls, the start of menstruation is not a condition for becoming mukallafa.

Why girls before boys?

Girls become physically and mentally mature before boys do.

It is not a burden but a blessing from Allah to a girl that He is inviting her to worship Him before the boys.

It does involve a bit of difficulty sometimes, but Allah (SWT) does not want you to waste your life (especially your younger days) without remembering Him.

BOYS:

Becoming mukallaf can begin at different ages for different boys. It is based on experiencing at least one of any of the following:

- Growth of rough hair on the private part
- Discharge of semen (while awake or asleep): in other words, having a wet dream. This is when you have a certain type of dream and wake up to find that you are wet - not with urine but with a sticky whitish substance called semen.
- Completing 15 lunar (Islamic) years- which is about 14.5 years of the Gregorian (Western) calendar.

Homework:

Q1. Becoming Mukallaf means:

- a) Being old enough to drive
- b) Reaching the age where we are responsible for all our actions and God will reward or punish us for them

Q2. Girls:

- a) Usually become Mukallaf at a younger age than boys
- b) Usually become Mukallaf at the same age as boys
- c) Usually become Mukallaf at an older age than boys

Q3. Which of the following is NOT a sign of becoming mukallafa for girls?

- a) Reaching 9 lunar years of age
- b) Starting to menstruate
- c) Growth of rough hair on the private parts

Extra Homework Activity

There are currently different Marāji' whom we refer to for our Islamic queries. Some of them include Ayatullāh Sayed Ali Khamenā'i, Ayatullāh Sayed Ali Sistāni, and Ayatullāh Makārem Shirāzi. Use the internet and other resources (such as books at your local Islamic Centre) to research the biographies of these personalities.

¹ Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, *Rulings of taqlīd*



SEEKING COUNSEL

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded of the importance of getting advice and seeking counsel
- Understand that they must seek advice from those who know and have more experience
- Understand that they must not give advice on any matter unless they are an expert in that matter
- Know that they must be very wary of advice about any issue given on the internet

SEEKING ADVICE

'Seeking advice from experts when making major decisions is something very highly encouraged in Islam. In fact, an entire Surah of the *Qur'an* is named 'al-Shūrā' or 'The Counsel'. This shows us that seeking guidance and counselling from experts in a particular area which we need help in, is an important aspect of life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASKING FOR ADVICE

Asking for advice from people who know more than us increases our knowledge and allows us to make better and more informed decisions. This is because people who know more can see the consequences of certain decisions more than we can and they can therefore guide us better, so we do not face loss.

In Surat al-Shura, Allah, the Exalted, reminds us of the importance of this act multiple times.

Firstly, he lists the qualities of the believers:

...وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ

“...those who establish prayers, and whose affairs are (discussed in a) council among them...” (42:38)

In another part of the *Qur'an*, Allah (SWT) commands the Prophet (saw) to seek the advice of his companions when implementing the laws of Islam. A famous example of this was in the Battle of Khandaq where the Prophet took advice from his companions and Salmān suggested the strategy of building the trench around the city of Medinah, which the Prophet (saw) approved.

The Prophet (saw) would often even ask his slave for advice. Imam *al-Riḍa* (as) refers to this and says he would also often seek the advice of his companions.

After seeking the opinions of those around us, we must make the final decision ourselves. Once we have reached a decision after counselling, we should go ahead and implement it. The Qur'ān advises the Prophet:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"...and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah..." (3:159)

We should develop the character of asking for advice when we are faced with problems that we cannot solve ourselves. Often, if we seek advice when the problem is still small, we can avoid the problem becoming much larger and being unsolvable.

ACCEPTING ADVICE

Another very important point to remember is that we should always be willing to take advice. If someone approaches us and gives us advice on something we are doing wrong or something we can improve, we should accept their advice and at least think about it properly. We should never get upset or annoyed when we are given advice. One of the real qualities of a believer is that they take advice and try to implement it in their lives.

GIVING ADVICE IS ONLY FOR EXPERTS

It is important to remember that we should not give advice to anyone about anything that we do not have expert knowledge in. For example, if you do not know the rules of football, you cannot tell someone else how to play. Also, if for example you want to buy a car, will you go to a plumber or to a mechanic? Obviously, you would go to a mechanic who has expertise in the area.

If you had questions about spirituality or Islamic laws, you would approach a sheikh, while if you had questions about physical health you would approach a medical

doctor. Therefore, if people give advice without knowing the subject properly, they will cause more harm and will create a lot of difficulty for the person they are giving the so called 'advice' to.

CAUTION! THE INTERNET AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION



Today, it is very easy to type up any problem or question you have on the internet and get a whole variety of answers – many of them are only opinions from ignorant people. Google is *not* a place you want to seek advice from, because it will confuse and mislead you more, if you don't have the help of an expert.

However, it is not completely wrong to do your research on the internet. It is only important that you should be guided by an expert or adult when doing your research so they can direct you sources that are trustworthy and reliable for you to use – you cannot always decide this on your own, so it is important that you ask an adult or teacher to help you in your research.

Q1. The Holy Qur'ān states that one of the qualities of the believers is to seek the advice of others. In which ṣurah does this occur?

- a) Ṣurat Āli 'Imrān
- b) Ṣurat al-Qadr
- c) Ṣurat al-Shūrā

Q2. When someone gives us advice, we should:

- a) Not worry too much about it
- b) Consider their advice and at least think about it properly
- c) Tell them to mind their own business

¹ References

- Holy Quran
 - Sura Ash Shura
 - Sura Ale Imran

- Lecture on Social Rules by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei on: Counselling



LAVATORY RULES

احكام التخلي

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the importance of cleanliness and hygiene
- Know that we need to wash the private parts after using the lavatory
- Know some further rules regarding use of the lavatory
- Know some of the recommended and disliked acts of being in the lavatory

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: RULES OF USING THE TOILET

In this lesson, we will learn some of the important rules of using the toilet. Most of these rules are there so that we can remain clean and hygienic. This is very important in Islam.

Our prophet (saw) was famous for his cleanliness and always used to keep himself neat and tidy. He used to say that cleanliness was a part of faith (imān). We need to keep our bodies clean; both to keep our bodies healthy and to strengthen our soul. One day, the Prophet (saw) walked past a man who was untidy and whose hair was not combed. The Prophet was upset by this and said that this man should fix his appearance. A little later, he walked past another man who was wearing dirty clothes. This also upset the Prophet and he said “doesn’t that man have water to wash his clothes with?” In fact, the Prophet (saw) says:

“Allah loves cleanliness”.

WASHING PRIVATE PARTS AFTER USING THE BATHROOM

We must wash our private parts with water after using the lavatory. This obligation is emphasised very much in Islam. Therefore, it is important that we observe this rule and make sure that we are cleaning ourselves properly. The very basic rules that you need to know for now are:

- When you urinate, wash the area twice with water
- When you pass faeces, wash the area until no faeces is left there. If you have no water, it is enough to wipe with dry tissue until no faeces remains

Review Questions

Q1. After urinating, we should:

- Wash the private parts twice with water
- Just wipe with tissue, there is no need for water
- Wash the private parts with water five times

Q2. When we pass stool:

- We should clean the private area with water unless there is no water
- We do not need to clean the area
- We should always only use tissue

LESSON 2: SOME MORE RULES OF USING THE TOILET

In this lesson, we will learn some rules for using the toilet. It is very important for all of us to follow toilet manners that will help us remain clean and tidy. Don't forget the following things before going to the toilet:

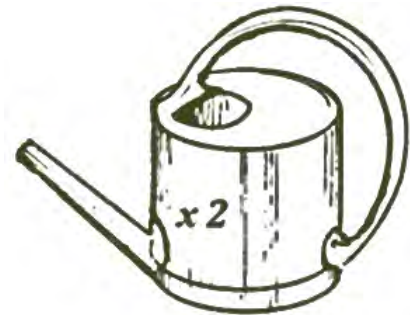
- We must go to toilet whenever we feel the need to go
- It is a good idea to wear slippers for hygienic reasons
- We must fill a container or a bottle of water to use in the toilet
- We should not take off pants/shorts in front of others. We should make sure that our private parts are always hidden from the view of others.

When we are in the toilet we should take care of these things:

- We should not sit facing or with our backs towards the Qiblah. This is *ḥarām*. If the toilet is facing Qiblah we can change our direction a little bit to avoid facing Qiblah.
- We should not use urinals. This is something very unhealthy and urinating while standing is very disliked in Islam.
- Flushing the toilet is very important
- Make sure to wash your hands with soap and then dry them after using the toilet

REVIEW OF THE RULES OF WASHING

- As we learnt in our last lesson, we need to wash our private parts after urinating or passing stool. When doing this, we should remember the following rules:
 - After urinating, we should wash the private area with water twice



- If we are at school or in a public place where there is no tap or hose, we can take a small water bottle or cup of water into the toilet with us. If we don't have a bottle or small cup, we can wet some tissue then squeeze the water out of it to wash the area.
- After passing stool, we should wash the area until there is no stool remaining.
 - If there is no water, we can use tissue to wipe, but again we must make sure all the stool is wiped away

Review Questions:

Q1. When using the toilet:

- It is *ḥarām* to face the Qiblah
- It is okay to face the Qiblah
- It is better not to face the Qiblah

Q2. Which of the following is true?

- It is *ḥarām* to use urinals or urinate while standing
- It is very disliked to use urinals or urinate while standing
- It is okay to use urinals or urinate while standing

Q3. If there is no tap or hose at the school toilet:

- We should not use the toilet
- We should fill a bottle of water and use that to wash
- We don't need to wash at school



PERSONAL HYGIENE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

LESSON I

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ...

“O Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every mosque...”

In this lesson we will discuss the above *āyah* and the importance of personal cleanliness in Islam. The *āyah* shows us that it is important to be clean in Islam. It is extra important to be clean and look good and presentable when we are attending the mosque or any Islamic gathering.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

This issue is very significant in Islam. The Prophet (saw) has emphasised this issue in many of his narrations. In this lesson, we will look at some of the most important aspects of this obligation.

DRESSING WELL AND SELF GROOMING

As Muslims, we should look neat, clean and tidy when we appear in front of other people. It is important to do this when we meet other believers, because this will increase the love between believers. It is also important to do this when we meet with non-Muslims, because this will give them a good image of Islam.

The most important aspects of being clean and well-presented are:

- Using perfume and deodorant all the time. We should always remember to have deodorant handy if we are going to play sport. The importance of using perfume is seen from this narration related from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as):

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded that Islam teaches us to be neat and tidy ourselves.
- Know that a Masjid (Islamic centre, place of prayer etc.) is a very special place and must be respected by dressing and grooming appropriately.
- Learn that we should groom ourselves (Smell good, comb hair, dress decently) well before going out or even at home
- Understand the importance of maintaining general hygiene to prevent the spread of germs, and the etiquette of coughing and sneezing
- Know that keeping their environment and room/house tidy and clean is an obligation
- Understand the concept of ‘Dress of Piety’

“Using perfume is a practice of the messengers”ⁱⁱ



- Our hair should be neat and combed. We should also try to get a neat haircut that makes us look good and avoid haircuts that look strange, messy or dirty. The Prophet (saw) would always comb his hair and keep it tidy. In fact, he would not even open the door to meet someone without first making sure his hair was neat and tidy.
- We should wear clean clothes. Our clothes should be respectable and appropriate, and we should not wear clothes that are considered abnormal in the society we live in.
- We should try to keep our mouth smelling good by regularly brushing our teeth, flossing our teeth and using mouthwash.
- We should wash our feet regularly so they do not stink. If we are going out for a long time, or are going to play sport, it can be a good idea to bring along a second pair of socks to wear after sport.
- We should take showers regularly. In summer, showering every day is important, and if we have played sport or are sweaty for some reason, it is good to take a shower as well.



ETIQUETTES OF COUGHING AND SNEEZING

Islam has also given us recommendations on the etiquettes of sneezing or coughing. These recommendations are the same as those that science and medicine in this day and age have encouraged people to follow, since many diseases are spread through the uncleanness of the body.

Influenza (flu) and other serious respiratory illnesses like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are spread by coughing, sneezing, or unclean handsⁱⁱⁱ.

TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- You may be asked to put on a facemask to protect others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Review Questions:

Q1. The Prophet (saw) used to:

- a) Always comb his hair before going out
- b) Never waste time combing his hair
- c) Only comb his hair on special occasions

Q2. It is extra important to look neat and clean:

- a) When at home
- b) When going to the mosque
- c) When playing sport

LESSON II

^{iv}In the previous lesson, we learnt the importance of dressing well and grooming ourselves when we go out, especially to the places of worship. However, we must know that dressing well does not mean dressing in an un-Islamic fashion outside the rules of *Hijāb*. We must observe modesty and decency in our dressing.

Allah (SWT) explains this beautifully in the Holy Qur'ān:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَذَكَّرُونَ

“O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves and as an adornment, and the raiment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may remember” (7:26)

THE DRESS OF PIETY

In the verse of Holy Qur'ān we discussed above, Allah (SWT) mentions that the dress of piety is better than all other types of dressing. This means that we have to be careful of our Islamic obligations and duties at all times and with everything we do, including dressing. We cannot dress to attract people's attention especially between opposite genders, for this is sinful. Also, our dressing should be to please Allah (SWT) and to give Islam a good image, not to show-off and be proud of our wealth and status.

CLEANLINESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSE

It is very important for Muslims not only to keep themselves clean and tidy, but to do the same for their environment and houses. Unfortunately, non-Muslim houses and suburbs are usually far more neat and tidy than our houses and suburbs—which gives a bad image to Islam. We must make sure that we follow our religion properly and keep our houses and neighbourhoods clean.

The Prophet (saw) said: “do not leave garbage overnight in your houses, and take it out in the daytime, for it is the dwelling place of the devil.”^v

Here are some things we should make sure to do to keep our houses, streets, schools and mosques clean:

- Always tidy our room. We should not drive our mums crazy with our messy rooms and beds. We should make our bed and tidy our room on a daily basis.
- We should not dirty the bathroom when we use it, wherever it may be.
- We should clean up after ourselves when we eat. If this is at home, we should pick up our dishes and wash them ourselves if we can. We should not leave crumbs and leftovers on the table and especially not on the floor.
- We should not litter. Littering is a terrible habit that is discouraged in Islam as well.
- We should pick up any rubbish we see around us, even if it is not our rubbish.
- We should help our parents with mowing the lawn, keeping our gardens neat, and with big house clean-ups.

Even after a hard long day at work, Imam 'Ali (as) used to help his wife with housework when he got home. He would sweep the floor around the house and help his wife keep the house neat and clean.

We should learn from this to do the same and help our parents, especially our mums, with housework and cleaning.

Review Questions

Q1. Islam encourages us to:

- Keep our houses clean and tidy
- Leave our houses dirty as there are more important things to do than clean up
- Neither of the above

Q2. Muslims suburbs should be:

- Average in cleanliness
- The cleanest
- The least clean

ⁱ References

Social Rules in Islam: Personal Hygiene – Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei
A Bundle of Flowers –www.al-islam.org
Dar-al- Hadith, Cultural Scientific Institute -
<http://www.darolhadith.com/index.php>
Holy Qur'an
Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>
ⁱⁱ [al-Kafi, v. 6, p. 510, no. 2]
ⁱⁱⁱ Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

^{iv} References

Social Rules in Islam: Personal Hygiene – Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei
A Bundle of Flowers –www.al-islam.org
Dar-al- Hadith, Cultural Scientific Institute -
<http://www.darolhadith.com/index.php>
Holy Qur'an
Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>
^v [al-Faqih, v. 4, p. 5, no. 4968]

UNCLEAN THINGS (NAJĀSĀT)

النجاسات

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded about cleanliness and hygiene and its importance in Islam
- Review the concepts of najāsah and ṭahārah
- Learn most of the categories of Najāsah with common examples
- Understand that Najāsah can be transferred through moisture and by actual contact
- Learn the principle that 'everything is ṭāhir until you know it is najis'

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: NAJĀSĀT

As we have learnt in previous lessons, cleanliness and hygiene are very important in Islam. Our Prophet (saw) and our Imams (as) paid a lot of attention to this, encouraging Muslims to be clean at all times.

However, in Islam, we do not worry about just cleanliness and dirtiness. We have special rules that are a little different from being just clean and dirty. These are rules that Allah (SWT) has set for us. Before we begin today's lesson, we need to know the meanings of certain words:

Ṭahārah: you can think of this as Islamic cleanliness. It is different to just being or looking clean. There are certain rules we have to follow to stay in a state of *Ṭahārah* and be *Ṭāhir*. We will learn about these in the next few lessons.



Najāsah: this is the opposite of *Ṭahārah*. When something is not *Ṭāhir* (clean) it is *najis* (dirty or unclean).

Najis: something which, according to the rules of Islam, is unclean. We need to remove this uncleanliness before engaging in acts of worship.

WHAT ARE THE 'NAJĀSĀT' (UNCLEAN THINGS)?

- “Najāsāt” or impurities are things that can make us in some way dirty and which can have harmful effects on our body and soul. These things are najis in themselves and can make other objects they come into contact with Najis as well.
- Here are the main najāsāt which you need to know about in your daily life:
- **Urine and Stool:** when we go to the toilet, we need to make sure these things do not touch our clothes, other parts of our body or the floor. If they do, our clothes, our body or the floor become najis and therefore we must use water to clean whatever has been touched by these things.
- **Blood:** this means that if we get injured and bleed, like when playing sport, or have a nose-bleed, we have to wash the blood away from our clothes or body.



- **Dogs & pigs:** this means that if we touch these animals and either they or we are wet, we have to wash our body or clothes afterwards
- **Disbelievers:** People who do not believe in God (like atheists) are disbelievers. So if we shake hands with them and our hands or their hands were wet, we should wash our hands afterwards. Similarly, if they touch our food (or prepare it) with wet hands the food becomes najis and therefore we cannot eat it.
- There are a few other Najis things which are good for you to know about, but which you might not come across that often:
 - Wine
 - Dead bodies

Review Questions:

Q1. If there is blood on my clothes:

- a) My clothes are Najis and I must clean them with water
- b) My clothes are still *tāhir*.
- c) I can just wipe the blood away with a tissue and my clothes will become *tāhir* again.

Q2. If a drop of wine falls into a large pot of soup:

- a) We can still eat the soup because it was only a drop of wine
- b) We cannot eat the soup because the wine has made it Najis
- c) It is better not to eat the soup

Q3. Ṭāharah means:

- a) Being hygienic
- b) Islamic cleanliness
- c) Being tidy

LESSON 2 : MORE RULES ON NAJĀSĀT

In the previous lesson, we briefly discussed some of the impurities. In this lesson, we will go into more detail.

TRANSFER OF NAJĀSAH

In the last lesson, we learnt what najāsah means, and which things are najis. Now we will discuss how najāsah can spread.

Najāsah spreads through wet contact.



For example a carpet made wet by a little child who urinated on it can make anyone who walks on it najis until the urine has been washed away in the correct way. Similarly, if one's clothes are najis and wet, they can make the things they touch najis as well.

NAJIS AND MUTANAJJIS

Something that is not originally clean such as urine is called 'Najis', but when something is originally clean in itself but touches a najis thing it is called 'mutanajjis' (something that became Najis). In the above example, urine is najis in itself, while the carpet is 'mutanajjis'.

EVERYTHING IS TĀHIR UNTIL YOU KNOW IT IS NAJIS

This is one of the important rules of ṭahārah and najāsah. If you have a doubt about something and think it may have become najis, you should ignore your doubt and consider it ṭāhir until you are **CERTAIN** it has become unclean.

For example, you might think the bathrooms at school are najis. However, you should consider them ṭāhir until you are **CERTAIN** that they have somehow become najis by actually seeing the najasah yourself or hearing from a reliable source that it is najis.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Let us see how we should deal with certain situations that come up in our day to day life:

- 1- *Can I buy food from a shop where disbelievers work?*
 - a. Yes, as long as you do not actually see them make it Najis.
- 2- *Can I use deodorant, perfume, gel or other products that have alcohol or ethanol as an ingredient?*
 - a. Yes, because although wine is Najis, alcohol (e.g. industrial alcohol) is not Najis.
- 3- *If the bathroom's floor is wet and my pants touch it, does it become Najis?*
 - a. No, unless you know the floor is Najis.

Review Questions:

Q1. Najāsah spreads through:

- a) Any contact between a Najis thing and another object
- b) Wet contact between a Najis thing and another object
- c) Najāsah does not spread

Q2. When it comes to deodorant or perfume that has 'alcohol' as an ingredient:

- a) We cannot use it
- b) We can use it but it is Najis
- c) It is not Najis and we can use it

Q3. If I think something has become Najis but I don't know for sure:

- a) I should assume it is Najis
- b) I should assume it is Ṭāhir
- c) I should ask anyone who might know for sure

PURIFIERS (MUṬAHIRRĀT)

المطهرات

Objectives >>>

Students should learn:

- That water is the main purifier
- The different categories of water
- How to purify things using water according to the rules of Islam
- The purifiers besides water
- The Earth as a purifier
- The concept of 'subjection' as a type of purifier

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: CLEANING WITH WATER

As we have learnt in previous lessons, remaining clean (*tāhir*) and maintaining hygiene are very important in Islam. *Ṭahārah* is particularly important when we come to offer the daily prayers and when it comes to things we eat or drink. Here is a reminder of some definitions we learnt:

Ṭahārah طهارة = Islamic Cleanliness

Najāsah نجاسة = Islamic Uncleanliness

In our last two lessons, we learnt which things are Najis and how *Najāsah* is transferred. In this lesson, we will learn how to clean things once they become Najis.

CLEANERS

If a thing which is usually *Ṭāhir* becomes Najis, we can use cleaners (*muṭahhirrāt*) to make it *Ṭāhir* again.

Muṭahhirrāt مطهرات = those things that can make a
Najis thing *Ṭāhir* again.

Some of these things are:



Figure 1: Water



Figure 2: Sun



Figure 3: Earth

Q2. Muṭahhirāt means:

- a) Those things that are clean
- b) Those things that are dirty
- c) Those things that can make Najis things ṭāhir again

Q3. The most important of the Muṭahhirāt is:

- a) Sun
- b) Water
- c) Earth

WATER, THE MAIN PURIFIER

Water is the main cleaner. In this lesson, we will focus on water and how we can use it to clean things which have become Najis.

The first point to note is that water is the only liquid which is a purifier. Other liquids (e.g. juice) are not.

Water is divided into:

- Running water: such as tap water or water in a river.
- Still water: such as water from a water bottle

We can use both these types of water to clean things, but the rules between them are different. We will learn these rules in later lessons.

Review Questions

Q1. If I want to clean something:

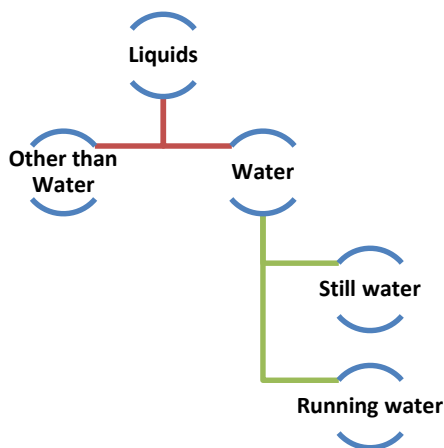
- a) I can only use plain water
- b) I can use plain or juice or soapy water
- c) I can only use running water

LESSON 2: THE PROCESS OF CLEANING

In this lesson, we will learn how to clean things with water.

A REVIEW OF THE TYPES OF WATER

Put a tick next to the boxes that have types of liquids we can use to clean things, and a cross next to the boxes that have types of water we can't use to clean things.



HOW TO CLEAN MOST THINGS

In the last lesson, we learnt that when things become Najis, we must clean them and that washing with water is the best way of making things Ṭahir. In this lesson, we are going to learn how to do this.



When we want to wash something which has become Najis, we have to do the following:

- Wash the Najis thing with water until all the Najāsah has gone from that thing. For example if your shirt had blood on it, wash it until you can't see any more blood mixed in the water as it washes off the shirt.

SOME IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS

However, there are a few things which have extra conditions before they become Ṭahir:

- If our clothes become Najis, we have to wash them and then squeeze the water out of them if we are using still water. If we are using running water, we do not need to squeeze.
- If our clothes become Najis because of urine, we need to wash them at least twice and then squeeze, if we are using still water. If we are using running water, washing once is enough.
- If our body becomes Najis because of urine, we have to wash it at least twice if we are using still water. If we are using running water, we only need to wash once.
- A plate or bowl licked by a dog must be rubbed with soil first and then washed. This should be done twice.
- If a plate or bowl becomes Najis on the inside, we have to wash it three times. After each wash, we should throw out the water.

Class Activity

Follow your teacher to the kitchen or the bathroom of your mosque or Islamic centre. The teacher will give you the following things to wash. See if you can remember how to clean these things:

- A shirt with tomato sauce on it- imagine this is blood
- A plate, imagine this has become Najis because some blood fell into it
- A plate, imagine it was licked by a dog
- A shirt, imagine it had become Najis because of urine

Review Questions:

Q1. Most things can be cleaned by:

- Washing three times
- Washing until the Najāsah disappears
- Washing once

Q2. If our clothes become Najis with urine, we need to:

- Wash twice then squeeze if we are using still water
- Wash three times if we are using still water
- Wash seven times if we are using still water

Q3. If the inside of a bowl becomes Najis, we need to:

- Wash the inside once
- Wash the inside three times and throw the water out each time
- Wash the inside six times and throw the water out each time

LESSON 3: OTHER CLEANERS

In our last two lessons we have learnt how to make things *Tāhir* using water. In some cases, we can use things other than water to make things *Tāhir*

THE EARTH

The soil, rock and sand of the earth can purify certain things.



If our feet or shoes become Najis because of something that was on the earth (for example, if we step on dog waste) then we can make our feet or shoes *Tāhir* simply by walking a few steps on the earth and rubbing the *Najāsah* that is on our feet or shoes on the earth until it is all gone. The earth we walk on must be:

- Dry
- Tāhir*

The earth can't be used to make the feet or shoes *Tāhir* if the *Najāsah* did not come from the earth itself.

Also, the earth can't make things like our pants or other parts of our body *Tāhir*.

Example:



Kumayl is walking home from school, and because he is looking at the birds in the park, he steps on some dog waste and his shoe becomes najis. If Kumayl continues to walk on the earth (dry dirt or soil, *not* grass) and the najis thing is cleared, his shoe will become *Tāhir*.

SUBJECTION (TABA'ITYAH)

This is when a Najis thing becomes *Tāhir* as a result of another najis thing becoming *Tāhir*.

Example 1: When the chef washes a knife that has become najis with blood, to make it *Tāhir*, his hands which are also being washed at the same time, will become *Tāhir* once the knife becomes *Tāhir*.

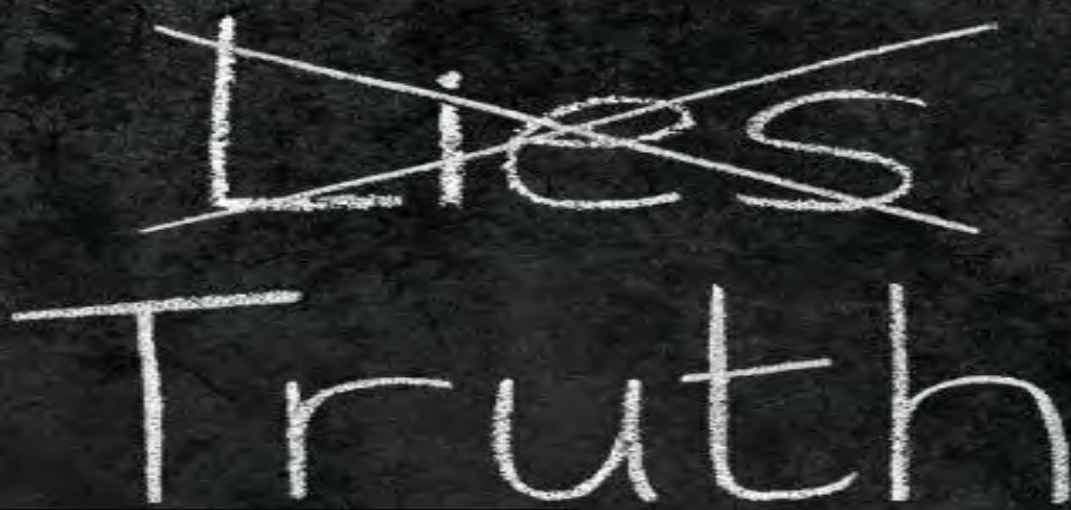
Example 2: If I am holding my Najis shirt to wash it, once the shirt becomes *Tāhir*, my hands also become *Tāhir* too and I do not need to wash them separately.



¹ References

- Sayyid Sistani, Islamic Laws, <http://www.al-islam.org/laws/mutahhirat.html#192>
- <http://www.madressa.net>

- Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Taharah and Najasah, <http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?id=4759>
- <http://www.madressa.net>
- <http://www.islamic-laws.com/taharatandnajasat.htm>



~~Lies~~ Truth

LYING

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand what it means to be truthful in speech and action
- Understand that lying is forbidden in Islam
- Understand that there are levels of lying and the most horrible are lies against God and His Prophets
- Understand that lying to deceive others is a major sin
- Understand that lying as part of a joke or to 'have fun' is also not allowed
- Understand briefly the consequences of lying in this world
- Be reminded of the punishments of lying
- Know some basic reasons why people lie and how you can stop lying
- Understand that lying just leads to more lying
- Know that listening intently to a liar or speaker of falsehood is also not permissible

LESSON 1: LYING IN ACTIONS

In today's lesson we are going to discuss the severity of lying and how ugly and lowly this act is considered in Islam. Unfortunately, lying has become easy and is becoming more and more common in our day-to-day lives. However, although we do not see the physical consequences of lying; the damage it does to our soul is irreversible. This is because lying leads to other bigger sins. The lesson below will hopefully help you better understand what Islam has to say about lying.

WORDS = ACTIONS

To be sincerely truthful is to be sure that our words fully match our actions. For example, we say we are Muslims and followers of Ahlul Bayt (AS) – but do our actions show that? Do we handle situations like the Prophet (SAW) handled situations? Or do we lie our way out of things as the disbelievers do?

Muhammad ibn Umar ibn Hanzaleh narrated that Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

"One who is only verbally in agreement with us, but is opposed to our deeds and words is not one of our followers. Shiites are those who not only agree with us in words, but they also accept our writings and follow us in action. They are our true followers." (Mishkatul Anwaar – Hadith No. 331)

Imam Sadiq (AS) says that those who only say they believe but their actions show otherwise, are not classified as believers. Therefore, being truthful is not only speaking the truth but also matching our actions to what we say.

Another example is when we mourn and beat our chests for Imam Husain (AS) but then neglect our prayers and listen to music. It is not enough to just mourn for Imam Husain (AS) and cry for him when we do not follow his ways. We are only deceiving ourselves! If we truly and sincerely love Imam Hussain (AS) we would not only mourn and cry for him, but also act upon his teachings and follow the principles he stood for.

NO LYING:

Telling lies is forbidden in Islam. The sad and unfortunate thing is that we do not realise how often we lie. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an, in Surah al-Hajj; verse no. 30:

وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

Shun lying speech (false statements)

The term 'shun' meaning avoid that is used in this verse is the same term Allah (SWT) has used when referring to alcohol. This would mean that just like we avoid even coming near to alcohol, we should avoid, shun and not even come close to lying! For example, just like we wouldn't sit at a table where alcohol is being served we shouldn't lie nor have any connection or association with those who lie.

THE WORST LIE:

There are many levels to lying. We lie and deceive ourselves and we also lie to deceive others. The greatest and most horrific level is lying against Allah (SWT) and His prophets.

We are lying against God and His Prophets when we misquote them. An example is when we quote a hadith (saying) without knowing the real words and the origin of that hadith. The words of God (SWT) and His prophets are so holy that we cannot just make something up and attribute it to them just to add credit to our words. This is Haram as it is a form of lying.

Homework:

- 1) Why do you think that Allah (SWT) has really discouraged lying and labelled it as a MAJOR sin? What are the harmful effects of lying?

- 2) Give other examples of when our actions are not truthful to what we say. What can we do to correct it?

Review Questions

Q1. Lying in action means:

- a) Lying when you are walking
- b) When ones actions do not match up with their beliefs
- c) Lying all the time

Q2. The worst lie is:

- a) Lies against parents
- b) Lies against oneself
- c) Lies against Allah (SWT) or His Prophet

LESSON 2: CONSEQUENCES OF LYING

To deceive someone is to cause someone to believe something that is not true and it is often done just to gain some personal advantage.

For example, if my parents ask me if I have prayed and I lie and say 'yes', when in fact I haven't yet prayed, this is deception. The funny thing is that when someone lies they are only deceiving and harming themselves. We cannot deceive Allah, because He knows what is in our hearts.

CONSEQUENCES OF LYING:

Lying is almost like a never ending sin. If we lie once, we have to lie another ten times to cover up that first initial lie. Lying is the key to all other sins. Imagine all the sins to be locked up in a warehouse; lying would be the key to the door of that warehouse. The following incident happened at the time of the Prophet (saw). It may help you better understand the consequences of lying:

There was once a man who was a thief and was known to be immoral. He took the road towards the Mosque and went to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and sat opposite him. He put his head down and with shame said '*O Prophet of Allah! Punish me for I have committed many sins! What can I do to stop sinning?*'

The Holy Prophet said to this man '*Never lie*'.

The man waited for further instructions, but to his amazement the Prophet didn't say another word. The man looked at the Prophet and asked '*is that it?*'

The Prophet repeated '*Don't lie*'.

He became happy; he thought he can do anything he likes now; he just has to be sure not to lie.

He was only steps away from the mosque as the idea of stealing from a house came to his mind; he was planning a strategy that would be safe; he would climb the walls at the back, gather the money fast and run away...

Suddenly, he came to a stop and realised how hard it will be to follow the instructions of the Prophet. He said to himself '*if after the robbery, someone asks me, "Did you steal?" what will I say to them? Will I say "No"? But this is a lie.*' So he started thinking of other bad acts he can do; however none of them can be carried out without having to lie; lying was the key to ALL his sins. From then, that man never sinned again.

PUNISHMENT OF LYING:

Lying is a mortal sin which takes one to Hell and punishment – unless one truly repents and never lies again! Allah (SWT) curses those who lie, saying in the Holy Qur'an

فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين

"And invoke the Curse of Allâh upon those who lie"

The curse of Allah (SWT) is the worst punishment that anyone can be a recipient of!

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, today's lesson consisted of many important and valuable lessons that we need to ponder over. We have discussed that even lying as a joke and to deceive someone is not allowed therefore we need to be extra careful next time we 'joke' around with someone. We also learnt how we can avoid lying by concealing the truth and that lying leads to bigger sins and is the key to all evils!

With these lessons and examples in mind, let us all make a promise to ourselves to stop lying and think twice

before we speak... We will notice that if we stop lying, we will eventually stop committing other sins too, by God's Will.

Homework:

- 1) When you lie, are you successful in deceiving others? Explain your answer using examples other than the ones used in the lesson.
- 2) How can you avoid lying? Explain your answer using examples.

Review Questions

Q1. The worst consequence of lying is:

- a) People will not like us
- b) We will be deceiving yourself
- c) Allah (SWT) will curse us and therefore will withhold his blessings from us

Q2. Lying as a joke is:

- a) Allowed if we are not hurting anyone
- b) Allowed if we make sure to say the truth later on
- c) Is never allowed and is therefore a mortal sin

LESSON 3: WHY DO WE LIE?

In our last lesson, we learnt that lying is a major sin. In this lesson, we will look at some of the major reasons people lie, and how we can avoid lying.

WHY DO WE LIE?

With different situations in our lives come different reasons as to why we may lie and hide the truth. However out of these, there are three main reasons as to why we may lie:

- It has become so common and second nature for us that it is no longer considered as something wrong or disliked.
- As an excuse to get us out of trouble as one may fear the consequences of telling the truth – This is probably the most common reason for lying. For example, a young student might be talking in class when they are not supposed to. When the teacher asks them if they were, they usually lie to get out of trouble.

- To reach our goal or something we desire quicker: For example, telling your parents that you are going to the library to study when in fact you are going out with a friend. One would lie in this scenario because he knows that if they told the truth they probably wouldn't be allowed to go.

However, when we lie, any blessing or pleasure we might have gained from that thing we wanted will be ruined. Our Imams (as) tells us that:

"When someone tries to achieve a goal by disobeying Allah, this will cause him to miss out on what he hopes to gain and to face what he feared even quicker"

None of these reasons are valid! There is no acceptable reason to lie. Lying is *ḥarām* and should be avoided.

HOW CAN LYING BE AVOIDED?

The answer to this, like most things in our lives, can be learnt from our Imams (AS) as they are the perfect examples and role models:

Once, Imam Sadiq (AS) was walking with his son, Ismail, and a friend. When they reached the Imam's house, the Imam (AS) did not invite the man inside. Later on, Ismail asked the Imam (AS) as to why he did not invite the man inside at least as a formality. To this the Imam (AS) said that Allah (SWT) does not like people who pretend.

From this story, we learn the key and the secret of how we can avoid lying – and that is to put Allah (SWT)'s pleasure before anything and everything! If we do this, we will not care what people think, we will not care about wealth and other worldly pleasures, we will not care about whether we will lose out telling the truth – in fact, we would not even think of lying because it would displease our lord!

To train ourselves to stop lying, we have to remember a few important points:

- The pleasure of God is more important than our pleasure or the pleasure of people. Therefore, we should please God by telling the truth, even if this might seem bad for us at first glance.
- Lying leads to more lying, and so if we lie that first time, we will have to keep weaving lies and this will make us stressed and anxious. In the example where a person lies about going out with friends, he usually has to make up a

whole story about what he did with his friends, who was with him etc...

- The truth always appears, and liars always get found out. Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Bani Israel (chapter 17) Verse no. 81:

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ
كَانَ زَهُوقًا

And say: "Truth has come and Bātil (falsehood) has vanished. Surely! Bātil (falsehood) is ever bound to vanish.

The verse tells us that falsehood is not something that will last and that truth will always prevail. Just look at the examples of those who gained pleasures through lying – like Fir'aun. Fir'aun (pharaoh) used to tell the people that he is God and that everybody should worship him. However, that falsehood and that lie were vanquished when Allah (SWT) caused his army to drown when He split the seas for the Musa and his followers, who were truthful.

LYING SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED!

Lying is so discouraged in Islam that Islam teaches us to even speak out against those who lie. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Baqarah; verse no. 42:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ

And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (the truth).

The verse tells us that we should not conceal or hide the truth when we know it. Perhaps this simple example will help us understand better in what situation we can stand up against lying:

Lying is so discouraged in Islam that Islam teaches us to even speak out against those who lie. We should also not listen to liars or obey or follow them. Our Imams teach that if we listen to people who speak falsehood, and who follow Satan, it is as if we are worshipping Satan.

This means that if we are in the habit of listening to music and songs that speak about sinful things that we are worshipping Satan. It also means that we should not follow or take as leaders people who are obviously liars, like many of the politicians in Western countries.

Instead, we should listen to truthful people, who teach us about our God, our Prophets and our religion. This is the Truth, and we should listen to them, so that we are worshipping Allah and not Satan.

Homework:

1) Can you think of any other reasons as to why people may lie? Use examples to explain your answer.

2) What do you think is the proper way of dealing with a liar? Should you be rude and aggressive or polite?

Review Questions

Q1. People lie to:

- a) Get out of trouble
- b) Get something they want
- c) Both a & b

Q2. We can train ourselves to stop lying by:

- a) Remembering that what God wants is the most important thing
- b) Remembering that lying will lead to more lying
- c) Both a & b



KEEPING PROMISES

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded that keeping promises and saying the truth is the foremost responsibility of a believer
- Understand the different examples of keeping promises
- Understand that one who breaks his/her promise is counted as a hypocrite
- Know that a promise must be kept, no matter who it is made to

KEEPING PROMISES

Keeping promises and speaking the truth has been mentioned many times in the Qur'ān and has also been emphasised in the sayings and actions of the Ahlul Bayt (as). Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا

“And fulfil the covenant. Verily! the covenant, will be questioned about.” (17:34)

It is our duty and responsibility, as this verse very clearly states, to keep our promises and speak the truth. As we have learnt, two of the most famous titles of our Prophet Muḥammad (saw) were ‘The Truthful’ and ‘The Trustworthy’. He is the perfect example for us to follow; and keeping promises is one of the remarkable characteristics of the Ahlul Bayt (as) that we need to aspire to if we claim to be their followers.

MAKE A PROMISE AND KEEP IT

We seem to make promises to people in our day-to-day lives without noticing or realizing the great responsibility of keeping them. For example, we might promise to take our little brother or sister out and play with them, or promise a friend we will help them with schoolwork, or promise our mum that we will help more around the house. Often we forget our promises or we back out when it starts to get too hard.

If we want to be true believers, we should make sure that we do what we say we will do. If we say things and then do not do them, we will be questioned by Allah (SWT) and we will earn His displeasure.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

“O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do” (61:2-3)

If we are unsure whether we can keep a promise or not, we should not make that promise in the first place. Instead, we should say that we will try or that we might be able to do something, but we cannot make any promises.

BEING PUNCTUAL (ON TIME)

Unfortunately, we tend to break our promises often when it comes to punctuality. Keeping promises and punctuality are both stressed in Islam as they are traits of a believer. If we tell someone that we will be at their house at a certain time but then we turn up very late – we have broken our promise of being on time. One of the functions of the daily prayers is to train us to be punctual and perform our duties on time.

Therefore, before making a promise we should first think it through and see whether we are able to follow it through. If we feel we will, then we can go ahead and promise but must make sure to fulfil it. If not, there is no sin in saying ‘no’ to someone! There are, of course, extenuating circumstances which sometimes force us to break our promise. In such a case, we should inform the person we promised as soon as possible.

HYPOCRITES BREAK PROMISES

A person who frequently breaks their promises is considered a hypocrite, and hypocrites are the worst group of people. Prophet Muḥammad (saw) has said:

“The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks; he lies, when he makes a promise; he breaks it, and when he is entrusted; he betrays”ⁱ

Even if we promise a disbeliever or an enemy something, we must keep it. Prophet Muḥammad signed a peace treaty with the disbelievers who were fighting Muslims at the time, and he made sure never to violate or break that treaty in any way.

Imam al-Sajjād (AS) says that even if someone were to entrust him with the sword that was used to kill his father, he would return that sword to its owner. This shows that promises must be kept, no matter to whom they are made.

Of course, we should make sure not to make any promises that would lead us to do something *ḥarām*. We should also not promise to do anything that we cannot possibly do. Such promises are not really promises and we are never allowed to do anything which is not allowed in Islam, even if we have promised to do it.

In conclusion, a truly believing Muslim must keep his or her promises under almost all circumstances. Keeping promises, including being punctual and doing what we say we will do, is a sign of a true believer.

Review Questions

Q1. Keeping promises:

- a. Has nothing to do with Islam and faith
- b. Is a big part of Islam and faith
- c. Is part of Islam but not very important

Q2. We must keep promises:

- a. Only to our family
- b. Only to our friends
- c. Everyone

Q3. If a person promises they will do something which is ḤARĀM:

- a. They must still do it
- b. They are not allowed to do it
- c. They have a choice of whether to do it or not

ⁱ [al-Faqih vol.4 p.361]



TRUSTWORTHINESS

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand what it means to be trustworthy
- Understand that trustworthiness has several meanings in the social context
- Understand the responsibility of the trustee
- Understand that our body is a trust from Allah (SWT) and we have to look after it
- Know that being trustworthy is an obligation in Islam and there are no exceptions to it

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is one of the most important obligations in Islam. On a social level, trustworthiness means to fulfil the trust that a person has been given. For example, if someone gives you money to keep safe before they go on a journey; to return this money exactly the way he had entrusted it to you is an example of being trustworthy. Another example is when someone tells you a secret: a trustworthy person would keep the secret safe and wouldn't spread or tell anyone.

Trustworthiness is one of the most important social rules in Islam. It is highly encouraged in Islam for a believer to practice trustworthiness. The best example of being trustworthy is of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW); he was so trustworthy in his trade and business that the people would call him al- *Ṣādiq Al-Amīn*, the Truthful and Trustworthy.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRUSTEE

When someone entrusts us with something, there is a responsibility we have to fulfil. This includes returning the trust to the rightful owner in the condition it was given to us. For example, if someone gave you their laptop to take care of, it becomes your responsibility to return the laptop in the same condition that you received it, unless something that is out of your control happens despite you being careful.

Secondly, it is the responsibility of the person being entrusted to not use the trust for personal gain. For example, if someone gives you a certain amount of money to look after then you must not use that money

for yourself and should return the exact same amount to the rightful owner. However, if the owner allows you to use it then it is allowed.

These responsibilities are towards *anyone* who entrusts you with something: regardless of their religion or beliefs.

TRUSTWORTHINESS: AN OBLIGATION WITH NO EXCEPTIONS!

Islam encourages us to be trustworthy towards EVERYONE – whether Muslim or not.

Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:

*“Do not betray a man who trusts you, even if he betrays you.
And do not disclose his secrets even if he discloses yours”ⁱ*

We learn from this narration that even in the worst cases we cannot break anyone’s trust! In fact, the prophets and Imams used to return trusts to their direct enemies!

Imam Zainul Abidin (as) says that even if the killer of his father, Imam Husayn (as), were to leave the sword with which he killed Imam Husayn (as) with the Imam as a trust, the Imam would fulfil the trust and give it back to him.ⁱⁱ

Another example is during the Prophet ‘s (SAW) time- during the war against the polytheists in Arabia. The Prophet (SAW) went to a polytheist by the name of Şafwan Ibn Umayyah, whose business was to sell shields. The Prophet (SAW) asked to borrow 70 shields to use in the war. Şafwan asked the prophet “Will I get these shields back from you?” to which the Prophet (SAW) answered “It is a trust which I guarantee”. Just like the Prophet (SAW) promised, he returned all 70 shields to Şafwan.ⁱⁱⁱ

We learn from these examples that we must fulfil all trusts, even if they are given to us by non-Muslims or enemies.

OUR BODY IS A TRUST FROM ALLAH (SWT)

Just like people may entrust us with their belongings, Allah (SWT) has also entrusted us with a body and soul. Our duty is to take care of them while we are alive and return them to Him in the state in which they were meant to be returned.

Let’s look at an example to help us understand things

Some ways we can take care of our physical bodies is by doing exercise regularly, not over eating or over sleeping etc. We should also take care of our soul by praying, staying in a state of purity, fasting etc...

WHAT DID WE LEARN TODAY?

- 1) Trustworthiness is an extremely important social rule in Islam and is highly encouraged as shown by our Prophets and Imams.
- 2) Our body and Soul is a trust from Allah (SWT) which we must take care of to the best of our ability.
- 3) And finally, trustworthiness is an obligation with no exceptions. Even if our enemy entrusts us with something, we must fulfil that trust.

Review Questions

Q1. Trustworthiness applies:

- a. To all trusts
- b. Only to trusts given to me by a Muslim
- c. Only to trusts given to me by a trustworthy person

Q2. If I am given a trust, my responsibility is:

- a. Nothing, the person chose to leave it with me and that’s their risk
- b. To take care of it as best as I can according to the conditions the person set
- c. To take care of it but use it for my benefit also

ⁱ [Scales of Wisdom; P 115]

ⁱⁱ [Biharul Anwar; Volume 75; P114].

ⁱⁱⁱ [Wasa’il ush-Shia; Vol 19; P92].



MINDING THE TONGUE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that tongue (speech) also refers to all forms of written and electronic communication
- Understand that Allah (SWT) has given us a unique ability to speak and communicate and that we should be thankful to him for this gift by using it wisely
- Understand that we do not know the character of a person until they speak
- Know that swearing is forbidden in Islam
- Understand that we have to guard our tongue when speaking
- Understand that we should be wary of how much we speak

MINDING THE TONGUE

In today's lesson we are going to discuss something very important; it is one of the hardest challenges that we have to face in our everyday lives.

OUR TONGUE IS A GIFT FROM ALLAH (SWT)

Minding the tongue means to be careful of what we say to others. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

"And speak good words to people" (2:83)

What does this ayah mean? It means that we should be polite and nice to people when we talk to them. Our ability to speak is an extremely valuable gift from Allah (SWT); it is a gift which Allah has not gifted to any of His other creatures. Allah (SWT) has entrusted us with this gift and so we need to take care of it!

If your mum gifted you an iPad for your birthday, do you think she would like it if you scratched it, threw it on the floor and played with it as if it were a ball? And would you, knowing how valuable the iPad is, throw it around and abuse it? Similarly, Allah (SWT) has gifted us with a very valuable tongue – we can use it in any way we like – to spread goodness, praise Him and be nice to people *or* to swear, backbite and lie. Which one would you use it for?

MINDING YOUR TONGUE ONLINE

Minding our tongue is not only limited to what we *say* to people physically but also what we say through e-mail, texting and of course also on social networking sites like Facebook. These are all different ways of communication that are becoming more common. Just because these are online and you are not physically *saying* anything to someone, this does not mean that we have an excuse to insult anyone or be rude to them.

Just like we should and we would be careful not to insult or be rude to people when we are talking to them face-to-face; we should be cautious and careful when we are dealing with people over the internet through email, texting or any social networking site. All forms of communication have the same ethical principles.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU... SAY

You make a new friend at school, but he is very quiet and doesn't talk at all. He just sits down next to you and does his work; will you be able to get to know what kind of person he is? You wouldn't know what kind of person he is until he talks. Therefore, the way we talk and the things we talk about define and determine what kind of person we are. This is what Imam Ali (AS) meant when he said:

"Man is concealed under his tongue."

Therefore, the way in which we use our tongue and the things we talk about are what show other people what kind of person we are.

THE TRIPLE FILTER TEST

There are three questions you should ask yourself before you decide to say something/post something on Facebook/write a text; your words need to pass through this triple filter test before coming out of your mouth – so ask yourself:

- 1) Is it the truth? If you are going to say something, first ask yourself whether what you are going to say is the truth. Are you going to say something you've just heard from anybody or are you going to say something factual? Think about it first.
- 2) Is it good? Is what you want to say going to spread goodness and is it good for the people around you? If you want to talk about someone, are you going to say something good?

- 3) The third and most important question is: Is it useful? Is what you are about to say going to be beneficial to those around you; if not, why say it?

If you pass these three tests; then only you should say what you have to – otherwise there is no point. Our challenge this week is to ask ourselves these three questions before saying anything, posting anything on Facebook, texting someone and of course writing an email to anyone. Hopefully by the end of this week we will become used to asking ourselves this and it will become a habit.

OVER TALKING IS DANGEROUS

Islam is a religion of moderation. Anything in excess is not considered healthy in Islam. For example, it is not recommended to eat more than your fill or to sleep too much. Similarly, talking too much is also discouraged in Islam.

Why do you think this is?

Over-talking can lead to us saying things that we may regret; and remember we can *never* take our words back! This story should help us understand the consequences of over talking and saying something we may regret later on:

A younger woman one day said something that hurt (insulted) her best friend. She regretted it immediately, and would have done anything to have taken the words back. But they were said, impulsively, in a moment of thoughtlessness, and as close as she and her friend were, she didn't consider the effects of her words beforehand.

In her effort to undo what she had done, she went to an older, wiser woman in the village, explaining her situation, and asked for advice. The older, wiser woman listened patiently in an effort to determine just how sincere the younger woman was and how far she was willing to go to correct the situation.

The older, wiser woman said, "There are two things needed to do to make amends. The first of the two is extremely difficult. Tonight, take your best feather pillows, and open a small hole in each one. Then, before the sun rises, you must put a single feather on the doorstep of each house in town.

When you are through, come back to me. If you've done the first thing completely, I'll tell you the second."

The younger woman hurried home to prepare for her chore. All night long she laboured alone in the cold. She went from doorstep to doorstep, taking care not to overlook a single house. Her fingers were frozen, the wind was so sharp it caused her eyes to water, but she ran on, through the darkened streets, thankful there was something she could do to put things back the way they once were.

Just as the sun rose, she returned to the older, wiser woman. She was exhausted, but relieved that her efforts would be rewarded. "My pillows are empty. I placed a feather on the doorstep of each home."

Now, said the older, wiser woman, "Go back and refill your pillows. Then everything will be as it was before."

The younger woman was stunned. "You know that's impossible! The wind blew away each feather as fast as I placed them on the doorsteps! You didn't say I had to get them back! If this is the second requirement, then things will never be the same."

"That's true", said the older, wiser woman. "Never forget. Each of your words is like a feather in the wind. Once spoken, no amount of effort, regardless how heartfelt or sincere, can ever return them to your mouth. Choose your words well, and guard them most of all in the presence of those you love, because remember one kind word can warm three winter months."

SWEARING IS FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM

In Islam, swearing is absolutely forbidden! The hardest time to guard our tongue is when we are angry; that is when we tend to say things we don't mean and sometimes that anger may even lead us to swear – this is forbidden in Islam.

Allah (SWT) tells us in Hadith Qudsi:

"O son of Adam, if your tongue is urging you to say things I have made impermissible for you to say, I have provided you with two shutters- your teeth and your lips- so shut them"

This basically means that if we want to swear or say something which is

not allowed, then it is better to just keep silent and not open our mouths.

ⁱ Review Questions

Q1. If we are not sure whether something will be good and useful or not, we should:

- a) Say it anyway, because no one likes quiet people
- b) We should remain silent
- c) We should say it anyway because it might be funny

Q2. Bullying:

- a) Is not allowed in Islam and is a form of misusing the tongue
- b) Is okay as long as it is online
- c) Is okay if the other person is not cool

Q3. People usually get to know us through:

- a) How we look
- b) What we say and do
- c) Who our parents are

ⁱ Bibliography
<http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/mis57.asp>

WUDU', GHUSL AND TAYAMMUM

الوضوء و الغسل و التيمم

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn how to perform WUDŪ' by watching a video demonstration
- Learn when it is necessary or recommended to perform WUDŪ'
- Know the invalidators of WUDŪ'
- Understand other general rules of WUDŪ'
- Know the method of performing Ghusl
- Know the main situations where Ghusl is obligatory
- Learn when it is necessary to perform Tayammum
- Learn what substances can be used for Tayammum
- Learn how to perform Tayammum

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: A PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF WUDŪ'

This lesson will consist of watching a video demonstration of Wudū'.

The video to be shown can be found in the eHAWZA: Semester 1, Course 4, Lecture 5.

LESSON 2: FURTHER RULES OF WUDŪ'

Practical Activity

Your teacher will take you to the nearest washrooms. There, each of you should demonstrate Wudū' to your teacher. We will then return to class to learn some rules about Wudū'.



WHEN TO PERFORM WUDŪ'

We need to perform *Wuḍū'*:

- Before our daily prayers
- Before we touch the script of the Qur'ān
- Before we touch the names of Allah (SWT) or the Prophets and Ahlul Bayt

It is recommended to perform *Wuḍū'*:

- Before any act of worship, such as reciting the Qur'ān or du'ā'
- Before sleeping
- All the time

CONDITIONS OF WUDŪ'

When we are about to perform *Wuḍū'*, we need to remember the following rules:

1. The water we use and the place we are doing *Wuḍū'* in need to be *Mubāḥ* - this means that we must have permission to use them. We should also be careful not to waste water.
2. We must use water (not any other liquid), and the water must be islamically clean (*ṭāhir*)
3. Before we start *Wuḍū'*, the parts of our body which we will wash or wipe during *Wuḍū'* must be *ṭāhir*. So if a person has a cut on their arm and it is bleeding and there is still some blood on it, they need to wash the blood off as much as they can.
4. We should do the different parts of *Wuḍū'* in quick order and should not wait a long time between them.



THINGS WHICH VOID WUDŪ'

A person remains in the state of *Wuḍū'* until one of the factors which breaks the *Wuḍū'* occurs. There are seven things which invalidate *Wuḍū'*. This means that if any one of these things occur, a person has to repeat their *Wuḍū'* before doing anything else that requires *Wuḍū'*. Some of the things that void *Wuḍū'* are:

- Urinating
- Defecating
- Passing wind from the rear
- Sound sleep (in which one cannot hear anything)
- Situations in which a person loses his senses e.g. insanity, intoxication or unconsciousness
- There are other situations that make *Wuḍū'* void which we will learn about in later years.



Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is correct?

- a) It is okay to wait a long time between the actions of *Wuḍū'*
- b) Waiting a long time between the actions of *Wuḍū'* makes our *Wuḍū'* void
- c) We do not have to do the actions of *Wuḍū'* in order

Q2. Which of the following voids *Wuḍū'*?

- a) Urinating
- b) Passing wind from the rear
- c) Both of the above

Q3. If we are going to touch the names of Allah (SWT), the names of the prophets or the Ahlul Bayt:

- a) It is better to have *Wuḍū'*
- b) We do not need to have *Wuḍū'*
- c) We have to have *Wuḍū'*

LESSON 3: GHUSL

In previous lessons, we have learnt about *Wuḍūʿ*, and that it is one way of cleaning ourselves Islamically. Another way of doing this is Ghusl. Ghusl is basically having a shower in a certain way with the intention of becoming pure, for the sake of Allah. In some situations, *Wuḍūʿ* is not enough to make us pure, instead we need to perform Ghusl. In this lesson, we will discuss how to perform Ghusl as well as some of the reasons why we have to perform Ghusl.

HOW DO WE PERFORM GHUSL?

There are two ways of performing Ghusl. The most common way of performing Ghusl is the following:

- Make sure the body has been washed from any impurity or barrier that would block water
- Make the intention of performing Ghusl to become pure for the sake of Allah, the Exalted
- Wash the head and neck, making sure water reaches every part.
- Wash the right side of the body completely; making sure the water reaches every part.
- Wash the left side of the body completely; making sure the water reaches every part.

Remember that water must reach every single part of the body.

Remember that just 'having a shower' is not enough. We must have the intention of Ghusl and we must perform Ghusl according to the steps above.

WHEN DO WE PERFORM GHUSL?

In certain situations, Ghusl is obligatory (*wājib*) and at other times it is recommended (*mustaḥab*). The most common reason for obligatory Ghusl for boys is waking up and realising that you have had a wet dream. If this happens, you should:

- wash your clothes which have become najis, making sure to make them *ṭāhir*
- stand under the shower and wash any impurity from your body
- perform Ghusl the way we described above

Ghusl also becomes obligatory in other situations, but we will discuss those in later years.

As we said, there are also situations where Ghusl is recommended (*mustaḥab*). The most common reasons for this are:

- **Friday Ghusl:** it is recommended to perform Ghusl on Friday morning which has the effect of washing many of our sins away
- **Ghusl on special days or nights of the year**, such as Laylatul Qadr

Practical Activity

Now you will pretend to do Ghusl to show that you know how to do it. Stand under the fan: imagine you are under the shower and go through the steps of Ghusl.

Teacher's Note: the remainder of the lesson is for female students only.

GHUSLS SPECIFIC TO GIRLS

There are different Ghusls which are specific to girls. We will discuss the situations in which Ghusl becomes obligatory for a girl.

MENSTRUATION (ḤAYḌ)

As you may know, when a girl reaches the age of puberty, certain changes occur in her body. One of the most important changes is that she begins to menstruate. Menstruation is when blood is discharged from the body of a woman for a number of days each month. Some of you may have already experienced this and for others it may start to happen soon. Do not be alarmed if it happens. It is something natural and happens to almost all girls. It is part of your body's new cycle of hormones, which are supposed to prepare you to be able to have children later in your life.

Islam has certain rules when it comes to menstruation. Probably the most important rule is that while a girl is menstruating there are certain things that she cannot do. We will discuss these later. However, when she finishes menstruation, she needs to perform Ghusl, as described above, to be able to do those things again. So, when you are sure that you have stopped menstruating for that month and no more blood is seen, you should perform a Ghusl with the intention of Ghuslil *ḥayḍ*.

The wording of the intention is not important. What is important is that you know why you are performing Ghusl and that it is for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

THINGS WHICH ARE FORBIDDEN FOR A MENSTRUATING WOMAN

A menstruating woman is not allowed to perform the following things:

- Daily prayers
- Fasting
- Touching the script of the Holy Qurʿān
- Any other act of worship that requires *Wuḍūʿ* or Ghusl
- Staying in a mosque

Things like reading the Qurʿān without touching the script or reciting Qurʿān from memory are allowed.

Review Questions

Q1. If a boy wakes up after having a wet dream:

- a) He must perform Ghusl
- b) He needs to have just an ordinary shower
- c) He needs to do *Wuḍūʿ*

Q2. Which of the following is the correct order of washing the body during ghusl?

- a) Washing the head and neck, then the right side of the body, then the left
- b) Washing the left side of the body, then the right, then the head and neck
- c) The order does not matter

Q3. Which day of the week is it most mustaḥab to perform Ghusl in?

- a) Friday
- b) Thursday
- c) Sunday

LESSON 4: TAYAMMUM

If water is not available, instead of *Wuḍūʿ* or Ghusl, we can purify ourselves with clean earth or soil, and this is called Tayammum. However, this can only be done in certain situations we will discuss later. We can perform Tayammum instead of *Wuḍūʿ* or Ghusl when:

- Water is not available
- There is not enough water
- Using water would harm us
- It is difficult or dangerous to find water
- We have no water that we have permission to use
- There is little time for prayer and Tayammum would take less time than *Wuḍūʿ*

HOW TO PERFORM TAYAMMUM (PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION)

Niyyah: Make your intention to perform Tayammum for the sake of Allah

Step 1: Strike the palms of hands simultaneously on earth, sand, or stone (in order of preference) which is dry and clean. (Figure 1)



Step 2: Pull both palms together from the beginning of the forehead where the hair grows down to the bridge of the nose. Both sides of the forehead joining the ears and over the eyebrows should be included. (Figures 2 and 3 below)



Figure 2



Figure 3

Step 3: Strike the palms together on the earth, sand, or stone second time as in Step 1.

Step 4: Then pull the left palm on the whole back of the right hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips. (Figure 4)



Figure 4

Step 5: Then pull the right palm on the whole back of the left hand.

RULES OF TAYAMMUM

Tayammum can be done on one of the following things (in order of preference):

1. Earth
2. Sand
3. Pebbles or stone.



All the items of Tayammum must be:

- Dry
- *Tāhir*
- The thing must leave some particles of soil or dust on our hands (where possible) and it is better that we do not shake these off.

Review Questions

Q1. I can do Tayammum when:

- a) There is no water available
- b) Water would harm my body
- c) Both of the above

Q2. What can I use for Tayammum?

- a) Mud
- b) Dry soil
- c) Grass

Q3. When performing Tayammum, I should wipe:

- a) The forehead from the hair-tips to the bridge of the nose
- b) The whole face
- c) The chin and cheeks

PRAYER TIMES

أوقات الصلاة

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYING ON TIME

Prayer is the fundamental practical pillar of our religion. In this lesson we will discuss the obligation of prayers upon the believers and the times at which prayers have been made obligatory. We cannot afford to be careless about our prayers, as our entire religion is based upon this act of worship. Every single one of our days should be based around the prayer and the times allocated for prayer. Think of prayer as a meeting with Allah, the Almighty Lord, and so when we plan our day, we have to ensure that we meet this appointment with Allah at its prescribed time. Just as we know exactly when our soccer match is this weekend, or when our favorite television show is on, we should know exactly when the time for prayer will arrive, so that we can be ready for it.

To make sure we are fulfilling our obligation we must ensure that we have a clear idea of what the times of the daily prayers are.

THE DAILY PRAYER TIMES

Think of prayer as a check-point. We go about our daily lives performing certain actions. We become very occupied and because of this, we become oblivious of Allah, the Exalted. We also become unaware of whether actions we are performing are pleasing Him or displeasing Him. Prayer comes in at certain points throughout the day to remind us and give us some perspective. We recite words from Allah's Book and we speak to Him. This gives us some time out and allows us to reflect on our actions. Once we have reflected on our day, we can repent for the evil deeds we may have done, and thank Allah for the

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the five prayers and the three times at which we pray them
- Recognise the importance of praying on time
- Have an understanding of the sequence of the prayers and their rak'āt numbers.
- Have an understanding of the concept of Qaḍā prayer

good deeds we may have done. If we were to only pray when we felt like it, there would no longer be any check-point to help us reflect on our actions and fix them.

*The Prophet (saw): "Prayer is as to religion as a head is to a body."*ⁱ

Imam 'Ali (as), in the middle of battle, paused amongst all of the fighting and looked at the sky. Many of the companions were surprised by this action and questioned him. The Imam (as) was checking whether the time of the prayer had arrived. The companions of Imam Husayn (as) did the same thing in the midst of the battle of Karbala. In fact some companions of Imam Husayn (as) were martyred in Karbala to protect those reciting their prayers at the correct time. They showed us that we must not neglect our prayers even in the most difficult circumstances.

Review Questions

Q1. According to the Qur'ān, the time for prayer is:

- a) When we feel like we are ready
- b) At specific appointed times
- c) Any time during the day

Q2. The best time to pray

- a) Is the beginning of the prayer time
- b) As late as is allowed
- c) Whenever we are not tired



LESSON 2: THE PRAYER TIMES

Now that we know it is extremely important for us to offer our prayers on time, we must know the times for each prayer.



- The Fajr Prayer is prayed from the start of true dawn, until sunrise.
- The Ḍuhr and 'Aṣr prayers: the beginning of the time for these prayers is when the sun is directly overhead in the middle of the sky and then starts to come down. This is the (real) midday. It is the time halfway between sunrise and sunset. The end of the time for these prayers is sunset.
- The Maghrib and 'Ishā' prayers: the beginning of the time for these prayers is Maghrib, which is a little after sunset, when more than half the sky is dark. The end of the time for these prayers is (real) midnight (halfway between sunset and dawn).

You can refer to the prayers calendar for all of these times. We should make sure we are aware of all of the times of the prayer to ensure that we pray each of them on time.

Class Activity: Prayer Timetables

Ramadhan -	Date -	Fajr Prayer (Fasting Begins)	Sunrise -	Zohr (Noon Prayers)	Sunset -	Maghreb (Fasting ends)
1	Sat 22 Aug	5:02	6:26	11:58	17:31	17:51
2	Sun 23 Aug	5:01	6:25	11:58	17:32	17:52
3	Mon 24 Aug	5:00	6:23	11:58	17:32	17:53
4	Tue 25 Aug	4:59	6:22	11:57	17:33	17:53
5	Wed 26 Aug	4:58	6:21	11:57	17:34	17:54
6	Thu 27 Aug	4:56	6:20	11:57	17:34	17:55
7	Fri 28 Aug	4:55	6:18	11:56	17:35	17:55
8	Sat 29 Aug	4:54	6:17	11:56	17:36	17:56
9	Sun 30 Aug	4:53	6:16	11:56	17:36	17:57

The above is an example of a prayer calendar. Choose three of the days in the calendar above and see if you can identify the beginning of the time for each prayer and the times at which they end.

THE SEQUENCE OF PRAYERS

We should remember that although we can pray the prayers within this time frame we have to always maintain the sequence of *ṣalāt*. That means we cannot pray 'Aṣr before Ḍuhr or 'Ishā' before Maghrib.

QADHA PRAYER

Missing one of the daily prayers *deliberately* is forbidden and a major sin. We must do our best to ensure that we pray on time. Apart from emergencies, there are no good excuses for missing one's prayer. If someone does miss their prayer, either because of a good excuse or without one, they need to make up this prayer at a later time.

This is called offering *Qaḍa'* prayer.

For example, if it is night-time and for some reason I missed my 'Aṣr prayer today, I need to pray it now to make up for the missed prayer.

Review Questions

Q1. The time for Fajr prayer is:

- a) Dawn till sunrise
- b) Midday
- c) Midnight

Q2. The time for Ḍuhr prayer is:

- a) When the sun is directly overhead, in other words midday
- b) An hour after midday
- c) An hour before midday

¹ (Nahj Al-Fasahah, Hadith number 1584)



QIBLAH, ADHÂN & IQÂMAH

القبلة والاذان والاقامة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the fact that there are conditions for the place of prayer
- Understand that our the environment has an effect on our prayer
- Have a clear idea that prayers should not be missed or delayed unnecessarily and that most places can be used for prayers
- Learn the most commonly encountered conditions with important details
- Understand the rule of the place of prostration
- Briefly discuss the importance and rewards of visiting and praying at the mosque

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: THE PLACE OF PRAYER

Prayers are the best method of communication with Allah (SWT) and so we must give special importance to prayer.

The environment in which we pray is important and affects the spirituality we feel during prayer. This is why there are certain rules we should remember when it comes to the place in which we are praying.

WHERE CAN WE PRAY?

Allah (SWT) has made the whole earth a place for worship. We can pray in most places and the place we are in should not cause us to delay or miss our prayers. However, there are some simple conditions we need to remember when it comes to the place of prayer:

- We have to be the owners of the place or have permission to use the place. If we are praying somewhere where we are not allowed to be, then our prayer is not valid.
- The place of prayer should not be Najis and wet. If it is Najis and wet it would make our clothes and body Najis and this would void our prayer. Therefore, our place of prayer cannot be Najis and wet. If it is Najis but dry, we can still pray there. However, the place on which we perform prostration (sujūd) must be *ṭāhir*, even if it is dry.
- If a man and a woman are praying close to one another, the woman should pray behind the man. However, if there is a barrier between them or they are more than five metres apart, then it is

okay for them to pray side by side or for the woman to pray in front.

- The place of prayer must be steady and not moving (for example, we cannot pray on a rocking boat)
- We cannot pray on very steep hills or steps because the place we perform sujūd on should be roughly level with where we are standing.

RULES OF SUJŪD

The thing on which we perform sujūd has to meet certain conditions. The most important conditions to remember are:

- It cannot be made of something which can be eaten or worn
- It must come from the earth (for example, paper grown from trees)

The common things we can prostrate on are:

- Solid clay which is normally called 'Turbah'. The preferred clay is from the land of Karbalā' or places where our Prophet (saw) or Imams (as) are buried.
- A piece of wood which is in its original form.
- Any other thing which is grown from the earth like leaves as long as they are not edible or wearable.
- Paper is also something we can use, especially if none of the above are available

THE REWARDS OF PRAYING AT THE MOSQUE

Attending the mosque and praying in a mosque are extremely rewarding. The mosque is the 'house of Allah' and attending the mosque shows that we are respecting the house of Allah and showing our submission to Allah. Let us look at the following two narrations to see just how much reward there is in attending the mosque and praying there:

"Whoever walks to the mosque with the intention of praying in a congregation gets the equivalent of seventy thousand good deeds for every step he takes, and he is raised as many levels..."ⁱ

"O Abu Dharr, as long as you are sitting in the mosque, Allah will grant you an extra level in paradise for every breath you take, the angels will ask for blessings for you, and ten good deeds are recorded for you and ten bad deeds are wiped away for every breath you take while you are sitting in the mosque".ⁱⁱ

Review Questions

Q1. The place where we are praying:

- Should not be Najis
- Should not be Najis and wet
- Should not be wet

Q2. The place where we are praying:

- Should be stable
- Can be stable or moving
- Should be moving Should be moving

Q3. If a man and a woman are praying close together:

- They can pray side by side
- The man must be in front of the woman even if there is a curtain between them
- The man must be in front of the woman if there is no curtain between them

ⁱ The Scale of Wisdom, chapter on mosques

ⁱⁱ Ibid



PRAYER CLOTHES

لباس المصلي

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know and understand the main rules regarding clothes of prayer
- Know the rules regarding leather and animal hair with respect to prayers
- Know of some *mustahab* rules regarding dress to improve sense of respect and concentration (including perfume, decent dress, etc.)
- Know the rules of blood on clothes:
 - Blood from a person's own body
 - Blood from other sources

LESSON 1: DRESS OF PRAYER

When we come to pray, we have to make sure that we are dressed appropriately. There are some rules we must follow, and some rules which are better to follow.

THE RULES OF DRESS FOR PRAYERS

This is different for boys and girls.

There are however four general conditions that apply to both male and females. These are that the dress should

- Be *ṭahir*
- Be *mubāḥ* (lawful to use - as in something we own or have permission to use)
- Not be made of the parts of an animal whose meat is haram

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

MEN

- While offering prayers, a man should cover his private parts even if no one is looking at him, and it is better for him to cover himself from the navel to the knee. It is recommended, however to be as fully dressed as possible
- His dress or any part of it must not be made of pure silk. This means we cannot wear silk ties or shirts.
- His dress must not be decorated with gold nor should he wear any jewellery made of gold whether pure or mixed

WOMEN

- A woman should cover her entire body while offering prayers, including her head and hair. It is however not necessary to cover the face and the hands to the wrist. When there are no strange men around, it is not necessary to cover the upper feet up to the ankles
- The rules for silk and gold do not apply to women so women can wear silk and gold during prayers.



If a woman finish her prayer then realizes that her hair was showing because her scarf had slipped down or something like that, her prayer is still accepted.

LEATHER AND HAIR OF ANIMALS

- The dress of prayer or part of it should not be made with the leather/skin of animal whose meat is *ḥarām*
- If a person doubts that the leather is *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*, he can pray in those clothes. You have to be sure that the leather is *ḥarām* for your prayer to be invalid. So for example a leather belt is okay if you are not sure that it is *ḥarām* and there is a chance that it might be made from a *ḥalāl* animal. For example, according to Ayatollah Sistani, we can wear a leather belt made in China for example, because there is still a chance it is made from a halal animal.
- A person's dress should not have any trace of hair, sweat etc... of an animal whose meat is *ḥarām*.



SOME MUSTAHAB RULES REGARDING DRESS OF PRAYERS

The following recommended things increase the reward of the prayer:

- The cleanest dress should be worn
- Wearing perfume, and
- Wearing an 'Aqīq ring



It is *makrūh* to wear a black, a dirty, or a tight dress. Similarly, to wear a dress which has images printed or drawn on it is *makrūh*.

RULES REGARDING BLOOD ON CLOTHES

It is quite common to come across blood on our clothes and we must be careful with this when it comes to approaching prayers. As we know from previous lesson,

blood is *najis*. In order to properly address this issue, we will discuss blood on clothes under two categories.

1. Blood from a person's own body
2. Blood from other sources

BLOOD FROM A PERSON'S OWN BODY

The general rule under this is that:

- If the body or dress is stained with blood discharged from our own body through a wound, we can pray as long as the wound or the sore has not healed. If it is possible to clean the wound and stop it bleeding, we should do this before we pray.

BLOOD FROM OTHER SOURCES

- If the body or dress are stained with blood from a source other than one's body, the prayer is invalid
- However, if the blood is spread over a space that is less than the last part of the thumb then this does not invalidate the prayer

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is true?

- a) Wearing pure silk clothing during prayer voids the prayer for a man and a woman
- b) Wearing pure silk clothing during prayer does not void the prayer for anyone
- c) Wearing pure silk clothing during prayer voids the prayer, but only for a man

Q2. If a person has a wound and their shirt is blood-stained from that wound:

- a) They cannot pray in that shirt
- b) They can pray in that shirt once they have tried to clean the wound
- c) Neither of the above

Q3. The clothes worn during prayer:

- a) Must be *ṭāhir*
- b) Are recommended to be *ṭāhir*
Must be white

ⁱ References

ⁱ Jameel Kermalli, *Concentration in Prayer*, page 19

ⁱⁱ Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, *The Ritual and Spiritual Purity*, <http://al-islam.org/ritualandspiritual/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.al-islam.org/nutshell/#LawsandPractices>

^{iv} <http://www.madressa.net>



AVOIDING ARGUMENTS

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that differences of opinion exist among human beings
- Know the meaning of arguing and quarrelling including rebellious arguing against different forms of authorities
- Understand the negative effects of unnecessary arguing on an individual and the society
- Understand and know some ways of avoiding arguments; especially the practice of agreeing to disagree and tolerance
- Understand that Allah does not like those who argue and fight between themselves

AVOIDING ARGUMENTS

Imam Al Hādi (as) said:

“Disputation corrupts old friendships and undoes strong ties. The most minor dispute can bring about aggression, and aggression causes relations to be severed.”ⁱ

In this lesson we will focus on what Islam considers a psychological and social disease that has many bad effects and from which we are advised to stay away from – the disease of arguing and disputing unnecessarily. The Holy Prophet (saw) even went to the extent of saying

“A servant will not perfect the reality of faith until he abandons argumentation, even if he is right”ⁱⁱ

Let us explore the meaning of this in more detail, so we know how to identify useless arguments and to stay away from them.



DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

One of the basic facts of being a human being involves having free will and this characteristic of the human being allows each one of us to have and form opinions and ideas about certain things. The difference of opinion is as much a fact of life as is eating and drinking and can be properly dealt with if understood.

Each one of us is different and there are some things that are common in truth while others are personal. For example to believe that lying is wrong is common between all human beings. But which colour of shirt or shoes each person likes might be different.



However, differences of opinion can many times lead to arguments and if not stopped can even lead to fights and wars. Islam considers arguing for no reason on topics that have no benefit for Muslims as wrong and a waste of time – because it leads to so many negative effects. Islam says to avoid arguing even if you think you are right!

ARGUING AGAINST AN AUTHORITY



Many times we come across examples where a child has a different opinion to his parents, and wants something that his parents refuse to give him – for example, permission to go watch a movie at the cinema. The parents in this case are authorities who, out of their love, wisdom and care want to protect the child. However, the child is young and wants to follow only his desire not knowing the full consequence. In such a situation, it is easy for the child to start arguing and trying to justify his demand and in the process, getting angry and disrespectful toward his parent(s) –which is a great sin.

UNNECESSARY ARGUMENTS

Sometimes people like to argue for the sake of argument – because they want to attract attention or prove themselves to be smarter. This is very discouraged in Islam. The ill-effects of being argumentative are many, but let's list a few main ones here:

- A lot of wasted time with no use or benefit in the end
- Can cause a lot of disrespect for another person
- Can create grudges that can break relationships and families
- Creates tensions between people and exposes people's faults because sometimes with anger, other things are said against the person, making it a personal attack on each other

DEALING WITH ARGUMENTATIVE

PEOPLE

In this we learn from what Imam ‘Ali (as) has said in his advice to one of his companions, Kumayl:

“O Kumayl, in every race there some groups are better than others, so beware of debating with the vile groups, and if they insult you, then tolerate them, and be of those whom Allah (SWT) has described in His verse, “and when the ignorant address them, say: peace”ⁱⁱⁱ

Therefore, some of the things we can do to avoid quarrelling are:

- Agree to disagree
- Keep an open mind and be ready to admit your mistake and learn from it
- Be confident if you are truthful and don’t impose your view on another person
- Look at the consequences of arguing and see whether it will lead to anything useful or just a waste of time
- Be tolerant to different opinions just as much as you would like others to see your point of view
- Be respectful
- Avoid concerning yourself with that which doesn’t concern you
- Don’t argue without knowledge or proof if you don’t have any



CUTTING RELATIONS

One of the main effects of being argumentative is that it leads to cutting off of family relationships, which is disliked by Allah (SWT).

وَتَقَطُّوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ... أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ
وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

“...and sever your ties of kinship...Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight” (47:22-23)^{iv}

Review Questions

Q1. When dealing with a person whom we cannot convince of the truth we should:

- Keep arguing until the other person eventually gives up
- Agree to disagree
- Get angry and shout until the other person gets scared and agrees

Q2. Arguing unnecessarily leads to:

- Relationships breaking up
- Better debating skills
- Both a & b

ⁱ [Mizan Al Hikma page 996, hadith 5789]

ⁱⁱ [Mizan al Hikma, page 995, hadith 5783]

ⁱⁱⁱ [Mizan Al Hikma page 1084, hadith 6140]

^{iv} References

- Mizan Al Hikma
- Lecture on Social Islam, Sheikh Mansour Leghaei – ‘Don’t Argue’
- Holy Qur’an

QIBLAH, ADHĀN & IQĀMAH

القبلة والاذان والاقامة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the times when the direction of Qiblah is to be known besides prayer
- Know how to use a generic Qiblah compass and the sun to find the Qiblah
- Know the words and meanings of the Adhān and memorize it
- Know the basic etiquettes of Adhān
- Students should be reminded of the Iqāmah and when it is usually recited
- Memorize the Iqāmah and be tested on it

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

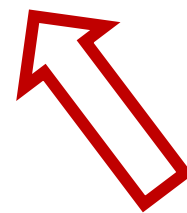
QIBLAH, ADHĀN & IQĀMAH

In this lesson, we will learn a few final rules before we learn about the prayer itself.

THE QIBLAH

One of the important conditions of approaching prayer is the aspect of direction. All Muslims have to face a certain direction which is known as the Qiblah. Physically, the Qiblah is the Holy Ka'bah in Mecca, and wherever Muslims are, they have to find and face the direction of the Ka'bah while praying. It is also important to know the direction of the Ka'bah in other instances such as when relieving oneself.

FINDING THE DIRECTION OF QIBLAH



Today, we have some very easy ways to find the direction of the Qiblah, such as:

- Downloading an application on our smartphones that will find the Qiblah for us wherever we are
- Using a special Qiblah compass

QIBLAH COMPASS – INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find a flat surface away from electronic and magnetic items like computers and magnets etc...
2. Point the coloured point of the needle on the number of the city or region you are in. You can find this number in the book that comes with the compass
3. Pray in the direction of the arrow that shows the direction of the Ka'bah

NORMAL COMPASS – INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find the direction of West
2. Seven degrees North of West is the direction of Qiblah

THE SUN

When we don't have access to a phone application or a Qiblah compass, we can use the location of the sun to find out the direction of the Qiblah.

The sun rises in the East and sets in the West. So we can know which way is west by looking at where the sun is in the afternoon. Once we know that direction, we can work out other directions and pray towards the direction of the Qiblah.

This means that we need to know which direction the Qiblah is (i.e. North, South, West or East) where we live. For example, if we are living in Sydney, Australia, the Qiblah direction is west.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN THE QIBLAH DIRECTION IS NOT KNOWN?

When the direction of Qiblah cannot be determined, this does not mean that we should delay offering our prayers. Instead, we should pray in any one of the four possible directions.

ADHĀN AND IQĀMAH

An important step in preparing for prayers and helping in concentration during prayers is the recitation of the Adhān and Iqāmah – the Muslim call to prayer.

It serves many purposes, which will be discussed in later classes, but the important purpose for this lesson is to know that it serves as a reminder for the time of prayer, and the position of the servant (i.e. the human being)

before the presence of his Lord (Allah, The Exalted). The Adhān and Iqāmah should be recited at the time of prayers and not before.

The words of the Adhān and Iqāmah are below, and you are required to memorize these as they are an examinable part of the lesson.

THE WORDS AND MEANING OF ADHĀN

Repeat	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
4	اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ	Allahu Akbar	Allah is the Greatest
2	اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ	Ash hadu an la ilāha illal lāh	I testify that there is no god but Allah
2	اَشْهَدُ اَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهُ	Ash hadu anna Muḥammadan Rasūlullāh	I testify that Muḥammad is Allah's Messenger
2	اَشْهَدُ اَنْ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللّٰهُ	Ash Hadu anna 'Aliyaz Waliullāh	I testify that Ali is the Vicegerent of Allah (This is not part of the Adhān and is not obligatory to state)
2	حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ	Hayya'alas Ṣalāh	Hasten to prayers
2	حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ	Hayya'alal Falāḥ	Hasten to Felicity
2	حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ	Hayya'alā Khayril 'Amal	Hasten to the Best Act
2	اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ	Allahu Akbar	Allah is Greater than any description
2	لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ	Lā ilāha illal lāh	There is no god but Allah

THE ETIQUETTES OF ADHĀN AND IQĀMAH

When the Adhān and Iqāmah are being recited, it is important to keep silent and listen carefully to the words. One must also try and repeat the words after the reciter.

WORDS AND MEANINGS OF IQĀMAH

Iqamah is recited once everyone has lined up for prayer and is ready to start praying. It is usually recited immediately after Adhān. When praying alone, we should also try to recite the Adhān and Iqāmah before praying.

Repeat	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
2	اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ	Allahu Akbar	Allah is the Greatest
2	اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ	Ash hadu an la ilaha illal lah	I testify that there is no god but Allah
2	اَشْهَدُ اَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهُ	Ash hadu anna Muḥammadan Rasūlullāh	I testify that Muḥammad is Allah's Messenger
2	اَشْهَدُ اَنْ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللّٰهُ	Ash Hadu anna 'Aliyāw Waliullāh	I testify that Ali is the Vicegerent of Allah (this is not part of the Iqāmah and it is not obligatory to state it)
2	حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ	Hayya'alas Ṣalāh	Hasten to prayers
2	حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ	Hayya'alal Falāḥ	Hasten to Felicity
2	حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ	Hayya'alā Khayril 'Amal	Hasten to the Best Act
2	قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ		Indeed the Prayer has begun

Qad Qāmatīs Ṣalāh		
2	اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ Allahu Akbar	Allah is greater than any description
1	لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ilāha illal lah	There is no god but Allah

Review Questions

Q1. Which is recited first?

- The Adhān
- The Iqāmah
- Both

Q2. What are some ways of finding the Qiblah?

- Looking at the direction of the sun
- Using a Qiblah compass
- Both of the above

Q3. The Ka'bah is in:

- Mecca
- Medina
- Neither of the above

¹ References

Ayatollah Sistani, Islamic Laws, <http://www.al-islam.org/laws/rulesofqibla.htm>
Masa'el Number 2603
Masa'el Number 622



PRACTICAL PRAYER

الصلاة

Objectives

Students should:

- Learn how to perform the prayer correctly
- Learn the main rules for each part of the prayer

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

Prayer Practical Lessons 1-3

These are practical lessons in which the students should learn how to perform their prayer correctly, and learn some of the main rules about each part of the prayer.

We suggest two ways of doing this:

- For the first lesson, the students should pray behind the class teacher and imitate his actions, while being supervised by teacher's aides for the correctness of their actions
- In the second and third lessons, the students should demonstrate prayer to the teacher themselves individually in front of the class, and this should be observed and if necessary corrected

We have provided a PowerPoint presentation as a guide to the level of rules that should be covered and as a visual take-home reference to show the students how each action should be performed.

We suggest teachers refer to the 'How to Pray' DVD of eHAWZA as preparation for this lesson. Students should also be given access to this DVD.





INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

مبطلات الصلاة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Review the invalidators of prayer learnt in previous years
- Discuss the most common invalidators of prayer
- Understand some of the disliked (makrūh) acts in prayer

Invalidators of Prayer

In previous years, we have learnt some of the things that cause our prayer to become invalid (no longer correct). If these things occur, we need to stop our prayer, get ourselves ready to pray again and repeat our prayer. We learnt about some of these things last year. Let's have a short quiz to review them.

Class Activity: Revision Quiz

Answer true or false:

- 1- Laughing during prayer breaks the prayer
- 2- Smiling during prayer breaks the prayer

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

- 3- Speaking normal words during prayer breaks the prayer
- 4- Turning the face completely away from the Qiblah breaks the prayer
- 5- Turning the face slightly away from the Qiblah breaks the prayer
- 6- Crying out of fear or love for Allah (SWT) breaks the prayer
- 7- Crying because of a problem a person is having in this world breaks the prayer (for example, mum and dad are fighting and you are very upset about this)
- 8- Eating during prayer breaks the prayer
- 9- Swallowing some food left in the mouth during prayer breaks the prayer

WHAT DO I DO IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS?

- 1- While a person is praying, they pass wind. What should they do?
 - a. They need to stop their prayer, renew their Wuḍū', and repeat the prayer from the beginning

- 2- After praying, a person realises they have prayed two rak'āt instead of three for Maghreb prayer. What should they do?
 - a. They need to repeat their prayer
- 3- I am praying at a picnic in the park, when a wet dog comes close to me and touches my pants. My pants are now wet because of the dog. What should I do?
 - a. I need to make my clothes Ṭāhir then repeat my prayer.

INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

Besides the things we have learnt about in previous years, there are others that break the prayer. You might have seen students your age doing some of the following things during prayer:

- Laughing
- Turning away to look at someone or looking to the side
- Whispering to each other
- Disturbing others by nudging them
- Checking their phones during prayer



All of these things make our prayer invalid, and if we do these things, we need to repeat our prayer. Therefore, while we are praying, we need to make sure that we avoid these things. We need to stand respectfully and stand still with absolute humility in front of Allah, the Almighty. We need to face the Qiblah and not turn away from it. We need to avoid looking away, speaking to others or laughing.

It is also important not to pray very quickly. Praying so quickly that a person looks like they are just

jumping up and down or pecking the ground like a bird means that we are not really showing any interest in our prayer and so we may not get any reward for our prayer.

One day, the Prophet (saw) was sitting at the mosque when a man walked in and began to pray. This man was praying very quickly. His rukū' and sujūd were very fast and he was not performing them properly. The Prophet (saw) said:

“It is as if he is a crow pecking the ground. If he dies while his prayer is like this, he will die on a religion other than mine” (*Wasa'ilul Shia, chapter 3 from the chapters on ruku'*).

The Prophet (saw) was so upset by this man's quick prayer that he said that if this man were to keep praying like this till he died; he would die as a non-Muslim.

Review Questions

- 1- If a person passes wind while they are praying:**
 - a. They can continue to pray
 - b. They need to repeat their prayer after renewing Wuḍū'
 - c. Neither of the above
- 2- When praying:**
 - a. It is okay to turn away from the Qiblah and look to the side
 - b. It is not okay to turn away from the Qiblah and look to the side
 - c. It is okay to turn away, but only very quickly
- 3- During prayer:**
 - a. It is okay to check the SMS we just received
 - b. It is okay to play a game on our phone
 - c. It is not okay to use our phone, we need to concentrate on prayer