



# Islamic School Syllabus MANUAL

**LEVEL  
5  
2015**

## Term Four



**THEOLOGY**

**JURISPRUDENCE**

**SOCIAL-ISLAM**

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_



IMAM MAHDI SCHOOL



AHL ALBAIT ISLAMIC CENTRE  
مركز أهل البيت الإسلامي أستراليا



NOOR ACADEMY





# THE UNITY OF GOD

## التوحيد

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Discuss the proofs for the existence of God
- Understand that Allah is Absolute and there is nothing like unto Him
- Understand that Allah is known through His Attributes and that His Essence is unimaginable
- Be reminded of the importance of worship and its role in helping us reach our purpose
- Discuss the final goal of worship- being the representatives of God on earth
- Be reminded the students of the proof of absoluteness for the Unity of God
- Further discuss the natural proofs for the Unity of God
- Address some of the objections against these proofs and their answers
- Discuss the Unity of Allah in His Attributes
- Discuss the practical consequences of truly believing in the Unity of Allah
- Discuss the theory of evolution and how it relates to Islamic beliefs about Creation and God
- Discuss the importance of gratefulness to Allah in more depth
- Discuss thanking people as one of the ways of thanking God
- Discuss the importance of contentment

### FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

### LEVEL 5

## Lesson 1: The Existence of God

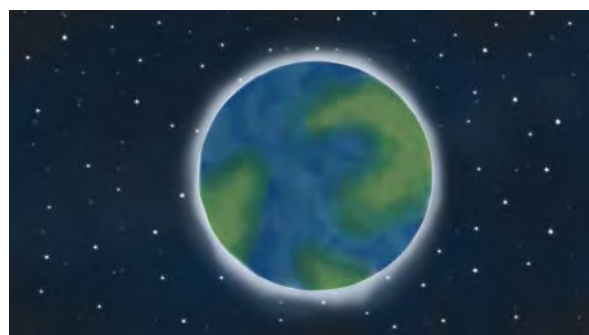
In previous years, we have discussed some of the proofs for the existence of God. After proving the existence of God, we then discussed the consequences of this conclusion. In this lesson we will take the same approach. We will first review these proofs and then answer the most common objections against them. After this, we will discuss that we must go beyond this logical proof to belief in the Existence of God with our hearts, and look briefly at the consequences of such belief.

### PROOFS OR REMINDERS?

So far, we have been talking about 'proofs' for the existence of God. However, there is a question of whether these are actually proofs or whether they are simply reminders? It seems that they are only reminders. This is because we all have an innate (something we are born with) knowledge of God. This knowledge is not acquired, like our knowledge that molecules expand when heated. Rather, it is something that we know with our hearts and is always there in our sub-conscious. The Holy Qur'an refers to this when it says:

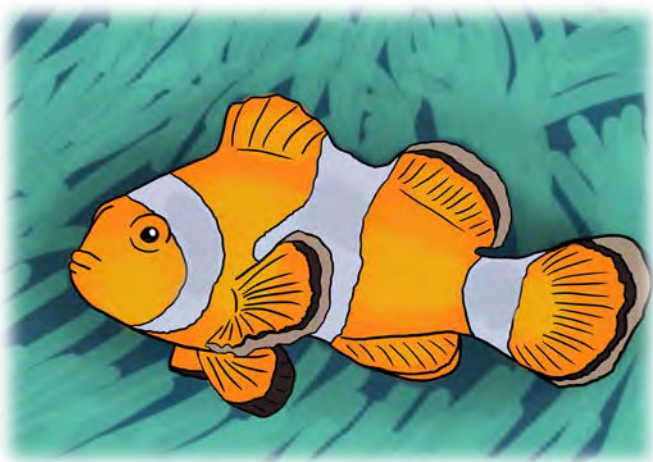
قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

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



Unfortunately, many humans do not realize that they have this knowledge, mainly because they have occupied themselves with other concerns. We all have material instincts (e.g. to live a comfortable life) and spiritual instincts (e.g. finding my purpose in life). Unfortunately, most people nurture their material instincts and ignore their spiritual instincts. The consequence of this is that people remain heedless of the innate spiritual knowledge that God endowed them with. The proofs that we will discuss here will hopefully serve a reminder that alerts us to this knowledge of God that we already have in our subconscious<sup>i</sup>.

### THE FISH THAT DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE SEA



To better understand the point we discussed above, some scholars have given us the following parable. There was a very inquisitive sea fish who used to always hear about 'the sea'. However, it could never see it or find it, and so it became very much occupied with this. It went to ask all the wise fish in the area but none could give her an answer. One day, someone told her to go to a very wise fish all the way at the other end of the ocean. She travelled a very long way to meet this wise old fish, and when she got there, she finally asked: 'so where is the sea?' The simple reply from the very wise old fish was: 'where is not the sea?'

## THE PROOF OF CAUSALITY

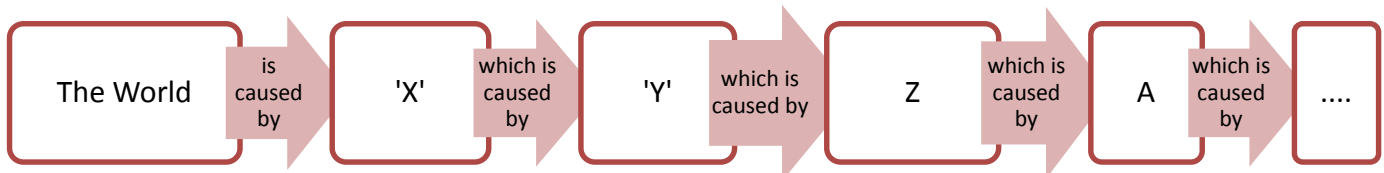
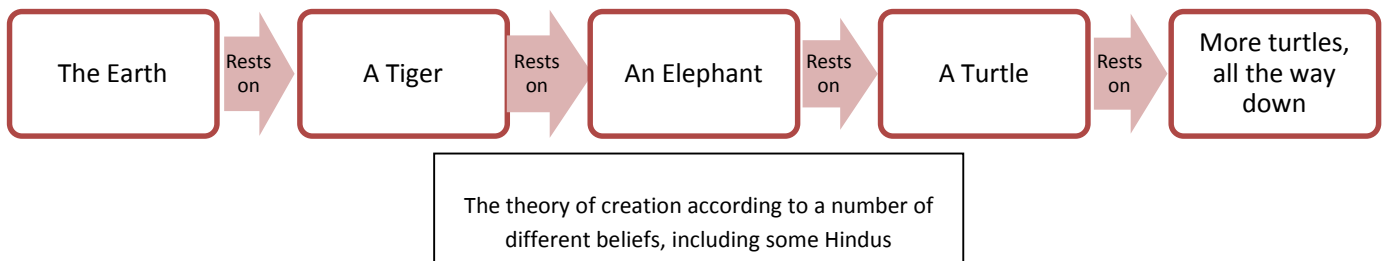
As we learnt in previous lessons, the law of cause and effect is the basis for all our knowledge and all our actions. Whenever we see anything in this world, we automatically seek or know a cause for it. We intuitively know that things cannot appear out of nowhere. All of our scientific and practical knowledge is based on the principle of cause and effect. If we did not have this instinct, we would not have reached all the knowledge that we have today. Therefore, we cannot suspend this instinct when it comes to the entirety of the universe around us. Just as we seek causes for the small things in our life, we must also seek a cause for the universe we live in.

Therefore, when we look at this amazing world around us, we automatically ask how it came about and what the cause for it was. It is impossible for it to exist without any cause, because of the law of cause and effect.

It is also impossible for this world to create itself, because it means it must have existed before it was created, and this is obviously logically impossible. It is impossible because it would lead to a vicious circle where the effect must have created its own cause and then been created by that cause. The theory of evolution in its absolute sense is rooted in this claim, and therefore it cannot possibly be true.

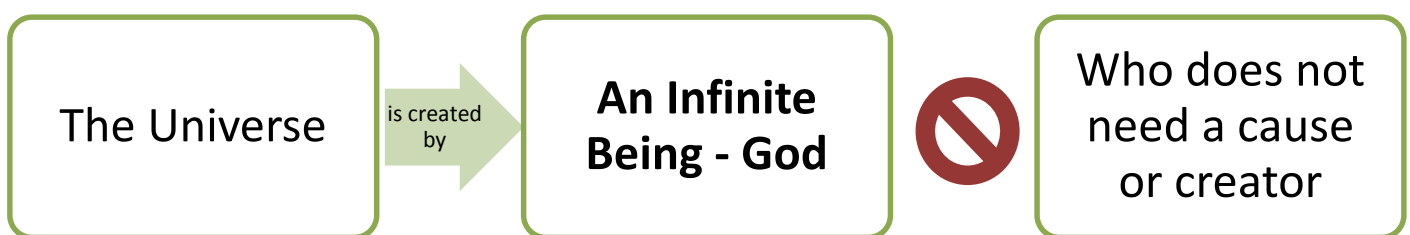
Another possibility is that the world was created by a series of infinite causes. Some faiths<sup>ii</sup> believe that the world was created by the elephant, who was in turn created by the turtle and so on. This leads to an infinite series of 'causes', which just like adding up an infinite number of zeros gives us a result of zero. An infinite number of causes is like having no cause at all, because it still leaves us without a beginning.





The impossibility of 'infinite regress'

The last possibility is that this world was created by a First Cause, who is not part of this world, and is Eternal and Infinite. He does not need a cause and therefore there is no longer an infinite series of causes. This First Cause is God.<sup>iii</sup>



## WHY DOES GOD NOT NEED A CAUSE?

One of the first questions that springs to mind when contemplating the proof of cause and effect is: 'then who created God?' There is an assumption that the law of cause and effect applies to everything. However, this is not the case. For the laws of cause and effect to apply, the effect must have had a beginning. Since everything in this world and this world itself has a beginning, then it needs a cause. However, God created this world, and time is part of this world. Therefore, He created time itself, and so He is beyond time and is Eternal. Thus, He does not need a cause. So the original question of 'who created God' or 'what is the cause for God' is false in itself, because God, by definition, does not need a creator or cause.

The other way to answer this objection is to correct people's definition of God. By definition, God means a Being that is not needy or limited like all the beings of this material world. Otherwise, He would no longer be God and would simply be another part of this material world. It is things that are needy or limited that need a cause, and so God, who is not needy (Needless) and not limited (Absolute), does not need a cause.<sup>iv</sup>

## KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

We have used one proof so far to prove the existence of God. In future lessons, we will discuss more proofs. These proofs only give us 'knowledge' of the existence of God. However, this is not our final goal. Our final goal is belief, which is knowledge coupled with action. "Belief (īmān) means: acknowledgement of the heart, confession of the tongue, and action by the body."



Thus the one who knows but his heart does not acknowledge is not a believer, just like the one who knows he is wrong but doesn't acknowledge it. Similarly, the one who knows something but does not want to confess it, does not believe in it. Finally the one who knows something but does not act upon it deliberately does not have faith in it. Like a doctor who knows smoking kills but he smokes.

Therefore, now that we have hopefully come to know of the existence of God, we need to move from the stage of knowledge to the stage of belief, by making sure our actions match our knowledge. The major practical consequence of knowing about God is to worship Him.

## **WORSHIP: THE CONSEQUENCE OF BELIEF**

All creatures of Allah submit to Allah, whether they choose to or not. Simply by existing we show our submission to Allah. However, the major consequence of belief in Allah is that we should submit to Allah willingly, and this submission with the intention to do so is called worship. Worship is our responsibility towards the Creator and Lord who we



have been discussing so far in this lesson. In other words, we have proven that we are the creatures of God, and as His creatures, we must have some responsibilities towards Him.

Literally, worship means complete submission and humiliation before someone else. One who completely submits before another is called a slave ('Abd). Thus, worshipping Allah, the Exalted, is to show complete submission and humiliation before Him, and to confess that we are His slaves. We will discuss the issue of submission in more detail in future lessons. However, for now, let us look in more detail at the concept of worship ('ibadah)

We often limit worship to rituals such as praying, fasting, performing ablutions and other similar acts. However, the scope of worship is far wider than this. Worship is anything that brings us closer to our Lord, the Exalted.

He has of course instructed us on how to get closer to Him, and so whenever we follow His commands we are worshipping and whenever we do not we are not worshipping and not performing our duty as slaves.

### **THE SCOPE OF WORSHIP**

To get some idea of the wide scope of worship, let us look at some example:

- Worship through rituals: such as prayer, fasting etc...
- Worship through contemplation: Imam al-'Askari (as) says:

“Worshipping is not only the great amount of prayers and fasts. Rather, it is a great amount of thinking about God’s affairs.”

- worship through imitation: if we imitate a person or listen to them, then we are worshipping them:

“Whoever listens to a speaker has indeed worshipped him. So if that speaker was speaking about God, he is worshipping God, and if the speaker speaks the language of Satan, then the listener is worshipping Satan.”

- worship through self-discipline: in certain situations remaining silent is a type of worship and sometimes overcoming bad habits is a type of worship<sup>v</sup>

We should aim to make every action of ours an act of worship, firstly making sure it correlates with Allah’s commands and prohibitions, and secondly by making our intention in performing the action for the sake of God.

### **Review Questions**

- 1. Explain the proof of causality in your words using 200 words.**

**2. How can you answer the question: 'who created God?'**

**3. Explain why what we have discussed were reminders and not proofs for the existence of God.**

"Different liquids have different degrees of viscosity (how easily a liquid flows). However, the viscosity of water is perfect for the use of all creatures. If it was a little higher than it is, plants could not have used it for transporting the nutrients vitally important for survival within their capillary tubes. 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."<sup>vi</sup>

Now, when we see such precise and exact order, we automatically think in the following way:

## Lesson 2: the Existence of God

In the previous lesson, we discussed one proof for the existence of God, along with the practical consequences that should follow from that belief. In this lesson, we will discuss another proof for the existence of God.

### THE PROOF OF ORDER

In previous years, we have also learnt about the proof of order. There is a set of laws by which this universe functions, and the natural sciences such as physics and chemistry are based on this set of laws. This order can be observed on many levels of the universe. For example, on a universal level, if the earth were closer or further from the sun, it would be uninhabitable. Another example which ties in the molecular, organic and global levels is the following example of the properties of 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:

**P.1:** There is a precise order ruling the world.

**P.2:** Every precise order needs a precise and wise regulator.

Conclusion: the world must have a precise and wise regulator; God.

Such a precise system could not have come about randomly. Our mind tells us that there must be knowledge and wisdom behind such a system.

### **A WORLD OF CHANCE?**

Another famous objection presented by atheists is that this world could have come about by chance. They claim that the system of this universe, which is indescribably precise despite its often unfathomable complexity and diversity, could have come about by mere chance. They claim that the conditions that led to the environment we have now could have come together through a set of coincidences. This objection is easily disproven through the concept of probability. An easy way to show this is as follows:

Suppose a word is to be created by chance. Let us calculate the probability of making a meaningful two letter word from the English alphabet. Given



that the English alphabet consists of 26 letters, if the word 'IT' is to randomly be created, the probability would be  $(1/26)^2$  or  $1/676$ . If now we wanted to create a three letter word, the probability would be  $1/17576$  or  $(1/26)^3$ . Imagine then what the probability would be of creating a perfectly functioning universe, which consists not of three, but of an infinite amount of components. Also, for each component, we do not only have 26 choices, but again we have a number of choices beyond what we can imagine. It would be akin to the following equation:

$$(1/100,000) \times (1/100,000) \times (1/100,000) \times \dots \text{to infinity}$$

This probability would be so miniscule that it is effectively zero.

Therefore, this world could not have come about by chance, rather it must have had a Wise and Knowledgeable Designer, God.<sup>vii</sup>

## **CAN WE KNOW GOD?**

One of the more sophisticated objections posed by atheists is that if God, by definition is Absolute, and we, His creatures, by definition, are limited, can we ever know Him. Something limited cannot come to know something Absolute. Thus they claim that even if He does exist, He is beyond the scope of our intellects and so we should not worry about knowing or believing in Him.

In answer to this, we say that we do agree that the *Essence* of God is beyond the scope of our imagination. In their narrations, our Imams (as) tell us:

“Whatever you have conceptualised (Allah to be) with your imaginations, (even) when it is by its most exact meanings, (what you conceptualised) is a created fabrication that is refused (and repelled back) to you”.<sup>viii</sup>

However, this does not mean the path to knowing God is closed. We may not be able to conceptualise God in His Essence with our weak minds, but we can have some idea of His Attributes, especially when He Himself introduces them to us. In the Holy Qur'an and in the narrations, Allah, the Wise, describes Himself through His Attributes in countless places, and thus introduces Himself to us. We know with certainty that such descriptions of God are free from error because they are His own descriptions of Himself, and He, of course, knows Himself and His Attributes.

“O' my Lord...I knew You by You, and You guided me to Yourself and called me to Yourself, and without You I would not have known what You are...” (Dua Abu Hamza al-Thumali, Imam Sajjad as)

Therefore, even though we cannot know God's essence, we can know a lot about God's attributes because of His own description of them to us, and so the objection is not sound.

## **FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON WORSHIP**

### **WORSHIP: THE PATH TO THE FINAL PURPOSE**

Worship is described in the Holy Qur'an as the Straight Path. It is the path which we must take in order to reach our ultimate purpose, which is proximity (closeness) to Allah, the Exalted. The final purpose of our life, our years, months, days and hours must be proximity to Allah, and this is only achieved through worship.

In the Qur'an, worship is directly correlated with proximity to Allah, and the people who are the very closest to Allah are given the title of 'slave ('abd) of God'. This title is used several times as a medal of honour for the Prophets, including our Honoured Messenger.

Therefore, we should strive as much as we can to be true slaves of God, such that we reach the stage of not having any will besides His Will, do not think of anything but Him and do not act except to please Him.<sup>ix</sup>

### **BISHR: THE BAREFOOTED SLAVE**

There was a wealthy man by the name of Bishr. He was not a religious man at all. He used to hold gatherings at his house where alcohol would be served and where there would be loud singing and dancing. One day, when one of these parties was going on, the female servant of Bishr went out on to the street to throw out the rubbish. As she was doing this, a man who was walking by asked her: 'is your master a slave or a free man?' She, surprised by the question said: 'well, he is my master, so of course he is a free man'. The man said: 'yes, for if he was a slave, he would fear his master'. When the servant went back into the house, Bishr asked her what that man had told her and she repeated his words to him. As soon as he heard this, Bishr realised that this was Imam Mūsā al-Kāḍim (as) and woke up to the wretched state of arrogance that he was in. He ran out of the house immediately and caught up to the Imam (as), and with tears in his eyes asked for repentance. Because he had

run out of the house so quickly, he had not put any shoes on and was barefooted (ḥāfi), and so he was called Bishr al-Ḥāfi. In fact, by some accounts, to show his humility and servitude to God, he refused to wear shoes on God's earth any longer. After this encounter, he became one of the most spiritual people of his time and is still famous for his spirituality.

### WORSHIP AWARENESS

One of the habits of the true slaves of God is to try to make every single action, no matter how trivial, somehow an act of worship. Consider the following examples:

- You are hungry and want to eat. This is a permissible action (mubāḥ). However, you make sure that you sit and eat with your parents and spend time with them while you are having your meal. This has now become a highly rewarding act of worship.
- You need to use the bathroom. This is another permissible act. However, you follow the etiquette of the bathroom and recite the supplications recommended for the time of relieving oneself. This now becomes a recommended act of worship.
- You want to have fun and play sport. This is another permissible act. However, you invite your Muslim friends and the game becomes a bonding exercise between you. This has now become a highly recommended action because it is nurturing love between believers.



### Review Tasks

1. Explain the proof of order in your words using 200 words.
2. How can you answer the question: could this ordered world have come about by chance?
3. Give three examples different to the above about how you can convert your everyday actions into acts of worship.



## Lesson 3: the Unity of God

As Muslims, all of our beliefs and practices return to one root and that root is monotheism, or the belief in the Unity of God. In previous years we discussed the proofs for the Unity of Allah and the different scopes of unity. We also discussed the importance of remembering Allah constantly and how this helps us to keep Allah in mind. In this lesson, we will review those proofs and look at them in a little more detail, as well as discussing the importance of remembrance again.

### UNITY OF ESSENCE

You will remember that in our lesson on proving the existence of God, we said that God, by definition, is not a material being. He created this material universe and in order to create it He must be beyond it. As Imam 'Ali (as) says:

“He (God) created space and thus He is beyond space, He (God) created time and thus He is beyond time, and He (God) created matter in its shape and form and so He is beyond this shape and form.”

This means that for God to be God, He must be infinite, free from any limitation. (Premise 1: God in an infinite Being)

We all know intuitively that there cannot be more than one infinite being. Infinity, by definition, leaves no room for more than one. We only need to contemplate on this for a second to understand it. (P2: There cannot be more than one Infinite Being). This leads us to the following argument:

*God is an Infinite Being.*

*There cannot be more than one Infinite Being.*

*Therefore, there cannot be more than one God.*

Another way to think of it is this: imagine two infinite beings 'x' and 'y'. For 'x' to be different to 'y' it must have something that 'y' does not have. That means that 'y' lacks something and is no longer infinite, and so we are left with only one infinite being 'x'. If they are not

different in any way, and both have all that the other has, then they are not different and are one and the same and again we are left with one infinite being.

As you can see, it is impossible to imagine more than one infinite being. Another point that needs to be made here is that when we say God is Infinite, we mean 'absolute infinity', something which cannot be comprehended by our intellect. We can only comprehend 'relative infinity', such as infinite numbers. This is not a true infinity because it is still related to material finite things. In contrast, Infinity in relation to God is absolute.

### UNITY OF THE CREATOR

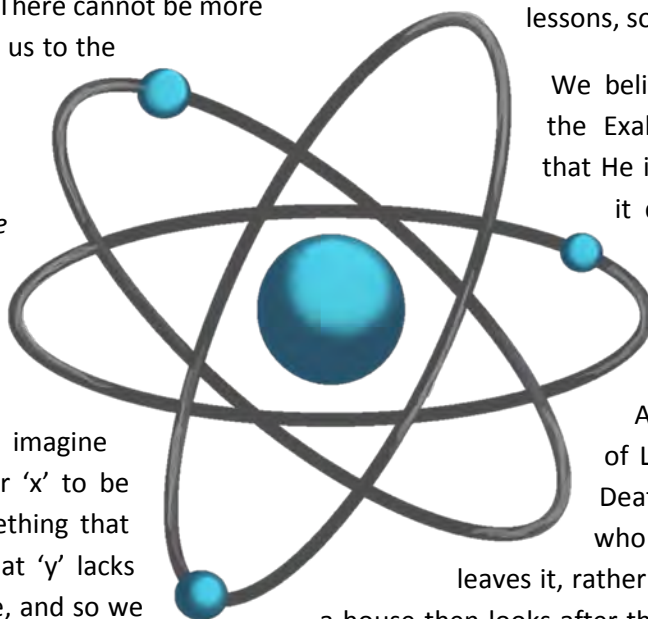
We learnt in our previous lesson that this entire world depends on a Creator, who is beyond this material world and its limitations. In other words, He is infinite. And since we just proved that an infinite being can only be one, then the creator, who must be infinite, can only be one. Therefore, not only is it that we have one creator, it is in fact impossible to imagine having more than one creator.

### UNITY OF LORDSHIP

The above proofs prove the Unity of the Essence of God, as well as the Unity of God as the Creator. In other words, God, in His Essence is One, and that He is the One Creator. However, as Muslims, we also believe in the Unity of Lordship. We have discussed this in previous lessons, so let us review it very briefly.

We believe that not only did Allah, the Exalted, create this world, but that He is also the one who manages it day by day and moment by moment. He is the Sustainer, the Giver, the Withholder, the Bestower, the Helper, the Answerer of Prayers, the Giver of Life and the One who causes Death. He is not like a builder who builds a house and then

leaves it, rather he is like the one who builds a house then looks after the needs of the house and all its inhabitants, be they trivial or great. This type of management is called Lordship (rubūbiyah). As Muslims,



we believe that there is only one Lord, and that is Allah, the Exalted, who as we discussed above is also One in His Essence and is the One Creator.

## PROVING THE UNITY OF LORDSHIP

Let us review the proof for the unity of Lordship and look at them in more detail. The major proof is that the world around us functions harmoniously and has a system that unifies the entire creation. From a tiny atomic level to the level of super-galaxies, there is a common thread that runs through the entire universe and that unifies it under one system. This leads us to the belief that there is one Lord who manages this world in its entirety.

This proof is referred to in the Qur'an, which asks to consider the possibility of more than one Lord. It then tells that if there were more than one lord, the world would be destroyed, because there would no longer be one system and a unifying factor in creation. Rather, there would be chaos and conflict in the world and it would eventually be destroyed as the two or more systems would clash with one another.

Another proof is this. For a lord to be able to manage this world properly and take it towards its perfection, he must also have been its creator. And since we have already proven that the creator could only have been one, then the Lord can also only be one. We can summarise this argument in the following form:

P1: the Lord must also be the Creator

P2: the Creator is One (as proven already)

Conclusion: the Lord is One.

## A COUNSEL OF LORDS?

One famous objection here is this: why can there not be a counsel of lords who, because they are wise, join together to make one system and one set of decisions? In this way, they could manage the world without any chaos and the world would not perish.

The first answer to this is that, as we discussed above, Lordship necessitates having been the Creator and we have already proven that the creator is one. Therefore, it is impossible to imagine more than one Lord.

Another answer is this: if there are two different beings, there must be something that differentiates them.

Otherwise they would be one and the same. So there must be something that distinguishes each of these lords from the other. If there is a difference between them, it means that they will definitely disagree on some issues, because they have some differences and these differences will lead them to make different decisions. Now, when they disagree, there will be a deadlock because they are all on an equal level and there is no reason to prefer one's decision over the other and the world would perish.

If we go back to say that they never disagree, then it means they are in fact one and the same, and we go back to one lord and not many lords.

## UNITY OF WORSHIP

Having established the above facts, it becomes obvious that there is only One God to worship, Allah, as He is our Creator and Lord. This is another essential aspect of our belief.

The polytheists at the time of Prophet Muḥammad (saw), as well as many people from different faiths believe in the Unity of the Creator without believing in the Unity of Lordship and the Unity of Worship. They believe that God created this world alone, but that He then deputed some independent power to other creatures. For example, they believed in gods for rain, gods for fertility, gods for thunder and so on. Others worshipped people and animals based on the same false belief. They believed these creatures somehow had independent power to influence the world.

This is polytheism (shirk) and is the greatest of all sins. As we mentioned above, as Muslims, we believe that no other creature has independent power besides God, and that we worship none besides Allah, our Lord and Creator.





## UNITY IN PRACTICE

Many of you may know the story of Prophet Mūsā (as) and the sorcerers. After seeing the signs of God, the magicians prostrated and submitted to Allah, the Exalted.

Almost immediately, the Pharaoh threatened them with tying

them to a tree and severing their arms and legs. We would

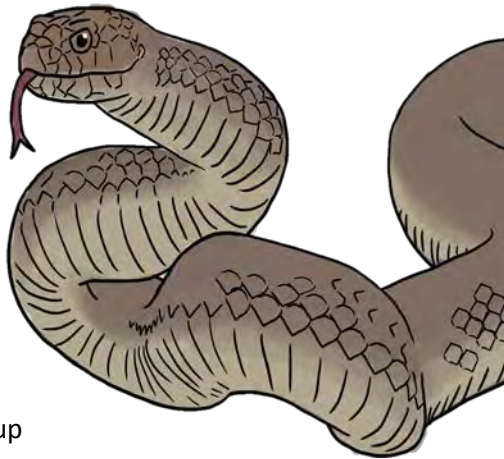
think that a group

people who had only submitted such a short time ago might now weaken or lose this submission in the face of such a threat. However, these are the responses they give to the Pharaoh's chilling threats:

“They said: We do not prefer you to what has come to us of clear arguments and to He Who made us, therefore decide what you are going to decide; you can only decide about this world's life. Surely we believe in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and the magic to which you compelled us; and Allah is better and more abiding”

(20:72-73)

“They said: Surely to our Lord shall we go back. And you do not take revenge on us except because we have believed in the communications of our Lord when they came to us! Our Lord: Pour out upon us patience and cause us to die in submission.” (A'raf, 7:125-126)



In their response, the sorcerers point out the following aspects of belief in the Unity of Lordship in such few words:

- Allah is our Creator and so He has a greater right upon us than anyone else
- Allah is the One who makes the final judgment, so we should only care about what He thinks of us
- Allah is Eternal while all else perishes, so we should only fear Him
- Allah is the absolute source of all goodness, so we should not worry about where our sustenance will come from
- We all eventually return to Allah, so again, we should only worry about His Pleasure and not the pleasure of anyone else
- Allah answers the prayers of those who are in difficult situations, so we should not give up when facing hardships in the path of Allah
- the importance of submission to Allah

## REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH (SWT)

Because of our forgetfulness and our weakness, we often become oblivious to the above facts and do not act according to them. We turn to other than Allah, or we fear other than Allah, or we ask from other than Allah. These are all forms of hidden polytheism (shirk), and just like apparent polytheism, they can have very harmful effects for us both in this world and the next.

In order to try to protect ourselves from forgetfulness and weakness, it is very helpful to constantly remind ourselves of these facts. True remembrance is that remembrance which actually influences the course of our actions. However, to try to reach that goal, we often have to train our heart by getting our tongue used to repeating words of remembrance. For the next week, your task is to memorise the following ayah and to repeat it as often as possible:

### Memorisation Activity

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى

“Does he not know that Allah Sees?” (96:14)

## Review Questions

1. Explain why there cannot be a counsel of Lords managing the world we live in.
2. Explain why God is One in His Essence.
3. Can you think of any other proofs for the Unity of God as the Creator?
4. Look through the Holy Qur'an and the books of narration to find a phrase of remembrance that particularly appeals to you.

## Lesson 4: The Theory of Evolution

### INTRODUCTION

The theory of evolution has often been cited as a major discrepancy between religion and science. The proponents of the theory of evolution use it to argue against the existence of a Creator or God, while those who believe in God often dismiss the theory of evolution in its entirety. In this lesson, we will introduce the theory of evolution, and consider whether it is compatible with Islamic teachings or not.\*

### WHAT IS THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION?

The generic meaning of the word evolution is 'change over time' and can be applied in a biological context as well as other contexts. Sometimes, societies can evolve to change their culture and thinking or ideas can evolve upon new knowledge and discoveries. In this lesson we shall focus on the biological meaning of evolution.

Biological evolution is a theory that proposes that changes occur in the inherited characteristics of species over several generations. Basically, it tries to explain change in the characteristics of living organisms over successive generations. One of the most commonly claimed examples of evolution is the following:

*Many times a species is forced to make changes as a direct result of human progress. Such is the case with the peppered moth (*Biston betularia*). Up until the Industrial Revolution, these moths were typically whitish in color with black spots, although they were found in a variety of shades. As the Industrial Revolution reached its peak, the air in London*

*became full of soot, and the once-white trees and buildings that moths used for camouflage became stained black. The birds began to eat more of the lighter-colored moths because they were more easily spotted than the darker ones. Over the course of a few months, dark moths started appearing in the area and lighter moths became scarce. Once the Industrial Revolution peak passed, lighter moths made a comeback.*

The theory of evolution is based on claimed evidence from fossils. It tries to explain that there are systems within nature that allow species to develop changes in order to survive.

It also tries to explain the cause for the variety of creatures that we see in the world around us today. Another part of this theory is that all creatures on Earth descended from one universal ancestor- that is, all animals, planets and other forms of life had one common source in one ancestor.

Upon the observation of the similarities within animals and plants, some humans long ago suggested that certain groups of animals came from a single ancestor<sup>xi</sup>. It was not until 1859 that the theory of evolution was formulated in a more systematic scientific manner by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace suggesting that new species emerge by the process of natural selection (survival of the fittest) and that no trait (characteristic) in any living being could have arisen simply by chance<sup>xii</sup>.

At that time, very little, if anything was known about genetics and DNA and therefore the original idea has over many years been changed and continues to 'evolve' in light of new information and discoveries. The best definition of evolution is therefore, a change in the inherited characteristics of an organism over successive generations<sup>xiii</sup>.

There are numerous lines of evidence that supports the idea that creatures can transform and 'evolve', aside from the fossil evidence that suggests the existence of some 'transitional species'<sup>xiv</sup>. Today with the advent of modern technology, especially the discovery and analysis of DNA and proteins in living organisms suggest that indeed all living organisms share certain characteristics. For instance, some proteins are shared



by most living things from simple fruit flies to humans without any alteration or change<sup>xv</sup>.

On the other hand, although evolution can be witnessed over the short term in species that have a short life span (such as bacteria and fruit flies) it is impossible to observe the process of evolution for any other creatures and that is why even in science, it still remains a 'theory'.

## **DOES EVOLUTION CONFLICT WITH THE CONCEPT OF GOD?**

From the basic scientific definition of evolution, it certainly does not. It is merely a tool used by scientists to attempt to explain natural phenomena just as they have used theories to explain how the rain falls or how memory is stored in the brain. We should therefore be very careful not to exaggerate the concept of evolution or dismiss aspects of it which may be true and which do not clash with Islamic beliefs.

### **EVOLUTION: AN EXQUISITE METHOD OF CREATION**

Evolution, in its basic sense, may be another sign of the Wisdom of Allah (SWT). Just because a creature evolves in order to thrive in its environment, this does not mean it was not created by God. Rather, it is another sign that it was created by a Wise Being who bestowed it the ability to evolve thus.

Allah (SWT) asks us on many occasions in the Qur'an to ponder and to think over His creation, surely He could have created the potential for evolution so that we could understand how it worked and be in awe of it?

### **EVOLUTION: AN EXPLANATION OF THE LAW OF CAUSE AN EFFECT**

The theory of evolution attempts to explain the great variety among the wonderful creatures we see around us. As it is a mere theory, it can only speculate on the origins of life and therefore the final cause still remains Allah (SWT).

## **EVOLUTION: PROOF OF A UNIQUE CREATOR**

The fact that all creatures in some way follow the **same** system of creation indicates that there must be one unique system created by one unique creator! The entire system so intricately and exquisitely designed with each creature following some form of divine instruction sheet in its development and evolution. This single theory permeates all of biological thinking today it is through this that biology makes sense.

### **UNACCEPTABLE PARTS OF EVOLUTION**

There are however aspects of the theory of evolution which definitely clash with Islamic beliefs. There are two main points in this regard:

- Most of the proponents of the theory of evolution consider it somehow a substitute for God. They deny the need for a Creator, because they see this theory and the process of natural selection and other processes to be the reason behind the origin of life, the development of life, and the diversity we see in the world. This, of course, is definitely unacceptable in Islam.

What may be true is that, as mentioned above, God created a world which was designed to evolve. This evolution was a system created and invented by God, and not something that came about by chance or from 'nature' itself.

- The issue of human evolution is another major point of disagreement. The theory of evolution indicates that humans simply evolved from more primitive creatures (e.g. apes), while religious texts clearly indicate that God created humans directly as humans. Although there are some parts of the Holy Qur'an which may be interpreted to indicate that human evolution may have occurred, the general message of the Holy Qur'an is that God created humans directly. Therefore, when it comes to this aspect of evolution, it is most likely that Islamic teachings indicate that humans did not evolve from other creatures.

In addition, the major difference between humans and apes is the unique intelligence that humans have. It is very difficult to explain this through evolution, and thus it can only satisfactorily be

explained through the intervention of a Wise Creator.<sup>xvi</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Allah (SWT) in His infinite wisdom has created an incredibly intricate natural world that scientists are yet to even scratch the surface of. The study and analysis of this natural world is a form of worship. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a.s) said:

"It is better to learn a branch of science than perform a thousand units of recommended prayers, even if you do not practice what you learn."<sup>xvii</sup>

Indeed it is our duty as Muslims to study science and contribute to scientific development. If this is done with a clear intention, it may reveal more of the exquisite beauty Allah (SWT) has placed in His creation.

When it comes to the theory of evolution specifically, there are a number of points we need to review and highlight:

- Many aspects of the theory of evolution are compatible with the existence of a Wise Creator and thus if proven do not need to be rejected by those who believe in God
- The theory of evolution, and the process of natural selection and other similar processes, have not been scientifically proven till today.
- The existence of a Wise Creator is a logically undeniable fact, and thus the aspects of the theory of evolution which contradict this are definitely rejected by reason and by Islam
- It is most likely according to the teachings of Islam that humans were directly created by God and did not evolve from other creatures.

## Review Questions

### 1. What is evolution?

### 2. How can evolution support the existence of a Unique creator?

### 3. Can the theory of evolution negate the existence of God? If so How?

## Lesson 5: Gratefulness

Previously we have learnt about the blessings of Allah and that naturally we feel that we need to be grateful for these blessings. There are different ways to express gratitude towards Allah (SWT) including through speech and action. When we thank Allah for the blessings, He gifts us with more blessings as a result of our gratitude towards Him.

In this lesson, we will discover that everything that happens is a blessing from Allah and we will focus on ways of expressing true gratitude for these blessings.

## APPARENT BLESSINGS FROM ALLAH

Allah, the Loving and Compassionate Creator, is always protecting and nourishing His creation. Many of His blessings are apparent and others are hidden. As humans, we tend to take Allah's apparent blessings for granted. Let us look at one example of this from the Qur'an:

"...if Allah was to make the night continuous until the Day of Resurrection, who is the god besides Allah who can bring you light?... If Allah was to make the day continuous until the Day of Resurrection, who is the god besides Allah who can bring you night for you to rest in?..." (28:71-72)

In order to understand the meaning of this āyah, we need to understand the benefits of the night and day to us and to all living things. Imagine if each day consisted of only night... it would be difficult to see all the time, we would not be able to keep count of the days, we would have less energy would know when to rest and we would not get the benefits of sunlight. The benefits of sunlight include giving colour to all things, positive effects on our mood and many physical health effects. Sunlight is also essential for the growth and function of

plants (such as photosynthesis) and in turn, plants play an important part in our lives. Sunlight is also important for other things that we take for granted, such as producing rain (for the evaporation of water from the earth to produce clouds), drying up the earth otherwise it would always be muddy and swampy (which could spread diseases and infections) and so on. Then we need to look at the other side, imagine if it was always day time ... too much sunlight can also be harmful such as causing certain cancers, drying up the water sources, burning trees, overheating the atmosphere and no time to rest. Allah (SWT) has kept the balance between the two for us so that we get the benefits of both the day and night in a perfect proportion.

Allah the All-Mighty wants us to ponder on such blessings so that we acknowledge that their source is His Beauty.

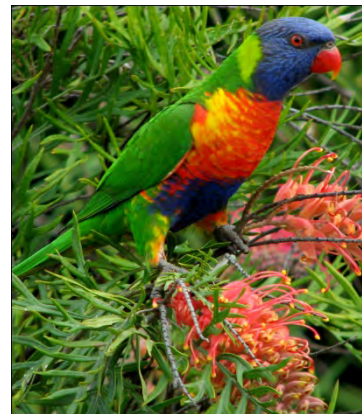
## **CONTEMPLATION AND REFLECTION**

When we want to know the value of something (which is shown through the above āyāt of the Quran) we need to imagine life without having that specific blessing; only then do we realise the importance of that blessing. For example, imagine not having a night to rest in, or eyes to see with, or the world without colours or beautiful scenery to look at. How would our life be? If we do not benefit directly or physically from certain things, we benefit psychologically. Take a look at the following pictures. How do you feel when you look at them?



All the beautiful scenery around us, from the flowers to the green valleys, the birds, animals, moon, sunset, sunrise, etc. all have a relaxing effect on us and give us a feeling of comfort and peace. Furthermore the various colours and shades play important roles in affecting our

minds and actions as they stimulate our sensory pathways in different ways. The colours of blue and green have a calming and relaxing effect on us. Red can cause one to feel angry, or to other people it can be a fascinating colour which has positive effects. Always being in a dull atmosphere can cause depression whereas being in a colourful environment can make us happier and more motivated. There are billions of different shades of colours in the universe, which Allah (SWT) has enabled us to perceive through the tiny pupil of the eye. This is made available to us at birth. Have a look at the following photos, then compare them to their grey and black and white equivalents:







## HIDDEN BLESSINGS

Allah is always attending our needs and interests and due to His absolute knowledge, Love and Justice, He grants only what is best for us. Even the things which may appear 'bad' to us are actually good. In fact, they are the best things that could have happened to us. They all happen for a reason, that reason being to aid us in our journey through life. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said that Allah revealed to the Prophet (saw):

"I have not done anything for a believer to please him or hurt him unless it was good for him." <sup>xviii</sup>

In order to explain this, Allah (SWT) uses the example of Prophet Moses and Khidr in the Quran. In this story, which most of you know, Khidr does things which seem strange and without even evil. Prophet Moses is distressed by these actions. However, when Khidr explains the wisdom behind the actions and why he was commanded by God to enact them, Prophet Moses saw the great benefits from each action.

Similarly, we go through different struggles and hardships in our lives which may appear 'bad' or unjust. However, we need to look at these hardships as blessings from Allah as they serve a purpose in our lives.

Consider this: Your family planned a trip to go overseas. On your way to the airport you had a car accident and lost your car and also could not go on your trip anymore. This initially seems 'unfair'. However, a few days later a war breaks out in the country you wanted to visit and only then do you realise that the car accident was good for you because if you were to go to that country you may have lost your life.



Imam al-Ṣādiq (a.s) said:

"... If God makes a believer rich, it is good for him. If God sends a calamity down upon him, it is good for him. If God makes him the owner of whatever lies between the East and the West, it is good for him. Even if he is torn into pieces, it is good for him. There is good in any of God's decrees for a believer." <sup>xix</sup>

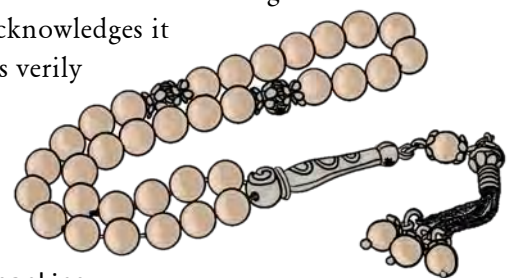
## EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

There are different ways in which we can thank Allah for all the blessings He gives us:

- 1) Acknowledging that all blessings are from Allah.

Imam Ṣādiq (as) said:

"He whom Allah favours with a blessing and who then acknowledges it with his heart has verily conveyed (true) thanks for it." <sup>xx</sup>



- 2) Thanking

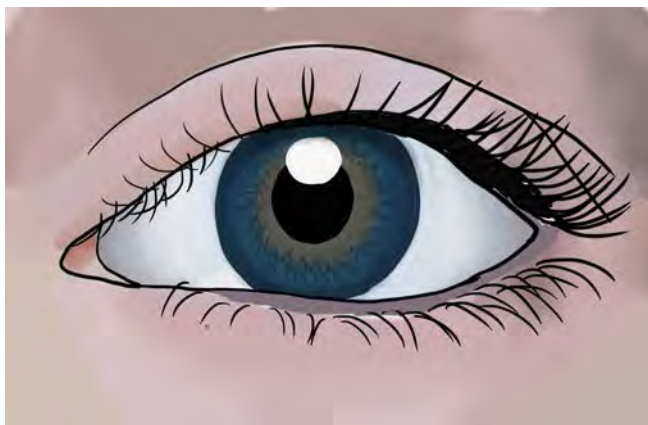
Allah with words. Imam al- Ṣādiq (as) said:

"..The ultimate expression of gratitude is saying "Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds." <sup>xxi</sup>

(الحمد لله رب العالمين)

- 3) Thanking Allah through actions.. When we receive a gift from someone, we appreciate it and want to show our appreciation and gratitude to that person; firstly we acknowledge the person who gave us the gift, then we utter words of thanks, and finally we want to do something in return for that person to show our appreciation. At the same time, we also value the gift by using it correctly so that it does not get damaged in any way. Likewise we need to show our appreciation to Allah for the gifts He has given us. This is done by caring for these blessings and using them correctly. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“Thanking for blessings is abstaining from the forbidden”<sup>xxii</sup>



For example, the appreciation for the gift of the eyes is that we do not look at forbidden (harām) things, the appreciation for the gift of the ears is that we do not listen to prohibited things, gratitude for having a tongue is using it to say only good things, and so on.

In addition to this, being grateful to the creatures of Allah is a good way of showing gratefulness to Allah (SWT). So when someone shows kindness towards us, it is the kindness of Allah being shown through that person. So if we want to thank Allah, we also have to thank that person. Imam Zaynul ‘Ābidīn (a.s.) said:

“Allah will ask one of His servants on the Day of Resurrection, Did you thank so-and-so?, and the servant will reply, ‘No, but I thanked You instead, O Lord.’ Allah will reply, ‘You have not thanked Me as long as you have not thanked him.’”<sup>xxiii</sup>

## Homework

1. Think of some of the apparent blessings of Allah and then imagine them being different or non-existent, for example: imagine you had 3 fingers on each hand instead of 5, would you be able to function as you do now? Reflect on such examples and list five other blessings of Allah and their benefits.

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<sup>i</sup> Haydari, Lesson in Islamic Theology, a series of lectures on the book ‘Kashful Murad’

<sup>ii</sup> This belief has been attributed to Hindus as well as some animists.

<sup>iii</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, Lecture 3, Proving the Existence of God

<sup>iv</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, Lecture 3, Proving the Existence of God  
 Semester 2, Course 1, Lecture 12, ‘Dad, who Created God’

<sup>v</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, p. 688-689

<sup>vi</sup> Harun Yaha, An Invitation to the Truth, Universe: the Greatest Design

<sup>vii</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, Lecture 3, Proving the Existence of God

<sup>viii</sup> Haydari, Lesson in Islamic Theology, a series of lectures on the book ‘Kashful Murad’

<sup>ix</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 2, Course 1, Lecture 28, Worship: the Path towards a Meaningful Life

<sup>x</sup> Teachers are advised to read the references and prepare for this lesson carefully before delivering it as it can be misleading if not delivered correctly.

<sup>xi</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution>

<sup>xii</sup> Burkhardt, F.; Smith, S., eds. (1991). The correspondence of Charles Darwin  
 7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1858–1859.

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evo101/Intro.shtml>

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/what-evidence-supports-the-theory-of-evolution.html>

<sup>xv</sup> HOX genes are an example

<sup>xvi</sup> <http://www.al-islam.org/man-and-universe-ayatullah-murtada-mutahhari/chapter-29-evolution-and-change-history>

<sup>xvii</sup> Mishkatul Anwar Fi Ghuraril Akhbar, narration 703

<sup>xviii</sup> (Mishkatul Anwar Fi Ghuraril Akhbar, narration 105)

<sup>xix</sup> (Mishkatul Anwar Fi Ghuraril Akhbar, narration 1765)

<sup>xx</sup> (The Scale of Wisdom, pg 585)

<sup>xxi</sup> (Mishkatul Anwar Fi Ghuraril Akhbar, point 122)

<sup>xxii</sup> (Mishkatul Anwar Fi Ghuraril Akhbar, point 122)

<sup>xxiii</sup> (The Scale of Wisdom, pg 585)





# THE JUSTICE OF GOD

## العدل الالهي

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Be reminded of some of the major objections to God's justice and their answers
- Be reminded God never gives a burden to anyone that they cannot bear
- Be able to understand the reasons for tests and the most effective ways of dealing with difficulties in terms of submission, patience, trust in Allah, and hope.
- Understand the results of tests in that we improve and come closer to our perfection
- Understand that evil is relative
- Understand the origin and philosophy behind the most common examples of evil
- Understand why evil happens to good people
- Be able to grasp the idea that eternity in hell is a natural part of God's Justice
- Be reminded that taking account of one's own deeds is an essential part of being a successful Muslim.

### FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

### LEVEL 5

## INTRODUCTION

In previous years, we have learnt about the fundamentals of the Justice of Allah (SWT), and why, as the followers of the Ahlul Bayt (as), we pay special importance to this belief. We believe that Allah (SWT), the Most Merciful, is Just in every affair. We believe that Allah (SWT) tests each creature to its ability and that each test is unique. It is as if Allah (SWT), the Wise, gives each person an individualized examination based on the person's abilities and that God only gives to each person a burden that he can handle, not more.

One of the main questions we need to answer within this topic is why evil things happen. When evil things happen, we often question God's justice and ask why such things happen. In this lesson, we will try to analyse this question and see whether evil actually does exist.

## REVISION

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

### Q1. What is the meaning of 'Adl'?

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

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

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



### Q3. What is the opposite of 'Adl?

**A3.** Dhulm is the opposite of 'Adl.

### Q4. What is the meaning of dhulm?

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

### Q5. When does a person oppress?

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

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

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

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

### Q7. Why does a person oppress out of ignorance?

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

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

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

## EVIL IS RELATIVE

### IT IS NOTHING BUT THE ABSENCE OF GOOD

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Student:** No sir. There isn't.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Prof:** Flawed? Can you explain how?

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

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

## WHAT IS THE REALITY OF EVIL?

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

### 1) Evil is a non being

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

### 2) Evil is relative

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

### 3) Evil disappears in bird's eye view

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



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

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

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

#### 4) Evil – a platform to perfection

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

##### TO MEMORISE:

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

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

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

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

We can understand this concept better through an incident:

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### HOMEWORK

**Task 1:** Give 2 major reasons why evil in itself does not exist



## Lesson 2: More on Evil

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

### WHY DOES EVIL HAPPEN?

Although we have partially discussed the reason for ‘evil’, we shall discuss the other reasons for the absence of good from the perspective of the Qurān and narrations.

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

“We try you by evil and good by way of probation; and to Us you shall be brought back” (21:35).

Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:

“Indeed a believer will be examined by calamities, as gold will be examined by fire.” These things that seem evil to us are often tests so that we may better ourselves.”



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

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

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

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

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

**4) Evils are a natural reaction to our actions.** We often are the creators of the ‘evil’ either unknowingly, or deliberately<sup>vii</sup>

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

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

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

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

**6) A secret sign of divine love:** When Allah (SWT) loves someone, He purifies him by giving him difficulties in order to bring that one He loves closer to Himself by helping him ascend the ladder of perfection through tests and trials. Imam Bāqir (as): “*Man will be tried according to his love for God.*” That is why Imam Ali (as) once said “*A calamity for an oppressor is discipline, and for a believer is a trial, and for the Prophets is elevation*”.

## THEN WHY DO SOME BAD PEOPLE HAVE SO MANY BLESSINGS?

There are two major reasons for this:

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

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

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

## WHY ETERNITY IN HELL?<sup>ix</sup>

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

**1)** This question is like asking why a man has to suffer AIDS for the rest of his life due to only ten minutes of illegal sex? The reality of the action that he committed was that he has to suffer that punishment. Similarly, the reality of the action determines the punishment and its length!

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

In fact, the concept of the Hereafter and its promised punishments and rewards is the best example of the Justice of God, the Almighty.

## HOMEWORK

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

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

## Lesson 3: The Furnace of Trials Part I

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

## WHAT IF THERE WERE NO TESTS?

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

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

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

## REACTIONS TO DIFFICULTIES

### NEGATIVE REACTIONS:

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

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

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

#### TO MEMORISE:

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

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

Imam Ali (as) has also said:

“Verily if you are patient, the trials of destiny will befall you and you will be rewarded for them, whilst if you are anxious, not only will the trials of destiny still befall you, but you will be sinful”<sup>xii</sup>

### POSITIVE REACTIONS:

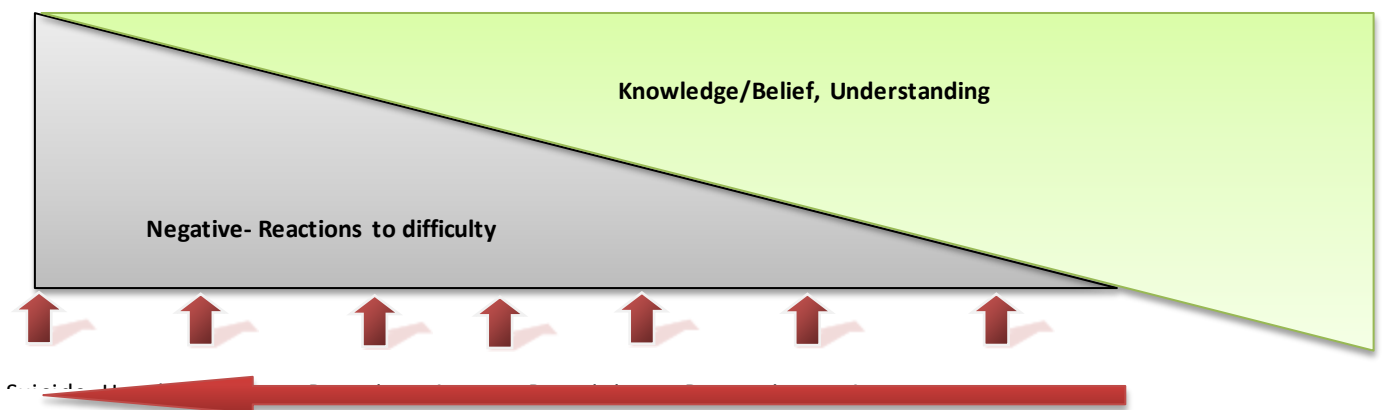
As much as there are different levels of negative reactions, there are different levels of positive reactions to difficulties and as the knowledge, faith and understanding of the human being increases, the easier it becomes to face these tests and grow because of them. The highest forms of these reactions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

### TACKLING DIFFICULTY THROUGH PATIENCE

Although the details of patience are discussed elsewhere, we will briefly review it here. Patience in the Qurān and hadith is defined as the resistance shown by man on the road towards perfection, against mischief, corruption and degradation<sup>xiii</sup>. Take the example of a mountain climber who is trying to reach the top of a mountain. He has to overcome numerous internal (will power, fear, despair etc...) and external (gravity, rocks, thorns, animals etc.) obstacles to reach his goal. Having the resistance to overcome these obstacles is called patience. We will discuss three means of achieving patience in the face of difficulty.

#### 1 - ENDURANCE

It is clear that in order to reach perfection, one must overcome barriers; some of these are external, such as difficulties or situations beyond one's control (losing a loved one, being involved in an accident) whilst others are internal (losing hope, determination or will). Patience against calamities means not to surrender to





these obstacles but to persevere with courage, endurance, enthusiasm, and high morale which begins with a strong belief that Allah (SWT) will never forsake us. Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

“The origin of patience is to have strong conviction in Allah (SWT)”<sup>xiv</sup>

One needs only to look at the example of Zaynab (as), the sister of Imam Ḥusain (as). Having seen so much tragedy in her life, she finally comes to Karbala where she experienced the most horrible ordeal. After the day of 'Ashura, she was taken captive along with Imam Sajjad (as), from city to city in a caravan. Zaynab (as) had to look after the young children who are traumatised, as well as the mothers, sisters and daughters who had lost loved ones and who were now being tortured.

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

## 2 - THOSE WITH GREATER DIFFICULTIES

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

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

## 3- CONVERTING DIFFICULTY INTO COMFORT AND EASE

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

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

Regarding this incident, Abu Baṣīr quotes from Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq (as):

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

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

## Homework

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

## Lesson 3 : The Furnace of Trials

### P<sub>2</sub>

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

### SUBMISSION IN THE FACE OF TESTS

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

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

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



Figure 5 An illustrative depiction of Imam Hussein in Karbala

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

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

her life, Fāṭima (as) was content with the fear, oppression, deprivation, poverty, sorrows and pains, which Allah (SWT) tested her with.

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

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

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

### TRUST IN ALLAH (SWT)

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

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

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

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

Imam Ṣādiq (as) said:

"One day Moses (as) was walking along the shore. A fisherman came suddenly and prostrated to the sun and said some polytheistic things and words. Then he cast his net in the sea and pulled it out filled with fish, and did the same thing again twice and got a lot of fish like the first time. Next someone else came. He made ablution and stood to pray.

He praised the Lord and cast his net into the sea, but got no fish when he pulled it out. He did it again and again, but only caught a small fish the third time. He thanked God and left. Then Moses said: "O' Lord! The polytheist servant came, and cast his net three times and pulled it out full of fish. Then Your believing servant made ablution and said his prayers and praised you and cast his net three times but only managed to catch one fish. Then he praised You and left!" God told Moses: "Look to the right."

Moses looked to the right. The curtain to the Unseen was pushed aside and he saw the position that God had prepared for the believer. Then God said: "O' Moses! Look to the left." He turned around and looked to the left. The curtain to the Unseen was pushed aside and he saw the position that God had prepared for the polytheist. Then God said: "O' Moses! What I did for the believer did not harm him, and what I did for the polytheist one did not benefit him." Then Moses said: "O' Lord! It is right that whoever recognizes You is content with Your deeds."<sup>xxii</sup>

## THE RESULTS OF HAVING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS TESTS

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

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

Allah (SWT) says in the Qurān:

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

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

## ADVANTAGES OF BELIEVING IN THE JUSTICE OF ALLAH (SWT)

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

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

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

**Justice Plays its Role in Individual and Collective Life:** The faith in the Justice of Allah (SWT) helps to lay the foundation of justice in individual and collective life. Such a person prepares himself to accept justice in his personal and social life. Further, he will act with justice with everyone around him and give them a 'fair go'.

## HOMEWORK

**Task 1:** Give the three main ways of overcoming difficulties in life



<sup>i</sup> This point here can be elaborated on to drive it home. There are many examples such as the venom of a snake can be evil for the one who gets bitten but its protection of the snake. A volcano can destroy thousands of lives but can throw up wonderful minerals and can stabilise the earth. Even in terms of humans, when the US attacks Afghanistan or Iraq, they are doing it for their own best interest but those being bombed and shot consider this to be evil (this will be discussed in little more detail in the next section) Taking an injection for a vaccine may seem evil due to the pain but it is eventually good.

<sup>ii</sup> God and His attributes, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lāri

<sup>iii</sup> Nahjul Balagha Sermon 7

<sup>iv</sup> Again there can be many examples the teacher could use here. An example of a typical food chain would be useful.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food\\_chain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_chain)

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

<sup>vi</sup> A discussion on the statement ‘what goes around comes around’ could be used here as well as discussions on this concept of ‘karma’ ensuring that not all of life is based on this concept but SOME perhaps could be explained by it.

<sup>vii</sup> Climate change is a prime example.

<sup>viii</sup> eHawza Semester 2 course 2, lesson 22

<sup>ix</sup> eHawza, Semester 1, course 3, lesson 5

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

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

<sup>xii</sup> Mizān-ul-Hikmah tradition 3454

<sup>xiii</sup> Discourse on patience, Sayyid Khamenai.

<sup>xiv</sup> Mizān-ul-hikmah, tradition 3459

<sup>xv</sup> Discourses on patience- Sayyid Khamenai

<sup>xvi</sup> al-Kāfi vol. 2 p. 89

<sup>xvii</sup> Mizān-ul-Hikmah tradition 3448

<sup>xviii</sup> Fatima the gracious - <http://www.al-islam.org/gracious/>

<sup>xix</sup> Manazilus Sairin – Description of Tawakkul

<sup>xx</sup> Behar ul Anwār, Vol 69 P373

<sup>xxi</sup> Teachers can use the following stories to illustrate the point further:

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

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

–the woman who comes to Imam Ṣādiq thrice to ask him to pray for the return of her son. He tells her to be patient each time, but after the third she says she can no longer be patient. He tells her ‘go home, your son just arrived’ Also, maybe a story to show how we reach perfection through our tests, particularly one in which the test directly leads to the perfection gained.

<sup>xxii</sup> Mishkātul Anwār Tradition 1694

# وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:181

## PROPHECY

## النبوة

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Know the objectives of the Prophets
- Understand the concept of sinlessness (al-'Iṣma) of the Prophets
- Be aware of the main objections against & proofs for the infallibility of the Prophets
- Gain a better understanding of other scriptures, in particular in the Jewish and Christian faiths
- Prove from evidence that the Bibles of the Jews and Christians are not the divine word of God nor are they the authentic words of the prophets
- Understand the view of the Qur'an regarding the previous prophets and scriptures

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

## LEVEL 5

### Lesson 1: Prophecy

In previous years we learnt about the basic role of the 124,000 prophets sent by Allah, the names of a few of the most important prophets, as well as learning some moral lessons from their lives which we are expected to follow. We were also introduced to the concept of sinlessness (al-'Iṣmah) of the prophets and the necessity of this characteristic. In this lesson we will discuss the reasons for which Allah (SWT) sent the Prophets.

### PROPHETS IN THE CONTEXT OF CREATION

As Muslims we believe that our Creator created us in order to fulfil a purpose and reach the highest levels of perfection possible to us. This concept applies not only to humans, but to all creatures in this world. Every creature in this world has a final purpose and perfection and this is why it was created. Also, our Lord is far too merciful to give a creature purpose without guiding it towards that purpose.

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ

“[It is He] Who has created me, and it He Who guides me.” (26:78)

Therefore, we also believe in Divine Guidance, which is of two types. The first is ‘natural’ guidance. This is a force Allah has created within the universe to guide it and all its creatures to their perfection. So, when we see that in the Qur'an Allah, the Wise, ‘reveals’ to the bee, we should know that this is a reference to the ‘natural’ guidance God has built within that bee to drive it towards its perfection.

There is another type of guidance provided to us by God, and that is guidance through Prophets. As humans, we are different to animals in that we not only need natural guidance, but we also need 'legislative' guidance, to teach us how to use our gift of free will in order to reach the highest levels of perfection. This guidance comes through the Prophets, without whom we would not know how to reach our perfection and how to use our gift of free will.

Therefore we see that sending prophets was a necessity in order to guide mankind to their purpose and help them best perform their multiple functions. In the previous lessons we learnt the reasons why God sent prophets.

Now that we have seen the necessity of guidance, and that this is the major roles of Prophets, let us review what we learnt last year about the reasons for the deputation of prophets, so that we can see the different aspects of guidance. These include:

### 1. RESPONSIBILITY NECESSITATES PROPHETS

Allah (SWT) has blessed man with the freedom of choice and holds him responsible for his belief and behaviour. The responsibility involves a set of rules and guidelines called the Shari'ah (divine law). The Shari'ah can initially only be taught and implemented by Prophets.

### 2. PUNISHMENT WITHOUT EDUCATION IS UNJUST

In order for man to refrain from sins and perform virtuous deeds, he needs to firstly know what a sin is, what a virtue is and the consequences of each. Mankind's intellect is not a sufficient tool for gaining this knowledge. Therefore, out of His Mercy and Justice, Allah (SWT) sends us Messengers to educate us about what we should do and should not do.

### 3. REGULATING MAN'S WORLDLY LIFE

Prophets were sent to establish a law under which the rights of all people are respected. This law would have to be made by One who is superior to all mankind and is absolutely aware of mankind's needs in every dimension. Therefore, only Allah (SWT) can make this law and send messengers to teach and establish this law. The Prophets were also responsible for implementing this law, in order to help mankind live the best and most harmonious life in this world and the next.



## 4. NEWS OF THE UNSEEN

If there were no prophets how would we come to know about the Hereafter, angels or jinn, things which are all beyond man's knowledge? This type of knowledge is what man has no access to, except through revelation.



## 5. PURIFICATION

Purifying the soul and actions of humans is another mission of the prophets. Purification in this context means to make man's soul aware of all types of moral diseases which are misleading him

This purification of souls occurred not only through teaching, but also through setting the very best example. The Prophets (as) would purify the souls of their communities by setting the perfect examples for them through their own actions.

## THE PROPHETS ARE OUR ROLE MODELS

It is very important to understand that the role models in our life should be the prophets, peace be upon them. Allah (SWT) advises those who hope for the pleasure of Allah and who are concerned about their fate on the Judgment Day to take Prophet Muhammad (saw) as an example and role model. This is a precious piece of guidance given to us by the Holy Qur'an. When we come to plan our lives, we should consider how the Prophet (saw) lived his life and models our life on his life. We should do this both in the small details of our life- e.g. when we eat, when we sleep, how we sit etc...-and in the overall direction of our life.



The Prophet (saw) was a man who dedicated his life, in its entirety, to a worthy cause. His nights and days, and every action he performed, had one aim only- to promote Islam and true submission to Allah and to free people from the shackles of dangerous and baseless beliefs.

This purpose permeated through the Prophet's life. He suffered physical and psychological abuse on account of it. He lost his wealth, he migrated from his hometown where he had been for 53 years, he had to confront close family members, he had to overcome deep-set prejudices in his community and he had to fight military and propaganda wars, all in order to promote Islam. He gave wealth, family, blood, reputation, position and life for the sake of this cause.

The person we take as a role model greatly influences our life. If our role models are sports stars or pop stars, who have dedicated their life to a frivolous and pointless goal, then we too will naturally incline towards the same thing. Therefore, rather than looking to such people for inspiration, we should look to our prophet for inspiration. When we ponder and reflect on our life and set goals, we should consider something other than fun, comfort and popularity. We should try to consider a worthy cause, and work towards it.

At the beginning of his mission, the Prophet (saw) had with him only 'Ali (as) and Khadijah, three people praying alone in the middle of a vast and empty desert. Now, there are over a billion Muslims, all praising the name of this man, all attesting that there is no Lord but Allah, and that Muḥammad is His Messenger. If we dedicate ourselves to a worthy cause with even a tiny portion of the Prophet's dedication, then we too will succeed in changing the world around us for the better. The first step is to have the right role model and the right source of inspiration.

## Memorisation Task

يَرْجُو كَانَ لِمَنْ حَسَنَةُ أُسْوَةِ اللَّهِ رَسُولٍ فِي لَكُمْ كَانَ لَقَدْ  
كَثِيرًا اللَّهُ وَذَكَرَ الْآخِرَ وَالْيَوْمَ اللَّهُ

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much.” (33:21)

## Review Questions

1. List three reasons behind the deputation of the Prophets (saw)?
2. Give two examples of forgiveness from the lives of two Prophets.
3. Can you think of another characteristic taught by the prophets? Can you give at least one story as an example?

## Lesson 2: Sinlessness (‘Iṣma) of the Prophets

As we have learnt in previous years, the Prophets did not commit sins due to a special divine protection. In this lesson we will study the concept of al-‘Iṣma (sinlessness) further.

### SINLESSNESS

A common error is to translate al-‘Iṣma to infallibility. By definition, the term fallible means capable of making an error. As such, the term infallible (in = not) means incapable of error or failing. However, al-‘Iṣma in the context of the Prophets and Imams does not mean an inability to sin. Rather, it means always choosing not to sin, because of a Divine protection from Allah (SWT).

The sinless nature of the Prophets and Imams is different to the sinless nature of the angels. Angels are incapable of committing sin, because they lack the human desires and the power of choice. For instance a human who is born blind is incapable of looking with lust simply because he lacks the ability (in this case, eyesight) to do so. Being incapable of committing this sin makes the blind person infallible in this regard, but not ma’ṣūm (protected or sinless- because this sin does not apply to him in the first place), as he would have no choice in the matter. Thus, inability in this sense is not a virtue.

Allah only admires the one who, although capable of indulging in the sin, was able to control and protect himself against it. The Prophets and Imams (as) had this theoretical ability to sin, and they too had the desires that other humans have. However, when they considered a sin, they had the ability to see its reality (for example, the reality of backbiting being eating the dead flesh of humans, the reality of taking an orphan’s wealth being eating fire). They had this special intuitive knowledge because of the purity of their souls. This type of protection was specific to the prophets, the Imams, as well as people like Sayyeda Fāṭima (as) and Sayyeda Maryam (as).

## INFALLIBILITY OF PROPHETS (AL-‘IṢMA)

The following story from the life of Prophet Moses, mentioned in the Qur’an (28:22-26), demonstrates al-‘Iṣma also teaches us a good lesson in moral conduct.

While escaping from Egypt Prophet Moses (as), went towards Madyan and was only a wanderer in the desert. He arrived at an oasis, weary and hungry, and he sat under the shade of a tree and saw at the well nearby, shepherds giving water to their sheep. However, there were two girls were waiting there on the side with their sheep because there was a big crowd of men near the well. There was no one to draw water for these young ladies, who were the daughters of Prophet Shu’ayb (as).

Prophet Moses (as) helped these girls and watered their sheep for them, and returned to rest. After a while, one of the girls returned on behalf of her father to invite him for food. On the way while walking, Prophet Shu’ayb’s daughter was walking ahead of Prophet Moses to show him the way. However, after a little while, Prophet Moses said to her: ‘I will walk ahead of you, and you throw pebbles to indicate to me which direction I should take’. The girl related this story to her father and when asked, Prophet Moses (as) said that he did *“not belong to the people who cast their looks upon the backs of women”*. This story shows that although the Prophets (saw) had desire, they always chose not to sin, because they saw the reality of sins and how disgusting each sin was.

### UNDERSTANDING AL-‘IṢMA

To understand the concept of this knowledge and access to reality better, look at the following hadith:

“On a chilly winter day Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) and his students were sitting around a brazier. One of the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a.s) asked the Imam how it is possible for the Imams to be sinless? Imam al-Ṣādiq (a.s) picked up a piece of burning charcoal with a pair of tongs and offered it to the man to put in his mouth! The man, surprised, asked what the Imam meant? Imam Sadiq (a.s) replied: ‘our knowledge about (the reality of) sins is similar to your knowledge about this burning coal!’<sup>i</sup>

(Sheikh Mansour, Article on Infallibility, [http://www.ihic.org.au/articles.php?a\\_id=16](http://www.ihic.org.au/articles.php?a_id=16))

## POSSIBLE ARGUMENTS AGAINST AL-'ISMA

In this lesson, we have reviewed the concept of al-'Isma and what it means. In previous years, we also learnt why it was necessary for Prophets to be sinless. Nonetheless, there are those who disagree with this idea and object to it. We will address their objections and answer them in this lesson.

### 1. Is 'Isma Contrary to Freewill?

'Isma is in no way contrary to free will. We have already explained that 'Isma does not involve the suspension of free will or the inability to sin. The Prophets always had, just as we do, the choice to sin. However, the extra knowledge given to them by God and their ability to see the reality of sins helped them to avoid ever sinning.

In fact, this Divine protection can be available even to ordinary people who were not prophets. This is proven by the Qur'an when it relates the story of Prophet Moses's mother. When she saw her beloved son at the palace of Pharaoh her motherly emotion could have erupted and that would have disclosed her secret about Moses. However, Allah, the Exalted, came to her aid with His Divine Protection:

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فَارِعًا ۚ إِن كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ لَوْلَا أَن  
رَّحْمَتُنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

But there came to be a void in the heart of the mother of Moses: She was going almost to disclose his (case), had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain a (firm) believer. (28:10)

### 2. Stories in the Holy Qur'an

Many stories in the Holy Qur'an seem to indicate that prophets committed sins. Prophet Adam, for example, ate from the forbidden tree and Prophet Moses caused the death of a person. How can this be when we have been saying that the Prophets are sinless?

The answer is that in all these situations, the Prophets did not actually commit a sin. Rather, they had a choice between two options, neither of which was a sin. However, they chose the option that was less good, and so they met its consequences and asked for forgiveness. The command to Prophet Adam (as) to not eat from the tree was a guiding command, to advise him about what

is best for him, and not an obligatory command that he had to follow. Prophet Moses's killing of that man was not a sin either. The man he killed was an oppressor from the soldiers of the Pharaoh. However, Prophet Moses asked for forgiveness because it was not the time for this, and his people would suffer on account of what he had done. This does not make it a sin, it is simply that he chose the less good option.

### 3. Is Mankind Sinful by Nature?

From the Islamic perspective, unlike the Christian perspective, man is created pure and without a sinful nature. Man by nature only recognizes and enjoys the good. Evil is against his nature. Thus, 'good' in the Qur'an is referred to as 'al-Ma'ruf' meaning something known and recognized by human's nature, whereas, 'bad' and 'evil' is introduced as 'al-Munkar' meaning something which is unknown and strange for the human soul. This concept is brilliantly illustrated in the following story:

One of the companions of the Prophet of Islam (saw) narrates: I went to the messenger of God to ask him about virtue (al-Birr) and vice (al-Ithm). Before I started, the Prophet (saw) said to me: "O Wabeseh! Do you want to ask your question or you want me to answer it?"

"Please answer it then, O Messenger of God", I replied, surprised.

The Prophet said: "You came to ask me about 'virtue' and 'vice', is it not?"

"Yes, O Messenger of God", I replied.

The Prophet then stroked his chest with his hand and said:

"Vice is what your heart doesn't accept. Virtue is what your heart is tranquil with. If people give you any other opinion on this, you ask your own heart for its (natural and healthy) verdict."

### Memorisation Activity

"O son of Adam, you will remain on the path of good as long as you have an advisor from within your soul..."<sup>ii</sup>



## Homework

1. Why is al-ʿIṣma not contrary to free will?
2. What is the difference between the angels not committing sins and the prophets and Imams not committing sins?
3. Is mankind born sinful by nature, and why?

### Lesson 3: Divine Books

We have learnt in previous years that Allah (SWT) has sent 124,000 prophets to mankind for guidance. From among them, some were given a book setting laws for the religious, intellectual and social development of people. In this lesson we will focus on The Old and New Testaments and the Qur'an in view of their accuracy and their teachings.

#### THE QUR'AN ON PREVIOUS PROPHETS AND RELIGIONS

Since the beginning of mankind till today, human intellect has been developing such that each generation is advancing beyond the previous generations. Due to the advancement in intelligence and the changing societies, Allah (SWT) has sent a Prophet to each society in order to direct them through their progression while maintaining and building on the same core message that Allah is One and Unique and to obey Him. For those who practiced obedience to Allah, Allah promises them heaven regardless of the time they lived in:

“a promise which is binding on Him in the Taurāt and the Injil and the Qur'an...”<sup>iii</sup>

Each prophet had various important roles; one of their roles was to correct and eradicate the perversions and fallacies that the people had attributed to the previous prophet(as). Likewise, one of the roles of the Qur'an and Prophet Muḥammad was to challenge the Christians and the Jews with the crimes (such as adultery, incest, claiming to be the son of God etc.) they had attributed

to Prophets such as David, Solomon and Jesus.<sup>iv</sup> In the Qur'an Allah says:

“O People of the Book! Indeed Our apostle has come to you making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book... indeed, there has come to you a clear Book from Allah.”<sup>v</sup>

Each prophet that was sent confirmed what the previous prophet had taught. In the Qur'an Allah commands Prophet Muḥammad (saw) and all believers to acknowledge and confirm all the previous prophets and the divine scriptures:

“The apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles; We make no distinction between any of His apostles; and they say we hear and obey...”<sup>vi</sup>

If we do not believe in all the prophets and Divine Books then we are not considered Muslims.<sup>vii</sup>

The question however arises as to what are the books that Allah has sent. Is Allah referring to the current books of the Jews and Christians or is He referring to something else? We will discuss this below.

#### THE BOOKS OF ALLAH

As mentioned in the previous āyah, and in various places in the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) uses the word 'Books' or 'Scriptures' which were given to a number of His prophets. The Taurāt was given to Prophet Moses about which Allah says:

“Surely We revealed the Taurāt in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allah) judged (matters) for those who were Jews, and the masters of Divine knowledge...”<sup>viii</sup>

Similarly, the Injil (Gospel – used as a singular term only) was given to Prophet Jesus as stated in the Qur'an:

“...We gave him the Injil in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of the Taurāt and a guidance and an admonition for those who guard (against evil).”<sup>ix</sup>

This āyah shows that Prophet Jesus was sent to confirm the Taurāt and to preach the advanced laws of the Injil.

Similarly, Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was sent to confirm the teachings and Books of the Prophets before him and

to reveal the final Book and message of Allah, the Qur'an. We will spend the next few lessons studying the Qur'an in much greater detail.

If the Qur'an is confirming the teachings of the Taurat and Gospel, shouldn't all these religions be similar and shouldn't their books contain the same message with only more laws to address the advancements in society? Why then do we all have major differences amongst us?

The answer is that the original Book, Scripture or message revealed to the Prophets was very similar and they all taught the same message. However, the people at the time of the prophets or after that time changed, added or deleted parts of the Book or message to make the teachings more suitable to their desire and liking (other reasons will be discussed soon). This very point is mentioned in the Qur'an regarding the Jews:

“Do you then hope that they would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this).”<sup>x</sup> (2:75)

Therefore when Allah (SWT) refers to the 'Books', He is referring to the original message, Book or Scripture that the Prophets taught and not the current distorted books that currently exist.

We will take a closer look at the Old and New Testaments (known as the Bible) and compare them to the Qur'an to gain a better understanding. In later lessons, we will discuss these books from a historical perspective to see whether it is possible to even claim they are the original holy books given to the prophets. However, in this lesson, we will only discuss the problems with the content of these books.

## THE GOSPELS (OR BIBLE)

The Bible is made up of two parts: the first part is the Old Testament which they believe refers to the laws of Moses and the prophets, kings or saints before the coming of Jesus. Although the Old Testament mostly refers to or addresses the Jews, the Christians acknowledge it to some extent, depending on their sect. The second part of the Bible is the New Testament which they believe are records of the accounts of Jesus (as) and his disciples.

## CONTENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

There are many problems that arise in the Old Testament which reduces its credibility as an authentic book. Some of these will be discussed:

- **Attributing sins to the Prophets or role models:**<sup>xi</sup> One of the major faults in the Old Testament is that it contains fabricated stories which attribute unacceptable sins to the prophets or noble people who are supposed to be role models for mankind. Some of these examples include: Prophet David (although Christians do not believe he is a prophet, they believe he is a noble king) falling in love with his neighbour's wife, and then killing his neighbour so he could marry his wife<sup>xii</sup>; the daughters of Prophet Lot (also not considered a prophet amongst the Jews and Christians) intoxicated their father and slept with him in order to continue his progeny/seed.<sup>xiii</sup>
- **Contradictions in descriptions:** This occurs on a number of occasions but an example is as follows: “II CHRONICLES 36:9, Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.” Compare this to “II KINGS 24: 8. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.”<sup>xiv</sup>
- **Immoral descriptions:** Such as that of the Jewish ancestor Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. Because she could not get children from Judah's son, she seduced him and became pregnant with his child.<sup>xv</sup> There is no moral behind this story rather it subtly encourages incest and adultery (although Christians and Jews consider incest and adultery as major crimes).
- **Deletions and additions:** As mentioned above, the majority of the Old Testament is written by unknown people and this was continuously edited throughout history.

In comparison, the Qur'an does not hold any contradictions. It also does not attribute any sins to the Prophets of God as they were divinely protected from sinning and were the best examples to mankind.

## CONTENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- **Deletions:** There are many verses in the present Gospels whose authenticity is debated by different Christian denominations because they don't have a copy of the original text. For example, the New International Version of the Bible does not contain many verses that are present in other Bibles.<sup>xvi</sup> This is different to the Qur'an as Muslims never debate whether an ayah is part of the Qur'an or not. The same Qur'an is used by all Muslim all around the world, and has been the same throughout time.
- **Inconsistencies among the gospels:** there are many discrepancies amongst the four gospels in narrating events such as the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>xvii</sup> Another example is the number of ancestors when tracing the genealogy of Jesus back to Prophet David.<sup>xviii</sup> There is also dispute as to whether Jesus' birth was miraculous or not.<sup>xix</sup>
- **Different versions:** there are many different versions of the Bible present today according to the different Christian denominations or even within the same denomination. Different versions of the bible written (or edited) by Protestants, the Catholics, Jehova's Witnesses, Evangelists, Anglicans, Ethiopians, Orthodox, etc. exist today. The differences amongst them arise from the acceptance or deletions of different verses, different translations, different order of the books, following different churches, etc. Which one of the Bibles is correct? In comparison to the Qur'an, there has never been a claim that there is more than one Qur'an.
- **Mathematical miscalculations:** *"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST: and these three are one."*<sup>xx</sup> Our understanding is that 1+1+1=3 not 1.

## CONCLUSION:

From the above arguments, we can see that the current Old and New Testaments are not Divine Books (i.e. they are not the word of God neither the direct words of the Prophets) and hence we cannot use them to guide us in life. However apart from the discrepancies and non-authentication, they do preach some morals (which they have maintained from the teachings of the prophets) similar to that in Islam. As Muslims we need to try and focus on the similarities between each religion in order to bring people of different faiths closer to Islam and make clear to them their misconceptions.

## Review Questions:

1. List three problems with the content of the Old Testament
2. List three problems with the content of the New Testament
3. Why does Islam teach about the previous holy scriptures, and does this refer to the current Old and New Testament?



<sup>i</sup> Sheikh Mansour, Article on Infallibility, [http://www.ihic.org.au/articles.php?a\\_id=16](http://www.ihic.org.au/articles.php?a_id=16)

<sup>ii</sup> Imam Zainul Abidin, Mishaktul Anwar fi Ghuraril Akhbar, no.1459

<sup>iii</sup> (*Qur'an* 9:111), also see surat Aali-'Imran (3) ayah 84

<sup>iv</sup> Regarding this Allah says in surat al-Maa'idah ayat 17-18: "Certainly, they disbelieve who say: Surely, Allah-He is the Messiah son of Maryam. Say: Who then could control anything as against Allah when He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Maryam and his mother and all those on the earth?....And the Jews and the Christians say: We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones. Say: Why does He then chastise you for your faults? Nay, you are mortals from among those whom He has created..."

<sup>v</sup> al-Maa'idah ayah 15

<sup>vi</sup> surat al-Baqarah ayah 285

<sup>vii</sup> If Prophet Muhammad (the perfect example and leader to mankind) believed in the previous prophets and scriptures then we must too, otherwise we cannot consider ourselves Muslims or believers; this is confirmed when the ayah states that the believers also believe in them (i.e. if you are a believer you will also believe it). Also Prophet Muhammad is confirming and believing in the previous books which were given to the previous prophets. Allah (SWT) has used the plural word 'books' (i.e. previous scriptures) and not the singular form 'book' (which would have referred to the Qur'an only) to indicate that we must believe in the previous scriptures as well as the Qur'an.

<sup>viii</sup> surat al-Ma'idah ayah 44

<sup>ix</sup> surat al-Ma'idah ayah 46

<sup>x</sup> surat al-Baqarah ayah 75. With this in mind, Allah then threatens those who change the Scriptures from the original teachings in surah 2 ayah 79: "*Woe then to those who write the book with their hands and then say: This is from Allah, so that they may take for it a small price; therefore woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.*"

<sup>xi</sup> The concept of Prophecy (or Prophethood) in Christianity and Judaism differs to that in Islam. They believe that prophets are not infallible and committed sins and mistakes and wrong decisions. Furthermore, although they heard the revelation, Jews and Christians don't believe that it perfects them. Some Christians believe the minimum requirements of a true prophet is that they give clear prophecies and are accurate in predicting events. On the other hand, in Islam, Prophets are divinely protected from committing any sin or mistake or wrong decision. They were always in complete submission to the will of God and were the best examples and role models to mankind (a role model cannot be a sinner nor make mistakes otherwise that would give an excuse to the whole of humanity to always sin, and this is certainly not the case).

<sup>xii</sup> 2 Samuel 11

<sup>xiii</sup> This story is in Genesis 19:30-38. For comparison, the Qur'an praises all prophets and in no way attributes any accusations of sins against them. Allah has divinely protected all prophets from sinning as they are our examples to go by. See surat 34 ayah 10 "And certainly we gave to Dawood excellence/favour from Us; O mountains! Sing praises with him, and the birds, and We made the iron pliant to him." For Lut see surat 7 ayat 80-84 and 21:74: "And (as for) Lut We gave him wisdom and knowledge..."

<sup>xiv</sup> A good reference for contradictions in the Old Testament, see Ahmad Deedat's works (such as "Is the Bible God's word?" which can be accessed at: <http://www.jamaat.net/bible/BibleIntro.html>)

<sup>xv</sup> Genesis, chapter 38

<sup>xvi</sup> Examples include Gospel of Mark chapter 16 verses 9-20, John Chapter 7 verse 53 and John chapter 8 verse 11.

<sup>xvii</sup> ehawza: Gospel or Gospels?

<sup>xviii</sup> Matthew recorded 26 ancestors in between whereas Luke gathered 41 forefathers to reach David. They also claim that Jesus had a father named Joseph the carpenter who was a descendent of David.

<sup>xix</sup> In Isaiah 7:14, Mary the mother of Jesus was referred to as a 'virgin' (hence the birth of Jesus without male intervention is miraculous) whereas in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, this term has been changed to 'a young lady' (i.e. Jesus may have had a human father, and his birth was not miraculous).

<sup>xx</sup> 1st Epistle of John 5:7

#### References:

- 1) [http://www.ihic.org.au/articles.php?a\\_id=16](http://www.ihic.org.au/articles.php?a_id=16)
- 2) Mu'sin Qara'ati, *Lessons From Qur'an*, Chapter 4, pages 138-180
- 3) <http://www.al-islam.org/Seal/index.html>
- 4) eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course on Islamic Theology, lecture 7-9
- 5.) Biha-ul-Anwaar, Vol. 78, page 111
- 6.) Holy Qur'an

# THE HOLY QUR'AN

## القرآن الكريم

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Be able to prove the authenticity of the Qur'an
- Know the differences between revelation of the Qur'an and Ḥadith
- Discuss the time and place of the revelation of the Qur'an
- Understand the history of the compilation of the Qur'an.
- Know the tools we have to understand the Qur'an:
- Be reminded of the importance of applying the Qur'an to ourselves and reading it with understanding
- Introduce the fact the Qur'an contains very specific and noble guidelines on social etiquette.
- Know that the Qur'an is the verbatim word of Allah
- Understand that the Holy Qur'an is the fundamental point of reference for Muslims
- Have a general understanding of the topics discussed in the Qur'an
- Understand that the Qur'an consists of clear and ambiguous āyāt, unconditional and limited āyāt, abrogated and abrogating āyāt
- Understand the harms of interpreting the Qur'an according to one's desire
- Be able to appreciate the importance of using the intellect with sincerity in obtaining the truth

### FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

### LEVEL 5

## Lesson 1: the Revelation and the Compilation of the Qur'an

As we have discussed in previous years, one of the fundamental beliefs of Muslims is the belief that the Holy Prophet (saw) was a messenger of Allah, the Almighty, and his message was made up of two primary gifts for mankind, the Holy Qur'an (the written message) and the holy Prophet and his pure Progeny (the practical message). The Holy Qur'an, as we have learnt in previous years, is like an instruction manual for operating the gifts that Allah has bestowed upon us (the body and the soul) so that we can fulfil our potential, whilst the Ahlul Bayt are the practical examples of those who reached their perfection by putting into practice the message of the Qur'an<sup>1</sup>.

We discussed that the Qur'an contains the authentic words of Allah, the Wise, without addition or subtraction, without change or distortion. We discussed some of the proofs proving the authenticity of the Qur'an in great detail in previous years. Here, we will review some of these proofs briefly.

### THE QUR'AN IS THE VERBATIM WORD OF ALLAH

The fundamental belief we have about the authenticity of the Qur'an is that it is the exact words of God. All Muslims are unanimous that the Qur'an is the verbatim Words of God. The Qur'an explicitly states:

"And verily, you (O Muḥammad) are given the Qur'an from the All-Wise, All-Knowing." [27:6]

There are many proofs of this such as:

1. **The Miracles of the Qur'an:** Had the Qur'an been the words of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) it would have been possible to forge similar to it. However, Allah (SWT) challenges all mankind to bring even a chapter

similar in its eloquence to the Qur'an, but no one in history has succeeded.<sup>ii</sup>

2. **Confirming the previous Scriptures yet correcting their perversions:** A big portion of the Qur'an deals with the stories of the previous Prophets. The Qur'an is free from all perversions which occurred in the Bible. The Qur'an clears the false accusations allegedly related to the Prophets.
3. **Its style:** The unique style of how different people are addressed in the Qur'an confirms that the Qur'an is the direct Word of God. It is not the indirect narration of the Words of God. For instance, more than 300 times God says to Prophet Muḥammad (saw): "Say (Qul)!"
4. The scientific miracles of the Qur'an, such as the description of the foetus in the mother's womb<sup>iii</sup> or the clear statement that the universe is expanding<sup>iv</sup>.
5. The numerical miracles of the Qur'an<sup>v</sup>.
6. The universality of the Qur'an: even though Prophet Muhammad (saw) lived in a small town in the middle of the Arabian Desert, the values taught in the Qur'an apply to all human society throughout all time. Values such as equity between races, rights of women and equality between social classes are all taught in the Qur'an, even though the Arabs were very much opposed to such values and hardly had any knowledge of them.

## HADITH AL QUDSI AND PROPHETIC TRADITIONS

It is important to understand that according to the Muslims, revelation from God can be of three kinds<sup>vi</sup> and that revelation can only come to Prophets.

The best description of God's revelation to man is explained in Sura Shu'ara':

وَمَا كَانَ لَيْشِيرَ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ  
حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِي بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ إِنَّهُ  
عَلِيُّ حَكِيمٌ

"And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases; surely He is High, Wise." (42:51)

1. **Revelation without any intermediate:** This is the first type of revelation which is by 'casting to the heart' of the chosen person. The lowest degree of this revelation is called 'inspiration' (*al-ilhām*) which was given to the mother of Moses (28:7) and other believers who were not prophets. Inspiration also came to Prophet Muḥammad (saw) in the Night of Ascension (53:10). This form of communication from Allah is called **Hadith**: where only the meanings are from God, but the words are of Prophets. The narrations of the Prophet, including Ḥadith al-Qudsi, and the inspiration that the infallible Imams and Sayyedah Fāṭimah received all fall into this category.
2. **Revelation through a physical obstacle:** In this type of revelation, Allah creates a voice from behind or above a physical object and communicates to His prophet in this way. This happened to Prophet Moses through a tree (28:30) or through fire (20:11).
3. **Revelation through an angel:** In this type the Almighty God creates the "Words" and delivers them to His chosen Prophet via an angel-messenger. In many of the instances the angel appears to the Prophet in a handsome human body and delivers the Message of God to him (11:81, 81:19). The example of this is the **Holy Qur'an**: Where the words and meanings both are revealed from God, and it is meant to be a miracle in itself and they are verbatim (precise words of Allah).

## THE COMPILATION OF THE QUR'AN

Despite the evidence that indicates the authenticity of the Qur'an, over the centuries, many misconceptions have arisen in regards to the completeness or distortion of the Qur'an (*tahrif*) (a group of Ḥadith in Sunni sources suggest the Qur'an is incomplete whilst some accuse the Shi'ah of believing in books other than the Holy Qur'an<sup>vii</sup>). It is important therefore to understand how and when the Qur'an was revealed and compiled in order to clarify these misconceptions.

This divine Book is the actual word of God, revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (saw) over the last 23 years of his life. As we have learnt before, the Holy Qur'an is the collection of 114 chapters called Surah (meaning Section), which consists of 6205 'portions' called āyāt (which means 'Signs', indicating that each expression within the Qur'an is a sign of God).

The Holy Prophet (saw) had some secretaries known as the **Scribes of Revelation**, whose duty was to write down the āyāt which were revealed to the prophet, under his supervision. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an as it is at our hand today was compiled during the time of the Prophet (saw).

However, there is a general belief that the standard text of the Qur'an was adopted during the reign of 'Uthmān (644-56 AD). This general belief was introduced through some fabricated narrations<sup>viii</sup>. Yet, there are many reasons rejecting this idea.

- 1- The Qur'an is called 'Book' in many āyāt of the Qur'an itself, which implies that it had already been compiled in a book form while it was still being revealed and the Prophet (saw) was alive.
- 2- The first Surah in the Qur'an is called, since the time of the Prophet, Surat al-Fātiḥa (the opening chapter). This surah was certainly not the first to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (saw), so why would be called al- al-Fātiḥa (the opening chapter) unless the Qur'an was already being compiled in the same sequence we have today.
- 3- In so many Ḥadith it is quoted from the Prophet that he ordered Imam 'Ali to compile all the skins and papers on which the scriptures were written, on one cloth and seal it.
- 4- And finally, Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an (ch.75:17) has promised that He is looking after the compilation of the Qur'an so that it will not follow the same destiny of the previous scriptures.

However, what was done during the reign of 'Uthmān was the uniting of the **accent** of recitation of the Qur'an according to the accent of the tribe of the Prophet, i.e. Quraysh. Also, what Imam 'Ali narrates regarding the compilation of the Qur'an after the Prophet's death, was the compilation of the Qur'an with the interpretation he had heard and read by the dictation of the Prophet.<sup>ix</sup>

But as far as the actual compilation of the words, āyāt and surahs in the very sequence we have today, this was done during the life of the Prophet (saw), under his supervision, and by the orders of Allah (SWT).

## HOMEWORK

1. **What is the difference between Ḥadith al Qudsi and the Holy Qur'an?**
2. **According to what you know, who was the first to compile the Qur'an in the form we have today, and give 2 proofs of your claim.**

## Lesson 2: Understanding the Holy Qur'an



Now that we have acknowledged the authenticity of the Qur'an and are convinced of its completeness, we are confronted with another problem. How do we interpret the Qur'an? Can we understand the Qur'an? There are many sects in Islam, and the differences they have are often due to the different interpretations of the Holy Qur'an.

### WHY DOES THE QUR'AN NEED INTERPRETATION?

On one level, the Holy Qur'an is easy to understand and is in fact aimed at the person who can speak average Arabic. Even such a person can understand the basic meanings of the āyāt of the Qur'an, learn its major principles (e.g. the unity of God, the Hereafter) and appreciate its eloquence.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

“And certainly We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, but is there anyone who will mind?”  
(54:17)

However, on another level, the Holy Qur'an needs a very analytical approach in order to be understood in the correct way. This is because some of its āyāt are ambiguous while others are allegorical (this will be discussed in the next lesson). Also, often the Qur'an only sets out general principle and leaves details and applications of the principles to the Sunnah of the Ahlul Bayt.

Therefore, sometimes, in order to understand the Qur'an in its correct sense, and especially to understand its deeper meanings, we need to refer to other sources of knowledge. These, in order of importance, are:

- 1- The holy Qur'an itself! -<sup>x</sup> Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:



“(This is) a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, from the Wise, All-aware” (11:1)

Therefore one of the best ways of understanding some āyāt of the Qur’ān is to refer to other āyāt which explain them. In order to be able to use this method, one must know

- a. The context of the verses and reason for revelation (*asbab un-nuzūl*)
- b. The timing of revelation (*makki* or *madani*)
- c. The language of the Qur’an (Arabic, knowledge of rhetoric, syntax, etymology- the meanings and origin of the words) and so on.

2- From the words of the Holy Prophet (saw) and the Ahlul Bayt (as)- (the ḥadīth): Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’ān:

“He it is Who raised among the inhabitants of Mecca an Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom.” (Jumu’a 62:2)

Deeper interpretation of the Qur’an comes from narrations narrated from the Ahlul Bayt (as).

You may notice that interpreting the āyāt of the Qur’an requires knowledge many sciences, including history, language, logic and often even the natural sciences.<sup>xi</sup> It is also important to note that in order to understand the Qur’an, the Qur’an itself often refers us to our intellect, and asks us to use our intellect to understand the arguments that the Qur’an is putting forth to prove certain points. We will discuss the importance of the correct use of the intellect in the next lesson.

### Applying the Message of the Qur’an

Now that we know that the Qur’an is the authentic verbatim word of God, and that it has reached us in its total complete form, let us look at some of the messages in the Qur’an that we are expected to apply in our daily lives. One of the fundamental contributions and miracles of the Qur’ān, is that Allah, the Wise, has introduced through it principles of social ethics that are unmatched in any religion, faith, creed, government or society. It is important to remember also that it is very important to apply the teachings of the Qur’an to ourselves whenever we are reading it. Over the next two lessons, we will look at some of the social messages of the Qur’an to try to apply them in our life.

## QUR’ANIC LESSON: THE BELIEVERS ARE BROTHERS

Allah, the Almighty, says in the holy Qur’ān:

“The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you.” (49:10)

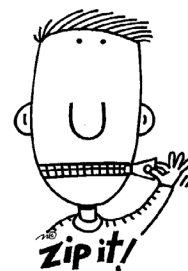
This is one of the most amazing verses of the Qur’an, and if today, we followed this injunction, there would be very little dispute between us. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) on this verse says

“A believer, for another believer, is like a single body. If one of the organs is in pain all the other parts of the body are also troubled”.

There is so much that can be discussed under this topic but we shall suffice in discussing three basic aspects of treating a Muslim like a brother:

- **Protecting a Fellow Believer’s Reputation:** there was once in Khorasān (today-Iran) a very wise scholar and judge called Sheikh Hatim. Once a respectable lady came to him and asked if he could meet with her in private regarding a case. The Sheikh agreed and they went into the court chambers. During this talk, whilst she was talking, she burped and being an honourable woman, was deeply embarrassed and ashamed, especially that she was near the judge! To stop her from being embarrassed, the judge pretended not to hear and said, “Do you know that I have become hard of hearing for some time now, could you please repeat what you said and say it loudly?” The woman felt very much at ease and continued without too much embarrassment. For a long time after this, the Sheikh pretended to be hard of hearing and became known as Hatim the deaf<sup>xii</sup>.

The emphasis on not revealing the secrets is so great that the Holy Prophet has said “*Gatherings are trusts*”. Just as much as you would not betray your brother or sister by revealing their secrets to others or embarrassing them, we must not reveal a believers secrets to others either.



- Putting the need of your fellow believer before your own<sup>xiii</sup>: Allah (SWT) has told us in the Holy Qur’ān:

“And those who made their abode in the city and in the faith before them love those who have fled to them, and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given, and prefer (them) before themselves though poverty may afflict them, and whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones.” (59:9)<sup>xiv</sup>.

This verse refers to the Anṣār (the helpers), the people of Medina, who accepted Islam when it was opposed tooth and nail by the pagans of Mecca, and who invited the Holy Prophet to settle down in Medina and become their leader. Once the Prophet (saw) arrived in Medina, many Muslims followed him there. They came to be known as the Muhājirīn (the migrants). The Muhājirīn were forced to leave all their property and wealth in Mecca by the pagans of Quraysh, so they arrived in Medina with nothing. The Anṣār now had to not only look after their own livelihood, but also needed to take care of the Muhājirīn. Despite their own state of need, they did not show any hesitation in sharing all they had with their new guests. The Prophet (saw) paired every one of the Muhājirīn with one of the Anṣār, and these two became brothers in the words of the Prophet. The person from the Anṣār would then share his job, his house and his wealth with his brother from Mecca. The faith of the Anṣār was so strong that they did this willingly and shared all of their belongings.

Another example of this value is the following story about Imam ‘Ali (as):

Once, having come to know that there was no food in the house, Imam ‘Ali (as) borrowed a dinar and went to the market to buy some food. There he found Miqdād crossing a street. He was walking to pass the time as in his house also there was no food. He could not bear the sorry plight of his children. When the Imam found out the real cause for Miqdād’s distress, he gave him the dinar that he himself had borrowed to feed his children.

These are mere examples of the noble social principles Allah, the Generous, has laid out for us in the Holy Qur’an. Certainly, just by pondering upon and studying the effects of such social laws, one has to acknowledge that the Holy Qur’an is truly a miracle!

## Homework

### 1. What are the two fundamental ways of understanding the Holy Qur’an?

## Lesson 3: Sciences of the Qur’an

In the previous lessons, we have discussed that everyone at any level can benefit from the Qur’an as long as they are sincere in their quest for the Truth. In this lesson, we shall try to understand a little more about this amazing treasure Allah has bestowed upon us and how we can begin to grasp its message and be touched by its miracle.

### THE HOLY QUR’AN IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE

Due to the unadulterated nature of the Qur’an, it is the primary reference for Muslims for all aspects of religion. The Qur’an introduces itself as the “**guidance for the worlds**” (3:96); and “**the manifest light**” (4:174). Furthermore, Allah, the All Wise, has laid down solutions for every human problem in the Qur’an very clearly. The Holy Qur’an says:

“and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything” (16:89)

And the Qur’an is:

“...a guidance for mankind and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination (between right and wrong)”. (2:185).

The Holy Qur’an, as a source of knowledge, not only has knowledge of this world and its intricacies, but more importantly contains knowledge of the ‘unseen’, without which we would have no idea that such a world as the unseen world even existed<sup>xv</sup>. Allah tells His Prophet in the Qur’an:

"This is of the news of the Unseen which We reveal unto you; neither you nor your people knew it before this." (11:49)

In the past and today, some have denied the use of the Holy Qur’an as a primary source or ‘valid evidence’ because they say that the Qur’an is too ‘ambiguous’. The reality is though that only a small proportion of the verses of the Qur’an are ambiguous while most have a clear meaning. In fact, it is so clear that our Imams have advised us that if we want to determine whether something they have said is authentic or not, one way is to check it against the principles established in the Qur’an! Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said:

"Everything is considered according to God's Book and traditions. Whatever tradition does not agree with God's Book is rejected."<sup>xvi</sup>

## WHAT DOES THE QUR'AN CONTAIN?

1) Knowing God, Revelation, Quran	30%	1920 Ayah
2) The Hereafter	25/8%	1640 Ayah
3) Mission of the Previous Prophets	23/5%	1500 Ayah
4) Islamic Ummah & People of the Book	11/7%	736 Ayah
5) Statutes (Fiqh & Ethics)	7%	456 Ayah
6) Jihad	4%	260 Ayah
7) Creation, Man, Jinn & Satan	3%	190 Ayah
8) Family of the Prophet (P)	3/5%	22 Ayah
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105/35%</b>	<b>6724 Ayah</b>

The total percentage is more than %100 and the numbers of the Ayaat are more than the actual numbers as some of the Ayaat include more than one subject.

Source: M. Bazargan, *Evolution Du Coran*, p.165

Many of us have undoubtedly opened the Holy Qur'an on many occasions, read it and tried to understand what Allah is trying to tell us through the words. But we often do not realise that the Qur'an has the information and knowledge to help us in all aspects of life, be it being successful in business, passing an exam at school, improving our relationships with others, *anything*.

While the Qur'an may not give specific information on minor issues, its miracle is that it establishes solid 'principles' or 'laws' and provides a genuine seeker of The Truth a means of finding the answers they seek. Allah encourages us to seek knowledge, think, ponder, and travel to find answers! Those issues that humankind, by their endeavour, thought and persistence can find the answers to are not spelled out in the Qur'an, but examples are mentioned for people to think.

On the other hand, the real knowledge which humankind can perhaps never grasp fully (until death perhaps), Allah explains in the Qur'an! It is very clear from the analysis of the different topics in the Qur'an, that a majority of the verses discuss matters related to various issues including social, political, historical, cultural, spiritual and other related matters. Only a very small proportion, seven per cent (456 verses) relates to problems of jurisprudence.

Now the question is: What is then the Qur'an's general theme? The Qur'an itself answers this by saying that it is a book of guidance, guiding man towards his spiritual and social perfection.

## HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE QUR'AN?

### CLEAR AND ALLEGORICAL VERSES

As we mentioned earlier, some schools of thought in Islam such as the Akhbaryūn, believe that the Qur'an is difficult to understand as it has allegorical verses. However, a proper analysis shows that the majority of the Qur'an contains verses that are clear in their meaning (*Muḥkamāt*) whilst others are allegorical or ambiguous (*Mutashābihāt*). The latter group can have more than one meaning. This may occur for a number of reasons:

- The limitations of human languages, including Arabic, mean that it is impossible to describe the realities of the Unseen World. Thus Allah (SWT) describes it in the best way possible in a human language, but this can still have some ambiguity because the reader has not experienced that world
- The nature of language and communication is that one expression can have many different meanings. We observe this in our daily lives all the time
- Some āyāt teach a concept through an example, or use similes to explain certain realities. This can lead to more than one meaning being understood by the reader

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

"He it is Who has revealed the Book to you; some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous; then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity they follow the part of it which is ambiguous, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation. But none knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge, (They) say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord; and none do mind except those having understanding."(3:7)

When faced with ambiguous āyāt that we find difficult to understand, we must refer to the clear, established āyāt in order to interpret those ambiguous ones. Therefore, the Qur'an remains a primary source that is understandable to us. Our second source of information when it comes to interpreting these ambiguous āyāt are the words of the infallible guides, the Ahlul Bayt (as).

## ABROGATING AND ABROGATED VERSES

Another feature of the Holy Qur'an is that there are some āyāt in the Qur'an that abrogate others. Most of the time, the situation is not one of real abrogation. Rather, it is a gradual introduction of a rule. For example, the āyāt related to the impermissibility of alcohol were revealed gradually. Initially, Muslims were encouraged to avoid alcohol, until eventually they were ordered to avoid it altogether. The later āyāt were continuing the education process about alcohol. They were not contradicting one another or changing the rule.<sup>xvii</sup>

There is one true example of abrogation in the Qur'an. This occurred when the Muslims were initially ordered by Allah (SWT) to pay charity before meeting with the Prophet. None except Imam 'Ali (as) followed this order. Then another āyah was revealed lifting this obligation. It is important to understand that this was not because Allah (SWT) 'changed his mind'. Rather, there were many lessons for the Muslims in the revelation of the first āyah and then in changing the rule, the first of these lessons being that the time of the Prophet (saw) was valuable and should be respected.

Furthermore, in cases where a rule is altered, some of our scholars believe that in our time today, if we are faced with the same contextual situation as the revelation of earlier āyāt, we can use them as a reference and a guide to act in those situations.

"When We substitute one Ayah for another, and Allah knows best what He reveals (in stages), they say you are but a forger. But most of them don't understand."  
(16:101)

## OTHER FACTORS

In order to understand the Qur'an, it is also important to appreciate the unique style of the Qur'an such that in some cases, the rule is general whilst in other cases it is limited to a particular situation or circumstance and all this can be determined by finding out why a particular verse was revealed (asbābun nuzūl) and the environment in which it was revealed. For example, the āyāt speaking about warfare and killing of polytheists were revealed at times when Muslims were being attacked by such people constantly, whereas the āyāt about peace and forgiveness were more general, and

apply in situations where Muslims are not being attacked or oppressed.

Despite all of this, although the principles of our faith are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, the detailed explanation of these verses and their application was the task of the Messenger of Allah and his pure progeny (Ahlul Bayt). This was illustrated by Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) when his close companion Abu Baṣīr asked him concerning '**those of you who are in authority**' in āyah 59 of Surah 4:

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority."

The Imam replied: "It is meant for Imam 'Ali, Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (as)."

Abu Baṣīr mentioned that people ask as why the names of 'Ali and the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet (P) are not mentioned explicitly in the Qur'an.

The Imam (as) replied: "Tell them: Daily Prayers were prescribed to the Prophet (saw), yet Allah did not mention the numbers of its rak'āt, for He left it to His Messenger to explain it. Similarly, Allah prescribed Zakāt, yet He did not mention to pay one silver for 40 Mithqāl of silver. He prescribed Ḥajj yet did not mention that the Ṭawāf is seven times for He left the explanation of all of these to His Messenger."<sup>xviii</sup>

## APPLYING THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

In this lesson, we will continue our discussion about the social lessons that the Qur'an teaches us. One of the most important of these lessons is goodness to parents.

## GOODNESS TO PARENTS

In many parts of the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) puts goodness to parents as second only to worshipping Allah and believing in His unity. This shows just how much emphasis the Qur'an places on this obligation.

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and that you should be good to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" and do not use harsh words with them, and speak to them honourably" (17:23)



Unfortunately as we get older, many of us become more audacious towards our parents and begin to use harsh words with them and criticise them. We often do not see the sense behind what they are asking us to do so we ignore it and we get angry if they persist in advising us and sometimes, God forbid, we shout at them or use harsh words. This is a major sin, to the extent that our Imams tell us that even if our parents were at fault in yelling at us and we look them with harshness, our prayers will not be accepted until we ask them for forgiveness. As you can see, the Qur'an says that do not even say so much as 'oof' to your parents, especially as they are getting older.

Sometimes we need to take a step back and think about why our parents are telling us to do a certain thing which we may not like. They have a lot more life experience than we do, and they have only our best interests at heart. Therefore, they are more likely to be right than us, and we should consider what they say instead of getting angry very quickly.

We should also train ourselves to take one step further and serve our parents, because this is one of the best paths to paradise. Once, a man came to the Prophet (saw) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, there is no bad deed but that I have done it, is there any way for me to repent? The Prophet (saw) asked: 'Are either of your parents alive?' The man answered: 'my father'. The Prophet (saw) said: 'go and be good to him!' When the person left, the Prophet (saw) said: 'I wish that it were his mother (who was alive)'".

## Review Questions

1. **Outline the major topics contained in the Qur'an and briefly explain what the majority of the verses talk about and why?**
2. **How are the ambiguous āyāt of the Qur'an interpreted?**

### 3. What do we mean by 'abrogation' in the Qur'an?

## Lesson 4: Qur'an and the Intellect

In this lesson, we will attempt to discuss the relationship between the Qur'an and our intellect. We want to find out what role our intellect plays in understanding our religion, as well as the limitations of using our intellect in trying to understand our religion.

### INTERPRETING THE QUR'AN BASED ON UNFOUNDED OPINION

Many Prophetic narrations denounce the interpretation of the Qur'an based on unfounded opinion (Tafsir Bil Ra'y). A person by the name of Qatadah visited Imam al-Bāqir (as) and the Imam (as) asked him: "*Are you the scholar of the people of Baṣrah?*" He replied: "*This is what they think.*" The Imam (as) then said: "*I have come to know that you interpret the Qur'an.*" He replied: "*Yes, I do.*" (The tradition continues until where) the Imam (as) says:

"O Qatadah, if you have interpreted the Qur'an in accordance with your own views, then you have certainly perished and have also caused others to perish, and if you have interpreted it in accordance with the views of others, then you have perished and have caused others to perish. Woe to you! No one knows the Qur'an except those who have been addressed by it."<sup>xix</sup>

The prohibited interpretation of the Qur'an can mean one of the following types of interpretation:

- 1) An interpretation of the Qur'an without any scholarly support. For instance, if someone interprets the Qur'an without being acquainted with the basic sciences necessary for understanding the Qur'an.

- 2) An interpretation of the Qur'an without referring to, or by going against, the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt (as), who have been give true understanding of the Holy Qur'an.
- 3) An interpretation of the Qur'an which aims at supporting and justifying a wrong doctrine be it jurisprudential, theological, philosophical, mystical etc. A wrong doctrine is the one which is contrary to the basic teachings of Islam.

This form of interpretation of the Qur'an is the very reason that today we have so much division in the Muslim community as each group interprets the words of the Qur'an in their own way, for their own desire, for political or personal benefits.

The scholars who comment on the meanings of the Qur'an in the correct way are simply trying to unveil the meaning of the Qur'anic words, rather than interpret them. They try to find the meaning of the āyāt to the best of their ability using the narrations and other sciences such as the sciences of language, rhetoric, grammar etc...They avoid using external evidence which has no authority in an Islamic sense, such as their own opinions or false narrations.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTELLECT

As we have discussed in previous years and in previous lessons as well, the Holy Qur'an has the answers to all of mankind's' problems provided they exercise their intellect (*'aql*) and make use of their knowledge to attain the ultimate truth (*ḥaqq*) as opposed to imitating others and following their low desires. Allah, in numerous places in the Qur'an, has advised and commanded us to use our intellect to understand not only creation, but everything around us and emphasises the use of evidence in arriving at the truth. Allah says

### Memorisation Task

قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful.” (2: 111)

The importance of intellect cannot be underestimated. It has been narrated that:

“Indeed, the Allah, the Great and Almighty, created reason from stored, hidden light through His previous knowledge with which He acquainted neither the

Prophets, the envoys, nor the angles brought nigh...Then He, the Great and Almighty, said to reason: turn back and it turned back. Then, He said to it: Come and it came. Then He said to it: Speak, and it said: Praise belongs to Allah who has neither support, nor rival, nor likeness, nor match, nor equal, towards whose mightiness all things are humble. Hence, Allah the Blessed and Exalted, said: I swear by My might and majesty, I have never created a creature better than you, more obedient than you, higher than you, nobler than you, dearer than you...Through you my Unity is confessed...Through you I will reward, and through you I will punish”.<sup>xxi</sup>

## DEVELOPING THE INTELLECT<sup>xxi</sup>

In order to arrive at the Truth in any matter, it is very important to ensure that the intelligence is not corrupted and matures in purity. This can be done by:

- 1) **Avoiding negative influences:** This means, avoiding things that are contrary to our pure conscience. For instance, we are certain about the harms of alcohol, and so we need to avoid any situation which may make us inclined to drink alcohol or be exposed to its harmful effect or even consider it to be normal! The most practical ways of avoiding negative influences is:
  - a. **Frequenting places of intellect:** This means, avoid listening to and hanging around people who have nothing intellectual to say and on the other hand being around, listening to people or going to places where you learn something and you are forced to think and ponder. This nurtures one's intellect.
  - b. **Avoiding Foolish friends:** It is important to avoid friends who would justify bad actions and convince us not to ponder and think.
  - c. **Follow our intellect not our desire:** Whenever we come across a situation where we cannot decide whether we should do something or not, we should consult our self, which will make the wrong path desirable to us. We should always try to oppose our self and take more difficult path, usually confirmed by our intellect. The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“Struggle against the desires of yourself and wisdom will enter your hearts”<sup>xxii</sup>

- 2) **Don't follow blindly-** Most people are such that they accept whatever beliefs that are current in their society. They adopt certain beliefs merely for the reason that they were followed by their preceding generation. The Qur'an bids people to carefully scrutinize all ideas and judge them by the criteria of reason --neither to follow blindly the conventional beliefs and traditions of their ancestors, nor to reject them totally without any rational justification. Allah Says in the Qur'an:

“And when it is said to them: 'Follow what God has sent down', they say, 'No; but we will follow such things as we found our fathers doing.' What? Even if their fathers had no understanding of anything, and if they were not guided?” (2:170)

The way we cut our hair, the way we dress, what we eat, what we read, what we watch, what we play etc. Everything needs to be scrutinised to ensure that it is rational and has some benefit for us.

- 3) **Maintain objectivity:** This means we need to know and understand all sides of the story before we make a judgement, and to not allow our personal interests or emotions to influence our judgment.

#### The Limits of the Intellect

As much as we are encouraged to use our mind and intellect, we also have to understand the limits of our intellect. Sometimes, our intellect is not developed enough to understand a reality that is expressed in the Qur'an. In such a situation, we should not put full trust in our intellect and, God forbid, reject what is in the Qur'an. Rather, we should understand that our intellect is too weak and submit to the Qur'an until Allah (SWT) blesses us to understand it better.

We also need to remember that some things are beyond the scope of our intellect, and that our intellect itself realises this. This is usually the cases when it comes to things related to the 'Unseen World'. Again, in such situations, we should understand the limits of our own intellects and submit to the realities within the Qur'an.

## Review Questions

1. Find at least 10 references from the Qur'an that tells mankind to ponder, think or use their intellect.
2. Choose one of the scientific miracles of the Qur'an and compare what the Qur'an says to what scientists today say. You can do this as an assignment in groups of two or three. You will have four weeks to complete this task.

<sup>i</sup> Hadith al Thaqalayn- For the Sunni sources containing *Hadith al-Thaqalayn*, see: *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, part iii, pp. 14, 17, 26, 59 Others who have reported it are Muslim in his *Sahih* and many others.

<sup>ii</sup> In the early years of the advent of Islam, the chiefs of Quraysh had banned listening to the Qur'an. The Qur'an in narration of that event states: "**And those who disbelieve say: Listen not to this Qur'an, and make noise in the midst of its (recitation) that you may overcome.**" [41:26] Ironically, however, the magnet of the Qur'an was so pleasant that the chiefs of Quraysh themselves could not but enjoy listening to it. Thus, they used to secretly listen to it.

<sup>iii</sup> The following is a quote from Keith L Moore, one of the most famous anatomists of the last half century. Most universities use his anatomy textbooks and in these he includes Qur'anic quote about embryology in his introductions:

"Statements referring to human reproduction and development are scattered throughout the Qur'an. It is only recently that the scientific meaning of some of these verses has been appreciated fully. . . . He makes you in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness."

This statement is from Sura 39. . . . Doctors in the 7th century A.D. likely knew that the human embryo developed in the uterus. It is unlikely that they knew that it developed in stages, even though Aristotle described the stages of development of the chick embryo in the 4th century B.C. The realization that the human embryo develops in stages was not discussed and illustrated until the 15th century. . . .

"The three veils of darkness" may refer to: (1) the anterior abdominal wall; (2) the uterine wall; and (3) the amniochorionic membrane. . . .

"Then We placed him as a drop in a place of rest." This statement is from Sura 23:13. The drop or *nutfa* has been interpreted as the sperm [but a better interpretation is] the zygote which divides to form a blastocyst which is implanted in the uterus ("a place of rest"). This interpretation is supported by another verse in the Qur'an which states that "a human being is created from a mixed drop." The zygote forms by the union of a mixture of the sperm and the ovum ("The mixed drop").

"Then We made the drop into a leech-like structure." This statement is from Sura 23:14. [Leech] is an appropriate description of the human embryo from days 7-24 when it clings to the endometrium of the uterus, in the same way that the leech clings to the skin. Just as the leech derives blood from the host, the human embryo derives blood from the decidua or pregnant endometrium. It is remarkable how much the embryo of 23-24 days resembles a leech. As there [was no microscopy] in the 7th century, doctors would not have known [about] this leech-like appearance.

"Then of that leech-like structure, We made a chewed lump." This statement is also from Sura 23:14. . . . Toward the end of the fourth week, the human embryo looks somewhat like a chewed lump of flesh [resulting] from the somites which resemble teeth marks. . . .

"Then we made out of the chewed lump bones, and clothed the bones in flesh." This continuation of Sura 23:14 indicates that out of the chewed lump stage, bones and muscles form. This is in accordance with embryological development. First the bones form as cartilage models and then the muscles (flesh) develop around them[.]

"Then we developed out of it another creature." This next part of Sura 23:14 . . . may refer to the human-like embryo that forms by the end of the eighth week. This [fetus] may be the new creature to which the verse refers.

"And He gave you hearing and sight and feeling and understanding." This part of Sura 32:9 indicates that the special senses of hearing, seeing, and feeling develop in this order, which is true. . . .

"Then out of a piece of chewed flesh, partly formed and partly unformed." This part of Sura 22:5 seems to indicate that the embryo is composed of both differentiated and undifferentiated tissues. . . . The interpretation of the verses in the Qur'an referring to human development would not have been possible in the 7th century A.D., or even a hundred years ago. We can

interpret them now because the science of modern Embryology affords us new understanding. Undoubtedly there are other verses in the Qur'an related to human development that will be understood in the future as our knowledge increases."

<sup>iv</sup> In 1929 Hubble discovered that the universe is constantly expanding. This is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an. (51:47)

<sup>v</sup> Although the Qur'an was compiled during the last 23 years of the life of the Prophet (P) certain related words have the same frequency in the Qur'an. For instance, the term Dunya (this world) is repeated 115 times and its opposite, i.e. Akhirat (the hereafter) is also repeated 115 times. Life is used 145 times and death is also used 145 times. Tongue is used 25 times and so is sermon. Man is used 24 times and so is woman. The word 'yawm' (day) is used 365 times, while the word 'shahr' (month) is used 12 times.

Also, the word sea is used 32 times, and the word land or earth 12 times, and if we add up the total words of both "sea" and "land" we get 45. Now if we do a simple calculation:

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

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

Above is what we know today, the percentages of Water (Sea) and Land in the world

<sup>vi</sup> The Sacred "al-Hadith al-Qudsi" - Moulana Zaki Baqri-

<http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?id=3220> and eHawza semester 4- Sciences of Qur'an, Lesson 2

<sup>vii</sup> For a full reference of all the accusations in regards to the Qur'an, please refer to The book Qur'an: Protection from Alteration- Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi - <http://www.al-islam.org/protection/>

<sup>viii</sup> Refer to Chapter 13, [http://www.al-islam.org/tahrif\\_Qur'an/](http://www.al-islam.org/tahrif_Qur'an/)

<sup>ix</sup> eHawza Semester 4- lesson 4 – Teachers should recount the story of how Imam Ali used to visit the Prophet every night to get lessons on all the verses revealed that day, and even paid for these lessons when he was required to when no one else would.

<sup>x</sup> The best example of this kind of interpretation is Al-Mizan by Ayatollah Tabataba'ee

<sup>xi</sup> Introduction to the Science of Tafsir of the Qur'an by Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani. [http://www.al-islam.org/ulum\\_al\\_Qur'an/](http://www.al-islam.org/ulum_al_Qur'an/)

<sup>xii</sup> Moral Values of the Qur'an, Commentary on Surah Hujuraat, Ayatullah Dastaghaib Shirazi.

<sup>xiii</sup> Another story that could be used here is: Al-Waqidi, the famous historian of al-Mamun's period, narrates: "I had two very close friends, one of whom was a Hashimite. Truly speaking, we were one spirit in three bodies. Once, on the occasion of 'id (Islamic festival), I was reduced to poverty. My wife told me that we could face together all the hardships boldly, but her heart was burning for the children. They were looking at other children wearing new dresses and making jubilant preparation for 'id; whereas their lot was worn and torn clothes. She asked me, if possible, to arrange some money for buying dresses for them. I thought and thought but could not find any way of obtaining money. At last, I wrote a letter to my Hashimite friend for help. My friend sent me a sealed packet containing one thousand Dirhams. Before I could open the packet, a message came from my second friend with a request of help, I sent him the same packet intact and went to the mosque, heart-broken and depressed, I passed the whole night in the mosque as I could not bring myself to face my wife. But when I went home next morning, to my great surprise, my wife welcomed me with a smiling face and expressed her unbounded pleasure for the help I had rendered to my friend.

It was then that my Hashimite friend came to me and asked me what I had done with the money he had sent me the day before. I narrated to him the whole story. He bent his head for a moment, then told me that on receipt of my message, he had sent me whatever he had, but then to meet his own requirements he wrote to the third friend for help. The third friend sent him the same sealed packet. My first friend was extremely puzzled by this mystery, till I solved it." Al-Waqidi further adds: "Then we divided that amount equally amongst us at the rate of three hundred Dirhams each, and the remaining one hundred Dirhams was the share of my wife. Caliph al-Ma'mun hearing this unique story called me, and I narrated the whole event. Al-Ma'mun awarded us two thousand Dirhams each and one thousand to my wife." (Muruj al-dh-dhahab by Mas'udi, Beirut 1966, vol.3, p.446)

<sup>xiv</sup> This verse states that the successful ones in this world and the next are those that put others ahead of themselves. Hisham, narrates that "During the battle of Uhud, I went to find my cousin on the battlefield, and when I found him, he was breathing his last. I brought some water and tried to drop it in his dry mouth. He closed his lips tightly and pointed toward another believer next to him. I went to the other soldier, and found him dying as well with parched lips. I tried to drop some water in his mouth and he closed his lips as well,



pointing to yet another wounded soldier. When I reached the third man, he had already died, so I went back to the second man and he had met with his Lord too, so I went to my cousin who had died too!" (Commentary of the verse by Aga Mahdi Pooya)

<sup>xv</sup> It is advised that teachers read and refer to the simile of the cave by Plato to help the students understand the concept of revelation.

[http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world\\_civ\\_reader/world\\_civ\\_reader\\_1/plato.html](http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_1/plato.html) but can be referred to from eHawza Semester 1, Course 1 lesson 3 – Sources of Islamic Knowledge

<sup>xvi</sup> Mishkaatul Anwaar- Tradition 799

<sup>xvii</sup> The stages are:

1. ***"And from the fruit of the date palm and the vine, you get out intoxicant drinks and wholesome food; behold, in this also is a Sign for those who are wise."*** (16:67).
2. ***"They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: In them is great sin and some profit for people, but the sin is greater than the profit."*** (2:219).
3. ***"O you who believe! Approach not prayers whilst you are drunk so that you can understand all that you say"***.(4:43)
4. ***"O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork; refrain from such abomination, that you may prosper."***(5:90).

<sup>xviii</sup> Ayatollah Al-Khoei in Al-bayaan p251

<sup>xix</sup> Ayatollah al Khoei in Zawahir al-Qur'an: The Authority of the Book's Literal Meanings <http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/khui/bayan.htm>

<sup>xx</sup> Uyuun Akhbaar Redha – and Al Kafi- Chapter on intellect

<sup>xxi</sup> Obtained from Al-Tawhid Understanding the Uniqueness of the Qur'an by Murtada Mutahhari <http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/unique-Qur'an.htm>

<sup>xxii</sup> Mizan-ul-Hikmah – Tradition 1218



# IMAMAT

## الإمامة

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

### Lesson 1: Discussions on Imamat

In previous years, we have learnt some general facts about Imamat, and discussed the roles of the Imams. In this lesson, we will review these discussions briefly and also discuss the importance of the Ahlul Bayt.

#### THE MEANING OF IMAMAT

As we discussed in previous lessons, Imamat literally means leadership. However, we use it to specifically refer to divine leadership. This means that an Imam is one who was chosen by Allah to lead the Muslim community, both spiritually and socio-politically.

As Shi'ah, we believe that the position of leadership of the Muslim community is one of the most important issues in Islam. Without the most qualified leader, the Muslim community would stray from the right path and Islam itself would be compromised. When the Prophet (saw) was alive, he was obviously the leader of the Muslim community. However, after his death, there was much dispute and controversy about this position.

Unlike other Muslims, we believe that Allah and His Messenger would not leave the Muslim community without a leader who was chosen and appointed by Allah. In fact, we believe that Allah (SWT) instructed His Prophet to appoint twelve successors, each of whom in turn would lead the Muslim community.<sup>1</sup> We argue that it is impossible for the Prophet, who instructed the Muslims on the smallest of issues (such as which side to sleep on, which foot to walk out of the bathroom with) would not instruct them on who should be the leader after himself. Therefore, the Prophet definitely appointed leaders after himself, chosen by Allah, whom we refer to as Imams. There is a significant amount of

#### Objectives >>>

##### *Students should:*

- Briefly review the previous discussions on leadership in past years
- Discuss the similarities and differences in the roles and tasks of the Imams and Prophets
- Understand the status of the Ahlul Bayt and the importance of love for the Ahlul Bayt
- Understand the concepts of al-Tawassul and al-Shafā'ah
- Briefly discuss the concept of al-Raj'ah
- Be reminded of the concept of sincerity in Islam
- Discuss some of the signs of sincerity and hypocrisy

documented historical evidence for this from all Muslim sects, evidence from the Quran itself and logical reasoning as seen above, all of which leave this matter beyond doubt.

### Further References:

We have provided you with reference in the endnotes for your further research. These references are useful for learning factual information about our belief in Imamat and the differences between Shi'a belief and the belief of other sects.<sup>ii</sup>

## **TWELVE IMAMS**

The Prophet appointed twelve Imams after himself. The first of these was Imam 'Ali (as). The last of these Imams is Imam al-Mahdi (as), who is still alive today. He was born over 1200 years ago, and lives in occultation. We will have further discussions on Imam al-Mahdi (as) in future lessons.

### **THE IMAMS ARE SINLESS (MA'SŪM)**

One of our major beliefs is that the Imams, just like the prophets, were sinless (Ma'sūm). We have discussed in previous lessons that the prophets were sinless, why they must be sinless and we have refuted any objections against this belief. To quickly recap, we need a role model to follow, and the Imams are our greatest role models along with the prophets. If they were not sinless

- we would have no point of reference to check our actions against
- we would not be sure that what they are telling us is in fact the command of Allah or otherwise as they could be lying.

This would therefore shake the very foundations of our faith.

### **THE ROLES OF THE IMAMS**

The Imams have very similar roles to the Prophets. Their purpose is to continue and maintain the message brought by Prophet Muḥammad (saw). Therefore, they must fulfil the same roles that the Prophet (saw) himself had with the exception of receiving revelation. The Imams do not receive revelation. Rather, they receive inspiration (ilhām) which is a lower form of communication with Allah (SWT). Also, the Imams receive their knowledge directly from the prophet (saw)

without the need for any chains or links in between.<sup>iii</sup> Therefore, they have access to the revelation through the Prophet (saw). In fact, Imam 'Ali (as) would often hear or smell what the Prophet (saw) would hear or smell during the process of revelation.

Imam 'Ali (as) narrates that the Prophet (saw) said to him:

“O' Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a Prophet, but you are a trustee...”<sup>iv</sup>

The other difference in their roles is that while a miracle that a prophet perform are called a 'mu'jizah' in the religious terminology, the miracle that an Imam performs is called a 'karāmah'. The difference is only in the terms we use: the miracles are not different in any real sense.

<u><b>Roles of the Prophet</b></u>	<u><b>Roles of the Imams</b></u>
Religious leadership-teaching people about Islam	Religious leadership-teaching people about Islam
Judging in disputes between people	Judging in disputes between people
Political leadership	Political leadership
Receiving revelation	Receiving inspiration and having access to revelation through the prophet
Perform mu'jizah	Perform karāmah

### **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMAMS**

The leader of the Muslim community must have the following characteristics.

1-The highest level of faith: for example, it is unanimously agreed that Imam 'Ali (as) never prostrated before any idol whilst Abu-Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān indisputably have been all worshipping idols at some time in their lives. Eight years had passed since the rise of Islam and 'Umar (the second Caliph) was still an

idolater! Even after embracing Islam he would question the Prophet's decisions and cast doubt on them on various occasions.<sup>v</sup>

2-The highest level of knowledge: is also necessary for the leader of the Muslim community.

"Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not?" [39:9]

The Prophet said about Imam 'Ali (as):

"I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate. Whoever wishes to enter the city, should enter it from its gate."<sup>vi</sup>

In contrast to this, 'Umar would often be corrected in his Islamic knowledge, such as when a woman stood up in the mosque one day to correct 'Umar's ruling on dowries and when Imam 'Ali (as) stopped a woman from being wrongly executed due to Omar's mistake.<sup>vii</sup>

3-The best in struggle in the way of Allah (Jihād): this is another necessity of leadership mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit." [4:95]

There is no doubt that no one came close to Imam 'Ali (as) and his progeny in this category. The examples of the Battles of Khaybar and Uhud are two of the most famous.

## SOME FINAL DISCUSSIONS

### Other Muslim Sects

One of the issues we need to quickly touch on as part of the study of Imamat is that there are other Muslim sects besides the 'Sunna' and the 'Shi'ah'. Many of these sects believe, like us, that Imam 'Ali (as) was the rightful leader of the Prophet (saw) but they do not believe in all of the twelve Ma'sūm Imams that we believe in. Some of these continues to have followers while others do not. Further information is provided on this in the footnotes.<sup>viii</sup>

## THE CONCEPT OF AL-RAJ'AH

Believing in al-Raj'ah is the unique belief of the Shi'ah. Al-Raj'ah literally means 'the Return'. In Islamic theology it's an expression for the return of the most noble

people and the worst enemies of Ahlul Bayt (as) at the time of Imam Mahdi's universal government. According to this doctrine the most sincere followers of Ahlul Bayt will be returning to earth by the Will of God to support the Imam and the worst enemies will also be brought back to receive their worldly punishment.<sup>ix</sup>

## SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY

As important as it is to learn the concept of Imamat, we also need to continue to learn and remind ourselves of the teachings of the Prophets and Imams. One of the major traits of the prophets and Imams (as) was their sincerity. Their absolute and complete sincerity made them unique and different to all other humans. They are the ones 'purified by Allah' (mukhlāṣīn) and so their actions are completely pure and sincere. Over the next two lessons, we will discuss sincerity and its opposite, hypocrisy.

In this discussion, what we mean by sincerity (al-ikhlaṣ) is the pure intention to do something for the sake of Allah (SWT). We never perform any action without a motivation. Sometimes this motivation is purely good and sometimes it is mixed with evil or even purely evil. When our motivation is purely for Allah (SWT), then our action can be called sincere, whereas when our motivation is for other than Allah (SWT) or only partly for Allah (SWT), then our action is not sincere and has an element of hypocrisy (nifaq).

We often feel that our actions are sincere, but when truly tested we see that in fact there are other motivations behind our actions. This form of hypocrisy can be very subtle. For example, we may do something for the sake of Allah but along the way we may:

- Feel pride because of our action
- Feel that we deserve praise for our action
- Magnify our action
- Boast about our action
- Make others feel low by mentioning our action

All the above things spoil the reward of the action. We get the full and true reward- in the Hereafter- not for actions that we perform, but for actions which we perform and protect until our death. Protecting the action means protecting from all the above feelings and



any others which may spoil it. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) narrates that Allah, the Exalted says:

“I am the best partner. Whoever associates a partner with Me in his actions I will never accept them. I only accept those actions which have been performed purely and sincerely for me.”<sup>x</sup>

Look at the following example:

Once there was a great scholar who had written tens of books about Islam, particularly the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt. His books were extremely valuable and beneficial. After he passed away, one of his students had a dream about him. He dreamt that while he was being judged he was asked what he had to offer. He mentioned his many books and how much effort had gone into them. He mentioned how hard he had worked, how much he studied and taught for the sake of Islam. However, he was told that none of these actions would benefit him, because he had not protected them from the above things. His books had his name on them, would he have agreed to put someone else's name on them? His teaching and studies had made him famous and respected, would he have done it if they did not have these consequences? By now, the scholar had become very afraid and feared that he would have nothing to present before his Lord, and nothing that would save him from the Hell-fire. However, he was told that he was safe, because of one action. One day, he was walking home in strong rain when he noticed there was a homeless boy sitting on the side of the road, looking hungry and distraught. He had two apples which he was taking to his family to feed them. He was not wealthy and this is all he had. However, he felt for this young boy and so he handed him one of the apples. However, after doing this, he completely forgot about this action and never thought about it again. Because of this, the action was not spoiled by pride and was protected.

## HOW TO REMAIN SINCERE

As we have seen from the story above, the best way to truly protect our sincere action is to:

1. **Forget about it.** When we help a friend with some money or assist our father with some house chores sincerely, try to forget about it because if we remember it, Satan will trap us with expectations

2. **Have no expectation-** When we do something good, we should not feel that we have come to deserve a reward from Allah or that we now have a pass into paradise. Instead, we should compare our action to the blessings of Allah and realise how insignificant they are.
3. **Real Reward is only from Allah.** When we do something good, we should always remember that it is only Allah, the Almighty, the most Generous, who will reward us. We should not expect rewards or recognition from people as this may ruin our sincerity.

## Homework

- 1- Explain the meaning of Imamat in your own words.
- 2- List some of the roles the Imams had.
- 3- Briefly explain the concept of al-Raj'ah.

## Lesson 2: Intercession

In our last lesson, we discussed different aspects of our belief in Imamat. In this lesson, we will discuss another aspect that is shared between Imamat and Prophecy: intercession. We will also continue our discussion of sincerity and hypocrisy.

### INTERCESSION (AL-SHAFĀ'AH) AND SEEKING HELP (AL-TAWASSUL)

As we discussed in our previous lesson, the Ahlul Bayt have a very high status, given to them by Allah (SWT). Part of this amazing status is the following two rights:

- Allah (SWT) has ordered us to seek his help through the Ahlul Bayt (pbut), and we call this **al-Tawassul**, which literally means seeking help through an intermediary<sup>xi</sup>. This is mentioned in the following ayah of the Holy Qur'an:

"O you who believe! Be pious and ask the means of approach to Him." [5:35]

- Allah (SWT) has given them the right to intercede with Allah on our behalf, and we call this **al-Shafā'ah**, which literally means intercession<sup>xii</sup>. This is mentioned in the following ayah of the Holy Qur'an:

"On that Day no intercession shall avail, except the one for whom the Most Gracious (Allah) has given permission and whose word is acceptable to Him." [20:109]

As you already know, one analogy for intercession is that if a person wants to visit a king or leader of a nation that he has no access to, he asks someone whom the king respects- such as a minister- to speak to the king and intercede for this person, so that the king will see him. Sometimes, when we want to ask Allah (SWT) for something, we are veiled from Him due to our sins, and so He has instructed us to ask him through intercessors who have a special right with Allah (SWT) because of their high status. These intercessors are the Ahlul Bayt, all the Ma'sūm Imams (pbut) as well as the prophets (pbut). The absolute majority of the Muslims believe in these two concepts. The only exception is the Wahhabi sect<sup>xiii</sup>. We will discuss some of the objections against

intercession and seeking help through the prophets and Imams in the following section and answer them.

### OBJECTIONS AGAINST INTERCESSION

#### Objection 1: Is Intercession an act of Shirk (polytheism)?

This is one of the major objections posed by the Wahhabis against intercession. They claim that we are asking someone other than Allah, and therefore we are performing an act of polytheism. This objection has already been answered in our above explanation because we have said that:

- We do not believe the prophets or Imams have any independent power besides Allah (SWT). This is why we call them 'intercessors'. We simply believe that their prayers are more easily accepted than ours and so we ask through them.
- The intercessors we turn to have been authorised by Allah (SWT), as we will prove soon. He has commanded us to seek His help through them. We do not choose them randomly or senselessly like the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance who took idols as intercessors.<sup>xiv</sup>

#### Objection 2: does the Qur'an prohibit intercession?

There are a number of āyāt in the Qur'an that seem to say that intercession is not allowed or at least that it is useless. Here are some examples:

"So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them" (74:48)

"O you who believe! Spend out of what We have given you before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession, and the unbelievers- they are the unjust." (2:254)

Although at first these āyāt seem to give the impression that intercession is prohibited, useless or even non-existent, when we look at the rest of the Qur'an, we see that these āyāt are saying that intercession is only useless in some situations: that is, when disbelievers or oppressors are seeking intercession through means that Allah (SWT) has not allowed or authorised. Let us look at some of the āyāt that prove this:

“...there is no intercessor except after His permission; this is Allah, your Lord, therefore serve Him; will you not then mind?” (10:3)

"On that Day no intercession shall avail, except the one for whom the Most Gracious (Allah) has given permission and whose word is acceptable to Him." [20:109]

The above two āyāt prove that the intercession that is useless is that which Allah (SWT) has not authorised. However, both āyāt clearly state that once Allah (SWT) gives His permission for an intercessor, then intercession is useful and allowed.

Let us look at some more āyāt:

“And they shall not have any intercessors from among their gods they have joined with Allah, and they shall be deniers of their associate-gods.” (30:13)

The above āyah shows that the intercession that is not allowed is the intercession in which people believed that the intercessors had independent power besides Allah and considered these intercessors to be ‘gods’. This type of seeking intercession is shirk.

So we can see from this brief look at the āyāt of the Qur’an dealing with intercession that the intercession through the prophets and Imams is allowed and beneficial, because it has been authorised by Allah and we do not attribute any independent power to our intercessors.

Further famous objections against intercession are discussed in the footnotes. Please refer to these if you would like more information.<sup>xv</sup>

## **MODELS OF SINCERITY**

Here, we continue our discussion on sincerity and hypocrisy that we began in the last lesson.

There are many stories related about our Imams and prophets (pbut) that show us wonderful examples of sincerity. One of the clearest examples is that it was the habit of a number of our Imams (pbut) to go out in the middle of the night, when it was pitch dark and when no one could see, to deliver food and clothing to the poor. Imam Ali (saw) was famous for this, as was Imam al-Sajjad (as). While they were alive, no one knew that it was they who brought these orphans food and clothing every night, or that it was they, under some sort of

disguise, would sit and speak to these orphans and make them happy and bring smiles to their faces. However, once they passed away, the orphans no longer had any visitors and the poor no longer received any nightly provision. Then they realised that it was the Imams (pbut) who in the middle of the night would come to them with assistance. The Imams (saw) maintained the secrecy of these actions for their entire lives and protected them from any form of insincerity.

## **EXAMPLES OF HYPOCRISY**

As we discussed above, hypocrisy is the opposite of sincerity, and so in this discussion what we mean by hypocrisy is doing something with an intention that is not purely for the sake of Allah. There are many examples of hypocrisy in Islamic history that shows that an action cannot be performed completely and successfully except with sincerity. Look at the difference in outcome between the battles of Badr and Uhud. In the battle of Badr, the spirituality among the Muslim was far stronger than it was in the battle of Uhud. Almost all the Muslims fought with no fear and with complete sincerity, and thus they were able to defeat an army far larger than theirs.

In contrast, during the battle of Uhud the lack of sincerity led to disastrous consequences which if not for the help of Allah and the bravery of a few sincere companions, may have led to the destruction of the Muslims and their city of Medina.

The Prophet had ordered one group among the army of Muslims to stand watch on the mount behind the battlefield and to protect the Muslims from any attacks from the rear. The group held this position until they saw that the Muslim army was almost victorious and that there was now a lot of war booty on the battlefield. They were afraid that if they stayed on that mountain, they would not get their share of the booty. Their intention was no longer purely for the sake of Allah, and the temptation for wealth overtook them.

They disobeyed the leader of their unit and the commands of the Prophet and descended from the hill, making the excuse that the war was almost over. This allowed the army of disbelievers to attack them from the rear and damage the Muslim army severely. This was the first act of insincerity, which stemmed from love for

wealth entering into the intention and motivation of these men.

The next act of insincerity was motivated by love of the self and the desire to protect oneself more than one's religion. Once the Muslim army saw it was being attacked from behind and that there were many casualties, they began to flee, leaving the Prophet (saw) behind. He called to them as they were fleeing, urging them to come back, but no one even turned around for fear of their lives.

Here now was the stage for the model of sincerity, Imam 'Ali (as), the Lion of the Lord, to again save Islam. He, along with very few of the companions who had stayed and fought, encircled the Prophet (saw) and defended him with all they could. The Prophet (saw) and Imam 'Ali (saw) fought very bravely in order to defend themselves against the attacks of a great number of soldiers.

They survived this incident and went back to Medina, where it was only after days that those companions who had fled returned, to find the Prophet and the Imam safe and sound. Because of their fear, they had been in hiding for days and had considered Islam to be destroyed. However, the Prophet (saw) sought forgiveness for them and they were forgiven.

## THE SIGNS OF HYPOCRISY

Our Imams (pbut) have taught us some of the signs of sincerity and hypocrisy. The purpose of discussing this is so that we can examine ourselves and see whether we have the signs of hypocrisy or the signs of sincerity, or some from each group. We should endeavour as much as we can to remove the signs of hypocrisy from our personalities, and instil the signs of sincerity. Here, we discuss the most important of these signs:

- A sincere person does not like to be praised for actions that He performs for the sake of Allah<sup>xvi</sup>
- A sincere person only has hope in Allah and only fears Allah<sup>xvii</sup>
- A sincere person prefers to attain things through his own work rather than asking people<sup>xviii</sup>
- A sincere person trusts Allah enough to spend in the way of Allah<sup>xix</sup>

- A hypocritical person is lazy when they stand for prayers<sup>xx</sup>
- A hypocritical person does not make a firm decision and does not take a firm side, he is torn between this side and that<sup>xxi</sup>
- A hypocritical person remembers Allah (SWT) very little<sup>xxii</sup>
- A hypocrite announces his actions and boasts about them<sup>xxiii</sup>
- A hypocrite breaks his promises<sup>xxiv</sup>
- A hypocrite lies most of the time<sup>xxv</sup>
- A hypocrite betrays trusts<sup>xxvi</sup>
- A hypocrite is not likeable and is arrogant<sup>xxvii</sup>

## Review Questions

### Q1. List five signs of sincerity

**Q2. Answer the following question: 'the Qur'an states in some āyāt that intercession will be useless and futile, so why do the Shi'ah believe in it?'**

### Q3. Why is intercession not an act of shirk?



## Lesson 3: The Ahlul Bayt

### THE STATUS OF THE AHLUL BAYT

Part of our belief in Imamate is our belief about the Ahlul Bayt and their great status. 'Ahlul Bayt' literally means 'people of the household', but it is a specific Qur'anic term referring to specific members of the household of the Prophet. These people are:

- the Prophet (saw) himself
- Imam 'Ali (as)- his cousin and son-in-law
- Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as)- his daughter
- Imam Ḥaṣan (as) and
- Imam Ḥuṣayn (as)- his grandchildren.

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) says the following about the Ahlul Bayt (try to memorise this ayah by next week's lesson)

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

"Allah only desires to keep away impurity from you, O People of the House (Ahlul Bayt), and to purify you a (thorough) purification." (33:33)

The above ayah, by clearly stating that Allah has removed all impurity from the Ahlul Bayt, confirms that they are sinless and protected from any impurity due to Divine protection.<sup>xxviii</sup> This is the sinlessness (*'iṣma*) that we have discussed earlier.

There is some discussion about who this ayah applies to. However, numerous narrations, found in both Shi'ah and Sunni books of narration, indicate clearly that the ayah refers to the five people listed above.<sup>xxix xxx</sup>

Now that we know that the Holy Qur'an confirms that the Ahlul Bayt are sinless and have a special divine protection and a great status in the eyes of Allah, let us look at what type of relationship we should have with the Ahlul Bayt.

### OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AHLUL BAYT

As we discussed, the Ahlul Bayt are sinless. Therefore, they are the examples that we should follow in all aspects of our life, if we want to save ourselves from straying from the right path. In fact, the Holy Prophet (saw) says:

"The likeness of my Ahlul Bayt amongst my Ummah (followers) is similar to Noah's Ark. Those who embark on it are rescued and those who reject it are perished...."<sup>xxx</sup>

Not only are we urged to follow the Ahlul Bayt and to hold on to them as role models and guides, but we are also expected to train ourselves and our families to love the Ahlul Bayt. In fact, Imam al-Bāqir (as) equates love for the Ahlul Bayt with faith and lack of love for them as disbelief:

"Love for us (the Ahlul Bayt) is Faith and hatred for us is disbelief".<sup>xxxii</sup>

Love for the Ahlul Bayt is not only a form of worship, but the highest one:

Imam Sadiq (as) says: "Surely, there are various degrees of serving Allah, but affection for us, the Ahlul Bayt, is the highest one."<sup>xxxiii</sup>

This is because if we love the Ahlul Bayt then we will naturally incline towards following their example, and since they are sinless and the people who are closest to Allah, we will naturally incline away from sins and closer to Allah.

Love for the Ahlul Bayt manifests itself in a number of ways which we have discussed in more detail in previous lessons:

- Taking them as role models
- Learning the knowledge they passed on to us
- Loving those who love them and disassociating ourselves from those who disassociate themselves from them

## EXAMPLES OF LOVE FOR THE AHLUL BAYT

In previous lessons, we have discussed some of the definitions or descriptions of love for the Ahlul Bayt. Here, we will discuss some practical examples of love for the Ahlul Bayt, to get a better understanding of what we mean by love for the Ahlul Bayt.

### 1. Muslim ibn 'Awsajah and Habib ibn Mudāhir

These two men were among the closest companions of Imam Ḥusayn (as). They had a close relationship with the Imam (as) since they were young children and they had fought alongside Imam 'Ali (as) and Imam Ḥasan (as). They were loyal, trusted and tried companions. When Imam Ḥusayn (as) was heading towards Kufah, they saw that everyone in their city was betraying him, and instead of supporting him as they had promised, the Kufans were preparing to fight against him. Muslim and Ḥabib decided to leave Kufah and join Imam Husain's small army. Kufah was surrounded by the enemy's troops, but Ḥabib and Muslim found a way out. These men had spent their lives struggling alongside the Ahlul Bayt. They had been at Imam Ali's side and also at Imam Ḥasan's side and now they left their homes, their belongings and all they had to fight one last battle alongside their Imam.

Once they reached Karbalā', they were among the first to step out into the battlefield and die protecting their rightful Imam (as). Muslim ibn Awsaja went to battle before Ḥabib, and was mortally wounded. Ḥabib and Imam Ḥusayn (as) rushed towards Muslim and sat near him as he was breathing his last. This is the conversation that followed between Ḥabib and Muslim:

Ḥabib: "O Muslim, it is so difficult for me to see you like this. Receive glad tidings of paradise."

Muslim: "May Allah give you glad tidings too, my brother Ḥabib".

Ḥabib: "If I did not know that I was to follow you quickly (to death), I would have loved for you to ask me to do whatever you wish after your death."

At this point, Muslim pointed to Imam Ḥusayn (as) and simply said: "I ask you to take care of this man".

Ḥabib replied: "By the Lord of the Ka'bah, I will do so."<sup>xxxiv</sup>

### 2. Maytham al-Tammar

Maytham was one of the special students of Imam 'Ali (as). He was a very close companion of the Imam, and the Imam had shared much of his knowledge with Maytham. One day, Imam 'Ali (as) called Maytham and said to him:

"What will you do when an evil man put in power by the Bani Umayyah- will call and ask you to disassociate yourself from me?"

Maytham said: "O Commander of the faithful! By Allah! I shall never disassociate myself from you."

Imam Ali (as) then said: "In that case you shall be killed and hanged on the gallows."

Maytham replied: "By Allah! I shall be patient, this is not much in the way of Allah".

After Imam 'Ali (as) passed away, and just before the events of Karbalā' occurred, Maytham was summoned by Ziyād, the tyrant ruler of Kufah who had been put in power there by Mu'āwiyah. This tyrant governor was told that Maytham was one of the most beloved friends of Imam 'Ali (as). As the Imam (as) had predicted, Ziyād ordered Maytham to disassociate himself from Imam 'Ali (as) and to speak evil of him. Maytham refused and instead answered Ziyād with praise of the Imam. He was first imprisoned and then hung on the gallows and left there for days to die. While he was in this state, he would call people to come closer to him and would speak to them of the virtues of the Ahlul Bayt (as). He kept this up till the last hours of his life. Towards the end, he was violently killed by the soldiers of Ziyād and he died for the sake of his religion and the rightful leaders of Islam, the holy Ahlul Bayt.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### 3. A Regular visitor of the Prophet

There was a man living at the time of the Prophet who would come every morning and wait outside the Prophet's door. Just as the Prophet (saw) would come out, he would catch a glimpse of the Prophet (saw) and then leave. This continued for many days and it puzzled the Prophet. One day, the Prophet (saw) stopped him and asked: "why do you do this every morning?" The

man said: “O Messenger of Allah, I love you, and I wish to catch a glimpse of your face every morning before I set out on my business for the day”.

One day, this man was not there outside the Prophet’s house and so the Prophet made enquiries. He was told the man worked at the market. He went to the market and asked about him, and found out the man had passed away. When he heard this, the Prophet (saw) said that that man had ensured a place for himself in Paradise because of his love for the Ahlul Bayt (as).

## Homework

**Your homework is to find two more examples of people who showed extraordinary love for the Ahlul Bayt, and the result of this love on their lives.**

<sup>i</sup> References for these narrations can be found in the books recommended below. However, we have also provided some specific references for you here:

-Bukhari 8:127

-Muslim 3:1452

-Refer to eHAWZA, semester 2, course 6, lecture 2 for more details

<sup>ii</sup> *Then I was Guided- SayyedTijaniSimawi- available online at al-islam.org*

*Al-Muraj’at, SayyedSharaful Din al-Musawi- available online at al-islam.org*

*Al-Nasswal-Ijtihad, SayyedSharaful Din al-Musawi, available in english as hard copy*

*Peshawar Nights, Sultanul-Wa'izinShirazi, available online at al-islam.org*

<sup>iii</sup> If the students ask: ‘how can the Imams communicate with the Prophet when he has passed away’, we can answer:

-they have been handed down the most comprehensive book of knowledge (Mushaf Fatima) from the previous Imam who had it from the previous Imam and so on until the chain reaches the Prophet (saw). Only the Imams have access to this book and it is protected from any alteration

-the Imams and the Prophet are on existence (or one light) in one realm of existence and so the knowledge the Prophet possessed is also possessed by them

<sup>iv</sup> *NahjulBalagha, sermon 190*

<sup>v</sup> Al-Nass wal Ijtihad, p.198-202. The story is regarding the treaty of Hudaibiyyah. The Prophet had a dream that the Muslims would perform Hajj and so they all set out towards Mecca. Before they reached there, the Quraysh confronted them in an aggressive manner and the Prophet (saw) decided to enter into a treaty with them rather than engage in war. So the Muslims stopped their journey to Mecca and the Prophet asked them to shave their heads and to slaughter their animals of sacrifice, for they were not going to Hajj that year. Umar was very upset by this and would not stop objecting to the Prophet’s decision and even personally confronted the Prophet. However, the Prophet told him that he had promised they would go to Hajj, but not that year.

<sup>vi</sup> *Dua al-Nudba, Mafatihul Jinan*

<sup>vii</sup> The two stories are as follows:

-one day, Umar had become upset about the rising dowries within the Muslim community and so he ordered that there should be an upper limit on dowries. A woman stood up in the crowd and quoted the ayah: ‘and if you had given her a heap of gold’, which clearly showed that it was permissible to give a woman a very large dowry. Thus, Umar was mistaken in his ruling and he admitted to this.

-One day, Imam Ali (as) saw an insane woman being prepared for execution. He enquired why this was happening and they said that she had committed adultery and was being punished. He stopped all the proceedings and brought the woman back before Umar. He reminded Umar of the narration which says that the pen (i.e. responsibility) is lifted from upon those who are insane (among others) and so she could not be punished. Again, Umar admitted his mistake and confessed that if it were not for the advice of Imam Ali (as), he would have perished.

<sup>viii</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 4, Course 3, lecture 11

- **Keesaniya:** after the death of Imam Husain (as), they followed Mohammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, one of the sons of Imam Ali (as), instead of Imam al-Sajjad (as)
- **Zaidiyah:** after the death of Imam al-Sajjad (as), they followed Zaid instead of Imam al-Baqir (as). Zaid never claimed to be the Imam and he himself was a pious and brave man and a strict follower of the Ahlul Bayt (as)
- **Ismailiah:** they followed Ismail, the son of Imam al-Sadiq (as), instead of Imam al-Kadhim (as).

<sup>ix</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, Lecture 4

<sup>x</sup> The Scale of Wisdom, narration no.1876

<sup>xi</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, lecture 11

<sup>xii</sup> Ibid

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid

<sup>xiv</sup> eHAWZA, Semester 1, Course 3, Lecture 4

<sup>xv</sup> **Objection 3: is Intercession limited to the Hereafter?**

Yet another objection is that intercession may in fact be useful and allowed, but only in the Hereafter, and that in this world the prophets and Imams cannot help us because they have passed away.

We can answer this objection by showing many examples from the Holy Qur’an, where people came to the prophets to ask them to ask Allah for forgiveness on their behalf:

- The brothers of Prophet Yusuf ask their father to seek forgiveness for them after they had hurt Prophet Yusuf (12:97)

- Allah (SWT) commands the prophet to seek forgiveness for his companions (3:159). If this was useless, then why would Allah (SWT) command the Prophet (saw) to do it?
- In another ayah of the Qur'an (4:64), Allah (SWT) makes his forgiveness conditional upon the Prophet (saw) asking forgiveness for his people. This ayah shows that not only is intercession permissible but it is sometimes necessary. A story that highlights this is the following:
  - When HurribnYazid al-Riyahi finally decides that 'he will not prefer anything to paradise, even if he is burnt alive', he rides his horse towards his Imam (as), his head lowered from shame before the family of the Prophet (saw), raising his voice and pleading: "O Allah, to you I turn back, so forgive me, for I have brought fear into the hearts of Your loved ones and the children of your prophet. O Abu Abdullah (Imam Husain saw) I am repentant, so will you forgive me?" Hurr realises that just as the Prophet's permission was needed for the repentance of the Prophet's companions to be accepted, the permission of Imam Husain (saw) is needed for his own repentance to be accepted and asks for his Imam (saw) to forgive him so that Allah (SWT) may forgive him.

The only remaining point from this objection is this: the prophet has now passed away, so how can we seek his intercession before the Day of Judgment? The answer is that even though he has physically passed away, his influence remains because he is alive, in the presence of His Lord, being given his sustenance. Part of the prophet's sustenance, as indicated by the narrations, is the right to intercede for his community.

"And do not consider those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; no, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord" (3:169)

**Objection 4: why do we need intercessors when Allah is so close?**

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an: "and we are closer to him than his jugular vein". If Allah (SWT) is so close to us, then why do we need intercessors? This takes us to an interesting point, which is that although Allah (SWT) is always close to us, we are sometimes far away from Him. In other words, if we look at things from Allah's point of view, He is always closer to us than our own life-vein. However, if we look at things from our point of view, we are sometimes very far from Allah (SWT). This is because our sins veil us from Him. Allah (SWT) clearly states in the Qur'an that if a person follows his desire, this causes veils to be placed between Him and Allah (SWT):

"Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his god, and Allah has made him err having knowledge and has set a seal upon his ear and his heart and put a covering upon his eye..." (45:23)

The reason we seek intercession through the prophets and Imams is because these veils do not exist for them, because they are absolutely pure and sinless. Therefore, in order to overcome these veils that we created by following our desires, we seek their intercession.

<sup>xvi</sup> The Scale of Wisdom, narration no. 1880

<sup>xvii</sup> Ibid, no. 1881

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid. no. 1883

<sup>xix</sup> Ibid. no.1883

<sup>xx</sup> The Holy Qur'an

<sup>xxi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The Scale of Wisdom, narration no. 6208

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Ibid, no. 6210

<sup>xxviii</sup> TafsirulMizan, discussion of ayah 33:33

<sup>xxix</sup> Other schools of thought indicate that it may be referring to the wives of the Prophet (saw) because the above expression comes in the context of ayaat which are speaking about the wives of the Prophet. However, this opinion is clearly incorrect for the following reasons:

The ayah uses the expression 'ankum', which in Arabic refers either to the masculine or a group including male members. Therefore it cannot refer to the wives of the Prophet. If it was referring to them, the expression used would have to be 'ankunna'.

There are a great number of narrations that indicate that this ayah was revealed about the five people mentioned above. These narrations are narrated through both Sunni and Shii chains of narration. In fact, the Sunni chains of narration are greater in number, and they amount to more than forty.

<sup>xxx</sup> Al-Kafi, 1:187

<sup>xxxi</sup> ???

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Biharul Anwar, 27:91

<sup>xxxiv</sup> NafasulMahmum, ch.19

<sup>xxxv</sup> NafasulMahmum, ch. 9



# JOURNEY TO THE UNSEEN WORLD

## Objectives >>>

### Students should:

- Understand and be reminded of the nature of the soul and that it exists
- Understand that the soul has senses just as the body does and that paying attention only to our external senses and ignoring our internal ones leads to ultimate humiliation in this world and the next
- Have an understanding that these senses can be developed by self-struggle
- Know and understand practical ways of developing the inner senses
- Be aware some of the countless benefits of fighting against the self both in this world and in the hereafter
- Learn more about the trials of death (the pangs of death) and the trials of the grave.
- The idea that we need to be conscious of what we take with us on the journey after death
- The importance of observance (al-Murāqabah) and the methods with which this can be done
- Understand that observance on the soul should always be coupled placing conditions on the self
- That observance on the soul must lead to supervision which is ensuring that we protect our good actions till the day of judgment
- Understand the philosophy and characteristics of Barzakh
- Understand the importance of Al-Murāqabah (self-supervision)
- Understand the positive impact of Al- Murāqabah on the life in Barzakh
- Know the etiquettes of Al-Murāqabah

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

## LEVEL 5

### Lesson 1: The Soul

In this lesson we will begin to discuss the last of the five fundamental beliefs of Islam: the Resurrection (al-Ma'ād). This belief is



strengthened by the belief in the Unity of God, the Justice of God and Prophecy. We would have no access to the details of this knowledge were it not for the Qur'an and the holy Prophet (saw) and unlike many other faiths, the emphasis on the day of Resurrection in Islam is tremendous such that over 25% or 1640 ayāt<sup>i</sup> of the Qur'an refer to this. It is a fundamental part of Tawhīd<sup>ii</sup>, the selection of prophets<sup>iii</sup>, self-purification<sup>iv</sup>, staying on the right path<sup>v</sup>, taqwa, worshipping, peace of mind, bravery, justice etc. A denial of this fact can lead mankind to social and economic crimes<sup>vi</sup>, a sinful life<sup>vii</sup>, immoral behaviour and so on.

Before discussing any of the above topics in more detail, it is important that we acknowledge that Allah, the Most Wise, has created us with a body (the physical existence) and a soul (the spiritual existence). We have to understand our souls as this is what will lead us to understanding Allah. We also believe that our journey in the afterlife occurs via the medium of the soul (in Barzakh). The soul will then be reunited with the body on the Day of Resurrection. Imam 'Ali (as) says:

## TO MEMORISE

من عرف نفسه عرف ربه

“One who attains inner knowledge of his soul attains inner knowledge of his Lord.”<sup>viii</sup>

### WHAT IS THE SOUL AND HOW DO WE KNOW IT EXISTS?

As we have learnt in previous years, a human being is composed of a physical existence (the body) and an immaterial existence (the soul). In the Holy Qur'an, four different terms are used to explain the same reality of the soul:

1. al Rūḥ – This is when the soul is disconnected from the body
2. al Nafs- When the soul is connected to the body (like in this world)
3. Al Qalb (the Heart or literally meaning- changeable) - This is the nafs that is changeable and is the faculty of the soul that understands immaterial things.
4. Al Aql- (Intellect or literally- to prevent/hold)- This is one of the powers of the soul that can distinguish between good and evil

The soul makes me 'me', such that if we were to think of ourselves without distraction, that would be the soul.

A further proof of the existence of the soul is the mere fact that the body we have is like a vessel in which our soul is housed. This can be explained in one of many ways:

1. Scientifically we know that the physical body we have now is not what we had or will have in the future because most of the cells in our body are constantly dying and regenerating (every 7-9 years). Despite this, we can still identify ourselves as the same person throughout our life!
2. Similarly, when we refer to our limbs, we say “my arm” or “my leg” even though they are not a part of who I am or 'me'. Consider a person losing an arm in a war; doesn't he still consider his-self and identity as complete despite this physical loss? Similarly, when a person dies, we stop referring to the body as 'him' or 'her' or by the person's name, instead we say refer to the body as 'it' or 'the body'.

3. Other phenomenon such as real dreams, near death experiences, and interactions between soul-mates further highlight this instinctive proof of the soul.

### FACETS OF THE SOUL

Now that we know that the soul exists, it is important to learn more about it. When we were created, Allah, the Exalted, created our soul pure and inspired it with the knowledge of what is good and what is evil. Allah says in the Qur'an:

“Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it” (91:8).

Finally Allah gave our soul the power of choice, or free will, to choose what is good and what is bad. Once a man came to the Holy Prophet to ask a question; the Holy Prophet said to him:

“Do you wish to ask your question or should I tell you what your question is?”

The man was surprised and asked the Prophet to reveal the question. The Holy Prophet replied:

“You have come to ask about what is good (virtue) and what is bad (vice).”

That was exactly what the man had come to ask!

The Holy Prophet placed his hand on the man's heart and said:

“Check it with your heart, regardless of what people may say, righteousness is what your soul (nafs) is at rest with whilst vice is the action after whose performance you feel guilty”.

Therefore, good is instinctively programmed in us and is compatible with our soul but evil or sin is not compatible with our soul and therefore results in us being uneasy and uncomfortable.

The fact that we possess such feelings and thoughts is proof that in addition to the senses that allow us to experience the external world (hearing, smell touch etc...) we also have internal senses that allow us to experience the 'unseen world'.

## INNER SENSES

Just as we are supposed to care for our physical beings from affected by diseases, we similarly must care for our spiritual self and protect it against all spiritual maladies. There are several ‘windows’ or avenues through which we can feed our souls. We must have a good understanding of these before we can take steps to develop ourselves.

**1- Sight with the ‘eyes’ of the heart:** Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an:

“And thus did We show Ibrahim the kingdom (malakūt) of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure.” (6:75).

All scholars agree that this seeing was the sight of the heart, not of the physical eyes. Similarly, there are many incidents from the lives of the Imams that prove this vision whereby they could see the unseen in this world. Once Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) attended Ḥajj with his companions and when they entered into Masjid ul Ḥarām, one of the companions was surprised to see so many devoted Muslims performing the rituals. The Imam wanted to prove to him that most of them were not devoted, so he placed his hand on the eyes of this companion and asked him to look again. This time the companion saw different types of animals of all forms doing Ṭawāf with only a few human beings between them! He got frightened and asked Imam what he was seeing. Imam replied that he was seeing the reality with the vision of his soul!

Another example of this spiritual vision was when Imam ‘Ali (as) was asked: "O Commander of the Faithful! Do you see the Lord when you devote yourself to worship?" The Imam (as) replied:

"Beware! I would not worship a God that I cannot see."

He was asked how he could see God, and he replied:

"Beware! Eyes cannot see him with a glance; it is rather the hearts that see Him through the realities of faith."<sup>ix</sup>

**2- Hearing with the ‘ears’ of the heart-** This is the ability to hear what ordinary people cannot hear or perceive. Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

“When the revelation descended on the Prophet of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his

descendants - I heard the moan of Satan. I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, what is this moan?"

He (saw) replied, "This is Satan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O' `Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a Prophet, but you are a vicegerent and you are surely on (the path of) virtue."<sup>x</sup>

It is clear therefore that the activation of these internal senses is open to everyone (at their own level).

## STRUGGLING AGAINST DESIRES

These inner senses can only be activated when the desires of the soul have been tamed by the intellect and a person practices piety (taqwa). We have discussed the three levels of the soul in previous years. Here, we will briefly review the concept of struggling with the self (*jihād ul nafs*).

Our life is a constant struggle between our desires and our intellect. Our desires urge to chase short-term material pleasures like comfort, food and sexual pleasures, while our intellect urges us to invest in long-term meaningful pleasures, whether they are in this world or in the next. We must always try to overcome our desires with our intellect. This is a life-long struggle, which is very difficult. You may remember the famous story we came across in previous years: after an extremely difficult military campaign, the Prophet (saw) tells the Muslims who have just come back from risking their lives and their wealth that what they had completed was the smaller struggle, and that the greater struggle was still to come. This greater struggle is the struggle against one’s desires.

If we follow our desires, we go down a dangerous path, because desires never end and only accumulate. This world and its temptations have been likened in the holy words of our Imams to sea-water (which is salty), whereby the more one drinks from it, the thirstier he becomes until eventually dying. This is why we see that people who follow their desires blindly end up humiliated and miserable.

Therefore, we must learn to tame our desires and resist them. One good way to train ourselves is to try to resist the more common urges like excessively sleeping, eating and talking. This exercise in turn will build our will-power to tackle the tougher challenges. If you are interested in self-purification by struggling with desires in a practical



way, we have provided some brief references to help you get started.<sup>xi</sup>

## ACTIVATING THE INNER SENSES



The whole of this course in Islamic studies focuses on trying to activate this inner sense and to win this struggle within ourselves. The first step of trying to attain the station of the resting soul is to avoid the *ġarġm* actions and to perform the obligatory (*wġġib*) actions. Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

“He who honours his soul will not humiliate it with sin and his desires become insignificant for him and the world becomes small in his eyes”.<sup>xii</sup>

Below are some practical tips for achieving this:

1. **Keep evil and negative (including fantasy) thoughts away from our hearts and minds.** Each action begins with a thought. If one can control his thoughts, he can control his body. Satan is very much like a thief looking for an open window in a house to enter. Similarly, he influences our thoughts to get us to commit sin. If we can control our thoughts, we can control our actions.
2. **Make our hearts the exclusive domain of Allah:** this means that we must try not to attach ourselves to anything in this world other than God. This also means being conscious of Allah all the time. Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:  
  
“God-wariness is the cure for the sickness of your hearts and purification of the pollution of your souls.”
3. **Al Wara’-** This simply means avoiding those things that are *makrġh* (not recommended) and trying to perform those actions that are *Mustġġab* (recommended). It also means avoiding things which are doubtful and taking extra precautions for the sake of religion.
4. **Breaking bad habits:** simply breaking nasty habits of swearing or gluttony by fasting can significantly elevate ones soul toward rest!

5. **Being watchful over ourselves:** Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:

“One, who censures his soul, improves it and one who praises his soul, slaughters it”<sup>xiii</sup>.

Being mindful of what we say, eat, meet and hear will activate the internal senses.

## HOMEWORK

### 1. Self-Observation Task

Your task this week is to make a table for yourself. In this table, record the following:

- How many instances you felt your desires overcame your intellect
- How many instances your intellect was in control

At the end of the week, graph your data, and see if you have managed to improve during the past week. Try to be very critical with yourself.

### 2. Explain the difference between *al rūġh* and *al nafs*?

## Lesson 2: Death

Death is an inescapable reality. Regardless of whether we are believers or not, each of us accepts death as a fact of our existence. Since it is inevitable, we begin to ask questions. What is death? What does Islam say about death? Is it destruction, annihilation, and non-existence or is it a change, a development and a shifting from one world to another? One of the major blessings which in fact prove the authenticity of Islam is the great number of resources and literature which reveal a lot about death. After discovering the Islamic viewpoint of death we begin to feel that we should prepare ourselves for this journey ahead of us. In today’s lesson we will have an understanding of our main beliefs about death and the importance of ‘observance’ in preparing us for this journey.

## WHAT IS DEATH?

Death is not ‘anti-life’, rather just like life, ‘death’ is something which is created. Allah, the Exalted says in the Qur’an:



الَّذِي أَحْلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“Blessed be He... who has created death and life, so that He might test you which of you is most righteous in action” (67:1-2)

Death is a continuation of life, a transition from one abode, this temporary world, to an eternal life. As Imam al-Ḥasan (as) has said:

“(Death is) the greatest happiness which comes to the believers, when they migrate from the house of misery to the eternal bliss; and (it is) the greatest disaster which befalls the unbelievers, when they go from their paradise (i.e. this world) to the Fire which will never be extinguished and will never burn itself out” <sup>xiv</sup>

Death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, introduces man to another stage of life in which felicity or disappointment depends upon good or evil deeds in the stage of life before death. We can never escape it:

“Every soul will taste death.” (21:35)

The word which is often used in the Qur’an regarding death is from the word, ‘tawaffi’. Tawaffi refers to the thorough collection of something, and so death is described in the Qur’an as the thorough collection of the soul by Allah (SWT).

## REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH

After understanding the reality of death, and that it is a transition into another world in which we will be recompensed for all our actions, it becomes imperative that we constantly remember death. Through remembering that this may occur at any moment we begin to be more aware of our actions.

We should remember the mysteries and suddenness of death:

### 1. Location:

“...and no one knows in what land he shall die; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware...” (31:34)

### 2. Time:

“What! do the people of the towns then feel secure from Our punishment coming to them by night while they

are asleep? What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they play?” (7:97-98)

### 3. State:

“...therefore die not unless you are Muslims” (2:132)

A lot of us observe our actions, but only for a short period of time, then we forget about it and go back to our old ways. What we have to remember is that it is not how we were three years ago that matters, it is where we are when we die. So, if we were very pious a few years ago, but now have lost our faith, we will be coming to Allah (SWT) as a disbeliever. So we must ensure that we are keeping up our good deeds regularly. This can happen when we remember that death is not a stranger that will come knocking at our doors when we are 90. It is a reality that can happen at any time! If you go to the cemetery you can see how many young people have died unexpectedly.

There was once a man who after hearing the message of the Prophet (saw) accepted Islam but soon learnt that alcohol was forbidden in Islam and this disturbed him. So he said to himself that he will continue drinking alcohol for another year and thereafter believe in Islam in its entirety. He died before that year and met his Lord as a disbeliever and a drinker of wine. We must make sure that since death may come at any time, we are in such a state that we are greeted pleasantly by the angel of death when our souls are collected.

## OBSERVANCE:

Based on the above we understand that death is merely a transition from this life of matter into a life of eternity. Each of the events that occur after our death is a direct result of what we have prepared for these stations. Our actions determine for us whether these will be easier or more difficult for us. This means that we have to take account of our actions before it is too late.

Imam Musā al-Kāḍim (as) said:

“He is not from us, he who does not keep the account of his/her action so if he did a good deed, he is appreciative and asks Allah to give him more, and if he committed a sin he seeks forgiveness from Allah and repents.”

On this basis we will look at the importance of observing one’s actions.

## STEPS OF OBSERVANCE AND ACCOUNTING:

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

وَلَا تَكُونُوا

كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“O you who believe, be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do. And be not like those who forsook Allah, so He made them forsake their own souls: these it is that are the transgressors.” (59:18-19)

Imagine you are a student in class and each term your teacher comes to check whether you have completed all the tasks set for you throughout the term. If you have carefully kept an account of all of the tasks given, those completed and those not completed, then when your teacher announces that he wants to check if you have kept your work up to date, you wouldn't have anything to worry about. On the other hand, the student who has not kept his work up to date, will panic when the teacher comes around to check everyone's work. Death is like this, because it can come at any time.

This is the same for our deeds and actions. From the age of responsibility until our death all of our actions are being taken into account. After twenty or thirty years, we don't remember everything that we have done, so we may have lost count of our sins. We have to be very careful about this.

The person, who is going to his Lord, should return aware of what he has done. It is for this reason that we should observe our actions each and every day. Self-observance and accounting can be divided into four stages:

- 1- Al-Mushārāḥ: You impose some conditions on yourself, that today you will do certain things and that if you do not do them, you will implement certain consequences against yourself
- 2- Al-Murāqabah: Observing yourself and being conscious of the conditions you set on yourself at the beginning of that day.

- 3- Al-Muḥāsabah: At the end of the day or time period, take yourself to account over your actions.
- 4- Al-Mu'ātabah/Al-Mu'aqabah: applying the consequences of breaking the conditions set at the beginning of the day (for example, I made a promise not to lie but I lied, therefore I must fast one day)

There is a ḥadith from the Prophet (saw) in his will and advice to Abu Dhar al-Ghifari:

“Oh Abu Dhar, no one can be from the pious people unless he keeps an account of his actions, what you have done, eaten and said today.”

Allah (SWT) loves His servant who is increasing in nearness to Him. So one shouldn't stay in the same state that he has been in for years and not attempt to increase and multiply his good actions. For example, if one of us wakes up for Fajr every morning, but we do so toward the end of its time, he should work to wake up for Fajr at the beginning of its time. Or if someone wakes up for Fajr at the beginning of its time, he should work to stay up until sunrise. That way we are continuously working to improve ourselves.

At the same time, while our actions are increasing in number, many of us may fall into the trap of feeling proud over our good deeds. It is always important to recognise that any good action that we do is a blessing from Allah (SWT), because He has guided us toward this.

## Homework:

1. Refer to your table of actions from last week. Now pick one action which you feel you should not have performed. Try to pick the thing you feel most guilty about. Now for the next week, make it a condition upon yourself not to commit this mistake. Set a punishment for yourself if you cannot keep this condition. For example, if you are guilty about missing Fajr prayer, make it a condition to wake up for Fajr every morning. If you miss Fajr in the coming week, then you should pay \$5 to charity.

## Lesson 3: Barzakh

By now we should already be familiar with some of main concepts of death. To begin this lesson, we will go through some of the points from the previous lesson, which shall briefly be followed by a short discussion on Barzakh, its philosophy and some of its characteristics, and we will then conclude the lesson with a discussion on one of the most effective and practical methods to prepare for it.

### REVISION

The dissociation between the body and the soul is called death. As soon as we die, the soul enters the stage of Barzakh which literally means a ‘barrier’ between two things. In other words it means that Allah (SWT) has placed a curtain or an intermediary stage between this world and the Hereafter. It is this stage of Barzakh that Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (as) said about:

“By Allah! I fear a lot for your state in Barzakh”.

Barzakh is followed by the day of resurrection. Everyone who has died so far, good or evil, old or young, is currently in Barzakh. They are either enjoying a taste of paradise or suffering temporary punishment, and all of them are ‘waiting’ for the Day of Judgement. Whatever we know of this stage of the Hereafter has come through divine revelation and the experience of the Prophet in Mi’rāj and also from authentic traditions from the Imams (as).

### PHILOSOPHY OF BARZAKH

As mentioned above, Barzakh is an intermediary between the world of matter and the hereafter. This stage possesses characteristics of both this world and those of the Hereafter. Because the Hereafter is completely different from this world of matter in terms of its nature, a sudden move directly to it will make it intolerable for us. Therefore, in order to make a smooth transition from this world to the day of judgement and hell or heaven, there has to be a middle stage that contains characteristics of both worlds.

Moreover, because the time of the day of Resurrection is the same for all souls, there has to be a world in which all souls live until the life of all creatures expires so that by then everyone will be raised collectively.

Another reason for Barzakh is that Allah (SWT) out of His mercy still gives a chance to the believers to elevate themselves and rectify their misdoings. They are able to achieve continuity in reward if one, for example, during his life time built a mosque in which thousands pray in every year, or if the deceased has left behind pious children who are paying back the obligations that they missed. In such ways Allah (SWT) elevates the souls and forgives their past.

In previous years, we have discussed the characteristics of the life in Barzakh, including:

- The pressure of the grave, which is a special punishment for specific sins
- Being able to hear the people still alive in this world without being able to reply
- Being questioned about our actions
- Being able to visit loved ones in this world

### PLANNING FOR BARZAKH

Different sins result in varying severities and types of punishments in the grave. So intense and painful is this experience that Abu Dhar, the pious and truthful companion of the prophet, when burying his son said that if it wasn’t for the fear of the punishment of the grave, he would have preferred to die instead of his son.

At the same time, for the virtuous servants of Allah, unimaginable bounties and pleasures in Barzakh have been promised. The extent to which we enjoy or suffer in the grave depends entirely on what we have done in this life.

In this lesson we will discuss a very effective practical way to ensure that we are able to gain the sweet fruits of Barzakh and avoid the bitter ones. For those who will not be able to bear the tortures of the grave, this practical exercise is not an option, it is a must! Now, if we are convinced that we will not be able to withstand Allah’s punishment, then this has to be implemented and taken very seriously.

### AL- MURĀQABAH (SUPERVISION OF THE SELF)

If we observe the lives of healthy conscious individuals, we will notice that they ‘watch’ themselves in ways that others do not. They avoid sweet and oily food, ensure to include fruits and vegetables in their diet and they even exercise on a daily basis. Some even go the extra mile by

going for regular medical check-ups, and if their sugar or cholesterol levels are even slightly off the mark, they waste no time in returning these to the normal limits. All this is done so that they can live a quality life in this world.

Unfortunately, once we die, the health and muscles are no more useful. The physical strength of the body is not going to help in bearing the pressure of the grave in Barzakh and neither will it be able to scare away the fierce angels and the wild creatures. Instead, only those who have taken care of their souls in this world will be able to make an otherwise terrifying and difficult journey of Barzakh pleasurable. In the same way that we make efforts to identify the potential threats to our bodies and build appropriate defences, similarly we need to identify the enemies of our souls, watch over them and then develop immunity against them.

## **ETIQUETTES OF AL-MURĀQABAH**

In order to be successful in self-supervision, we need to:

1. Be very careful of how we spend our time. We need to understand that this time will pass and death will come and therefore we have to try and do as much good in this life as we can since we have been gifted with this life to purchase the Hereafter. We need to be conscious of the way we spend our youth and endeavour to make it very productive in the way of Allah (SWT).

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says about time management:

“Prosperous is the one who divides his day into four:

Worshipping God

Earning a livelihood

Lawful entertainment

Socialising (with the right people)”



2. Be mindful of the events in the Islamic calendar. These include the nights of the holy month of Ramaān, the first ten days of Dhil Ḥajja, and birth and death anniversaries of our Imams. These are events in which our good deeds act as catalysts in our journey to Allah (SWT). In the same way that we take advantage of winter and summer specials if we want to buy clothes because we get more value for our money, similarly we need to do as much as we can in these Islamic occasions as we get more value for our time.
3. Learn as much about how our Imams lived their lives so that we can compare that to our life and make necessary changes.
4. Put conditions on ourselves. We have discussed this in detail in the last lesson on death.
5. Start our day with good and end it with good. The best starting action would be the night prayer or Morning Prayer in congregation followed by recitation of the Holy Qur'an. A good action to end the day would be to sleep with Wuḍū'. The narrations say that accounting of such a day will be looked at leniently on the day of Judgement.
6. *Self- accounting every day.* We must remember that we will face all of our actions in the world of Barzakh and so we must be very careful what we do in this world.

Do you remember the story we heard last year's lesson?

A man once was visited in his dream by a deceased relative who was pleading to him to act kindly (on his behalf) towards those who worked for him. On inquiring as to why the sudden and urgent need, the deceased said that he had been very harsh with those working under him during his life and that he is now experiencing unbearable noise in the grave for which relief can only be achieved if all the bad is compensated by good towards them.

We have also learnt that in the world of Barzakh, when we are lonely and desperate for help, beautiful and loyal companions come to our assistance when we need them most. These companions are our good deeds like prayer, patience and love for the Ahlul Bayt.

<sup>xv</sup>Let us all try to keep careful accounts of our actions so that we can prepare ourselves better for the long journey of Barzakh.



## Review Questions

### Action Diary- Continuation Activity

Prepare in a confidential diary or in a password protected Word document 5 columns; One for the date and the other four for the type of deeds, namely: recommended, obligatory, not recommended or better to avoid and forbidden. Every night, before retiring to bed, fill in the columns depending on how you have spent your day and work to increase the good and decrease the bad.

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<sup>i</sup> Sheikh Mansour Leghaei – Journey to the Unseen World lesson 1

<sup>ii</sup> Repeated 30 times in the Qur'an is the concept of belief in Allah resulting in a belief in the hereafter

<sup>iii</sup> Holy Qur'an 38:46-47

<sup>iv</sup> Holy Qur'an 79:39-41

<sup>v</sup> Holy Qur'an 38:26

<sup>vi</sup> Holy Qur'an 83:1-5 (if time permits, the teacher can possibly discuss the concept of the Gyges Ring ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring\\_of\\_Gyges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring_of_Gyges)) (or the Harry potters 'cloak of invisibility')- Whereby if one is not caught one can get away with anything or whether a typical person would be moral if he did not have to fear the consequences of his actions

<sup>vii</sup> Holy Qur'an 75:5-6

<sup>viii</sup> (*MizAnul Iikmah*- tradition 4065)

<sup>ix</sup> Al Kaafi (don't know full reference!)

<sup>x</sup> Nahjul Balagha sermon 191

<sup>xi</sup> The book 'Self Building' by Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini

<sup>xii</sup> Scale of wisdom section 1749- The effects of a noble soul

<sup>xiii</sup> Scale of Wisdom – Tradition 6198

<sup>xiv</sup> (Quoted in the book: Day of Judgement, by Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, pg. 22, no reference was given)

<sup>xv</sup> References

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Holy Qur'an

Nahjul Balagha

Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabataba'i

# RESURRECTION

## المعاد

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Be reminded of the proofs for the existence of the Resurrection Day
- Be introduced to the proofs for the possibility of the Resurrection Day
- Discuss the stages of the Resurrection
- Know that that there is (and that we are responsible for both):
  - individual judgment
  - social/community judgment
- Review the nature of this world and the danger of becoming a slave of the world
- Know that Heaven and Hell are the realities of our actions and are a natural result of what we do in this world
- Know that those who enter paradise do not leave, whereas those who enter Hell may leave eventually
- Know that Allah (SWT) trains us through a fine balance of fear and hope

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

## LEVEL 5

### Lesson 1: Signs of the Day of Resurrection

In the previous lessons, we have discussed various aspects of life after this world, from death to Barzakh. In this lesson we will discuss one of the fundamental beliefs of all major religions, especially Islam: that of Ma'ad or Resurrection. As we have learnt in previous years, there are many names for the Day of Resurrection (Yawmul dīn, Yawmul Qiyāmah, Yawmul Ḥashr, Yawmul Ḥisāb etc.). It should be noted that 'yawm' or 'day' in this context does not mean the regular day (24 hours). In lesson we shall discuss the possibility of the resurrection and some of the signs that herald it.

### POSSIBILITY OF RESURRECTION

Before we can discuss the existence of the hereafter, we have to prove that indeed it is possible to have a day of resurrection.

#### 1. THE MIGHT OF GOD

We have discussed previously that if God exists, then it is necessary that He be the most powerful. Indeed, this Power entitles him to be able to bring any being back to life. Furthermore, He is the most knowledgeable and therefore it stands to reason that He has the knowledge to bring back the dead back to life. Allah (SWT) knows where each joule of energy is 'lost' as much as He knows where each atom is scattered, it certainly stand to reason that He knows how to bring these together to resurrect life!

“We know indeed what the earth diminishes of them, and with Us is a writing that preserves” (50:4)

## 2. RESURRECTION IN THIS WORLD

Resurrection is a common phenomenon in this world too. A great example is that of Lake Eyre in the centre of Australia, that is dormant, lifeless and when it gets filled up with water, life just appears from the dead soil. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

"We give life thereby to a dead land; thus is the rising"  
(50:11)

The very fact that Allah (SWT) has demonstrated it for us in front of our very eyes makes the possibility of a resurrection in the hereafter a reality.

## 3. THE FIRST CREATION

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Were We then fatigued with the first creation? Yet are they in doubt with regard to a new creation." (50:15)

If Allah (SWT) has the Might and Power to create this world from nothing, it is far easier therefore for Him to put it back together again!

## SIGNS OF THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

In previous lessons, we have discussed in some detail some of the stages of the Day of Resurrection. It is important though, to remind ourselves of the very last days before the Day of Resurrection as it should wake us up to the reality that this could happen at any time and that some of these signs are already here!

## THE TERRIFYING EVENT

We only need to open the Holy Qur'an to discover the details of the terrifying events that will take place before the Day of Judgment. Allah says:

"O men, fear the wrath of your Creator! The earthquakes and explosions of resurrection will be mighty and awesome. On that day suckling mothers will forget their infants and pregnant women will be delivered of their burden. You will see men as drunken from the terror of that day, but they will not be drunken, for the doom of God is fierce and painful" (22:1-2).

"When the earth begins to move and shake violently, the mountains are torn asunder and scattered like atoms of dust ..." (56:4-6).

"Man asks: 'When the day of resurrection will be?' (Say) 'It will be the day when the sight of man is confounded in terror, when the moon is darkened and the sun and the moon are joined. On that day man will ask where he might flee and to what shelter'" (75:6-10).

"When the stars are put out, and when the Heavenly bodies are scattered" (82:2).

This is a time where we will be running for shelter but none shall be found! This period of time will be so terrifying that those alive at that time will be in deep fear and helplessness. There will be no place of refuge and escape.

## THE BLOWING OF THE TRUMPET

The Noble Qur'an describes the occurrence of resurrection as follows:

"They will blow on the trumpet and everything in the Heavens and the earth will be swallowed up by death, save only that which God wishes to preserve. Then another trumpet blast will be sounded and all creatures will suddenly rise up to behold the plain of resurrection" (39:68).

There will be then two blasts of the trumpet. The first will be swift and of brief duration, like a roar in the Heavens, a universal proclamation that will cause the whole expanse of creation to be folded up; the people of the world will suddenly fall to the ground while they are still engrossed in their daily struggles. This first blowing of the trumpet will bring about the death of all living beings, and all creatures in the Heavens and on the earth, including the angels.

"The Qur'an says: "On the day when the summoner summons mankind to the awesome resurrection, the unbelievers will come forth with their eyes humbled, like locusts scattered abroad, hastening to respond to the summoner to resurrection. The unbelievers shall say to each other: 'This is the day of hardship!'" (54:6-8).

The second blast of the trumpet will be the awe-inspiring summons that brings men back to life and ushers in resurrection. Men will suddenly rise up from their graves and they will ask, their whole beings filled with fear:

"Who is it that thus raises us from our slumber?" (36:52)

Then they will open their eyes and say:

"This is none other than what God promised; the prophets indeed spoke the truth." (36:54)

The Holy Prophet said:

"At that time, some people will be in their own homelands, and some will be travelling. Some will be swallowed up by death as they are about to place a morsel of food in their mouths. Some will be talking to their friends and their souls will be taken from them before they are able to complete their words. In the end death will have overtaken all human beings, but Isrāfil will continue blowing on his trumpet until all springs and rivers, all buildings, trees, mountains, and oceans, are intermingled and buried in the heart of the earth. "As the dead fall to the ground, some will be on their backs, and others will lie face down. People will still have the food in their mouths, the food that death gave them no chance to swallow." <sup>i</sup>

## OTHER STAGES

We have discussed in some detail the other stages of the Day of Resurrection where people will be raised from their graves and assembled on the field of maḥshar as Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Matters will succeed each other and ages will pass away, one after the other, until resurrection finally arrives. Then God will bring men forth from the pits of their tombs, from the nests of ravenous birds, from the lairs of wild animals, and from battlefields. They will hasten toward the divine presence, in obedience to God's command, to be sent on to their eternal abode. They will stand before Him, silent and in groups. Although their numbers will be vast, none of them will be hidden from God's limitless knowledge and penetrating vision." <sup>iii</sup>

We will then be given our book of actions and proceed on to the Ṣirāt after questioning.

## JUDGMENT

### INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT

The judgment of our actions will be the most terrifying part of this journey such that every single action we have performed will be judged. Allah says:

"At the time of resurrection, We shall set up the scales of justice, and none will be wronged on that day. Everyone will be requited in accordance with his deeds. We shall take into reckoning the smallest of deeds, even if it be no greater than a mustard grain, for it is We Who shall call them to account" (21:47).

This means that every deed we do will be weighed on the Day of Judgment, however small it may be!

On that day, we shall not be able to hide anything because not only will it be known to Allah, the All Knowing, our very organs will testify against us!

Allah (SWT) says:

"When they enter Hellfire, their eyes and ears and the skins on their bodies shall testify against them on account of the sins they have committed. They will address their skins asking them, 'Why do you testify against us?' They will receive this answer: 'The Lord Who gave speech to all things and Who first created you has given speech to us, too; certainly you will return to Him.'" (41:20-21)

## COLLECTIVE JUDGMENT

As much as there shall be the judgment of each individual's actions, we shall also be responsible for our actions as a community. This is especially true in regards to the leaders we chose. On the Day of Judgment, we shall be raised and judged with our leaders and role models we chose. If we chose and believed in the 14 Ma'sūmīn as our leaders and role models we will be gathered with them. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says that:

"On the Day of Judgement God Almighty will entrust the accounting of our Shi'a to us. Then if there will be anything due to God, we will request God to grant it to us and it will be granted. Then whatever will be due to us from them we will forgive. Then the Imam recited this verse: **"Surely to Us is their turning back, Then surely upon Us is the taking of their account."** (88:65-66)" <sup>iii</sup>

It is therefore very important that we choose the right role models and leaders for certainly our leaders will either take us to Hell or to paradise! We are responsible as a group to rise up against oppressors and corruption, so if our society is corrupt we are not blameless before God.

## Review Questions

**Describe the stages of the Resurrection in two brief paragraphs. Imagine that you are trying to explain it to someone who does not know anything about the Resurrection.**



## Lesson 2- Preparing for the day of Resurrection.

Allah (SWT) constantly reminds us of the terror of the Day of Judgment so that we are constantly conscious of it and can change our lives in order to protect ourselves from these terrors. Allah (SWT) says:

"Before resurrection occurs and you are compelled to return to your Lord, answer the summons of your Creator, for on that day you shall have no shelter to protect you from your shameful punishment or to avert from you your well-deserved chastisement." (42:47)

The question is then how do we know we are doing the right thing, how do we know that our actions will be accepted and how do we know that we will be of those who are saved on that day?

The Holy Prophet (saw) answered this saying:

"When resurrection comes, a summons will be heard by all on the plain of gathering. The summoner will say: 'Where are those who worshipped other human beings? Rise up; go, seek your reward from those whom you desired to please with your acts. I do not accept deeds tainted by worldly intent.'<sup>iv</sup>

Our actions should be such that we are totally detached from anything except Allah! Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Some men worship God in order to attain reward, and this is the worship of traders. Others worship Him out of fear of punishment, and this is the worship of slaves. But there are others again who worship Him out of gratitude and recognition that He is fit to be worshipped, and this is the worship of free men."<sup>v</sup>

From what we have learnt of the stages of the Day of Judgment, we have to always keep in mind that we have been put in this world to gather as much provision as we can for that Day. The period of time we spend in this world is so short when compared to the Hereafter and all we have to sustain ourselves in the next world is what we take with us from this world! Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

To Memorise:

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌّ وَهَوٌّ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ  
وَتَكَاتُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ

"Know that this world's life is only sport and play and gaiety and boasting among yourselves, and a vying in the multiplication of wealth and children" (57:20)

Allah says in another verse:

"Did you think that We have created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?" (23:115)

### THE NATURE OF THIS WORLD

One of the primary causes of punishment and suffering in the Hereafter and in this world is the love for this world. We often tend to forget the Hereafter and focus only on the temporary pleasures of this world. Imam 'Ali (as) says in a letter to one of his governors:

"Where are those people whom you had tempted with pleasures and enjoyments? Where are those groups whom you (world) had allured with pomp and glory? They are imprisoned in their graves pressed down by tonnes of earth upon them. O vicious world! Had you been a person or a being with life and limbs I would have punished you under the laws of the Lord because you have tempted with impossible hopes millions of individuals from the true path of humanity, you have brought about destruction, decline and falls of nations after nations alluring them with power and pleasure, you have thrown crowned heads into dust, you have lowered them to such depths that there is no refuge for any of them at that place and no one can come out from there."<sup>vi</sup>

On the one hand we know that this world is mere illusion and that we must try our best to ensure that we live simple lives and not be allured by its majesty, but on the other hand, we can still be rich and still enjoy the benefits of the next life.

Imam 'Ali (as) says in a letter to his governor in Egypt:

"Remember that pious persons passed away from this world after having led a respectable and fruitful life and they are going to be well-rewarded in the next world (when compared with the worldly-minded people they had equal opportunities of gathering fruits of this world and utilized them to the best of their abilities and at the same time kept away from all wicked and vicious ways of life). They did not jeopardize their salvation like worldly-minded persons. They led a more contented, more respectable and happier life than those who lived wickedly. They enjoyed the fruits of their labours and they had more gratifying, sober and healthy experience of the pleasures of life than the rich and the wealthy.

They regaled themselves with the joys, the facilities and the bliss of this world as much as the tyrant and vicious people desired to enjoy. Yet while leaving this world they carried with them all that would be of use to them in the next world. While living in this world they enjoyed the happiness of relinquishing its evil ways”.<sup>vii</sup>

## HOW CAN WE HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS ?

In order to be successful both in this world and the hereafter, we have to detach ourselves from this world and understand that everything we have belongs to Allah. All these are the bounties Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon us to use in order to purchase our Hereafter. Allah (SWT) has *lent* these to us so that we can use them to gain everlasting benefits in the hereafter. This means, we have to spend our energy, our money and our time to obtain everlasting pleasures in the Hereafter. The Imam also has said about this world:

“If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it then it would blind him.”<sup>viii</sup>

We can do 'see through the world' by<sup>ix</sup>:

- 1- Dropping our interest in committing any sin because at the end we know that the pleasure of sin is a mere illusion
- 2- Taking precaution in our actions- Always taking the precaution when it comes to our religion. For example, being cautious not to be alone in a room with a person of the opposite gender.
- 3- Dropping interest in things one does not need. Reducing the pleasures that the body or mind do not need. The pleasures in this world are like medicine, you need to take only enough to cure the problem, if you take too much, it is harmful and if you don't take enough it will be harmful too! We have to also remember that in the end we will be accountable for everything extra that we took, even of the halāl things!
- 4- Try to avoid anything that keep us away from God.
- 5- Using the world to gain the pleasures of the hereafter- Using wealth to buy the bricks and mortar that would make our place in paradise, by spending it the way of God.

To know if we really are not attached to this world, we can test ourselves with different possessions such that if we lose something we do not regret it or feel bad and when we gain (or get) something we do not rejoice!<sup>x</sup>

## Homework

Identify and explain 3 logical reasons for the existence of the hereafter?

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Discuss 3 main ways in which one can detach oneself from the world (dunya) and yet enjoy it and also gain pleasures in the hereafter.

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In the past years we have done an exercise to detach ourselves from our material possessions. Identify at least 2-3 things you are attached to (TV, particular food, play station, computer, Facebook etc.) and in the next week try as hard as you can to detach yourself from these items. Each time you use that item, punish yourself (by putting a dollar in a jar) and each time you held back (even though you wanted to use it), reward yourself with taking a dollar from the jar.

## Lesson 3: Heaven and Hell

In the previous lessons we learnt about the reasons for the creation and existence of Heaven and Hell. We came to understand that both these places are a reward or punishment for our deeds in this world, and are places where we will live forever, after resurrection – though life in Hell may be temporary subject to the Will and Mercy of Allah (SWT).

In this lesson we will discuss the issues of Heaven and Hell further and see that they are both signs of God's Absolute Wisdom and Justice. We will also see how the system of reward and punishment works in Heaven and Hell.

### HEAVEN AND HELL – A PRODUCT OF OUR ACTIONS, BELIEFS AND CHARACTER IN THIS WORLD

It is important to know and remember that Heaven and Hell are not in reality separate from the world in this life – in fact, they co-exist together with this world, but at a different level which we cannot usually experience. We only come to know of this from the Holy Prophet (saw) when he himself sees and relates the rewards and punishments in Heaven and Hell.

The type of reward we will receive in Heaven or the punishment we will receive in Hell will be a natural consequence of our actions. For example, if we put our hand in the fire, it will be burnt and will change its shape and colour and look very bad and feel very painful. In the same way our actions will have consequences. If we perform a good action, it will be a pleasant and enjoyable consequence. However, if we commit a sin, it will be an unpleasant and painful consequence which will frighten and harm us. Allah (SWT) has placed certain laws, just like the natural laws (such as gravity) that have their effects sometimes both in this world and the next but the real distinction of these effects is manifested in the next world when:

“We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp” (50:22)

To further explain this reality, there is a hadith from the Holy Prophet (saw) where he said



“Jealousy devours belief, like fire devours wood”.

This is one example of the Prophet teaching us about the reality of our actions. Jealousy, in its reality, eats up faith just like fire burns wood.

### LAW OF EMBODIMENT OF ACTIONS

The law of embodiment of action (*tajassumul a'māl*) is based on the principle that every action we perform in this world has a reality in the hereafter. The reward or punishment of our deeds will be the reality of that action and *nothing* else. Therefore, as will be explained to you, this law provides the fairest system of judgement on that day. For example, if we fail to break a habit of performing a certain bad action in this world, then according to this law, we will be unable to detach ourselves from its ugly reality in the hereafter.

Allah (SWT) says:

“And whatever good you send forth for yourselves you will find it with Allah” (2:110)

In another verse Allah (SWT) says:

“Those who lied about our signs and the meeting of the hereafter, in vain are their deeds. Shouldn't they be requited except with what they have done?” (7:147)

“And will not the disbelievers (simply) get back what they have earned?” (83:36)

To understand this better, we can refer to some of the narrations from our Imams:

#### 1. OUR ACTION WILL BE OUR COMPANION

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“Methāl (embodiment) says: “I am the joy that you brought to your believing brethren in Dunyā. The Almighty God created me from it to please you.”<sup>xi</sup>

Imam al-Bāqir (as) or Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)<sup>xii</sup>:

“When a believer dies six embodiments will accompany that person.”<sup>xiii</sup>

## 2. THE RECOMPENSE WILL BE THE ACTION ITSELF:

“Intoxicants are the firebrands of Hell.”<sup>xiv</sup>

“Deception is a firebrand of Hell.”<sup>xv</sup>

Prophet Ibrahīm told the Holy Prophet (saw) as he was returning from Me’raj: “Paradise is a plain desert. Its cultivation is ‘Subḥan-Allah, Alḥamdolellah, La ilāha illa Allah, Allāhu Akbar, and La ḥawla wa la quwwata illa billāh.”<sup>xvi</sup>

“Generosity is a tree in Paradise. Whoever holds on to one of its branches shall enter Paradise.”<sup>xvii</sup>

Ibrahim Ibn Shu'ayb once came to Imam Ṣādiq (as) and told the Imam that he has employed a servant to care for his old and weak father since he cannot keep up with his father’s needs. The Imam replied “If you can attend your father directly do so and feed him with your hand, for he is your paradise (or shield against Hell) morrow.”<sup>xviii</sup>

## LEVELS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Each level of Heaven or Hell will be appropriate for the person depending on his good and bad actions and his level of faith in Allah (SWT). Those people who enter Heaven will never come out of it and will remain there forever.

People who go to Hell do not necessarily stay there forever. Some believers will go to Hell to be purified from their sins – just like gold is put into the fire to purify it and then taken out. However, only those who have completely denied and rejected the truth will remain in Hell forever.

## HELL

The following Qur’anic ayāt tell us of some of the major punishments in Hell. Of course, these descriptions cannot show us the reality and extent of these punishments, but they give us some idea in language that we can comprehend.

This is mentioned in the Qur'an where Allah, The Exalted says:

“Like those who abide in the fire and who are made to drink boiling water so it rends their bowels asunder” (47:15).

“and drink as drinks the thirsty camel” (56:56)

## HEAVEN

The following ayāt and narrations describe the pleasures in paradise:

“Allah(SWT) has promised to the believing men and the believing women gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and best of all is Allah’s (SWT) goodly pleasure – that is the grand achievement” (9:72)

Imam ‘Ali (as) in a sermon of his describes Heaven as:

“...[a place] where Allah, the Exalted has provided for His guests, all the niceties of feasts and of dining and beautiful houris and handsome servant boys and highly comfortable apartments, extremely pure and clean springs and rivers of tasty drinks and green fields and gardens and delicious fruits...”.

## Homework

1. From the Qur'an, write down 5 other features of Hell and 5 features of Heaven with the references:

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- 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Allah (SWT) in Surah Qaf describes an argument the people of Hell will have with Allah (SWT). What is that argument? What will be the consequence of it? What do you understand from it?



## Lesson 4: Fear and Hope

Heaven and Hell are a manifestation of God's Infinite Wisdom. In this world, in order to achieve the benefits of paradise and avoid the atrocities of Hell, Allah (SWT) asks us to train ourselves through a fine balance of fear and hope, never allowing one more weight than the other. Having too much hope leads to complacency and having too much fear leads to despair-both extremes are dangerous. For example, one ḥadith of the Holy Prophet (saw) says:



"What I fear the most for my nation is following their selfish desires, and having high hopes. Selfish desires will make you deviate from the right path, and having high hopes will make you forget the Hereafter."

The fear we are discussing here is fear purely of Allah (SWT), and the hope is the hope purely hope in Allah (SWT). Therefore, since Allah (SWT) is Absolute and Limitless, our hope and fear too should be limitless. This is why we are told in narrations that:

"Your fear of Allah should be such that if you came to Him with all the good deeds of the humans and the jinn, from the beginning of time till its end, you would still fear that He may punish you in the Hell-fire and your hope in Allah(SWT) should be such that if you came to Him with all the sins of the humans and the jinn, from the beginning of time till its end, you would still hope that He may grant you a place in Heaven."

### FEAR OF ALLAH

There are many amazing rewards in this world and in the next for fearing Allah (SWT), the main one being that it keeps us away from sin and it increases our love and reverence to our creator. In this world too, Allah (SWT) loves the actions resulting from his reverence and respect that He rewards abundantly!

A story is related from our fourth Imam (as) that some people were sailing in a boat when it capsized in a storm. Only one woman survived by hanging on to a wooden plank that kept afloat. She landed in an island where she met a sinful person. When he saw the woman the evil desires rose in his mind. The woman cried and begged him to spare her. The man who she was scared of in such an isolated place.

The woman raised her hand towards the sky and said, "I am afraid of Allah (SWT)!" The evil person asked her, "Have you never done such an act?" The woman replied, "By Allah (SWT)! I have never committed such a sin!" The man thought that the woman was chaste and he had himself committed many sins. Therefore he thought that he must be more fearful of Allah (SWT). With this thought he left the woman unmolested and went away in one direction.

Later on, a sheikh joined him on a journey away from that island. The heat of the sun was excessive and the sheikh asked him to pray that a cloud shadowed their heads to provide them some relief from the sunlight. The man said that he had been sinner all his life and his prayers may not be answered! The hermit said that he would himself pray and the man should say, 'Aameen!'

The hermit therefore prayed and the sinner said, 'Aameen'. The prayer was answered and a cloud appeared over their heads. After a while they reached a place from where the sheikh had to go in a different direction. When the sheikh went his way, the cloud followed the sinner giving him the shade! The sheikh said, "O youth! What is it that my prayer was not answered and your prayer was?" The man recounted his experience to the sheikh. The hermit said, "Allah (SWT) is pleased with you! Try to earn His pleasure in the future!"

This shows that the fear this young man showed gave him a great status in the eyes of Allah (SWT).

### HOPE IN ALLAH

Once our eighth Imam (as) was told a story. A companion of the Imam related to him that there was a particular minister of the king of the time (Harun al-Rashid) who had some love for the Ahlul Bayt (as) in his heart. In order to test and break this minister, the king ordered him to kill sixty innocent followers of the Ahlul Bayt.

The kings sent this minister to a house, accompanied by a mercenary who was ordered to kill the minister if he did not follow the king's instructions. The minister opened the first room of the house, and found twenty innocent men. He beheaded all of them, and threw their heads into a well. In the next room, were twenty innocent women, and again he beheaded them. The last room contained 20 elderly men, and this minister

ruthlessly killed 19 of them. When he came to the last victim, the elderly victim said to him: 'what will you do on the Resurrection Day when you meet our grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, with our blood on your hands?'

The minister was shaken when he heard this. He truly regretted his actions and knew he would be punished in the Hereafter. Then Satan came to him and took away any hope he had in being forgiven. So the minister said to the old man: 'I have already killed 59 people, and will definitely be punished, so what is one more person?' He killed the last victim.

When the Imam (as) heard this story he said: 'killing those 59 people was a major sin. But losing hope in the Mercy of Allah was a greater sin!'

No matter how great our sin, we should never lose hope in the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah (SWT).

## FEAR ONLY ALLAH (SWT) AND HOPE ONLY IN ALLAH (SWT)

It is very important that we remember that we should only fear Allah (SWT) and have hope only in Allah (SWT). As soon as we start to fear others, fear other things, fear other actions, we lose our faith and our dignity and we are as cowards. Similarly, if we retain hope in those other than Allah (SWT) we will certainly be disappointed.

In order to understand what to be fearful of and what to be hopeful for, we have to recognise characteristics in ourselves that are 'Hellish' or 'Heavenly' and try to eliminate the former and cultivate the latter. In the next section we will discuss some of these characteristics.

## WHO IS HELL BOUND?

It is very important that we recognise that because we not have access to the real 'reality' we cannot judge who goes to Hell or Heaven. We know ourselves the very best and therefore we can determine if we have the characteristics of those who will end up in Hell. Allah (SWT) has described some of these characteristics in Surah Qāf (surah 50):

- 1- **A kāfir**- A person who knowingly rejects the truth of God's existence and Islam.

- 2- **A stubborn person** ('anīd)- One who is stubborn (rebellious) when the truth is presented to him- argumentative when truth is presented.
- 3- **Forbider of good** (Mannā'in lil Khayr)- One who stops other from doing good deeds- e.g. Stopping someone from praying on time or wearing the hijab.
- 4- **Transgressor** (Mu'tadin)- One who exceeds the limits set by Allah (SWT). One who transgresses others' rights.
- 5- **The Doubter** (Murib)- One who doubts everything, even the most manifest of realities, that is Allah (SWT).
- 6- **Polytheist**- (Mushrik)- One who makes partners with Allah (SWT). This could involve layers of shirk that we have discussed in previous lessons.

Allah (SWT) will command the angels to:

"Cast into the Hell-fire every ungrateful, rebellious one"  
(50:24)

May Allah (SWT) protect us from being such people that the severe 'cleansing' in Barzakh is not enough to purify them.

## PEOPLE OF PARADISE

Although we all want to go to paradise, we have to understand that the people of Paradise have some characteristics too. If we don't have these characteristics, if we don't love goodness, we will not be compatible to paradise. These characteristics include:

- 1- **Turns to Allah** (SWT) (awwāb)- the person whose heart returns like a compass to God (SWT). He is constantly thinking of God and His responsibilities and his every action is connected to what God wants of him.
- 2- **Keeps to the limits** (Hafīdh)- One who keeps his covenant with Allah (SWT) that he had made before coming into this world, in other words, keeps to the limits Allah (SWT) has set for him.
- 3- **Who reveres the Beneficent Allah (SWT) in secret** (Khashiyā rahīmāna bil Ghayb)- One who worships Allah (SWT), believes in Him in their heart (without boasting or showing off), even when no one is around or they were in a different land or situation. They know that Allah (SWT) is watching them even if no one else is.



### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Discuss the era before the deputation of Prophet Muḥammad (saw)
- Understand that the Prophet was a Muslim prior to the advent of Islam
- Understand that the Prophet had no grandchildren other than the children of Sayyidah Faṭimah (as)
- Outline the fact that Islam abolished all forms of racism and prejudice
- Understand and be reminded the style of the preaching of the Prophet
- Be reminded of some of the difficulties faced by the Muslims when Islam was first proclaimed
- Understand that during the early days of Islam, it was the patience of the early Muslims that led to the victory of Islam
- Be reminded of the fact that the Prophet migrated to Medina to escape the tortures of the Quraysh in Mecca
- Understand a brief analytical history of the treaty of Ḥudaibiyyah and the final conquest of Mecca
- Know that the prophet won over Mecca without a battle
- Understand that not all the companions of the prophet were righteous
- Understand the events that transpired in the last days of the life of the Holy Prophet

## Lesson 1: The Early Stages of the Prophet's Life

### ARABS BEFORE ISLAM

We learnt in the previous years that Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was sent to a very ignorant and ruthless Arab community. Below is a short list of their vicious practices:



- They considered newly born daughters to be an evil omen and thus used to bury them alive,
- Women were treated as slaves who were expected to yield to any demand of men's lust.
- Brutal wars were being fought for very insignificant reasons with no party willing to compromise, leaving them fighting for years.
- Heavy drinking and gambling was the norm while superstition and witchcraft was considered to be systems that ran universe.
- Above all, the community suffered from anarchy, corruption and lack of law and order and there were no systems in place to correct misdoings.

To summarise, it can be said that the environment in which the Prophet's mission began could not have been any worse because not only were people indulging in every kind of uncivilised and corrupt act, but they were also extremely resistant to any form of change and would go to the extent of killing anyone who proposed change. The Holy Prophet was sent to this community to reform and change them, a very tough task indeed.



## THE FAITH OF THE PROPHET BEFORE THE FIRST REVELATION

The faith of the Holy Prophet (saw) prior to the first revelation has been a matter of discussion between the Shi'a and Sunni scholars for a long time. The following issues have been raised:

1. Did the Holy Prophet believe in any religion before that first revelation?
2. Supposing that he was the follower of a religion, was it his own religion or was it based on revelation?

These questions can be answered by the following two methods:

### **a. By studying the first 40 years of the Prophet's life**



When using the first approach, we see several instances where the Holy Prophet professed the Oneness of Allah. He prayed continuously in the cave of Ḥira. Similarly the Prophet always remembered Allah while taking his meals and refrained from eating meat of the animals which had been slaughtered in an unlawful manner. He was very much disturbed to see obscene scenes, wine-drinking and gambling; so much so that at times he sought refuge in the mountains and returned home when a part of the night had passed.

### **b. By scrutinising what the Ahlul Bayt have said on the subject.**

Using the second approach, we find discourses such as those of Imam 'Ali (as), the chief of the monotheists in Khutbat al Qāsiyah:

“From the time the Holy Prophet had been weaned, the Almighty Allah had associated the most distinguished angel with him so that he might show him the path of magnanimity and goodness during day as well as night”<sup>i</sup>

In addition to this, we see that other prophets, like Prophet Yaḥyā and Jesus (as), were prophets from birth, as confirmed by the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, it is

definitely possible for Prophet Muḥammad (saw) to have been a prophet from birth, as confirmed by the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt and what we know about his lifestyle prior to the first revelation.

### **c. Our Principle Beliefs**

As followers of the Ahlul Bayt, we believe that all Prophets were born as Prophets, and knew they would later receive revelation and be given a specific mission. Thus when it comes to the Master of the Prophets and Messengers, surely he too was a Prophet since birth.

## THE HOLY PROPHET'S FAMILY

Prophet Muḥammad's (saw) first wife was Sayyidah Khadijah (sa). He married her when he was 25 and lived with her until her death which was 25 years later. He had two sons with Sayyidah Khadijah (sa), both of whom died at a very young age. The Prophet and Sayyidah Khadijah (sa) also raised four girls. One of these girls was of course Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) who was definitely their biological daughter. As for the other three girls, Ruqayyah, Zaynab, and Umm Kulthūm, there is debate about whether they were actually the Prophet's daughters or not. They may have been his daughters with Sayyidah Khadijah (sa), or they may have been Sayyidah Khadijah's (sa) daughters from a previous marriage, or they may have been her nieces whom she was raising.

Another member of the Prophet's family was a boy called Zayd. Zayd was a young boy who was taken as a slave. Prophet Muḥammad (saw) freed Zayd from slavery and looked after him like a son. In Islam, it is highly recommended to take care of orphans or slaves and provide them with what they need in life<sup>ii</sup>. The Prophet (saw) and Sayyidah Khadijah (sa) were extremely kind to slaves and freed many of them, always acting charitably towards them.

## THE PROPHET TAUGHT SOCIAL JUSTICE



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 (Quran 49:13).

The Prophet did not differentiate between these classes and this was most annoying to the arrogant people of Quraysh. They were asked to sit and dine with the poor, accept their proposals of marriage to their daughters, and to share positions of leadership with them.

These messages were not taken very well by his 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 examples below provide a glimpse of the Prophet's character in ensuring equality, and his efforts to avoid hurting the feelings of the less accepted groups in society.

- On another occasion, the Prophet was busy having food with a few other companions when a person suffering from leprosy, a disease that disfigures the face and body, arrived in the gathering. The people present expressed their abhorrence and detestation over his arrival but the Messenger asked him to sit next to himself and invited him to eat the food.
- One day, a poor man joined a gathering with the Prophet and his companions. He sat next to a wealthy man. The wealthy man collected his long robe and pulled it away because he did not want it to come into contact with the poor man. When the Prophet (saw) saw this, he chided the wealthy man. The wealthy man then offered to give half his wealth to the poor man. The poor man refused to accept the gift, saying he wished for a greater reward from God.

We have also read that Prophet Muḥammad (saw) would always give Bilāl, the black Ethiopian slave, the distinguished position of reciting the Adhān, even though he could not pronounce a few words correctly. This was to show that race or colour did not matter to him or to Allah (SWT). Moreover, the Holy Prophet eliminated discrimination due to gender by elevating the status of women at a time when they were only used for the fulfilment of desires and newly born daughters were considered to be a disgrace.

Now, after studying the way the Prophet behaved, let us ask ourselves how we would react in each of the cases above. Would we sit next to a person with leprosy? We should reflect on how we act and ensure that we do not discriminate against people because of their background or because of how they look.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE WORDS OF MUHAMMAD (PBUH)**

“Say (O Muhammad): My Lord has commanded justice...”<sup>iii</sup>

Prophet Muhammad states that “*the heavens and the earth stand upright by justice*”<sup>iv</sup>, and that when it comes to social justice: “*people are as equal as the teeth of a comb*”<sup>v</sup>. He also has specific teachings when it comes to certain types of discrimination and injustice.

In every community, there are people who are seen as lowly and abased. For a variety of reasons, they are discriminated against and down-trodden. In this regard, the Prophet of Mercy says: “*Shall I inform you of the best of Allah's servants? It is the weak and the down-trodden (among you)*”<sup>vi</sup>. The Prophet even states that we can share in his mission by seeking out the down-trodden and helping them: “*Assist me in seeking out the down-trodden, for verily you are given sustenance and succour only because of the presence of the down-trodden among you*”<sup>vii</sup>.

One of the reasons for being down-trodden and abased is racial discrimination. The Prophet was a pioneer in addressing this form of inequality too. The Arabs of his time looked down at their former slaves of African descent. They also discriminated against other non-Arabs. To crush this terrible pride, the Prophet (saw) gave special positions to freed slaves like Bilāl. He also facilitated marriages between non-Arab men and Arab women. Bilāl, Salmān (an Iranian) and Ṣohaib (a Roman) all married Arab women with the help of the Prophet (saw).<sup>viii</sup> The Prophet tackled this most sensitive component of racial discrimination, as a clear indicator and sign that inequality and discrimination based on race, ethnicity or skin colour is not tolerated in Islam.

Another group that suffers from discrimination are the poor, who are often stuck in a vicious cycle that only leads to more poverty and suffering. Prophet Muhammad (saw) teaches that one who works in order

to stave off the neediness of poverty from himself and his family is like one who risks his life in battle for the sake of God. Yet there will always remain those who are poor through no fault of their own, never given a chance to escape that vicious cycle.

In this regard, Muḥammad (saw) states so simply and so eloquently that *“poverty is my honour”*<sup>xix</sup> and that: *“the poor are the friends of God”*<sup>xx</sup>. He declares himself to be amongst the community of the poor, and he relates them to God, so that we know that not only should the poor not be humiliated or ignored, but they should be honoured and helped.

One of Prophet Muḥammad’s greatest achievements in social justice was the status he gave to women. He respected and honoured women, listening to them and responding to their concerns positively.<sup>xi</sup> He prohibited the senseless murder of infant girls and several other oppressive Arab customs, and he taught that women should be loved, not lusted after. Islam teaches that lust is a harmful thing when it is left to run loose. However, this is not to be confused with love for a woman. Love for a mother, daughter, wife or sister includes respect, honour and consideration. Prophet Muḥammad (saw) taught that: *“the more the faith of a (male) servant (of God) increases, the more his love for women increases”*<sup>xii</sup>. The Prophet declares innocent love for women a part of faith, so that it is clear that injustice and discrimination against a woman are not compatible with faith at all.

Through his actions and words, Prophet Muhammad (saw) worked to establish a fair society, free of discrimination and inequality, in which *“mankind may keep up justice”*<sup>xiii</sup>.

## Class Discussion

- What are some situations in which we may be racist or discriminate against people? (Teacher to facilitate):
  - Marriage
  - Close friendships
  - Jobs
- How can we avoid being unfair to people in such situations?

## Review Questions

**Q1. From the evidence provided in this lesson, give three reasons why the Holy Prophet could not have possibly practiced a faith or religion other than Islam.**

**Q2. Why did the Holy Prophet (saw) give Bilāl the position of reciting the Adhān?**

## Lesson 2: The Prophet’s message begins

In the previous lesson we learnt about the environment in which the Prophet (saw) had to perform his mission. The people were ignorant and therefore violent and aggressive in their dealings and led a very immoral and uncivilized lifestyle. We also learnt how the Prophet (saw) dealt with these people and introduced many changes in the lifestyle of his people even before he was declared a Prophet.

In this lesson, we will learn more about the ways in which the Prophet (saw) was able to bring about a reform in his society, particularly focusing on the role of patience as a fundamental value in achieving success in this world and in the Hereafter.

## THE PROPHET’S STYLE OF PREACHING

Even before the Prophet (saw) was declared as the Messenger of Allah (SWT), he lived a lifestyle of purity, sincerity and peacefulness. His character and behaviour was so pure and sincere that he was known among the Arabs as al-Ṣādiq (the truthful one) and al-Amīn (the trustworthy one).

He had a reputation for tremendous kindness and compassion especially for children and women, and he was a very friendly and sociable person. He was never known to get angry, even when provoked.

Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was a sign from the signs of Allah in morals and manners and he was distinguished from all the prophets and all human beings by his unequalled morals. By his behaviour he could attract the hearts of even his worst opponents, and could unite the Arabs and lead them to purify the earth from idolatry and ignorance. Therefore, Allah praised him in the Holy Qur’an when saying

“And thou (stands) on an exalted standard of character.”  
(Al-Qalam 68:4)

An example of the Prophet’s (saw) patience is when his front teeth were broken and his forehead was wounded in the Battle of Uḥud. His companions, who were very angry about that, asked him to pray to Allah (SWT) against the enemy, but he replied kindly and mercifully:

“I have not been sent as a curser but a herald and mercy. O Allah, guide my people for they do not know!”

This forbearance and compassion exemplified the attitude of the Prophet throughout his life.

## **DIFFICULTIES EARLY MUSLIMS FACED**

As the Prophet of Islam declared and spread the faith, he faced severe opposition from the wealthy rulers of Arabia. They used various means to stop the spread of Islam, the worst of which was that they captured and tortured those that accepted the call. Some examples include the experiences of the following companions.

### **BILĀL, THE ETHIOPIAN**

Bilāl was the slave of one the Prophet’s biggest enemies – Umayyah bin Khalaf. When Bilāl heard of the Prophet and his message, he converted to Islam and defied his owner. Umayyah was very upset with this and used to openly torture Bilāl by placing him on the hot sands of the desert and placing a heavy stone on his chest. He used to then try and force Bilāl to reject Islam by threatening to kill him in this way, but Bilāl remained firm until he was set free by the Muslims.

### **THE PARENTS OF AMMAR IBN YASIR**

The idolaters also tortured two early and steadfast Muslims: Yāsir and Sumayyah. They were the parents of ‘Ammar Ibn Yāsir, and were subjected to the most barbaric forms of torture. Despite such torture, they never forsook their faith! These were the first martyrs of Islam.



The continuation of this unpleasant situation turned the city of Mecca into a prison and a place of torture for the defenceless Muslims. The polytheists made it forbidden even to listen to the verses of the Qur’an, and they appointed certain people to go out and meet incoming caravans and warn them not to make contact with the Muslims.

The intimidation and cruelty of the Quraysh led to the Prophet ordering a number of Muslims to leave Mecca and migrate to Ethiopia in search of safety and a place where they could practice their religion. However, some Muslims remained behind with the Holy Prophet and they faced the hardest times of early Islam. This came in the form of an economic blockade or boycott.

## **THE ECONOMIC BOYCOTT**



The quick spread of Islam made the Arabian chiefs very upset and they realized that the torture techniques they were using were actually creating more trouble, and would not stop people from converting to Islam. They therefore decided to implement a new technique to cripple the Muslims. They carried out an economic boycott to weaken the Muslims’ earning and trading powers.

The following were the terms of the boycott

1. Every sort of trade and business with the supporters of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) shall be banned. Anyone found dealing with them would be tortured even if they were not Muslim.
2. Any other form of association, such as friendship with the Muslims, was prohibited.
3. Nobody was allowed to marry Muslims.
4. The enemies of the Muslims should be supported and rewarded in all cases including enjoying cheaper prices of goods and other benefits.



This boycott lasted for over three years during which the Prophet and his followers were not even allowed to live in Mecca. They were forced out of their homes and had to move to a barren valley outside Mecca called – Shi'b Abu Ṭālib – The Valley of Abu Ṭālib.

The conditions the Muslims faced were so bad that people used to eat only one date per person per day and sometimes they even had to share that between two people. The great wife of the Prophet, Sayyidah Khadijah (sa), was also suffering in the same manner. Being the richest person of Arabia, she gave all her wealth for Islam and was now sharing the plight of the oppressed. All this demonstrated a great amount of faith, fortitude and patience by every person there.

The boycott finally came to an end, when it was no longer bearable. The great lady Sayyidah Khadijah (sa) passed away shortly after this, as she was still weak from this horrible ordeal. Finally, the agreement that created this whole event and was pinned to the walls of the Ka'bah was eaten by termites and only the words 'In the Name of God' remained. Many people even among the Quraysh started disapproving of the boycott, and this miraculous event brought a big change and relief for the Muslims.

However, the opposition and hardship did not stop there. The Muslims, especially the Holy Prophet, faced a lot of slander, mockery and humiliation from the speech and action of the idolaters.

In all these events the main factors that helped the Muslims persevere and survive were their patience, faith in the Prophet, and fortitude, without which neither they nor the religion of Islam would have survived.

## **PATIENCE (AI-ṢABR)**

In a famous hadith, Imam 'Ali (as) states that:

“Success will not be denied to one who is patient, even though it may take a long time to reach him”.

The truth of this can clearly be seen in the process of the building of Islam by the Holy Prophet and the early Muslims. Today, the flag of Islam is raised in all corners of the world. If Prophet Muḥammad (saw) and the early Muslims had not practiced immense patience and strong faith, Islam would not have survived over these generations.

## **SO WHAT IS PATIENCE?**

There are many definitions of patience, but the best and closest ones are the following:

The famous scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī describes patience as:

“Ṣabr means restraining the self from agitation when confronted with undesirable events.”

In his book 'A discourse on Patience', Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamen'ai says:

“Patience is resistance against disobedience and persistence in obedience”.

From this we understand that patience is the ability to tolerate a bad, hurtful or painful situation and to deal with it in a reasonable way without becoming angry, agitated or hopeless.

## **WAYS TO ACHIEVE PATIENCE**

Below is a piece of advice from Ayatollah Khomeini (ra) for achieving patience:

“This world is a believer's prison. Gather all the strength at your command and be patient and forbearing throughout its ups and downs. With courage and fortitude, stand against adversities and calamities. Make yourself understand that the agitation and anguish inside you, aside from involving a great disgrace by themselves, are futile in confrontation with sufferings and calamities. Be happy with God and don't complain in front of creatures about His irresistible decrees and unavoidable ordainments.

During the times of hardships, turn your heart's attention to God and you will witness its effects in this world itself and your heart will attain such an expanse that it will witness God's Power. Richness and contentment will then spread through your heart such that everything related to this world will become worthless in your eyes. Ṣabr, forbearance, and restraint bring fair and plentiful rewards, and have sublime and beautiful forms in the world of Barzakh (purgatory).

If you have faith in God and you believe that all the affairs lie in His mighty hands, you will not complain before God Almighty of the hardships of life and the adversities that strike you. Rather, you will accept them willingly, fulfil your duties and thank Him gratefully for His bounties.<sup>ixiv</sup>

## Review Questions

**Q1. In your review, what was the most difficult test faced by the Muslims during the early years of Islam?**

**Q2. Define and describe patience in 200 words.**

## Lesson 3: The Spread of Islam

As we have learnt in previous lessons, the early Muslims showed amazing patience and courage in remaining on the right path despite the torture and abuse they faced. Eventually, the environment of Mecca became unbearable and the Muslims migrated to Medina along with the Prophet. The people of Medina accepted the Muslims and the Prophet whole-heartedly, as many of them had already accepted the Message of the Prophet prior to his migration.

### HOW ISLAM SPREAD TO MEDINA

The people of Medina used to go to Mecca to seek help from Quraysh for their tribal battles between 'Aws and Khazraj. On one of these trips, their leader heard the following words of the Holy Qur'an being recited by the Prophet and it affected him greatly.

“Say: Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited for you: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty - We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to shameful sins, whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause. This He has commanded you that you may understand. And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he (or she) attains the age of full maturity; and give full measure and full weight with justice. We burden not any person, but that which he can bear. And whenever you give your word, say the truth even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfil the Covenant of Allah, This He commands you, that you may remember.” (6:151-2)

He invited his friends from Medina to meet the Holy Prophet and Islam spread very quickly among them. In one of the years that the people of Medina went to Mecca for their pilgrimage, they accepted Islam formally.

Upon their return to Medina, they took great efforts to spread the Message of Islam.<sup>xv</sup>

### LIFE AFTER MIGRATION

After migrating to Medina, the Muslims continued to struggle and were faced with different challenges from Quraysh and other non-Muslims, such as battles, hypocrites and spies.

In order to ease the life of the Muslims and bring peace between tribes and different faiths, the Messenger of Allah (SWT) established treaties amongst the groups.<sup>xvi</sup>

Another reason why the Prophet (saw) established treaties amongst different groups was in order to spread Islam in a peaceful manner. There were a few obstacles in the way of propagating Islam, such as armed enemies and enmity. The Prophet knew that if the enemies were disarmed and no longer had the intention to fight the Muslims militarily, Muslims would be free to preach Islam and the people of Arabia would soon become Muslims. Indeed, this is what happened.<sup>xvii</sup>

### THE PEACE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYAH<sup>xviii</sup>

In the year 6 A.H., Prophet Muḥammad (saw) along with around 1600 companions left Medina to Mecca in order to perform the Pilgrimage (*Ḥajj*). They did not carry any weapons with them as a gesture of their good will and to show that the purpose of their journey was solely to perform the Pilgrimage. When Quraysh were informed of this, they vowed not to allow the Muslims to enter Mecca and stopped them at a place called Ḥudaybiyyah. The noble Prophet sent an ambassador to Quraysh with some gifts and to explain the intention of the Muslims. However, in response, Quraysh killed the ambassador's camel and put the ambassador's life in danger too. After many attempts to come to terms with Quraysh, the Prophet was finally able to make a treaty with them. This was named the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Although most of the terms in the treaty seemed to be against the Muslims, the Prophet (saw) accepted it.<sup>xix</sup> The treaty included the following:

- There would be no fighting between them for ten years.

- The people were free to join or make agreements with the Prophet or Quraysh and there would be no restrictions.
- Whoever goes to Prophet Muḥammad from Quraysh without the permission of their guardian should be returned to Quraysh but whoever goes to Quraysh from the Muslims would not be returned.
- The Prophet and his companions (the Muslims) will go back and not enter Mecca that year. However, they would come back to enter Mecca (unarmed) the following year for the pilgrimage and reside in it for three days.<sup>xx</sup>

Some of the companions complained about the treaty. However, the Prophet insisted it was the best thing for Islam. It was this Treaty that paved the way for the conquest of Mecca which occurred two years later. Regarding the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

“Indeed, We have granted you a manifest victory.”  
(48:1)<sup>xxi</sup>

## **QURAYSH VIOLATE THE TREATY**

Two years after the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah took place, the tribe of Quraysh violated the treaty and attacked<sup>xxii</sup> the tribe of Bani Khuzā‘ah, who were allies of the Muslims, and killed many of them.

## **THE CONQUEST OF MECCA**

In the Ramadan of the 8<sup>th</sup> year A.H., shortly after the treaty was broken, Prophet Muḥammad (saw) left Medina with ten thousand Muslims and headed towards Mecca to take the enemies by surprise. The Holy Prophet made it very clear to the Muslims that they should avoid bloodshed at all costs.



When they neared Mecca, the Prophet sent a message to Quraysh telling them about the means of their security and safety: to either remain in their houses (as a gesture of neutrality) or seek refuge in the precincts of the Ka‘bah or the house of Abu Sufyān<sup>xxiii</sup>, to show that they had surrendered. Quraysh, knowing that the Prophet was a trustworthy person who wouldn’t go against his word, surrendered as they knew they would be safe if they did so.

Upon entering Mecca, there were only a handful of the Quraysh who arrogantly wanted to resist the Muslims and attacked one of the groups. The Muslims defended themselves and some of the Quraysh who attacked were killed. Otherwise, the entry and conquering of Mecca was peaceful. As soon as the Prophet entered into *Masjid al-Ḥarām* (wherein is the Ka‘bah), the statues were broken and shattered. This proved to the Quraysh and idolaters that if the statues were gods they would have at least defended themselves, let alone protect their worshippers from the Muslims.<sup>xxiv</sup>

From this early history of Islam, we can see clearly that Islam spread because of its beauty and logic, and not through violence.

If one removes the barriers that have been placed to make Islam seem bad, Islam on its own will shine. For example, in today’s society, there are a great number of lies and distortions which have been propagated against Islam to prevent it from spreading and in order to make people hate or attack Muslims. In order to win this battle and remove those barriers, we need to show what Islam is really like through our behaviour and educating friends and the community.

## **THE PROPHET’S STRUGGLE WITH THE HYPOCRITES**

As we have learnt, the Prophet struggled with non-Muslims throughout his message. However this was not his only struggle. Although the Prophet had many righteous companions, such as Salmān, Abu Dhar al-Ghifārī, Miqdād ibn al-Aswad, ‘Ammār ibn Yasir and so on, there were many so called ‘companions’ who disobeyed him and were hypocrites. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

“...and from among the people of Medina; they are stubborn in hypocrisy; you do not know them, We know them...”<sup>xxv</sup> (9:101)

## THE HYPOCRITES

Walid ibn ‘Aqabah<sup>xxvi</sup> was a supposedly reliable Muslim and hence the Prophet appointed him as the tax (*Zakat*) collector. One of the tribes that he was sent to was Bani al-Mustaliq. On the way there, Walid started to remember the fights and problems that occurred between his tribe and Bani al-Mustaliq during the pre-Islamic era and hence thought that the tribe of Bani al-Mustaliq would kill him once they saw him. Without addressing the tribe, he returned to the Prophet and told him that this tribe did not want to pay their *Zakāt*. At that moment, the following āyah was revealed:

"O you who believe! If a sinful person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done."  
(49:6)

So the Holy Prophet sent another companion to make enquiries and realised that the people of Bani al-Mustaliq were all Muslims and were willing to pay their *Zakāt* and co-operate.<sup>xxvii</sup> This was an example of how some hypocrites, who had only become Muslims for personal benefits, were affecting the Muslim community in a negative way.

Abu Hurayrah<sup>xxviii</sup> is a prime example of another type of hypocrite: one who fabricated narrations and attributed them to the Holy Prophet. The Sunni books of narration are filled with thousands of narrations from Abu Hurayrah, even though this man was only with the Prophet for the last two years of the Prophet's life. There is no way that this man could have heard so many narrations. However, he was willing to fabricate narrations and attribute them to the Prophet at the behest of Prophet like Mu'āwiyah.

These were the type of personalities that the Holy Prophet had to struggle against. Having overcome the external enemies of Islam, he and his Ahlul Bayt (as) now had the more difficult task of fighting the internal enemies of Islam, who had started to call themselves Muslims so that they could enjoy power and wealth, but who were in fact trying to undermine Islam from within. Thanks to the efforts of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) and his Ahlul Bayt (a), we can still distinguish the true Islam

from the falsehood these hypocrites have introduced. Unfortunately however, they have damaged the progress and spread of Islam in a great way.

## BLACK THURSDAY<sup>xxix</sup>

On the Thursday 3 days before the Holy Prophet's death, the senior companions came to enquire about his health. He lowered his head a little and reflected for some time. Then he said to them: "Bring me a sheet of paper and an ink-pot so that I may write something for you, after which you will never be misguided".

At this moment the Second Caliph broke the silence and said something terrible: "The man is delirious. The Qur'an is with you. The Divine Book is sufficient for us".

The view expressed by the Caliph became the subject of discussion, some persons opposed him and said: "The orders of the Prophet must be obeyed. Go and bring him pen and paper so that whatever he has in mind should be recorded". Some others took the side of the Caliph and prevented the procurement of pen and ink. The Prophet was extremely annoyed on account of their dispute and presumptuous words and said: "Get up and leave the house."

After narrating this incident Ibn 'Abbas says: "The greatest calamity for Islam was that the discord and dispute of some companions prevented the Prophet from writing the deed which he intended to write"<sup>xxx</sup>.

When some persons in order to make amends for the ill treatment, asked the Prophet, whether they might bring pen and paper he was much disturbed and said: "After all that has been said, do you want to bring pen and paper? I recommend only that you should behave well with my progeny". Having said this he turned his face from those present and they too got up and dispersed.  
<sup>xxxi</sup>

Some of the so-called close companions of the Prophet had disobeyed him in the last moments of his life. It would be the same companions who would later not attend his funeral, and instead go to seek power and position selfishly.

The Prophet (saw) passed away a few days later. According to most of our scholars, he died of natural causes. His Ahlul Bayt, led by Imam 'Ali (as) attended to



his funeral, and with great sorrow buried him in Medina, in the holy mosque of the Prophet.

The legacy of Prophet Muḥammad can be summarised thus:

Muḥammad was deputed by His Lord to teach mankind to worship none but God, and to associate no partners with Him, freeing them from the oppression of idolatry and the chains of superstition. He taught that a person ought only to submit to God; not to society, not to rulers, not to the majority; but only to God. He taught that absolute submission to God was absolute freedom.

In teaching freedom, he also taught us to avoid shameful sins. He urged us to be true to ourselves, our values and our ideals, rather than succumbing to sinful desires which were ultimately destructive. Once a person chooses the path of sin, they begin a journey of sometimes slow, but always inevitable, self-destruction.

## Review Questions

**Q1. Why did the Holy Prophet and the Muslims migrate to Medina?**

**Q2. How did the Holy Prophet conquer Mecca?**

**Q3. Describe some of the struggles of the Holy Prophet with some of the hypocrites of his community.**

<sup>i</sup> Nahjul Balagah, vol 2, page 182

<sup>ii</sup> Al-Isaba, vol. 1, page 545, Usul Ghabah, vol 2, page 224

<sup>iii</sup> The Holy Qur'an, 7:29

<sup>iv</sup> Quoted by Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, Tasfir al-Amthal, commentary on 4:135

<sup>v</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, n. 6273

<sup>vi</sup> Mizanul Himah, n. 3743

<sup>vii</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, n. 3744

<sup>viii</sup> Al-Kafi, v.5, p. 320

<sup>ix</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, n.5048

<sup>x</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, n. 5049

<sup>xi</sup> See The Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Mujadila and Mizanul Hikmah, n. 5741

<sup>xii</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, n. 5748

<sup>xiii</sup> The Holy Qur'an, 57:25

<sup>xiv</sup> [Adopted from 'Forty Hadith' by Imam Khomeini, Chapter 16, 'Sabr']

<sup>xv</sup> Seal of the Prophet and his message.

<sup>xvi</sup> In one such incident in the year 6 A.H. the Prophet (saw) undertook a treaty with BaniKhuzā'ah in order to protect their water, property, lives and land. (Ja'farSubhani, The Message)

<sup>xvii</sup> Ja'farSubhani, The Message

<sup>xviii</sup> Hudaybiyyah is a small village near Mecca.

<sup>xix</sup> Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, The Revolution of Imam Husain

<sup>xx</sup> 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi, The Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an by al-Qummi

<sup>xxi</sup> Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, The Revolution of Imam Husain

<sup>xxii</sup> The Prophet at that time had sent a group of Muslims to the frontiers of Syria to punish the Romans for attacking and killing unprotected Muslims. Although there were not many casualties, the Muslims did not return with the expected victory. Quraysh heard of this and thought that the Muslims had weakened militarily. Hence they took the opportunity to disturb the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity created by the treaty and attacked the Muslims.

<sup>xxiii</sup> This is Abu Sufyan the husband of Hind (who had eaten the liver of Hamzah. He accepted Islam out of fear during the Prophet's march to Mecca.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani, The Message

<sup>xxv</sup> In the previous ayah, (9:100), Allah praises the companions and this is the ayah which other sects adhere to in order to prove that all companions of the Prophet (who were contemporary with the Prophet) were trustworthy. However in the ayah, Allah (SWT) is praising some of the companions not all: "Those who embraced Islam first (the early Muslims) **FROM AMONG** the Migrants (*Muhajirin*) and **AMONG** the Helpers (*Ansar*) and those who followed them with righteous deeds, God is pleased with them and they are pleased with God". Hence God is selective to the companions and is not pleased with all as some/many of them were hypocrites as He explains in the next ayah (9:101). This is important when it comes to assessing whether a narration narrated by the companions from the Prophet is authentic or not. Sunnis believe they can accept any hadith from any of the companions, however Shi'as believe that all companions are subject to assessment and criticism before taking their word.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Some people may say that he repented and became a better Muslim. However later in the reign of 'Uthman, Walid was made the governor of Kufah. He used to lead the *jama'ah* (congregational) prayers while drunk (praying four rak'at instead of two for fajr prayer) and at times used to command his mistress to dress in men's clothing and lead the fajr prayer since it was dark and nobody would realise.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, eHawza, Semester 3, Course 3, Lecture 7

<sup>xxviii</sup> All the information about Abu Hurayrah is taken from the book: "Abu Hurayra", by Abdul-Hussayn Sharafiddeen al-Musawi. Available online at: [www.al-islam.org/abu-hurayra/](http://www.al-islam.org/abu-hurayra/)

<sup>xxix</sup> Adapted from Chapter 62 of 'The Message' by Ayatullah Jafar Subhani

<sup>xxx</sup> Sahih Bukhari, Kitabul 'Ilm, vol. I, page 22 and vol. II, page 14; Sahih Muslim, vol. II, page 14; Musnad Ahmad, vol. I, page 325 and Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. II, page 244.

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IMAM 'ALI

امام علي (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

## Lesson 1: Imam 'Ali, and Submission to Allah (SWT)

In previous years, we learnt about the life of Imam 'Ali (as) and how he exemplified the quality of submission. In this lesson, we will learn more details about his life, again emphasising on the quality of submission and its importance. We will also discuss some of the consequences of submission.

### SUBMISSION (ISLĀM)

As we learnt in previous years, the word *islām* in the Arabic language means submission, and Allah, the Wise, chose this name for His religion to emphasise to us that our relationship with Him should be like that of a slave to a master: complete submission.

Submission is to give up control of one's affairs to another. Our Creator and Lord expects us to give up control of our affairs to Him by following His commandments. In other words, when we are faced with a choice in our life, Our Lord wants us to make the choice which He has commanded us to make, and not the choice that our desires or personal conclusions command us to make. If we prefer Allah's choice for us over our own choice for us, then we have submitted.

Preferring what Allah chose for us is logically always the better option for us. This is because He created us and the world around us and so He knows better than anyone, including us, how we and the world around us can reach its perfection. His Commands are there to help us reach our full potential and help the world around us reach its full potential.

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should understand:

- Learn another of the titles of Imam 'Ali (as)
- Know a brief timeline of his life
- Discuss his submission to Allah (SWT)
- Discuss the controversies during the Caliphate of Imam Ali (as)
- Gain an understanding of the last stages of Imam Ali's life and the main events therein

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً

“... O you who believe! Enter into submission, one and all...”

(2:208)

The opposite of submission is arrogance. Arrogance against God is perhaps the one major sin that leads people to the Hell-Fire. Arrogance is demonstrated when a person knows that Allah, the Exalted, has commanded him to do a certain thing, but he goes against this command because he feels that his intelligence or his own personal conclusions are more worthy of being followed. For example, we know with certainty that complete and correct Hijab is an obligation from God. However, some people argue that this is backward or extremist. Not only do they not act according to this obligation, but they also form arguments as to why it is permissible and thus prefer their conclusions over the commandments of their Lord.

This kind of person is promised a terrible fate by Allah, the Exalted:

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنكَفُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

*“But those who are disdainful and arrogant, He will punish with a grievous penalty; Nor will they find, besides Allah, any to protect or help them.” (4:173)*

We should learn not to question Allah’s commandments, and not to put our trust in our own presumptions, because our minds are far too weak to fully understand the realities of this world, let alone the realities of the Hereafter, which will be our final abode.

## IMAM ‘ALI (AS), THE LEADER OF THE SUBMITTERS (IMĀMUL MUSLIMĪN)

We will now take a brief look at the life of Imam ‘Ali (as), a man who exemplified this quality. Throughout his life, he showed absolute and complete submission to Allah, the Exalted. For this reason, he was given the title of the Leader of the Submitters by the Prophet (saw)<sup>1</sup>.

We will first look at a brief timeline of his life. Your task will be to undertake further research into the life of the Imam (as) and add more detail to the timeline. We will

then look into a couple of the events within the timeline in more detail to see how the Imam (as) showed submission to Allah in the most difficult and trying of times.



## IMAM ‘ALI (AS), A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

The following is a brief timeline which shows the major events within the life of Imam 'Ali (as).

11 A.H: the leadership of the Muslim community is usurped from Imam Ali

11 AH-35AH: Imam Ali avoids uprisals during the reign of the Caliphs but advises them when they sought his advice or made mistakes

**35 A.H: he accepts the Caliphate when people rush to him appealing to him to become the leader**

**The Battle of Jamal against those who rebelled against Imam Ali**

**The Battle of Siffin against Mu'awiyah and his army**

## IMAM 'ALI IN THE WAKE OF THE PROPHET

In this lesson, we will begin our discussion on how the Imam (as) dealt with the great tests that he faced immediately after the death of the Prophet (saw).

As we have learnt in previous lessons, throughout his life, the Prophet (saw) instructed the Muslim community that after he passes away, they should take Imam 'Ali ibn abi Ṭālib as their leader. However, when the tragedy of the death of the Prophet did come to pass, the Muslims ignored this advice.

While the Prophet was still living his last moments among them, some of the Muslims gathered and discussed the issue of leadership after him. This was done in the absence of Imam 'Ali (as) who was busy attending to the Prophet (saw) and his funeral arrangements. That small council of Muslims decided to appoint Abu Bakr as the new leader, and this was later gradually enforced upon the entire Muslim community, who at the time did not appreciate the significance of this issue of leadership.

When Imam 'Ali (as) had completed the funeral arrangements and paid his last respects to his most beloved Prophet, he came to find that this new leadership was being enforced and that they were denying his right to leadership. The situation was extremely tense, and those loyal to the Prophet and his Household were extremely disturbed by the situation.

It was at this stage of Islamic history that Muslims split into two groups: those who maintained their belief that Imam 'Ali should have succeeded the Prophet, and those who rejected this. The first group later came to be known as the Shi'a, while the latter became known as the Sunna. In our next lesson, we are going to relate some of the events and discuss some of the controversies related to this event, and see how the Imam (as) dealt with them. We will see that his characteristic of submission truly came to the fore in dealing with these challenges.



## Lesson 2: Discussions on Leadership

In this lesson, we will answer a number of commonly asked questions about what happened after the Prophet's death, and how Imam 'Ali dealt with the challenges he faced during this time.

### THE FIRST DISCUSSION: DID THE IMAM PAY ALLEGIANCE TO THOSE WHO CLAIMED LEADERSHIP?

When the position of leadership was usurped and taken by people who were neither qualified nor rightfully appointed or chosen, how did Imam 'Ali (as) react? From the historical evidence we have, it seems that the Imam (as) reacted differently at different stages. At the very beginning, the Imam (as) showed his dissatisfaction with the situation and objected publicly. One example of this open protest was the famous speech that Fāṭima (as) gave at the Prophet's mosque to all of the Muslims, in an attempt to motivate them to return to the path of truth. This of course reflected her husband's attitude to the situation.

Another of the Imam's acts of protest was to suspend his participation in the public life of Muslims for that early period to show his disapproval. In addition to this, the Imam did not pay allegiance to those leaders, to show very openly that he was dissatisfied with their actions.

This situation lasted a few months. After these few months, once the Imam (as) had made his statement in the way of enjoining good and forbidding evil, he returned to public life and paid allegiance to these leaders. We will see in the next discussion why he did this.

For the next few decades, while these false leaders were in power, the Imam (as) always acted with the interests of the Muslim community as the priority in his mind, no matter what consequences it had for him. For example, these leaders would ask his advice on many issues and the Imam (as) would always answer sincerely. In one situation, one of the leaders asks the Imam (as) whether he should go to the frontline of the war or remain in Medina. The Imam (as) could have advised him to do the former in order to place him at greater risk of dying and thus give himself a chance of taking over from him. However, as always, the Imam answered according to

the truth and advised him to remain in Medina, as it would be best for the Muslim community.<sup>ii</sup> Later on, when the third Caliph was under attack by the Muslims because of his blatant injustice, the Imam (as) did his utmost to reconcile between him and the Muslims and even physically defended him, again because he felt it was best for the Muslim community.

This trait of Imam 'Ali (as) was well-known and was acknowledged even by his worst enemies. He would always stand by truth, whether it would personally benefit him or not. This was one of the consequences of his submission to Allah, the Exalted. He had reached such a level of submission that he knew that his role was to be with the truth no matter what its consequences were. This is why the Prophet (saw) says about him:

“‘Ali is with the truth, and the truth is with ‘Ali- it turns wherever he turns.”<sup>iii</sup>

### THE SECOND DISCUSSION: WHY DID THE IMAM NOT INITIATE AN UPRISING?

Once his right of succession was taken, the Imam (as) had two options:

The first was to rise against this false leadership and attempt to remove them by force. This may have seemed like the more obvious choice, and was definitely easier than remaining silent and watching unqualified people declare themselves as leaders. In fact, Imam 'Ali (as) was urged to rise up by a number of people, including the old enemy of Islam, Abu Sufyān. However, he decided to take the more difficult option<sup>iv</sup>.

He feared that if he rose up, divisions would occur amongst the Muslim community and that this relatively young community would fail to thrive. Therefore, he decided to protest silently by not paying allegiance to the new leaders for a while to show his discontent with the situation as discussed above. However, he avoided any form of military uprising. He remained in his house for the first few months and busied himself with compiling a book that interpreted the entire Qur'an with its true interpretation, as he had learnt it from the Prophet (s).

This was a very difficult period for Imam 'Ali (as). This is how he describes it in his words:

“By Allah, a certain person has dressed him with the leadership while he knows with certainty (that it is my rightful position)... (However) I put a curtain against the Caliphate and kept myself away from it. I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly...I found that endurance was wiser, so I adopted patience although there were sharp thorns in the eyes and suffocation in the throat.”<sup>v</sup>

We can see from his own words that Imam 'Ali (as) made an extremely difficult decision, so difficult that he felt as if there were thorns constantly pricking his eye and that his throat was tight all the time. However, he knew that the choice that was better for the sake of Islam was this one. In other narrations, we are told that it was the Prophet (saw) who had already advised the Imam (as) to take the path of quiet endurance. So, as was always his habit, he took the decision that was better for Islam, no matter what the personal consequences were for himself.

### **THE THIRD DISCUSSION: WHY DID THE OTHER COMPANIONS NOT OBJECT TO THIS USURPATION?**

If the companions had heard the Prophet (saw) declare that Imam 'Ali (as) would be his successor so many times, why did they not object against his right being taken away?

One group of companions did protest against the usurpation and showed this by gathering at the house of Imam 'Ali (as) during his period of silent protest. Different narrations give slightly differing names and numbers regarding these companions. However, they definitely included the very loyal companions of the Prophet (saw).

Another group of companions felt that even though 'Ali (as) was the rightful leader, it would not be such a major issue if someone else was the leader at least for a while. They did not see the position of leadership as pivotal and so they did not publicly protest.

Yet another group did not protest out of fear. We have narrations that as soon as the discussion in Saqifah was over, the usurpers began forcing people to pay allegiance to them using violence and threats of violence.

A final group did not protest because they had grudges against Imam 'Ali (as) or envied him. Remember, by now, many of the old enemies of Islam had become Muslims and were living in the Muslim community. These were the same people whose fathers and brothers had been killed by Imam 'Ali (as) in the wars against the disbelievers and so they still held grudges against the Imam and did not wish him to be the leader. This is referred to by Imam al-Šādiq (as) in *Du'ā' al Nudba*.

### **THE FOURTH DISCUSSION: IS THE POSITION OF LEADERSHIP THAT IMPORTANT?**

We have discussed this issue in more detail in our lesson on Imamate. Please refer to that lesson, in which we have explained that perhaps the most important affair within the Muslim community is having a divinely appointed leader.

### **THE FIFTH DISCUSSION: WHY DID IMAM ALI (AS) LATER TAKE THE POSITION OF LEADERSHIP AS THE 'FOURTH CALIPH'?**

Once the position of leadership was initially usurped, it kept being handed down from one unqualified leader to the next, until it came to the third Caliph, 'Uthman. He drew the wrath of the Muslim community because of his injustice and nepotism and was eventually assassinated despite the best efforts of Imam 'Ali (as).

After this happened the people came rushing towards Imam 'Ali (as) and begged him to take the position of leadership of the Muslim community. They had suffered from injustice for a long time and their natural reaction when seeking justice was to go to the Imam (as), whom they knew was the most just of people. People from all around the then Muslim world had gathered and now they all rushed to Imam 'Ali (as) to ask him to take this position.

The Imam (as) was reluctant to take this position. However, he felt it was a responsibility upon him to take it because it would allow him to enjoin good and forbid evil. In fact, he says that this position was worth less to him than the sneeze of a goat, unless it allowed him to establish justice and enjoin good.

In the next lesson, we will see that taking up this position brought nothing but more pain for the Imam (as). He took up this position not for any personal gain,

nor because he acknowledged the people's right to choose their leader. Rather, he took it up because it gave him a chance to bring about justice for those who were oppressed and to establish the laws of Allah, the Exalted. The Imam's ability to do this is another consequence of his submission to Allah. He was so submissive that he became the instrument through which Allah, the Exalted, acted in this world. In one narration, the Imam (as) says the following about himself:

"I am the strong rope of Allah. I am Allah's firmest handle and the word of piety. I am the eye of Allah, His truthful tongue and His hand."<sup>vi</sup>



The Shrine of Imam 'Ali (as) in Najaf

## Homework

- 1. Conduct your own research into the life of Imam 'Ali (as). Pick two of the events in the timeline and write a short paragraph giving more detailed information about each event.**
- 2. Find two example of submission in the Qur'anic stories about the lives of the Prophets. Write a paragraph about each story.**

## Lesson 3: Imam 'Ali in the Position of Caliphate

In previous lessons and in previous years, we have discussed many of the major events of the life of Imam 'Ali (as). In this lesson, we will discuss the final stages of his life, and focus on two of his major characteristics: his hard work and self-reliance.

### IMAM 'ALI TAKES ON THE LEADERSHIP

We have discussed how Imam 'Ali (as) dealt with the three Caliphs that had usurped his position. However, after the third Caliph, Uthmān, was assassinated, Imam 'Ali (as) was forced to accept leadership of the Muslim community as it was his duty. The Muslims from around the world had converged on Medina to ask justice from the third Caliph but now that he had been assassinated they were unanimous about who they wanted to be their leader after this. They rushed to Imam 'Ali (as) and begged him to take up the leadership of the community. Regarding this, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"at that moment, nothing took me by surprise except the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced towards me from every side so much so that Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were getting crushed and my clothes were torn. They collected around me like a herd of sheep and goats."<sup>vii</sup>

We need to understand that we do not believe that a spiritual (who is also a political) leader can be chosen by the people in a 'democratic' system. The fact that the people came to Imam 'Ali (as) to ask him to lead them was not the reason he accepted their proposal. He only accepted because this was a responsibility given to him by Allah (swt), and it was only now that these people were accepting this truth and reality. He (as) says:

"if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the learned to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed I would have untied the rope of Caliphate, and would have given the last one the same treatment as the first one, then you would have seen that in my view this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat"<sup>viii</sup>.

The above is true for every person who is capable and learned to take leadership and fight tyranny as Allah, the

Almighty, has taken a pledge from these people. If we know we are able to lead, it is our responsibility to do so.

Once Imam 'Ali (as) became the leader, some changes began to occur.

## THE DISSENSION BEGINS

Imam 'Ali (as) came to power with the purpose of stopping oppression and establishing justice. His justice was so exact and firm that many found it difficult to live with. Two of the first who broke their pledge of allegiance to Imam 'Ali (as) were Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr. These were two of the oldest companions of the Prophet (as) and had a great status amongst the Muslims. However, during the reign of the past Caliphs they had strayed from the path of truth and had been lured by this world. As a consequence, Imam 'Ali (as) did not give them any positions of authority. In addition to this, they expected to be treated in a special way, but Imam 'Ali's justice was such that he treated everyone equally despite their status in society. They were very much angered by this and they broke their pledge and left Medina to gather an army to fight Imam 'Ali (as).

## THE BATTLE OF JAMAL

At the same time, A'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (saw), who had a particular animosity for Imam 'Ali (as), was trying to instigate people against him as well. Even though she used to insult Uthmān publicly, now that he was dead she blamed Imam 'Ali (as) for the death of Uthmān and urged other Muslims to fight against Imam 'Ali (as). She joined forces with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr and they gathered a large army to fight against Imam 'Ali (as). They gathered at Baṣrah in Iraq, and Imam 'Ali (as) headed to stop their influence. A large army gathered around him also, and the two armies, both Muslim, were ready to fight. Imam 'Ali (as) urged both sides against violence. He sent messenger after messenger to this force gathered by A'ishah but to no avail. Each messenger would be shot by the arrows of this misguided army. Finally, when this army attacked the right and left wings of the Imam's army, he ordered them to fight back and a bloody war began. A large number of Muslims died in this battle, but Imam 'Ali's army was victorious. This incident came to be known as the Battle of Jamal, because the icon of the misguided army that fought Imam 'Ali at Baṣrah was the camel (Jamal) that A'ishah rode.

## THE BATTLE OF ŠIFFĪN

When Imam 'Ali (as) came to power, the centre of the Muslim world was in Medina as it had been since the time of the Holy Prophet (saw). This was where the leader of the Muslim community resided and ruled from. However, the Muslim empire had expanded greatly and now included Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria and other areas of the world. For a long time, a person by the name of Mu'āwiyah has been the premier of Sham- an area containing modern day Syria, and parts of Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. It was a large and important area and Mu'āwiyah (father of Yazīd), who was the son of the great enemies of Islam, Abu Sufyan and Hind (the one who ate the liver of Ḥamza, the uncle of the Prophet) had been allowed to rule there quite independently by the first three Caliphs, especially Uthmān.

By the time Imam 'Ali (as) came to power, Mu'āwiyah had a lot of military and economic power, and had a lot of influence in the area of Sham. He was a public enemy of Imam 'Ali (as) and led a huge media campaign to slander Imam 'Ali (as) and his reputation. Mu'āwiyah wished to rule the Muslim community himself. After much verbal conflict, Mu'āwiyah put together an army that marched from Syria towards Iraq, hoping to expand the areas under his control. Imam 'Ali (as) also established an army and the two armies met in the south of Iraq, near the city of Kūfah. Of all the confrontations between the two armies, the Battle of Šiffīn was the most important one. In this great battle, the army of Imam 'Ali (as) was winning the war and were hours away from destroying Mu'āwiyah's army when Mu'āwiyah and his main advisor resorted to a cunning and vicious plan.

They told their army to stop fighting and instead to raise the Holy Qur'an on spears and to ask the army of Imam 'Ali (as) to enter into judgment according to the Qur'an. This was obviously a trick but some of the members of Imam 'Ali's army fell for it and forced their own leader, Imam 'Ali (as), to accept this proposal. In fact, they threatened to kill him if he did not order the war to be stopped and so he did this.

Once the war stopped, negotiations began and because of some hypocrites within Imam 'Ali's army and because of the cunning of Mu'āwiyah's advisor, 'Amr ibn al 'Āṣ, the result of the negotiations was corrupted. Once the Muslims saw this, they got ready to resume their war



against Mu'āwiyah. However, before the war was to be resumed, Imam 'Ali (as) had a new problem to deal with. We learn from this tragic story that we should not fall for the evil tricks of people who use religious symbols or religion to take us away from the right path.

## THE KHAWĀRIJ AND THE BATTLE OF NAHRAWAN

The same people who had forced Imam 'Ali to stop the war and to resort to the Qur'an for judgment then accused Imam 'Ali (as) of making a mistake and even of being a disbeliever. They broke off from his army and became known as the Khawārij. They had a very 'pious' exterior. They would stay up the nights praying and would recite the Qur'an with beautiful voices. They had black marks on their foreheads from the amount of their prostration. They justified all that they did somehow very much like the modern day Wahhabi sect. However, they announced that all other Muslims were disbelievers and that it was permissible to attack them or take their wealth, and they often did this.

Imam 'Ali (as) dealt with them patiently, until their negative influence became so great and the Muslims were suffering so much from their attacks that the Imam (as) decided it was time to put an end to this group. His army faced the army of the Khawārij in the Battle of Nahrawan. Imam 'Ali (as) gave a moving sermon before this war and this caused the majority of the Khawārij to in fact repent and leave the battle. However, some of them remained and were destroyed by Imam 'Ali's army. Less than ten of them remained alive and fled into hiding. Imam 'Ali (as) said about this incident:

“I have put out the eye of revolt. No-one had the daring to do this except me when its gloom had surged up and its rabidity had become severe.”<sup>ix</sup>

## THE IMAM'S SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF HIS COMMUNITY

The period during which Imam 'Ali (as) led the Muslims caused him much grief, even though it lasted just over four years. No matter how much he tried to rouse his people towards truth and goodness, they ignored him and followed their own desires and worldly ambitions. No matter how much he tried to teach them and save them from a terrible ending, they became more stubborn and petulant. They had become used to the

corrupt practices of the past leaders and now they were not willing to make the tough transition back to the path of truth. One famous example is when Imam 'Ali (as) advised his people that the 'Taraweeh' prayers were an innovation that should not be practiced. They objected and cried out in support of the 'practice of Umar'. Imam 'Ali (as) allowed them to continue it despite his reluctance about it. This was just one example of his people's disobedience, and you have seen others from our discussion above. No wonder then, that he (as) had these complaints to make to Allah (SWT) about his people:

“Before me the people used to complain of the oppression of their rulers, but now I have to complain of the wrongful actions of my people...”

## THE IMAM'S HARD WORK AND SELF-RELIANCE

Imam 'Ali (as) was a man who never stopped his work in the path of Allah, and who never left a task that needed to be done to someone else. He lived up to his own saying:

“I have never seen one who fears hell to be asleep, nor one who hopes for paradise to be asleep”.<sup>x</sup>

It is narrated that Imam 'Ali (as) dug a thousand wells and donated all of them to the poor. When he was asked why he continued to do much work he would say that he did not know if any of it was accepted and thus he would continue to work till the end of his life. He struggled and struggled and never became complacent or lazy. This is why it was only after that mortal blow of the accursed ibn Muljam that he cried out: '*I am victorious*'.

Finally, he could stop his hard work and move on to an abode of rest and peace, which he had prepared for himself by working tirelessly and relentlessly in this world. Here is how the Imam (as) describes his own hard work and the fact that he never left a task for others to do:

“I discharged duties when others lost the courage (to do so), and I came forward when others hid themselves. I spoke when others remained mute. I struck with Divine light when others remained standing. I was the quietest of them in voice but the highest in going forward..”<sup>xi</sup>

Another important trait that Imam 'Ali (as) possessed along with his hard work was his self-reliance. He did not care who was on his side, or what others thought of him,

or how many followers he had. His only concern was that he was discharging the duty that was obligatory upon him, no matter what its consequences. Again, let us look at how Imam 'Ali (as) himself describes this quality in himself:

“I am neither emboldened by abundance of followers nor am I disheartened by their paucity (small number). Do not think that your brother will lose heart if people forsake him and give up their help or that he will humiliate himself, bow down against heavy odds, submit to unreasonable demands of others or accept their commands or orders like a beast of burden.”<sup>xii</sup>

“Certainly, I belong to the group of people who care not for the reproach of anybody in matters concerning Allah”<sup>xiii</sup>.

We should take the example of this amazing personality in always working as hard as we can for the sake of truth and the religion of truth, no matter what the obstacles are.

## THE MARTYRDOM OF THE IMAM (AS)

In later lessons, we will learn about all the evil people who opposed Imam 'Ali (as) because they could not stand his justice and his firm stand for the Truth. The Imam spent all of his life fighting these groups.

Eventually, 40 years after the migration of the Prophet, the most evil of these people, from among the most evil group of the Imam's enemies, killed Imam 'Ali (as) while the Imam was praying. The man's name was Ibn Muljam al-Murādi. He plotted with a few others to attack Imam 'Ali (as) while he was praying the Fajr prayer at the mosque of Kūfah. Unfortunately, Ibn Muljam was able to carry out his plot. He waited for the Imam (as) to go into prostration, and then he unsheathed his poisoned sword and struck the Imam (as) splitting his head. The Imam (as) knew at the moment that this was the end. He cried out:

“I am victorious, by the Lord of the Ka’bah.”

<sup>xiv</sup> All of Kūfah was perturbed by this occurrence and the city shook with the cries and wailings of people. More perturbed were the heavens and Gabriel cried:

“By Allah, the pillars of guidance have been destroyed...”

<sup>i</sup> Mizanul Hikmah

<sup>ii</sup> Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 133

<sup>iii</sup> Mizanul Hikma, narration no. 361

<sup>iv</sup> Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 5

<sup>v</sup> Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 3

<sup>vi</sup> Mizanul Hikma, narration no. 400

<sup>vii</sup> Nahjul Balagha, sermon 3

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid

<sup>ix</sup> Shaheed Mutaaharri, Polarisation around the Personality of Imam Ali (pbuh), quoting Nahjul Balagha, sermon 92

<sup>x</sup> Ibid, sermon 88

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid,

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

## SAYYIDAH FATIMAH (AS)

### سيّدة فاطمة (ع)

#### Objectives >>>

#### Students should understand:

- The meaning of Sayyedah Fāṭimah's title of al-Batūl
- The different aspects of hijāb exemplified by Sayyedah Fāṭimah and our role in upholding its value
- How Sayyedah Fāṭimah is a role model in her chastity and her family relations
- The limits that need to be observed when communicating and interacting with people of the opposite gender
- The status of Sayyedah Fāṭimah from her title al-Muḥaddathah
- The importance of maintaining strong parent-children relationships from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's life and the positive effects it has on the individual and society

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

## LEVEL 5

### Lesson 1: Fāṭima's (as) Chastity

In previous years we have learnt about Sayyedah Fāṭimah's noble family tree and the different aspects of her amazing character for which she earned her honourable titles. Through her we learnt about the importance of being chaste and discussed the effects of hijāb and chastity in both males and females and how to implement and maintain chastity in our society today. In this lesson we will further develop these ideas in order to appreciate chastity as being a key factor in nurturing a healthy individual, family and society as a whole.

#### SAYYEDAH FĀṬIMAH – AL-BATŪL

Due to her endeavour to please God in all aspects of life, Sayyedah Fāṭimah was given many titles by the Almighty Allah and the Messenger of God. One of these titles was al-Batūl. This name was given to her because she devoted her life to worshipping and impressing Allah alone and not people. Al-Batūl means the one who detaches herself from anyone or anything other than Allah (SWT); this includes choosing Allah's pleasure over her own desires whole-heartedly and sincerely. Furthermore, al-Batūl means that her hope was only in Allah and she had fear of no one except of Allah (SWT).<sup>i</sup> This title has been displayed throughout her life where some of the instances include the following:

- Giving away her wedding dress to a poor person on her wedding night because she remembered the Qur'anic āyah:

"You will not attain righteousness until you give away that which you love most." (3: 92)<sup>ii</sup>

- Along with her family, giving away her ifṭār for three consecutive nights to a poor person, an orphan and a captive of war respectively out of her love for Allah only.<sup>iii</sup>
- Staying up in worship at nights until her legs would swell. She would never ask anything from anyone except from Allah as all her hope was in Him.
- Even though she was the most beautiful of women, she chose to be chaste to the extent that no man saw her nor did she lay her eyes on any man.

We learn from Sayyedah Fāṭimah al-Batūl that when we are faced with a dilemma between two things we should always opt for the action or path that will please Allah (SWT).

We can implement these qualities in our life in the following way:

**The way we dress:** For example if a female is to choose between two types of clothing, she should choose the one that is more modest even though her temptations incline towards the less modest one. This is because usually the less modest one is worn in order to impress the people in society whereas Allah loves that His female servant be free from the evil demands of society and be chaste, protected and honoured. Ladies need to remember that modest dress is something that covers the entire body (excluding the face and hands) including the shape of the body. Men need to remember that modest (or recommended) clothing covers the body and is not tight on the body in order to show-off one's muscles as this is more respectable.

**When we look:** When we come across something we should not be looking at, we should lower our gaze and look away, even though we may be tempted to look.

**Outings:** Another example is when we are invited to a wedding that will be conducted in a non-Islamic manner. Even though the couple may be your close relatives, you decline the invitation because you fear Allah and know that He would not like to see His servant in such a place.

## SAYYEDAH FĀṬIMAH: THE HEART OF SOCIETY

Sayyedah Fāṭimah was the centre and only link connecting Prophecy and Imamat, as she was the only daughter of the Messenger, wife of an Imam and the mother of two Imams. This symbolises that Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) plays a central role in the existence and establishment of Islam and the maintenance of a family and society. Hence through her teachings of Islam and the perfection of character that she demonstrated in her role as a daughter, wife, mother and servant and soldier of Allah (SWT) she gave life to society. We will take a look at what this means and relate it to our role as Muslims in a family and society today.

## CONNECTION WITH ALLAH (SWT)

Sayyedah Fāṭimah was raised by the noble Prophet Muḥammad (saw) in a way that increased her connection with Allah (SWT) and detached her from the material aspects of this world.

Once the Holy Prophet had to go on a trip and during that time Imam 'Ali (as) had sent Sayyedah Fāṭimah two silver bracelets and a curtain which he had gained from the booty of a war. When the Prophet returned from his travel he first came to the house of his daughter, which was his usual practice, and saw that she was wearing the bracelets and that the curtain was hung up. He didn't show his usual happiness that he showed when he saw his daughter, and after staying for a short while he left.

Sayyedah Fāṭimah realised the reason for this and immediately called for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and gave the curtain and bracelets to them to take to the Prophet. The Prophet was pleased with his daughter and took these and divided them amongst the poor who had no money or shelter.<sup>iv</sup>

Not being attached to worldly things helps to establish a strong connection with our Lord. Through this we acknowledge His Love and Might and hence would only have hope in Allah and behave in a manner that gains His love and we would not fear anyone other than Allah. Once this connection is developed, we then have the courage to say no to any injustice and corruption and we pursue that which is right and pleasing to Allah. This in turn helps to develop a strong and peaceful society where everyone benefits.



## CHASTITY IN SOCIAL RELATIONS

One of the main values that Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) demonstrated in her life was chastity in social life. Let us look at some main principles to remember and practice in this regard:

- Talking to the opposite gender is not forbidden provided that it is limited to what is necessary. We have to remember that being related to someone does not give us an excuse to behave or talk to them freely nor to drop any part of hijāb and chastity.
- Inappropriate jokes should be avoided as it makes one feel less restricted with the opposite gender. It can lead to a 'friendly' nudge or handshake and harām talking or touching. If we need to speak to someone about an issue (such as in class or at university) then try to stick to that topic or talk respectfully to one another about a decent topic. Always think of what your action will lead to in the future before acting it out.
- A male and female (who are not maḥram to one another) should not be in a place on their own as Satan will always be around inciting them to commit a ḥarām act. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that we are very responsible and have pure intentions when it comes to the opposite gender and will never commit a sin; sometimes all it takes is one small temptation and at that spur of the moment a person may do something that they will regret forever.

## Homework

1. Write a small paragraph on the meaning of the name al-Batūl and give examples from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's life.
2. You attend a co-education school and your teacher pairs you up with a boy/girl (the opposite gender) in your class to complete an assignment together. What are some of the limits required to be maintained when interacting with him/her.

## Lesson 2: Fāṭima's (as) family life

In the previous lesson we learnt how Sayyedah Fāṭimah is a role model for both men and women in all aspects of life. We focused on her chastity and discussed how chastity plays a vital role in maintaining our connection with Allah and strengthening ourselves and the society. In this lesson, we will take messages from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's family life and how she built her family and raised her children.

### SAYYEDAH FĀṬIMAH'S MARRIAGE

When Sayyedah Fāṭimah reached the age of marriage, many companions approached the Prophet asking for her hand in marriage. However both the Prophet and Sayyedah Fāṭimah declined all the proposals. Imam 'Ali (as) was initially too shy to ask. However, when he found the courage to ask, the Prophet and Sayyedah Fāṭimah both agreed as they were aware of his devotion to Islam.<sup>v</sup> From this Sayyedah Fāṭimah knew they had compatible qualities to support one another on their journey towards perfection and their beloved Lord.

### FINDING A SPOUSE

When we reach the stage of life where we are searching for a spouse, we need to look for someone with similar goals in life, who has good character and is a practicing Muslim. We can find out about them by:

- Observing their behaviour in public
- Hearing others speak about that person or asking others about him/her
- It is permitted to speak to the person of the opposite gender within certain limits in order to find out more about him/her from this. Keep in mind that joking, flirting or spending endless hours talking on the phone, internet or directly is not required to find out details about others initially. This stage of 'getting to know each other' should be done with the knowledge of parents and their permission.

## A DEVOUT WIFE

Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) was the support of her husband, his best friend and soul-mate. She would never upset him in any of her words or actions. Imam 'Ali (as) said:

“By Allah, I never angered Fatima, or forced her to do something (she did not like), up to the day she died; nor did she ever anger or disobey me. In fact, when I looked at her, depression and sadness would be removed from my (heart).”<sup>vi</sup>

Sayyedah Fāṭimah and Imam 'Ali divided the house chores and agreed that Imam 'Ali would sweep the floor, bring water and wood for the fire and Sayyedah Fāṭimah would grind (grains), knead (for bread) and bake.<sup>vii</sup> This shows that both parents in the household need to help each other.

Sayyedah Fāṭimah worked extremely hard in the home to the extent where Imam 'Ali says:

“Fāṭimah would carry water in the water-skins until the marks (from carrying it) were left on her chest, she would grind the grains (with the hand mill) until her hands blistered, and she would sweep the floor until her clothes became dusty, she would light the fire under the cooking pot until her clothes would become black (with soot).”<sup>viii</sup>

Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) never nagged her husband, nor did she complain or ask something that her husband was not capable of providing. Imam 'Ali (as) said about his noble wife:

“We were so poor that the sheep-skin we had was our mattress to sleep on, it was our table cloth, our prayer mat. The rest of the house was covered with soft sand.”<sup>ix</sup>

Throughout these hard times, Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) never complained or asked for anything more.”

The way in which Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) dealt with the hardships she faced throughout her life and the sacrifices she made for her family for the sake of Allah teach us all a great lesson. In addition, her efforts show that she truly earned the title of al-Batūl in all aspects of her life.



## PLANNING A FAMILY

We have discussed that there are prerequisites required in order to build an ideal family, one of which was choosing the right spouse equal in spirit and manners. Sayyedah Fāṭimah refused to marry any of the men who had asked for her in marriage except Imam 'Ali (as) because she knew that only she and Imam 'Ali (as) had similar characteristics.. The Prophet said:

“If it wasn’t for Ali, Fāṭimah would not have an equal match.”

This enabled a strong marital relationship which left its positive effects on their children. Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) also sacrificed all she had for her family and never complained. One morning Imam 'Ali (as) woke up very hungry and asked if there was any food. She replied that there was nothing to eat that morning and there hadn’t been any food for two days otherwise she would have preferred to give it to him and the children. Imam Ali (as) said to her, “*Fāṭimah! Why didn't you tell me, so I could bring some food for you?*” To which she answered, “*Abul Ḥasan, I surely become ashamed before my God to ask you to do something you cannot do.*”<sup>x</sup>



## A LOVING MOTHER

The mother is a central figure of the family as she maintains the household by managing her duties towards her husband and children. She is also a central figure in society because a healthy society arises from a healthy family. Sayyedah Fāṭimah attended the care of her children in all manners including emotionally and treated them equally.

Once Imams Ḥasan and Ḥusayn as young children were competing against each other as to whose writing was better. They went to their mother Fāṭimah to judge between them but she did not want to hurt either of their

feelings. She had a necklace with beads on it and said that she will drop the beads and whoever picks up the most would be the winner. At that moment Allah commanded Jibrāil to make it that both would pick up the same amount so that neither of them get hurt.<sup>xi</sup>

Like her father had placed emphasis on her spiritual upbringing, she too focused on the spiritual upbringing of her children. Her children used to witness her staying up in worship every night. Once Imam Ḥasan (as) saw her at night standing in her prayer niche performing prayers until dawn and he heard her praying for all the believers mentioning their name. He noticed though that she would not pray for herself. Imam Ḥasan (as) asked her why she did not pray for herself in the way that she prayed for others. Sayyedah Fāṭimah's reply was,

“O my son! The neighbour first, then the house!”<sup>xii</sup>

Sayyedah Fāṭimah clearly understood that the vital part in maintaining a strong household was to focus on the family members' connection with God. Once this is firmly established, the love for God will drive one to only perform what is right and pleasing to Allah.

## LOVE FOR SAYYEDAH FĀṬIMAH

We have seen Sayyedah Fāṭimah's love for her father and family. However her love did not stop there and extends to all those who love her and her offspring.

When Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) learnt of the dowry for her marriage she told her father the Prophet:

“I kindly ask you to give it back and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to make my dowry the right to intercede for the sinners<sup>xiii</sup> among Muslims (on the Day of Rising).”<sup>xiv</sup>

On another occasion the noble Prophet (sawa) said:

“It is as though I can see my daughter Fāṭimah on the Day of Judgement and she arrives on an outstanding light. On her right there are seventy thousand angels escorting her and on her left side seventy thousand angels escorting her and from behind her seventy thousand angels as she arrives to lead the believing ladies to paradise. Then a voice will be heard saying, “O people of the Gathering! Lower your gaze (in humbleness) so that Fāṭimah the daughter of Muḥammad can pass by”. When she nears the gate of Paradise she will look to her side and God will ask her why she is looking around. She will say, “O Allah I wanted my status to be known on a day like today.” So Allah will reply, “O daughter of my beloved, turn back and look at the assembly, whoever in his or her heart there is even just a drop of love for you or any of your offspring, take their hand and lead them into paradise.”<sup>xv</sup>

The effects of loving Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) and taking her as a role model will be shown in this world and the next..

## Homework

- Discuss ways that you would go about choosing a spouse, when you reach that stage of your life.
- Using examples from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's life, discuss some ways of nurturing our family positively.

<sup>i</sup> eHawza, semester 2, course 5, lecture 30 (for the meaning of al-Bat'ul)

<sup>ii</sup> Fatima the Gracious, ch 27. On her wedding night she wore her dress that her father gave her. A poor person knocked at the door asking for clothes to wear. Fatima (as) was going to give the poor person her old worn dress (which was the only other dress she had) but she remembered the ayah in the Quran (mentioned in the text) and so immediately gave the poor person her new dress. Upon this, Jibrail descended by the command of Allah to replace her dress with a dress made in paradise.

<sup>iii</sup> Surat al-Insan

<sup>iv</sup> Bihar al-Anwar vol 43 page 83

<sup>v</sup> Fatima the Gracious

<sup>vi</sup> Fatima the Gracious, ch 30

<sup>vii</sup> Bihar al-Anwar vol 43 page 150

<sup>viii</sup> Fatima al-Ma'suma, by Sayyed Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah

<sup>ix</sup> eHawza, 10 divine medals of honour

<sup>x</sup> Fatima the Gracious

<sup>xi</sup> Bihar al-anwar vol 43 page 309

<sup>xii</sup> Fatima al-Ma'suma, by Sayyed Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah

<sup>xiii</sup> Sinners here means those amongst the Muslims who have made mistakes or committed sins in their lives but their love for Ahlul Bayt remained intact.

<sup>xiv</sup> Fatima the Gracious, chapter 26

<sup>xv</sup> eHawza, semester 1, course 6, lecture 23





## SOCIAL ISLAM

## SOCIAL ISLAM

## LEVEL 5

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand the place and significance of the social rules of Islam
- Understand that these rules are set to ensure the perfection of society
- Understand that social rules extend to all creatures
- Understand that positive social actions are a great way of promoting Islam

The second level, which must be built from the first level of jurisprudential rules, involves acting in accordance to the social rules set by Islam. This is called al-Fiqh al-Kabeer (the Greater Jurisprudence) While al-Fiqh al-Asghar applies to only Muslims and is concerned with their personal relationship with Allah (SWT), al-Fiqh al-Kabeer or social rules applies to everyone and is mainly concerned with our relationship with the people and the environment around us.

Examples of social rules include but are not limited to social justice, personal hygiene, visiting the sick, etiquette of hosting guests and taking care of the environment. The third level which is beyond the scope of this lesson is called al-Fiqh al-Akbar (the greatest jurisprudence or Practical Mysticism). A true aspirant toward Allah (SWT) must endeavour to put all these three levels into practice to be able to achieve his goal.

## Social Islam

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

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

In the previous years we were introduced to the importance of living by the social rules of Islam. In this lesson we will continue this discussion in more depth.

Islamic laws can be divided into three levels. The first and lowest level is called al-Fiqh al-Asghar (the Minor Jurisprudence). This level which lays the foundation for the other higher levels, involves all the rules for the obligatory acts of worship such as prayers and fasting.

## SOCIAL RULES FROM ALLAH

We should understand that all these rules are set in place by Allah (SWT) who is our creator and knows what is best for us. Divine laws are meant not imprison us but to free us from the clutches of our desires thereby providing a harmonious social environment to live in where individuals are not drive by their own desires and self.

Such laws cannot be man-made. No man’s wisdom can encompass the world and provide universal and timeless laws, unless that man is a vicegerent of God. Man-made laws, which are manifestations of human ideas, are not qualified to bring genuine happiness to mankind; this is because men have a limited thinking capacity.



In today's world, it is not difficult to imagine a society where each individual lives totally for himself and goes to any extent to fulfil his egotistic cravings. Such a self-centred and materialistic approach is what divine social rules are meant to break and this was the purpose of sending down prophets.

“Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice” (57:25)



Both Sociologists and psychologists attest to the fact that without excellent virtues and spiritual guidance man would wander from the path of justice, and any society that does not abide by the principles of social rules will eventually disintegrate. It is for this reason that the destruction of previous great civilizations did not take place because of political or economic crisis but from a bankruptcy of good social rules and etiquette.

### **INTERACTING WITH OUR ENVIRONMENT**

The beauty of laws from a divine source is that they are created with a holistic outlook i.e. the whole of the universe is taken into account. In addition to attending to human rights, Islam places great emphasis on looking after the flora and fauna around us because these too are the creation of Allah (SWT) and all of them play a part in making this Earth conducive to life. In the future, we will dedicate separate lessons to discuss issues such as animal rights and how to look after our environment.



### **PROMOTING ISLAM THROUGH SOCIAL GOODNESS**

A Muslim who lives by the social rules of justice, equality, kindness and environmental care will easily be able to attract others towards him and rid them of any misunderstandings and misconceptions they have about Islam. Even Allah (SWT) attributes the power of the Prophet (saw) to attract people towards him to his kindness and amicable nature:

“And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs....” (3:159)

Our Imams ordered us to treat others well, so that we may be a reflection of the beauty of Islam and the Ahlul Bayt (as):

Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab asked Imam al-Şādiq (as): “How should we interact with our brothers in faith and with other people that we mix with who do not follow our faith?” The Imam (as) said: “Look at your Imams whom you took as guides and do what they do. By Allah, your Imams visit their ill, and attend their funerals, and give testimony for them or against them and fulfil their trusts....once you become very careful about your religion, tell the truth, fulfil the trusts and make your manners with people good, then they will say: ‘this is a Ja’fari...’ and that would please me.”<sup>i</sup>

## AN EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL GOODNESS

A believer is responsible for maintaining friendships with friends and good relations with neighbours, whether they are Muslims or not. In one story, Mufaḍḍal ibn ‘Umar, one of the close companions of the Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), comes to the Imam after a trip. The Imam (as) asks him about his companions on this trip. Mufaḍḍal says that he had a companion on this trip but that they had parted and he had not heard of or seen him again. The Imam (as) encouraged him to maintain his relation with that person, saying:

“Do you not know that if a person accompanies a believer for forty steps, Allah (SWT) will ask that believer about that person on the Judgment Day?”<sup>ii</sup>

It is amazing that the Imam (as) emphasised on even such a simple relationship. Many of us may not even give a second thought to someone we met while travelling. In fact, many of us often let friendships with people who we see often disintegrate. However, the Imam (as) orders his companion to not even let such a seemingly simple relationship to break.

This further demonstrates the emphasis the Imams (as) placed on building positive social relations.

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<sup>i</sup> Al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 464

<sup>ii</sup> [Wasaelu-Shi’a vol.12, p.12]



# TAQLID

## التقليد

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Learn about the process of picking a Marja'
- Learn the conditions of being a Marja'
- Learn ways of finding out the ruling of a Marja'
- Review the signs of Taklīf
- Be able to find rulings through the website or book of their Marja'
- Learn briefly the biography of two prominent Maraaji'
- Learn about the important role of scholars in Islam

### JURISPRUDENCE

### LEVEL 5

## Lesson 1: Reviewing Rules of Taqlīd

In previous years we have been introduced to the scholars of our religion and learnt how to identify and select them. In this lesson, we will briefly review the basics of Taqlid.

### SELECTING A MARJA'

In Islam, it is obligatory that if we have not reached the stage of deriving rulings (ijtihād), we follow the most learned Marja' in the jurisprudential laws of our religion.



We can be certain about and select the most learned Marja' if:

- 1) We become certain as a result of our Islamic knowledge, ability and qualification.
- 2) We become certain through the statement of two trustworthy & qualified person(s).
- 3) We become certain through identifying that the person is well known as the most learned Marja' by many practicing members of the Shi'a community.

## **ACCESSING THE RULINGS OF A MARJA'**

Once we have selected a Marja', we need to know how to find out the rulings in regards to our questions. There are a few ways of doing this:

- Referring to that Marja's book of Islamic Laws.
- Referring to the Marja's official website.
- Referring to the Q & A section of the Marja's official website
- Asking a qualified sheikh in our community who has knowledge of that marja's rulings
- Hearing the rulings from a person we trust knows the verdicts of the Marja'
- Hearing the rulings from the Marja' himself

## **FINDING RULINGS ONLINE**

Today the internet is the most used and possibly fastest source of knowledge. Unfortunately, there is also wide availability of inaccurate or incorrect Islamic knowledge. It is therefore important for us to be able to find the authentic and correct jurisprudential rulings of our Marja' online. We will learn how to do this using an example.

*I want to know how to correctly perform Wuḍu'*

1. Go to [www.sistani.org](http://www.sistani.org)
2. Select 'English'
3. Select 'Islamic Laws'
4. Search 'Wudhu' using the search function (or scroll down and find it in the contents list).
5. Select the relevant search results.

## **BASIC TERMINOLOGY**

It is important to have a thorough understanding of the basic terminology used in the writings of our Marja. We will therefore briefly review some common words and their meanings:

- Wājib: obligatory
- Mustahab: recommended
- Mubāh: permissible
- Makrūh: disliked
- Ḥarām: forbidden
- Mujtahid: a person who has the ability of Ijtihād.



- Ijtihād: the scientific capability of the person to deduce and infer a legal opinion from the religious sources and evidence.<sup>i</sup>
- Marja': a Mujtahid in all fields of jurisprudence, who then announces himself as such and is followed by the general public.
- Obligatory precaution: When a Marja' has no definite ruling on an issue but is leaning more towards one side. In this case, his follower must either follow the precaution that the Marja' has suggested or follow another Marja' who is of equal knowledge or who is the next most knowledgeable, if that second Marja' has a definite ruling.
- Recommended precaution: When a Marja' believes there is some evidence that may indicate that precaution is better taken in a certain situation, so he gives a 'recommended precaution', which the follower has a choice as to whether to follow or not.
  - You may also come across the word 'Pak' in the book of Islamic laws of your Marja'. This is the Farsi word for 'Ṭāhir' or clean. It is used because often the translators have a Farsi background.

## **Review Questions:**

### **Q1. A Mujtahid is:**

- a. Any scholar who has studied for at least 10 years
- b. A scholar who is older and more experienced
- c. a person who has the scientific capability to deduce a ruling from the religious sources and evidence

### **Q2. We can choose or find a Marja' by:**

- a. Asking two qualified sheikhs to identify a Marja'
- b. Following someone who is well-known in the Shi'a community as a Marja'
- c. Both a & b



## Lesson 2: The Importance of Taqlid

In previous lessons, we have reviewed the issue of Taqlid. We have discussed how to select a Marja' and how to find out the rulings of that Marja', and the basic rules related to Taqlid. In this lesson, we will review the conditions that a Marja' must meet. We will also answer some objections against the practice of Taqlid, thereby getting an insight into its importance.



### THE CONDITIONS OF A MARJA'

In order to become a Marja', a person must meet nine requirements. These are being:

1. Male
2. Sane
3. Shia Ithna 'Ashari (a Shi'a) who believes in all of the twelve Imams, as opposed to certain sects of Shia who only believe in some of the Imams)
4. Of legitimate birth
5. Mature (Mukallaf)
6. Just\*
7. The most learned on issues where the Maraji' have different opinions
8. Al-Dabt: meaning he is not suffering from any kind of memory loss like Alzheimer and dementia.
9. Living: (for those who choose a Marja' for the first time)

\* A person is said to be just when he performs all those acts which are obligatory upon him, and refrains from all those things which are forbidden to him. And the sign of being just is that one is apparently of a good character, so that if enquiries are made about him from the people of his locality, or from his neighbours, or from those persons with whom he lives, they would confirm his good conduct.<sup>ii</sup> In addition, given the sensitivity and significance of the position of being a Marja', in addition

to being 'just', having full control over one's desires and restraining oneself from worldly aspirations are required of a Marja', based on obligatory precaution.<sup>iii</sup>

### **CAN WE FOLLOW A DECEASED MARJA'?**

Another issue that is commonly encountered relates to whether a person can follow a Marja' who is deceased.

According to the absolute majority of our Mujtahids following a deceased Mujtahid is not permissible for those who are choosing a Marja' for the first time. There is only one hypothetical exception and that is unless the deceased is proven by the living ones to be more learned. Following a deceased Mujtahid can have some problems. For example:

- If new issues arise, one does not have access to the Marja' to seek his opinion
- It is not possible to pay khums to a deceased Marja'. Paying khums to his office is also impermissible, because a Marja' is the representative (wakil) of the Present Imam (atfs) and once he dies his representation is nullified. So, his office cannot collect Khums on his behalf anymore. Thus the khums must be directed to a living Marja'.
- If it is allowed to follow a deceased Mujtahid, then one would have the choice of all the Mujtahids who passed away for the last millennium. Who can then decide who of these is the most learned?

There are some of the reasons why the Shi'a community follows Maraji' who are living.

### FURTHER DISCUSSION ON TAQLID

There are a number of questions or objections posed against Taqlid. Here, we discuss some of these.

1. Why should someone who is educated and is an 'intellectual' blindly imitate a Marja'? Can they not come to conclusions about religious matters themselves?

Answer: Who are the intellectual people from the Islamic perspective? Does your literacy and academic degree determine the level of your intellect? Is it related to your Islamic education?

Mistakenly, we often regard the academic people as intellectuals. However, the real intellectual according to Islam is one who believes in God and obeys His Commands. Thus, the most foolish people are the atheists who deny the existence of God even if they are the most renowned scientists.

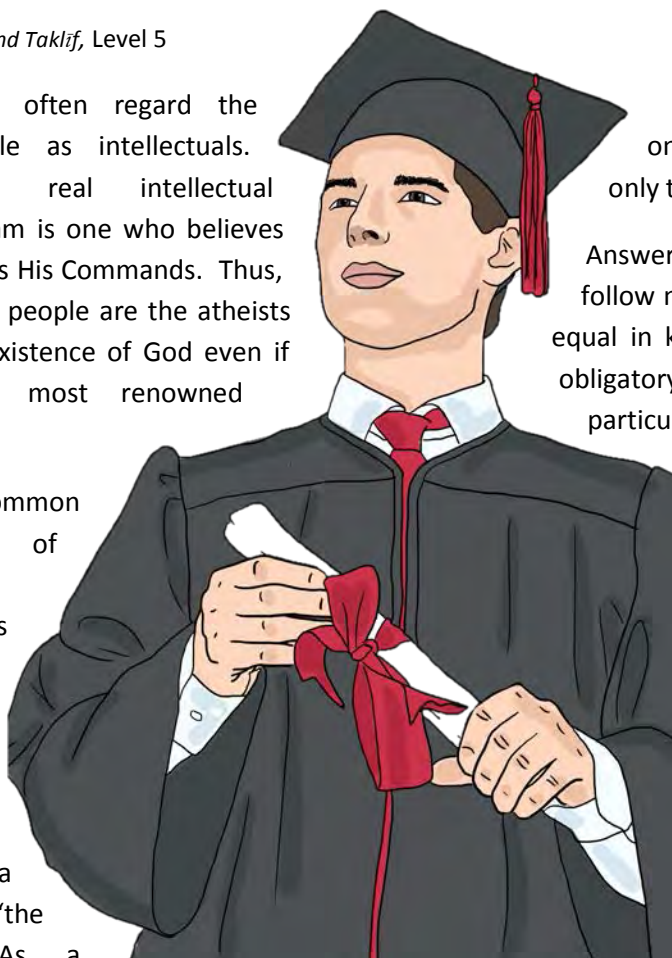
One of the common plagues of insufficient knowledge is pride. Sadly, once we obtain a degree we classify ourselves as a member of 'the intellectuals'. As a

result, we question and often doubt many religious issues, unprofessionally criticize the practice of great scholars, the end result of which will be nothing other than no or doubtful practice of Islam. For every virtue, having a little is better than having none. The exception is knowledge, where little knowledge can be more dangerous than no knowledge at all. Thus it is quoted from the holy Prophet (saw):

"Insufficient knowledge is dangerous."

The one who sees himself as an intellectual, and then gains a little religious knowledge, assumes he knows everything about the subject, and hence goes on to criticize issues he could not understand due to his insufficient knowledge.

Therefore, even those who are educated in secular fields, and who may have some Islamic knowledge, need to refer to the true experts in Islamic jurisprudence.



**2.** Why does a person have to follow only one Marja' and limit themselves to only the rulings of that person?

Answer: all jurists are unanimous that one can follow more than one Marja' as long as they are equal in knowledge and piety. In fact, it may be obligatory if particular Maraji' are more learned in particular fields.

In practicing our religion we need a 'valid proof' between us and God, and as qualified learned scholars are valid proofs, then there is no difference whether one takes the verdict of scholar A or B as long as both of them meet the criteria for being 'valid proof'.

**3.** Is Taqlid a new concept, or was it practised or encouraged by the Imams (as) of the Ahlul Bayt?

Answer: The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt have been appointing some of their learned students to give rulings, and instructing laymen to follow them: for example, Imam al-Bāqir (as) said to his trusted companion Abān Ibn Taghlib:

"Sit in the mosque in Medina, and give rulings to people. For I love to see the likes of you among my followers (shi'a)."

There are a number of other situations where the Imams (as) would refer their followers to learned companions such as Zurarah.

The criterion for giving rulings was knowledge. The following narrations imply this:

"Be wary not to give rulings to people without knowledge. Whoever gives rulings to people without knowledge, on him is the curse of Allah and the angels."

Moving forward in history, our scholars from the past to the present time are almost unanimous about permissibility and rather obligation of Taqlid on ordinary people. This is why Sheikh al-Ṣadūq, one of our earliest great scholars, named his book 'Man la Yaḥḍuruhul Faqih' meaning 'a book for the one

who has no access to a scholar'. This meant that he saw his book as a reference for laymen who wanted to learn rulings from knowledgeable scholars. Great scholars such as Sheikh al-Ṭūsī, 'Allamah al-Ḥilli, and al-Shahīd al-Awwal have all claimed that the scholars are unanimous on the necessity of Taqlīd. These were the great scholars of different generations, and all agreed on this issue.

4. There are narrations that condemn the practice of Taqlīd. How can we explain this?

Answer: these narrations do exist. However, they are referring to following the wrong people, who are unqualified to be followed. The following narration makes this very clear.

Mohammad ibn 'Ubaydah narrates that Imam al-Reḍā (as) said to him: "Are you more strict in practising Taqlīd or the Murji'ah (a deviant group)?"

I said: "They practice Taqlīd and so do we."

He (as) said: "The Murji'ah established in a position of leadership a man who was not worthy to be followed and they followed him. You have established in a position of leadership a man whom you are obligated to follow, but you have not followed him. Therefore, they are more practising of Taqlīd than you."<sup>iv</sup>

In fact, it was the extreme group of al-Khawārij who were against the concept of following any human or any religious issue. The narration below is a discussion between the Khawārij and a companion of Imam 'Ali. The end of the narration clearly shows that following someone who is following God (i.e. gives us the rule of God) is permissible:

"When Ali ibn abi Ṭālib (as) sent Sa'sa'a ibn Ṣuḥān to the Khawārij they said to him: 'If 'Ali was here with us, would you be with him?' Sa'sa'a said: 'yes'. So they said to him: 'Then you are following 'Ali when it comes to your religion. Go back, for you have no religion'. Sa'sa'a said to them: 'Woe to you, should I not follow the one whom God has given responsibility to? This is the best of following.'"<sup>v</sup>

Through this discussion, we come to a more firm conclusion about the necessity and obligation of Taqlīd,

and why it plays such an important role in the life of a practising Muslim.

## Lesson 3: The Process of Analytical Jurisprudence

In previous lessons, we have reviewed the issue of Taqlīd. We have discussed how to select a Marja' and how to find out the rulings of that Marja'. We have also discussed the conditions required to be a Marja' and the importance of Taqlīd. In this lesson, we take a brief look at the process which a Marja' goes through in order to reach a ruling. This will also give us some insight into why the rulings of two Maraji' may differ sometimes.

### THE PROCESS OF REACHING A RULING

When a qualified scholar (Mujtahid or Marja') is faced with a jurisprudential question, they go through a very complex and difficult process in order to reach an answer. At every step, there are several factors that must be taken into consideration, and a Mujtahid must have adequate knowledge of many sciences in order to go through this process.

Here, we take a very brief look at the process of reaching a ruling. It must be emphasised that this is only a brief review of the steps, and by no means takes into account all the complexities of the process:

- Analysing the Holy Qur'an to find any reference to the question. For example, if the question at hand was: 'how should Wuḍū' be performed', the following āyah would be a main reference:
 

"O you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and your feet up to ankles" (5:6)
- When looking at the Qur'an, the qualified scholar does not simply look at one āyah and give a ruling. They look at the whole Qur'an and take into consideration all the āyat related to the issue. This means they need a knowledge of which āyat are established and which are ambiguous, and which āyat are general and which are limited. For example, when it comes to the question 'is wine prohibited to consume', we see that the Qur'an has a number of

āyāt referring to this issue. The qualified scholar uses his understanding of the sciences of the Qur'an to come to the conclusion that the Holy Qur'an gradually prohibited the consumption of wine.

- Thus the āyah totally forbidding wine was the last to be revealed and overrules the others. The āyāt relating to wine are quoted below in the order of revelation from first to last:
  - "And from the fruits of date-palms and grapes, you derive strong drink (this was before the order of the prohibition of the alcoholic drinks) and a goodly provision. Verily, therein is indeed a sign for people who have wisdom." (16:67)
  - "They ask you concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: "In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit." (2:219)
  - "O you who believe! Approach not the prayer when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter..." (4:43)
  - "O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, Al-Anṣāb, and Al-Azlām are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful..." (5:90)
- The next step is to analyse the aḥādith- the narrations from the Prophet (saw) and the Infallible Imams (as). The qualified scholar has knowledge of the main compilations of narrations from the Ahlul Bayt (as), and searches these for reference to the question at hand. For example, if the question was 'can one fast while travelling', the following narration would be a main reference:

The authenticated narration of Suma'ah ibn Mihran from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as): "I asked him about fasting while travelling and he (peace be upon him) said: 'one should not fast while travelling. Some people fasted while travelling during the life of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) and he called them the disobedient. Therefore, one should not fast while traveling, except for the three days during Ḥajj that Allah, the Exalted and Glorified, mentioned'"<sup>vi</sup>

- When looking at a narration, the scholar analyses the following:

- The chain of the transmitters, who must be authenticated and known to be trustworthy narrators
- The content of the narration. It must be free from contradiction, must not go against the Holy Qur'an, or against established Islamic principles
- Often, an authentic narration may explain an āyah of the Qur'an and give further understanding of it.
- Sometimes, narrations may seem to give conflicting evidence. In this case, the scholar must seek to compromise the apparently conflicting evidence using several established principles. Examples of how to compromise between narrations include:
  - Is one general and one specific?
  - Is one unconditional and one limited?
  - Is one more in agreement with the Holy Qur'an?
  - Is one possibly an example of dissimulation (taqiyyah)?
- Having analysed the Holy Qur'an and the narrations, if the scholar finds no reference to the question at hand, they can resort to the following:
  - Unanimity amongst scholars. For example, in the question of whether the elbow itself should be included in washing during Wuḍū', the evidence from the Holy Qur'an and the narrations does not give a clear answer. However, all scholars are unanimous that the elbow should be included, and so a qualified scholar can give a ruling based on this unanimity.
  - Referring to certain procedural principles, which can be used in the absence of textual evidence. An example of these principles is one called 'istiḥāb'. When one is uncertain about a particular issue, this principle allows one to carry past certainty about the same subject and apply it to the present. For example, if a body of water was unmixed and now doubts whether it has become mixed or not, they can apply this principle to assume that it remains unmixed.
  - The practice of the followers of the legislation. If there is no evidence from the Holy Qur'an or narrations, a qualified scholar can also refer to the practice of practising Muslims in the past to come to an answer. For example, we know from the narrations that some prayers should be



recited aloud and some silently. However, when it comes to specifying which should be recited aloud and which should be recited silently, perhaps the main evidence we have is the practice of the Muslims over so many generations, since the time of the Imam (as). Because there is no possible source for this practice other than the instruction or practice of the Ahlul Bayt (as), the scholar can rule according to this practice.

## **DIFFERENCES IN RULINGS**

At times, the ruling reached by different scholars may be different. The differences are often minor, but they do exist. This may be due to several factors. Two scholars may

- believe in different principles when it comes to authenticating transmitters of narrations,
- or they may differ in how to give preference to one piece of textual evidence over another
- or they may differ in the way they understand or interpret the textual evidence

We often see differing opinions amongst experts even in empirical sciences, where the evidence is tangible and experimental. Thus it is natural for there to be difference amongst experts in jurisprudence as well. These differences should be respected and understood. Each scholar is doing their utmost and performing their duty before Allah (SWT) in trying to reach the most correct conclusion.

Therefore, we should not criticise scholars because of the differences in rulings, and we should not inflame tensions between their followers. We are each bound to select a Marja' whom we believe is the most qualified, and then to follow his rulings. We do not need to enter into arguments or debates about rulings. This is because we often do not understand the complexity of the process in deriving these rulings, and we may do injustice to the scholars. Furthermore, these debates can become heated and cause disunity amongst the community.

Ultimately, we must respect the qualified scholars and their sincere conclusions, and maintain our duty in following these rulings. At the same time, we have to

respect the differences in practice amongst our community, and try to make the best of it.

## **Activity**

**Give a brief overview (200 words) of the process that a Marja' undertakes in order to reach a ruling.**

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<sup>i</sup> Ayatollah Makrem Shirazi, Rulings of Taqlid

<sup>ii</sup> Ayatollah Sistani, Practical Laws of Islam

<sup>iii</sup> Ayatollah Khamenei, Practical Laws of Islam

<sup>iv</sup> Al-Kafi, v. 1 p. 53

<sup>v</sup> Biharul Anwar, v. 22, p. 402

<sup>vi</sup> Wasailul Shi'a, chapter 11, from the chapters on who can fast, narration 1



## SEEKING COUNSEL

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand that we should always ask for advice from elders, especially our parents and teachers
- Understand that we should only ask for advice from elders whom we know

### Seeking Counsel

The prophets that Allah (SWT) has sent to humankind throughout history came to guide, advise, and help their followers. The Holy Qur'an states that prophet Hūd said:

"...and I am a trustworthy adviser to you" (7:68)

In another verse about prophet Nūḥ, he says to the people

"I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission; sincere is my advice to you..." (7:62)

As such, counselling in Islam is of great value and importance. It is how the Prophets and Imams (as) carried out the mission Allah (SWT) had given them.

In fact, "counsellor" means "adviser." A counsellor is an individual who facilitates the solving of problems, the resolving of conflicts and issues, and the capacity to change. Islam is a way of life that prescribes self-transformation. This is the changing of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviours for the better so as to achieve certain states – pure and sound heart, richness of self, tranquillity and freedom of the soul - all endeavouring to earn the pleasure of Allah SWT.<sup>1</sup> Such transformation is often impossible without heeding advice.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING ADVICE IN ISLAM

People often experience a mental or emotional problem that they are unable to cope with and resolve by themselves. It is not surprising given the complex and fast-paced world we are living in. The following example is common of problems that warrant help from a counsellor.

- Sarah was a young woman who came for counselling due to obsessive thoughts. She would list in her mind what she had to do each day, over and over again. She felt that this problem was ruining her life as she found it difficult to focus while at her college classes and felt anxious most of the time. She never participated in class and avoided close friendships as she didn't want anyone to find out about her problem. She did not know where this problem came from or how to deal with it. The more she tried to just stop the listing habit, the stronger it seemed to become. She was miserable and desperate to find relief and live her life without the possessiveness and the anxiety.

In such a situation we know our social responsibilities in Islam suffer and if we suffer from a problem that causes us to fail to meet some of our Islamic responsibilities, then we should seriously consider seeking counselling.

When facing problems, either marital trouble, financial difficulties, or otherwise, many Muslims are reluctant to seek professional counselling. Some people consider it degrading or inappropriate to speak of one's troubles to others.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Islam teaches us to give good advice to others, and to offer guidance and support when needed. Of course, the advice needs to come from qualified people who are likely to give beneficial advice.

## BARRIERS TO LISTENING

In the Holy Qur'an Allah (SWT) has provided stories of several prophets who came to guide and teach the people of their communities and to prevent them from idol worship and sins. For example in the story of Prophet Abraham (as) we see that he was sent to guide

the people to worship only One God and to turn away from idols. In the story of Prophet Hūd (as), we see that he was sent to the people of his community to guide them to worship only One God and to be thankful for the blessings that they had and to stop committing sins. In the story of Prophet Şāleḥ (as) and Prophet Moses (as) also we see that the prophets were busy guiding the people and the rulers.

However, as in the above stories, we see that the prophets acted in one common way. They all had one message and duty. Just as the prophets and righteous people had one common duty, we see that the people of their communities also acted in a common and similar way. The following are the main causes that act as barriers against listening to advice.

1. **Having a pre-determined attitude and assumption about the subject matter** – this is a common problem that people suffer from even today. Once you have made up your mind on a particular subject then to listen to advice on that becomes very difficult especially if the advice is against what you desire to hear, though it may be in your real interest. During the time of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) the people would put cotton wool in their ears because they had been told by their chiefs that the words of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) were magic and that he would possess them if they listened to him.
2. **Pride and arrogance** – this is the biggest barrier to taking advice

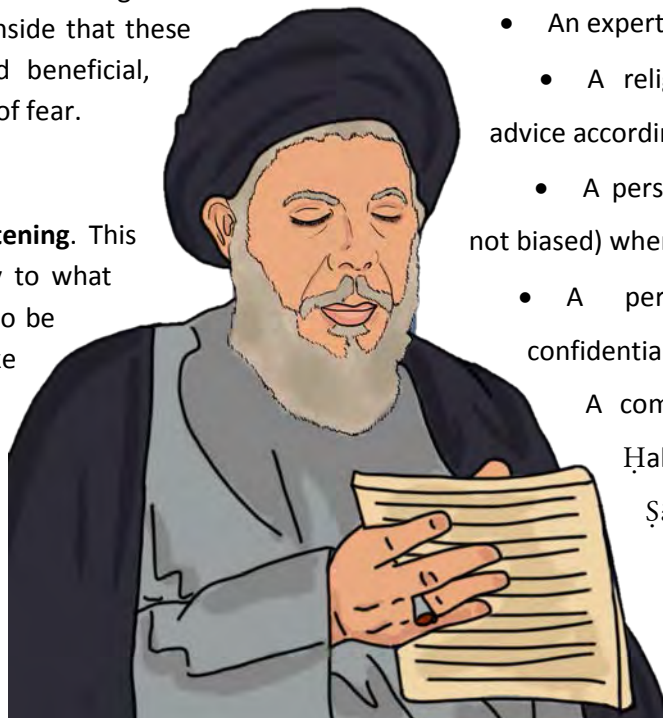




because it blocks the person from seeing the truth and acting on it. This is the cause that led to the ruin of many people and still continues to ruin many. This problem even got Satan to where he is.

3. **Love of this World** – there are many ḥadith that teach us that love of this world is one of the major causes of blindness to the truth. Pharaoh's love of his position, and the love for wealth of the people of Prophet Shu'ayb stopped them from listening to advice.
4. **Fear** – Sometimes a person is afraid to take advice because they fear that taking advice will mean making significant and difficult changes in their life. We often know deep inside that these changes are necessary and beneficial, but we delay them because of fear.

5. **We engage in selective listening.** This occurs when we listen only to what we want to hear. We like to be right, and our minds like consistency. We don't feel comfortable when something upsets our belief system. It is easier to ignore that information. The downside is that we can't learn from others or cooperate with each other effectively. <sup>ii</sup>



these things, we should not dismiss it simply out of love and attachment to these things.

- Courage to make changes despite the difficulties and challenges that come with change will help us implement good advice.

## THE QUALITIES OF THE ADVISOR

Earlier, we gave the example of a person who was suffering from difficulties in their life and needed to seek advice. When seeking advice, we should go to a person who is:

- An expert
  - A religious person, who will give advice according to the principles of Islam.
  - A person who will be impartial (i.e. not biased) when giving advice
- A person who will maintain confidentiality and not reveal our secrets.

A companion by the name of al-Ḥalabi narrates from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as):

“Seeking advice from others is a virtue. If you do not do it, you will face a great loss.

However, there are conditions. The first is that the person you seek advice from should have intellect (i.e. be an expert). Secondly, he should also be religious and impartial. Thirdly, he should also be a friend. Fourthly, you must divulge all the details to him, so that he knows your affairs as much you do. The counsellor should then keep this a secret and not divulge it.”

## REMOVING THE BARRIERS

- The most important step to take is to overcome our pride. We should train ourselves to look at other points of view seriously, and not be afraid to admit we are wrong.
- It is also important to listen actively. Whenever someone gives us advice, we should at least consider it. We should also thank that person. Then we can objectively try to assess whether the advice is beneficial or not.
- Another important step is to reduce attachment to things in this world. While it is permissible to enjoy wealth, friendships and reputation if they are ḥalāl, it is important not to become too attached to these things. When we are given advice that may affect

## WHAT DOES ISLAM SAY ABOUT SEEKING ADVICE FROM WOMEN?

It is related from Imam ‘Ali (as) says in Nahjul Balagha:

“Do not seek the advice of women, because their advice is incomplete and their decisions are weak, except those women whom you know are intelligent”

Generally speaking, women are more emotional and their emotions often influence their decisions and cause them to make mistakes. However, as the Imam (as)

clarifies at the end of the narration, it is good to take the advice of women who are intelligent and who are not overly affected by their emotions.

This is confirmed by the Holy Qur'an, which says that the husband and wife should seek each other's advice and make decisions together.

- In one specific example about the issue of breast-feeding children, Allah, the Exalted, recommends that the husband and wife take each other's advice and make decision together
- In Surah al-Ṭalāq, there is a more general command for the husband and wife to take advice from each other

In one narration, the Prophet (saw) says that when it comes to issues relating to women, it is better to take advice from a woman than from a man.

“take and accept the advice of women in the matter of their daughters”

There is another narration that says: “take their advice (feminine) then go against it”. This is often interpreted to mean that we should always go against the advice of women. However, the mystics interpret this feminine pronoun to be referring to our evil-commanding soul, rather than to women.

In conclusion, there is no problem with taking the advice of women, as long as the woman or women are using their intellect and not being driven solely by emotion.

## SEEKING GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL FROM ALLAH (SWT) – ISTIKHĀRAH

The Prophet of Allah said:

“Among the felicities of the children of Adam is that he asks the best from Allah and His pleasure in that which Allah has decreed for him. And among the misfortunes of the children of Adam is abandoning the asking of what is best from Allah and not being pleased with what Allah has decreed.”<sup>iii</sup>

The actual meaning of the word Istikhārah is to seek the best from Allah in one's affairs. So before we engage in an important project or task, we pray to Allah (SWT) to give us the best in this task and

help us succeed.

Another meaning of Istikhārah is to use the Holy Qur'an or other methods to decide what to do in situations where we cannot make a decision. This Istikhārah is<sup>iv</sup> reserved for situations where:

- One has weighed up the pros and cons of the decision or situation. This step also includes supplication and prayers to Allah (SWT) to guide you to the best.
- We have done all our research, asked the appropriate experts and advisors, and still cannot come to a decision based on the facts we have at hand
- We have a sincere intention to follow the outcome of the Istikhārah
- We do not become dependent on, or obsessed with Istikhārah, such that we do not do anything without it and stop using our intelligence

## Review Questions

### Q1. How do we know WHEN to seek advice:

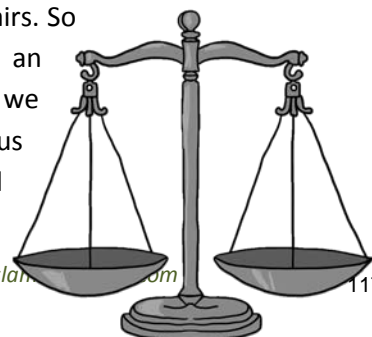
- When we want to justify our actions
- When we are making important decisions
- When we know the answer but just to make sure

### Q2. What are the qualities of the advisor in Islam?

- They must be our close friend
- Expert in his field
- Someone older than us

### Q3. When should we not perform Istikhara?

- When we are in a reasonable dilemma and can act both ways
- When we have made up our mind but we just want to make sure
- When we don't feel like thinking.



<sup>i</sup> Seeking Advice Through Counselling — Part 1  
[http://salaamhearts.com/advice/57/Seeking\\_Advice\\_Through\\_Counseling\\_\\_Part\\_1](http://salaamhearts.com/advice/57/Seeking_Advice_Through_Counseling__Part_1)

<sup>ii</sup> 7 BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LISTENING: WHY WE DON'T LISTEN AS WELL AS WE COULD - <http://lawsagna.typepad.com/lawsagna/2010/03/7-barriers-to-active-listening-why-we-dont-listen-as-well-as-we-could.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 77, Page 159, Hadith 153

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7 BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LISTENING: WHY WE DON'T LISTEN AS WELL AS WE COULD - <http://lawsagna.typepad.com/lawsagna/2010/03/7-barriers-to-active-listening-why-we-dont-listen-as-well-as-we-could.html>

Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 77, Page 159, Hadith 153

Istikhara – Seeking the Best From Allah (swt) – <http://www.al-islam.org/istikhara-seeking-the-best-from-allah-muhammad-baqir-haideri/section-1-necessity-performing#1-istikhara-success-muslim>

Holy Qur'an



# LAVATORY RULES

## احكام التخلي

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand the importance of cleanliness and hygiene
- Know the rules of maintaining ritual cleanliness when using the toilet
- Discuss the etiquette of using the lavatory
- Understand the doubts of excessive doubt

JURISPRUDENCE

Level 5

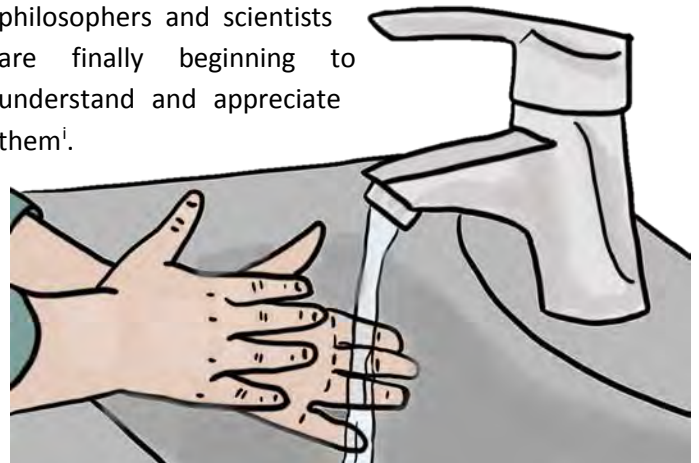
### Rules of Lavatory: Lesson 1

In the past, we have learnt the rules of using the washroom and the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in Islam. In this lesson, we shall briefly go over the importance of cleanliness in Islam specifically in relation to the rules for the lavatory. We will learn that Islam is a religion of moderation and Allah does not wish to place an unreasonable burden on us. The rules that Allah, the Exalted, has set are not difficult to follow as they are natural.

#### HYGIENE AND CLEANLINESS IN ISLAM

Islam deals with the rules we need for all aspects of our life, no matter how trivial they may seem. This is part of Allah's Mercy towards us.

We have learnt the importance of hygiene and cleanliness in order to avoid the spread of germs and other diseases. Islam introduced these concepts over 1400 years ago, and they are so wise that many western philosophers and scientists are finally beginning to understand and appreciate them<sup>1</sup>.





Even the simple act of washing hands, which was only introduced in the western world in the late 1700 to reduce the spread of disease, was emphasized upon by the Prophet of Islam on numerous occasions.

It suffices therefore to mention that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

"Try to be clean as much as you are able to. Verily, Allah has based the foundation of Islam on cleanliness; hence, only the one who is clean can enter paradise."<sup>ii</sup>

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

"Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those who purify themselves." (2:222)

One of the main ways of remaining clean is to ensure that the rules and bathroom etiquette that our Imams (as) have introduced to us are followed. This includes the rules of how to wash oneself after using the toilet, how to sit when relieving oneself, what to recite and the most appropriate places for relieving oneself.

## **WASHING PRIVATE PARTS**

### **URINE:**

As you are aware, urine is one of the unclean (najis) things and one cannot pray or perform other acts of worship if there is urine on their body or clothes. The obligatory rules for making the urinary organ *Tahir*. No other thing can make it *Tahir*. Tissues are not sufficient.

- If one uses kurr or running water, then washing the organ once will suffice, as long as all the particles of urine are removed.<sup>iii</sup>
- But, if one uses qalil water, then recommended precaution is to wash it twice, better still, three times.
- It is obligatory to conceal one's private parts in the toilet and at all times from adult persons even if they are one's near relatives.

This means that Muslim men are discouraged from using urinals as one cannot wash oneself when using urinals

and it is difficult to conceal one's private parts. Also, it is disliked (makruh) to stand while urinating.

The following are some recommended rules when using the bathroom:

- Istibrā' is a recommended act for men after urinating. Its object is to ensure that no more urine is left in the urethra. It is not meant for women, and if a woman any liquid and she doubts whether it is urine, that liquid is *Tahir*, and it will not invalidate Wudhu and Ghusl. This is the method for Istibrā': the part between the anus and the root of penis should be pressed thrice, with the middle finger of the left hand. Then the thumb is placed on the penis, and the forefinger below it pressing three times up to the point of circumcision, and then the front part of the penis should be jerked three times.
- Istibrā' is also recommended after ejaculation to ensure no semen is left in the urethra. This is done simply by urinating.
- It is *Mustahab* to urinate before *ṣalāt*, before sleeping, before sexual intercourse, and after ejaculation

The following things are discouraged:

- It is *makruh* to urinate while standing, or on hard earth, or in the burrows of the animals, or in stationary water.
- It is *makruh* to not relieve oneself when one feels the need.

### **STOOL**

The obligatory rules of cleaning oneself after excreting faeces are:

- If the anus is washed with water, one should ensure that no trace of faeces is left on it. However, there is no harm if colour and smell remain. If the first wash removes all the faeces there is no need to wash again.
- The anus can be made *Tahir* with stone, cloth, or tissue provided they are dry and *Tahir* themselves.
- If one makes oneself totally *Tahir* with a stone, tissue or cloth once, it will be enough, though it is better to do it three times. In fact, it is better to use three pieces. And if one does not get totally *Tahir* after three times, they should continue until they

become Ṭāhir. However, there is no harm, if invisible, tiny particles are still there.

- It is Ḥarām to use things which are sacred and revered, like, a paper on which the names of Allah and the Prophets are written to clean oneself.

## Review Questions

### Q1. Washing the urinary organ with water is:

- a. Obligatory
- b. Recommended
- c. Discouraged

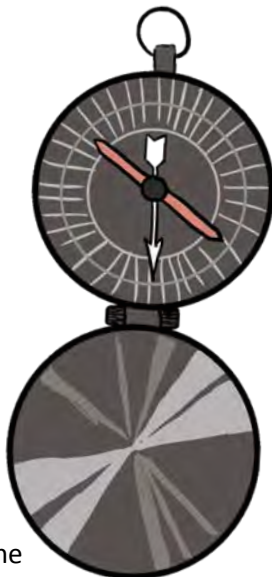
### Q2. The purpose of Istibrā is:

- a. To ensure no faeces remains around the anus
- b. To ensure no urine is left in the urethra
- c. It is an alternative to using water

## Rules of Lavatory: Lesson 2

In the last lesson, we learnt the major rules we must adhere to when relieving ourselves. In this lesson, we will learn some of the etiquettes and recommended rules.

- 1- It is not permissible to keep the front or back toward the Qibla whilst relieving oneself. Knowing the direction of the Qibla therefore is not only necessary for offering prayers, it is also necessary before using a bathroom
- 2- It is Ḥarām to relieve oneself at the following four places:
  - a. In blind alleys, without the permission of the people who live there.
  - b. On the property (land) of a person who has not granted permission for the purpose.
  - c. At a place dedicated for certain uses (e.g. a mosque or school)
  - d. Sacred places which might be disrespected if a person relieve d himself there.



- 3- It is also Makrūh to eat while relieving oneself, or take longer than usual time, or to wash oneself with the right hand.
- 4- Talking is also Makrūh unless necessary. However, to recite words of Allah is recommended.
- 5- It is mustaḥab to enter the toilet with the left foot forward, and come out with the right foot.
- 6- It is also Mustaḥab to cover one's head or face.
- 7- It is mustaḥab to wear shoes or slippers to the lavatory.

### SOME ADDITIONAL ETIQUETTE:



- Do not splash water on the floors or walls. This has the potential to spread najāsah.
- Do not use too much toilet paper- Isrāf is also a sin
- Clean up after yourself, wipe the seat for the next person –even at home.
- Flush the toilet before leaving, if there is some air freshener, use it.
- Ensure you leave the washroom as you found it (if not BETTER).
- Be a true role model of a Muslim even in the use of the lavatory.

### EXCESSIVE DOUBT

As much as it is important to be clean and maintain ṭahārah, it is equally important not to become paranoid. Some people become obsessed with rules of Ṭahārah and spend hours in the toilet cleaning again and again. Allah wishes to make religion easy for us. Excessive doubt is a disease of the soul and is a result of obeying Satan.

It is important that we do not exceed the limits of what Allah has set, for instance, when you wish to urinate, you are required to wash yourself twice, not more than this.

When we do have a doubt about Tahārah and Najasah, Islam has set certain simple rules for us to allow. Here are the most commonly used ones:



- 1- Everything is Ṭāhir for you unless you come to know for sure that it is Najis. This means that for instance it is permissible to use public toilets unless there is visible najāsah.
- 2- If something has definitely become najis, and a person doubts whether he has made it Ṭāhir, it is necessary that he should go back and make sure he has done so.
- 3- When a person doubts after ṣalāt, whether he made the private part Ṭāhir before he started the prayers, the ṣalāt already prayed will be okay and does not need to be repeated, but for the following prayers, he has to make himself Ṭāhir for certain.

## Review Questions

### Q1. Everything is:

- a. Ṭāhir until proven Najis
- b. Najis until proven Ṭāhir
- c. Neither of the above

### Q2. Facing the Qiblah while relieving oneself is:

- a. Discouraged
- b. Permissible
- c. Forbidden

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<sup>i</sup> For details refer to article by Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Hakim which can be found at: <http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?id=5446>

<sup>ii</sup> *Kanz-ul-'Ummal*, Tradition 26002

<sup>iii</sup> Most maraj'e say that washing the urinary organ once is sufficient. Ayatollah Sistani is of the opinion that it needs to be washed once to remove the najasah, then washed once more.





## PERSONAL HYGIENE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

### Lesson I

## IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE IN ISLAM

The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

"Try to be clean as much as you are able to. Verily, Allah has based the foundation of Islam on cleanliness; hence, never can a person enter Paradise but the clean ones."<sup>i</sup>

The above narration from our beloved Prophet (saw) summarises the immense importance Allah (SWT) has placed on being clean. There are 5 major facets of being clean that we have learnt in previous years:

- 1- **Spiritual Cleanliness-** This is the cleanliness of our soul from any type of dirt of sins
- 2- **Social Cleanliness:** this involves good social manners and justice
- 3- **Jurisprudential cleanliness-** This is following the rules of Ṭahārah and Najāsah.
- 4- **Cleanliness of the body-** we have discussed this type of cleanliness previously and we will elaborate on it in this lesson.
- 5- **Cleanliness of the environment-** this aspect involves ensuring that we do not litter or pollute the environment and protect it for others.



### *Objectives >>>*

#### *Students should:*

- Be reminded that Islam teaches us to be neat and tidy
- Should know the recommendations of Islam on personal hygiene
- Understand the importance of these rules especially when visiting the mosque
- Discuss the concept of 'dress of piety'
- Know the jurisprudential rules regarding tattoos
- Understand the rules of growing and maintaining a beard
- Be reminded that Islam teaches us to be neat and tidy
- Should know the recommendations of Islam on personal hygiene
- Understand the importance of these rules especially when visiting the mosque
- Discuss the concept of 'dress of piety'
- Know the jurisprudential rules regarding tattoos
- Understand the rules of growing and maintaining a beard



## **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

We will discuss here in more details some aspects of personal hygiene:

- 1- **Bathing-** It is highly recommended to take a bath (a shower) to remain clean. There are several types of ghusl that are recommended and some that are compulsory for a Muslim to do. Hand washing is also highly emphasised especially before and after meals and after using the washroom.
- 2- **Avoiding body odour-** It is narrated that the Holy Prophet of Islam used to love perfume so much so that he used to spend more on perfume than on food! It is narrated that the Noble Prophet had a container of musk and when he performed ablution he would take it with his wet hands. When he came out everyone knew that it was the Prophet of Allah because of his scent. <sup>ii</sup> The Holy Prophet (saw) advised Imam Ali (as):

“O Ali! You must apply perfume every Friday as this is from my sunnah. Good deeds will be written for you as long as the scent (of the perfume) is present from you.”<sup>iii</sup>

There are some important rules we must remember regarding perfume

- a. The intention for wearing perfume should not be to ‘attract’ or seduce the opposite gender. Wearing perfume for such an intention can be a sin.
  - b. Wearing perfume for women that can be smelt by men (non-mahram) is also prohibited.
- 3- **Avoiding mouth odour-** Brushing one’s teeth regularly and avoiding foods that bring out bad odour prior to meeting with others is another major recommendation. In fact, the Prophet (saw) used to discourage eating garlic prior to coming to the mosque. Having mints or mint gum or other mouth fresheners is one way to avoid bad breath.
  - 4- **Personal Grooming-** Cutting nails every Friday and combing hair were the practice of the Prophet (saw). Indeed the Prophet used to comb his hair and beard regularly and used to keep a comb under his pillow too and comb his hair prior to morning prayer! These practices are recommended for women too.

- 5- **Getting rid of excess hair-** Islam encourages both men and women to get rid of excess hair from their bodies. For both men and women, it is recommended to remove excess hair from the pubic area and arm pits. For women it is especially important to remove excess facial hair whereas for men it is recommended to keep a neat and trim beard. To shave the beard off is prohibited by most scholars but trimming it to keep it neat is recommended.



- 6- **Clothing-** Our clothes must be clean and neat. We should change and wash our clothes regularly. No only is this good for those around us but also makes us feel good and fresh.

We should maintain hygiene so as to:

- 1- Create a pleasant experience for people around us and therefore present a good image of Islam and Muslims.
- 2- Avoid diseases and disorders associated with poor hygiene
- 3- To gain proximity with Allah (SWT) by emulating the Prophet (saw)
- 4- To feel good about ourselves
- 5- At the same time we should not go to the other extreme and become paranoid about hygiene for that is a disease in itself.

## Homework

**Q1. On what day of the week is it recommended to remove excess body hair and clip one's nails?**

- Sunday
- Friday
- Monday
- Every day

**Q2. Removal of arm pit hair for men is:**

- Permitted
- Highly recommended
- Prohibited
- Compulsory

## Lesson II

### PREPARING FOR THE MOSQUE

We have now studied the basic requirements of personal hygiene in Islam but Islam places a special emphasis on personal grooming and hygiene when attending a place of prayer. Allah (SWT) tells us in the Holy Qur'an:

#### To Memorise

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

“O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying...” (7:31)

The beautiful clothes (or beautification) when going to the mosque especially (but also more generally) has specific rulings and boundaries. A clear example of the boundary would be that which we discussed in the last lesson regarding women not wearing excessive perfume.

The clearest guideline Allah (SWT) has set is the following:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا  
 ۞ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

“O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves (screen your private parts, etc.)

and as an adornment, and the dress of piety, that is better...” (7:26)

### DRESS OF PIETY

#### لِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ

It is very important we understand what ‘dress of piety’ means. Although there are deeper meanings to this term, we confine our discussion to the physical aspects of dressing. Before we can understand this, we have to know why we dress the way we do.

#### WHAT INFLUENCES OUR DRESS CHOICE

Many studies <sup>iv</sup> have shown that the most common influences on what we choose to wear are popular culture, ‘music’, movies, fashion trends etc...The trends chosen as teenagers often stick with people for life.<sup>v</sup>. When we go shopping, we often select clothes based on what we have seen on TV or what our friends wear. We may also choose to wear something to stand out in a crowd or to fit in to a certain group.



#### THE BEST DRESS

Having understood the influences on dressing, Allah (SWT) tells us that the best of dress for us is that which is:

- Worn for the pleasure of Allah (SWT):** that means one that is not worn to blend into a group or to show off or boast (stand out of a group) or to show rank in society.
- Influenced by those who are pious-** Dressing like disbelievers, sinful entertainers etc...is therefore highly discouraged in Islam.
- Not against the commands of Allah-** this includes observing the rules of Hijab. It also involves things like tattoos (for both males and females) and keeping beards (for males).

## RULES OF TATTOOS

Jurisprudentially, according to most major scholars, tattooing is permissible in Islam. Having said that, we must be guided by the instructions of Allah (SWT) regarding 'pious dressing'. Therefore we must consider the following:

- 1- **Resemblance to disbelievers/criminals**- If by tattooing we resemble disbelievers, criminals or we are associated with a negative personality then it can be problematic
- 2- **Tattoos signify negative characteristics**- In many studies done around the world, tattoos signify negative characteristics such as promiscuity, drinking, crime and gangs<sup>vi</sup>. We have to be careful not to attract such labels to ourselves.
- 3- **For women**- if it is done to beautify oneself for a non-maḥram, then it is prohibited. This rule includes temporary tattoos such as henna.
- 4- **Tattooing obscenities** – or blasphemous images or images of ḥarām actions would make tattooing a sin
- 5- **To show off**- If the intention to get a tattoo is to show off (riyā') then getting a tattoo is a sin.

## RULES REGARDING THE BEARD

As we have discussed previously, most scholars agree that men *must* keep a beard based on obligatory precaution. This means it is prohibited to shave off one's beard (to be clean shaven). It also means a 'goatee'-style beard is not sufficient according to most scholars, and the beard must cover some of the sides of the face.

The gravity of this sin is often overlooked, Prophet (saw) states:

"The shaving of the beard is indeed considered an unjust action, may the curse of Allah befall those who are unjust".

Keeping an over grown beard or shabby beard is also disliked in Islam. Indeed as we discussed in the previous lesson, the Prophet used to regularly comb his beard and trim it to make it neat and perfume it too!

We will end this discussion with some FAQs answered by Āyatullah Sistani:

**Question:** At times the big companies in Europe discriminate —among those who come to them seeking jobs— between those who shave their beards and those

who don't shave them. If this is true, then is it permissible to be clean shaven in order to get the job?

**Answer:** Shaving the beard —whose prohibition is based on obligatory precaution— would not become permissible just by the desire to get a job with these companies.

**Question:** Is it permissible to shave the two sides of the face and leave the hair on the chin?

**Answer:** Shaving the beard is haram based on obligatory precaution, and this includes the hair that grows on the sides of the face. However, there is no problem in shaving the hair that grows on the cheeks.

**Question:** If a person commits haram by shaving his beard by razor baled on day one, is it permissible for him to do the same on the second, the third, the fourth day and so on?

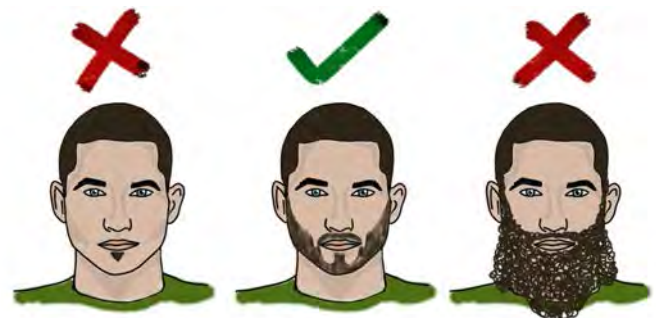
**Answer:** It is compulsory to refrain from it as a measure of precaution.

**Question:** Is it permissible to shave beard, if one is faced with an unavoidable or a difficult situation?

**Answer:** A Muslim is allowed to shave his beard, if he is compelled to do so or if he is forced to shave it for medical reasons, etc. It also allowed if he fears harm to his life by not shaving or if growing the beard would put him in difficulty (for example, if it becomes a cause of ridicule and humiliation that is not normally tolerable by a Muslim).

**Question:** Is it permissible to have a long beard?

**Answer:** It is better that the length of beard does not exceed the width of a fist.



## Homework

### Q1. The dress of piety referred to in the Holy Qur'an is only referring to:

- a. Keeping away from sins by our physical clothes
- b. Only covering our private parts
- c. All our actions including our clothing to be 'dressed' in piety
- d. All of the above

### Q2. Shaving the beard completely is:

- a. Makrūh
- b. Not permissible
- c. Permissible
- d. Mustaḥab

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<sup>i</sup> Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Tradition 26002

<sup>ii</sup> al-Kafi 6:515, Makarim al-Akhlaq: 42

<sup>iii</sup> Makarim al-Akhlaq:43

<sup>iv</sup> Introduction to Demographic and Social Influences, Phyllis Tortora, in the Berg Encyclopaedia of World Dress and Fashion, Volume 3 – The United States and Canada on The Berg Fashion Library online.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/BEWDF/EDch3028a>

<sup>v</sup> Lynch, Annette; Changing Fashion: A Critical Introduction to Trend Analysis and Meaning, Dress, Body, Culture series (Joanne B. Eicher, ed.), Berg 2007.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/9781847883766>

<sup>vi</sup> Swami V and Furnham A. (2004) "Unattractive, promiscuous and heavy drinkers: perceptions of women with tattoos." Body Image; 4(4): 343-52



## UNCLEAN THINGS

## النجاسات

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Know all the unclean things
- Understand how najāsah is transferred
- Know the rules related urine, stool, blood, semen and corpse.
- Be aware of myths, doubtful areas and confusing ruling in regards to the above
- Understand the ruling about dogs, pigs, disbelievers and alcohol
- Introduce difference between khabath and ḥadath

### JURISPRUDENCE

### LEVEL 5

## Lesson 1: Rules of Najāsah

In previous years, we have learnt about the meaning of Najāsah and have come to know some of the Najis things. In this lesson, we will go into more detail with the rules of Najāsah and the Najis things.

### UNCLEAN THINGS

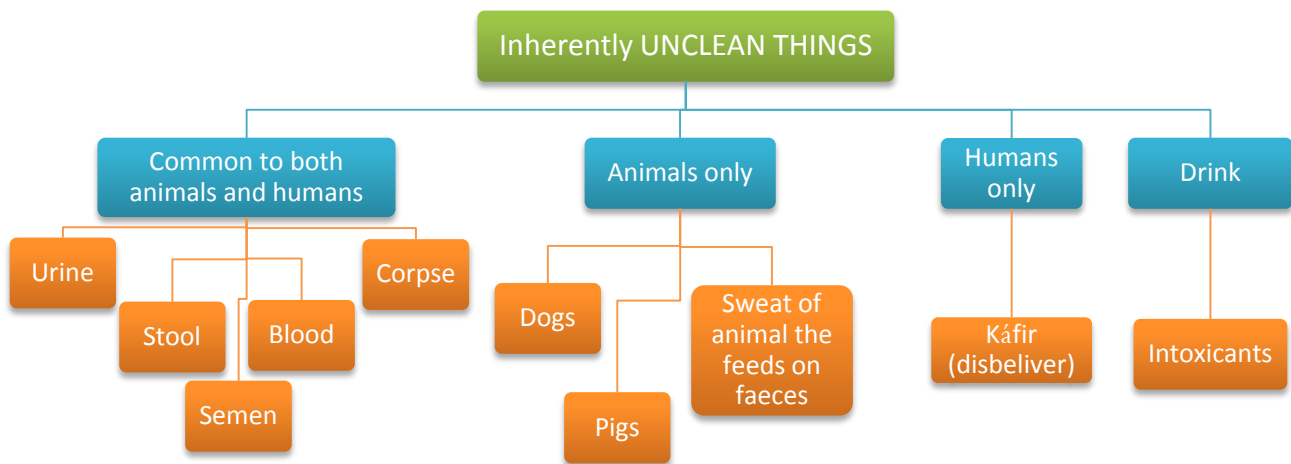
In Islamic laws, Najāsah is of two types: inherent and acquired. To differentiate between the two, a thing which is inherently unclean (e.g. urine) is known as "Najisul 'ayn" whereas a thing whose uncleanness is acquired (e.g. clothes stained with blood) is known generally as "najis". A Ṭāhir thing becomes najis by coming into contact with one of the inherently najis things. For example: blood is considered an inherently najis thing whereas milk is considered pure. If a drop of blood falls into a glass of milk, the milk will become najis because of the blood which is an inherently unclean substance.

It should be remembered that a thing that is normally Ṭāhir becomes najis only by wet contact with another najis object. For instance, touching a dry dog does not make one najis.

### THE INHERENTLY UNCLEAN THINGS

According to the Islamic laws, the inherently impure things are nine in number. They can be divided into four groups as follows:





The implication of this law for a Muslim is that he or she must refrain from the inherently unclean things in three situations:

- when performing acts of worship
- eating
- drinking
  - It is important to remember that anything which is najis cannot be consumed. However, there are many things which are not najis but are still Ḥarām to eat. Therefore, when you read in this lesson that some things are not najis, it does not necessarily mean they can be eaten. We will go into details of what can and cannot be eaten in later lessons.
- it is also impermissible to trade in some najis things

In other words, it is not a sin to become najis due to contact with the above things. However, one is not allowed to perform many acts of worship while najis, and is not allowed to eat or drink najis things.

In this lesson, we shall discuss the first category of najasāt.

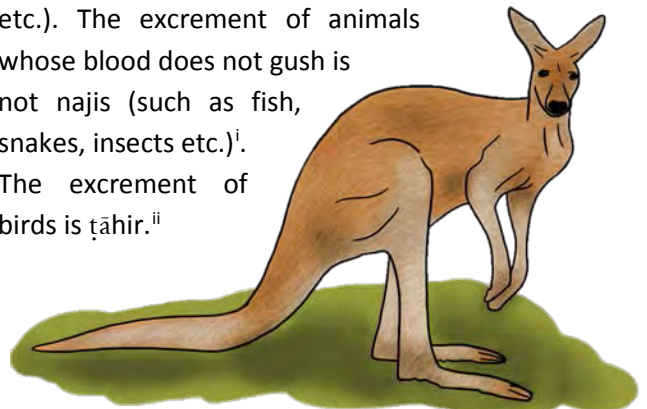
## URINE AND STOOL

These are the most common najāsāt one would come across. We have already discussed the rules of cleaning ourselves after coming into contact with these Najasāt.

1. Both the urine and stool of a human are inherently unclean. A person must clean themselves with water after passing urine, and with water or tissue paper after passing stool.

In addition, if one wants to pray, they need to repeat their wuḍū if they have passed urine or stool since their last wuḍū.

2. The urine and stool of an animal that is Ḥalāl to eat (ref. to lesson on rules of food) like a goat or cow, is not najis. Therefore manure is not najis.
3. The urine and faeces of an animal that is Ḥarām to eat and whose blood gushes when the neck is severed is najis (such as a kangaroo, mouse, rat, lion etc.). The excrement of animals whose blood does not gush is not najis (such as fish, snakes, insects etc.).<sup>i</sup>
4. The excrement of birds is ṭāhir.<sup>ii</sup>



## SEMEN

Semen is also an inherently impure substance. But before discussing this, it has to be clear what is semen and what is not. Sometimes a liquid, other than semen and urine, is discharged from man; this type of liquid is not najis.

Other than these, the semen of human beings, and of every animal whose blood gushes when its large vein (jugular) is cut, is najis.

The discharge of semen requires ghusl janābah to be performed before performing acts of worship. However, contact with semen only requires the actual semen to be washed away and does not require ghusl.

## BLOOD

The blood of human beings is najis, as is the blood of animals whose blood gushes out. While the blood of an animal whose blood does not gush out is ṭāhir (e.g. fish). Bleeding does not require the performance of ghusl or wuḍū. Removing the blood particles and cleaning the area with water is enough. Bleeding does not make the wuḍū void.

### Exceptions

1. Blood leftover in meat of an animal that has been slaughtered in an Islamic manner is ṭāhir. However, this blood should not be consumed.
2. Blood in the egg is considered najis according to recommended precaution<sup>iii</sup>
3. If a person's gum bleeds and the blood mixes with saliva such that the blood vanishes within the saliva, then that saliva is ṭāhir
4. If one cannot determine if the blood on one's clothes is ṭāhir they can consider it ṭāhir.

## CORPSE

The corpse of a Muslim human (prior to being given ghusl and after becoming cold) is najis (while the corpse of a disbeliever remains najis always). Touching such a corpse would require Ghusl for touching a dead body.

A corpse (*al mīta*) is the body of an animal which has not been slaughtered in an Islamic manner. Such a corpse is najis. The meat, fat, and skin of that animal are all najis. The exception is that the corpse of an animal whose blood does not gush (like fish) is ṭāhir.

The fat, meat or hide (skin used to make leather) of an animal, about which there is a probability that it may have been slaughtered according to the Islamic law, are ṭāhir. However, if these things are obtained from a non-Muslim, or from a Muslim who himself obtained them from a non-Muslim, without investigating whether the animal was slaughtered according to Islamic law, it is haram to eat that meat and fat, but ṣalāt in that hide will be permissible.

## Homework

1. You went to visit your friend's house and you saw some dried mouse droppings in the driveway. Are these najis?
2. Whist you were making a pitcher of juice, you got a nose bleed and a very small drop of blood fell into the juice. Is the juice najis? Can you drink it?

## Lesson 2: Further Rules of Najāsah

In this lesson we will continue discussing rules related to unclean things.

### DOGS AND PIGS



Dogs are a creature of God that have fulfilled their purpose to humans for centuries. The fact that they are najis does not mean that they are to be mistreated.

All parts of pigs and dogs, even the nails, hair, teeth and bones and their saliva, milk, urine and excrement are najis. Therefore, all things made from pigs' fat, skin, hair, and other parts of its body (i.e. belt, gloves, jackets and shoes) are najis. Similarly, all the food items produced from the meat and fat of pig is najis.

Keeping or buying of dogs for pleasure is also prohibited. However, buying hunting dogs (for hunting), guard dogs or shepherd dogs is allowed, although they still remain najis.<sup>iv</sup> In such cases, they should be kept outside the house.

Trading in products derived from pigs is not allowed. Working at a shop or restaurant where a person is directly involved in selling these products is not allowed.

## KĀFIR

According to most of our scholars, the Ahlul Kitāb can be considered clean. This definitely includes Jews and Christians, and may also include Zoroastrians and Sabians.

As for people of other beliefs (e.g. Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, athiests), all scholars agree that such people are najis. The main implication of this is that if we come into contact with such people and there is moisture, then the part of our body which came into contact with them must be washed.

## ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

All alcoholic drinks are najis (fermented alcoholic drinks). Industrial alcohol (which comes from petrol) and is used in perfume, hand washes, soaps etc. is not najis. Chocolate liquor does not contain any alcohol; it is a form of concentrated chocolate.

Furthermore, trading in alcohol is completely prohibited. Therefore, even working in a place where alcohol is served or sitting at a table where alcohol is served is prohibited. Even if a pin-drop of alcohol is put in a pot of food would make the entire pot and its contents najis.



## PRINCIPLES GOVERNING NAJIS ITEMS

Allah, the Almighty, in His infinite Mercy does not want us to be obsessed with the najasāt such that life becomes difficult for us. As such, there are two principles to help:

1. **Everything is ṭāhir unless you KNOW it is najis.** This means that one has to be sure that a thing has become Najis before assuming so, for example by personally witnessing it happen or hearing it from two reliable people.
2. **The principle of continuing the certainty of the past into the present (*al istiṣhāb*).** This rule means that we should bring whatever certainty we had in the past into the present, and ignore any doubt that we have at present. For example, if we are certain of something being najis in the past, and now we doubt whether it has become ṭāhir or not, we should assume it is najis. Similarly, if we know something was ṭāhir in the past, and now we doubt whether it has become Najis, we should assume it remains ṭāhir.

### Homework:

1. **Samīr's hands were najis. He went to the washroom and washed his hands under running water. However, later on he had a doubt whether he had washed his hands or not, what should he do?**
2. **It is Christmas, and your neighbour gives you a box of chocolates, you are just about to eat the chocolate (it has melted slightly in your hand) when your mum reads the ingredients and tells you it has alcohol in it. What would you do?**
3. **You were at a park. Between the two prayers, a dog walks up to you and rubs its wet nose on your pants. Do you have to renew your wuḍū?**



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<sup>i</sup> Although according to Ayatollah Sistani it is a recommended precaution to avoid them.

<sup>ii</sup> Imam Khomeini asserts that the excrement of birds that are *harām* to eat is also *najis*.

<sup>iii</sup> This is according to Ayatollah Sistani . According to Ayatollah Khamenai, the blood in the egg is *ṭahir* but is still *harām* to eat. Ayatollah Makarem believes that the blood in an egg is *najis* as an obligatory precaution.

<sup>iv</sup> The proper treatment of all creatures of God must be emphasised here. There are numerous accounts of the mercy of Allah being showered upon those who took care of any animals. One is the story of Sayyid Rashīd, an *a'ārif* who was quite poor and once with the little money he had he went and bought a loaf of bread for himself. As he was walking back to his house, he noticed a female dog with its puppies starving. The Sayyid, feeling pity on the dog, gave his bread to the dog and went back home hungry. When he reached home, he received news that a relative of his had died and left a huge fortune to him!



## ISLAMIC CLEANLINESS - CLEANERS

### المطهرات

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

#### Objectives >>>

##### Students should:

- Review the conditions of cleaning water
- Review the different categories of water and learn some new categories
- Know the standard method of cleaning with water
- Know cases where specific requirements additional to the standard process of cleaning are required
- Understand that the Earth is a cleaner
- Understand the process of 'subjection' as a cleaner
- Understand that becoming a Muslim is a cleaner
- Understand that the removal of 'Najisul 'ayn' can be sufficient as a cleaner in some cases

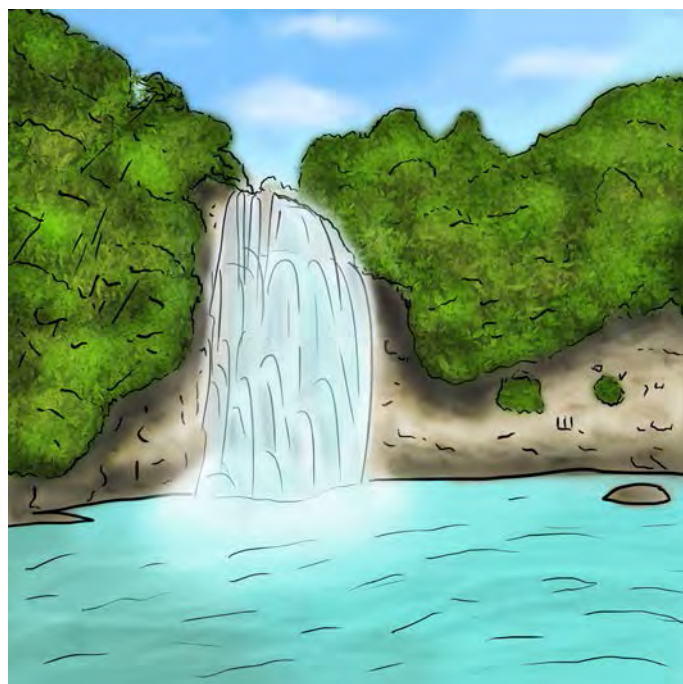
### Lesson 1: Types of Water

In previous years, we have learnt that there are various cleaners and that the one most commonly used is water. In this lesson, we will review some of the rules we learnt in previous years as well as learning some additional rules regarding the process of cleaning. Before we begin our discussions however, let us review the different categories of water.

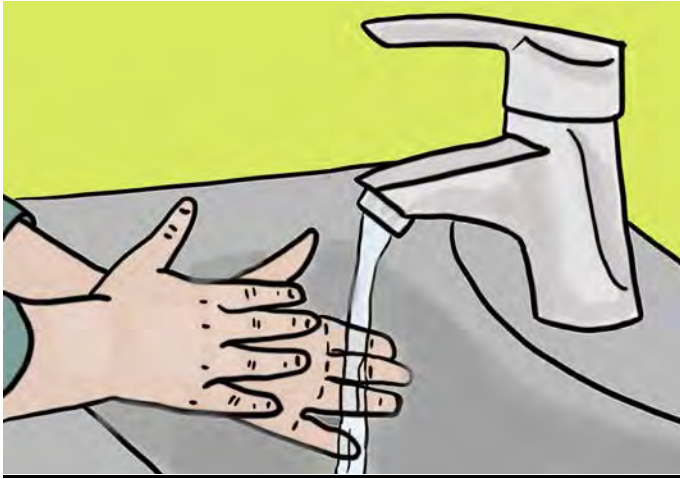
#### CATEGORIES OF WATER

##### RUNNING WATER

This is water which comes from a source in the earth and flows, such as the water of a river, sea, canal or spring. If a najis thing comes into contact with running water, only that part of the water which changes smell or taste becomes Najis. The rest remains Ṭāhir.



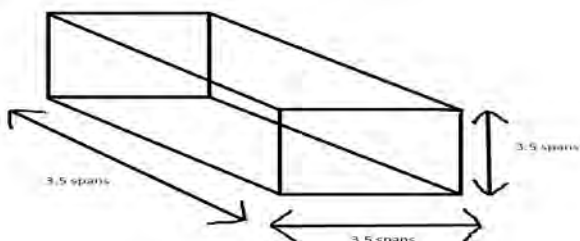
## TAP WATER IS RUNNING WATER



Water running through pipes and taps, if connected to a supply of water which is more than the Kurr limit, is also considered Kurr. If it is connected to a source of running water, it is considered running water. Therefore, the water flowing into our homes through pipes and taps is considered to be running water and the rules of running water apply to it.

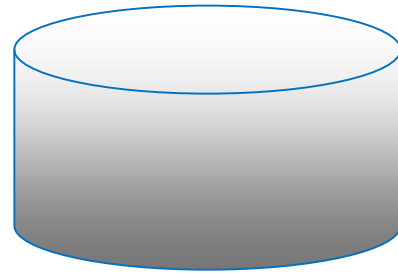
## KURR WATER

This is water which is still and not flowing, but fills a container which is three and a half (average) hand spans wide, long and deep. In other words, the container must be 42.875 cubic hand spans.<sup>i</sup> Some scholars say that it is permissible to work out whether water is Kurr or not using its volume. If it is over 384 L it is considered Kurr.<sup>ii</sup>



$$3.5 \times 3.5 \times 3.5 = 42.875$$

By volume: 42.875 cubic spans or more



By weight: 384 litres or more

## QALĪL WATER

This is water which is still and not flowing, and which is not enough to fill a container three and a half hand spans wide, long and deep. In other words, it does not reach the limit of Kurr water. If an essential najāsah (najisul 'ayn) comes into contact with Qalīl water, the entire body of Qalīl water becomes Najis, even if its smell, colour and taste have not changed. For example, if a small drop of blood falls into a small container of water, all that water becomes najis, even if its smell, colour or taste does not change.



When it comes to cleaning objects, in some cases the rules are different depending on whether we are using Kurr (e.g. tap water) or Qalīl (e.g. from a bottle) water. We will discuss these differences as we come across the specific cases.

## THE CONDITIONS OF CLEANING WATER

In order to clean anything with water, the water used must meet the following two conditions:

- it must be Tāhir
- it must be Mutlaq, meaning it must be unmixed water, not mixed with any other substance. Water which is mixed with another substance is called Muḍāf (mixed)

Therefore, if water is mixed with soap or detergent it cannot clean something no matter how many times we



wash that thing. For the purpose of cleaning, we must use only unmixed (Muṭḥaq) water.

The way to know whether water is mixed or unmixed is whether that water would ordinarily be called unmixed or mixed by reasonable people (i.e. we do not need to scientifically analyse it).



Fill in the following table:

	Running Water	Kurr Water	Qaleel Water
Description			
What happens if Najasah comes into contact with it?			

## Lesson 2: Further Rules of Cleaners

In our last lesson, we learnt about the different categories of water, the conditions of cleaning water, and the process of cleaning for most things. In this lesson, we will learn about some special cases requiring further conditions, and briefly look at cleaners besides water.

### SPECIAL CASES

#### 1-Cleaning the body or clothes from urine

If a person's clothes or body becomes najis because of urine, it must be at washed at least twice before it can be considered clean. This means that even if all the najāsah is removed and the water flowing is clean after the first wash, a second wash is still necessary. This is according to the ruling of Āyatollah Sistāni. The rulings of some other scholars have been provided for you in the endnotes<sup>iii</sup>.



## Review Questions

### Q1. Qalīl water is:

- Still water which cannot fill a container which is three and half hand spans in every dimension
- Any still water
- Running water

### Q2. If najāsah comes into contact with qalīl water:

- The entire body of water becomes najis
- The water remains ṭāhir
- Neither of the above

### Q3. When cleaning something with water, we have to use:

- Plain water (muṭḥaq)
- Mixed water (muḍāf)
- Any water



## 2-Cleaning Utensils

If the interior of a utensil (e.g. inside of a pot or plate) becomes najis, it must be washed three times, whatever category of water we are using. We must pour water inside the utensil then throw that water out and repeat this three times. This is according to the ruling of Āyatollah Sistani. The rulings of some other scholars have been provided for you in the endnotes<sup>iv</sup>.

## 3-Purifying Utensils in Special Cases

- Alcohol: If a utensil is made najis by alcohol, it must be washed three times, whatever category of water we are using.
- Dogs: if a dog drinks from a utensil, it must first be scrubbed with soil and then it should be washed twice. If the dog licks a utensil, it should be scrubbed with dust, then washed three times

## 4-Purifying carpets, cloths, dresses and similar things

If we are using qalil water to purify clothes, carpets, cloths or similar things, we must squeeze the water out after washing so that the water remaining in it runs out. However, if we are using running water, it is only a precaution to squeeze it.

## **WASHING MACHINES**

According to Āyatollah Sistani, one can pray with clothes that have been washed using a washing machine if one is certain of all of the following:

- If the najāsah has been washed away.
- Clean water covered the entire najis area twice (for urine) or once for any other najis thing.
- The water from the clothes has been removed by squeezing or wringing (the spin phase of the washing cycle usually performs this) if the water used during some stage was less than Kurr.

## **SOME IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES**

Remember the following rules whenever you are faced with an issue of najāsah and ṭahārah:

- if you previously knew a thing was clean, you should consider it to still be clean until you are sure it has become Najis
- if you previously knew a thing was najis, you should consider it to still be Najis until you are sure it has become clean

- in the case where you didn't know whether a thing was clean or unclean previously, you should consider it to be clean

## **CONCLUSION**

The two most important points that we should take from this lesson are the following:

-in general, when something becomes najis, it should be washed until the water flowing from the object is not mixed and all of the Najāsah has been removed from that object

-in some special cases, such as with urine, extra conditions apply and in this lesson we have discussed four of these which you should remember as they are common in our daily lives.

## **OTHER CLEANERS**

There are a number of other cleaners besides water. We will discuss two in this lesson and leave the rest for our next lesson:

- The earth: we learnt in previous years that if our feet or shoes become unclean from a najāsah that came from the earth, we can clean them by walking on the earth, if certain conditions are met.
- The sun: we also learnt in previous years that under certain conditions, the sun can make things like mattresses, carpets or walls pure

## **Homework**

**1-Fill in the following table:**

	Number of washes required	Extra conditions required (if any)
Blood on an object (not body or clothes)		
Blood on clothes		
Blood on the body		
Urine on the body		

Urine on clothes
Interior of a utensil which has become Najis for any reason
A Utensil with dog saliva in it
A utensil made najis by alcohol



3-

### REMOVAL OF THE NAJISUL 'AYN

As we have learnt previously, to clean something which has become Najis, we usually need to remove the Najāsah from it and then wash it. However, in some cases, it is enough just to remove the Najāsah and we do not need to wash the thing. This rule applies in the following situations:

1. If the body of an animal has become unclean (for example because of blood or due to impure water splashing on it), the body of that animal becomes clean again once that uncleanness disappears or (in the case of water) dries up.
2. If the inner parts of the human body- such as the inner mouth or nose- become unclean, they also become clean again once the uncleanness disappears and do not need to be washed. Similarly, if something is placed inside the body (e.g. dentures), or if there is food between the teeth and any of these things becomes Najis, it does not need to be washed. Once the Najāsah is no longer in contact with it, it becomes pure.

### 4- TRANSFORMATION (ISTIḤĀLA)

If a thing undergoes a transformation (Istiḥāla) such that it becomes a completely different thing and changes its essence to a thing which is considered clean, then it becomes clean. For example, if an unclean log of wood burns and turns to ashes, the ashes are considered clean, or if coal is made from wood which was originally Najis, the coal is clean. If one is not sure whether a thing has undergone a transformation (Istiḥāla) they should assume that it has not.

There is a famous but false claim that gelatine extracted from the bone marrow of animals is clean because it undergoes transformation by the time it reaches the food products in which we find it.

## Lesson 3: Other Cleaners

In this lesson, we will discuss the remaining cleaners.

### 1- SUBJECTION

In certain situations, cleaning something leads to make another thing that is related to the original thing clean as well. For example, if we are holding an unclean cloth in our hand and we clean it while holding it, then our hand automatically become clean as well. For further details, refer to our previous lessons.

### 2- BECOMING A MUSLIM

If a person who was previously a disbeliever becomes a Muslim by testifying to the Oneness of Allah and the prophecy of Muḥammad (s), then that person becomes pure. Just as before his body, sweat and saliva were unclean, they all now become clean. If a person makes the two testimonies and declares themselves a Muslim, we should consider them a Muslim even if we are not sure whether they were sincere in this or not, unless they do things openly which show that they have not really accepted Islam.

However, this is not true. Gelatine does not undergo transformation and thus if we are certain it is derived from an animal source, we cannot consume it.

## 5- CONVERSION (INQILĀB)

As you know, if the juice of grapes ferments by itself or by being heated, it becomes wine, and so becomes unclean and impermissible to consume. However, if that same liquid later converts to vinegar by itself, or because it was mixed with salt or vinegar, it becomes clean again. In fact, even the pot in which it was kept becomes clean again automatically.



## 6-TRANSFER (INTIQĀL)

learnt in previous lessons, the blood of humans and some animals is unclean. However, if this blood is sucked by an insect which itself does not have blood, then that blood sucked from the human or other animal becomes clean once it enters the insect's body and becomes part of that insect. So if a mosquito sucks a human's blood and then that human kills the mosquito and blood leaks out, that blood is considered clean, if it can be said that it has become part of the mosquito.

## 7- REMAINING BLOOD IN A SLAUGHTERED ANIMAL

If an animal is slaughtered in the Islamic way, and blood flows out of it as it usually would, the blood that remains in its body is clean. This rule applies only to animals which are permissible eat. However, that blood should still be removed before consuming the meat.

## 8- DISAPPEARANCE OF A MUSLIM

If a Muslim person disappears, his usual property (such as clothes, household utensils, carpets and so on) are considered clean. So if, for example, we are staying at Muslim friend's house and he is not present at that time, we can assume that all his property is clean.

This rule includes all Muslims, although as a precaution it is limited to practicing Muslims who know the rules of cleanliness.

## 9- INFORMATION FROM ANOTHER MUSLIM

If a Muslim tells a person that a certain thing has been cleaned, they should take their word and consider that thing clean.

Both these last two rules are in place to promote trust amongst Muslims and encourage them to accept each other's information.

### Homework:

**Q1. Match the examples with the Arabic name for the process:**

Intiqāl	Wood burning into ashes
Istiḥāla	Wine turning into vinegar
Inqilāb	Blood moving from a human to a mosquito

**Q2. List two situations where the removal of unclean thing itself is sufficient to provide cleanliness (i.e. once the Najāsah has gone, there is no need to wash):**

- 
- 

**Q3. Circle the correct option! If a Muslim is not present:**

- we should assume his property is unclean
- we should assume his property is clean, and by precaution we should only assume this if he was a practicing Muslim
- we should assume his property is clean

<sup>i</sup> Note that Ayatollah Sistani says that even though 3.5 to the power of 3 equals 42.875, a volume of 36 cubic spans is enough to consider water Kurr.  
<sup>ii</sup> This is the opinion of Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi in his book of Islamic laws. Other scholars put the weight limit at 377 L.

<sup>iii</sup> Ayatollah Khamenei: After urination, how many times should the urinary outlet be washed to become pure? A: According to the obligatory caution, the urinary outlet will become pure by washing it two times with qalīl water. (Practical Laws of Islam, Q 97)

Imam Khomeini: According to the more cautious opinion, it is obligatory to wash the exit for urine twice with water, although, according to the stronger opinion, it is sufficient for a man to wash it once (Tahirurul Wasila, Rules of Istinja, no. 1)

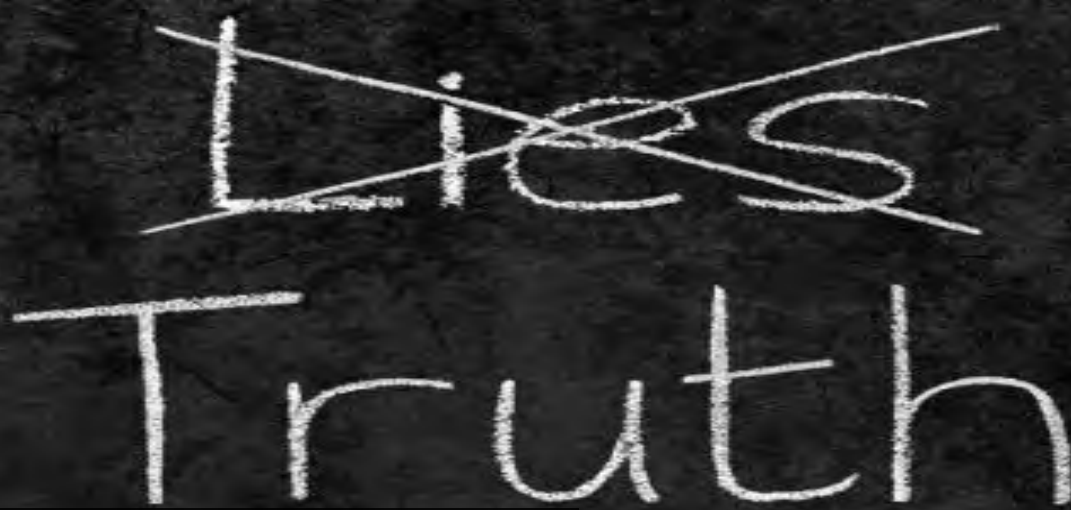
Ayatollah Fadlullah: Clothes or body getting contaminated with urine can be made tahir again by washing them once, i. e. after they have been washed to remove the very najasah.

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi: To make a thing Pak, which has become najis with urine, it should be washed with under-Kurr water twice and in Kurr or running water or the mains water once is sufficient. But if it has become najis with other than urine, once is sufficient with either Kurr or under-Kurr water... The urinary organ cannot be made Pak with other than water. If one uses under-Kurr water, it is obligatory to wash it twice; but if one uses the hoses that are connected to the mains which is regarded as running water, once will suffice. (Practical Laws Book, No. 73 & no. 181)

<sup>iv</sup> Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi: A najis utensil should be washed three times with Qaleel water, but in Kurr or running water once is sufficient, though three times is better

Ayatollah Fadlullah: Generally speaking, food and drink utensils turning najis cannot be deemed tahir again, if washed with little water. However, washing could be sanctioned if it was done three times in such a way that each time water is poured into the utensils, then rinsed by turning the water inside to cover all its parts only to be poured out.





# ~~Lies~~ Truth

## LYING

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 1

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand what it means to be truthful in speech and action
- Understand that lying is forbidden in Islam
- Understand that lying can also be in action and belief
- Be reminded that lying as a joke is not allowed
- Understand the concept of 'al-tawriya'
- Be reminded that in some very specific situations lying is permitted
- Discuss the conditions of taqiyyah
- Discuss the reasons behind why a person may lie
- Understand briefly the consequences of lying in this world and the hereafter

### Lesson 1: Truthfulness and Lying

Truthfulness is one of the most important virtues that a Muslim should have. Furthermore the Prophet (saw) says:

“the nearest of you to me tomorrow and those most worthy of my intercession are those who are the most truthful in speech, the most trustworthy, the best in manners and the closest to people”<sup>i</sup>

Accordingly, lying is a terrible sin, which Allah (SWT) commands us to avoid.

وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

“..and shun lying speech” (22:30)

It is a sin which is classified among the Greater sins. The famous scholar, Sheikh al-Anṣārī says:

“Common sense suggests lying is Ḥarām, all the revealed religions also say so; particularly Islam. The Qur’an is explicit in this regard. The opinion of the majority of the jurists confirms this tenet and reason also sustains this assertion.”

### LYING IS FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM

We know that that which Allah (SWT) has forbidden for mankind is unhealthy and harmful for mankind while that which He (SWT) has allowed, is healthy and beneficial for man. Among the things that Allah (SWT) has forbidden is lying.

Common sense itself suggests that lying is essentially deceiving, misrepresenting or hiding the truth. Doing this intentionally with an aim to misguide another person or to direct punishment to another person is

wrong and harmful to the society and the individual. Lying also breaks relationships and is a source of hardship for the victims of lying.

Allah (SWT) tells us in the Holy Qur'an not to lie:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

“And do not mix up the truth with the falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know (it).” (2:42)

## FORMS OF LYING

Lying can occur in speech as well as in action and belief. There are several levels of lying in both speech and in action. Some examples of lying:

- Claiming to have achieved something that one actually did not, simply to brag
- Lying to get out of trouble after a person has made a mistake
- Lying about others to damage their reputation, out of jealousy or competitiveness
- Lying in action: acting in a way that goes against our beliefs. For example, a person who calls themselves a Muslim and talks about their belief, should not commit sins, especially major sins.
- Lying in action by being two-faced or acting one way in the presence of a person but differently in their absence.
- Lying in belief: being a hypocrite. This is when a person pretends to have a belief which they in fact do not. This is the worst type of person. The prime examples are the hypocrites who lived at the time of the Prophet. They pretended to be Muslim simply to damage Islam from within.

## LYING TO LAUGH

It is very common especially among young people to make practical jokes which often involve lying to another person.

Imam al-Sajjād (as) said:

"Avoid telling lies irrespective of small or great, whether it is in earnest or joking, because when a person tells a lie in small (things), he dares to tell a lie in great things, too."<sup>iii</sup>

Islam forbids us from lying for practical jokes also as this can damage your reputation as a truth teller. The more practical jokes and lies you make, the less believable you become even when you are actually speaking the truth. We all know the story of *'the boy who cried wolf!'*

## Review Questions

### Q1. Why is lying forbidden in Islam?

- a. Because it causes problems in society
- b. Because Allah (SWT) has forbidden it
- c. Because it is common sense that lying is harmful
- d. All of the above

### Q2. Which Imam has told us to avoid lying even in small things:

- a. Imam 'Ali (as)
- b. Imam al-Sajjād (as)
- c. Imam al-Jawād (as)

## Lesson 2: Exceptional Situations

In the previous lesson, we discussed that lying is a great sin. In this lesson, we will discuss some exceptional situations related to lying.

### THE WHITE LIE – IS IT ALLOWED?

The expression 'white lie' may refer to situations where a person may not tell the whole truth in order to be polite to others or to avoid hurting the feelings of people they respect. The default rule is that such lies are not allowed in Islam. For example, if I do not want my friend to come over to my house, I should not lie and offer just to 'be polite'.

Once, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was walking home with his son from the mosque and a companion friend joined them in the walk. When the Imam reached his doorstep, he bade farewell to the companion without inviting him in even out of courtesy. When the companion left, the Imam's son asked him, 'why didn't you invite him in?' The Imam (as) replied that he did not want to be among those who made empty offers which were not really true.

However, in some situations, it can be a good idea to focus on another aspect of the situation to avoid hurting other people's feelings.

For example, if your grandmother buys you a shirt which you do not really like, you might focus on something positive in the gift and comment on that by saying something like: 'It was so kind of you to get me such a gift!'

## **WHEN IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO LIE?**

In certain situations, it may be allowed, and even sometimes obligatory, to lie. The important thing to remember in all these situations is that we should be lying for mere personal interests.

### **TAQIYYAH**

Taqiyyah refers to when a person acts or speaks in a way that conceals their beliefs, in order to protect their life, honour, wealth or family. It refers to situations where a person would be killed or persecuted because of their faith.

The prime example is that of 'Ammar ibn Yāsir. He saw his parents murdered in front of him because of their belief in Islam. He was tortured almost to death, before he eventually said some words of disbelief that his torturers were ordering him to say. He basically said, in words, that he was no longer a Muslim. However, in his heart, his faith remained as strong as ever. He was released after this, and went to the Prophet (saw) to ask forgiveness. The Prophet (saw) explained to him that why he did was justified, and that if he was in that situation again to do the same thing.

### **RESOLVING CONFLICTS**

If two believers are in conflict with one another, other people should do all they can to reconcile them. This means that if one of the people say something negative about the other, we should never go and tell the other person. It also means that sometimes we may need to lie in order to repair the relationship between them. In fact, it is sometimes obligatory to do this. This is especially important in situations of reconciling between family members and avoiding divorce.

The Prophet (saw) advised Imam 'Ali (as):

“Allah, the Exalted, loves lying with the purpose of reconciliation, and detests truth if it leads to mischief”<sup>iii</sup>

### **PROTECTION FROM AN OPPRESSOR**

One day, the Prophet (saw) was sitting on the side of a road when he saw someone fleeing from some evil people. After the man passed, the Prophet went and sat on the other side of the street. When those people chasing the man saw the Prophet (saw) and asked him whether he had seen anyone, he (saw) said: 'since I have been sitting *here*, I have not seen anyone'.

This above example show us 'how' to lie in such a situation – so since the time the Prophet (saw) moved across the street, after that no one passed him – so by 'here' he meant specifically that particular place which he was sitting in at that moment, not before.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:

“If a Muslim is asked about a Muslim and he harms that other Muslim by telling the truth, he is written as a liar. However, if a Muslim is asked about a Muslim and he benefits that other Muslim by lying, he is written as a truthful person in the eyes of Allah”<sup>iv</sup>

## **Review Questions**

**Q1. List three situations where lying is permissible. Give a short explanation of each situation.**

## **Lesson 3: Consequences of Lying**

We have so far discussed that lying a major sin, and we have also discussed some exceptional situations related to lying.

### **SOME OF THE CAUSES OF LYING AND THE SOLUTIONS TO THEM**

There are perhaps three major reasons why people lie:

- It has become so common that it is no longer seen as something wrong or detestable. Once a sin becomes public and commonplace, people become less sensitive to it. This is why in Islam, while it is bad to commit a sin, it is far worse to publicise that sin.
- People may think that by lying they can reach their goal faster and so they lie in order to get ahead in life. In this regard Imam 'Ali (as) gives us a true test for how faithful we are, saying:



“Faith is when you prefer truth, when it would harm you, over lying, when it would benefit you”<sup>v</sup>

Wealth which is gained through illegal means such as lying has no blessing, and it is often lost from the person’s possession through one calamity or another.

- The third reason people may lie is because of fear of the consequences or because they do not feel secure from the consequences of lying.

However, the lifestyle of the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt was such that they did not worry about these consequences and kept the pleasure of Allah (SWT) as their priority. For example, one day a man wanted to speak to Imam al-Sadiq (as) but the Imam was in a state of Janābah. Rather than making any excuses, the Imam (as) told the man directly that he was in a state of Janābah and asked him to come back later.

On this note, we should make sure that we do not miss our prayers because we are too shy to perform Ghusl. Even though this may be awkward, we must learn to overcome this awkwardness and perform our obligations on time.

We can stop lying by following the examples set for us by the Ahlul Bayt (as) and especially remembering Allah (SWT), fearing only Him and no one else. By keeping in mind His Pleasure, and being strong we can overcome lying.

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF LYING**

There are several narrations from the Imams that have condemned lying and have shown us the evil consequences of this act, to ensure that we stay away from it as much as possible:

- Lying destroys faith:  
Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (as) says:

“Lying destroys Faith”<sup>vi</sup>

- Lying leads to forgetfulness:  
Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:

“One of the divine punishments for too much lying is that Allah makes the liar afflicted with forgetfulness.”<sup>vii</sup>

Thus a man speaks a lie and then forgets his lie. Consequently people come to know that he has spoken a lie and his falsity is exposed to the people. Now to save himself he speaks more lies and is insulted further because his forgetfulness does not enable him to hide his false statements

- The curse of Allah

The liar is eligible for Divine curse and Allah (SWT) causes His retribution to descend upon him.”

For example Allah (SWT) says:

“...the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars.” (24:8)

- Lying leads to a person being lied to. Parents cannot expect children to be truthful when they themselves lie at work or lie to their spouse or lie to get a better business deal. Giving advice to others without practising it ourselves does not work. When it comes to business, it is permissible to not tell the truth by saying for example: ‘this is my car, you can check it for yourself and see if it has any faults’ without telling the person all its faults. However, it is not permissible to lie to the person by decorating the car or lying about its features or condition.
- Lying is the key to the house of sins. If you can imagine all sins being locked in a warehouse, the key to that warehouse would be lying. This is one of the major dangers of lying: it leads to multiple other sins.
- One of the properties of lying is that the lying person is exposed later on. It is a natural consequence of a lie that the truth will later show up. Therefore, whenever a person lies they are taking the risk of the truth being disclosed which always occurs, one way or another.

## **Review Questions:**

**Q1. <sup>viii</sup>Discuss the consequences of lying in 200 words.**



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<sup>i</sup> **[Wasa'lu-Shi'a 12:163]**

<sup>ii</sup> [Tuhaful-Uqul, p. 201]

<sup>iii</sup> [Wasa'elu-Shi'a vol 12 p.252]

<sup>iv</sup> [Mustadrakul-Wasa'el vol.9 p.95]

<sup>v</sup> [Nahjul-Balagha, Wisdom No. 458]

<sup>vi</sup> al-Kāfi

<sup>vii</sup> Wasa'il ul-Shia

<sup>viii</sup> References

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## MINDING THE TONGUE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

### Minding the Tongue

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

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

Speech is one of main distinguishing characteristics of human beings. It is one of the signs and products of the human being’s superior intelligence which Allah (SWT) has bestowed on us from His favours.

Imam ‘Ali (as) has said

“Your tongue is the interpreter of your intellect.”

Knowing that speech is one of the greatest blessings of human beings, it is important to understand as thoroughly as possible the ways to use this blessing in order to achieve the maximum benefit and realize its full potential for raising our status in this world and the hereafter.

### SPEECH – THE SOURCE OF MAN’S SUCCESS OR DESTRUCTION

Humans are social creatures who cannot live in isolation. They naturally incline towards living together and communicating with one another. The main form of communication between humans in their social life is speech. It is this ability to speak which sets humans apart from other creatures. While most other abilities that a human possesses can also be found in other creatures, speech is something unique to mankind.

#### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand that the tongue is a blessing that can take us to paradise or hell as most good and bad actions start from speech
- Understand that we can use good speech to convince others of the beauty of Islam
- Be reminded that most sins are from speech and the damage done cannot easily be corrected or taken back
- Understand techniques of minding the tongue
- Be reminded of the basic rules of speech

One of the major challenges of living in a society and communicating with others is in fact is how we use our tongue. Our words can be very hurtful if they are not well considered, and words which are not considered properly, can cause many problems. Therefore, in order to live well in society, we need to mind our tongue.

Imam 'Ali (as) was asked: 'What is the best thing that Allah has created?' He (as) said, 'Speech'. Then he was asked, 'What is the worst thing Allah has created?'. He (as) replied, 'Speech'. Then he said, 'With speech faces are whitened (illuminated) and with speech faces are blackened'.

By this statement, Imam 'Ali (as) has shown us that the tongue is responsible for leading man to paradise or hell depending on how he uses this blessing.

On a closer look, we will note that a majority of the sins committed start or are caused by the wrongful use of the tongue (wrong speech). These sins have damaging effects both to the individual and to the society. This is because the tongue is used to express thoughts and feelings which result in action. For example, a man who gets angry can utter vulgar words or disrespect his family members and hurt their feelings, causing a rift in the relationship.

Some of the great sins that are caused by the tongue (through speech) are the following:

**a) Backbiting**

Imam al-Kāḍim (as) said: "Cursed is the one who backbites against one's brother (fellow Muslim)." <sup>i</sup>

**b) Slander**

The Holy Prophet (saw) said: "Slander acts quicker against the faith of a Muslim believer than leprosy does against his body." <sup>ii</sup>

**c) Lying**

Imam al-'Askari, the eleventh Imam, (as) said: "Wickedness was put inside a house, and the key (of its door) was rendered to be lies." <sup>iii</sup>

**d) Vain Talk**

Imam 'Ali (as) said: 'Any talk that does not have the remembrance of Allah (SWT) therein is vain'. <sup>iv</sup>

**e) Obscene Language**

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said: 'Allah (SWT) has prohibited Heaven to those who use obscenity, vulgarity, lack shame, and are not concerned about what they say and what is said to them'. <sup>v</sup>

**f) Insulting**

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said, 'The one who insults a believer is as one who is on the verge of ruin'. <sup>vi</sup>

**Note:** Here it is important to understand the emphasis on the respect we should show towards our parents in particular. We should avoid rebuking, insulting or being rude and hurting their feelings in any way whatsoever.

## THE BLESSING OF THE TONGUE

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) mentions that He has given us eyes and a tongue and lips, and showed us two paths, and left it up to us to choose whether we use these blessings in the right way or the wrong way:

"Have We not given him two eyes, And a tongue and two lips, And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways?" (90: 8-10)

When considering the tongue, we obviously acknowledge that the physical tongue is a blessing which allows us to speak, eat, taste etc...However, here we are discussing the ability of speech. The ability of speech is what sets humans apart from animals. Historically, humans have been defined in philosophy as: 'speaking animals'. In fact,

Imam 'Ali (as): says: 'what is man without a tongue except either a drawn image or a mute animal'.

## A MAN IS CONCEALED UNDER HIS TONGUE

It is a person's speech which introduces that person and gives us the best insight into what kind of person he or she is. We know little about a person until we listen to them speak. Once they speak, we then either see the ugliness or the beauty of their personality through their speech. This is why Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

"The tongue is a human's scale"

Imam 'Ali (as) also says:

"Man is concealed under his tongue."

The meaning behind these statements is that a man's worth can be known by his speech because the speech of every person is indicative of his mind and manners, and by virtue of it, his feelings and temperament can be very easily assessed. Therefore, so long as he is silent, his weaknesses as well as his attainments are concealed but when he speaks his real self, manifests itself.

Some of the great virtues that man is greatly rewarded for are also caused by the tongue (through speech) are the following:

### a. Truthfulness:

Imam AL-Ṣādiq (as) has said: 'He whose tongue tells the truth is pure of action'

### b. Eloquence:

Imam 'Ali (as) has said, 'The best speech is that which is decorated by a pleasant structure and is understood by the elite as well as the laymen'. <sup>vii</sup>

### c. Supplication

Imam 'Ali (as) has said: 'The most beloved action on this earth with Allah – The Mighty and Exalted – is supplication'. <sup>viii</sup>

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) commands mankind to use good speech to invite others to Islam. He says:

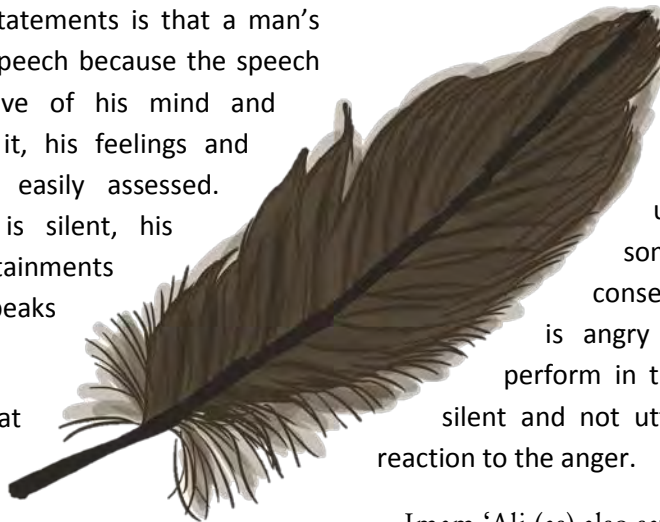
"Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best

who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." (16:125)

This means that our speech should be intelligent, polite, clear and appealing to the listener.

## WORD POWER

The quality of speech is such that whatever one says, he or she cannot take it back. This means that once something is said – the effect of the words has already taken place and cannot be cancelled. Just like a feather that is blown away and cannot be replaced, similarly our words cannot be taken back.



This is the reason why Islam recommends that we must carefully think and ponder upon the words we wish to utter, for once we have said something, we have to live with the consequences. As such, when a person is angry or upset, the best action to perform in this state is to remain calm and silent and not utter vulgar or obscene words in reaction to the anger.

Imam 'Ali (as) also says: 'The heart of a fool is in his mouth while the tongue of the wise man is in his heart'

## MINDING OUR COMMUNICATION

Speech in this context is not only limited to uttering words using the mouth. Speech extends to all forms of communication which utilize the use of words, texts, sounds and also images to certain extents especially in the form of publication. As such, the different modes of communication that would be governed by the rules of speech in Islam include:

- Talking face to face
- Talking on the phone/video
- Texting
- Online communication including chats, email and comments etc. This includes all communication in social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Now that we know how important and also dangerous the tongue can be, we must know how to use it properly



to avoid harming ourselves (our reputation) and also others' (feelings).

Since many feelings and relationships are based on the communication of speech, it is vital to regulate who we speak to, when we speak and where and how we speak – to the four questions to ask before speaking are:



1. **Who** – are we speaking to someone we are allowed to speak to?
2. **When** – are we speaking when it is necessary to speak?
3. **What** – is what we are saying important, true, good and useful/relevant?
4. **How** – are we polite, rude, angry, or sarcastic?

## SOME RULES TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN SPEAKING

1. Avoid all the plagues of tongue – this includes lies, swearing or vulgar words, sarcasm and insults, rudeness and other ill words
2. Don't be the sole speaker, also listen to the other person
3. Don't prolong your stories. The more you speak the more you slip, the more you bore people, and above all the more you harden your heart.
4. Don't say but what you know, and also don't say all what you know.
5. Try to practice silence as much as possible (avoid speaking when it's not necessary to speak)

## RULES OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION

1. Avoid casual (unnecessary and unimportant) communication to people of the opposite gender
2. Use kind and proper words – not words that are rude, emotional or that arouse inappropriate feelings
3. Make sure what you speak or write is true, good and useful/relevant – avoid giving opinions on subjects you have little or no knowledge on.
4. Make sure you are not bullying someone online!

## Review Questions

**Q1. The rules of speech and minding the tongue in Islam only apply to:**

- a. Verbal communication
- b. Online communication
- c. Dressing
- d. Any form of communication which involves words in any format.

**Q2. Provide an example for 1 vice and 1 virtue of the actions of the tongue and explain briefly the effects of each action.**

**Q3. <sup>ix</sup>Provide one hadith from the Ahlul Bayt (as) on the importance of minding the tongue/speaking/speech, which is not provided in the lesson above.**

<sup>i</sup> Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 23

<sup>ii</sup> Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 257

<sup>iii</sup> Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 263

<sup>iv</sup> Mizan ul Hikma, p. 978

<sup>v</sup> Mizan ul Hikma, p. 862

<sup>vi</sup> Mizan ul Hikma, p. 508

<sup>vii</sup> Mizan ul Hikma, p. 151

<sup>viii</sup> Mizan ul Hikma, p. 369

<sup>ix</sup> REFERENCES

Mizan Ul Hikmah – book of Hadith

Holy Qur'an – Surah Baqara (Surah 2) and Surah Balad (Surah 90)

Social Rules in Islam Lecture Notes – Sheikh Mansour Leghaei on Minding the Tongue (as)

# TRUSTWORTHINESS

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

## Objectives >>>

### Students should:

- Understand that trustworthiness has several meanings
- Know that being trustworthy is an obligation in Islam and there are no exceptions to it whatsoever
- Understand that trustworthiness is a true sign of belief in Allah (SWT). Know that this is the character we have to portray to the community in the West
- Understand the responsibilities of the trustee
- Understand that our body, time and everything we think we own is a trust from Allah (SWT) and we have to look after it and use it only in His way

## Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is one of the first and most important traits that Islam has commanded the believers to practice. In this lesson we will briefly review this trait and examine in detail our responsibilities regarding what we are entrusted with.

### CONTEXTS OF TRUSTWORTHINESS IN ISLAM

Trustworthiness has several meanings in different contexts. Trustworthiness can mean faith in the beliefs of Islam, because this is fulfilling the trust of Allah, the Exalted. For example believing in the day of Judgement means knowing that all we have of blessings are from Allah (SWT) as trusts for us to use properly in this world, after which we will be accountable for them.

Trustworthiness also has a meaning in the social context, where it means to fulfil the trust that a person has been given by other people. For example, trust may be wealth, such as when a person's friend leaves money with them, or a bank lends money to a person. In every situation, one is obligated to fulfil their trusts.



## **NO EXCEPTIONS**

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said: “Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, did not depute any prophet except with (teachings of) truthful speech and fulfilling the trusts, whether it is the trust of a good person or an evil person”.<sup>i</sup>

As the narration above shows, trustworthiness is an obligation without any exceptions, and there is no difference in the obligation whether the people involved are believers or non-believers. There is no excuse for the scams and tricks that some people use in order to obtain money by illegal means or by obtaining benefits from social welfare systems without deserving them, whether they are living in a Muslim or a Non-Muslim country.

## **THE REAL CRITERIA FOR BELIEF**

The Ahlul Bayt (as) have taught us that if a person wants to be known as a real follower of theirs, they must be known within their community to be the most trustworthy person, and should not be judged solely by their worship.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as): “do not be deceived by their prayers and their fasting. A man may become so habituated to praying and fasting that he would feel strange if he did not perform them. Rather, examine them when it comes to truthfulness in speech and the fulfilling of trusts”.<sup>ii</sup>

We should keep this criteria in mind when it comes to making decisions in our lives and the lives of our family members, such as when considering potential spouses.

We should also bear in mind that, especially when living in Western countries, we are the flag bearers of our religion and our actions can illustrate the



beauty of Islam. For example, if a Muslim works in a financial institution and is the most trustworthy person there, everyone will see how beautiful and perfect the religion of Islam is, and the workmates may be more encouraged towards our faith.

When living in a Non-Muslim country, we must follow the inspirational example of Prophet Yūsuf (as) who became the minister and treasurer of Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs, due to his supreme moral character (which includes trustworthiness) and firm faith in Allah (SWT).

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRUSTEE**

If a person is to take a formal position as a trustee, they should fulfil the following conditions:<sup>iii</sup>

- Be bāligh (mature) & sane (the depositor must also have this condition)
- Reject taking up the trust if they do not have the ability to take care of it
- Guard and protect the trust from any damage, misuse or loss
- Return the trust the way it was given, to its lawful owner when asked to return it
- Not use it for their own benefit without the permission of the owner
- Not delay in returning the trust
- Compensate for any loss or damage if they were negligent towards the trust. However, if they have not been negligent and the property unexpectedly perishes, they are not responsible for it.
- Keep the trust in the specified place if they have accepted to do so, and not move it without the owner's permission.
- In the case of orphans or people who cannot take care of their own property, the trustee has to guard and manage the property by maintaining it and if possible also to invest in it to make the value of the property grow, and return the property when the owner is mature and able to take care of it.



## ARE THEY REALLY OURS?

We sometimes think that our body belongs to us and we can do whatever we like with it. But if it was truly ours, we would be able to keep it forever and it would not become dead when we pass away. If our body parts, belongings, time, and even family members were truly ours, then Allah (SWT) would not be able to take them away from us at any second.



وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

“And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth...” (4:131)

Everything we ‘own’ is in fact the blessing of Allah (SWT) which belongs to Him, and we are merely His trustees. We should therefore take care of these precious blessings that we are entrusted with and use them only in His way. For example, with regards to ‘our’ money, we should only spend it in Halal transactions, we should not waste it, and we should pay our Khums and Zakāt. We should always keep in mind the responsibilities of the trustee which we have learnt as we are the trustees of Allah (SWT), and He will one day ask us about everything that we have been entrusted with.

## ACTIVITY

Discuss as a class how we can take care of and use in Allah (SWT)’s way each of the trusts named below:

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| • Eyes        | • Hands    |
| • Tongue      | • Time     |
| • Food        | • Brain    |
| • Environment | • Internet |

## Review Questions

**Q1. Everything that we ‘own’ in reality is:**

- Truly ours
- Truly Allah (SWT)’s
- Truly our children’s

**Q2. Being trustworthy is:**

- Only in regards to what other people entrust us with.
- An important social recommendation
- One of the most important social obligations mentioned in many narrations

**Q3. The Ahlul Bayt have taught us that the real criteria for belief is:**

- How often a person prays
- How much a person fasts
- How trustworthy a person is

<sup>i</sup> [al-Kaafi vol2 p.104]

<sup>ii</sup> [al-Kaafi vol.2 p. 162]

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Greater Sins: The Complete Book, by Ayatullah Abdul Husayn Dastaghaib Shirazi, Chapter 24 “Khayanat” - [http://www.al-islam.org/greater\\_sins\\_complete/](http://www.al-islam.org/greater_sins_complete/)

<sup>iii</sup>Islamic Laws: Rules regarding deposit or custody or trust (Amanat), Ayatullah Sistani, <http://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/2341/>



# KEEPING PROMISES

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

## Objectives >>>

### Students should:

- Understand that Allah (SWT) Has given us a unique ability to speak and write
- Be reminded that we should be thankful to Him for this gift by using it wisely
- List the number of sins and good things one can do through speech
- Understand that we have to be careful as to what we say

## Keeping Promises

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَائِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

“Those (faithful believers) who are faithfully true to their trusts and to their covenants” (23:8)

<sup>i</sup>As we have learnt in the past, keeping promises is one of the most important social obligations in Islam, and named as one of the major traits of the faithful believers in the Holy Qur’an. We have also learnt that breaking promises is a major sin and a sign of hypocrisy. In this lesson, we will examine some further details regarding this concept.



## THE GREATEST PROMISE

<sup>ii</sup>Amongst all our promises, the greatest promise (or covenant) is the promise that we have made with Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) tells us in the Holy Qur’an that before we were born into this world, we have all made a promise to Him that we will obey Him.

Proofs for this promise are that we each have a divine Godly instinct that points us towards Allah (SWT) and a conscience which teaches us right and wrong. Each and every time we sin, we are breaking this great promise, and we will be held account for our unfaithfulness to our covenant with Allah (SWT) on the Day of Reckoning. In fact, Allah (SWT) groups those who have broken this major promise as the *Fasiqīn* (*the rebellious and disobedient to Allah whose hearts are turned away from the truth and suffer the disease of hypocrisy*)

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَغْدٍ مِيثَاقِهِ

“Those (Fasiqīn) who break Allah’s Covenant (of worshipping none but Allah and abiding by His Law) after ratifying it...” (2:27)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING PROMISES

As with fulfilling trusts, keeping promises is an obligation without exceptions, as we can see from the following narration.

Imam al-Bāqir (as) said: “There are three situations where Allah (SWT) did not make any exceptions: respect to parents, keeping promises and fulfilling trusts.”<sup>iii</sup>

As Muslims we **must** keep our promises to **any person** we make them to. It does not matter whether the other person is young or old, Muslim or non-Muslim, good or bad. We must follow the example from Imam Zainul 'Abidin (as) who said that even if a person entrusted him with the sword that was used to kill his holy father, and he had promised to return it to the owner, he would do so.

## MUHAMMAD (SAW, THE TRUSTWORTHY)



Our Holy Messenger, Prophet Muḥammad (saw) is the perfect role model that each and every one of us should follow. At a young age, before beginning his mission, he was known as 'Al-Amīn', the trustworthy, due to the fact that he never broke a promise or trust.

Even all the disbelievers had complete trust in him, highlighted by the story regarding the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad) of the Ka'ba. He was so trustworthy that during his first public invitation to Islam he first asked the people of Mecca whether they would believe him or not if he gave news of enemies approaching from behind the mountains. The unanimous reply was 'yes'. Indeed, it was Prophet Muḥammad's (SAWA) trustworthiness that made him fit for this great mission and allowed the people to believe the message that he delivered. If we follow his example in our lives, especially in Western societies, we will present the supreme moral standards of our religion and invite others to Islam through our actions.

## NADHR, 'AHD & QASAM

In Islam, we have three types of specific promises that have special jurisprudential rulings.

**Nadhr (vow):** when one uses a verbal expression to promise using the name of Allah (SWT) to make

something obligatory on themselves if a certain thing happens

**Qasam (oath):** when one uses a verbal expression using the name of God to promise to do a certain act

**'Ahd (covenant):** this is when a person makes a vow with Allah (SWT) to do something. It is very similar to a Qasam, and differs mainly in the verbal expression used

If one makes any of the above promises with their required conditions, and then breaks them, a kaffārah (expiation) is obligatory. This expiation is different according to the type of promise.

	Nadhr Vow	Ahd Covenant	Qasam Oath
<b>Kaffarāh</b>	Feed 10 poor, clothe 10 poor or free a slave. OR Fast for 3 consecutive days.	Feed 60 poor, fast consecutively for 2 month or free a slave.	Feed 10 poor, clothe 10 poor & free a slave. OR Fast for 3 consecutive days.

## Homework

### Q1. The Greatest Promise is:

- The covenant we made with our parents.
- The covenant we made with Allah (SWT).
- The covenant we will make with Allah (SWT).

### Q2. If a person takes an oath to do something for the sake of God:

- They must do that thing or pay a penalty
- They do not have to do it
- They should not do it

### Q3. The signs of a hypocrite are:

- He or she does not pray
- He or she does not fast
- He or she does not keep their promises

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Youth & Morals, by Sayyid Murtaza Musavi-Lari - <http://www.al-islam.org/youth-and-morals-sayyid-murtaza-musavi-lari/>

<sup>ii</sup> Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei – Tafseer of Verse 27 of Surah Baqarah.

<sup>iii</sup> [al-Kaafi vol.2 p. 162]



# WUDU', GHUSL AND TAYAMMUM

## الوضوء و الغسل و التيمم

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

### Lesson 1: Wuḍū'

**Teacher's Note:** For lesson 1, teachers have a choice between two lessons depending on the level of their students. If the students are already competent with Wuḍū' and its rules, use the first lesson provided. If not, use the second.

#### Objectives >>>

##### **Students should:**

- Revise the obligation of Wuḍū' and/or Ghusl as a preparation for prayer and other acts of worship
- Know the major rules of Wuḍū'
- Discuss the significance of Wuḍū'
- Know what invalidates Wuḍū'
- Review Tayammum as an alternative to Wuḍū' under certain conditions
- Know the method and general requirements of performing Tayammum
- Understand the rules of Ghusl al-Janābah and Ghusl Mass al-Mayyit
- Review the different reasons requiring Ghusl
- Discuss further rules regarding Ghusl
- Know the situations in which Tayammum becomes obligatory
- Know how to perform Tayammum
- Know the objects which one can use to perform Tayammum

In previous years, we have learnt the rules regarding Wuḍū' as well as the mustahab acts and supplications that we recite during Wuḍū'. In this lesson we will focus on the spirituality of Wuḍū' and its significance. Before we begin, an important principle to remember is that Allah, the Exalted, often commands us to perform external physical acts in order to symbolise a spiritual process that we should be going through. Because it is difficult for us to conceptualise or control the spiritual process, Allah, the Exalted, due to His Mercy, allows us to perform a similar physical process. If we perform this physical process correctly, He, by His Mercy, allows the spiritual process to occur more easily and thus we reap the benefits of that spiritual process. There are many examples of this in Islam, including Ḥajj, Ghusl, Tayammum and others. One of the major examples of course is Wuḍū'.

### THE GATE TO A SACRED MEETING

As stated by the Prophet (saw), the daily prayer is the spiritual ascension of a believer to His Lord. There are many prerequisites that lead to this ascension that and Wuḍū' is one of them.

Consider prayers as a fortress wherein is the sacred, secret meeting place between one and his Lord. This fortress has doors which must be protected; if they are left open or broken then the sacred meeting with The Lord cannot take place. *Wuḍū'* is one of these doors. If carried out correctly, the door to the fortress is closed from intruders leading to the occurrence of the meeting, and furthermore, if performed with knowledge and understanding that door is strengthened.



## **SPIRITUAL ROLE OF WATER**

Allah (SWT) has created water as the substance that enables life and cleanses dirt and filth and hence it is a mercy and blessing from Allah. When we perform *Wuḍū'*, we are approaching the water as the purifier of our external body and also as the manifestation of Allah's mercy to purify our hearts from sins and the evils of Satan.

When we meet with important persons, we try our best to meet them in our most perfect state. There is no doubt that the most important and beloved One to all believers is Allah (SWT). Hence when we want to meet with Him during prayers, it is only right that we approach Him with a pure body and pure heart. This is what we achieve through *Wuḍū'*. Our body parts must be cleansed because with them we obey and worship Allah and we supplicate and ask Him for guidance and sustenance. Our heart must also be cleansed as it is the centre of our love and faith in our Powerful Creator. Furthermore, *Wuḍū'* removes laziness, expels sleep and directs our attention to the Presence of Allah.

*Wuḍū'* also symbolises the purification of our bodies and hearts before our major meeting with Allah on the Day of Judgement (the daily prayer also serves to remind us

of that Day). That is why we utter the different supplications when we are washing or wiping the different body parts in *Wuḍū'*; we ask Allah to brighten our faces on the Day of Judgement, to give us our book of deeds in our right hand and not in our left, to encompass us with His Mercy and Forgiveness and to keep our feet firm on the path that we will all have to pass on that Day. Once we've asked Allah for these things, we proceed to standing in Allah's presence on the Day of Judgement (prayers).

## **Review Questions**

Try to keep all these different aspects in mind when performing *Wuḍū'* throughout the week. By the end of the week, reflect on your actions and judge yourself as to whether it has had a positive impact on your spirituality in prayers.

## **Lesson 1 (alternative): a Practical Lesson on *Wuḍū'***

### **Practical Activity**

Your teacher will take you to the nearest washrooms. There, each of you should demonstrate *Wuḍū'* to your teacher. Your teacher will assess you on the *Wājib* and *Mustaḥab* aspects of *Wuḍū'*.

## **WHEN DO WE NEED TO PERFORM WUḌŪ'**

It is *Wājib* to perform *Wuḍū'*:

- Before our daily prayers
- Before we touch the script of the Qur'ān in Arabic
- Before we touch the names of Allah

It is recommended to perform *Wuḍū'*:

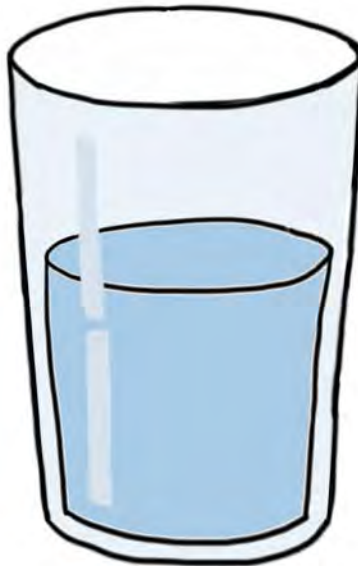
- Before we touch the names of the the Prophets and Ahlul Bayt
- Before any act of worship, such as reading the Qur'ān or du'a'
- Before sleeping
- All the time



## CONDITIONS OF WUDŪʾ

When we are about to perform *Wuḍūʾ*, we need to remember the following rules:

1. The water we use and the place we are doing *Wuḍūʾ* in need to be *Mubāḥ*-this means that we must have permission to use them.
2. The water we use must be plain water (*mutlaq*). It must also be *ṭāhir*
3. Before we start *Wuḍūʾ*, the parts of our body which we will wash or wipe during *Wuḍūʾ* must be *ṭāhir*.
4. A person has to do *Wuḍūʾ* for themselves without help from anyone, unless they are disabled.
5. We should do the different parts of *Wuḍūʾ* in quick order and should not wait a long time between them.
6. We must make sure to perform the actions of *Wuḍūʾ* in the correct order.
7. It is important to remember that we are allowed to wash our face and arms a maximum of two times during *Wuḍūʾ*. As for wiping the head and feet, this can only be done once.



## GENERAL RULES

- It is important to understand that *Wuḍūʾ* can be performed with very little water – even half a glass of water is sufficient, as it takes only about a handful of water for each act of washing.
  - When performing *Wuḍūʾ* with tap water, it is recommended that you close the tap after each act, while you wash/wipe, so as to avoid wasting water.
  - You should not delay or miss your prayers because of not having access to water – as there is an alternative to this called *Tayammum* which we will discuss in the next few lessons.
  - If a person is about to pray but is not sure whether they have performed *Wuḍūʾ* or not, they must perform *Wuḍūʾ* before praying.
- If a person is certain they have performed *Wuḍūʾ*, but are now not sure if it has become void or not, they should assume that their *Wuḍūʾ* is still valid. Even if a person doubts whether their *Wuḍūʾ* has become void during prayer, they should continue their prayer and complete it.

## THINGS WHICH INVALIDATE WUDŪʾ

There are seven things that make *Wuḍūʾ* void. If any of these occur, a person must renew their *Wuḍūʾ* before they can do something that requires *Wuḍūʾ*.

These seven things 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. A common example would be fainting or going under an anaesthetic for an operation.
- Menstruation (in women only)
- Discharge of semen (for example after a wet dream or after sexual intercourse)

## **Review Questions**

### **Q1. Which of the following voids *Wuḍūʾ*?**

- a) Light sleep
- b) Complete sleep in which one cannot hear anything
- c) Sleep does not void *Wuḍūʾ*

### **Q2. When performing *Wuḍūʾ*:**

- a) We should use lots and lots of water
- b) We should use as little water as possible
- c) Using lots of water for *Wuḍūʾ* is not considered waste

### **Q3. The water used for *Wuḍūʾ* must be:**

- a) Plain (*mutlaq*)
- b) *Ṭāhir*
- c) Both a & b

## Lesson 2: Ghusl

As we have learnt in previous years, a number of situations cause us to enter a state for which we need to perform Ghusl. The main two situations are entering a state of Janābah and being in a state of Ḥayḍ or Istihāḍa (menstruation, for females). In this lesson, we will learn some general rules for Ghusl and the states of Janābah and Ḥayḍ. Female students will have another comprehensive lesson on the rules of Istihāḍa and Ḥayḍ later.

### GHUSL OF JANĀBAH

A person enters the state of Janābah under three main circumstances which makes Ghusl Janābah obligatory upon them:

- When sexual intercourse occurs. This is for both men and women. As soon as there is penetration of the male organ into the female organ, both persons have to perform Ghusl.
- If semen is discharged from a male due to being aroused. For a female, this also applies if a fluid is discharged with lust due to being aroused.

As we have learnt previously, once someone enters the state of Janābah, certain acts (which will be mentioned) become forbidden to that person. In order for a person to be able to purify themselves and resume those acts, Ghusl becomes obligatory.

### ACTS WHICH ARE FORBIDDEN

Certain things become forbidden to a person in the state of Janābah. This impurity can only be removed by Ghusl (or Tayammum depending on circumstances). The forbidden acts are five, and they also apply to a woman who is menstruating:

- Touching the script of the Qur'an, the names of Allah and the infallibles (whichever language they are in) with any part of one's body
- Entering Masjidul Ḥarām (in Mecca) or Masjid al-Nabi (in Medina), including passing through one gate and exiting another
- Stopping in any of the Shrines of the Imams or any other Masjid. However it is not forbidden to cross

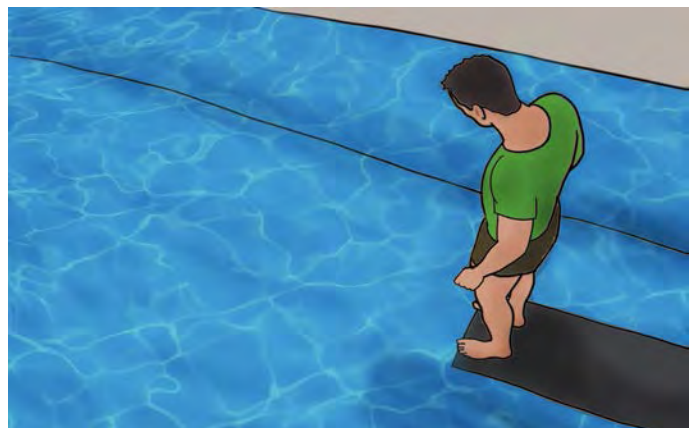
through a mosque (without stopping) entering through one gate and exiting from another

- To enter a mosque with an intention of lifting away something or placing something in it
- Reciting the verses of the Qur'an in which Sajdah is obligatory. These include:
  - Surat al-Sajdah (chapter 32), ayah 15
  - Surat Fuṣṣilat (chapter 41), ayah 38
  - Surat an-Najm (chapter 53), ayah 62
  - Surat al-'Ala (chapter 96), ayah 19

### CONDITIONS FOR THE WATER OF GHUSL:

The conditions of the water required for Ghusl are the same as those required for Wuḍūʿ:

- Mutlaq: plain or unmixed water
- Mubāḥ: water which one has permission to use
- Sufficient for the whole body: If the water available is not enough to make Ghusl for the whole body then one must resort to an alternative such as Tayammum.



### BEFORE PERFORMING GHUSL

- Remove any barriers that may prevent water from reaching the skin
- Remove any impurities (things that are najis); however if these impurities are of the type that can definitely be removed during the Ghusl (i.e. while diving into water or pouring water over the body), then they may be left on the body provided they are removed during the Ghusl and water reaches the skin beneath them.

### INTENTION

We must have an intention for the type of Ghusl we want to perform. The intention for Ghusl does not have

to be verbalized rather it is a thought in the mind whereby you know what you are doing and for which purpose. For example, if someone was to ask you at that time which Ghusl you are doing, you know that you are performing the Ghusl for Friday - this is the intention.

If a person has more than one Ghusl to do for different reasons (such as Ghusl of Janabah and Ghusl for Friday and Ghusl for touching a dead body) they can do one Ghusl with the intention of all the reasons. However doing Ghusl with the intention of one of the reasons or with the intention of complying with the orders of Allah is enough to represent all others and hence the Ghusl will be valid.

## TYPES OF GHUSL

As you have learnt in previous years, there are two ways in which Ghusl can be performed:

**Ghusl Irtimāsi:** this applies mostly to performing Ghusl in rivers, swimming pools etc. When performing Ghusl in this way, the entire body should be completely out of the water and then submerged into water at once or it can be done gradually with the intention of Ghusl. If after performing Ghusl Irtimāsi it becomes known that water has not reached some part of the body one should repeat the entire Ghusl.

**Ghusl Tartībī:** one must wash the head and neck first and then the right side of the body (from the shoulders down to the toes) then likewise the left side of the body. In order to be certain that the water has reached all parts of the body, one should include part of the left side while washing the right side and vice versa.

## IGNORANCE OR BEING HEEDLESS OF OR DURING GHUSL:

As mentioned earlier, Ghusl is one of the prerequisites for our acts of worship. Hence if it is not correct, our acts of worship will be void and will need to be repeated once Ghusl has been corrected.

If after entering the state of Janabah, or menstruation, one did not perform Ghusl due to not knowing about Ghusl or did not know that certain circumstances require Ghusl, then those prayers performed will need to be repeated. Depending on the type of ignorance, the fasts

offered during that state may or may not need to be repeated (refer to your own marja's fatwa).

In some circumstances, such as if someone did not know that Janabah required Ghusl but performed a different Ghusl (whether mustahab or wājib) done with the intention of complying to the orders of Allah it will be deemed sufficient and hence the prayers offered would not need to be repeated.

## GHUSL SUFFICING FOR WUḌŪʿ:

After performing an obligatory Ghusl, one does not need to perform Wuḍūʿ for prayers (except in certain situations for women) as the Ghusl would suffice.

As for mustahab Ghusl (e.g. Friday Ghusl), there are different opinions about whether this can substitute for Wuḍūʿ. Check your marja's ruling on this, but in general it is better to perform Wuḍūʿ after a mustahab Ghusl.

## GHUSL FOR TOUCHING A DEAD BODY

We may come across situations in life where we come in contact with a dead body (such as while resuscitating someone who dies in the process, or dissecting bodies at university). If we touch a dead body, the following rules apply:

- If it is the body of a non-Muslim, we must perform Ghusl afterwards
- If it is the body of a Muslim, and the body has gone cold, but has not been washed yet, we must perform Ghusl afterwards.
- If it is the body of a Muslim, and the body has not gone cold (i.e. the person has just passed) or the body has been washed with Ghusl al-Mayyit, then we do not need to perform Ghusl.

The Ghusl for touching a dead body is performed in the same way as Ghusl Janabah.

## Homework

1. Summarise in point form, the sequence of Ghusl Tartībī, include the prerequisites to the Ghusl including the conditions of the water, intention etc...

## Lesson 3: Tayammum

In previous years, we have learnt that Tayammum is another way of attaining the ritual cleanliness required for daily prayers and some other acts of worship. Tayammum is basically cleaning with soil rather than water and is a substitute for *Wuḍūʾ* or *Ghusl* when one cannot perform *Wuḍūʾ* or *Ghusl* for some reason. In this lesson, we will discuss in more detail the situations in which Tayammum becomes obligatory. We will also quickly review the method of performing Tayammum as well as the things that we can use to perform Tayammum.

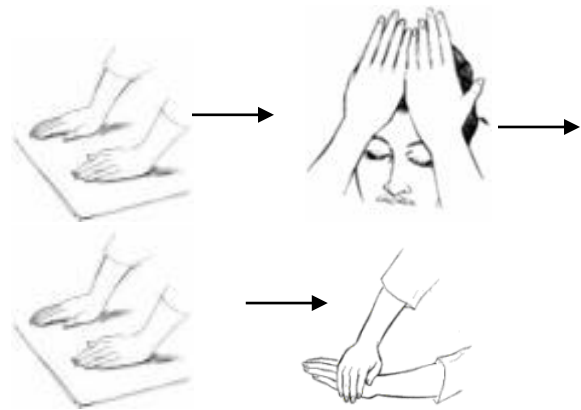
### PERFORMING TAYAMMUM

The method of performing Tayammum is very easy. It is outlined in the following steps:

- 1- Remove any barriers that may stop the dust of Tayammum reaching the hand or forehead (e.g. rings). Also, if there is any uncleanness on these areas, it should be purified.
- 2- One must make the intention (*Niyyah*) of performing Tayammum for the sake of Allah. As you know by now, this need not be said out loud, you simply need to know in your mind what you are doing and why.
- 3- One must strike both palms together on the object which they are using to perform Tayammum
- 4- The entire forehead should be stroked or wiped with the palms of both hands, from where the hair begins to grow down to the eyebrows (passing the palms over the eyebrows is recommended) and just above the nose. Start from the top and wipe downwards towards the eyebrows.
- 5- (Recommended step): Strike the hands on the object of Tayammum again
- 6- Stroke the left palm over the whole back of the right hand and then stroke the right palm over the whole back of the left hand. Start from just above the wrist and make sure the whole back of the hand is wiped. However, you do not need

to wipe between the fingers. Start from the wrist and wipe towards the tips of the fingers.

When striking the hands on the object of Tayammum, particles of the object should stick to the hands, and after striking, one should not shake off all those particles from the hand.



### OBJECTS OF TAYAMMUM

The following objects can be used for Tayammum, in descending order of preference:

- 1- Earth (the soil from the earth)



- 2- Sand





3- Lump of clay or stone



4- Gypsum



5- Lime-stone



6- Mud



7- Dust which gathers on clothes or carpets, provided that its quantity is such that it can be termed as soft earth

## CLASS ACTIVITY

The rest of this lesson explains most of the major rules of Tayammum and the situations in which we should perform Tayammum. Because there is a lot here to memorise, you will be given some time to read through this information, and then you will be split into teams and we will have a quiz to do. The winning team will receive a small prize.

## OTHER IMPORTANT RULES FOR OBJECTS OF TAYAMMUM

1-If none of these objects are available, one can pray without Tayammum. However, they must repeat their prayer as Qadhā' later.

2-If a person does not have anything to perform Tayammum with, but can buy such a thing, it is obligatory for them to buy it.

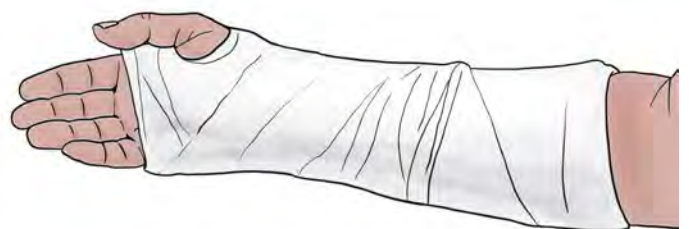
3-Whatever object is used, it must leave some particles of dust on the person's hand.

4-Whatever object is used, it must be pure (Ṭāhir).

5-The above things should not be mixed with another substance on which Tayammum is not allowed. For example, mud mixed with straw is not a sufficient for Tayammum.

## FURTHER RULES OF TAYAMMUM

1-If a person is obligated to perform Tayammum but his forehead or hands are bandaged with a bandage that cannot be removed, he should wipe over the bandage. Even if the palms are bandaged, one can strike the object of Tayammum with the bandaged hand.



2-If at the beginning of the prayer time, one cannot perform Wuḍūʾ or Ghusl, and they are sure that the reason why they are not able to do so will continue till

the end of the time for prayers, they can perform Tayammum at the beginning of the prayer time and pray. However, if they know or have a hope that they will be able to do Ghusl or Wuḍūʿ before the end of the prayer time, they should wait until that time and perform Wuḍūʿ or Ghusl and pray with that Wuḍūʿ or Ghusl.

3-Once the reason for performing Tayammum disappears, the Tayammum becomes invalid.

4-The things which invalidate Wuḍūʿ invalidate the tayammum performed instead of Wuḍūʿ also. Similarly, the things which invalidate Ghusl invalidate the tayammum performed instead of Ghusl also.

5-In cases where a person plays a part in having to do Tayammum instead of Wuḍūʿ or Ghusl (e.g. intentionally delaying prayers or intentionally entering a state of Janābah knowing there may not be water available), it is better to repeat the prayer which he performed with Tayammum.

## **SITUATIONS IN WHICH TAYAMMUM BECOMES THE OBLIGATION**

### 1-When it is not possible to procure enough water for Wuḍūʿ or Ghusl.

A person should first do his best to search for water in the place where he is. If he does not find it, he can perform Tayammum.

### 2-Lack of access to water due to Special Circumstances

If a person is unable to get water on account of old age or weakness, or fear of a thief or a beast, they can perform Tayammum.

### 3-When water is harmful

If a person is certain or has a reasonable fear that using water will harm his health, he should perform Tayammum.

### 4-When water is needed for drinking

If there is a shortage of water, and if one uses this water for Wuḍūʿ, he or other people, or even animals under his care, would go thirsty, he should save the water for drinking, and perform Tayammum.

### 5-When Water is needed to clean clothes

If a person's clothes in which he must pray or his body are unclean, he should prioritise the use of the water he has to clean them and then should pray with Tayammum.

### 6-When the water container is usurped

If the only water a person has is in a usurped container, the person cannot use that water and must perform Tayammum instead.

### 7-When the time for prayer is running out

When the time left for Prayer is so little that if a person does Ghusl or Wuḍūʿ he would be obliged to offer the entire prayers or a part of it after the prescribed time he should perform tayammum. This includes the time it takes to look for water or get ready for Wudhu. Of course, if it is quicker to perform Wuḍūʿ or Ghusl, he should do them rather than Tayammum.

## **Quiz**

10 points for answering a question correctly. If not answered correctly, passed on to the other team, who get 5 points for answering correctly.

Team A	Points	Team B	Points
1. If we cannot perform Wudhu and none of the objects of Tayammum are available, what should we do?		1. Is one allowed to wipe all the dust off one's hand after performing Tayammum?	
2. True or False. The object used for Tayammum should be Tahir.		2. True or False. The same things that invalidate Wudhu invalidate Tayammum.	
3.If a person could not do Wudhu and had to do Tayammum, but it was because of a fault of their own, are their prayers with Tayammum accepted?		3. Dhuhr Adhan just happened. At the moment I cannot do Wudhu for a valid excuse. However, I have a feeling that my reason for not doing Wudhu will disappear before sunset. What is my obligation?	
4.Name two situations where Tayammum becomes obligatory?		4.Name another two situations where Tayammum becomes obligatory?	
5.If I have something to perform Tayammum with, but I only have enough water to purify my Najis clothes in which I need to pray and not enough water for Wudhu, which takes priority, purifying my clothes or performing Wudhu?		5.If there is very little time left for prayers. and I am scared if I perform Wudhu I will not have time to pray. What is my obligation: a. a.perform Tayammum and pray? b. b.perform Wuḍū and pray c. c.perform either Wudhu or Tayammum, whichever takes less time	
6.If I am not sure whether doing Wudhu or Ghusl would mean I have no time left to pray, what should I do? a) a.perform Tayammum and pray? b) b.perform Wudhu and pray c) c.perform either Wudhu or Tayammum, whichever takes less time		6.If I know that if I perform Wudhu, I will only have enough time to pray without any Mustahab acts and without reciting the second surah of Qira'a, whereas if I perform Tayammum, I will have time to pray with all the obligatory and Mustahab acts. What should I do: a) a.Perform Tayammum and pray b) b.Perform Wudhu and pray	
7.Choose one member of your group to go around the centre's premises to find the most suitable object for Tayammum. Then choose someone else to perform Tayammum in front of the class. You will be marked on your accuracy.		7. Choose one member of your group to go around the centre's premises to find the most suitable object for Tayammum. Then choose someone else to perform Tayammum in front of the class. You will be marked on your accuracy.	
<u>Total Points</u>		Total Points	

## Homework:

1. List the seven situations in which Tayammum becomes obligatory:

2. List three objects on which one can perform Tayammum.

3. Practical: prepare a Tayammum pack for yourself. Find some soil and place it in a small box somewhere handy. You may need it, especially if you wake up just before sunrise and you have no time to perform Wuḍūʿ.

# PRAYER TIMES

## أوقات الصلاة

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Review the importance of praying the five daily prayers on time
- Understand the importance and benefits of praying at the prescribed time
- Know what to do in situations of doubt regarding prayer times
- Know the sequence of the prayers and what to do in situations where the time of prayers is limited

### JURISPRUDENCE

### LEVEL 5

## Lesson 1: Prayer Times

In previous years we have learnt about the five obligatory daily prayers and the times at which they are offered. We have also learnt that if we do not or have not offered these prayers, then we have to make them up as Qadhā.

In this lesson, we will focus on the rules regarding the timing of the obligatory daily prayers and situations of doubt regarding the prayer times.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYING WITHIN THE PRIME TIME

There is quite a long time period in which each prayer can be prayed. However, it is always best to pray each prayer at the beginning of its prescribed time. This time is known as 'Waqtul Fadhilah' or the 'prime time'. This window of time differs in length for each prayer. As a general rule, it extends for about an hour from the beginning time of that prayer. This creates the spirit of punctuality and discipline in us, and also reflects our dedication and commitment to communicate with Allah (SWT).

Offering our prayer on time is a highly recommended act. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:





“Whoever performed the obligatory prayers at the beginning of their times and observed their restrictions, the angels would raise them white and pure into heaven.

The prayer would say (to the performer): ‘May Allah (SWT) preserve you as you preserved me and entrust you to a generous angel as you looked after me’. But whoever performed them after the appointed times with no excuse, and did not observe their restrictions, the angels would raise them, black and dark. The prayer would shout at the performer: ‘you have lost me, may Allah (SWT) lose you, and may He not care for you as you did not care for me’.”

It is also related in a Ḥadīth Qudsi:

“And when he (the worshipper) knows that it is time of Prayer but does not pray, he is indeed careless about Me”<sup>i</sup>

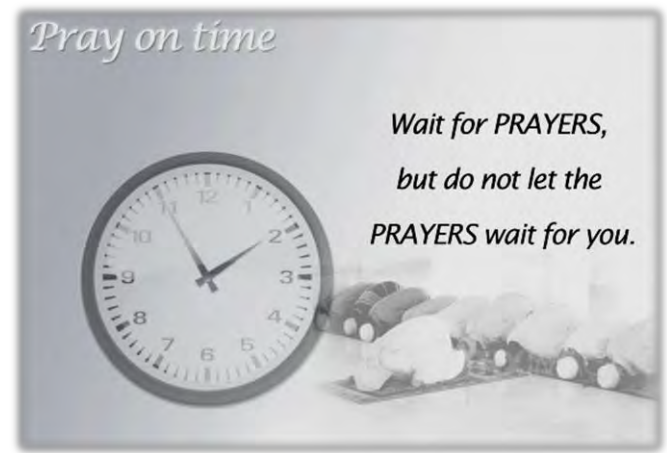
## **PRAYER TIMINGS ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ĀN**

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ  
إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

“Undertake the prayer at the time of the declining sun to the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; for indeed the morning recitation is witnessed” (17: 78)

It is clear from the above āyah that the *times* of the obligatory prayers are three:

1. The time of the two obligatory prayers, Ḍuhr (noon) and ‘Aṣr (afternoon), which is shared between the two. This starts from when the sun is at its highest point in the sky, and continues until the sun sets.
2. The time of the two obligatory prayers Maghrib (dusk) and ‘Ishā’ (night) which is also shared between the two. This begins a short time after sunset (when more than half the sky is dark), and ends in the middle point of the night.
3. 3) The time for the Fajr (morning) prayer which is specific to it. This begins when the first horizontal ray of light appears on the horizon, until the sun rises.



## **RULES REGARDING THE TIME OF PRAYERS:**

It is mustaḥab (highly recommended) that we offer our prayers at the prime time prescribed for them. We should not delay our prayers without good reason. Things such as watching television or playing a game are not reasonable excuses for delaying prayer.

There are a few exceptions whereby we are allowed to delay our prayers, including the following:

- waiting to join jamā’ah (congregational) prayers
- situations pertaining to rules of menstruation
- situations where one has no access to water for ghusl or wuḍū’, but may get access to this later
- where one is in doubt of some of the important rules of prayers and needs to learn them before praying,
- other urgent situations



## **DETERMINING THE TIME FOR PRAYERS**

We cannot begin offering prayers until we are certain that the time for prayers has set in. The ways to determine whether the time for prayers has set in are:

- By witnessing the times/sky ourselves
- If two just/trustworthy persons inform us that the time of prayers has set in
- If we hear the adhān for prayers, and this gives us surety that the time for prayer has set in

If we are not certain whether the time for prayers has set in, we should delay prayers until we feel certain that the time for prayers has set in.

### SITUATIONS OF ERROR OR DOUBT

If we are certain that the time of prayers had set in and pray, but later realise that we prayed before the time, the prayer is void and must be repeated.

If we were certain that the time of prayers had set in and begin praying then we realise during the prayers that the time has **not** set in, the prayer is void.

If we realise during the prayers that only then (during the prayers) the time **did** set in, the prayer will be valid.

For example, if in the third raka'at of my Dhuhr prayer I realise that the time set in while I was in second raka'at, then the prayer is valid and I can continue.

If we are heedless and do not care to check carefully whether the time for prayers has set in or not and begin to pray, then while praying we realise that the time for prayers only set in then, then the prayer is void and must be repeated.

### Review Questions

**Q1. The best time to pray is the beginning time for each prayer which is about up to an hour after the adhān. This is called the:**

- a) Mustaḥab time
- b) The Faḍilāh time
- c) The Wājib time

**Q2. Which surah and āyah in the Holy Qur'an talks about the time of prayers:**

- a) 17:78
- b) 103:3
- c) 33:33

**Q3. Ja'far thought that the time of Ḍuhr had set in and began to offer his Ḍuhr prayer. However while in ruku' of the second rak'ah he heard the adhān for Ḍuhr. Is his prayer valid or void? What should he do?**

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## Lesson 2: Rules Regarding the Sequence of Prayers

It is important to offer our prayers in the prescribed sequence. This means that we should make sure to pray Ḍuhr before 'Aṣr and Maghreb before 'Ishā'. This is because each prayer is specific for a certain time, as we have learnt in previous years; for example, the time for 'Aṣr prayer begins once Ḍuhr prayer has been completed. In this lesson, we will discuss some rules related to this issue.

- Intentionally offering 'Aṣr before Ḍuhr or 'Ishā' before Maghreb prayers:
  - In this situation, the prayer will be void and must be repeated.
- Intentionally offering 'Aṣr before Ḍuhr:
  - The prayer is valid even if we only realise after we have completed it. However it should be treated as Ḍuhr prayer. We then pray 'Aṣr afterwards.
  - If we begin offering 'Aṣr prayer by mistake before Ḍuhr prayer and realise this before completing the prayer, we should revert our intention to Ḍuhr prayer and complete the prayer as Ḍuhr prayer, then we can offer 'Aṣr prayer afterwards
- Forgetfully praying Ishā' before Maghreb:
  - If we begin 'Ishā' prayer before Maghreb prayer by mistake and realise during the prayer before the ruku' of the fourth rak'ah, we should change our intention to Maghreb and complete the prayer.

- If we begin praying with the intention of 'Ishā' and realise during the prayers that we have not offered Maghreb prayers yet and we have already gone into the ruku' of the fourth rak'ah, then we should complete the prayers with the intention of it being 'Ishā' prayers and then pray Maghreb after it.

### LIMITED TIME FOR PRAYER

- If there is not enough time left to pray, we should not perform the Mustahab parts of and we should focus only on the obligatory parts in order to complete the prayers within the correct time. For example, if I have 3 minutes left before the time for 'Asr prayer ends, I should pray 'Asr without any recommended acts so I can complete within that time.
- If the time left for prayers is so little that we would only be able to perform one rak'ah of the prayer within the prescribed time, we should offer that prayer with the intention of adā'm(in time). For example, if I begin my Fajr prayer at 5.45 am, while the sunrise time is 5.46am, I should still pray the prayer with the intention of Ada, not the intention of Qaḍā'.
- If we have not offered Ḍuhr and 'Asr prayers and it is nearly sunset:
  - if there is enough time for 5 rak'at (i.e. the four rak'at of Ḍuhr and one raka' of 'Asr) then we should pray our Ḍuhr first and then 'Asr with the intention of adā'.
  - if there is only enough time for 4 or less (at least one) rak'ah, then we should pray 'Asr first with the intention of adā', and Ḍuhr after it with the intention of qaḍā'
- The same rule applies if there little time left for Maghreb and Ishā' prayers.
- In normal circumstances, if we do not offer Maghreb or 'Ishā' prayers till after midnight, as an obligatory precaution we should offer them both in sequence<sup>ii</sup> before Fajr without making the intention of adā' or Qaḍā'. However, in special situations such if one was ill, or fell asleep, they can pray those prayers

between midnight and Fajr with the intention of adā'.

### Review Questions

**Q1. Fatima woke up early in the morning for Fajr prayer and saw an eastern light in the horizon. She doubted whether the time for Fajr prayer had set in or not. Can she pray at that time? What should she do in this situation?**

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**Q2. Hasan heard the adhān at Maghreb time and began offering prayers with the intention of 'Ishā' prayer by mistake. While standing up in the third rak'ah he realised that he had not offered Maghreb prayer yet. Is his prayer void or valid? What should he do?**

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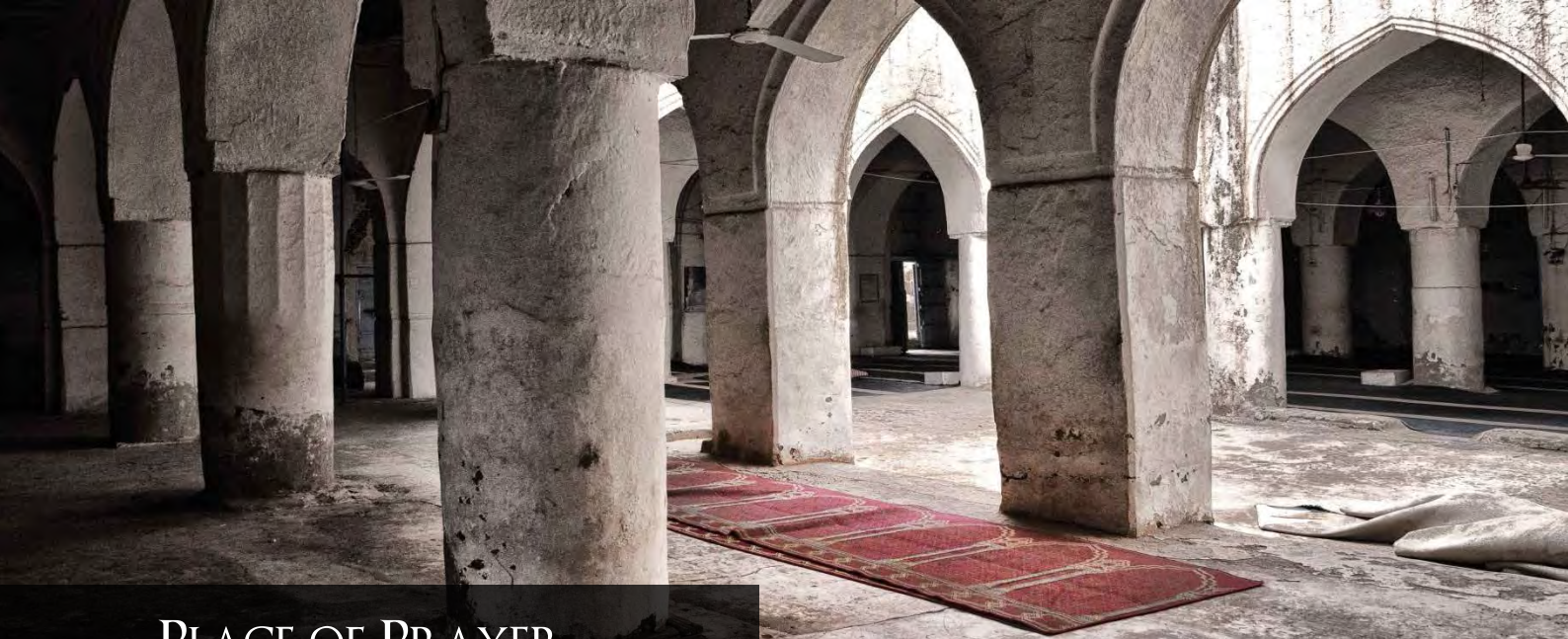
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<sup>i</sup> (Hadith al Qudsi)

<sup>ii</sup> References

- ehAWZA: semester 1, course 4, lecture 14
- Sistani.org → Islamic Laws → Chapters 86-91 - <http://www.sistani.org/english/>





## PLACE OF PRAYER

### مكان المصلي

#### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand the seven conditions of the place of prayer with their most important details
- Be reminded of the rewards of praying at the mosque

### Lesson 1: The Place of Prayer

In this lesson, we will discuss the conditions for the place in which we choose to perform our prayer. We will discuss each condition in some detail. Before we begin the discussion it is important to remember that we should not delay our prayer unnecessarily because most places are appropriate for prayer. If the conditions we are about to discuss are met, then we can pray in that place and should not delay our prayers till for example, we arrive home.

#### 1. THE PLACE OF PRAYER SHOULD BE PERMISSIBLE TO USE

We learnt last year that we cannot pray in a place that we do not have permission to pray in. Therefore, if we are at someone's house or on their property, we cannot pray there without their permission. However, this rule

#### JURISPRUDENCE

#### LEVEL 5

does not apply to public places or large lots of land such as farms etc...

There are three other major common examples of praying in a place which is usurped:

- Taking someone's place in a mosque without their satisfaction and then praying there instead of them. If one does this, they need to repeat their prayer. This might especially be the case if that person needs that place for a certain purpose (e.g. back pain)



- Praying on land or in a property that one owns but whose Khums he has not been paid. Such land or property is considered usurped and thus one cannot pray there



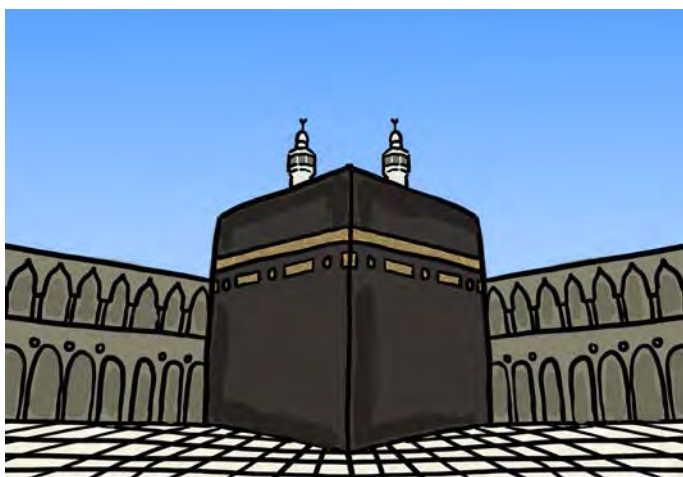


- If two people share a property, then one partner must seek the permission of the other before using that place for prayer

## 2. THE PLACE OF PRAYER MUST BE STABLE

The place for prayers should not have such a vigorous movement which would make normal standing, bowing (rukū') or prostration impossible. In fact, as an obligatory precaution, it should not prevent the body from being at ease. But if one is forced to pray at such places, due to shortage of time, or any other reason, like in a car, on a ship or on train, then one should try to remain still, and to maintain the direction of Qibla, as much as possible, even if this requires moving their whole body. If the vehicles move away from the direction of the Qiblah. There is no harm in offering prayers in a car or a boat, or on railway trains or other vehicles, while they are motionless. If they do not cause the body to sway excessively, when they are in motion, one can pray in them. This includes praying on airplanes. This is not an excuse to miss or delay prayers.

## 3. ONE MUST BE RELATIVELY SURE THEY CAN COMPLETE THEIR PRAYER AT THAT PLACE



If there is a place where one thinks they may not be able to complete their prayers because of, for example, a strong wind or a huge crowd, then they should not pray there. If, however, they do pray there and are able to complete their prayers, their prayers are still void according to some scholars, but valid according to others.<sup>i</sup>

This rule is particularly important during Ḥajj, where the Holy Mosque is often so full that one needs to remain at

a distance from the Holy Ka'bah in order to pray without having their prayer interrupted.

## 4. THE PLACE OF PRAYER MUST BE SUFFICIENTLY SPACIOUS

The place of prayer must be spacious enough to allow the person to stand upright and perform prostration and bowing (rukū').

This is often an issue at Ḥajj, where due to great congestion it is not possible to perform bowing and prostration and one must find a suitably spacious place. It is not permissible to perform prostration on someone's back.

## 5. THE PLACE OF PRAYER MUST BE ṬĀHIR

We learnt last year that the place in which we are praying must be Ṭāhir. If it is Najis but dry, we can still pray on it, except for the place of Sujūd which must be Ṭāhir, even if it is dry.

For further details, refer to last year's lesson on this topic.

## 6. A WOMAN MUST PRAY BEHIND A MAN IF IN CLOSE PROXIMITY

We learnt previously that if a man and a woman are praying close to one another, the man needs to pray ahead of the woman. For further details on this rule, refer to last year's lesson.

## 7. THE PLACE OF PROSTRATION AND PLACE OF STANDING MUST BE CLOSE IN HEIGHT

It is a condition that the spot where a person places their head during prostration is not more than four finger-widths higher or lower than the place of the toes or knees. This rule applies to when there is a sudden step-down between the position of standing and the position of prostration- such as standing on the floor but performing prostration on a thick mattress- or when there is a steady incline- such as when one is praying on a hill.

## PRAYING IN A MOSQUE

As we have learnt in previous years, it is highly recommended to pray at the mosque and that the rewards of a prayer prayed at the mosque are far greater than a prayer prayed at home. This is especially the case for people who live close to a mosque or Islamic centre.



“He who walks to a mosque intending to join the congregation gets the equivalent of seventy thousand good deeds for every step he takes, and he is raised just as many levels...”<sup>iii</sup>

## Homework

- 1. List four of the conditions of the place of prayer.**

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- 2. If I am praying in a place which is najis but dry and I place a pure cloth on the place of prostration and pray, is my prayer valid?**

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- 3. If I have not sought permission from a person to use their house, can I pray there?**

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- 4. Extra research:**

- a. Find out if there are any mosques around the world in which it is particularly rewarding to pray.**

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- b. Are we allowed to pray inside the Holy Ka’bah?**

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<sup>i</sup> Ayatollah Sistani deems such a prayer void, whilst Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi deems it valid.

<sup>ii</sup> **References**

Islamic Laws, Ayatollah Sistani

Practical Laws of Islam, Ayatollah Khamenei

Islamic Laws, Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi

<sup>iii</sup> Mizanul Hikmah, no. 2930



## PRAYER CLOTHES

### لباس المصلي

#### Objectives >>>

##### Students should:

- Understand the basic conditions for the clothes of prayers including the *mustaḥab* and *wājib* conditions
- Be reminded of the rules of silk, gold and leather during prayer
- Be able to solve common doubts about dress of prayers
- Know the detailed rules of blood on clothes of prayer

#### JURISPRUDENCE

#### LEVEL 5

### Dress of Prayer

In previous years, we have discussed the rule of the clothes we wear during prayer. Here, we will revise the rules and go into some more detail.

#### COVERING THE BODY DURING ṢALĀT

As we learnt in previous years, it is *Wājib* to cover the body during prayers. For women, the whole body must be covered, except the face, the hands up to the wrist and the feet up to the ankles. For further rules, refer to last year's lesson.

#### CONDITIONS OF CLOTHES OF PRAYER

As we have discussed in previous years, there are certain conditions one must meet with regards to their prayer clothes in order for the prayers to be correct. We shall discuss a few details in this regard below.

##### 1. ṬAHĀRAH

The condition of *Ṭahārah* means that the clothes and body of the person offering prayer must be free from any *najāsah*. If a person finds out his clothes are *Najis* during prayer, he should either start his prayer again if there is time, or try to remove the *Najis* item if possible. For further rules, refer to last year's lessons.

There are certain exceptional rulings which make prayer valid even if the body or dress are *najis* with blood:

- If the body is stained with blood discharged from a wound or sore on the person's own body



- If the body or dress is stained with blood spaced over a space lesser than the approximate diameter of an Australian 5c coin.
- Blood is on the clothes one wears that are not big enough to cover the private parts (like socks or cap)

## 2. CLOTHING MUST BE MUBĀḤ

As a precaution, or most agree obligatory precaution<sup>i</sup> praying in usurped clothing (stolen or khums not paid), intentionally makes the prayer void. If someone, unintentionally offers prayers with usurped clothing (he forgets or is unaware) and has not usurped it himself, his prayer is valid.

Unlike the ruling of najis clothing, if one realises during prayer that he is wearing a usurped item of clothing, it must be taken off immediately. If this is not possible, and he has time for one rak'ah, he must break his prayer, change clothing and pray again.

## 3. RULES OF LEATHER AND FUR

Carrying an item (e.g. wallet) which is made of the skin of an animal which has **not** been slaughtered lawfully but whose meat is usually ḥalāl (like a cow), is permissible during prayers. However, wearing such as item, as an obligatory precaution, is not permissible (even if it

is not big enough to cover the private parts) and some scholars say that it cannot be worn at all<sup>ii</sup>. Having the hair or saliva<sup>iii</sup> of an animal that is ḥarām to eat (and whose blood gushes-like a cat, rat, kangaroo etc.) on the clothes voids the prayer.<sup>iv</sup> Similarly, wearing anything made from parts of such animals renders the prayer void.



## 4. RULE OF GOLD AND SILK

It is ḥarām for men to wear gold or silk whether it touches the skin or not, although for women it is okay. Any prayers said by a man wearing these two items are void although carrying it (in a pocket for instance) is ok. These things are ḥarām for men even outside prayer.

## 5. MISCELLANEOUS RULE

Wearing a dress whose cloth colour or stitch is not befitting the status of a person, or is unusual for him, is ḥarām if it is undignified or humiliating, but will not void his prayers.

## MUSTAḤAB AND MAKRŪH DRESS

It is mustaḥab to wear a turban, a loose garment over the shoulders ('aba), a white dress, clean clothes, use of perfume and wearing 'aqīq (agate).



It is makrūh to wear black, dirty or tight clothing. Also it is makrūh to wear clothing with images printed or drawn on them, to keep buttons open or to wear a ring that has images engraved on it.

## HOMEWORK

Open the Islamic Laws book of your marja' and write 5 other rules you manage to find (which have not been discussed in this lesson) on the rules regarding blood on the clothes of prayer.

<sup>i</sup> Big difference of opinion here, most say it is obligatory and not only a precaution...so I would mention that here...here are



the other fatawa (K:Khomeini, F: fadullah, M: makarem shirazi)

**M:** The dress that a person uses for offering prayers, as an obligatory precaution, should be Mubah, and if he offers prayers having a usurped clothes on intentionally, even if a piece of thread or a button of it is usurped, he should offer it again. However, if he did not know that it was usurped, and offered prayers with it, his prayers would be in order. Similarly, if he knew that it was usurped but then forgot about it being usurped, and offered prayers with it, his prayers would be in order, unless he himself was the usurper, that is, he himself had usurped something and then forgot about it and offered prayers with it, his namaz, as an obligatory precaution, would be void and he should offer it again.

**K:** Secondly, that it is not permissible to offer prayer if the garment is usurped, provided that he has knowledge about its being usurped, so that if he does not know about it, his prayer shall be valid. The same rule shall apply in case he forgets about the garment being usurped, except when he is himself the usurper. Caution must not, therefore, be given up by offering the prayer again.

**F:** It is not permissible for any mukallafs to usurp an item of clothing to wear during prayer. Should they wear it, they would be guilty, regardless of whether they said their prayer wearing it or not. If they went ahead and performed prayer in that usurped garment, such a prayer is deemed null and void; that is, if they were aware of the fact that their action, [i.e. usurpation] is unlawful, and that the garment was big enough to cover the private parts, as a matter of obligatory precaution; if it is not the case, i.e. without it being big enough to cover the private parts, prayer would not be deemed batil. Should we assume that the perpetrator was ignorant, their prayer should be valid, and although ihtiyat must be followed where the ignorant person was both aware of the rule and negligent.

<sup>ii</sup> **M:** The dress with which a person offers prayers should not be made of the parts of the dead body of an animal whose blood gushes when killed. Even, as an obligatory precaution, the dress made of the dead body of an animal whose blood does not gush (for example, fish and snake) should also be avoided. A person who offers prayers should not have with him parts of a carcass, even if it is not in dress form.

**K:** Thirdly, that (if the garment has been made with the parts of body of an animal), It should belong to an animal which has been one whose meat is allowed for eating and which has been lawfully slaughtered. So it is not permissible to offer the prayer while wearing the garment made of the skin of an animal not lawfully slaughtered, nor the garment made of other parts of its body having life, and, according to the more cautious opinion, even if it is clean due to not being one having spurting blood, like a fish.

<sup>iii</sup> **S:** Question: What is your ruling about cat's hair on a person's dress during salat?

Answer: Cat's hair does not invalidate prayer.

**M:** The dress of a person who offers prayers should not be from an animal whose meat is haraam to eat, even if a hair of it is with him, his namaz is objectionable.

**K: Q 437:** Does the existence of the hair or saliva of a cat on a person's clothes cause his/her prayer to be invalid? **A:** Yes, it invalidates the prayer.

**F:** Any clothing should not be made of the skin or hair of an animal whose meat is not lawful to eat, such as that of any beast; that is, even such animals were killed according to the Islamic code of slaughtering. Prayer said by the worshipper wearing such clothes is not valid. Nevertheless, any part of such animal coming into contact with the clothes or body of the worshipper will render the prayer batil. For example, should the worshipper pray with a cat's hair on their clothes, their prayer is batil.

<sup>iv</sup> Sayed Sistani, however, rules that this is permissible.

<sup>v</sup> Islamic Laws- Aytollah Sistani.



# AVOIDING ARGUMENTS

## Objectives >>>

### Students should:

- Know that different people have different opinions about things and as a Muslim we have to respect and tolerate other's opinions as long as they are not destructive to Islam.
- Know that in order to defend Islam, arguments and conflict do not help (with examples)
- Know the ills of arguing and the psychology of arguing
- Understand that arguing can have many destructive effects on the person, family and the society
- Know some ways of avoiding arguments
- Understand that Allah does not like those who argue and fight between themselves.

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

## Avoiding Arguments

### DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS

One of the beautiful things about humans is that Allah (SWT) has created us each with our own way of thinking and no two people are alike. This is a major blessing in terms of being able to independently use our intellect and wisdom to understand our society and Creator, and distinguishes us from animals. However, a problem that often unnecessarily results from our differing opinions, views, and knowledge is argument and conflict.



Arguments can easily be avoided if we learn to communicate correctly with one another and respect and tolerate one another. As Muslims, we must maintain a high level of moral discipline and be able to politely yet firmly present our beliefs without becoming angry, raising our voice, or being dragged into arguments. We must learn how to not allow others to enrage us or argue with us for hours and hours without any benefit to either party.

We must learn to be able to judge whether the person we are conversing with is truly open to understanding and accepting our viewpoint or if they simply want to impose their viewpoints on us, and move away as soon as we realise that it is becoming an unproductive argument. Allah (SWT) teaches us that when we meet such people, instead of arguing and quarrelling we have

to agree to disagree, and respect and tolerate their opinions as long as they are not destructive to Islam.

What this means is that if someone, for example, is of the opinion that all Muslims must be removed from a particular land we must stand against them as they are destructive to Islam and cannot simply respect and tolerate them. Other than such exceptions, we must try to coexist with mutual respect and tolerance, exemplified by the Ayah:

"To you be your religion, and to me my religion" (109:6)

Sometimes we feel that in order to defend Islam we must argue or have conflict with someone. For example, a classmate may be saying rude things about the Holy Prophet (saw) and we might think that it is our duty to defend him by physically or verbally attacking the person.



Yes, it is our duty to defend the Holy Prophet but it is also our duty to maintain our morals and swallow our anger and address the issue in a civilised manner. This is exemplified by the kindness demonstrated by the Holy Prophet and our Imams when people mocked or verbally abused them.

Attacking the person either physically or verbally would only make such situations worse and the best thing to do is to swallow our anger, calm down, and politely talk with the person – perhaps some time after in private. The best way to deal with each situation may vary based on the circumstances but we must keep in mind these principles and act in accordance with our wisdom and patience.

## **PSYCHOLOGY OF ARGUING**

There are many reasons why people argue:

- 1- Sometimes we feel we know the truth and need to share it with others and when others do not

agree and are not prepared to listen, an argument erupts. Being able to avoid quarrelling even when we are right is amongst the traits of the righteous.

- 2- Sometimes we think that we would be perceived as weak if we admit to being wrong and might argue or raise our voice unnecessarily due to our pride even when we know that we are wrong. As Muslims, we are encouraged to submit to the truth however painful it may be and to take responsibility for our mistakes.
- 3- Sometimes we argue and rebel when we want to be heard, when we feel no one is listening to us and we feel frustrated. This is as a result of anger. This kind of anger is also prohibited in Islam. Imam 'Ali (a) said:

"Protect yourself from anger for its beginning is insanity and its end is remorse."<sup>i</sup>

- 4- Sometimes we get defensive and argue when we are criticized about something we have done. This is because we have pride in our hearts and do not have the capacity to take criticism well. Imam al-Şādiq (as) encourages to be open to constructive criticism:

"Amongst my brothers my favourite is one who informs me of my failings and defects"<sup>ii</sup>.

- 5- Sometimes we are completely ignorant of an issue and yet we argue. This is the most disliked form of argument and is a symptom of a disease of the soul. Imam al-Şādiq (as) says:

"Avoid arguing, for it leads to disease of the heart".

- 6- Sometimes we are bored and have nothing to talk about so we start arguments on issues that have no relevance in this world or the next (blue is better than white!?). This idle talk is also highly discouraged in Islam.



- 7- Sometimes we argue due to wanting to demonstrate our superiority over another

person and feeding into our pride. This can be over issues such as nationality, tribe, family, and sports team. As Muslims we must also avoid such arguments.

## THE EFFECTS OF BEING ARGUMENTATIVE

Entering arguments unnecessarily has many destructive effects on the person, the family and society in general:

- It leads to animosity between the people arguing and therefore a lack of trust and co-operation especially if arguments happen between friends and family. It can destroy relationships leading to divorce, family feuds and sometimes often lead to major sins such as backbiting, lying etc...
- It leads to the faults of people being exposed and therefore the erosion of trust between people.
- It can waste a lot of time and often perpetuates ignorance and malice.
- It brings about enmity: even though we may be trying to convince a person of the truth, if we are very argumentative, we may end up driving people away from us.
- It brings anger, frustration, headaches, and hatred between the people involved.

## PREVENTING QUARRELS



As Muslims we are encouraged to stop arguments to the extent that we can even lie to bring believers closer.

“ And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah’s command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably (49:9)

Here, Allah (SWT) commands that we have to promote peace between believers this, especially between biological brothers and sisters.

## HOW CAN WE STOP BEING ARGUMENTATIVE?

There are several ways in which we can stop being argumentative:

- Agreeing to disagree - This is the most effective means and is encouraged in Islam as we have discussed.
- Differentiating between a discussion and an argument. A discussion is when both parties present their points politely and respectfully and intend to gain knowledge or increase understanding, rather than simply demonstrate that they are right in order to feed their pride and feel better about themselves. Well-mannered and constructive discussions are very much encouraged in Islam, provided that we are knowledgeable on the issue.
- Avoiding arguments and discussions where one has little or no knowledge on the subject.
- Accepting criticism and not considering it a personal attack.
- Avoiding talking back in anger/frustration and instead discussing disagreements once we have calmed down later on. Arguments are often more lethal when in anger and one should avoid and be very passive to an angry person, and not incite them further with aggressive comments in return.
- Trying to look at issues from the viewpoints of others and see their reasoning behind their actions. As Muslims, we are taught to make excuses for others.
- Avoid places of idle talk and ignorance especially online chat rooms and arguments on social media (Facebook etc...) and similarly avoid people who like to argue.

## ALLAH DISLIKES THOSE WHO QUARREL

"The believers are but a single Brotherhood. So make peace and reconciliation between your two contending



brothers, and observe your duty to God, that you may receive mercy." (49:10)

It is clear from this āyah that Allah (SWT) loves those who act righteously and create peace and reconciliation, and dislikes those who argue and quarrel. Therefore, as Muslims we must make sure we maintain a high level of manners and practice patience when disputes arise.<sup>iii</sup>

## Review Questions

### 1. Arguing a lot:

- a. Improves our debating skills
- b. Improves our reputation
- c. Leads to disease of the heart

### 2. If someone is not willing to listen to the truth, we are encouraged to:

- a. Get angry at them and never give up until they start listening
- b. Speak to them in a calm and mannered way, and leave them be if they do not want to accept
- c. Get our friends to join in and try to convince them as well. They will be scared of big numbers

### 3. We can stop being argumentative by:

- a. Agreeing to disagree, knowing the difference between a discussion and an argument, and accepting criticism.
- b. Making our voice louder and louder
- c. Discussing what we have little or no knowledge of.

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<sup>i</sup> Al-Amidi, *Gharar ul-Hikam wa darar ulKalim*, hadith # 2635

<sup>ii</sup> Bihar, Vol 74, Page 282

<sup>iii</sup> Social Rules in Islam, 'Avoiding Arguments' – Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

# QIBLAH, ADHĀN & IQĀMAH

## القبلة والاذان والاقامة

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Know and understand the detailed rules on Qiblah
- Know the rules regarding actions that require the Qiblah to be known
- Know and understand the reason we face the Qibla
- Review how to determine Qiblah from various sources and in different places
- Know the rule regarding inability to find the Qiblah and responsibility in such a situation
- Know and understand the reason we recite Adhān and Iqāmah and memorize it
- Know the basic rules regarding Adhān and Iqāmah and recommended times of recitation

### JURISPRUDENCE

### LEVEL 5

## Qiblah, Adhān & Iqāmah

In the previous years we discussed the Qiblah which is the Holy Ka'bah in Mecca, and the obligation of facing it during obligatory prayers, recommended prayers and whilst performing other acts of worship. We also discussed Adhān and Iqāmah, which are recommended to be recited before performing the daily obligatory prayers and in other situations. In this lesson, we will continue to cover the above two issues.



### Finding the Qiblah: Revision Quiz

1. List three practical ways of finding the Qiblah:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. If I have no compass and it is night-time, how can I find the Qiblah?
3. True or False. If a person is ill and must lie down to pray, they need to lie down on their right side facing the Qiblah?

### What to do when one can't find the Qibla at all

- If a person does not possess any means of determining the direction of Qibla, or in spite of his efforts, he cannot form an idea about it; it will be enough to offer prayers facing any direction. And the recommended precaution is that, if there is enough time, the same prayer should be offered four times, each time facing one of the four directions.

- If a person is sure or guesses that Qibla is on one of the two directions, he should offer prayers facing both.
- If a person has to offer prayers facing a few directions, and wants to offer two prayers like Ḍuhr prayers and 'Asr prayers, the recommended precaution is that he should offer the first prayer facing those few directions, and then start the second prayer.

**NOTE:** Not being able to find the direction of Qiblah is not a reason to miss prayers.

## **ACTIONS THAT REQUIRE QIBLAH TO BE KNOWN**

By now, you may already have realized that not every act of worship requires you to know the direction of the Qiblah. For instance, a *mustaḥab* prayer recited while walking does not require you to face Qiblah. However, the general rule is that one must face the Qiblah for the act of obligatory prayers and recommended prayers, which are prayed under normal conditions. Below is a summary that might be helpful to determine when it is necessary to know the direction of Qiblah.

### **When must we know or find Qiblah and the relevant rule**

- 1) Obligatory prayers – see above
- 2) Recommended prayers
  - A *mustaḥab* prayer offered while one is walking, or riding, does not require facing the Qiblah.
- 3) Slaughtering an animal
  - If determining the direction of the Qiblah does not seem possible, then slaughtering facing any direction will be valid.
- 4) Visiting the toilet (must avoid facing front or back to Qiblah)

All other acts of worship including reciting *du'ā*, *Ziarāt*, and *some* rituals performed in Ḥajj or 'Umrah do not require you to face Qiblah. However, it is recommended to always face the Qiblah.

## **REASON WHY WE FACE THE QIBLAH**

Like every statement and action in the prayer represents a symbolic meaning which reflects the inner/spiritual reality, so too does facing in a particular direction i.e. the Qiblah.

In the Holy Qur'an, Prophet Abraham (as) introduces to us this idea:

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا  
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

‘Verily I have turned my face wholly unto Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, being upright, and I am not of those who associate others with God’ (6:79-80)

There are several reasons why we face the direction of Qiblah, but it will be sufficient to illustrate two reasons –

1. **Physical/psychological**- When we physically face in one direction it indicates our submission to One God and to His Command alone. It reflects our belief in the Unity of God and enables us to understand psychologically that we worship only One God and we turn to Him alone, and that we all do this together. It can also mean we turn to the Right place and direction for worship, guidance, help and fulfilment of our needs which shows our obedience to One Authority.
2. **Spiritual** - When we face the Qibla for prayer, our inner sense and spirit should be reminded to empty our hearts of multiple gods or idols that we may have in us just as the Holy prophet removed idols from the Holy Ka'bah. These idols could be represented by any pre-occupations we may have – for example, if a person says his/her prayers quickly so as to make it in time for a football game, this pre-occupation pollutes the prayer and sincerity of the person.



## **ADHĀN AND IQAMAH: A BRIEF PHILOSOPHY**

The Adhān and Iqamah generally serve as a reminder to oneself about the state and condition he or she is in. It is

a declaration of faith in the Greatness of God, the truth of the Messenger – the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw), the position of prayer, the reward for prayer and ending again with a declaration of the Greatness and Oneness of God, The Almighty.

Reciting the Adhān and Iqāmah helps one to understand their position in the presence of God, and should serve as a reminder to that day when we will all stand before God to be judged. It should instil in us a state and feeling of awe, fear and humility before the prayer begins.

It is also recommended to recite the Adhān and Iqāmah into the right and left ears respectively of a new born baby.

## THE ORIGIN OF ADHĀN

After the emigration of the Holy Prophet (saw) from Mecca to Medina, and the founding of the first Mosque, the issue of announcing the call to prayer was considered. A number of people gave different opinions on how to do this, including a suggestion to ring bells as the Christians did. All these practices were rejected until the Prophet (saw) received revelation about the words of the Adhān. The first person to recite the call to prayer was Bilāl, the great companion of the Prophet (saw) from Ethiopia.

## Review Questions

### 1. Who was the first person to recite the Adhan aloud in public?

- a. The Holy Prophet (saw)
- b. Bilal – the companion of the Prophet (saw)
- c. Imam Ali (as)

### 2. The following action does not require us to find the direction of the Qiblah

- a. Slaughtering an animal
- b. Performing a Wajib sajda (prostration)
- c. Performing a Wajib salaah

### 3. Reciting the Adhān & Iqāmah is recommended because:

- a. It enables us to inform everyone around that we are about to pray
- b. Reminds us of our position before Allah (swt) and helps our concentration
- c. Helps us spend more time on the prayer mat

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## <sup>i</sup> References

- *Imam Khomeini (translated by Muhammad Ja'far Khalili & Salar Manafi Ansari), Ādāb-as-Ṣalāt: The Disciplines of Prayer*, page 143-156
- Islamic Laws, Ayatollah Sistani <http://www.al-islam.org/laws/rulesofqibla.htm>

- Masa'el Numbers 784 - 795

<http://www.madressa.net>





## PRACTICAL PRAYER

# الصلاة

### Objectives

#### Students should:

- Remember which acts in prayer are Rukni and which are Ghayr-Rukni
- Learn more detailed rules regarding specific actions of prayer
- Students should learn whether certain mistakes invalidate prayer and how to rectify some of the common mistakes.

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

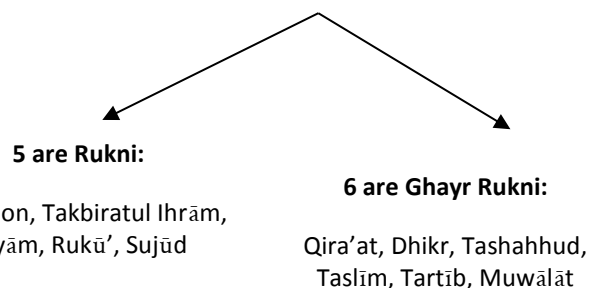
### The Daily Prayer (Ṣalāt): Lesson 1

In previous lessons we have learnt some of the rules regarding the different parts of daily prayer and learnt some of the recommended acts of prayer. We will briefly revisit these and also discuss further rules of prayer.

### FOUNDATIONAL (RUKNI) AND NON-FOUNDATIONAL (GHAYR RUKNI):

As we have learnt in previous lessons, there are 11 obligatory acts in prayers where 5 of these are foundational (arkān) and the other six are non-foundational.

#### 11 obligatory acts in prayers



The details for the Rukni and Ghayr-Rukni acts have been learnt last year. Some other rules for these will be mentioned with each act.

### NIYYAH:

This is a Rukn act in prayers. As we have learnt the intention does not have to be verbal, as long as in our mind, we know the following things:

- the reason we are praying (to gain closeness to Allah)
- which particular prayer we are praying (e.g. Ḍuhr or ‘Asr)

If done with any other reason e.g. showing off, then the intention is not complete and the prayer is void.

The correct intention must be kept from the beginning till the end of prayers. In some cases we can change our intention for the prayer we are offering and the prayer will still be valid. These situations include:

- Changing from a latter to a former prayer: for example if we are offering ‘Asr prayer but we remember during the prayer that we have not prayed Ḍuhr, we can change our intention to Ḍuhr and the prayer will still be valid as Ḍuhr prayer. We cannot change from a former to a latter one though. So if we are offering Ḍuhr and then remember that we have already offered Ḍuhr prayer, we cannot change our intention to ‘Asr prayer.
- - Changing from Adā to Qaḍā prayer: for example if we are offering our Dhuhr prayer and there is a lot of time left, we can change our intention to offer a Qaḍā prayer. We cannot however change our intention from Qaḍā to Adā.
- Changing our intention from an obligatory to a recommended prayer. For example if we are offering our ‘Ishā’ prayer and are still in the first two rak’āt, and we remember that we have not offered the nāfilah of Maghreb prayer, we can change our intention to the recommended nāfilah. However if we are offering a recommended prayer (such as nāfilah) we cannot change our intention and offer it as an obligatory prayer such as ‘Ishā’ prayer.

## **TAKBIRATUL IHRām:**

This is the opening to prayers and is a foundational obligation (Rukn). Remember that Takbir has conditions:

- While saying the Takbir we need to be in the position of Qiyām (standing straight and steady and the feet not far apart – to be discussed in the next lesson). If one cannot

stand then the alternative is to sit or to pray while lying down (if one cannot sit).

- Takbir is pronounced in proper Arabic or the best that one can say it in Arabic
- We should not join the Takbir with any preceding du‘ā’ or the Iqāmah of prayers.
- We should pause after saying the Takbir before reciting Surah al-Ḥamd. If we connect the Takbir with the surah then we must recite the Takbir as “Allāhu Akbar”.
- We should recite the Takbir in a manner that we can hear it (at least the whisper). If there is too much noise then we can raise our voice enough to hear it.
- If we doubt whether we have recited Takbiratul Iḥrām or not and have not proceeded to the next act (Qira’ah) then we should say the Takbir again. However if we doubt whether we have said the Takbir while we are reciting a surah then we should ignore our doubt.
- If we are sure we have not performed the Takbir we must go back and perform and start the prayer from the beginning again.



## **QIRA’AH:**

After reciting Takbiratul Iḥrām, we make a very short pause before reciting surah al-Ḥamd followed by a second surah.

### **Rules regarding Surah al-Ḥamd:**

- Surah al-Ḥamd must be recited first (due to Tartib). If we intentionally recite the second surah before surah al-Ḥamd, the prayer will be void. If it is done by mistake and we realize while reciting the second surah, we should abandon the surah and recite surah al-Ḥamd first then continue.

- It should be recited in proper Arabic (as it is in the Holy Qur'an) or in the best manner one can recite it. If one cannot recite it properly it is their duty to learn it as best as they can before offering their prayer if there is enough time to do so.
- Intentionally changing the pronunciation of the words of the surah will make the prayer void. For example, instead of saying "ghayril maghḏūbī" we say "ghayril maghzūbī", this will make the prayer void. Changing the short vowels of the surah will also make the prayer void, such as instead of saying "al-hamdu lillāhi **rabbil** 'ālamīn" we say "al-hamdu lillāhi **rabbul** 'ālamīn".
- Keeping the above rule in mind, if a person has learnt a word which he/she believes is correct and recites it that way in prayers, but later realizes that they have been reciting it incorrectly, it is not necessary to offer those prayers again.
- It is obligatory for men to recite surah al-Ḥamd and the 2<sup>nd</sup> surah aloud (by aloud we mean such that another person nearby would usually hear the recitation) for Fajr, Maghreb and 'Ishā' prayers.
- For men the 'Basmalah' of each surah during Ḍuhr and 'Asr prayer should be recited loudly and the rest of the surah should be whispered (enough for oneself to hear it). If he accidentally begins to recite the surah loudly he should lower his voice as soon as he realizes and his prayer will be valid. He does not need to go back and repeat the āyah he recited aloud. If he intentionally raises his voice, the prayer will be void.<sup>i</sup>
- For ladies, it is better to recite with a low voice all her prayers however she can say Fajr, Maghreb and 'Ishā' prayers with a loud voice provided a non-maḥram cannot hear her.

#### Rules regarding the second surah:

- The second surah can be any surah from the Holy Qur'an. It must be a complete surah and not an ayah only (such as Āyatul Kursi). It is best to avoid the surahs that require a wājib sajdah.<sup>ii</sup>

- If we forget a part of the surah that we are reciting and cannot complete it, we can abandon that surah and recite a different surah.
- Surah al-Ḍuḥā and Surah Inshirāḥ are treated as one surah and surah al-Fil and surah Quraysh are treated as one surah. So if we start to recite Surah al-Ḍuḥā or surah al-Fil we must follow it with its second surah.
- Surah Ikhḷās should be recited in each of the daily prayers at least once. It is makrūh not to do this.
- There are certain circumstances in which the second surah may be abandoned (such as little time left for prayers or when in fear).
- If we forget to recite al-Ḥamd and/or the second surah and realize after reaching ruku', the prayer is still valid.

## Review Questions

- 1) Samar was offering her Ḍuhr prayer. While reciting surah al-Ḥamd of the first rak'ah she doubted whether she said the Takbir. What should she do?
- 2) Jawad was having trouble pronouncing the intention for his Maghreb prayer. What should he do?
- 3) Maryam was offering 'Asr prayers. She accidentally recited surah al-Ḥamd in a loud voice. Is her prayer still valid? Give reasons for your answer.
- 4) What is a mustaḥab thing to say after reciting surah al-Ḥamd during prayers?

## The Daily Prayer (Ṣalāt): Lesson 2

In the last lesson we learnt that it is important to follow the rules in prayer because we are conversing with Allah (SWT). In this lesson, we will focus on the rules for other parts of the prayer.

### QIYĀM:

Qiyām means to be standing upright and steadily while saying Takbiratul Ihṛām and before we go into Ruku'. It is a foundational (Rukn) act of prayer and hence if it is not



performed, even if this was unintentional, it will make our prayer void.

The position of Qiyām is also obligatory (ghayr-rukni) during Qira'ah and after rukū' (before going into sujūd). Intentionally moving excessively (without a valid reason such as an illness) during prayers will make the prayer void. If one wishes to move a little forward, backward, to the left or the right, he should not recite anything at that time.

It is mustahab when we are offering prayers to stand in front of our Lord as a humble slave. This includes: standing erect, slackening down the shoulders, placing our hands on our thighs, joining our fingers together, looking at the place of Sajdah, placing the weight of our body equally on two feet, standing in humility and keeping both feet in line. We have to remember that we are standing in front of our Lord and Cherisher and we have to stand with humility (Khushū').

Men offering prayers should keep a distance of three open fingers, or a short span between their feet, and women should keep the feet together. Keeping our feet far apart from one another (to the extent that it does not look like we are standing normally) will make the prayer void.

- If a person cannot stand upright to offer prayers unless while leaning on something, he should offer prayers in that situation and offer what he can while standing and the rest while sitting. If he cannot stand at all or his body shakes too much, he should offer prayers while sitting. Likewise, if he cannot even sit upright to offer prayers then he should offer prayers in a lying position, on his right side and facing the Qiblah. If he cannot lie on his right side then he should lie on his left side (facing Qiblah). Still if he cannot do so, then on his back with his feet facing Qiblah. Hence there is no reason to neglect prayers.

## RUKŪ':

Remember that Rukū' consists of first standing still and then bowing down to recite the dhikr. If we do not stand upright and still before going into Rukū' our prayer will be void.

- Remember that if we **intentionally** say dhikr before reaching Rukū' or while standing up from

Rukū' then the prayer is void. If we accidentally begin to say the dhikr before reaching Rukū', then once we reach Rukū' (and are steady) we should repeat the dhikr. (Your teacher demonstrate both these rules.)

- If by mistake, we raise our heads from rukū' before completing the dhikr and then remember when we are not completely out of the state of rukū', we should make our body steady and recite the dhikr again then continue.
- If by mistake we raise our heads from rukū' before completing the dhikr and only realize after rising totally from rukū' then the prayer is still valid.
- If we forget to do rukū' and remember before the second sajdah of the same rak'ah, we should immediately stand up straight (position of Qiyām) then do rukū' and then stand and go to sujūd again (both sajdahs have to be offered). This way the prayer will be valid.



- If we forget rukū' and only remember after the second sajdah has been completed, then our prayer is void.
- After completing the dhikr of rukū' we should stand up straight (position of Qiyām) before going into sujūd. If we intentionally go into sujūd before Qiyām then the prayer is void. Otherwise if this is done by mistake the prayer will be in order.

## SUJŪD:

Sujūd consists of two sajdahs (prostrations) within the same rak'ah. Both sajdahs together are considered one Rukn. Some of the rules regarding this include:

- Omitting or adding two sajdahs in the same rak'ah intentionally or forgetfully makes the prayers void.
- Omitting or adding one sajdah intentionally invalidates the prayer.



- Omitting or adding one sajdah forgetfully has different rules:
  - If you have reached a different rukn (such as rukū' of the next rak'ah) then continue as normal and once that prayer is completed offer the forgotten sajdah as Qaḍā'.
  - If you have not gone into a different rukn (such as reciting Tashahhud or standing up for the Qira'ah or Tasbīhāt of the next rak'ah) then go back into sujūd and perform the forgotten sajdah, then proceed to the next action.<sup>iii</sup>

After completing the dhikr of the first sajdah we should sit until the body is steady and then perform the second sajdah. Likewise, after completing the second sajdah, we should sit until our body is steady and then stand for the next rak'ah.

Similar to ruku', the dhikr must be recited while in sujūd:

- If we intentionally recite the dhikr before our forehead reaches the ground and our body becomes steady then the prayer is void.
- If we recite the dhikr before reaching the state of sujūd by mistake, then once we are in sujūd we should repeat the dhikr when the body is steady.

Seven parts of the body must be on the ground whilst in sujūd and while reciting the dhikr. They are the two big toes (at least), both knees, both palms of the hands, and the forehead (where the forehead must be placed on something that we are able to prostrate on – this was discussed in previous lessons). In addition the body must be steady at all times in sujūd whether reciting dhikr or not.

- If we intentionally lift one of our limbs from the ground while reciting dhikr then the prayer is void. But if we are not reciting anything and lift a limb off the ground and place it back on the ground, the prayer will not be void.<sup>iv</sup>
- If we raise a limb off the ground by mistake while reciting dhikr, then we should place that limb back on the ground and recite the dhikr. If we accidentally raise our forehead off the ground before

completing the dhikr of that sajdah then we should not place our forehead back on the ground, rather we should treat it as one sajdah.

## QUNŪT:

Qunūt is a mustaḥab act which is recited in all obligatory and mustahab prayers before the rukū' of the second rak'ah (except in some special prayers). It is a special opportunity that Allah has given us during prayers to ask Him anything that we want in any language (this is the only part of prayers that does not have to be in Arabic).



- Even if we intentionally do not perform Qunūt our prayer is in order because it is a mustaḥab act and not a wājib one.
- If time for prayer is very short, it is better to leave it out.

## Review Questions:

Your teacher will demonstrate 5 scenarios to you by acting out a certain part of prayers (the rak'āt to be performed should be specified to the students e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rak'ah or the last, etc). In each scenario there may or may not be a mistake. You need write down on a piece of paper what mistake (if any) was made in each one. The student(s) who gets them all correct will get a small reward (according to the teacher's discretion).

Suggested scenarios:

- 1) In the 2nd rak'ah of any prayer, after Qunūt you go straight into sujūd and perform both sajdahs and complete the prayer with Tashahhud and Taslim.
- 2) You look at your clock and realize time is short for Fajr prayer and so offer it in a hurried manner. While going into rukū' and sujūd of both rak'at you say the dhikr while going into the ruku' and the sujūd (and while rising from that act too). The students will have to note 2 mistakes (for the rukū' and the sujūd).
- 3) In the last rak'ah of any prayer, you forget to perform rukū' then after the first sajdah you

realize this and rise again for the rukū' but do not go into Qiyām first. Then you stand and then go to sujūd and complete the prayer.

- 4) Time is short for Fajr prayer. In the second rak'ah you do not perform Qunūt and go to ruku' and sujūd etc and complete the prayer. (note: there is no mistake in this scenario)

## The Daily Prayer (Ṣalāt): Lesson 3

So far we have learnt rules for most of the acts in prayers. In this lesson we will discuss the rules for Tashahhud, Taslīm and Tasbīḥāt al Arba'ah. Where possible, the teacher will demonstrate the acts mentioned in this lesson. Remember, intentionally performing an act in the wrong place will make the prayer void. However if this is done unintentionally, it can be rectified and the prayer remains valid.

### TASHAHHUD:

In the second unit of all obligatory prayers after sitting up from the second sajdah and the body is steady, we place our hands on our thighs with our fingers together and recite the Tashahhud (or testimony). This is an obligatory non-foundational (Ghayr Rukni) act in prayer.

- The words should be recited in correct clear Arabic and in usual succession
- If we forget to recite Tashahhud and rise for the next rak'ah:
  - If we remember before the next rukū' we should sit down and recite the Tashahhud and then stand up again and continue the prayer as normal.
  - If we remember in rukū' or after rukū' then we should complete the prayer as normal and then after reciting Taslīm, it is recommended to recite the forgotten Tashahhud as qadā'. We should however perform two sajdah for the forgotten Tashahhud (this will be explained in detail in another lesson).<sup>v</sup>
- During Tashahhud and Taslīm, it is mustaḥab to sit on the left thigh and place the upper part of the right foot on the sole of the left foot. It is also mustaḥab to look at our lap while reciting it.

- The mustaḥab position for ladies is to keep her thighs close to each other while reciting Tashahhud and Taslīm.

### TASLīm:

At the end of prayers after reciting Tashahhud, we conclude with greeting the Prophet Muḥammad and Ahlul Bayt, all prophets and angels by saying: *"Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh"*.

It is mustaḥab to say before that: *"Assalamu Alayka Ayyuhan-Nabi wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh, Assalamu Alayna wa 'ala 'Ibaadillahi Saaliheen"*.

- If we forget to recite Taslīm and remember when the form of prayers has not been disrupted (e.g. we have not yet turned away from the Qiblah) then we should recite the Taslīm and the prayer will be in order.
- If we remember after the form of prayers has been disrupted then the prayers will still be in order and nothing needs to be done to rectify it, however sajdatus sahw is recommended.
- While offering a 3 or 4 rak'ah prayer and we accidentally say Taslīm after the Tashahhud of the 2<sup>nd</sup> rak'ah then we should continue our prayer as normal and at the end perform sajdatus sahw and the prayer will be in order. However if we intentionally recited the Taslīm at the wrong place, the prayer is void because it breaks the sequence of actions (tartib) of the prayer.

### TASBīḥ:

In the third and fourth rak'āt of prayers we can either recite Tasbīḥāt al-Arba'ah or surah al-Ḥamd (without a second surah). Reciting the Tasbīḥāt is preferred.

- Whether surah al-Ḥamd or Tasbīḥāt is recited in the third and fourth rak'āt, it is obligatory to be recited silently by both men and women. However, if one chooses to recite Surah al-Ḥamd in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> rak'āt, the 'Bismillah' of Suratil al-Ḥamd may be recited aloud (unless one is praying in a congregation)

## Review Questions

- 1) While in the 2<sup>nd</sup> rak'ah of Ḍuhr prayer, after performing Sujūd, Sa'id stands up without performing Tashahhud. He realizes that he had forgotten Tashahhud while standing and reciting. What should he do to correct his prayer?
- 2) While in the 2<sup>nd</sup> rak'ah of 'Ishā' prayer, after performing Sujūd, Maryam stands up without performing Tashahhud. While in her 4<sup>th</sup> rak'ah, she remembers that she has forgotten Tashahhud of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rak'ah. How can she correct her prayer?
- 3) Sara accidentally recited Taslīm after the Tashahhud of the 2<sup>nd</sup> rak'ah of Maghreb prayer. How can she correct her prayer?
- 4) While Ja'far was offering 'Asr prayer, he recited surah al-Hamd in the 3<sup>rd</sup> rak'ah and the Tasbīḥāt in the 4<sup>th</sup> rak'ah. Is his prayer still valid?

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Tasleem (only "Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh" is required).

A better thikr to recite during the above sajdah is: "Bismillahi wa billah assalamu 'alayka ayyuhan Nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh".

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<sup>i</sup> If there is too much noise then they can raise their voice loud enough to hear oneself. The same applies to women provided non-mahram men cannot hear her.

<sup>ii</sup> These surahs are surah Sajdah (ch 32, specifically ayah 15), Surah Fussilat (ch 41, specifically ayah 38), Surah Najm (ch 53, specifically ayah 62) and Surah 'Alaq (surah 96, specifically ayah 19). If one of these surahs are recited and they read the ayah whereupon sujood is wajib they must perform sujood and their prayer will be void, if they don't do sujood and continue prayers the prayer is in order but they have committed a sin.

<sup>iii</sup> The action that they were performing when they remembered the forgotten sajdah needs to be recited – they don't continue where they left off from. Eg if they were halfway through surah al-Hamd and then go back to perform the forgotten sajdah, when they stand up again they recite surah al-Hamd from the beginning not from where they left it. If they remember the forgotten sajdah while reciting surah or tasbīḥāt of the following rak'ah then go down to perform the forgotten sajdah and stand up again. (It is recommended precaution (not wajib) to offer sajdat as-sahw for the extra standing when they complete the prayer.)

<sup>iv</sup> Sometimes while in sujūd, a girl/lady's headscarf may flip and show her hair or a lady or man's back may show and they want to fix it while in sujūd. To do this one should keep the forehead on the floor, pause from reciting dhikr, fix it up quickly, place the limb back on the floor then continue dhikr.

<sup>v</sup> The method of offering sajdatu sahw: Immediately after Tasleem of the prayer, one should make the intention of performing sajdatu sahw and go into sajdah and recite thikr. Then he sits up and performs another sajdah and recite thikr. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> sajdah he sits up and recites Tashahhud and

# INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

## مبطلات الصلاة

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Have a good understanding of invalidators of prayer
- Understand why the daily prayers have certain rules and appreciate that it is a form of communication with Allah (SWT)
- Learn more of the actions that invalidate prayer
- Know when prayers can be broken
- Know the Makrūh acts in prayers

### JURISPRUDENCE

### LEVEL 5

#### INVALIDATORS OF PRAYERS

#### REVIEW QUIZ

In the quiz below, the situations given are those occurring during your prayer. Some invalidate prayers and some do not. Using the knowledge you have gained from previous lessons, place a tick in the appropriate columns on the right. On completion, ask you teacher for the answers and give yourself a score out of 10.

SITUATION IN PRAYER	INVALIDATES PRAYER	DOES NOT INVALIDATE PRAYER
1. I reply to Salāmun 'Alaykum		
2. Wearing a shirt that I had stolen		
3. Forgetting both sajdahs of the same rak'ah		
4. Crying due to fear of Hell		
5. My feet are not facing Qiblah		
6. Only eating half an apple while in Qiyām (standing)		
7. Sleeping for only thirty seconds while in sajdah		
8. Crying because I failed my exam		
9. Forgetting tashahhud of the second rak'ah		
10. Laughing loudly and uncontrollably		



## WHY DO WE HAVE TO BEHAVE IN A PARTICULAR MANNER WHEN PRAYING?

As Muslims we get an opportunity to communicate with Allah (SWT) throughout the day by praying. This is not an ordinary opportunity but a very special one because we are talking to the Lord of the Worlds, The Most Powerful. Allah (SWT), The Unique, Who sees, listens and pays attention to us when we stand for prayer. For this reason we have to be very careful that we do not show negligence and inattentiveness towards Him because that, in the least, is to be ungrateful. In this regard, Imam al Reḍā (as) says:

“Stand in from of your Lord as a slave appears before his master. Keep your feet in order and your stature (body) firm. Do not look here and there. Be as if you could see Him, and if you do not see Him, He sees you”

Eating and laughing loudly whilst talking to Him are few things that are not supposed to be done whilst praying to Him and they thus invalidate our prayer. Even if you stand in the presence of an important person and act in a rude manner, he will not accept your request or he will be unhappy with you. Similarly, we have to be very careful to avoid all things that our Prophets and Imams have taught us that are rude and inappropriate to do when standing in front of Allah (SWT).

<sup>i</sup>Further to this, it is important that prayers are said in a place where there is minimal distraction from our surroundings. As such, it is not recommended to pray in a crowded or noisy area.

## NOW LET US LOOK AT MORE ACTS THAT INVALIDATE OUR PRAYERS:

### 1. Folding hands before the body

The Prophet (saw) did not fold his hands during prayer. This was something introduced by others later and has no Islamic basis. Therefore, it is forbidden to do this during prayer and one must stand with their hands by their side or resting on their thighs.

### 2. Saying ‘Āmīn’ after Surah-al Fātiḥa

This is another thing that was introduced after the Prophet and has no real Islamic basis. The word ‘āmīn’ is not even a word from the Qur’an. Therefore, we cannot and should not say it in our prayer.

### 3. Doubts

- Doubt about the number of rak’ah in a 2 or a 3 rak’ah prayer
- Doubts about the number of rak’ah arising in the first 2 rak’ah of a 4 rak’ah prayer.

The details of this have been explained in other lessons.

### 4. Loss of the pre-requisites for prayer

- *Tahārah*. If one for instance discharges urine during prayer
- The place of prayer and the clothes of prayer have to be *Mubaḥ* i.e. permissible to use or not stolen.

### 5. Loss of Wuḍū’

If one exits the state of Wuḍū’, such as by passing gas, then the prayer becomes invalid.

## Review of Other Invalidators of Prayer

1. Eating and Drinking
2. Laughing
3. Speaking words other than the words of prayer
4. Missing out or adding acts of prayer. The detailed rules of this have been explained in other lessons.

## WHEN CAN PRAYERS BE BROKEN?

It is ḥarām to break prayers under any circumstances except in the four below:

1. In order to protect property or to escape from financial or physical harm, or from any worldly or religious purpose crucial to the person.
2. If a person whom you owe money to approaches you and demands payment and if is not possible to pay him while praying AND also if there is sufficient time to pray again, then the prayers should be broken.
3. If a person remembers during prayer that he has not recited adhān and Iqāmah before the prayers, then it is mustaḥab to break it and recite them.

4. If a person praying realises that the mosque is najis, and if he cannot make it ṭāhir during prayer AND he has sufficient time to pray again, then he should break his prayer.

### THINGS WHICH ARE MAKRŪH DURING ṢALĀT

- Turning the face slightly towards the left or right
- To shut the eyes
- To play with one's hands or beard
- To look at the writing of the Qur'ān or some other book
- To become silent in order to listen to a conversation
- Any other such act that disturbs the humility and attention of the person praying is makrūh

### Review Questions

#### 1. Why is it important to have rules of prayer?

- a. So we can have a routine and pray as a habit

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### <sup>i</sup> References

- eHAWZA- lectures on prayer and its invalidators

- b. To maintain humility and respect for the communication with Allah (SWT)
- c. To make it look professional

#### 2. To clap your hands in prayer out of excitement

- a. Breaks the prayer
- b. Is makrooh
- c. Has no consequence

#### 3. If a person is doing taqiyyah and is forced to fold his arms in prayer, this:

- a. Invalidates the prayer and he has to pray again at home
- b. Is permissible
- c. Is Makrūh

- Islamic Laws-Sayed Sistani