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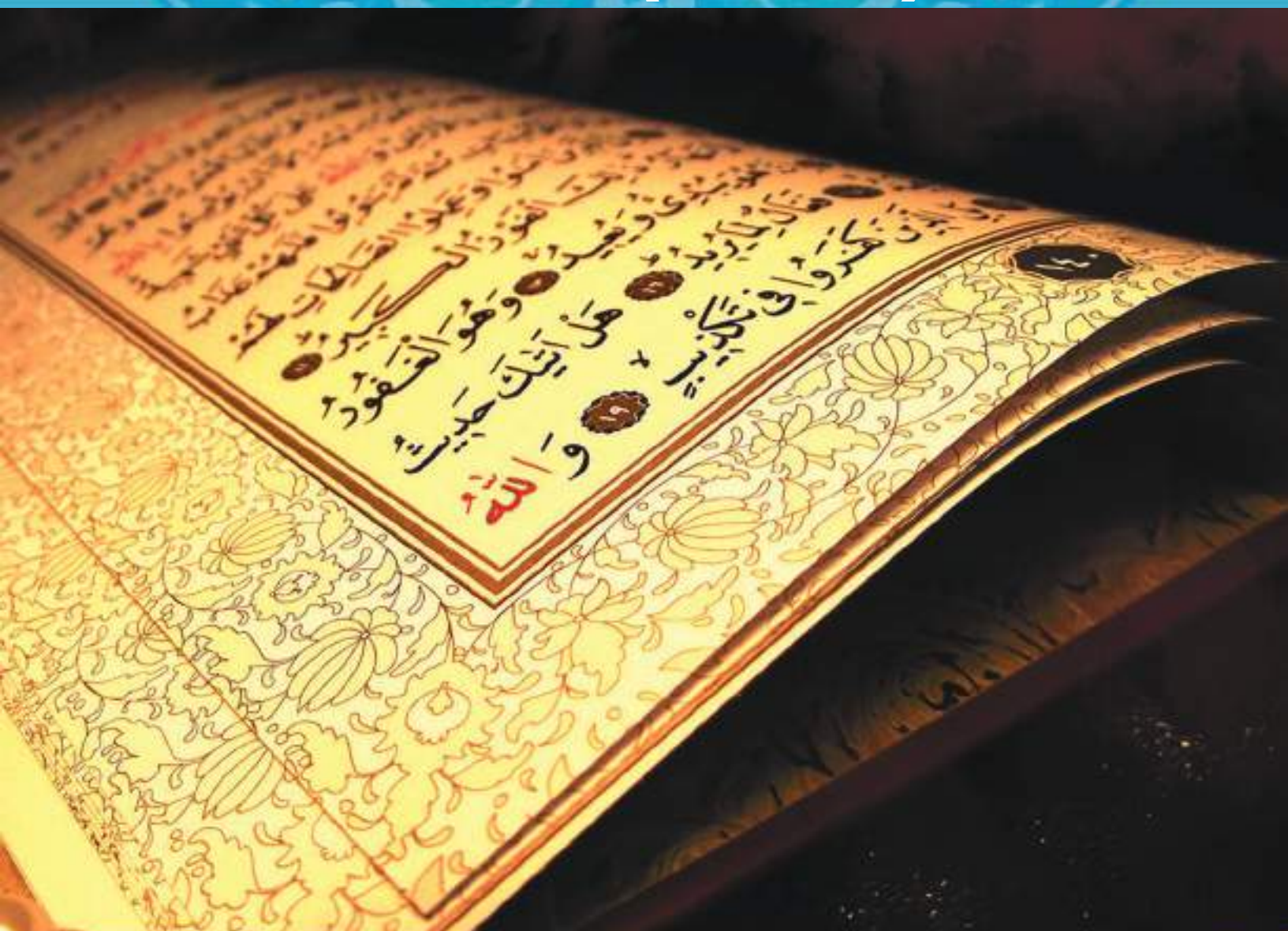
School Syllabus

MANUAL

LEVEL
4

2017

Book 2 (Year 2)



THEOLOGY

JURISPRUDENCE

SOCIAL-ISLAM

Teacher's Name: _____

Student's Name: _____

Third Edition – 2017
Book 2 of 2 (LEVEL 4)

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This work has been approved by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei and is loosely based around the eHawza (www.eHawza.com). The lessons have been edited and checked for typographical and contextual errors to the best of available resources. Some errors may still be present. Islamic Syllabus does not take responsibility for the teaching of this content, teachers are advised to read widely and use the lessons provided as a foundation.

Supporting resources can be found at www.islamicsyllabus.com

About Us

This syllabus was written and compiled by a team of Islamic studies students and teachers. It was a combined effort from members of various Islamic centres around Australia and the wider global English-speaking Muslim community.

The work was generally supervised by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, and is loosely based on the eHAWZA, an electronic English-language School of Islamic Theology (www.ehawza.com).

The syllabus has been eight years in the making. However, it remains a work in progress and all suggestions, queries or corrections are welcome.

Please direct these to info@islamicsyllabus.com

Islamic Syllabus Timetable and Calendar*

Week	Date	Islamic Date	Occasion	Main topic	Fiqh Topic
Term 1 -2017					
1	4th Feb	6th Jamadil Awwal	Ayyam Fatimiyyah	Imam Hassan (as)	Further Rules of Prayers
2	11th Feb	13th Jamadil Awwal		Imam Husain (as)	Congregational Prayers
3	18th Feb	20th Jamadil Awwal		Imam Sajjad (as)	Traveller's prayer
4	25th Feb	27th Jamadil Awwal		Imam Baqir (as)	Special Prayers
5	4th Mar	4th Jamadil Thani		Imam Sadiq (as)	Social Rules- Backbiting
6	11th Mar	11th Jamadil Thani		Imam Kadhim (as)	Social Rules- Suspiciousness
7	18th Mar	18th Jamadil Thani		Imam Redha (as)	Social Rules-Social Independence
8	25th Mar	25th Jamadil Thani	Birthday of Sayyida Fatima (as)	Imam Jawad (as)	Healthy Friendships 1
9	1st Apr	3rd Rajab	Martydom of Imam Hadi (as)	Imam Hadi (as)	Healthy Friendships 2
10	8th Apr	10th Rajab		Imam Askari (as)	Healthy Friendships 3
Term 2 -2017					
11	29th Apr	2nd Shabaan		Imam Mahdi 1 (AJTFS)	Being Sociable + Islamic Conversation
12	6th May	9th Shabaan		Imam Mahdi 2 (AJTFS)	Dealing with Our Enemies
13	13th May	16th Shabaan	Birthday of Imam Al-Mahdi (AJTFS)	Imam Mahdi 3 (AJTFS)	Goodness to neighbours + rules of hosting
14	20th May	23rd Shabaan		Prophet Adam (as)	Fasting 1: Intention, conditions
15	27th May	30th Shabaan		Prophet Nuh (as)	Fasting 2: Invalidators of fasting
16	3rd Jun	7th Ramadhan		Prophet Ibrahim (as) -1	Fasting 3: General rules of fasting
17	10th Jun	14th Ramadhan	Islamic Studies Exam	Prophet Ibrahim (as) -2	Fasting 4: Further Fasting Rules
	17th Jun	21st Ramadhan	Shahr Ramadhan Break		
	24th Jun	28th Ramadhan			
Term 3 - 2017					
18	22nd Jul	27th Shawwal		Prophet Yusuf (as) -1	Food and Drink 1
19	29th Jul	5th Dhul Qa'dah		Prophet Yusuf (as) -2	Food and Drink 2
20	5th Aug	12th Dhul Qa'dah		Prophet Musa (as) -1	Community Care
21	12th Aug	19th Dhul Qa'dah		Prophet Musa (as) -2	Community Service 1
22	19th Aug	26th Dhul Qa'dah		Prophet Musa (as) -3	Community Service 2 / Stealing
23	26th Aug	3rd Dhul Hijjah		Prophet Dawud (as)	Hajj
	2nd Sep	10th Dhul Hijjah	EID AL ADHA HOLIDAY		
24	9th Sep	17th Dhul Hijjah		Karbala 1	Hijab 1
25	16th Sep	24th Dhul Hijjah	Eid Mubahala	Karbala 2	Hijab 2
	23rd Sep	2nd Muharram	ASHURA PROGRAMS		
Term 4 - 2017					
26	14th Oct	24th Muharram		Ancient Prophets 1	Music
27	21st Oct	1st Safar		Ancient Prophets 2	Self-Praise (‘Ujb)
28	28th Oct	8th Safar		Prophet Sulayman (as)	Amr Bil Ma'roof/ Nahi Anil Munkar
29	4th Nov	15th Safar		Prophet Ayyoub (as)	Jihad
30	11th Nov	22nd Safar		Prophet Isa (as) 1	Animal Rights
31	18th Nov	29th Safar		Prophet Isa (as) 2	Islam and the Environment
32	25th Nov	7th Rabiul Awwal		Prophet Isa (as) 3	Transaction Laws 1
33	2nd Dec	14th Rabiul Awwal		Revision Lesson	Transaction Laws 2
	9th Dec	21st Rabiul Awwal	End of year examinations LEVEL 5 SYNOPTIC		
	16th Dec	28th Rabiul Awwal			

*** This timetable is based on the NSW school timetable and is assuming classes are on Saturdays. Dates and times may vary in the year (Islamic Dates, events etc.) and based on location. Parents and teachers are advised to keep up to date with school announcements.**

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THEOLOGY

السلام عليك يا حسن المجتبي

IMAM AL-HASAN ^[A.S]

امام الحسن (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the difficult circumstances that Imam Ḥasan (as) dealt with as an Imam
- appreciate Imam Hasan's (as) forbearance throughout his life in dealing with Muslims
- be able to rebut the accusations that have been made against Imam Hasan (as)
- Be introduced to Imam Ḥasan's (as) excellent character

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Imam Ḥasan: The Forbearing Imam



Imam Ḥasan (as) is the first grandson of the Prophet (saw) and the first child born to Sayyedah Fāṭimah and Imam 'Ali (as). He lived with his grandfather and mother for 7 years before they both passed away. When he was 37 years of age, his father Imam 'Ali (as) was murdered and by the command of Allah (SWT), Imam Ḥasan (as) became the next Imam. Imam Ḥasan (as) was poisoned to death at the age of 47 years.

This lesson will focus on two main aspects of the Imam's life:

- His forbearance with his community despite how badly they treated him. Forbearance means to remain patient and repeatedly forgive.
- Answering some of the accusations made against Imam Ḥasan (as) and showing them to be false

THE IMĀMAH OF IMAM ḤASAN **(AS): A DIVINE DECREE**

The Imāmah of Imam Ḥasan (as is the case with all the twelve Imams), was a Divine decree of Allah that the Prophet (saw) emphasised in his life on a number of occasions. On one occasion the Prophet (saw) said:

“I am worthier of the believers than themselves, then my brother ‘Ali bin Abi Talib will be worthier of the believers than themselves. If he is martyred then his son al-Ḥasan will be worthier of the believers than themselves then after him al-Ḥusayn will be worthier of the believers than themselves...”ⁱⁱ

THOSE OPPOSING THE DIVINE DECREE

Mu’āwiyah was always an enemy of Islam and particularly the Ahlul Bayt. His malice was that of his father’s (Abu Sufyān) and grandfather (Umayyah). They were always jealous of the high status that their cousins Banu Hāshim (the Prophet and his forefathers and progeny) held in the eyes of people. Hence when the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt were given the power of authority by Allah (SWT) their enmity grew towards them.ⁱⁱⁱ

Abu Sufyān had always advised the Umayyads to treat the Caliphate like a ball and pass it from one to another of their clan and to never let it out of their possession. He said, *“I swear that there is neither punishment nor judgement, neither Heaven nor the Hell, and neither Resurrection nor a day of Reckoning.”* His son Mu’āwiyah accepted these teachings and made them his doctrine and hence always opposed the Prophet, Imam ‘Ali and Imam Ḥasan (as).

It is through the difficult situations imposed on Imam Ḥasan (as) that we can understand Imam Ḥasan’s (as) sublime character.

MU’ĀWIYAH WAGES WAR AGAINST IMAM ḤASAN (AS)

In order to extend his empire and seize control over the Islamic world and surrounding countries, Mu’āwiyah waged a war against Imam Ḥasan (as). Imam Ḥasan (as) had to respond to the call for war and so encouraged the Muslims to begin preparing for the battle. The majority of the men who joined his army were not completely sincere in their intention to defend Islam; each group having their

own aims and ambitions. Some had hatred towards Mu’āwiyah (so they sided with Imam Ḥasan (as)), others were eager to fight in battles, others simply followed the leaders of their tribes or the rest of the community. There was of course a small group who were truly loyal followers of Ahlul Bayt (as).

THE SILENT BUT DEADLY WAR

Mu’āwiyah began sending spies to spread rumours among the Imam’s army. He also bribed many of them with money to leave the Imam. Many of the soldiers in Imam Ḥasan’s (as) army who were weak in their faith blindly believed the rumours and accepted the bribes.

Such people deserted their Imam and went to join Mu’āwiyah, or caused trouble within the Imam’s camp. This impacted negatively on Imam Ḥasan’s army and hence rendered it too weak to fight against Mu’āwiyah’s army. Others tried to kill the Imam and managed to stab him brutally in his thigh.

Throughout all this, Imam Ḥasan (as) patiently persevered and did not show any anger towards any of the men nor did he retaliate. The disloyalty of the Muslims towards the Imam proved to him that fighting the battle against Mu’āwiyah was not the best option as it would lead to great bloodshed without any benefits towards safeguarding the true Islamic teachings.

PEACE – THE WISE SOLUTION

Imam Ḥasan (as) was left with two choices:

- Fight against the enemies to the end, which would mean the Imam’s true followers would be killed and Mu’āwiyah would try his best to pervert Islam
- Make peace with Mu’āwiyah. With this option, Imam Ḥasan (as) would save the lives of the Muslims and over time it would expose Mu’āwiyah’s evil intentions to the people.

Imam Ḥasan also remembered what his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to say:

“Indeed, this son of mine (al-Ḥasan) is a leader. Through him Allah will make peace between two groups of the Muslims.”^{iv}

By considering the weak faith of the Muslims in his army, safeguarding the lives of his true followers, and preventing great bloodshed amongst the Muslims, Imam Ḥasan (as) knew that the best solution was to make peace with Mu'āwiyah. In the peace treaty, Imam Ḥasan (as) put conditions to uphold Islamic teachings. However, Mu'āwiyah violated all the conditions of the peace treaty publicly. We will learn about this in later lessons.

By studying these events, we can see the forbearance, wisdom and bravery of Imam Ḥasan (as).

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST IMAM ḤASAN

As we have seen from the above discussion, the time in which Imam Ḥasan (as) lived was a time of great problems within the Muslim community. Mu'āwiyah was trying his utmost to take full control of the Muslim world. Besides having a large and wealthy army, his other strategy was to try to hurt the reputation of the Imam (as), through various false accusations. In this lesson, we will look at some of these and answer them.

THE FIRST ACCUSATION: IMAM ḤASAN WAS NOT A COURAGEOUS IMAM

It is clear from history that Imam Ḥasan was ready to fight Mu'āwiyah and in fact prepared an army. Imam Ḥasan's (as) intention to fight (in fact in every aspect of his life) was to uproot evil and establish the true teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet. Furthermore, Imam Ḥasan (as) fought in many battles alongside his father Imam 'Ali (as) such as the Battle of the Jamal and the Battle of Siffin.

We also have to remember that Imam Ḥasan's courage was not limited to the battlefield. When Imam 'Ali (as) wanted to prepare an army for the Battle of Jamal, he sent his son Imam Ḥasan (as) to Kufa to raise an army. When Imam Ḥasan (as) went to Kufa he delivered a powerful and eloquent speech^v after which twelve thousand men rose and joined Imam 'Ali (as) for the battle. Imam 'Ali (as) knew that his son Imam Ḥasan (as) had the courage and intelligence to raise a large force and that is why he sent him.

It is also important to consider that courage is not only shown in battles or events that require warfare. Courage is required to perform what is most righteous regardless of what people say or do to oppose you. Imam Ḥasan (as)

knew that a war was not the best thing for the Muslims under those circumstances (even though many of the people who remained in his army wanted to fight). Imam Ḥasan (as) was courageous enough to insist on peace even though he knew that many people would accuse him of weakness or disbelief – this is a true test of courage!

THE SECOND ACCUSATION: IMAM ḤUSAYN WAS MORE COURAGEOUS THAN IMAM ḤASAN

To prove this statement wrong, we need to look at what the Prophet (saw) said about Imams Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (as):

الحسن والحسين امامان ان قاما او قعدا

“Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are two Imams whether they are standing up (fighting against the enemy) or are seated (making peace with the enemy).”

We can derive many meanings from this saying; the main two being that both Imams Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are Divinely chosen as Imams and hence all that they do is according to the commands of Allah (SWT) and hence should be obeyed. The second is that the Prophet (saw) was in a way giving a prophecy that Imam Ḥasan will make peace with the enemy and Imam Ḥusayn will fight against the enemy. If we were to swap the two Imams and put them in the other's situation, they both would have responded in the same way as the other did.

IMAM ḤASAN'S (AS) FORBEARING CHARACTER

We can understand from all the difficulties that Imam Ḥasan (as) managed in his life that he was a forbearing person. He splendidly demonstrated his patience when dealing with his army, being wounded by his own army, making peace with Mu'āwiyah and putting up with Mu'āwiyah and his blind followers defaming him^{vi}.

Once a man who had lived in Syria (brainwashed by Mu'āwiyah) came to Medina where Imam Ḥasan (as) was residing. He encountered Imam Ḥasan (as) in the streets of Medina and as soon as he was told by the people that he was the Imam he began swearing at the Imam and cursed him and his father. Imam Ḥasan (as) did not say anything nor did he frown; he waited for the man to finish. Then the Imam said to him:

“From your accent I gather that you are new in this city. Are you tired, are you hungry? When did you arrive?” The man replied, “I just arrived.” The Imam said, “You must be tired then! Why don’t you come down, we’ll have lunch together and then we can discuss things. Then if what you are saying is correct may God forgive me and if what you are saying is incorrect may God forgive you.”

The man was speechless upon hearing the Imam’s answer. They went and had lunch together and spoke. A short time later after realising the pure character of the Imam, the man hated Mu’awiyah and praised the Imam.^{vii}

This story exemplified how the Imam (as) treated people, whether they were his followers or not. His forbearance, as well his general kindness and compassion were amazing.

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“A good deed is the one before which there is no evading and delaying and after which there is no boasting or holding favour”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 113)

“Arrogance is the cause of destruction and annihilation of religion and Satan was cursed due to it. And greed is the enemy of the soul and Adam was expelled by it from

paradise and jealousy is the guide to wickedness- for the same reason Qabil (Cain) killed Abel.”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 111)

“The one who does not have wits and intelligence does not have decorum and decency and the one who lacks fortitude, does not have generosity and magnanimity and that one who does not possess shame and modesty, does not have religion.”

(KASHFUL GHUMMA VOL 2, P 197)

Review Questions

Q1. Imam Ḥasan (as) was appointed an Imam by:

- His father
- The Prophet (saw)
- Allah (SWT)

Q2. Imam Ḥasan signed a peace treaty because:

- He wanted to prevent further bloodshed of true believers
- He wanted to expose Mu’awiyah
- Both of the above

Q3. Mu’awiyah was from which family?

- Umayyad
- Abbasid
- Banu Tamim

Himself, we call you to someone whom the Messenger of Allah has called him closer to himself as the closeness in two things: closeness in religion and closeness in kinship (blood relation). We call you towards a person whom was always there in moments of sacrifice and whom Allah extended as a help for the Prophet while others were withholding their help from him. He is the one who was close to the Prophet while the others moved away from him. He is the one who prayed with the Prophet while others were pagans. And fought and stood by him in the battlefield while others were running away from the battlefield. And the one whom defended the Prophet while others turned their backs to him. Who believed in the Prophet while others rejected him. And he is now calling you to him for help and asking you to come to the truth and commands you to come to him and help him against a people who have broken their allegiance with him and who have killed righteous people and taken over the treasury in Basrah. May Allah have mercy on you therefore move towards him.”

^{vi} Mu’awiyah, in order to brainwash the people, made it a common practice to curse Imam Ali (as) during every speech and prayer. Once the orator of the mosque of Harran delivered a sermon and then ended it without cursing Imam Ali (as) which had become the usual practice (sunna) established by Mu’awiyah. So the people shouted out from all sides “Woe unto you! Woe unto you! The sunna, the sunna! You have left the sunna!”

^{vii} eHawza, semester 1, course 2, lect 6

References

- Sulh al-Hasan, by Shaykh RĀdi Āl-YĀsin
- eHawza, semester 1, course 2, lect 6
- Imam Hasan ‘The Myths of his Divorces’, by Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (<http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/default.asp?url=imamhasan.htm>)
- Lectures by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi delivered 15th Ramadhan 1418 and 1420 on al-Islam.org

ⁱⁱ Bihar vol 36 p 231

ⁱⁱⁱ Once Abu Sufyan (in his old age) was in the mosque and the AdhĀn was being called. When the caller of AdhĀn reached the line “I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” Abu SufyĀn remarked, “Look at where my cousin (i.e. the Prophet) has placed his name”. Imam Ali heard this and became annoyed and told him that it was the command of Allah.

^{iv} (sulhul Hasan – attitude towards confusion, from Hulyat al-Auliya by Abu Na’im).

^v Imam Hasan’s speech includes the following: “O people we have come to you calling you to the Book of Allah (SWT) and the Sunna of the Prophet and the best in religious knowledge amongst all the muslims and the most just amongst all the Muslims (i.e. Imam Ali (as)). We are calling you to the most superior to all the Muslims and the one who will stay faithful to the allegiance you pledged to him and the person who is known by the Quran and the Sunna. And there is nothing in which good virtues and good deeds are concerned in which he is not most forward. We call you to someone who Allah has called him closer to

IMAM HUSAIN [AS]

امام الحسين (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should understand:

- The objective of Imam Ḥusayn's sacrifice in Karbala
- The effects of his martyrdom on the Islamic nation
- That there are many untrue accounts of the events of Karbala and we need to distinguish the true narrations from the false ones
- That Imam Ḥusayn's love for Allah (SWT) was the motivation behind his sacrifice

Imam Ḥusayn (as)

Imam Ḥusayn (as) is the third divinely appointed Imam and successor of the Holy Prophet. In previous years, we have learnt about his great personality and his sacrifices for the sake of Allah (SWT), especially in Karbala. Undoubtedly, you know of his sacrifice from your attendance of the Muḥarram majālis at different centres and mosques. In this lesson we will learn more about Imam Ḥusayn's role in Karbala and its effects on Islam throughout history till today.



FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

THE HIDDEN EVIL AND THE DAZED 'MUSLIMS'

In the lesson on Imam Ḥasan (as), we discussed that the Imam signed a peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah which Mu'āwiyah blatantly disregarded. After Mu'āwiyah violated the peace treaty, the Muslims started to realise Mu'āwiyah's true evil character. However, the Muslims did not have the courage to oppose him or fight him. Before Mu'āwiyah passed away he handed over the Caliphate to his son Yazīd. Yazīd was well known for his indecency (such as publicly drinking alcohol, committing adultery and incest, playing with animals, etc...) yet the people did not have the courage to oppose him either. On the other hand, Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd had somewhat disguised their evil nature and real intention (of using Islam to gain more power) by 'virtuous' deeds such as building numerous mosquesⁱⁱ throughout the Islamic countries. He also paid the Muslim soldiers generously in order to fight non-Muslim countries to expand the Islamic territories.ⁱⁱⁱ The Muslims seeing this considered it as good revenue for themselves and thought it was a good deed, without realising the real intention behind it.

NEVER SUBMIT TO HUMILIATION

The Muslims pledged allegiance to Yazīd whether voluntarily or by force. However, Imam Ḥusayn and the family of the Prophet and true followers of Ahlul Bayt did not. Yazīd knew that for his leadership to be safe from opposition, it was vital for Imam Ḥusayn (as) to pledge allegiance to him. He therefore sent a messenger to Medina to ask the Imam to pay allegiance. Imam Ḥusayn responded to this in the following manner:

“We are the Household of Prophecy ... and Yazīd is a man who drinks wine, kills innocent people and openly commits sins. Hence someone like me will never pledge allegiance to someone like him...”

On another occasion, Imam Ḥusayn (as) said, “Farewell to Islam if the Islamic nation is afflicted with a ruler like Yazīd.”

CAN'T WE HAVE AN UNJUST RULER AND PRACTICE OUR OWN BELIEF?

We need to understand that the personality of the leader of a nation will have an impact on the people and can subtly influence their faith over time. That is why Allah (SWT) sent numerous Prophets (i.e. righteous, just and perfect leaders) over time, in order to guide mankind and eradicate oppression.^{iv} Imam Ḥusayn (as) knew his role as an Imam and guide for people; he wanted the people to wake up from their misguidance and encourage them to take action against tyranny. Hence he reminded them of what his grandfather had ordered:

Surely you know that the Prophet (saw) said: “Whoever witnesses a tyrant ruler who considers the prohibitions of Allah as permissible, violates the covenant of Allah, opposes the practices of the Prophet of Allah, treats the servants of Allah sinfully and cruelly, and does not oppose him verbally or physically, then Allah will associate him with that ruler.”

IMAM ḤUSAYN MIGRATES TO KUFĀH

The people of Kufah in particular wanted a just leader and hence wrote letters to Imam Ḥusayn (as) who was in Medina at the time, to attend to them as their Imam. Imam Ḥusayn (as) accepted the invitations of the Kufahns and headed towards Kufah to fulfil his duty as an Imam and lead them justly. Imam Ḥusayn (as) acted similarly to his grandfather the Prophet (saw) when he left Mecca and migrated to Medina^v in order to be able to practice and establish the true teachings of Islam in a complete manner.

IMAM ḤUSAYN'S AIM WAS TO REVIVE THE MUSLIM NATION

When he was asked about his departure to Kufah Imam Ḥusayn (as) replied:

“Indeed I did not revolt (against the tyrannical regime of Bani Umayyah) joyfully or arrogantly nor to cause corruption or to be an oppressor; rather I rose up in order to reform the Muslim nation of my grandfather the Messenger of Allah (SWT).”

This shows that Imam Ḥusayn (as) wanted to bring back the true teachings of Islam that the Prophet had established and remove the injustice that was inflicted on Muslims (under the guise of Islam) by the unjust leaders who seized the Prophet's position after his demise (especially Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd).

By analysing the events that took place after the tragedy of Karbalā', we will realise that by the sacrifice of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his companions, Islam had been revived and continues to exist till this very day. Let us have a look at the impact of the tragedy of Karbalā'.

THE AWAKENING

The martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his family (the progeny of the Prophet) and companions in Karbala sparked questions about the murderer. Furthermore, the women and children were taken as captives which also caused people to question the legitimacy of Yazīd's authority and personality. These questions triggered revolutions not only against Yazīd but other tyrant leaders too.

The very first revolution was begun by Imam Ḥusayn (as) himself in Karbala by not pledging allegiance and sacrificing his life and his family for the cause of truth and justice. This was followed by Sayyedah Zaynab and Imam Zaynul 'Ābidīn's (as) opposition and stance against 'Umar ibn Sa'd, 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyād and Yazīd^{vi} after being taken as captives.

SACRIFICE FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE OF ALLAH

After learning about what happened in Karbalā', we may think 'how did Imam Ḥusayn (as) have the courage to sacrifice his family and own life for the sake of Allah? What is the secret behind it?'

When we love someone we are more willing to sacrifice for them. For example, when a friend that you love asks for a favour you immediately fulfil their need. You are willing to give your wealth and time to make that friend happy.

Similar is the case with Allah (SWT); when we love Him we become more mindful of what we do and try as best we can to impress Him. The more we love Allah, the more Allah will love us, which in turn will attract us to love Allah (SWT) more. Imam Husayn (as) reached a level of loving Allah that not only did he give his wealth for Allah (e.g. giving to the poor and needy even though he also was in need, as we have learnt in previous years), his time (e.g. worshipping Allah in prayers, helping others) and his family (to the extent that he sacrificed his infant baby), but he also gave his own life for the sake of Allah (SWT). That is why Imam Husayn (as) said:

ان كان دين محمد لم يستقم الا بقتلي فيا سيوف خذي

“If the religion of Muhammad will not stand firm except by my death, then O swords come and take me!”

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“The company and social interaction with the people committing transgression is a cause for blame”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 122)

References:

Lectures by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei:

- Muharram 2008/9, lectures 11 and 12
- The aftermath of Karbala 1 & 2
- The aftermath of Ashura 2
- eHawza, Semester 4, course 6, lectures 12 & 13
- eHawza, Semester 4, course 4, lecture 2

The Revolution of Imam Husayn (A historical analysis of the roots & the impacts of Karbala) – A series of lectures presented by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei. Compiled by the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Community of Australia, 1996.

ⁱⁱ The Umayyid mosque in Syria (Damascus) and the Sakhray Mosque in Jerusalem are examples of such mosques.

ⁱⁱⁱ Expanding the Islamic territories in the way that the Umayyids and Abbasids did was never endorsed by the Imams. One of the shia (who was a soldier under the command of the Abbasid rulers) at the time of Imam Sadiq (as) came to the Imam and asked him whether it was permissible for him to go and fight kuffar (non-believers) in order to expand the Islamic territory when demanded by the Abbasid Caliph. Imam (as) replied that it was not permissible and that they (the Ahlul Bayt) do not endorse such wars. And further, if he was to die in such a war his blood would be wasted and he would not be considered a martyr. The most that one can do is guard the borders of the Islamic territory so that the enemies would not attack but they were not permitted to attack other territories just to expand the Islamic territory.

As proof that the aim of bani Umayyah was to increase their power: Yazid ibn Muhallab was one of the commanders of bani Umayyah. In one of the expansion wars they attacked the northern part of Iran (to the Caspian Sea). When they were about to expand and defeat, the Iranians resisted. Yazid ibn Muhallab took an oath that he will make a river of blood (ie kill so many of them

“One who removes the anguish and sorrow of a faithful person, Allah grants him deliverance from the sorrows and dejections of this world and the Hereafter.”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 121)

Review Questions

Q1. Imam Husayn (as) rose up against the tyrants of his time because:

- a. He wanted to establish justice
- b. He wanted to re-establish the real teachings of Islam
- c. Both of the above

Q2. Imam Husayn's (as) revolution:

- a. Had no real effect on the Muslim world
- b. Revived the Muslims and led to many other revolutions
- c. We are unsure of its consequences

Q3. Imam Husayn (as) did not pay allegiance to Yazid because:

- a. He was an open sinner and an unjust ruler
- b. He didn't like his family
- c. He was the son of Mu'awiyah

that a river of blood flows on the land of Tabarestan). As a result he captured a thousand people (women, children and men), took them to a valley (in order to fulfil his vow) and beheaded them all. The soldiers told Yazid that the blood wasn't flowing, and there wasn't anymore people around to behead. So Yazid replied that they should add a bit of water to the blood to make it flow and so his promise would be fulfilled (in a way to cheat God) ... they didn't have any concern about Islam and expanding its territories for the sake of Islam, it wasn't their intention. They were expanding the territory to enforce their power and have more land to themselves under their power.

^{iv} Nabi Musa (as) is mentioned many times throughout the Quran. One of his main missions was to fight against the tyrannical Pharaoh at his time. Through the actions of Prophet Musa Allah is teaching humankind to not voluntarily accept unjust rulers. In his uprising against Pharaoh there's a huge lesson otherwise Allah would not mention it merely for entertainment in the Quran.

^v This is the first migration of the Prophet (sawa) after preaching for 13 years in Mecca. When the pagans exerted every cruel act and sanctions on the Muslims (such as the 3 years the Muslims had to live in the valley of Abu Talib without being able to have any interaction with the Meccans) the Prophet migrated with the Muslims to Medina in order to establish Islam and live according to the Islamic rules. Another migration is when the Prophet sent some of the Muslims under the command of Ja'far ibn Abu Talib (brother of Imam Ali (as)) to the Christians of Najran in Ethiopia.

^{vi} Sayyedah Zaynab and Imam Ali Zaynul 'Abidin's courageous and eloquent speeches and defence in the courts of 'Umar ibn Sa'd and Yazid played a key role in awakening the Muslims from their slumber. Not only did they expose the evil actions and blasphemy of those tyrant rulers, they brought the Muslims back to their senses and caused them to question Yazid and oppose him. They also caused the Muslims' feelings of regret (for deceiving or deserting Imam Husayn) to erupt and hence a chain of both unsuccessful and successful revolutions against the Umayyads began.

KARBALA

کربلاء

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1

EVERYDAY IS ASHURA AND EVERY LAND IS KARBALA

This famous saying sums up the event of 'Āshurā' and Karbala. In the previous lesson on the life of Imam Ḥusayn (as) we discussed the background to the event of 'Āshurā' and why Imam Ḥusayn (as) took it upon himself to defend Islam by sacrificing his life. 'Āshurā' was the ultimate good vs. evil event and its power has inspired hundreds of revolutions. In this lesson we shall discuss some of the lessons that Imam Ḥusayn (as) taught and that live to this day and will continue to live.

SITUATION AT THE TIME OF OUR IMAM (AS)

In order to understand the history of Karbala, it is imperative we understand the situation under which our Imam was living. As we have discussed previously, our Imam lived in a very difficult time. At the time of Imam Ḥasan (as) his own people deserted him and he was forced to sign a peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah. One of the conditions of the treaty was that when Mu'āwiyah died, Yazīd would not be leader. Mu'āwiyah eventually murdered Imam Ḥasan (as) and violated many of the conditions he had signed with Imam Ḥasan (as). When Mu'āwiyah died, Yazīd knew that Imam Ḥusayn (as) was the rightful leader so he did not inform anyone that Mu'āwiyah had passed away.

He sent a message to the governor of Medina to seek allegiance from three key people whom he thought would revolt against his rule: Imam Ḥusayn (as), 'Abdullāh bin

Objectives >>>

Students should understand:

- The political and social situation of the Imam, Muslims and Islam prior to Karbala
- What happened in Medina that caused Imam Ḥusayn (as) to leave
- Know that Imam moved to Mecca so as to seek a global platform, seek refuge with Allah (SWT) and as opposition to falsehood
- Understand why Imam left Mecca to go to Kūfah with brief details of his journey.
- Be reminded that Karbala and 'Āshurā' should always be upheld for it keeps our Islam alive
- The composition of the Imam's army, including most prominent family members and companions
- The characteristics of the people in the Imam's army, and how this can be generalised to any time or place
- How the Imam ended up at the land of Karbala
- The events prior to 'Āshurā' and brief details of the events of the tenth day, dispelling common myths such as
 - The age of Ali al-Akbar and al-Qāsim ibn Ḥasan
 - Exaggeration about people killed by the army of Imam Ḥusayn (as)
 - Apparent marriage of Qāsim
- Should be wary of sermons where preposterous and fabricated stories of Imam Ḥusayn (as) are mentioned that contradict Islamic principles
- Should be aware of the most reliable literature on the story of Karbala in the English language.
- The role of Zaynab (as) on the night after 'Āshurā' and thereafter
- A brief discussion of the aftermath of 'Āshurā'

Zubayr and ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar, none of whom recognised his right for any position. Walīd, the then governor of Medina called Imam to him and Marwan bin Ḥakam the governor’s ruthless advisor told Walīd:

"I swear by Allah that if Ḥusayn bin ‘Ali leaves this place without taking the oath of allegiance it will no longer be possible for you to lay hands on him without bloodshed. You should, therefore, detain him till he takes the oath and in the event of his refusing to do so, you should chop off his head."ⁱ

Imam very tactfully escaped the situation and did not give his allegiance to anyone.

As we have discussed, earlier, this hatred that these people had to our Imam was rooted in greed, corruption, and the need to take revenge for what the Prophet (saw) and Imam ‘Ali (as) did to their ancestors. This intimidation and threats against the Imam (as) continued and our Imam (as) refused to acknowledge Yazīd as the leader of the Muslims and he knew if he stayed in Medina, he would be assassinated and no one would have ever known. After a few nights he left Medina along with his wives, brothers and nephews and most of the members of his family, and proceeded on his journey to Mecca, remembering the words of Prophet Mūsa:

"So he left the city in the state of fear and cautious saying: Lord! Protect me against the unjust people."
(28:21)

The 'state of fear' in the verse however should not be mistaken for 'fear of death' for our M’asumīn leaders are far from such states. The fear in this verse perhaps was from any event that would hamper his path from fulfilling his mission of awakening the slumbering community and reviving Islam in the hearts and minds of the Muslims. Thus he did not want to be martyred before he fulfilled his mission.

TO MECCA

The Imam arrived in Mecca just before the pilgrimage season. Traders, pilgrims and visitors would come from all over the Muslim world and meet in one place. When we analyse the journey that Imam took to migrate to Medina, he did it for three main reasons

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF A GLOBAL PLATFORM:

In one of his historic statements Imam Ḥusayn (as) clearly says that the main reason behind his uprising (in whatever stage it may be) is to seek reform in the Muslim nation. Then he describes the path he would

أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمُرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَ أَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

"I plan to invite towards good and to forbid evil."

In order for him to carry out this reform immediately, the best place to go to was Mecca, where pilgrims from all over the Muslim world would come to perform 'Umrah and Ḥajj. They would listen to his message, wake up, and relate the message to their people on their return. Historical records tell us that while in Mecca, Muslims from different countries would come to Imam Ḥusayn (as) day and night, and listen to what he had to say.ⁱⁱ

2. OPPOSITION AGAINST FALSEHOOD:

The flight of Imam Ḥusayn (as) reveals the Imam's liberated spirit. He never allowed himself to submit to any government that does not obey the laws of God. In fact it is a practical manifestation of Islām (submission to the will of God).

3. SEEKING REFUGE IN ALLAH

His flight to the Divine sanctity of safety perhaps demonstrated that his only refuge was Allah (SWT) in whose house there is always safety:

"In it are clear signs and whosoever enters therein is safe" (3:97)

Seeking refuge in the Divine sanctity, however, should transport us to a greater meaning: one who really seeks refuge in Allāh is safe from all kinds of polytheism and oppression.

MUSLIM IS DEPUTED TO KŪFAH

As people realised that Mu’āwiyah was dead and Imam Ḥusayn (as) had refused to pay allegiance to Yazīd, the people of Kūfah responded and wrote hundreds of to the Imam while he was still in Medina, asking him to come to their city and help them rise against the tyrant rulers. They claimed he would have safety and an army if he wished to fight the oppressors. The Imam (as) could not ignore these letters and therefore sent his special envoy and cousin, Muslim Ibn Aqīl, to Kūfah to determine the situation and report back to him. When Muslim arrived,

over 10,000 people paid allegiance to him! Muslim, seeing that the people were with him, sent a message to Imam to come to Kūfah to set up his base there.

Yazīd heard of this and immediately appointed one of his most ruthless and cunning mercenaries, ‘Ubaydullāh Ibn Ziyād as the governor of Kūfah. ‘Ubaydullāh was very devious and cunning and tested the resolve of the Kūfans: he threatened them, jailed a few, killed some of them and bribed many to abandon Muslim. The Kūfans failed this test and one by one, they abandoned Muslim such that he was left alone. ‘Ubaydullāh also killed Muslim ibn Aqil in the most brutal way.

IMAM HUSAYNS’ JOURNEY TO KŪFAH

Whilst this was happening, Imam Ḥusayn (as) had already left Mecca on his way to Kūfah to join Muslim. He left as people were coming for the Ḥajj (on the 8th of Dhul Ḥijjah 60 AH) and therefore Imam took every opportunity to speak to people. In every stop, he gave sermons and spoke to people telling them to join him and spread the message of true Islam that Yazīd and his clan had so desperately tried to distort and corrupt. We will discuss a significant incident that happened at one of these stations. The companions of Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn narrate:

We were with Zuhayr bin al-Qayn when we came from Mecca. Although we were travelling alongside Ḥusayn (as), there was nothing more hateful to us than that we should stop with him at a halting place. Yet at one point when al- Ḥusayn (as), travelled and halted, we could not avoid halting with him. Imam Ḥusayn halted at the side (of the road) and we halted at the (other) side (of the road). While we were sitting, eating our food, a messenger of al- Ḥusayn, peace be on him, approached, greeted us and entered (our camp).

"Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn," he said, "Abu 'Abdullāh al- Ḥusayn, peace be on him, has sent me to you (to ask) you to come to him." Each man of us threw away what was in his hands (i.e. threw up his hands in horror); it was (as surprising) as if birds had alighted on our heads.

"Glory be to God," (Zuhayr's) wife said to him, "did the son of the Messenger of God send for you? Then aren't you going to him? If you went to him, you would hear what he had to say. Then you could leave him (if you wanted to)." Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn went (across) to him. It was not long before he returned to announce that he was

heading east (to join the Imam). He ordered his tent (to be struck) and (called for) his luggage, mounts and equipment. His tent was pulled down and taken to al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him, then he said to his wife: "You are divorced, go back to your family, for I do not want anything to befall you except good."

Then he said to his companions:

"Whoever wants to follow me (may do so), otherwise he is at the end of his covenant with me (i.e. released from obedience to follow Zuhayr as the leader of his tribal group). I will tell you a story (of something which happened to me once): we were raiding a rich land.

God granted us victory and we won (a lot of) booty. Salmān al-Farisi, the mercy of God be on him, said to us: 'Are you happy with the victory which God has granted you and the booty you have won?' We said: 'Yes.' Then he said: 'Therefore when you meet the master of the young men of the family of Muḥammad be happier to fight with him than you are with the booty which you have obtained today.' As for me. I pray that God may be with you."

He remained among the people with Imam Ḥusayn (as) until he was killed. ⁱⁱⁱ

The powerful message Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn left us with is that sometimes we are scared to stand up for the right things, we would rather avoid talking to someone when we know he is going to tell us to do something good that we dislike. The reward Allah granted him for joining and being with our Imam was that he got paradise and he defended Islam and we remember him till today as a hero of Islam. He chose a more difficult yet more rewarding path and never regretted it.

Class Activity

From what we have learnt about the journey of the Imam each person in the class will give one message we learn from this lesson.

- Standing up to oppressors
- Spreading message of Islam in a peaceful strategic manner
- Opposing falsehood
- Standing up to authority when the authority is in the wrong
- Not being hypocritical like the Kūfans, i.e. sticking by your word (your promise) even if it means giving your life for the truth
- Not abandoning the Ahlul Bayt (as)
- Sticking by the truth even if it means losing your life

Review Questions

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- a. He wanted to establish justice
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- a. He was an open sinner and an unjust ruler
- b. He didn't like his family
- c. He was the son of Mu'āwiyah

Lesson 2

In this lesson, we will discuss the members of the army of Ḥusayn (as). The companions of the Imam were incredibly loyal to him and to the religion of Islam. They had such strong faith which made them extremely brave. They were told by the Imam that they will be martyred on the day of 'Āshurā' yet none of them left Imam's side. These are the kinds of characteristics our present Imam (as) requires of us! Let us see who Imam's army consisted of and check with ourselves if we can be considered to be as part of the army of the Imam of our time.

THE PROMINENT COMPANIONS

- Muslim ibn 'Awsajah: Muslim was an elderly man who had fought alongside the Ahlul Bayt his whole life. He left Kūfah despite the blockade and managed to join the army of his Imam. He gave his life early on in the battle of Karbalā'.
- Ḥabib ibn Maḍāhir: Ḥabib was a lifelong friend of Imam Ḥusayn (as). Even as a child, he was very close to the Imam (as). He too had fought to help the Ahlul Bayt throughout his life. He gave his life soon after his friend Muslim.
- Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn: we have learnt about how Zuhayr joined the Imam's army on their way to Karbala.
- Sa'id ibn Abdullah al-Ḥanafi: Sa'id was the man who stood in front of Imam Ḥusayn (as) while the Imam prayed his Ḍuhr prayer. He was shot by 13 arrows, as well as spears, and died protecting the Imam (as).

HIS FAMILY

The most difficult part of the saga of Karbala was the sacrifice Imam Ḥusayn (as) gave from his family and the family of the Prophet and Imam 'Ali (as).

BROTHERS OF IMAM ḤUSAYN (AS)

1. 'Abbas ibn 'Ali ibn Abu Tālib
2. The three younger brothers of 'Abbas
3. 2-4 other brothers of Imam Ḥusayn (as) according to different narrations

SONS OF IMAM ḤUSAYN (AS)

4. 'Ali al-Akbar ibn Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali
5. 'Ali al-Asghar ('Abullāh) ibn Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali

NEPHEWS OF IMAM ḤUSAYN (AS)

6. Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan (as)
7. Two brothers of Qāsim both named 'Abdullāh
8. Aun, the son of Zaynab
9. Mohammad, the son of Zaynab (according to some narrations)
10. There were also many sons of 'Aqīl and Muslim ibn 'Aqīl among the martyrs

THE IMAM REACHES KARBALA

When Imam Ḥusayn (as) crossed into Iraq, Ibn Ziyād's troops blocked the path and surrounded the caravan. Ḥurr ibn Yazīd had been sent by Ibn Ziyād with one thousand troops to meet Imam Ḥusayn (as). After

studying the unfortunate situation, Imam Ḥusayn said to the enemy troops:

“I have come because you wrote letters inviting me to come and unite you for the cause of truth and justice. But now if you have changed your mind and you dislike my presence here, I am ready to go back.”^{iv}

However, the treacherous Kūfans, who invited the grandson of the Prophet showing their loyalty in their messages and letters, had now become so hypocritical and delusional with the riches that Ibn Ziyād and Yazīd had promised, that they were not prepared to let him go back, either to Mecca or Medina or forward to Kūfah.

Imam Ḥusayn (as) continued his march in a direction that led neither to Kūfah nor Medina, and reached the fateful plain of Karbala. Here he camped on the 2nd Muḥarram, 61 A.H.

The followers of Imam Ḥusayn (as) showed unparalleled dedication and conviction. They refused to desert him, despite the unfavourable situation.

One of his followers, Muslim ibn ‘Awsajah, famously remarked:

“Could we leave you alone? How should we excuse ourselves before Allah concerning doing our duty to you? By God! Not before I thrust my spear until I break it in their chests...I will not leave you. If I have no weapon to fight them with, I will throw stones at them to defend you until I die with you.”

Other faithful followers voiced the exact sentiments and promised to defend Imam Ḥusayn (as) with their own lives.

THE FATEFUL BATTLE

For the next nine days, more and more soldiers began to arrive in Karbala, in preparation for the battle against Imam Ḥusayn (as). Every day, the Imam took the opportunity to speak to them and warn them not to fight him. He offered every possible solution other than paying allegiance to Yazīd, but the army refused time and again.

Ibn Sa’d, the commander of Yazīd’s army, insisted Ḥusayn (as) to come in the battlefield and decide the matter by sword. After a final discussion, the confrontation between truth and falsehood commenced when Ibn Sa’d led the assault by shooting the first arrow.

Even at such a tense moment, Imam Ḥusayn (as) did not forget his Lord. Rather, he devoutly prayed to Allah, saying:

“O Allah! It is You in Whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all distress. You are my trust and provision in everything that happens to me...”

Imam Ḥusayn (as) also reminded the cruel and heartless army of the crime that they were about to commit. With great eloquence, Imam Ḥusayn (as) told them:

“...Trace back my lineage and consider who I am. Then, look back at yourselves and remonstrate with yourselves.

Consider whether it is right for you to kill me and desecrate my honour. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet, the son of the executor of his will and his cousin, the first of the believers in God and the man who [first] believed in what His Messenger brought from his Lord? Was not Ḥamzah, the lord of the Martyrs, my uncle? Was not Ja’far, in heaven, my uncle? Have you not heard the words that circulate among you that the Prophet of Allah said concerning myself and my brother: ‘These are the two leaders of the youths of the inhabitants of heaven?’”

The enemies could not answer to these truths. Some got confused but their leaders reminded them of the riches and gold they were promised and therefore in greed and frustration they attacked.

Though the Imams companions were few (between 72 and 100), they put up a brave and courageous fight.

By midday, most of Imam’s faithful devotees had been martyred. Soon after, none remained except the close relatives of Imam Ḥusayn (as). One by one, they too were brutally assassinated. Imam Ḥusayn’s (as) own son, ‘Ali al-Akbar, was savaged to pieces by the cruel army.

Qāsim, the son of Imam Ḥasan (as), showed great courage and bravery, but was soon martyred too. Even the infant ‘Ali al-Asghar was not spared. Eventually Imam Ḥusayn (as) himself was brutally killed by the enemies. Imam al-Mahdi (as) describes the scene in vivid detail in his Ziyarāt Nahiyah:

“You were bearing the tribulations of the battle with so much patience that the angels of the sky were astonished.

Then the enemies surrounded you from all the sides and began to give you one injury after another and made you fatigued. No helper remained between you and your women and children. You were still deflecting the crowd of attackers with persistence and patience away from your women and children.

Till they forced you down from the horse-back. And you descended to the earth, wounded. The horses were trampling you with their hooves. The atrocious-army fell upon you with their swords.

The perspiration of death appeared on your forehead and your hands and feet folded and unfolded to the right and the left.

You were beholding your wounds and your children too, when in such a situation you might not have thought of your children and family due to the severe pain. At that time your horse galloped towards your camp, weeping and neighing.

When your ladies saw your riderless horse and the saddle which had slipped downwards, they became restless and came out of the tents. Their hair awry, they slapped their own faces and wailed and lamented. They were calling their elders and ancestors in a dejected condition after having been so much respected. They all headed towards the place of your slaughter. What a pity!

That at that time the accursed Shimr was astride your chest and was moving his sword upon your neck as he held your hair with his hand. And was slaughtering you in this way

will his sword. You had become motionless and your breathing was about to stop. Till the time you were beheaded and your head was raised up on the sword. And your women were arrested like slaves and tied up with heavy iron chains and made to sit on the camels.

Their faces were seared in the heat of the sun during the day. They were taken around in the desert and wilderness like homeless people. Their hands were tied to their necks. In this condition they were made to march in the markets.”^v

THE AFTERMATH OF KARBALA

Although the battle of Karbala on the surface was lost, and the enemies of Islam plundered and looted and humiliated the family of the Prophet (saw), the real victory came after the battle. Sayyedah Zaynab (as) and Imam Sajjād (as) opened the eyes of the Muslim

community to the deception of Yazīd, Ibn Ziyād and others. At every opportunity, even in front of the tyrant rulers the bravery of the daughter of Imam ‘Ali (as) shone through as she courageously spoke to the rulers^{vi}. The Holy family was taken first to Kūfah where they ended up humiliating Ibn Ziyād then to Damascus (Shām) and were



imprisoned for up to a year. Were it not for the bravery and courage of Zaynab (as), the blood of Imam Ḥusayn (as) would have been in vain because no one would have known about it and we would have any form of Islam surviving today.

We are the Zaynab (as) of our time; we have to speak for Imam Ḥusayn (as) and tell people about the true Islam and portray Islam in our behaviour and actions. Yet we have to be brave and have the courage to speak against the oppressors of our time- we cannot as followers of Imam Ḥusayn (as) afford to keep silent!

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT KARBALA

Every year, the Shi‘ah commemorates the message of Imam Ḥusayn (as) in centres all over the world. This revival of the faithful is the seed of revolution we must all ingrain in our hearts. We must try to attend these programs and participate in mourning for Imam Ḥusayn (as) as this is one way in which the message of the Imam (as) remains alive.

Imam Reḍa (as) has said:

“He who sits in a gathering in which our affairs are discussed and revived, his heart shall not die on the day (Day of Judgment) when hearts shall die (of fear).”^{vii}

Often though, different speakers come and occasionally, to make people cry more, exaggerate the story of Imam Ḥusayn's (as) martyrdom.

This form of lying is not permitted in Islam and unfortunately some major misconceptions have entered into our communities such as:

- The age of 'Ali al-Akbar (his real was age around 33 whereas many unjustifiably claim he was much younger)
- The supposed weeding of al-Qāsim ibn Ḥasan: some claim that Qāsim married his cousin in Karbala. However, Qāsim was very young and had not reached the age of puberty yet, and thus the story of his marriage is a myth.
- A more common myth is the exaggeration about the number of people killed by the army of Imam Ḥusayn (as).

We have to also be careful what books we read to learn about the tragedy of Karbala as not all books contain authentic information. A highly recommended books in English is:^{viii}

- Nafasul Mahmum by Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi ^{ix}

Homework

Write a 1000 word essay on "What would Imam Ḥusayn's (as) criteria be for accepting someone into his army"

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM (AS)

"Emulate and compete each other in achieving the human values, and rush and hasten to get the spiritual treasures."

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 121)

Review Questions

Q1. Imam Ḥusayn (as) army consisted of:

- a. A small number of brave and intelligent people
- b. Many cowards and deserters
- c. A mixture of brave and coward people

Q2. Imam Ḥusayn's (as) revolution:

- a. Made the hearts and minds of the people wake up
- b. Was continued to its final aim by Sayyedah Zaynab (as) after Karbala
- c. Both of the above

Q3. To be a companion of our living Imam is to be:

- a. Truthful, brave and courageous like the companions of Imam Husayn(AS)
- b. To be brave and truthful only in the presence of our Imam (as)
- c. To be truthful only when fighting the enemies of Islam

ⁱ A Probe into the History of Ashura <http://www.al-islam.org/ashura/>

ⁱⁱ The Everlasting instruction of Imam Ḥusayn's journey to Mecca <http://www.al-islam.org/gallery/sounds/hajj2004/An%20Everlasting%20Instruction%20-%20internet%20version.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kitab-al Irshad by Shaykh Al-Mufid- <http://www.shia.org/journey.html>

^{iv} *The History of al-Tabari; The Caliphate of Yazid. b. Mu'awiyah*. Volume XIX.

^v Ziarat Naahiya (Duas.org)

^{vi} Speeches of Sayyida Zaynab (AS) can be found at <http://www.al-islam.org/ashura/>

^{vii} http://www.al-islam.org/azadari_40hadith/

^{viii} NOTE TO TEACHERS- Please bring a copy of these books to class and discuss them with your students if possible.

^{ix} <http://www.al-islam.org/nafasul-mahmum/>

السلام عليك يا زين العابدين و سيد الساجدين

IMAM AL-SAJJAD [AS]

امام السجاد (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Imam al-Sajjād (as)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the historical environment in which the Imam lived after Karbala
- Know how the Imam led the Shi'ah through that time with a focus on spirituality
- Know how the Imam used grief for events in Karbala as a motivation for the Shi'ah and that his grief was not out of despair or in futility
- Know the importance of building a strong relationship with Allah by discussing excerpts from the du'ā's taught to us by the Imam
- Understand the importance of becoming familiar with the du'ā's of the Ahlul Bayt

After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (as) the survival of Islam depended on Imam Zainul'Abidīn (as). He had a very hard job of letting the world know the mission of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and exposing the evil intentions of Yazīd and the BaniUmayyah. He had to keep the message of Islam alive and save it from being confused by the evil BaniUmayyah.

THE AFTERMATH OF KARBALA

No Imam began his Imamate in a more tragic atmosphere. The first day of his Imamate saw him seriously ill and a captive of the army of Yazīd in Karbala. His father and predecessor had sacrificed all he had on the altar of truth; and Imam Zainul 'Abidīn found himself with a group of helpless widows and orphans being led from place to place. Finally they were thrown into a prison, where the Imam spent the first year of his Imamate, cut off from his followers.

Understandably, the tragedy of Karbala had created a chaos in the Shi'ah world. The Shi'ah were in a time of darkness and the community was in confusion.

Altogether, Imam Zainul 'Abidīn had three difficult tasks before him:

- To announce his Imamate publicly without seeming to oppose outsiders
- To unite the community together, doing it in such a way as not to give Yazīd an excuse to strike back.
- To expand true faith, providing a beacon of light to guide the seekers of truth to the safety of true faith and virtuous deeds - doing it without attracting the attention of his enemies

Imam Zainul 'Abidin under divine guidance did achieve all these aims in such a beautiful way that even his followers, who tremendously benefited, and are benefiting, from his superb leadership did not consciously realise how they were being guided.

THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE IMAM

Sorrow and grief succeeds in binding the people together, while intellectual arguments and joyous functions fail to achieve that object. Have we not seen how at the time of a national tragedy all political differences are genuinely forgotten and how the whole nation unites together to share the sorrow and shoulder the resulting responsibilities? Imam Zainul 'Abidin under divine command selected this method to unite the community.

It is said that he continued to weep till his eyes were endangered. And whenever he took water to drink, he wept till the tears filled the pot. Someone talked to him about it and he replied:

"Why should not I cry, when my father was denied the water which was free to the beasts and animals?

"And never was food brought to him but that he wept, so much so that a servant told him: "May I be your ransom, O Son of the Messenger of Allah! I am afraid that you would die (of this weeping)". The Imam said: 'I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah and I do not know. Never do I remember the massacre of the children of Fāṭimah but that tears strangle me.'

Naturally, this example set by their Imam was followed by the Shi'ah everywhere; and they joined hands to establish mourning of Imam Ḥusayn (as) whenever possible. This created a feeling of oneness and unity in all persons attending those mourning-sessions and motivated them to rise against tyrants and attempt to establish truth and help it overcome falsehood.

This institution of mourning became the focal-point of all religious activities of the Shi'ah community. In later periods, the enemies of the faith realised the vital role which the "mourning" plays in religious education and character-building of the Shi'ah, and they tried to stop it. Now they have changed their tactics. Now they ask: Why should one mourn for an event which occurred more than 1300 years ago? They ask it while they are fully aware that these mourning sessions (Majālis) are the best-organised, well-attended religious schools, where the participants

willingly learn the basic tenets of faith, are exhorted to emulate the way of life of Ahlul Bayt; and thus their Islamic outlook on the life and the world is fortified.



This seat of learning was given to the Shi'ah community by Imam Zainul 'Abidin so unobtrusively that even the community did not realise its importance and significance in the beginning.

HIS SUPPLICATIONS

Imam Zainul 'Abidin was as patient as anyone could be and expressed himself through beautiful supplications that represent a moving spiritual, social and moral Islamic course. If we read his supplication we find within them a general Islamic course that covers all basic Islamic principles and concepts.

Some examples of the Imam's relationship with Allah (SWT) can be seen from the following excerpts of his supplications:

“My God, who can have tasted the sweetness of Your love, then wanted another in place of You? Who can have become intimate with Your nearness, then sought removal from You?”

(MunājātulMuḥibbīn)

“My God, how agreeable for hearts are the thoughts inspiring Your remembrance, how sweet travelling to You through imagination upon the roads of the unseen worlds, how pleasant the taste of Your love, how delightful the drink of Your nearness!”

(Munājātul‘Arifīn)

The Imam (as) taught us that invocations and supplications are the most powerful solutions to difficulties and also for obtaining needs. He showed us this through all his supplications, which were later compiled into a book called *al-Saḥīfah al-Sajjādiyah*.

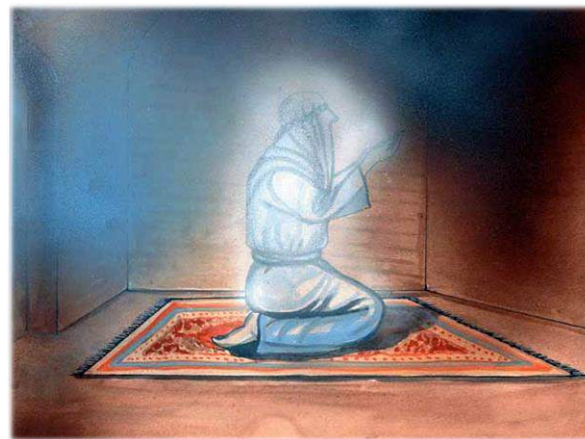
These du‘ās show us that the relationship between us and Allah (SWT) is one of slave and Master – He is the Master, The Rich and Needless – whereas we are the slaves, poor and always needy.

Whenever we are in difficulty or even when we are in times of comfort, these du‘ās remind us that our source of relief is from Allah (SWT) and so is the source of our blessings which we enjoy and we should therefore be thankful to Him.

We are also encouraged by Allah (SWT) to call upon Him – in the Qur‘an He says:

“Supplicate your Lord humbly and secretly; He loves not transgressors.” (7:55)

From *al-Saḥīfah al-Sajjādiyah*, we can see that the Imam (as) has taught us how to humble ourselves before Allah (SWT) to ask Him for our needs and for help in difficulties.



BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“Be careful about committing sin along with joy (avoid it), since the felicity of committing a sin is itself a bigger sin (than the actual sin).

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 159)

“Oh people, contemplate, meditate and practice for the (place, thing) that you have been created for, Allah did not at all create you in vain and uselessness.”

(TUHAFUL UQOOL, P 274)

Review Questions

Q1. The title of the fourth Imam – Al-Sajjād means:

- a. The one who worships
- b. The one who constantly prostrates
- c. The one who feeds the hungry

Q2. What is the name of the book in which the du‘ās of the Imam are compiled?

- a. Al Kamilah
- b. Nahjul Balaghah
- c. al-Saḥīfah al-Sajjādiyah

Q3. How did Imam Al-Sajjad (as) spread the message of Islam in his time?

- a. Through fighting with the government
- b. By keeping quiet
- c. By spreading the message through du‘ās

ⁱ REFERENCES

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- Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin – www.madressa.net
- The illustrious period of the Imamate of Imam Zayn al ‘Abidin, SeyyidSaeedAkhtarRizvi,

- Al-Serat Journal, Vol. 5 (1979), Nos. 3 & 4 - <http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/default.asp?url=illustrious.htm>
- SahifahSajjadiyah – www.duas.org



IMAM AL-BAQIR^[A.S]

إمام الباقر (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Get a brief overview of the historical context in which the Imam (as) lived
- Understand the types of knowledge encouraged by Islam
- Gain an insight into the importance of seeking Islamic knowledge

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Imam al-Bāqir (as)

Seeking of knowledge has always been highly emphasized in Islam. Allah (SWT) equipped His prophets with extraordinary levels of knowledge as a tool to enlighten their communities and to make clear to them the main purpose of life. In every other era, seeking of knowledge has been made obligatory on mankind because it is only through this path that the intellect of a man is strengthened and overall progress in society can be achieved.

When we use the word 'knowledge' however, are we referring to knowledge only gained from schools and universities i.e. 'secular' knowledge, or do we only mean religious knowledge from Islamic books and mosques, or could it be both?

By focusing on Imam Bāqir's (as) life in this lesson, such questions will be answered. We will also see the emphasis the Imam placed on seeking knowledge, the guidelines of what kind of knowledge one should go after and the best way to approach learning such that we benefit both in this world and the next.

We shall begin by providing a brief overview of the historical context of the Imam so that we may understand the main reason for the sudden emanation of knowledge during this period.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE IMAM (AS)

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE IMAM MUḤAMMAD AL-BĀQIR'S (AS) TIME?

- The people who took the position of leadership and government after the Prophet were harsh towards Ahlul Bayt and did not let them freely preach the true teachings of the Prophet.
- During this time, many narrations and teachings that the Prophet left behind were changed and manipulated.
- This restriction against Ahlul Bayt continued for about 90 years after the Prophet passed away.

AT THE TIME OF IMAM AL-BĀQIR (AS)

- The government was weaker because they were fighting amongst themselves for power, so they could not pay as much attention to the Ahlul Bayt and their teachings.
- However by that time, many people had wrong information about Islam.
- Also, other people were making up narrations (what the Prophet said) so they could sell them and make money.
- As you can tell this caused the spread of wrong information about Islam.

THE IMAM'S REVOLUTION OF KNOWLEDGE

- People wanted to know the truth about the teachings of Islam. The only person they could find who could answer all their questions was Imam Bāqir (as). That is because he was al-Bāqir i.e. the one who knew all knowledge including the hidden knowledge that other people do not have access to.
- However, Imam al-Bāqir, and after him his son Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) did not only use this opportunity to teach about specific Islamic studies. They set up a university of sorts in which they taught all different types of sciences and had students specialising in various fields of science and research. They emphasised to people that it is not only knowledge of religion which is important, but also knowledge of the contemporary sciences.

JĀBIR- A RESULT OF THE IMAM'S REVOLUTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Jābir ibn Ḥayyan was one of the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), who continued the school established by Imam al-Bāqir (as). Jābir was an amazing scientist whose contributions in many scientific fields, particularly chemistry, are widely acknowledged today. He invented several types of laboratory equipment, as well as many chemicals widely used today. He emphasised the scientific experimental method in his work in chemistry: "The first essential in chemistry", he declared, "is that you should perform practical work and conduct experiments, for he who performs neither practical work nor makes experiments will never attain any degree of mastery."

According to one modern western author, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) would ask Jābir for certain useful inventions and Jābir would set about inventing these things. Apparently, Jābir invented a kind of paper that resisted fire, and an ink that could be read at night.



Jaber's Inventions which we use in Chemistry Labs today:

- Almebic
- Retort
- Hydrochloric Acid
- Nitric Acid
- Sulfuric Acid



USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

If we come back to the question of what kind of knowledge the Imams were referring to, we would realise that they placed emphasis on ANY knowledge that could be used to:

1) REMIND OURSELVES OF ALLAH (SWT)

For instance, if a student in his or her science class learns about the vastness of the solar system, the different types of stars, the perfect positioning of the planets and so on, and if such knowledge triggers his mind and heart to think of Allah (SWT) as the intelligent designer of this marvellous creation, then such knowledge is the true knowledge.

On the other hand, you may have a student who simply learns facts from the same science class just for the sake of passing his exams. No one would benefit from such knowledge.

2) BENEFIT OTHERS

A doctor who has studied ten years of medicine simply to earn respect from his peers, earn enough money and live a comfortable life is considered very low in the eyes of Allah (SWT). Consider another doctor who gives special attention to the ill who cannot afford the usually expensive treatment. Wouldn't such a person be held very dear in the eyes of Allah (SWT)?

In this regard Imam al-Bāqir (as) says:

“The knowledgeable man who is beneficial to others as a result of his knowledge is better than seventy thousand worshippers”ⁱ

3) IMPROVE ONESELF BY PUTTING IT TO PRACTICE

Such knowledge would mainly include the seeking of Islamic knowledge. If after learning how to respect parents a student still continues to disobey them, then his or her knowledge according to our Imams is useless because it has not been put to practice. Similarly, studying the stories of our past prophets and knowing all the details is not enough since we need to derive lessons and apply them in our lives. Only then will our knowledge be useful.

To summarise the above points, any knowledge be it in our science class, jurisprudence, ethics or history that help us to remember Allah (SWT), to benefit others and knowledge that we put into practice is indeed the knowledge that Islam is stressing on.

ENCOURAGEMENT TOWARDS SEEKING ALL TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

Our studies in public and Islamic schools can get overwhelming and seem like a burden at times. It always helps to remind ourselves of the benefits of learning different sciences. Imam 'Ali (as) says:

“Every container becomes cramped by what is placed therein except the container that holds knowledge, for verily it expands because of it”ⁱⁱ

Homework

Commit yourself to do some research about careers over the next week. Pick the three that interest you most. List them and for each write a few sentences about how you can use this career to help Islam and Muslims.ⁱⁱⁱ

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“Nobody remains safe from sin unless he guards his tongue.”

(TUAHFUL UQOOL, P 298)

“Indeed, Allah hates and despises those who curse, rebuke and are sarcastic in relation to the believers”.

(TUHAFUL UQOOL, P 300)

“Whosoever's tongue utters the truth, his practice becomes purified. And the one whose intention is decent and good, his sustenance increases. And whoever adopts a decent and nice attitude and behaviour with his family, his life is prolonged.”

(TUHAFUL UQOOL, P 295)

Review Questions

Q1. Which types of knowledge are useful?

- Those that can help us become wealthy later
- Those that will allow us to benefit others
- Those that are popular sciences today

Q2. Imam al-Bāqir (as) taught his students:

- Islamic theology and jurisprudence only
- Chemistry and astronomy only
- Both 'Islamic' and 'secular' sciences

ⁱ (Mizanul Hikam, no. 4471)

ⁱⁱ (Mizanul Hikam no. 4455).

ⁱⁱⁱ Bibliography

Mizanul Hikam (section 288)

Mishkatul Anwar (no. 685)

The life of Imam Mohammed al BĀqir by BĀqir Sharif al- Qarashi.



IMAM AL-SADIQ^[A.S]

امام الصادق (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)

Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as) was born in Medina in the year 83 A.H. (702 A.D.) and died in Shawwal in the year 148 A.H. (765 A. D.) at the age of sixty-five. He is buried in the cemetery of al-Baqī' alongside his father, his grandfather and Imam Ḥasan (as). His mother was Um Farwah. His Imamate lasted for thirty-four years.

The Imam (as) has the same birth date as our Holy Prophet (saw), the 17th of Rabi'ul Awwal. He was brought up in the care of his grandfather, Imam Zainul Abidin (as) for twelve years and then remained under the guidance of his father, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as) for another 19 years.

THE CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ (AS)

Consequent upon the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (as) the government of the Bani Umayyah was shaken. The people into their enemy and become pessimistic about them. There arose a number of uprisings, one after another, aimed at overcoming the Umayyads and removing them from power. Some of these uprisings were done with true intentions, and the leaders of these uprisings wanted to hand power over to the Imams (as). However, there were other uprisings, which did not have good intentions.

These latter uprisings were led by members of the 'Abbasid family. These people claimed to be taking revenge for the atrocities of Karbala. However, in reality, they simply wanted power.

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know basic biographical facts about the Imam (as)
- Understand the historical circumstances during the life of the Imam
- Know about the humility of the Imam (as)
- Know the meaning, benefits and role of humility in our lives

The time in which Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) lived was a transition time between the Umayyad dynasty and the 'Abbasid dynasty.

The gap in between these two powers opened the way for the propagation of Shi'ah ideology and school of thought. This is where Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) took maximum advantage of the opportunity and managed to start, through a learning movement, to propagate the teachings of Shi'ah Islam in such a way to extend and make it reach all the people in the world. He established a university-like institution aimed at both Islamic and scientific education.

Many students from foreign countries came to learn from the Imam (as). His classes and sessions of instruction produced 4,000 scholars of Ḥadith and other sciences. Amongst his famous students were Hisham ibn al-Ḥakam and Jābir ibn Ḥayyan, The Imam (as) was responsible for organising the Fiqh (jurisprudential laws) of the Shi'a faith, which is why we are sometimes known as the Ja'fari Shi'a.

The Abbasids took advantage of the popularity of the Ahlul Bayt and had made their slogan to stand and protect the rights of Ahlul Bayt. They gathered the public around them on this pretext. But when they came to power and destroyed the Umayyads, they turned against the Ahlul Bayt.

In spite of all these atrocities against the Ahlul Bayt Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) went on propagating the teachings of Ahlul Bayt. As a result, even those who did not acknowledge him as an infallible Imam, nor knew his prestige or lineage, bowed before his knowledge and prided in being counted among his students.



Manṣūr, the 'Abbasid Caliph wanted to remove the esteem in which the Imam was held by the people. He tried to bring scholars to compete with him but all of them proved incapable of arguing and succeeding even with the Imam's students, let alone the Imam himself. These so called scholars all admitted that their counterparts had acquired the religious learning from the descendants of the Prophet. The arrogant Caliph ignored them and continued to undermine the popularity and respect of the Imam by other means. Failing this he decided to harass, arrest or to murder him. In every town

and city hired agents were posted to monitor the activities of the followers of the Imam. It was at this time that these followers were given the name of al Rafiḍah (meaning those who reject). It was also Manṣūr who coined the word Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama'ah in order to increase enmity against the followers of the Ahlul Bayt. Anyone who was found supporting the Imam would be arrested, imprisoned or killed.

THE WISDOM OF THE IMAM (AS)

At this time, with a great number of followers, many companions and friends of the Imam asked him to begin a revolution against the government. However, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) knew that he didn't have enough genuine followers to start a revolution, and doing so would just injure Islam.



As an example, once a man from Iran by the name of Sahl ibn Ḥasan came to the Imam (as) and asked him why he did not fight for his right when there were so many Shi'ah in Iran ready to fight with him. In reply Imam (as) took Sahl told Sahl to walk in to a burning furnace. Sahl began to tremble and said that he had a family to return to, and begged to be excused from this test.

Meanwhile, Hārūn al-Makki, a close companion of Imam (as), arrived, having just returned from Ḥajj. The Imam (as) asked him to jump in the fire and he did so at once. After a while, the Imam (as) asked Sahl to look in the furnace and Sahl saw that Hārūn sat there, quite unharmed. The Imam (as) asked Sahl how many such followers were there in Iran, to which the man replied, "None, master." Having made his point, the Imam (as) asked Hārūn to come out of the furnace.

The other sensitive issue which came up at the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was his advice to his followers regarding revolutions started by others. Throughout the

his Imam, there were many revolutions, all of which pronounced noble goals like avenging the atrocity of Karbala, or overpowering the tyrants of the time. The Imam's followers, keen to join these revolutions, would come to him and ask for advice. He would advise them not to join these revolutions, because he knew the intention of these revolutions was not pure and well thought out. History proved the Imam was correct in this.

THE COMPANIONS OF THE IMAM (AS)

ABU BAṢĪR:

Layth al-Mūrādī al-Kūfī was a reliable companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), and he was given the title of Abu Baṣīr. He was a blind man. This man saw miraculous acts from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as). For example, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) rubbed his hand on the eye of Abu Baṣīr and made him see.



Generally speaking, Abu Baṣīr was among the great traditionalists and jurisprudents. He was also among the closest companions of Imam al-Bāqir, peace be on him. The Shi'ah scholars have agreed on the correctness of the traditions which have been reported on his authority, and acknowledged his ability in jurisprudence.

MUḤAMMAD IBN MUSLIM

Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Thaqafī reported traditions on the authority of the truthful Imams, peace be on them. He lived during the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as). He was among the matchless figures of whom the time does not bring but by chance. He was a model of righteousness. He obeyed the orders of his Imams and followed their behaviour. He was trustworthy. Even those who disagree with his beliefs know his outstanding merits and righteous.

He was regarded as the jurist of his time when there were many jurists and a lot of research in jurisprudence. His fellow companions at the time said about him: "No one of the Shi'ah was more knowledgeable than Muḥammad ibn Muslim. He narrated thousands of narrations from the fifth and sixth Imams, and is considered among the most trustworthy of the companions of both those Imams.

THE HUMILITY OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ (AS)

The people of humility have recognizable signs. When one of them was asked about humility, he said, 'It means you are humble to the truth and follow it, even if you hear it from a child.' Many types of pride keep one from using, accepting and following knowledge.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was a highly respected person in the community and had a very high status with Allah (SWT) – but this status never made him proud. He never once even thought that he was better than someone else on account of his knowledge and status. Instead, the Imam (as) was a very humble, friendly and helpful person especially to the poor and needy.

The Imam (as) often at nights used to carry on his shoulder bags full bread, meat, and money. He went to the needy people of Medina and divided those things among them, while they did not know him. Only after his death, did they come to know that Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was the very one who was giving them such gifts and help.

The feeling of pride spoils our actions, we should avoid firstly the feeling of pride and then also avoid expressing this feeling by praising ourselves. We often lose respect for people who praise themselves and our heart automatically does not like to hear this. Similarly, we should avoid praising ourselves because people will also find it unattractive.

The Prophet (saw) tells Imam 'Ali (as) as part of his final will:

"Vanity (or self-pride) is the greatest loneliness"

Instead of praising ourselves, we should praise others. We should always think the best of other people, and be harsh with ourselves. When we do a good deed, we should never feel proud and when others do the wrong thing, we should always assume that they may repent and be better than us. Let us consider the following narration about Prophet David (as), and learn that we should not be pride of our good actions and should not judge others because of their mistakes:

Allah, the Exalted, revealed to Prophet David: "O David, give glad tidings to the sinners, and warn the pious people".

Prophet Dawud was surprised by this...

Allah, the Exalted, explained: “O David, give glad tidings to the sinners that I accept repentance and forgive sins, and warn the pious to not be proud of their actions. For no slave can stand for judgment unless he is perished”.

We learn from this narration that we should not be proud of our actions because they are insignificant in comparison to God’s blessings upon us, and so there is nothing to be proud of. If it were not for God’s Mercy, we would all perish on the Day of Account.

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“Be kind and affectionate to your parents and your children will treat you kindly and nicely and exhibit modesty to the women of other (people), they will treat your women with modesty and chastity.

(BIHAR UL ANWAR, VOL 27, P 242)

“Toiling and labouring hard for one’s family is like becoming the warrior of a holy war in the cause of Allah.”

(WASAILUL SHI’AH VOL 12, P 23)

Review Questions

ⁱ REFERENCES

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- The Infallible, Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as Sadiq (as), taken from Kitab al Irshad, Sh. Mufid - <http://www.al-islam.org/masoom/bios/6thimam.html>

Q1. Which two governments were fighting each other at the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)?

- Maliki and Hanbali
- Umayyad and Abbasid
- Abbasid and Sunni
- Umayyad and Kharijite

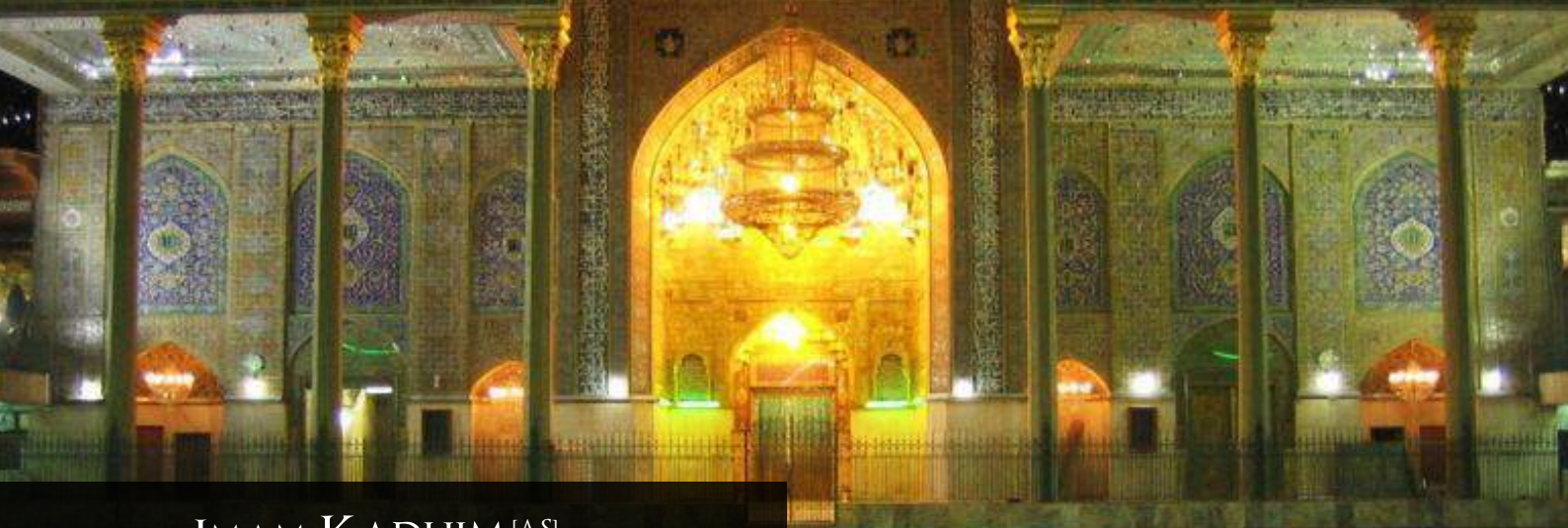
Q2. Which of the following was NOT a close and trusted companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)?

- Muḥammad ibn Muslim
- Abu Ḥanifa
- Abu Baṣīr

Q3. The Imam advised his companions not to join the revolutions of their time because:

- We should not rise against tyrants no matter how evil the yare
- The revolutions of their time did not have pure intentions and led to more problems for the Muslim community
- We should only start an uprising if Imam al-Mahdi is present

- Imam Ja’far Sadiq (as) – www.madressa.net
- The Sixth Imam, Ja’far Ibn Muhammad El-Sadiq (as) - <http://www.al-islam.org/kaaba14/9.htm>



IMAM KADHIM ^[A.S]

امام الكاظم (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn basic biographical facts of the Imam (as)
- Understand the historical circumstances during the life of Imam
- Understand the benefits of controlling one's anger and strategies to control one's anger

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4



THE POLITICAL CONDITION

When the sixth Imam was martyred, the seventh Imam, Mūsa al-Kāḍim (as) took this role by the instruction of God and His prophet. He spent his life under four tyrant rulers, the last and most famous of which was a man by the name of Harūn. All these rulers were from the Abbasid family.

Previous Caliphs like Maṣṣūr persecuted the Imam and imprisoned, and some even tried to kill him.

Then the most cruel and tyrannical Hārūn appeared as the head of the Abbasid Empire. It was during his reign that the Holy Imam passed the greater part of his life in a miserable prison till he was martyred.

Among the reasons that motivated Harūn to arrest the Imam and to throw him in a dark, underground prison is that the Imam indicated to him that he was amongst the grandsons of the Prophet and his inheritors, and because he was more appropriate for the Caliphate than him.

Imam Musa's attitude towards Harūn was strict and uncompromising when it came to the truth and justice. The Imam prevented his followers from co-operating with

Imam al-Kāḍim (as)

Name:	Mūsā
Title:	Al-Kāḍim
Born:	At 'Abwa (between Mecca and Medina) on Sunday the 7th Safar 128 A.H
Fathers name:	Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as)
Mother's name:	Ḥamidah Khātūn
Martyred:	Aged 55 years in Baghdad on Friday, 25th Rajab 183 A.H. Buried in Kaḍimayn, Baghdad.
Poisoned by:	Hārūn-al-Rashīd. The ruling Abbasid Caliph of the time.

the ruling authority. An example of this is that he prevented his companion Ṣafwān al-Jammāl to hire his camels to Harūn, while the people used to hire them to go to Mecca to perform the Haj pilgrimage. So Ṣafwān was forced to sell his camels. Harūn came to know that. He harboured malice against Ṣafwān and intended to kill him.

THE IMAM IN PRISON

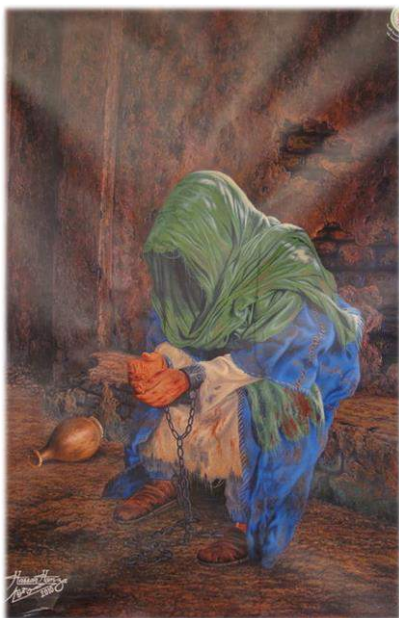
The Imam (as) spent one year in Baṣra in this prison. Harūn then wrote a letter to the prison commander, ‘Īsa to kill the Imam (as). Having received this letter, ‘Īsa summoned some of his close friends and reliable ones, read the letter to them and sought their advice. They advised to ask Harūn to exempt him from this order, and this is what ‘Īsa did. He wrote a letter to Harūn mentioning that the Imam has been in his prison for a long time and the spies have been watching his every movement and that the Imam was always busy praying. He said that Harūn should send someone to collect the Imam or he would free him.

It is said that one of the spies reported about the prayer, which he had heard from Imam (as) during his imprisonment:

“Oh God! You know that I have always wished that you put me in a place where I can be free to worship You, and You have granted me this...”

The Imam (as) was then taken to Baghdad. Here, he spent time in two prisons and both times the commanders of the prisons developed great admiration for him and refused to kill the Imam. Finally, he was moved to a third prison in Baghdad, ruled by a cruel Jewish jailor by the name of Sindi.

On the 25th of Rajab 183 A.H. Sindi poisoned the Imam (as) fatally. Even the corpse of the Imam was not spared. His body was taken out of the prison and left on the bridge of Baghdad. An announcement was made:



“This is the Imam of the Rāfiḍah (those who reject).”

The followers of the Imam were devastated by this. They recovered the body and managed to bury it in Baghdad, in a place now honoured with the name of the Imam.

THE IMAM’S COMPANIONS

IBN ABI ‘UMAYR

He was one of the well-known and renowned learned men of his time. He narrated a huge number of narrations. In fact, he had written most of these narrations in books. When he was arrested by the tyrants of the time, his books stayed in his attic. When he was finally released from prison years later, he found that water had destroyed all his books. He continued to narrate the narrations he had memorised. He is one of the most trustworthy narrators we have in our history.

Some people had informed the government that Ibn Abi ‘Umayr recognized the Shias of Iraq. He was arrested and they asked him to tell them the names of those whom he knew. He did not submit to their will, he was turned, tortured and tied up to the palm date tree. They sentenced him to a hundred lashes of the whip, but he would not give up any names.

Sheikh al-Mufīd says this grand friend of the Imam (as) was imprisoned for as long as seventeen years. All his property was destroyed. Even after all these torments and tortures he remained on the true path and did not let any of the Imam’s followers come to harm because of him.

‘ALI IBN YAQṬĪN

He was one of the companions of the sixth and seventh Imams (as). He established close contacts with the Abbasids and occupied important posts in their government and used to help the Shi’ah through his position.

Harūn even appointed him as his minister. ‘Ali had doubts about whether he should take a position in the government or not. He would always ask the Imam whether this was a good thing or not. The Imam (as) answered him in the following way:

“Don’t resign, for we are more comfortable with you, and your brothers will gain some dignity through you. I hope that Allah will heal some wounds through you, or

will stop the fire of the enemies through you. O 'Ali, whoever makes a believer happy, has begun with God, and then pleased the Prophet, and then pleased us."

However, there was condition to 'Ali having this position. The condition was that he would use it to help needy people. When 'Ali stopped doing this, the Imam (as) turned away from him and ignored him. 'Ali was hurt by this, and eventually repented and regained the respect of the Imam (as).

A TERRIBLE MASSACRE

Hārūn's tyrannical soul had neither mercy nor compassion toward the family of the Ahlul Bayt. He committed terrible crimes against the family of the Ahlul Bayt. He ordered a large group from the extended family of the Ahlul Bayt to be executed and assassinated, while they were the best of the Muslims in knowledge and piety. Some of these figures were as follows:

- **'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan:** Hārūn received information that 'Abdullāh (the grandson of the second Imam) was gathering people to revolt against him. Despite denying the accusations, 'Abdullāh was imprisoned for a long time. After a long time in prison, he sent a letter to Hārūn cursing him, and soon after Hārūn had him beheaded.
- **Yahyā ibn 'Abdullāh:** He was one another pious and brave man from the progeny of Imam Ḥasan (as). He led an uprising against Hārūn which eventually failed. He was captured, imprisoned in very harsh conditions, and shortly after being released, was killed under Hārūn's orders.

IMAM AL-KĀDİM (AS)

Imam Mūsā (as) was given this title because he had complete control over his anger. One of his contemporaries states:

"The patience and forbearance of Imam Mūsā was such that he was given the title of 'al-Kāḍim'. He was the embodiment of virtue and generosity. He devoted his nights to the prayers of God and his days to fasting. He always forgave those who did wrong to him."

There are many stories of the Imam containing his anger and showing patience and forbearance which we have discussed in previous years.

ANGER

Anger is a mental condition that provokes the excitement of man in words and deeds. Because of the dangers and sins such as mocking, backbiting, beating, killing, and the like evils that are resulted from anger, it has been considered as the door to every evil.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) narrated on the authority of his father that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (saw) and said: "I live in the desert; hence, I want you to instruct me." The Prophet said: "I instruct you not to be angry." As the Bedouin repeated the same request three times, the Prophet (saw) repeated the answer three times:

"do not become angry!"

The Bedouin commented: "I will not ask you for anything further. Certainly, the Messenger of God has instructed me the best."

BENEFITS OF CONTROLLING ANGER

- Judgment:** Controlling anger will help analyse situations better with a positive mind. As anger makes a person incapable of being able to handle a situation well or make a better judgment and makes one prone to mistakes in making sound decisions.
- Better Communication:** Anger is often caused by misunderstandings, which are in turn caused by faulty communication between two people. Controlling anger will allow us to communicate in a more constructive and non-stressful way and will turn a person into someone who is more approachable and easy to talk to.
- Empathy:** Many a times, anger builds up because the person involved refuses to see the situation from the other person's point of view. When you begin to develop empathy for the other person and try to see life from their perspective, there will be no room for conflict at all.
- Healthy Relationships:** Since the people we love are closest to us, they are often the first victims when we lose control. Controlling anger will make the person concerned more capable of leading a life that is relatively free of ugly scenes or outbursts of anger.

STRATEGIES TO CONTROL ANGER

CHANGING YOUR STATE

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

“If any of you becomes angry and he is standing, let him sit down, so his anger will go away; if it does not go away, let him lie down.”

KEEPING SILENT

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

“If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent.”

This is because in most cases, the angry person loses self-control and could utter words which they will later regret.

REMEMBERING GOD

Allah (SWT) revealed to one of His prophets:

“Son of Adam! Remember Me in your states of anger so that I will remember you in My Wrath and will not crush you with those whom I will crush. Consider Me as your supporter, for My support to you is better than your own support.”

SUPPLICATION AND ABLUTION

Supplication always the weapon of the believer, whereby he asks Allah to protect him from evil, trouble and bad behaviour and seeks refuge with Him from falling into the pit of wrongdoing because of anger. Practicing the ablution or washing the face with cold water, and touching the hand of the relative who is the object of anger also helps in the treatment of anger.ⁱ

QUR'ĀNIC VERSES & NARRATIONS ON ANGER

Below are some references for Qur'anic ayat that talk about anger. Look these up and write them (in Arabic or English) in the space provided belowⁱⁱ.

Surah 41 Ayah 34-35

References:

SML lecture on Imam al-Kadhim (as) in Lives of the Ahlul Bayt course
<http://www.al-islam.org/masoom/bios/7thimam.html>
http://www.maaref-foundation.com/english/library/ethics/ethical_role_models/06.htm
http://www.maaref-foundation.com/english/library/pro_ahl/imam07_kadhim/the_life_of_imam_musa_bin_jafar/index.htm
<http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/benefits-of-anger-management-9677.html>

Surah 3 Ayah 134

NARRATIONS

Imam 'Ali advisee Qanbar when Qanbar was about to answer in anger to the man who had insulted him:

“Slow down, Qanbar! Leave him who reviled at you plunging in humility so that you will please the Beneficent Allah, annoy Satan, and punish your enemy. I swear by Him Who split the seed and made the soul, nothing like clemency (mercy) for the believers to achieve the satisfaction of the Lord, nothing like silence for them to annoy Satan...”

Imam al-Kāḍim (a) said: “Be steadfast against the enemies of the graces, for your best retaliation for those who acted disobediently to Allah against you is to act obediently to Allah with them.”

Review Questions

Q1. Why did Hārūn arrest the 7th Imam:

- The Imam was supporting truth and Justice
- The Imam proved to Hārūn that he was the rightful leader of the Muslims
- Both of the above

Q2. One of the strategies to control one's anger is;

- To say whatever you feel like and walk away
- To keep quiet
- To backbite about the person

Q3. List three strategies for controlling one's anger.

Q4. List three benefits of controlling one's anger.

<http://www.tebyan.net/newindex.aspx?pid=60997>

ⁱⁱ “Virtue and evil are not equal. If you replace evil habits by virtuous ones, you will certainly find that your enemies will become your intimate friends. Only those who exercise patience and who have been granted a great share of Allah's favour can find such an opportunity” (41:34-5)
“And who also harness their anger and forgive the people. Allah loves the righteous ones” (3:134)



IMAM REDĀ [A.S.]

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

امام الرضا (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the historical and political environment of the time of Imam al-Reḍā (as)
- Know some of the ideological threats that occurred among the Muslim during the time of Imam al-Reḍā and the Imam (as)'s role in defeating those threats
- The circumstances around the martyrdom of Imam al-Reḍā (as)

Imam al-Reḍā (as)

Imam 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Reḍā (as), is the eighth in the series of the Imams from the Household of the Prophet, whose character and personality reflect all the standards of virtue to make him an ideal role model.



His life was characterized by difficulties and oppression from the beginning till its painful end. At the start of his life, he witnessed the oppression which filled the life of his father Imam al-Kāḍim (as), and in the latter parts of his life he was forced to deal with al-Ma'mūn, another tyrant and cunning Caliph who had taken his position by usurping it from the Ahlul Bayt (as).

THE LIFE OF IMAM AL-REDĀ (AS)

Imam al-Reḍā (as) was brought up under the care of his father Imam al-Kāḍim (as) for 35 years. When his father was poisoned in prison in 183 A.H., the Imam (as) took over the great responsibility of Imamatus under very difficult circumstances. Hārūn, the Abbasid Caliph, made life very difficult for the followers of Imam (as).

In Medina, the Imam (as) carried out his duties in a peaceful manner in the face of a very difficult period for the Shi'ah and it was mostly due to his efforts that the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw) and the correct interpretation of the Holy Qur'an became widespread.

Hārūn died in 193 A.H., leaving behind two sons who fought one another viciously for power. Eventually, al-Ma'mūn was victorious and took the position of Caliphate.

Al-Ma'mūn saw that the Shi'ah Muslims were increasing in number despite torture and oppression. He was aware of the position and power that al-Reḍā (as) held over the people and this made him worry about the influence of al-Reḍā (as).

He decided that the only way he could silence the Shi'ah and protect his own position, was by changing his approach. First, he cunningly declared himself Shi'ah and ordered that the descendants of Imam 'Ali (as) should not be harmed. He then took a very surprising and cunning step. He offered Imam al-Reḍā (as) the position of being the heir of the king. This caused outrage among the Abbasids. The Imam, aware of the al-Ma'mūn's evil intentions, refused. However, his life was threatened, and so eventually he accepted, and people came to pay their allegiance to him as the heir to the king.

Al-Ma'mūn had not given this position to Imam (as) due to any love for him. He had no intention of allowing the Imam (as) to become his successor but rather by taking such a political action, he intended only to retain a position of strength for the Abbasids. He also wanted to show the people that the descendants of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) were only after political and material wealth. However, the Imam made it clear to his true followers that he was not interested in position or power in itself, and that this issue was forced upon him.

When the Imam (as) took up his place in the court of al-Ma'mūn, he took the opportunity to spread the teachings of Islam further. He organised gatherings to remember the martyrs and sacrifice of Karbalā', and explained to the people the moral lessons to be learnt from that tragedy.

He also used the opportunity of being able to preach publicly to argue with people of other religions and beliefs, to dispel their doubts and to guide them to the right path.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF IMAM AL-REḌĀ (AS)

There were several occasions on which al-Ma'mūn intended to humiliate and degrade Imam al-Reḍā (as) by inviting him to debate with different kinds of people, from scholars in religion to scientists and also people from other faiths. However, on every occasion, Imam al-Reḍā (as) was not only successful in defeating his opponents, but in many cases also influenced them to convert their faith. This made al-Ma'mūn even more insecure in relation to Imam al-Reḍā (as).

THE IDEOLOGICAL THREAT DURING THE TIME OF IMAM AL-REḌĀ (AS)

During the time of Imam al-Reḍā (as), there was a great ideological threat to Islam and the Muslims. This threat came mainly from the deliberate fabrication of false ideas and theories on faith that were produced by the government and which were threatening the minds of the Muslims.

Imam al-Reḍā (as) was instrumental in protecting, developing and securing the correct faith and ideology of Islam as per the original teachings of Prophet Muḥammad (saw). He was an excellent debater and successfully defeated, through wisdom and logic, all his opponents. A few examples of the questions being debated were as follows.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S WILL AND PEOPLE'S WILL¹

In one debate, the Imam (as) tells us about the difference between the Will of God and the will of humans. Ṣafwan ibn Yaḥyā said:

"I asked Abul Ḥasan (Imam al-Reḍā as): 'Tell me about God's Will and the will of His creation.' He said:

"The will of a person is something he possesses, hence it is a possessive pronoun; as regarding God, His Will is His Action, nothing other than that, because He does not contemplate upon doing something, nor does He decide to do something, nor does he sets His mind to do something, and all these verbs have nothing to do with His Essence; they are among the faculties of humans, and they are among the characteristics of the creation. God's Will is His Action, nothing other than that. He says 'Be!' and it is without articulating something, or using a tongue, or setting his mind upon something or contemplating something, nor does He think about the means to do so, nor does He think about how."

COMPULSION AND EMPOWERMENT

The debate about how much 'will power' we have as humans has been raging among Muslims for a very long time.

Some Muslims claim we don't have real choice in our actions, and that we are forced to perform the actions we think we are 'choosing'.

Other Muslims believed that we have absolute free will, and that we can always choose to do whatever we want.

A man visited Imam al-Reḍā (as) and asked him: "O son of the Messenger of God! It has been reported to us that the truthful Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (as) said, 'There is neither compulsion nor empowerment but a path in between'. What does he exactly mean?" The Imam (as) answered:

"Whoever claims that God does our deeds and then penalizes us for doing them has in fact accepted the concept of compulsion, and whoever claims that God Almighty empowers His Proofs to distribute His sustenance has in fact adopts the belief of empowerment. One who believes in compulsion is a kāfir (disbeliever), and one who believes in empowerment is a mushrik (polytheist)."

So I asked him: "O son of the Messenger of God! Then what is the path between the two?" He answered:

"It is finding a way to do what they are enjoined to do and forsake what they are enjoined to forsake."

I asked him: "does God Almighty have a Way and a Will in this regard?" He (as) said:

"As regarding deeds done in obedience to His commandments, His Will in their regard is His approval of and assistance in their performance. As regarding His Will about sins, it is His order that they should be shunned, that He condemns them, and that He forsakes those who commit them."

THE MARTYRDOM OF IMAM AL-REḌĀ (AS)

As al-Ma'mūn felt more threatened by the presence and growing influence and popularity of Imam al-Reḍā (as), he decided upon the evil act of assassinating the Imam.

Abul Ṣalt, a close companion of the Imam (as) narrates:

"I entered the house of al-Reḍā (as) after al-Ma'mūn had already left and he said to me: "O Abul Ṣalt! They have

done it...!" and he kept unifying and praising God." The Imam (as) had been given poisoned grapes by al-Ma'mūn. This poisoning led to his death within a few hours.

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM (AS)ⁱⁱ

- "A man who takes pain and labours to provide for himself and his family is like someone who fights a holy war (Jihād)".

- "Keep yourself clean, since cleanliness is the manner of Prophets."

-When asked about the Qur'anic āyah: "Whoever relies on God, He suffices him." He said: "Reliance on God is in various degrees one of which is that you rely on Him in everything related to you, and when He does something to you which you know will not bring you anything good, you rely on His wisdom in doing it, so you nevertheless put your trust in Him willingly. Another is to believe in the Unseen regarding God of which you have no knowledge, so you relied on Him and on His custodians, trusting in Him in their regard, and in others."

-He was asked once who a lowly person is. He said, "Anyone who has something to distract him from God."

Homework Activity

Find examples of other debates that Imam al-Reḍā (as) had that helped protect the correct ideology of Islam.ⁱⁱⁱ

Review Questions

Q1. Who was the Abbasid Caliph who murdered Imam al-Reḍā (as)?

- Hārūn
- Amīn
- Al-Ma'mūn

Q2. The Imam accepted the position of the heir to the Caliph because:

- He was forced to
- He wanted to take power for himself
- He liked al-Ma'mūn

Q3. The Imam (as) taught that:

- God's Will is the same as people's will
- God's Will is His Action itself
- Neither a nor b

References:

ⁱ Imam al-Rida - Historical and Biographical Research - <http://www.al-islam.org/al-rida/>

ⁱⁱ An introduction to tenth infallible Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (AS) -

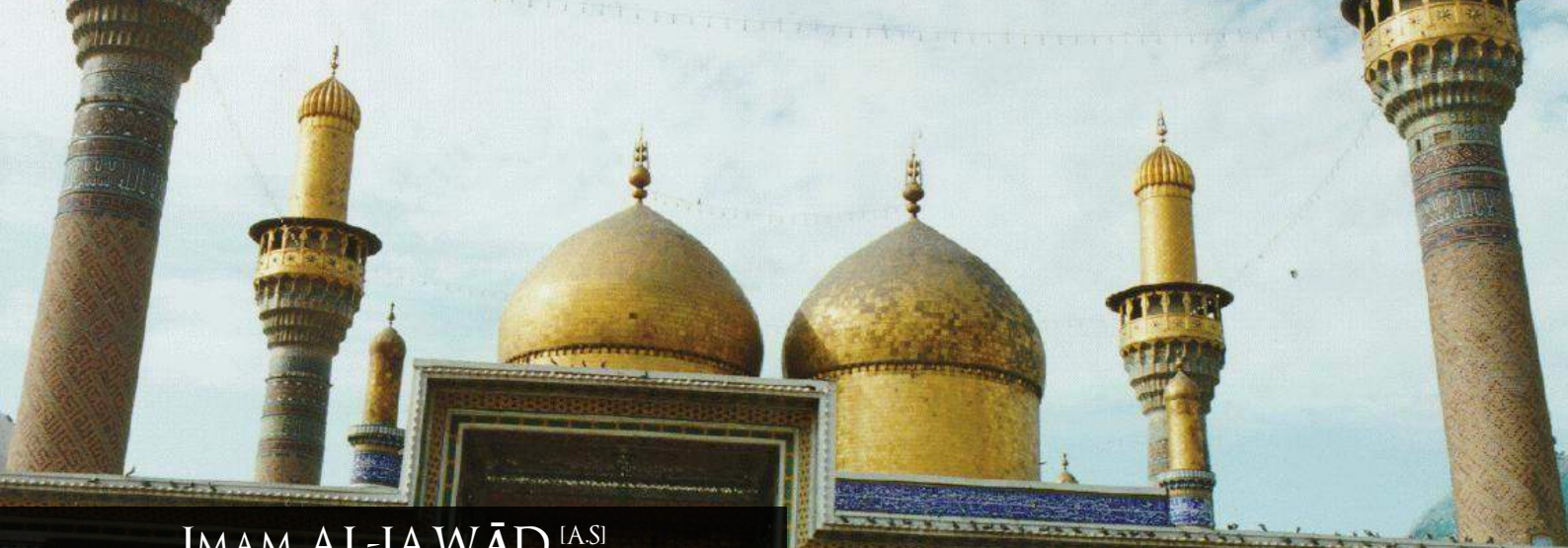
<http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/infallible10.asp>

Imam Redha (as) – www.madressa.net

The Life of Imam Redha (as) –

http://en.rafed.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3562%3Aabout-imam-reza-as&catid=166&Itemid=967&limitstart=8

The life of the Infallibles - <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/infallible10.asp>



IMAM AL-JAWĀD [A.S]

امام الجواد (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand some basic biographical facts about the Imam (as)
- Understand the aspects of the Imam's (as) generosity
- Review some of the Imam's (as) brief teachings

THE MANIFESTATION OF MAGNANIMITY

Muḥammad ibn 'Ali al-Jawād was brought to the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) after the martyrdom of his father (peace be upon him).

He was (still) a child. He went to the pulpit and ascended the first step of it. He then said: "I am Muḥammad, the son of 'Ali al-Reḍā, I am al-Jawād (the Magnanimous). I am the one who knows the lineage of people in their loins; I am the most knowledgeable of both your secrets and your apparent affairs, and where you will end up. This is knowledge that was granted to us by the Creator of all of creation...if it was not for the dominance of the people of falsehood, and the governance of the people of misguidance, and the attacks of the people of doubt, I would have said words that the first and last of the people would have been amazed at".

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

Muḥammad ibn 'Ali al-Jawād (as), the ninth Imam from among the progeny of the Prophet (peace be upon him), was the manifestation of God's Generosity and Magnanimity. After the poisoning of his father by the Abbasid tyrant al-Ma'mūn, Imam al-Jawād took his divinely appointed position as the leader of the believers at the young age of nine.

THE IMAM'S EARLY MATURITY

One day, when the young Imam was still younger than nine years old, the caliph al-Ma'mūn went out hunting. The Imam was standing silently by the road side where some children were playing. The caliph's entourage came that way. Seeing the soldiers of the caliph all the children ran away, but the young Imam remained standing at his place.

Noting this, al-Ma'mūn stopped his carriage and asked, "Young man, why did you not run away like the other children?"

The Imam (as) replied calmly:

"Neither I have committed a crime, nor am I blocking the way. Why should I run away or be afraid? And I also know that you will not cause any unnecessary trouble when your way is not blocked."

Al-Ma'mūn was surprised with this mature reply and asked, "What is your name?"

"Muḥammad," came the reply, "...the son of 'Ali Ibn Mūsā al-Reḍā (as)."

Impressed as he was, al-Ma'mūn rode on. During his hunt, the hawk returned to him with a fish in its beak. Al-Ma'mūn was surprised. He returned toward the city.

Once again, he found children playing on the same spot, who ran away seeing the caliph's soldiers, except the young Imam, who again remained where he was.

The Caliph tried to test the knowledge of the young Imam. He hid the fish in his palm, stopped his carriage near the Imam and said, "Tell me, what is there in my fist?" The Imam replied:

"God created clouds between earth and sky. The hawks of kings sometimes catch fish from there and bring it to the Kings. They hide it in their fist and ask a member of the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet (saw) what is in their fists"

On hearing this, al-Ma'mūn said: "Truly, you are the worthy son of al-Reḍā (as)".

THE YOUNG AGE OF THE IMAM

His young age was of the first and greatest miracles of al-Jawād (as). The Imam took the post of leadership at the very young age of nine. Doubt began to spread among the believers, as some found it hard to fathom that the proof of God on earth was a young boy who was yet to even reach puberty. The Imam (as) removed their doubts mainly by referring to the Qur'an and citing that God had appointed Jesus and John as prophets while they were still young boys.

A companion of the Imam (as) says that was he looking at the Imam (as) closely so that he could describe him to the believers in his home land of Egypt. While he was doing this, the Imam sat down and said:

"O Ali, God has appointed Imams as proofs, just as He appointed prophets as proofs, when he said: 'and We gave Him wisdom while he was a boy', 'and when he reached maturity' and 'when he reached forty years'.

Therefore it is possible for wisdom to be granted to one while he is still a boy, as it is possible for it to be granted when he is forty."

The learned scholars of the Islamic world could not compete with the Imam. In a contest with the most learned authority then, Yaḥyā ibn al-Aktham the Imam (as) demonstrated his perfect knowledge of the laws of God, with all its details. He showed that he truly was the representative of God on Earth, with full knowledge of the laws of God.

THE ASPECTS OF THE IMAM'S GENEROSITY

Throughout the period of his leadership, the Imam came to be known for his generous and kind nature. A group of companions, led by Aḥmad ibn Ḥadid, were attacked on their way to Ḥajj, and their belongings and money were stolen. They arrived in Medina in a desperate state, with no money or travel necessities, wondering how they would return home. Ahmad headed straight to the house of al-Jawād (as). The Imam immediately gifted Aḥmad the same amount of money that had been stolen from his whole group. In fact, the Imam's generosity extended even to animals. He would instruct his companions and their servants to leave the left-overs of a meal eaten outdoors- even if it was as much as the leg of a lamb- for the wild animals to feed on, and the left-overs of a meal eaten at home for the domesticated animals such as cats to feed on.

Despite the tyrannical and oppressive nature of the Abbasid regime, the Imam did what he could to help his companions in both simple and complex matters. A man from Sajistan accompanied the Imam (as) on a journey to Ḥajj. While on the journey the man said that the governor of his state claimed to be a follower and lover of the Ahlul Bayt. He asked the Imam: 'may I be sacrificed for you, if you see it fit, would you write to him to treat me well?' The Imam (as), wanting to disassociate himself from an unjust governor, said: 'I do not know him.' The companion persisted in his request though and so the Imam wrote to this governor:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. The one who is carrying my letter to you has said that you have a beautiful belief. Be aware, that only your good actions will remain with you, so be good to your brothers and know that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will ask you about even the weight of an atom and a seed..."

As this man was returning home with the letter, the governor became aware of it, so he went out of the city to meet the man, kissed the letter of the Imam, considered it an honour, and gave this man whatever he wanted.

The Imam was also generous and kind when it came to the emotions of his followers. He was attentive to their feelings and made them feel better in times of affliction and hardship. When a companion of his lost his young son, the Imam (as) wrote to him:

“I heard of the affliction of the death of your son ‘Ali, and I remembered that he was the most beloved of your sons to you. Thus does Allah, the Exalted, take from a believer’s children and property the best among them, so that he can increase the reward of the afflicted believer. May Allah increase your reward, and make good your grief, and strengthen your heart, for He is the Powerful. May Allah soon grant you another child...”

Besides his generosity in material and emotional aspects, the Imam was generous in the knowledge he passed on, especially when it came to knowledge of God. In one simple sentence, the Imam answered one of the great theological questions that Muslims are to this day still debating. When asked whether it was permissible to refer to God as a ‘thing’, he said:

“Yes, this frees him from both limitations, the limitation of suspension and the limitation of likeness”

THE IMAM’S MARTYDOM

However, the tyrannical regime of the Abbasids, exemplified in al-Mu’taṣim, plotted and planned until eventually the Imam (as) was, like his father before him, poisoned and martyred.

The Imam, in his magnanimity, left behind messages for his followers. These served as trees from which branches of hope and motivation would grow.

INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS FOLLOWERS

Amongst several things, the Imam prepared his people for the return of al-Qā’im (atfs), saying:

“(He is called al-Qā’im) because he rises again after the death of his remembrance, and the turning away of most of those who previously believed in his Imamāt. (He is called al-Muntaḍar) because his occultation will be long-lasting, and so the pure ones will await his reappearance, while the doubting people will deny it, and the stubborn will mock it. People will lie in specifying the time of his return, and those who are hasty in awaiting it will be destroyed. (Only) the ones who submit will be saved (during the occultation).”

He also instructed them on what to dedicate their lives to during this tumultuous and difficult period of waiting:

“He who takes up the affairs of the orphans of ‘Āle Muḥammad (the family of Muḥammad),- who are cut off from their Imam, who are bewildered in their ignorance, captives of the Satans and the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt- and saves (the orphans) from them (the Satans and enemies), and takes them out of their bewilderment, and overcomes the Satans by rebutting their whispering, and overcomes the enemies through proofs from their God and guidance from their Imams, so that the covenant of God is maintained over His slaves- the honour of such people is greater than the honour of the heavens over the Earth, and the Throne over the Chair, and the Veil over the Sky, their honour over the rest of the slaves is like the honour of the full moon over the faintest stars in the sky...”

We are the orphans of the family of Muḥammad, physically cut off from our Imam, and it is our role in life to dedicate ourselves to overcoming our Satans and enemies, and to save our fellow orphans, as we wait eagerly yet submissively, for our Imam to reappear, and fill the Earth with justice, just as it has been filled with injustice.

VISITATION OF THE IMAM

One of the best ways to build a spiritual bond with any of our Imams is to remember them regularly by reciting visitations (Ziyarāt) dedicated to them. One of the most authentic and widely narrated visitations is Ziyarāt Amīnullāh, which can be recited for the visitation of any of the holy Imams.

To help make us more familiar with this visitation, we will go over the first part of it in this lesson.

زيارة امين الله

لَسَّلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِينَ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَحُجَّتَهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ
 اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ جَاهَدْتَ فِي
 اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ وَعَمِلْتَ بِكِتَابِهِ وَاتَّبَعْتَ سُنَنَ نَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ حَتَّى دَعَاكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى جِوَارِهِ فَقَبَضَكَ إِلَيْهِ
 بِاخْتِيَارِهِ وَالزَّمَ أَعْدَاءَكَ الْحُجَّةَ مَعَ مَا لَكَ مِنَ الْحُجَجِ
 الْبَالِغَةِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ خَلْقِهِ

Peace be on You, O the trustee of Allah on His earth,
 and His Proof over His servants.

Peace be on you, O 'Amīrul Mu'minīn.

I bear witness that,
 you strived in the way of Allah what is due,
 and you acted upon His Book,
 and followed the ways of His Prophet,
 blessings of Allah be on him and his family,
 until Allah called You to His side.

So He took you to Him by His choice,
 and made incumbent upon your enemies the proof,
 with what you have of the considerable proofs,
 over all of His creation.

Review Questions

Q1. What enabled the Imam to be so knowledgeable such that he knew everything about his people?

- The knowledge was gifted to him by Allah (swt)
- He used to study really hard
- He used to spend a lot of time with his people.

Q2. The Imam (as) took his position at the age of nine years. When asked about this, he answered by:

- Showing that his knowledge was Divinely given and superior to that of others
- Proving to people that God can and does appoint representatives at a very young age
- Both a & b
- Neither a nor b



IMAM ALHADI ^[A.S]

امام الهادي (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the historical and political environment of the time of Imam al-Hādi (as), including:
- The circumstances around the martyrdom of Imam al-Hādi (as)
- Understand what it means to be a guide and what is required to be guided
- Understand the harms of refusing advice

Imam al-Hādi (as)

Imam 'Ali al-Hādi (as) lived most of his life in Samarrā', a city in the north of Iraq. The Abbasid government imposed on him house arrest. He was like a prisoner. The spies and enforces of the Abbasid government surrounded his house watching all his movements and the movements of all associated with him. He suffered the most severe political pressure during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the Abbasid tyrant, who saved no effort in oppressing the Imam and his Shi'ah.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

THE IMAM IN MEDINA

The Imam (as) was only eight years old when his father died. Thus, like his father, he also took over the responsibility of Imam at a very young age. The Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn was succeeded by al-Mu'tasim, who ruled for eight years. He was in turn followed by al-Wāthiq Billāh. During the five years of the reign of Wāthiq, the Imam (as) and the Shi'ah were allowed to live peacefully. After Wāthiq, his brother al-Mutawakkil came to power.

Al-Mutawakkil was notorious for his free living, immodesty and intoxication. He was the first Abbasid Caliph to hold and participate openly in parties where music, drinking, vain talk and all kinds of evil were practised.

For the first four years of his rule, al-Mutawakkil was occupied in state matters, so he did not trouble the Imam (as). After he was free from his affairs, he turned his attention to the activities of the Imam (as).

At the time, the Imam (as) was preaching to the people in Medina, guiding them to the right path and increasing their faith in Islam. The recognition of his great knowledge and attributes grew day by day. When al-Mutawakkil heard about his reputation and popularity, he was overcome by jealousy and felt that his own power was threatened.

Al-Mutawakkil disguised his hatred for Imam (as) and wrote to him, respectfully inviting him to come to Samarrā' to meet him. He claimed that he believed in the position of Imam (as) and wanted to settle matters peacefully. Although the Imam (as) was well aware of al-Mutawakkil's evil intentions, he knew that the consequences of refusing would be sure death.

THE IMAM MOVES TO SAMARRĀ'

He therefore reluctantly decided to leave Medina, the beloved city of the Holy Prophet (saw). When he arrived in Samarrā', al-Mutawakkil totally ignored him and ordered that he should be put up in an inn provided by the state for beggars and homeless people.

Al-Mutawakkil imposed a serious economic blockade on Imam al-Hādi (as) and imposed severe penalties on whoever sent *khums* or gifts to him. During the reign of al-Mutawakkil Imam al-Hādi (as) was in serious hardship and difficulty. The believers refrained from giving him the *khums* as they refrained from visiting and having the honour of serving him for fear of the oppressive government.

al-Mutawakkil now showed his true colours by imprisoning the Imam (as) under the custody of a cruel hearted man. This man, however, soon changed his feelings on witnessing the manners and behaviour of the Imam (as). Thereafter, al-Mutawakkil transferred him to the prison of another cruel man called Sa'īd.

Here the Imam (as) remained until Fataḥ bin Khāqān became the prime minister of al-Mutawakkil. Fataḥ was a Shi'ah and could not bear to see the miserable condition of Imam (as), so he used his influence to secure his release. However, al-Mutawakkil kept a close watch on the activities of Imam (as), trying to prove that he was acting against the government so as to have an excuse to kill him.

Although al-Mutawakkil was his most deadly enemy, the Imam (as) did not return this enmity. Once al-Mutawakkil happened to suffer from a serious sickness and his own doctors declared him incurable. Al-Mutawakkil's mother approached the Imam (as) for help, and he prescribed an ointment that resulted in a quick cure.

Al-Mutawakkil made it his mission to hunt out and kill all the descendants of Abu Ṭālib and made life so terrifying for them that they were scattered far and wide. He did not content himself with this, but also showed the ultimate disrespect by demolishing the shrine of Imam Ḥusayn (as).

He prohibited anyone from going to visit Karbala. If anyone tried, they were put into underground prisons, never to be seen again.

Al-Mutawakkil was finally killed by his own son al-Muntaṣir, who succeeded him. He was followed by al-Musta'in Billah and al-Mu'tazz Billah.

It was the accursed Mu'tazz who decided to kill the Imam (as) because he could not bear to see the devotion of the people to him. A messenger of al-Mu'tazz came to Imam (as) and managed to poison him.

The Imam (as) died within a few hours. The funeral prayers were conducted by his son, Imam Ḥasan al-'Askari (as), and he was buried in Samarrā'. He was only 42 years old at the time. Of the 34 years of Imam al-Hādi's (as) Imamate, 17 years were spent in freedom and the other 17 years were spent in prison.

WHO IS A GUIDE?

There are some general qualities that are required for person to be a guide; these are that the guide should be:

- Knowledgeable
- genuine or honest
- caring, and understanding

However, a guide can only guide if the person who needs guidance accepts the guidance. For a person to benefit from the guidance that can be provided by others, they must be willing to take advice. They need to put away their pride and be willing to listen and reassess their thoughts and actions regularly.

It is therefore a two-way process for success to be achieved. When it comes to the Guidance that God provides to us through so many channels, we will not benefit from any of these channels unless we are able to accept guidance.

WHY THE IMAM (AS) WAS CALLED AL-HĀDI (THE GUIDE)

1. The Imam was always emphasising the role of the Qur'an as the Scale of Truth when people doubted the Qur'an and tried to use narrations to change the religion. In such a time, the Imam made sure everyone referred to the Qur'an as the main reference.
2. The Imam guided people to the right answer in one of the most difficult debates to take over the Muslim world- the debate about free will and determinism. We have learnt about this in previous lessons.
3. At the time, the Shi'ah were being accused of saying that God had a body, because of a mistake by one Shi'ah scholar. The Imam (as) made sure that this was refuted and did not let this accusation spread.

4. The Imam (as) guided us towards understanding the true status of the Ahlul Bayt (as). This was done mainly through an amazing visitation called: *al-Ziyārah al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabirah*.

TAKING ADVICE

We know that people who are more knowledgeable and more experienced than us are always in a better position to guide us. This is because they are able to see many of the consequences of our decisions better than we can. By seeking advice, we are actually getting more knowledge and with more knowledge we can obviously make better and more profitable decisions.

Seeking advice also demonstrates a person's intellectual and social development. Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"He who consults with men of understanding, shows his development...."ⁱ

WHO SHOULD I ASK ADVICE FROM?

When seeking advice, we should go to a person who is an expert. This is the main condition. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has told us as to how to take advice and from whom, saying:

"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 our affairs as much as you do. The counsellor should then keep this a secret and not divulge it."

In this narration, the Imam (as) says we should take advice from people who:

- Are knowledgeable (not just any ordinary friend or random person)
- Are religious, especially when it comes from religious issues or issues of right and wrong, we should seek advice from practising Muslims.
- Are nice and kind to us, such as our parents, teachers, friends. We should not take advice from people who may dislike us or who have problems with us, as it will be harder to take their advice.

The harms of not taking advice are quite a few, but to list them in brief – a person who does not take advice:

- Is likely to do more harm than good, not only to himself but to others around him

- Is likely to do the wrong thing and put him/herself in difficulty afterwards
- Prevents him/herself to improve their situation even if they are in a problem
- Becomes arrogant and makes more mistakes

Therefore we must be humble and polite enough to seek advice from those who know more than us, and we must be willing to consider their advice at least, even if we sometimes may not agree with the advice entirely.

However, it is important to know that we do not have the choice or wisdom to disagree with religious advice as this is always in our best interests – i.e. we cannot disagree with the Laws of Allah and choose not to follow them if someone advises us to do so.

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM (AS)

"In a friendly manner, advise your friend and say to him: When God intends goodness for somebody, He makes him accept the advice of the friends."

"He who fears God, all others will fear him. He who obeys God, will be obeyed. He who obeys God will not care for the dissatisfaction of the creatures. He who enrages the Creator should be sure of encountering the dissatisfaction of the creatures."

"This world is like a market in which some profit and others lose."

Review Questions

Q1. The tyrant who poisoned Imam al-Hādi (as) was:

- a. Al-Mu'taṣim
- b. Al-Mutawakkil
- c. Al-Mu'tazz

Q2. We are encouraged to take advice from:

- a. Friends
- b. Enemies
- c. People we have problems with

Q3. When we are given advice, we should:

- a. Usually ignore it, because people don't always understand us
- b. At least consider it, because it will allow us to improve
- c. Always take it, no matter where it comes from

ⁱ [Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 75, p. 105]



IMAM AL-'ASKARI ^[A.S]

امام العسكري (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Biographical detail of Imam al-'Askari (as)
- The reason for the titles of al-'Askari and al-Zaki
- That the Imam (as) was kept under constant surveillance all the time
- Why we should fear none other than Allah (SWT)
- The importance and benefits of fearing God

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Imam al-'Askari (as)

- Born in Medina on the 10th of Rabi'ul Thāni 232 AH
- Died in Samarrā', Iraq on 8th of Rabi'ul Awwal 260 AH aged 28 years
- Period of Imamat was six years
- Being a resident of 'Askar, a suburb of the city of Samarrā', he was given the title of al-'Askari

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Imam Hasan al-'Askari (as) lived a short life (only 28 years) and in this short life he had to endure great suffering at the hands of the Abbasid caliphs. But in spite of all that suffering and confinement under house arrest in Samarrā', many students of Islam benefited from his God-gifted knowledge and later became scholars in their fields.

Historians say that during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the followers of the Ahlul Bayt (as) suffered neediness and deprivation so bitter and horrible that it could not be described. Their poverty reached such an extent that a whole family would have only one cloak, and whenever the man or woman wanted to go out, they would wear it, such that they could never go out at the same time. People refrained from associating with the followers and descendants of the Ahlul Bayt for fear of being punished by the government for doing so.

The Abbasids persecuted the people of Qum (which was known as a Shi'ah city) and treated them with oppression and terror. They appointed Mūsā ibn Yaḥyā, who was wicked and unjust, as a ruler over them. He was impolite, immoral, and inhuman.

He treated people in a very bad way and exaggerated in oppressing them until the notables of Qum resorted to Imam al-'Askari (as) complaining to him about what was being done to them.

The Imam (as) prayed to Allah the Almighty to save them from the evil of that mean, oppressive ruler, and taught them a supplication and asked them to recite it in the qunūt of their prayers so that Allah might relieve them from this calamity.

THE IMAM UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION

The Imam (as) suffered in many different ways because of the Abbasid Caliphs. They surrounded the Imam with spies and policemen to watch him and to observe any follower or companion who approached him. The Abbasid kings spared no effort in oppressing him. They moved him from one prison to another. They subjected him to confinement and imposed an economic blockade on him as well.

THE BRAVERY OF IMAM AL-'ASKARI

One of the Abbasid rulers, al-Musta'in Billah had a wild and uncontrollable horse. Anyone who mounted the horse would be thrown off it and hurt. This ruler wanted to test the Imam (as) by forcing him to ride the horse. He was hoping the horse would hurt or kill the Imam (as). The Imam was aware of the issue with this horse.

When he was asked to mount it, he did not hesitate at all. Without any fear, he approached the horse and mounted it. He began to ride and then tame the horse without any problems. The king was surprised by this and asked for an explanation. The Imam (as) replied:

“We are the Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger, our perfections cannot be compared to others.”

THE IMAM'S MARTYRDOM

Al-Mu'tamid, the Abbasid tyrant, could not bear Imam al-'Askari any longer, for he saw and heard people everywhere glorify the imam and prefer him to all the other notable people of the time. Finally, he made up his mind to assassinate the Imam (as). He poisoned the Imam (as). The Imam (as) spent his last moments in pain in his home, attended by his young holy son, Imam al-Mahdi (atfs).

THE ANTICIPATION OF AL-MAHDI

The Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs knew very well about the Prophetic narrations with regards to coming of al-Mahdi (atfs), who would be the twelfth divinely appointed Imam from the progeny of the Prophet (saw) through his daughter Fatima (as). They knew that the narrations indicated that al-Mahdi (atfs) would establish justice and the rule of God on Earth. So like many tyrants before them, they wanted to stop the birth of Imam al-Mahdi, or to imprison or kill him if he was born. For this reason, Imam al-'Askari (as) was kept in isolation and a close watch was kept over him and all his family members.

Despite all their efforts though, they could not stop the birth of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs), the ultimate saviour of all humanity.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FEARING GOD

The distinct aspect in the childhood of Imam al-'Askari (as) was his fear of Allah. He was God-fearing since his early years.

The Fear of Allah and the Punishment of Allah (SWT) is an important sign of a believer. Allah has commanded human beings to fear Him in many verses of the Qur'an.

“Therefore fear not people but fear Me...” (The Holy Qur'an, 5:44)

“Verily! Those who fear their Lord unseen (i.e. they do not see Him, nor His Punishment in the Hereafter, etc.), theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward” (67:12)

A person who fears Allah will not be tempted by the gloss of this world, nor will they be scared of the material threats of this world. This is because before them there is always the awe and fear of Allah (SWT).

FRUITS OF FEARING GOD

- a. **High standing with Allah:** The degree of fear of Allah in someone's heart is a key indicator of his rank with Allah. Because someone who fears Allah can immediately distinguish between right and wrong, they will behave in accordance with what is most pleasing to Allah in everything they do.
- b. **A double share from Allah's mercy:** In the Qur'an Allah promises to all His servants who fear Him and behave cautiously, to bless their lives in this world and the hereafter.

- c. **Acceptable worship:** Those who do not fear Allah every act of their worship there will be the desire to show off or to impress others.
- d. **Ease in one's affairs:** Allah will open the way for them in all their undertakings. Even in the apparently most difficult situations, Allah will eventually show them a way out, and however long their difficulty lasts, they will not be left alone. This is Allah's promise to the believers.

SIGNS OF A PERSON WHO FEARS GOD

- a. **They only fear Allah:** The true believer does not fear anyone or any community other than Allah. He will know that benefit and loss, good and bad can only come from Allah. The following ayah praises exactly such a group of people:
 "Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, "Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them." But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: "Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us)."

In recent years, we have seen soldiers following the path of the Ahlul Bayt who have shown exactly the resolve described above and have been victorious against armies which were much greater and more equipped.

- b. **Strive to please Allah alone:** They will only strive to seek the pleasure of Allah and not the people who in reality do not possess any power or strength. The attitude of Prophet Yūsuf (as) is a very good example. Prophet Yūsuf (as) was able to preserve his chastity against a powerful woman who desired him. Despite all her threats and intrigues, he preferred to go to prison rather than overstep Allah's boundaries.
- c. **They always act conscientiously:** Someone who is profoundly aware of Allah will again be fearfully cautious about doing anything that would displease Him, whether any other human is present or not, because they are aware that Allah will know of any wrongdoing they commit, whether it is done openly or in secret.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said: "Whoever recognizes God fears Him, and whoever fears God deprives himself from this world."

- d. **They emulate all the good qualities mentioned in the Qur'an:** A person who fears Allah will display those attitudes that relate to good character such as loyalty, faithfulness, righteousness, honesty and sincerity.
- e. **In every situation they turn to Allah:** When any negative incident happens to them or when they feel their work is going badly, they will immediately examine themselves as to whether or not they have done anything to displease Allah. Through their supplications they will seek and beg forgiveness from Him.

When we look at the conduct of the prophets, Imams and true believers, we see that they are all servants who respectfully fear Allah and who strenuously tried their best to avoid His punishment. However, at the same time, their continuous and consistent praise and exaltation of Allah is an indication of their total love and attachment to Him.

FEARING ONLY ALLAH

- i. **Consequences experienced on Earth:** Allah will make those people who do not fear Him and who are not cautious of Him suffer both physical and spiritual distress in this world. In reality their lives will be reduced to one long series of physical and emotional disasters.
 "God will make everything fear the one fears God, and will make the one who does not fear God, fear everything."
- ii. **Situation in the Hereafter:** Those people who did not fear Allah whilst on Earth, so in the Hereafter He will subject them to fears the like of which they have never experienced or been faced with, they will be surrounded by fear, terror, and stress forever.

Excruciating physical pain on the one hand, and unbearable spiritual agony on the other, will torture these victims. They will be constantly ill-treated, disgraced, degraded and belittled

COWARDICE AND BRAVERY

ⁱCowardice is the opposite of courage. Fear is of two kinds. Firstly, there is the fear of God and fear of sins and Divine punishment. Secondly, there is the fear of things other than God. The first kind of fear is praiseworthy, and leads man to perfection, whereas the second kind of fear is an undesirable vice brought about by the disease of cowardice.

Cowardice has its roots in fearing other than Allah. We should train ourselves to fear only Allah (SWT), so that we can be truly brave and not fear others besides God.

Imam 'Ali (AS) said: "Cowardice, greed, and miserliness are vile traits that come together as a result of distrust in Allah."ⁱⁱ

Therefore, according to this, the true definition of bravery is to face up to our perceived fears of things other than Allah (SWT). True bravery is when a person always does what pleases Allah (SWT), no matter who else they might displease.

Review Questions

Q1. How long did Imam al-'Askari (as) live?

- a. Twenty three years
- b. Sixty four years
- c. Twenty eight years

Q2. What is Cowardice?

- a. Bullying people
- b. Being fearful, in action, of other than Allah (SWT)
- c. Being strong

Q3. What is one of the signs of someone who fears God?

- a. Likes to show off
- b. Acting conscientiously
- c. Being a coward

ⁱ <http://www.al-islam.org/kaaba14/14.htm>
<http://www.al-islam.org/akhlmaq-aimma/9.htm>
http://www.maaref-foundation.com/english/library/pro_ahl/imam11_askari/the_life_of_imam_askari/index.htm
http://harunyahya.com/en/books/2546/Fear_Of_Allah/chapter/1666
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Mishkatul Anwar- search through Google- chapter on FEAR and HOPE
Mizanul Hikmah- chapters on FEAR and COWARDICE
http://www.darolhadith.com/modules.php?name=my_AlfabetMenu&vid=127&scid=1
SML Lectures:
Imam Askari
ⁱⁱ [Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 1837]



IMAM AL-MAHDI ^[AS]

امام المهدي (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know basic facts about Imam al-al-Mahdi as the living Imam
- Know that the concept of the saviour returning to rescue the world and establishing justice is a universal concept across many creeds
- Know that the general concept of al-al-Mahdi is shared among all Muslims
- Understand briefly the characteristics of the saviour al-al-Mahdi
- Discuss in detail the main Qur'anic āyāt related to Imam al-al-Mahdi
- Discuss in detail the narrations related to Imam al-al-Mahdi
- In relation to the above, know the characteristics of the Imam (atfs)
- Know briefly the concept of al-Intiḍār
- Know the characteristics of people who will be included in the Imam's group when he reappears
- Know the government of al-al-Mahdi (atfs) when he returns, and its characteristics, from the narrations
- Know in brief some aspects of the reappearance, emphasising the general aspects mentioned in the narrations
- Understand that it is important not to become preoccupied with the signs of the reappearance, but instead to prepare for it appropriately

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: al-Mahdi: the Universal Saviour

Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) was born in the time of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tamid, who had tried to prevent his birth but had been unsuccessful.

Among the titles of the Imam (as) are:

- al-Qa'im (the One who Rises)
- al-Ḥujjah (the Proof)
- al-Muntaḍar (the Awaited one)
- al-Muntaḍir (the Waiting one)
- Ṣaḥibul Zamān (the Master of this Age)



Allah (SWT) granted the Imam (as) with wisdom and excellence at birth. Like the Prophets Jesus (as) and John (as), he had the ability to speak in infancy and used to recite verses of the Holy Qur'an from the cradle.

As we have seen from previous lessons, Imam al-Mahdi (as) is the living Imam of our age. He has already been born and is living among us today. Unlike what you may hear from other Muslim schools of thought or other religions (that also believe in a saviour) – that he is still to be born – we believe that Imam al-Mahdi (as) has already been born but is in hiding and we only await his re-appearance by the command of Allah (SWT).

THE BELIEF IN A SAVIOUR – A UNIVERSAL BELIEF

All the major religions in the world, even Buddhism and Hinduism, believe in a saviour who will come to bring the world to a state of ultimate good. They may disagree on the identity of this saviour, but they all agree that such a saviour will come. The belief in a saviour is clearly expressed in the holy books of the divine religions and forms an important part of their belief system.

The belief in a saviour is a major part of Jewish theology. In fact, they- albeit wrongly- see their return to Palestine as a step towards the return of the saviour, and have mobilized their resources and efforts in order to hasten the supposed return of their saviour. Similarly, Christian theology revolves around the return of Jesus (as) and his establishment of a rightful order in the world.

In fact, even non-religious ideologies and philosophies speak of a saviour who will bring peace and justice to the world. Famous men such as Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein have referred to this, as has Bernard Shaw, who even says that the life-span of such a saviour must be long (centuries) prior to the start of his mission. He believes that the saviour needs such a long life-span to build the necessary knowledge and characteristics to truly change the world. Of course, we believe the Awaited Imam already has these qualities, but is in fact waiting for his community to be ready. However, Shaw's writings show that the idea of a saviour who has an extraordinary lifespan is not something strange to human thought.

Not only do many religions believe in a saviour, but almost all religions and ideologies who believe in a saviour also believe that the saviour appears after a period of occultation. Christians believe Jesus will reappear, whilst the Jews believe in the reappearance of 'Uzayr and so on.

This is because all humans have an inherent need towards a state of peace and tranquillity at which their constant struggle and work ends. There is an in-built belief that all this movement must end at a place of rest. This is why all ideologies share in this belief that there will come a saviour who will bring about such a state.

THE COMMON BELIEF AMONGST ALL MUSLIMS ON AL-MAHDI (AS)

THE NARRATION OF THE TWELVE CALIPHS

al-Bukhāri narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* through his chain to Jābir ibn Sumārah who said:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying: “there will be twelve Emirs”, he then said a word I did not hear, so my father said to me that the Prophet had said: “they are all from Quraysh”.

This is another narration narrated by Shi'ah and Sunni scholars. It is narrated by:

- al-Bukhāri,
- Muslim in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim
- Al-Tirmithi
- Abu Dawūd

It indicates that after the Prophet, there would be twelve Imams, all from Quraysh. This is another narration that the Prophet stated at important times at the end of his life, such as at 'Arafāt and at the stop in Ghadīr Khumm. This shows that the Prophet was delivering a very important message to his community through these narrations.

These and other narrations from the different schools of Islamic thought all indicate that the belief in al-Mahdi (atfs) is a common belief amongst all Muslims. However, differences do arise in the details of who al-Mahdi is, whether he is born already or yet to be born, which we have already discussed above.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF IMAM AL-MAHDI (ATFS)

As we learnt in previous years, every community must have an Imam. Now we want to learn the characteristics this Imam must have as outlined by the Qur'an:

1. The Imam must be sinless. This is proven by the following āyah where Prophet Abraham asks for his descendants to be Imams, and Allah, the Exalted, replies that only **those who are not wrong-doers** can be Imams.
2. The Imam is from the progeny of Abraham (as), as proven the same āyah below.

3. The Imam must be chosen by Allah, as is also proven by the āyah below where Abraham (as) clearly indicates that an Imam can only be appointed by Allah, the Exalted.

“And (remember) when the Lord of Abraham tried him with (certain) Commands, which he fulfilled. He (Allah) said (to him), "Verily, I am going to make you an Imam of mankind." (Abraham) said, "And of my offspring (to make Imams?)" (Allah) said, "My Covenant (Prophethood, Imamah) does not include the Ḍalimūn (polytheists and wrong-doers)." (2:124)



Like the other infallible Imams, al-Mahdi (atfs) will have special moral excellences. As the Infallibles (as) are perfect human beings and are the models and exemplars of mankind in every aspect, they have the most excellent morality.

Imam al-Reḍā (as) said: “al-Mahdi (atfs) will be the most knowledgeable, humble and virtuous man (of his time).

Of all men (during his time) he will be the most forgiving, brave and pious.”ⁱ

One of the salient features of al-Mahdi (atfs) is that he can know the inner personalities of people through their faces; he would be able to distinguish pious from impious personalities.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said: “When al-Qa’im rises up, no one will be left except the person he knows to be a righteous and good, or the deviant and corrupt.”ⁱⁱ

Review Questions

Q1. The difference between the Sunni and Shi’ah beliefs on Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) is:

- a. The Shi’ah believe he is already born but the Sunnis do not
- b. The Sunnis do not believe in al-Mahdi (atfs)
- c. The Shi’ah believe al-Mahdi is from the progeny of the Prophet (saw) but the Sunnis do not

Q2. The characteristics of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) do NOT include:

- a. He is appointed by God
- b. He is sinless
- c. He is the most peaceful

Lesson 2: al-Mahdi in the Qur’an and Ḥadīth

As we discussed earlier, the unique thing about our belief in al-Mahdi is that we believe that he is living currently. In this lesson, we will study some Qur’anic āyāt which clearly indicate the fact that there must be an Imam in every age and time. This fact means that in our time there must be an Imam too, and this Imam is al-Mahdi (atfs).

AL-MAHDI IN THE QUR’AN

EVERY NATION WILL BE CALLED BY ITS IMAM

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur’an:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَفْرَهُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هُذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ
سَبِيلًا

“(On) the Day when We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imam. So whosoever is given his record in his right hand, such will read their records, and they will not be dealt with unjustly in the least. And whoever is blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter and more astray from the Path.” (17:71-72)



Let us try and understand the possible meanings of the word 'Imam' in the context the Ayah is talking about. The following suggestions have been made to explain the meaning of the term 'Imam' in this ayah:

Possible Meaning of Imam as Used in the Qur'an	Does it fit the context of this ayah?
1.The Preserved Tablet (A higher level of existence of the Qur'an)	No , because there is only one preserved tablet, not one for each community.
2.The Holy books	No , because the communities before Prophet Noah's time did not have holy books
3.The General Prophet of the Community	No , because not each community had a prophet living amongst it
4.The Divinely appointed leader for the community (prophet or Imam)	Yes , because every community has such a leader

Therefore, the āyah indicates that we will be judged according to how we responded to the Imam of our time and our community. It clearly indicates that every community has to have an Imam, and thus we must have a living Imam amongst us, who is appointed by God. This Imam observes all our actions and will be an Imam and a witness for our community on Judgment Day.

EVERY COMMUNITY HAS A GUIDE

The Holy Qur'an also declares that every community has a guide, and so, in our time, our community too must have a guide.

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ ۚ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

"And the disbelievers say: "Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?" You are only a warner, and to every people there is a guide" (13:7)

According to other āyāt of the Qur'an, this guide must be someone who himself is guided directly by Allah, the Exalted, and the only person who fits this criterion is Imam al-al-Mahdi (atfs). The Qur'an also states that this guide must be someone appointed by Allah, and again the only one who fits this criterion is Imam al-Mahdi (atfs).

AL-MAHDI (ATFS) IN AUTHENTIC NARRATIONS

There are also several authentic narrations we will examine regarding al-al-Mahdi (atfs). We will also examine a number of narrations considered to be authentic by the Sunni school of thought, and see how they apply best to our belief in al-Mahdi.

THE NARRATION OF AL-THAQUALAYN

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

"I am leaving among you two things that if you hold on to them you will not go astray after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, a rope stretching from heaven to earth, and my progeny, my household. These two will not separate until they come to me at The Pond, so be careful how you act in relation to them after me"ⁱⁱⁱ

The above narrations is narrated in several of the most trusted Sunni books. There is no doubt that this narration is authentic and that the Prophet (saw) definitely said these words. In fact, we gather from the narrations that the Prophet (saw) used to say these words repeatedly at a number of important situations where the Muslims had gathered.

We know that "my progeny" and "my household" refers to Sayyidah Fāṭimah (as) and the twelve Imams after the Prophet, as is proven by Sunni narrations themselves.

This narration proves the fact that there must always be a living Imam in the following ways:

- The Prophet (saw) said that His household and the Qur'an will never separate. We know the Qur'an is always Truthful, and therefore the Prophet's Household must always be Truthful, in order not to separate from the Qur'an. This means that they are sinless (ma'ṣūm), and the only sinless person claimed to be alive in our time is al-Mahdi (atfs)

- The Prophet (saw) said that the Qur'an and His household will never separate until the Judgment Day, meaning that at least one sinless person from among His Household must always be alive till the Judgment Day, and this is none other than al-Mahdi (atfs)

THE NARRATION OF THE TWELVE CALIPHS

The most trusted Sunni compiler of narrations, al-Bukhari narrated in his book from a companion of the Prophet:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying: “there will be twelve Emirs”, he then said a word I did not hear, so my father said to me that the Prophet had said: “they are all from Quraysh”.^{iv}

It indicates that after the Prophet, there would be twelve Imams, all from Quraysh. This is another narration that the Prophet stated at important times at the end of his life, such as at Arafāt and at the stop in Ghadīr Khumm. This shows that the Prophet was delivering a very important message to his community through these narrations.

These narrations say that these twelve Caliphs have the following characteristics:

- They are from Quraysh
- They are Caliphs and Emirs
- The religion will be upheld as long as they are present
- They will be faced with opposition

The only people to whom this narration can possibly apply are the twelve Imams that we the Shi'a Ithna 'Ashari believe in, because:

- According to the narrations, these Imams must be alive from the time of the Prophet (saw) till the Judgment Day. Therefore, one of them, al-Mahdi (atfs) must be alive today.
- These twelve Imams must come one after the other, without any gap between them, because as the narrations say Islam's success depends on their presence
- There have never been twelve consecutive Caliphs who have upheld Islam and its laws in the history of the religion. Whatever part of Islamic history we examine; we find there have been mostly corrupt leaders. Thus this narration

can only apply to the twelve Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) as per the Shi'a Ithna 'Ashari belief.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AL-MAHDI

It is clear from the above verses of the Holy Qur'an and authentic narrations from both Shi'ah and Sunni sources the following things have not only be true but also necessary about Imam al-Mahdi (atfs):

- He is from the Ahlul Bayt (as) – the progeny of the Holy Prophet (saw) and Prophet Abraham (as)
- He is currently living
- He is appointed by God – because the Qur'an has mentioned him and so has the Prophet (saw) on several occasions. We also know that the Prophet (saw) does not say anything except which Allah (SWT) commands him to say.
- He will come to bring justice by applying the Laws of God

Review Questions

Q1. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an that every community has a:

- a. Teacher
- b. Guide
- c. Leader

Q2. Which narration speaks about Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) being a Caliph from among the Quraysh:

- a. The narration of Thaqalayn
- b. The narration of Ghadīr
- c. The narration of the twelve caliphs

Q3. In Surah 17:71-72 (see above) the possible meaning of Imam is:

- a. A Holy Book
- b. A Divinely Appointed Imam
- c. The Preserved Tablet

Lesson 3: al-Intidār

THE IMPORTANCE OF AL-INTIDĀR

The narrations indicate that al-Intidār (actively waiting) for the relief to come from Allah, particularly in the form of the reappearance of al-al-Mahdi (atfs) is one of the greatest and most important and rewarding actions.

“The greatest worship of a believing slave is waiting for the relief from Allah”^v

Waiting for the reappearance of the Imam, and truly living as one who is waiting, prepares a person to be one of the companions of the Imam at the time of his reappearance, and even if he does not meet the time of the Imam, he will gain the reward of having been one of the Imam’s companions:

“Whoever dies while waiting for this affair (the reappearance), will be like the one who was in the tent of al-Qa’im...”^{vi}

AL-INTIDĀR (ANTICIPATION)

“The one who dies while anticipating the coming of the Imam (atfs), it is as if he was in the tent of the Imam. In fact, it is as if he was fighting the enemies alongside the Messenger of Allah (saw).”

1. al-Intidār: means waiting with alertness. This is the state we are supposed to be in while waiting for our Imam (atfs). It is not waiting lazily or passively. Rather, it is the active anticipation that involves preparation and eagerness.
2. This means that we should have got ourselves ready for our Imam (atfs) and simply by waiting for him to come. This means we should stay away from places our Imam would not want us to be in because the Imam may come while we are in such a place, and we should frequent places where the Imam would want to see us.

DIMENSIONS OF AL-INTIDĀR

- Knowing the Imam: find out as much as you can about your Imam (atfs), because the one who dies without knowing the Imam dies the death of ignorance and disbelief

- Showing your love for the Imam: give charity on his behalf; attend gatherings where he is mentioned etc...
- Develop an emotional connection with the Imam (as) through special supplications and prayers for the Imam (as)
- Show your knowledge and love in action. Perform the deeds that you think the Imam would want you to do. Involve yourself in projects and programs that you think improve the community, and that the Imam (as) would approve of.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOLLOWERS OF IMAM AL-MAHDI (ATFS)

- According to the narrations, the followers of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) are devout by night and lions by day. This means that they are active in the day, standing up against oppression, dishonesty and all other vices at the same time fulfilling their obligations to their family, community and society. At night they humble themselves in prayer seeking nearness to Allah (SWT).
- They are courageous, determined and submissive on Allah’s path. Patience is one of their characteristics; they are never hasty. They are wise and patient in their struggle for Islamic values to dominate the world.
- Submission to Allah is their greatest source of strength in their faith. They are fully submitted to Almighty Allah. In times of danger, they are never uneasy, but say, “It is all for the best.” Let us now look at the features of these blessed people of the End Times, the followers of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) in the light of some narrations.

“The nature of his (Al-al-Mahdi’s) followers will be pure and immaculate. They will be free from hypocrisy and all other contaminations.”^{vii}

“Their (Al-al-Mahdi’s followers’) hearts will be untainted and unadulterated by malice, jealousy and enmity.”^{viii}

THE GOVERNMENT OF AL-MAHDI (ATFS)

The time of the Imam’s government will be a time of happiness where oppression, pressure and persecution end and people can turn to Allah and live peaceful, tranquil lives

“Allah will bring relief to the Muslim community through him. Glad tidings for the one who lives at his time”^{ix}

It will be a time of great material wealth:

“Allah will fill the hearts of the community of Muhammad (pbuh) with wealth, and his justice will encompass all of them”^x

It will be a time of honour and end the degradation of the Muslims

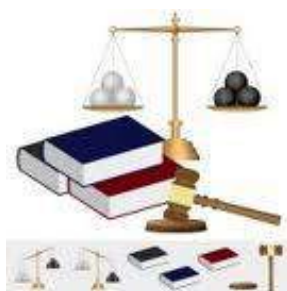
The Imam will be a true leader, who uses his position only to serve people.

“He will be cautious of Allah. He will not place one stone over another, and will not strike anyone with a whip except in judicial punishment”^{xi}

At the same time, the Imam (atfs) will be very kind and compassionate towards his community, such that they will turn him for all their needs.

“They will turn to him, as bees turn towards their homes”^{xii}

The Imam will remove all polytheism and establish the system of Islam universally. The Imam will bring back the original Taurāt and Injīl and use these to argue against the Jews and Christians. Most of them will revert to Islam except for a small and stubborn minority.



He will unify all Muslims under the banner of the true Islam that the Prophet practiced:

The Prophet (saw) said about al-Mahdi (atfs); “His practice is my practice. He will rule people according to my legislation and practice”^{xiii}

The Imam (atfs) will remove all innovations that have been introduced into Islam and will overcome all seditions. The Imam will begin by removing innovations, beginning with the innovations in Masjidul Ḥarām, such

as the separation of the Imam of the prayer from the followers.

The Imam will appoint representatives and workers to implement his governance around the world. He will be harsh and strict with them and ensure they do not become corrupt.

The Imam will also be just in distributing wealth equally to all people, without giving people political or racial preference. The narrations also say that he will give generously when asked.

THE REAPPEARANCE

As we have learnt previously, we believe the Imam could reappear at any time. However, there are narrations that talk about the signs that indicate that his reappearance is very near. If we think these signs are absent, this does not mean the Imam’s reappearance is far away, because these signs can occur at any time as well.

Some of these signs will definitely occur, whereas others may not, and some occur very close to the reappearance of the Imam whilst others occur a long period before it. The narrations discussing these signs use a lot of symbolism and special language, and so we must be careful in interpreting them correctly, and not applying them to any event that has some similarity to the narrations. We must also be careful of distinguishing the authentic narrations from the false ones.

There are five definitive signs that are based on Ḥadith that are authenticated and are accepted by a large amount of scholars:

- The revolt of Sufyāni
- The appearance of al-Yamāni
- The scream from the sky
- Sinking of the land
- Killing the Innocent Soul

The late Sheikh al-Kulayni, author of al-Kāfi, narrates this aforementioned tradition that quotes the five definitive signs, with only five mediums to Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (as), and all five of them are reliable and trustworthy.

As far as other signs are concerned, they must be scrutinised individually by the relevant expert scholar and its result could differ from one to another.

In addition to keeping ourselves aware of the signs of his return, we should also pay more attention to actually preparing ourselves for the Imam's return rather than simply looking out for the signs. We can prepare ourselves for his return in the following ways:

- Increase our knowledge of Islam – we should be familiar with the lessons from the Qur'an and the lives of Imams (as)
- Strengthen our faith in Allah through practicing His Commandments and Laws to the best of our ability
- Develop and gain new talents that will be helpful to the community now and also at the time of Imam's reappearance and government
- ^{xiv}Contribute towards the development of the community and the spread of the message of Islam

Review Questions

Q1. According to the narrations, Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) will judge the Jews and Christians and prove Islam to them, according to:

- a. The Qur'an
- b. Common sense
- c. The original books of the Jews and Christians

Q2. What does al-Intiqār mean?

- a. Waiting with alertness and always preparing through good actions
- b. Only gaining more knowledge but not acting on it
- c. Being lazy and careless about the current state, and waiting for the imam to fix things

Q3. The followers of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) are:

- a. Patient and courageous
- b. Courageous and impatient
- c. Strong and merciless

ⁱ Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 401; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 537; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 367

ⁱⁱ Kamaluddin, vol. 2, p. 671; Khara'ij, vol. 2, p. 930; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 493; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 58; vol. 52, p. 389

ⁱⁱⁱ This narration is narrated through a huge number of narrators.

- The famous Sunni scholar Ibn Hajar lists 20 chains of narration in his book al-Sawaiq al-Muhriqa
- The famous Sunni scholar al-Tirmithi lists 33 chains of narration in his book Sunan al-Tirmithi
- It is narrated with similar wording (always including the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt) by the following famous Sunni narrators:
 - Al-Bukhari, in Tareekh al-Kabir
 - Sunan al-Tirmithi
 - Sahih Muslim
 - Sunan ibn Majah

^{iv} This is another narration narrated by Shi'a and Sunni scholars. It is narrated by: Al-Bukhari, Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Al-Tirmithi, Abu Dawud

^v (Biharul Anwar, 52:131)

^{vi} (Kamalul Din: 645)

^{vii} *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol 52, p. 35

^{viii} *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 35

^{ix} (Ithbatul Hudat, 3:504)

^x (Musnad Ahmad, 3:37)

^{xi} (Malahim Ibn Tawus, p.132)

^{xii} (al-Burhan, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, p. 78)

^{xiii} (Kamalul Din, p.411)

^{xiv}

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السَّلَامُ عَلَى آدَمَ صَفْوَةِ اللَّهِ

PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS:

ADAM [A.S]

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded that Prophet Ādam (as) is the first prophet and the first human being that Allah (SWT) created.
- Know that the creation of Eve was from the 'human soul' not from Adam's rib
- Know the exact Qur'anic wording for the process of creation
- Understand the reaction of the angels and why God ordered them to prostrate to Adam and how this is related to free will.
- Understand and analyse the reaction of Satan and its basis in pride and the dangers of this
- Understand the mistake of Adam and why it was not a sin with a clear understanding of the difference between obligatory and guiding commands

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

PROPHET ĀDAM^(AS) - THE FIRST HUMAN BEING

All Abrahamic religions (including Muslims) believe that Prophet Ādam (as) was the very first human being created. The details of his creation and the resulting beliefs that come out of this have influenced the core of many religions. For instance, it is the story of Ādam and Eve that makes the Christians believe in the "original sin" or the inferior status of women. Fortunately, from the incredible miracle of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, as Muslims we do not believe in these concepts. This lesson shall attempt to give an overview of the story of Ādam (as) from the perspective for the Qur'an and we will learn the most significant message from this story which is the evils of pride.

THE CREATION OF ĀDAM-AND EVE^(AS)

Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an in various places describes the creation of human beings:

"We created man of an extraction of clay, then We set him, a drop, in a receptacle secure, then We created of the drop a clot, then We created of the clot a tissue, then We created of the tissue bones, then We garmented the bones in flesh; thereafter We produced him as another creature. So blessed be God, the fairest of creators!" (23:12-14)

Allah (SWT) has created human Beings in an extremely precise manner with each stage a wondrous miracle. We believe that human beings were created from clay as Allah (SWT) says about the creation of Prophet Ādam (as)

"And when your Lord said to the angels 'See, 'I am creating a mortal of clay of mud moulded. When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him, fall you down, bowing before him!" (16:28-29)

We have to remember that many of these words of the Qur'an cannot be interpreted literally. Allah (SWT) does not have a mouth to blow for instance but because of the limited nature of our language Allah (SWT) in His wisdom has explained it as such. We also believe that all human beings were created in this manner and that Eve, was *not* created from the rib of Ādam like the Christians believe.

THE ANGELS PROSTRATE TO ĀDAM (AS)

As we read in the last verse, the angels were commanded to prostrate to Ādam (as). Let us read the story from the Holy Qur'an:

"And [after creating Ādam] Allah taught Ādam all the names. Then He presented those to the angels and said, "Tell me the names of these if you are true. They said, "Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are surely the All-Knowing, the Wise." [Then] He said, "O Ādam! Tell them the names of those [persons]." When Ādam told them those names, Allah said [to the angels], "Didn't I say to you that I know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you manifest and what you hide."

And when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Ādam." All of them prostrated except Iblīs, who refused and was haughty, and [thus] he became one of the unbelievers.

"[After creating Eve), We said, "O Ādam, Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat from it [freely] as many [things] as you wish; but do not approach this tree, otherwise you will become one of the dhalimīn الظَّالِمِينَ."

"But the Satan made them slip (أَزَلَّهُمَا) from that [Garden by luring them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree] and thus got them out from the state [of felicity] in which they had been."

So We said [to Ādam, Eve, and the Satan that, "All of you] get down [from the Garden to the earth] some of you being the enemies of the other, and there is on the earth your abode and the necessities [of life] for a [fixed period of] time." [Ādam felt ashamed and intended to ask Allah's forgiveness.] So Ādam learnt some words from his Lord, and Allah turned to him mercifully (تَابَ عَلَيْهِ). Surely He is the Most-Forgiving, the Merciful. We said, "All of you get down from the Garden. [Once you are on the earth], a guidance will certainly come to you from Me: whosoever follows My guidance, there will be no fear for them nor shall they grieve. But those who disbelieve and reject Our revelation, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide."

We learn several things from this story

1. Allah (SWT) created Ādam (as) with a special knowledge. The angles thought they knew everything but were embarrassed when Allah (SWT) informed them that Ādam (as) knew more than them. We have

to remember that we cannot become haughty and proud about what we know and even if we do we have to become humble when the truth is shown to us.

2. Iblīs refused to concede to the truth because of his arrogance and pride. Even though all the others prostrated, he did not. Later in this lesson we shall discuss the evils of pride.
3. Allah (SWT) created Eve (*not* from the rib of Ādam) and they lived in a Garden (*not* in heaven) but on Earth. They were asked not to approach a tree. This was a recommendation not an order. In Islam, there are two types of commands Allah (SWT) gives to His creation:ⁱ
 - a. **Legislative command** (Al-'amr al-mawlawi,): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command which has to be fulfilled and failure to do so results in punishment. (eg. Ṣalāt)
 - b. **Guiding command** (Al-'amr al-'irshādi): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command but the action to be done is not Wājib, rather the command is simply a guiding command which is meant to make life for that person easier. Not doing that action does not result in sin but may have natural consequences. This is the kind of order Prophet Ādam (as) got regarding the tree.
4. The natural consequence of Prophet Ādam (as) making that mistake was that him and his wife had to leave the garden and now had to face the normal difficulties of life.
5. Prophet Ādam (as) sought forgiveness for his mistake and Allah (SWT) forgave him and gave him the great news of guidance.

Memorisation Activity

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ
وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"And when We said to the angels: Prostrate to Ādam, and so they prostrated, but Iblīs (did it not). He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers." (2:34)

IBLĪS (SATAN) WAS PROUD AND ARROGANT

As we have just read the story of Prophet Ādam (as), we learn that the most significant message to come out of this story was the deception and pride of Iblīs. Imam 'Alī (as) says:

“You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him licence for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.” (That is pride and arrogance).ⁱⁱ

Satan thought he was better than Prophet Ādam (as) and despite being shown the truth he was stubborn and arrogant. If we show any such characteristics in our lives, we can be put in the same category as Satan on the day of judgement.

There are three main types of pride

1. **Arrogance against Allah (SWT):** this is disbelief (kufr). It is like what Satan did. We can be arrogant against Allah (SWT) when we do not follow Allah’s (SWT) command purposefully or when we question His laws and commands, because we think we know better.
2. **Arrogance against the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Imams (as):** Where we think we know more than them and accuse them of making wrong decisions for instance. This applies also to the Ālim (scholar).
3. **Arrogance against other people:** This is where we think we are better than others for any reason whether it be nationalistic, due to our wealth, our possessions, our knowledge etc.

Each of these types of arrogance is forbidden in Islam and would cause us to be associated with Satan in Hell. Allah has kept a simple law as a punishment for those who are arrogant. The Holy Prophet has said:

“One who humbles himself before Allah is raised by Him in status; and the one who is arrogant will be degraded by Allah.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Let’s see an example of this.

A scholar narrated: “I was at the sacred Mecca, between Şafa and Marwah when I saw a stranger on a camel. His slaves were preventing the people from coming near him. After sometime I happened to be in Baghdad. There I saw a man in a dishevelled condition with his hair awry. I stared at him in surprise. He asked as to why I was

staring at him. I said that I find a great resemblance between him and an arrogant person whom I had seen at Mecca between Şafa and Marwah. At that time he behaved very arrogantly. The man said, “I am the same person! I had behaved arrogantly at a place where people exhibit humility, that is why the Almighty has made me lowly in Baghdad where people achieve great honours. And thus these people behave arrogantly towards me.”

SIGNS OF PRIDE

- 1) If in gatherings and social events a person dislikes not being in a position of leadership or being the centre of attention.
- 2) If one finds it difficult to say salām or show humility a person lower than him in social status, he is proud.
- 3) If it is difficult for one to accept the invitation of poor people or to sit with beggars it is a sign of pride.
- 4) If he feels it is below his dignity to perform physical and unclean work such as sweeping the floor or cleaning a bathroom or something similar

The punishment of those who are proud is, as promised by Allah (SWT), very severe. We have to always remember the story of Prophet Ādam (as) and always be humble and not arrogant and haughty.

Class Activity

Can you identify other types of arrogance and pride you have experienced in your life?

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Ādam (as) disobeyed a command of Allah that was:

- a. Legislative
- b. A guiding command
- c. Both of the above

Q2. Eve was created:

- a. By Allah (SWT) from the human soul as all humans are created
- b. From the Rib of Ādam (as)
- c. From an angel

Q3. Pride is bad because:

- a. It is the source of all other evil acts
- b. Satan was proud
- c. It destroys all good actions
- d. All the above

ⁱHawza – Ancient Prophets for the Modern World- Prophet Adam (as) – Sem 2
ⁱⁱ Nahjul Balagha Sermon 192
ⁱⁱⁱ Greater Sins (Dastagahab Shirazi) chapter 3- Pride

السَّلَامُ عَلَى نُوحٍ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET NŪH ^[A.S.]

نبي الله نوح (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Review Prophet Noah's position as one of the great law-making Prophets
- Review the details of Prophet Noah's mission, particularly focusing on his forbearance
- Discuss the importance of the quality of perseverance on the right path (al Istiq'amah)
- Discuss goal-setting, overcoming challenges and having determination

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Prophet Nūḥ (Noah as)

"It was said to Noah: disembark with peace from us and blessings" "Greetings (from Allah) upon Noah from among the creation" (37:79)

Prophet Noah was one of the very earliest Prophets sent by Allah (SWT) to a people who were worshipping idols and who had gone astray in their actions and beliefs.

"Surely We sent Noah to his people, saying: Warn your people before there come upon them a painful chastisement"

The Qur'an tells us that Prophet Noah was sent specifically to his people and not people in general. Prophet Noah was therefore ~~was~~ a prophet and a messenger, who received revelation and had the responsibility of guiding his people to the right path.

Prophet Noah is also one of the five principal law making (ulul 'azm) Prophets who came with a message and a book of laws for people to follow.

PROPHET NOAH: AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance means to have steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose or a state especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement. This means not giving up on the truth, no matter how difficult it becomes. Prophet Noah was one man who never gave up on his mission to guide his people to the right path. Let's see how the Allah (SWT) shows Prophet Noah's perseverance in the Qur'an.

Prophet Noah has been introduced to us as a symbol of patience. The reason behind this is that he was preaching

the message of Allah (SWT) for 950 years, with only 80 people believing in him. The Qur'an says he was a prophet who used very sound arguments to convince and guide his people – he used common sense and logic, kind words and was very gentle and compassionate to his people. However, even after so many years of teaching and preaching, not many people listened to him.

All of his followers were poor people, because the wealthy people were too proud to listen to what Prophet Noah (as) had to say. He told his people,

"Worship only Allah (SWT). There is no God but Him. Otherwise, I fear that you will see the punishment of a painful day." (7:59)

The chiefs of the people laughed at Prophet Noah (as). One of their leaders stepped forth and said: 'you are nothing but a man like us. We don't see anything special about you. You have only a few followers and they are the poorest and the lowest from among us. We do not think that you are better than we are. In fact, we think you are a liar!'

The chiefs thought that just because they had a lot of money, they were better than Prophet Noah (as) and his followers. They used this as an excuse not to believe in Islam. The leaders of the town became upset and angry because Prophet Noah (as) had made very good and convincing arguments but one of the chiefs finally said, 'O, Noah! You have argued with us so many times and we still don't care what you say. We don't believe you.'

The Qur'an then describes what Prophet Noah felt after so much effort and time with these stubborn people:

"He said: O my Lord! Surely I have called my people by night and by day! And whenever I have called them that You may forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, cover themselves with their garments, and persist and are puffed up with pride: Then surely I called to them aloud: Then surely I spoke to them in public and I spoke to them in secret..."

After preaching and being patient for 950 years, Prophet Noah's people reached such a stage that they would not believe anymore. Allah (SWT) knew in His Knowledge that not one more of Prophet Noah's people would come to believe. In addition to this, Prophet Noah's people asked the Prophet to bring on the punishment. At this stage, Prophet Noah prayed for Allah (SWT) to punish these people.

Allah (SWT) only punished them when He knew that not even one more of them would believe even if they were given more time. In fact, if they had been given more time, they would also mislead those who had already believed. When this happened, Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet Noah to build an ark. His people started mocking and ridiculing him. He simply kept quiet and kept doing his job.

Prophet Noah then asks Allah (SWT) not to leave any trace of them on the Earth:

"And Noah said: My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers"

Then a huge flood began. Even after the flood began, people were given a chance to embark on the ark. Meanwhile the Qur'an says that Noah was ordered to take with him his family (except his son), a pair of each domestic animal and the believers who believed in Noah (as).

"Until when Our command came and water came forth from the valley, We said: Carry in it two of all things, a pair, and your own family– except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And there believed not with him but a few."

Allah (SWT) therefore destroyed all the disbelievers including the son of Prophet Noah who refused to believe in Allah (SWT), by drowning them in the flood; and saving Prophet Noah and those who believed, with the Ark that was built.

AL-ISTIQĀMAH

It is important to note the difference between perseverance and effort. There are some people who do make efforts in the beginning, yet they break down when confronted with difficulties. The important thing, therefore, is that we do not just start a task and then give up easily. Instead, we should keep our motivation and determination and overcome any obstacles we might face and work through them. This is what we learn from the story of Prophet Noah.

persevere
to persist in anything undertaken;
maintain a purpose in spite of difficulty,
obstacles, or discouragement; continue
steadfastly.

Every triumph is not of the same kind. Sometimes it arrives early and sometimes it takes a long time. One must not expect that everything would be done in the same manner and that everything will end in success.

So if success does not arrive early one must not give up efforts. One must not imagine that victory is impossible and very difficult.

A great Muslim scholar narrates the following story: 'I have learnt firm determination from an insect called 'Bijju'. Once I was sitting near a clean and shining pillar in the Masjid when I observed that a tiny insect was attempting to climb the upright stone pillar to reach a lamp that was on the top. I kept sitting the whole night and observing until dawn how relentlessly that insect was struggling to climb up the slippery column. I counted 700 attempts when he was falling down from the middle of the path because the pillar was very smooth and glassy. His legs could not hold on. I was extremely astonished to see the extraordinary determination of that little worm. When it was time for Fajr Prayer, I got up from my place, made ablution and engaged myself in worship. After concluding my prayers, I looked back toward the pillar to find to my absolute astonishment that, as a result of its perseverance and untiring effort the insect had achieved its aim and was sitting close to the burning light!"

THE ROLE OF PERSEVERANCE IN LEARNING

The story of a famous seventh century Muslim scholar, 'Sakkaki', is also very interesting. He began to study at the age of thirty. Though his teachers were not at all hopeful of his success he continued his study with wonderful zeal and enthusiasm. With a view to test the extent of his intelligence a teacher once posed a problem of jurisprudence before him.

The teacher said: 'he teacher says that the skin of a dog becomes clean and pure by pounding.' Sakkaki was supposed to learn this sentence by heart. So he repeated it many times and became ready to recite it when called for. The next day the teacher asked him to recite the

sentence in front of all the other students. He stood up at once to say: 'The dog says the teacher's skin becomes clean and pure by pounding.'" Hearing this, everyone, including the teacher, burst into laughter.

Yet the aged pupil's determination was so sound that despite this experience he did not give up his study, but followed the same course for another ten years. Of course, due to advancing age, his grasping power was becoming weak day by day.

Once he had gone to the forest to study where he noticed that drops of rainwater constantly fell on a rock and made marks on that hard stone. He thought over it and told himself, "My heart is not harder than this rock. If drops of knowledge fall on it constantly like these raindrops they too would certainly leave imprints on it, at least to some extent." He returned home and began to study with added zeal.

At last, as a result of his untiring and continuous efforts and non-stop endeavour he became a distinguished personality of the literary circles of the Arab world. He authored a book, which was, for many years, a textbook in the course of Arabic education.

Therefore, perseverance and uprightness are among the distinctive features of a believer. Allah (SWT) has given glad tidings to those who observe fortitude and perseverance in their affairs. In fact, this is the best means of leading one's life. Then one who wishes to succeed in this world and hereafter must embrace these characteristics.



Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

"One who is steadfast (perseveres) shall get Paradise, but the one who is afflicted with doubt and disbelief shall get the fire."ⁱⁱ

Review Questions

Q1. How long did Prophet Noah guide and preach his people for?

- a. 2000 years
- b. 950 years
- c. 300 years

Q2. Why did Prophet Noah's son also get punished and drown?

- a. He disbelieved in Allah (SWT)
- b. He thought he could swim out of the flood
- c. He tried to save other people

Q3. What is the most important lesson we learn from Prophet Noah's Life?

- a. That we should always remain firm and persevere in the path of Allah
- b. That we should train our children to be more obedient
- c. That we should pray to Allah to punish the bad people immediately

ⁱ REFERENCES

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ⁱⁱ (*Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 119*)

السَّلَامُ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ

PROPHET IBRAHIM^[A.S]

نبي الله إبراهيم (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Prophet Abraham was one of the Principal Prophets
- Should understand the concept of courage
- Should discuss the roots of courage
- Discuss the real examples of courage
- Discuss the Sacrifice of Prophet Abraham (as)
- Discuss the quality of Trust in God (Tawakkul)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Abraham's (as) Bravery

PROPHET ABRAHAM^(AS) IN THE QUR'AN

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Abraham (as) was one of the greatest prophets that lived. He has been mentioned 69 times in the Holy Qur'an in over 25 chapters with one chapter named after him. Indeed, Allah (SWT) through this Prophet has taught us numerous lessons some of which we have come across in previous studies. Allah (SWT) tested Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) with various tests, and every time he passed those tests, Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) was given titles by Allah (SWT) Himself! We shall discuss a few of these titles of Prophet Ibrāhīm (as).

- 1- "Man of truth" (19:41) (كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا) - Allah(SWT) refers to him as a person who would not pretend or lie at any time.
- 2- "A Nation obedient to Allah"(16:120)- (إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا) In this incredible title, Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) is referred to as an entire nation either due to the huge role he played in shaping his society or that he was like a nation by himself against all the idolaters of his time!
- 3- "Chosen Friend of Allah (SWT)" (Khalilullah). This unique title was given to him because in his entire life he did not reject any of Allah's (SWT) creatures and never asked for his need from anyone other than Allah (SWT).
- 4- He was a man of "strength and insight" (أُولَى الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ) (38:45) indicating that not only was he brave and courageous, he was also wise in his approach when confronting the idol worshippers of his time. We shall discuss this particular characteristic in some more detail.

PROPHET ABRAHAM'S BRAVERY AS A YOUTH

The king at the time of Prophet Ibrahim (as), Namrud, discovered that a person of the stature of Prophet Ibrahim (as) would be born and so he ordered the execution of all baby boys. Prophet Ibrahim's (as) mother, due to this threat, gave birth to him in a cave. She remained secluded from her community until Prophet Ibrahim (as) grew up into a young boy.

On returning to the city, he began talking to his uncle Āzar, who had an Idol-making workshop. Even at this tender age he used to bravely challenge those who came to his uncle's shop to buy idols (refer to the Holy Qur'an 26:69-82 to get an idea of the arguments he raised). The only answer they could come up with was that their ancestors were doing it and therefore they did the same.

One particular incident stood out. In Babylonia, it was a day of festivities- the idolaters would gather once a year in open fields to have a celebration. Prophet Ibrahim (as) had had enough of their idol worship:

"Then he cast a glance at the stars and said: Verily, I am sick of what you worship." (37: 88-89)

So he went to their temple and mocked at the idols: "Then he turned towards their gods and said: Do you not eat? What ails you that you no speak?" (37: 91-92) Then he smashed every single idol except for the chief idol, who he left intact.

"Then he started striking them down with his right hand" (37:93).

His intention was to teach the idolaters a very powerful and profound message. The people called Prophet Ibrahim (as) to the scene and asked him if it was he who did that with their gods. He in turn pointed to the chief idol, left intact by him, and asked them to find out the truth from him.

"Then they were turned down on their heads (utterly confounded). They said: You know full well that these idols do not speak!" (21:65).

Prophet Ibrahim (as) had the best of the argument. The people knew the idols could not speak. They turned to each other and confessed their folly and hung their heads in shame. When they admitted that their idols could not speak, Prophet Ibrahim (as) said to them

"What! Do you worship then beside Allah that which cannot profit you, or do you harm? Fie on you and on those you worship beside Allah. What! Do you not understand?" (2: 66-67)

PROPHET ABRAHAM' WISDOM

Although Prophet Ibrahim (as) was incredibly brave, he was also very wise, he would very cleverly pass the message in a subtle yet very profound manner by relating with people first (on a common ground) then gently guiding them to the right path.

This narrative from the Holy Qur'an in Surah An'am (6:76-78) explains one such incident:

"So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star; said he: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: I do not love the setting ones. Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: If my Lord had not guided me I should certainly be of the erring people. Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: Is this my Lord? Is this the greatest? So when it set, he said: O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allah). Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists."

This clearly indicates his method of introducing to the people the idea of Allah (SWT) subtly yet profoundly.

BRAVERY IN ISLAM

Prophet Ibrahim (as) was extremely courageous and took calculated risks in confronting the idolaters of his time. He was never cowardly and always stood up to oppressors and informed people of the truth. A courageous person understands danger, and chooses to overcome their fear and proceed to face the danger and act according to their values. It is not fearlessness, recklessness, or rashness. It is a well-considered, wise, and brave decision to behave constructively despite the fear, discomfort, or temptation. Courage is a strength drawn from a wise balance between the weaknesses of cowardice and recklessness. It is the discipline to act on wisely-chosen values rather than an impulse.

Imam al-Hasan (as) was once asked about courage. He replied:

“It is to know when to stand up to one’s opponents and when to be patient in the face of criticism and slander”.ⁱ

Because courage allows us to act on Islamic values rather than our impulses, its virtue has long been recognized in Islam. Taking meaningless or pointless risks for weak or poor values does not make that action brave even though it may mean overcoming one’s fears.

A coward cannot avoid committing sins or saying the truth because it is easier to lie and sin (in the short run). Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:

“Beware of cowardice for it is a source of defect and shame”ⁱⁱ

There are three types of courage and bravery:

- 1- **Physical Bravery**- Demonstrating physical prowess, overcoming fear—especially fear of death, and launching an attack or an offensive effort are often considered the hallmarks of courage.
- 2- **Endurance**- Sometimes the most difficult obstacles are fatigue, boredom, and other chronic stressors such as relentless bad weather, lack of food or shelter, disrespect, uncertainty, and other annoyances and difficulties. Enduring in the face of these obstacles requires courage.
- 3- **Moral Courage**- Moral courage is choosing to risk embarrassment rather than tolerate injustice. There are five essential elements of moral courage, Presence and recognition of a moral situation, moral choice- knowing your religion and values to make a choice, behaviour—acting to carry out the moral decision, individuality—stepping away from the group and taking personal responsibility for this action, and fear—knowing the risks; facing the fear and overcoming it.

While physical courage is inevitably defeated by fatigue or age, moral courage can be strengthened by repeated use.

Without risking imprisonment or making headlines, we can exercise moral courage every day by being impeccable with our word, doing our best, acting on Islamic principles and values, and refusing the temptation to comply with, assist with, or ignore dishonest, unfair, coercive, cruel, wasteful, or deceptive practices encountered during your everyday activities.ⁱⁱⁱ

THE ROOTS OF COURAGE

What are the factors that make a person truly brave, in the correct definition that we have discussed so far? There are three main qualities that ensure bravery:

- 1- **Fear of Allah (SWT) only**. Courage and bravery is the fruit of the fear of Allah (SWT)- just like Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) who feared no one except Allah (SWT) and therefore was extremely brave. Fear of the punishments in Hell, or the fear of being embarrassed in the eyes of Allah (SWT) may motivate us to have courage in facing our fears. Allah (SWT) tells us that the Prophets were chosen because they had this very characteristic:

“Those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear anyone but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account.” (33:39)

- 2- **Trust in Allah (SWT)**. If one were to trust completely in Allah (SWT) he would bear with any test put forward to him. This was manifested brilliantly by the Muslims at the time of the Holy Prophet (saw) after the battle of Uḥud:

“Those to whom the people said: Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them, but this increased their faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent is the Protector. So they returned with favour from Allah and (His) grace, no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace.” (3:173-174)

- 3- **Knowledge and wisdom**- To be able to cut out a tumour in a person is difficult but someone who has the knowledge (such as a surgeon) is able to overcome that fear and do the right thing. Similarly, when we are afraid of telling the truth, if we know of the punishments in the Hereafter for lying, we would not do it.

HOW DO WE BECOME BRAVE?

The Holy Prophet once asked his companions: “Shall I tell you who is the toughest and strongest from among you?” They replied: “yes, do tell us!” The Prophet (saw) said:

“The strongest and toughest of you is who, when he is happy, his happiness does not lead him to committing sin or doing anything wrong, and when he gets angry, his anger does not prevent him from speaking the truth, and when he is empowered in any way, he does not take hold of that which is not lawfully his.”

Therefore, the easiest way to become brave is do what Allah (SWT) has commanded us to do and avoid what He has told us to avoid! Good characteristics such as generosity, knowledge, self-control all help in building bravery and courage to do the right thing.

Exercise

Discuss with your teacher how you can demonstrate bravery in your everyday life. Each student in the class should give one way in which he/she can exercise bravery. Have any recent scenarios in your life required you to show bravery?

Review Questions

Q1. Why is Prophet Abraham (as) called the “Friend of Allah”?

- a. He gives Allah (SWT) gifts
- b. He likes Allah (SWT)
- c. He never took help from anyone except Allah (SWT)

Q2. Prophet Abraham (as) was brave because

- a. He stood against the idolaters of his time
- b. He took calculated and measured risks to achieve an outcome
- c. He did not seek the help of anyone except Allah (SWT)

Q3. Which of the following actions is actual bravery?

- a. Eating a cockroach as a dare
- b. Telling the truth when someone else got blamed for your error or mistake
- c. Taking a dangerous jump from a height to impress your friends

Lesson 2: Prophet Abraham’s Trust in Allah (SWT)

We learnt in the last lesson the incredible bravery of Prophet Abraham (as) which was due to his immense love and trust in Allah (SWT). In this lesson we will continue to discuss the life of Prophet Abraham (as) and how he managed to achieve such a tremendous amount of trust in Allah (SWT).

ALLAH GRANTS CERTAINTY TO ABRAHAM

Prophet Abraham (as) had a very high status with Allah (SWT) as we have seen in the previous lessons and because he passed so many tests Allah (SWT) had given him, he was granted a very special gift, that of witnessing the actual demonstration of how Allah (SWT) brings the dead to life.

And (remember) when Ibrahim (Abraham) said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe?" He [Ibrahim (Abraham)] said: "Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in Faith." He said: "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces), and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (2:260)

It has to be made clear that this very action of Allah (SWT) helped Prophet Abraham increase in his confidence and trust in Allah (SWT). Prophet Abraham witnessed the miracle of life where the 4 birds before his very eyes re-formed and flew to him.

TRUST IN ALLAH (SWT)- TAWAKKUL

The more we know Allah (SWT) after turning to Him, the more we will acknowledge that Allah (SWT) is the ONLY being with any power in the universe! If we really know this, and take Allah (SWT) as our sole helper, we cannot be afraid of *anything* except Allah!

Imam Ja’far al-Şādiq (a) was asked regarding the words of God Almighty:

“And whoever puts his trust in God, then God suffices him” (65:3).

The Imam (as) said:

“There are various degrees of trust in God. Of them one is that you should put your trust in God in all your affairs, being well pleased with whatever God does to you, knowing for certain that he does not cease in His goodness and grace towards you, and that the command therein rests with Him. So put your trust in God, leaving that to Him and relying upon Him in regard to that and everything other than that.”

To take Allah (SWT) as our sole helper is to have tawakkul in Allah (SWT). Therefore, tawakkul means entrusting all the matters to the Master and relying upon Him fully.^{iv} Prophet Abraham (as) was a true example of what it means to trust in Allah (SWT) and every stage of His life he demonstrated this.

There are 4 types of ways people put their trust in Allah (SWT)

- 1- There are those who only claim on their tongue to trust In Allah (SWT) but this belief has not reached their hearts. For instance, someone who says “I trust In Allah (SWT)”, yet when they face difficulty, they go to other than Allah (SWT) for help!^v
- 2- Then there are those who say they trust in Allah (SWT) but also say they do not need to learn about Islam or the world because they trust Allah (SWT). For instance, they don’t wash their hands before eating saying that we trust in Allah that He will not make us sick! These people are misguided and have not understood or acknowledged Allah (SWT) at all.
- 3- Then there are those who can logically claim to trust in Allah (SWT) and rationally can explain their thoughts but faith has not really entered their hearts. When it comes to practical aspects of trust in Allah (SWT), they are still shaky.
- 4- The true meaning and type of trust we should have in Allah (SWT) is that which was demonstrated so brilliantly by Prophet Abraham (as), that which has penetrated the heart and the whole being. Let us see how Prophet Abraham (as) trusted in Allah (SWT).

The enlightening narrative of the story of Prophet Abraham continues from when he demolished the idols in the temple of the idolaters when they had left the town to celebrate. When they returned they were furious with Abraham:

“They said: Burn him and help your gods, if you are going to do (anything).” (21:68).

They managed to provoke enmity in their people, utilising the argument that if they burnt Abraham they will be able to avenge the injustice done to their gods! Historians have gone into vivid detail of this event saying that firewood was collected for 40 days, and ladies were selling their jewellery to support the creation of the fire that would burn Abraham.

Finally the day arrived, and Prophet Abraham, this young boy, was made to face the fire, a fire that was so big that birds could not fly over it. Allah (SWT) describes it as “*bonyaan*” (37:97), flames on top of flames, a furnace which had to be walled in! It was so big that they could not approach it and had to use a catapult to throw him into the fire, with his hands and legs bound.

A GARDEN OF FIRE

As soon as the rope that would catapult Prophet Abraham (as) into the mountain of flames was cut, the angels in the heavens began asking Allah (SWT) to help him. Jibraïl, with permission of Allah (SWT) descended to Abraham and offered help saying:

“Do you need any help?”

To which Abraham replied:

“From you no, from the lords of the worlds, Yes!”

Jibraïl responded “*then ask your lord!!*”

Prophet Abraham turned and told Jibraïl:

“His knowledge of my situation suffices as my request to Him”

Prophet Abraham was indirectly telling Jibraïl that Allah (SWT) knew full well the situation he was in! Others say that Abraham Prayed to Allah (SWT) saying

“O One, O One, You are needless, the one who begets not nor is he begotten and none is like him, In God I trust!”

This was when Allah (SWT) said:

“We said: O Fire! Be cool and safe for Abraham.” (21:69)

When Prophet Abraham landed in the fire it became safe and cool like a garden! This was also where Allah (SWT) said:

“And Allah did take Abraham for a friend.” (4:125)

Our sixth Imam, commenting on this āyah, said:

“Indeed Allah(SWT) did take Abraham as a Khalīl because he never intended nor did he ever ask anyone other than God”

HOW DO WE GAIN TAWAKKUL?

There are a few steps we can take to gain complete trust in the Almighty.

- 1- Strengthen our belief in Him, learn about Allah, think about His creation, and think about His power and magnificence. This deeper acknowledgement of Allah (SWT) leads to us recognising that there is no power in the universe except Allah (SWT) and therefore we should trust only Him!
- 2- Leave any affairs that are beyond your control in the hands of Allah (SWT). If you have control over something, like studying to do well in an exam, then you must exercise your control but after you have studied and you try your best in an exam, you have to trust in Allah (SWT) to help you pass!
- 3- Reduce sins and increase good deeds- Sins blacken our hearts and reduce our belief in Allah (SWT) whereas if we try our best to obey the commands of Allah (SWT), He will grant us knowledge of Himself and then we can develop trust in Him.

There are many other ways to increase our trust in Allah which we shall discuss in the future years.

BENEFITS OF TAWAKKUL

There are innumerable benefits of having complete trust in Allah (SWT). We shall discuss only a few here.

- 1- Allah (SWT) loves those who trust Him. Allah(SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

“... then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust (Him) (Qur'an, 3: 159)

- 2- Fearlessness and bravery- One who has trust in Allah (SWT) can never fear another human being or even indeed Jinn! If the most powerful Being in the universe is protecting you when you are facing injustice or tyranny, can you be afraid!?

- 3- One's tawakkul in God guarantees his success in this world and the Hereafter, no matter how difficult the tasks, harsh the conditions, or powerful the enemy. Imam 'Ali (as) says;

“Tawakkul on God is [source of] relief from every evil and protection from every enemy.”

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is an example of trusting Allah (SWT) in its correct definition?

- a. Leaving the car unlocked in the parking lot saying “I trust in Allah (SWT)”
- b. Taking medication for an illness then saying “I trust In Allah (SWT)”
- c. Trying to lift your car with your hands to change the tyre saying “God will help me”
- d. Going into an exam without studying or preparing and expecting Allah to help you.

Q2. Prophet Abraham (as) trusted Allah (SWT) to save him because

- a. He knew that Allah (SWT) was the only one who could save him.
- b. He had done so many good deeds and thought he deserved to be saved.
- c. He thought God needed him for continuing the message of monotheism and therefore had to save him.
- d. He sent the angels to save him.

Q3. We can gain trust in Allah by:

- a. Avoiding all sins
- b. Doing exactly what Allah (SWT) tells us to do
- c. Increasing our faith by learning about our religion.
- d. Thanking Allah (SWT) for all the gifts He has bestowed upon us
- e. All the above

ⁱ Mizanul Hikmah Tradition 3218

ⁱⁱ Ibid. tradition 1042

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.emotionalcompetency.com/courage.htm>

^{iv} 40 Hadith- Imam Khomani

^v Teachers, please use relevant examples for the students to illustrate this point.

نبي الله يوسف (ع)

PROPHET YŪSUF [A.S]

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Prophet Yūsuf (as)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the story of Prophet Yūsuf (as) in more detail
- Understand that jealousy is an evil quality
- Understand the negative effects of jealousy
- Discuss the ways of overcoming jealousy and envy
- Discuss that even if jealous feelings are present, we should never act on them
- Discuss al-ghibṭah
- Know about Prophet Yūsuf's (as) life in the Egyptian king's house, and his time in prison
- Discuss Prophet Yūsuf's (as) reunion with his family after coming into a position of power
- Understand the importance of making sure we do not put ourselves in tempting situations
- Understand the importance of chastity and avoiding sexual relations prior to marriage
- Understand the negative consequences of sexual relations prior to, or outside, marriage

The story of Prophet Yūsuf is detailed by Allah (SWT) in Chapter 12 of the Holy Qur'an (Surat Yūsuf). It is a unique chapter of the Qur'an in that it is the only story that has been revealed chronologically to the Holy Prophet. Also, out of the 27 times that Prophet Yūsuf's name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, only twice does his name appear outside Chapter 12. This is in contrast to the names of other Prophets like Moses and Abraham that appear frequently over several chapters.

It is in this chapter only that Allah (SWT) praises His revelations as the best of revelations, perhaps referring to all the stories in the Qur'an – or as many exegetes have said that the reference to the 'best of stories' is the story of Prophet Yūsuf.

Caution against Myths related to this story

There is a false hadith attributed to Imam 'Ali (as) which discourages women from reading the story of Prophet Yūsuf (as) because it would lead to bad temptations. We should be aware of such false ahadith and not let them influence us. Allah (SWT) tells us in this surah that there are lessons in the stories of the Qur'an for anyone who is mindful, male or female.

“Indeed in their (the prophetic) stories, there is a lesson for people of understanding” (12:111)

Prophet Yūsuf (as) was the eleventh of the twelve sons of Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon them both). Prophet Yūsuf (as) was different to the rest of his brothers, not only because he was the only prophet amongst them, but also because he possessed remarkable beauty both in his physical appearance and in his personality.

This, together with the fact that Prophet Yūsuf (as) lost his mother when he was a young boy, made Prophet Ya'qūb deeply affectionate toward him. Yūsuf's brothers noticed the special attention that he was receiving from their father and they did not like it.

THE SPECIAL DREAM

When Prophet Yūsuf (as) was about eight years old, he had a dream that there were eleven stars with the moon and the sun prostrating in front of him and he reported this dream to his father. It is important to understand here that the dreams that Prophets have, unlike ordinary people's dreams, are always a reflection of some reality (recall the dream of Prophet Abraham where he was ordered by Allah to slaughter his son). Being aware of this, Prophet Ya'qūb advised his son not to relate it to his brothers lest their jealousy should be excited. The Holy Qur'an relates:

"He (Ya'qūb) said: O' my dear son! Tell not your brothers of your vision lest they should plot against you because surely Satan is the manifest enemy of man"
(12:5)

If we pay close attention to conversation between Prophet Yūsuf and his father, Prophet Ya'qūb, we will notice that they address each other with utmost respect. Yūsuf says "O my father!" and Ya'qūb replies in return, "O my son". Here, Allah (SWT) is teaching us the correct manner of addressing our parents and vice-versa. Unfortunately, many children nowadays call their parents by their first names, and when the parents grow old, these names become very rude.

THE PLOT AGAINST YŪSUF (AS) (AS)

The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (as) could no longer tolerate just watching the special attention that he was getting from their father. They believed that they deserved it more since they were older than Prophet Yūsuf (as) and were more useful to their father. With what began simply as a negative thought now turned to strong jealousy toward Yusuf and they decided to get rid of him. An initial proposal of killing him was not unanimously accepted by the brothers so they instead decided to throw him into a deep well. The Holy Qur'an says:

"One said: Slay Joseph or drive him to some other land so that your father's favours may be exclusively for you and after that you shall live as upright persons. One among them said: Kill not Joseph but cast him down into the bottom of a pit if you must do it so that some wayfarers may pick him up." (12: 9-10)

In order to seek their father's permission to take Yusuf out from house, they created a lie. They pretended to take Yusuf out so that he could enjoy and have fun:

"Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily, we will take care of him." (12:12)

The way Prophet Ya'qūb replied to the brothers of Yusuf here is interesting. He did not refuse them to take Prophet Yusuf out of the house on the basis that having 'fun and enjoyment' is a vain and sinful activity as so many 'spiritual' people today have wrongfully claimed. Instead, he declines their request on the basis of a realistic danger i.e. the wolf. So, we can learn from this that setting aside time in our days for entertainment in the form of sporting activities are all permissible provided they are all within the boundaries of the rules set by Allah (SWT).

Prophet Ya'qūb eventually consented. The brothers executed their plan. Prophet Yūsuf (as), only a young boy, was left in the bottom of the well for an unknown period until he was rescued by a passing trade caravan. Did Prophet Yūsuf (as) deserve this treatment from his brothers? Of course he didn't! Did he then develop any hatred toward them? Did he pray to Allah (SWT) to punish them? We will discuss how Prophet Yūsuf (as) dealt with his brothers later in the story. However, what is clear is that when Allah (SWT) wishes to raise the ranks of his servants in this world and in paradise, He puts them through several trials. Being left alone in the bottom of a well was just the first of many such trials that Prophet Yūsuf (as) would have to face.

JEALOUSY AND ITS EVILS

WHAT IS JEALOUSY?

Jealousy is a mental state in which a person wishes for that a blessing or talent possessed by another person is taken away from them. Sometimes, the jealous person does not even care whether he would then get that blessing himself or not.

The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (as) possessed such characteristics. Whilst they did not mind not receiving special attention from their father toward themselves, they simply could not tolerate the fact that Prophet Yūsuf (as) enjoyed it.

Jealousy in a person begins as a negative thought and if not stopped, can cause the person to commit unfathomable crimes such as murder – as some the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (as) initially intended.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF JEALOUSY

- A jealous person will never enjoy the pleasures this world and will face punishment in the Hereafter, unless he repents. It was *this* unhappiness that the brothers of Yūsuf (as) thought they could distance from themselves by throwing him into the well. Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“The fruit of jealousy is the misery of this world and the Hereafter”ⁱ

- Jealousy eats away all good deeds and the person eventually loses his faith. One again, we see this from the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (as). Remember they were all sons of a Prophet! One would expect them to be faithful and righteous. However, jealousy ate away their faith and caused them to throw their innocent, young brother into the well. Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:

“Jealousy consumes faith like the fire consumes dry wood”ⁱⁱ

- In another Ḥadīth, we are warned against jealousy since it is the seed of disbelief in Allah (SWT).
- Jealousy negatively affects one’s mental and physical health so much so that it can end up killing the target of their jealousy. Imam ‘ (as) said:

“How capable jealousy is! And how just it is, that it starts off with its perpetrator (the jealous person) and ends up killing him!”ⁱⁱⁱ

PRACTICAL CURES FOR JEALOUSY

Like every other spiritual malady, Islam has also provided a prescription for curing jealousy. We will mention a few practical ones:

- To force ourselves to be kind and affectionate toward the person we are jealous of. To force ourselves to

respect and honour him and to always speak of him positively in his absence. Initially, we will find this to be very difficult but with some persistence, this attitude will become second nature.

- To study the negative effects of jealousy both on our physical health and on our spirituality. We should also study the evil consequences faced by jealous people in the past and thereby understand that we too are not immune from those. As human beings, we are created to naturally avoid those things that are harmful to us, and jealousy is certainly the most harmful, as Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

”Jealousy is the worst disease”^{iv}

- The most effective step to eradicate the roots of jealousy from our minds and hearts is in its earliest stage - similar to our physical health whereby the sooner a cancer is detected, the better the chances that a given treatment will be effective. We should carefully ‘watch’ over our thoughts and as soon as any negative thoughts about others arise, we should try to remove them from our mind there and then and change them to positive thoughts.

IS IT BAD TO DESIRE WHAT OTHERS HAVE?

There is nothing wrong with being desirous of the good others have without wanting them to lose it. This is called *al-ghibṭah* in Arabic and has positive effects since it causes a person to work hard toward achieving these things. A jealous person on the other hand wishes that the other person loses whatever position, wealth or skill he has and therefore as discussed, it is very bad.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1. Which ONE of the following is TRUE?

- Prophet Yūsuf (as) was the son of Prophet Ya’qūb
- Prophet Ya’qūb was the son of Prophet Yūsuf (as)
- Prophet Ya’qūb had 12 brothers, one of whom was Yūsuf (as)

Q2. Which ONE of the following is TRUE?

- Jealousy negatively affects our physical, mental and spiritual health
- If a person is moderately jealous then this is good for him.
- The best way to treat jealousy is by completely ignoring the person we are jealous toward.

Lesson 2: Life After the Well

Young Yūsuf (as) remained in the deep well for an unknown period of time. Was there anyone around who could save him?

Yūsuf (as) knew that Allah (SWT) was fully aware of his situation and therefore he called onto Him for help. Allah (SWT) responded with what seemed to be a mere 'coincidence'. A trade caravan passed by the well and some of the men needed water to quench their thirst. One of them lowered a bucket and into the well and when he lifted it, to his surprise, a young boy emerged. The men hid Yūsuf (as) in their caravan and they sold him to the King of Egypt in the slave market. The Holy Qur'an says:

"And there came a wayfarer and they sent down a water drawer. He let down his pail into the pit. He said: What a good luck, here is a youth. And they kept his case secret to make merchandise of him and Allah knew what they did, and they sold him for a petty price, a few dirhams and they attached little value to him."

YŪSUF (AS) DEFEATS DESIRES

Yūsuf (as) found his place as a slave in the palace of the Egyptian King. He grew up into a handsome and attractive young man with great charm. Because of this, everyone loved him.

Like all previous prophets, when Prophet Yūsuf (as) reached a certain age, Allah (SWT) blessed him with special knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge and wisdom is special because it is not acquirable through any formal education or through reading books. Instead, it is something that Allah (SWT) places into the hearts of those He wishes. These gifts empower them to witness the hidden realities of actions performed in this world. For us as ordinary beings to be recipients of such divine gifts, we need to become sincere doers of good i.e. perform good deeds solely for the sake of Allah (SWT):

"And when he (Joseph) attained his full manhood, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, thus We reward the doers of good" (12:22)

As time passed, the king's wife put Yūsuf (as) in a very seductive situation because she had fallen deeply in love with him. One day in the absence of her husband (the

king), she desired to be very close to him. She locked all the doors in the palace (12 doors according to some narrations) and prepared a seductive room wherein she trapped Yūsuf (as) and herself.

Remember that Yūsuf (as) was a young handsome man and the king's wife was a beautiful woman. There was no one around to know about what would happen.

The king's wife took a cloth and covered an idol that was in the room out of respect for her God. Yūsuf (as) said:

"What about *my* Lord who is All-Watching"?

She ran towards him, but Yūsuf (as) ran away from her, and called on to Allah (SWT) in desperation:

"I seek protection in Allah"^{vi}

Prophet Yūsuf (as) refrained from even casting a glance at her. He desperately tried to get rid of her but she chased him. With the special knowledge he was endowed with, Yūsuf (as) 'saw' the evil reality of the sin and he witnessed the glory and might of Allah (SWT) and thus was he able to protect himself.

Remember that whenever a servant calls upon Allah (SWT) sincerely for help, Allah (SWT) responds immediately. Allah (SWT) dispelled the evil of the woman from Prophet Yūsuf (as). If we pay close attention to the wordings of the Qur'an, we will notice that because of Yūsuf's (as) pure and sincere plea for help, Allah (SWT) caused the evil desires and indecency to turn away from him instead of Yūsuf (as) being removed from the evil.

Just at that time the King appeared at the scene and got an idea of what had transpired. The king's wife became frightened. She immediately tried to rid herself of any fault by pouring all the blame on Prophet Yūsuf (as).

Confident that he was innocent, Yūsuf (as) responded to the accusation very calmly. He said:

"It was she that attempted to seduce me,"^{vii}

Nevertheless, because Yūsuf (as) disobeyed the king's wife, she would punish him. Yūsuf's (as) prayed to his Lord:

"O my Lord! Prison is more dear to me than that to which they (women) invite me to. Unless You (Allah) turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one of the ignorant."^{viii}

SOME LESSONS FROM THE -STORY

The main lesson we can get this part of Prophet Yūsuf's (as) story revolves around staying chaste before we get married since the effects in this world and the next are disastrous. Some of these negative effects are:

A study carried out in 2005 to determine the effects of pre-marital relationship on teenagers' emotional state showed that teenagers who entered into such relationships usually regretted them later. These teenagers were two to three times more likely to become depressed.

The rate of divorce in couples who engage in pre-marital relationships is significantly higher than in those who do not. Each partner is usually unhappy with the other and they feel forced to satisfy themselves with other people.

LESSONS FROM PROPHET THE LIFE OF YŪSUF (AS)

We should be aware that any intimate relationships that we have with the opposite gender prior to marriage are *harām* and therefore punishable both in this world and in the hereafter. Such a person will never enjoy a happy life after marriage. Divorces are usually the end result as each partner is usually unhappy with the other and they cheat on themselves. Eventually, the whole family becomes separate and fragmented. In the hereafter also, such person will undergo severe punishment.

So, how can we avoid such a negative end and react like Prophet Yūsuf's (as) in controlling our desires and resist any temptation from the opposite gender?

The most effective practical way is to get married at an early age.

The Prophet (saw) said, 'When any young person gets married at the prime of his youth, his inner Satan cries out in rage, 'Woe unto him! Woe unto him! Two thirds of his faith have now been secured against me, and he has only to be careful of his duty to Allah in the remaining third.'^{ix}

However if this is difficult, then we can avoid falling into sins by other ways prescribed to us by Islam:

- Avoid being in a place or situation where such a risk may present itself. This includes being alone with the opposite gender, either physically or virtually i.e. over the internet. Even Prophet Yūsuf's (as) preferred to be in prison, away from all the mischief, just so that he is safe.
- Avoid having the opposite gender as a friend just for 'social' reasons. This includes friends on Facebook or any other social media sites.
- Ensure that you are physically active in sport or always occupied in other extra-curricular activities such as community service etc. Such activities prevent our thoughts from straying in the wrong way.
- Always take prayers seriously as it keeps one away from evil and indecency.

“Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents great sins...”
(29:45)

YŪSUF'S (AS) IS IMPRISONED

Allah (SWT) rescued Prophet Yūsuf's (as) from the mischief of the women by responding to his prayer. In prison, Prophet Yūsuf (as) did not waste any time dwelling on his past. He did not complain about the injustices done to him by his brothers and now by the king's wife. Instead, he immediately began to preach the message of the Oneness of God to his prison-mates. It was only a matter of time before both Yūsuf's (as) words and immaculate character touched the hearts of the prisoners. They exclaimed:

“...Verily, we consider you (Joseph) as one of the doers of good...” (12:36)

Yūsuf's (as) remained in prison for several years until he was eventually released by the king. The king had heard of Yūsuf's (as) special dream-interpreting abilities and he desperately needed such a service^x.

Prophet Yūsuf (as) interpreted the king's complex dream in a way that no other person could.

The king was so amazed by the interpretation that he accepted Prophet Yūsuf (as) as a minister in his government. Such was Yūsuf's (as) journey. Allah (SWT) had rescued his beloved Prophet from the depths of the well and placed him into the seat of the minister of Egypt.

REUNION WITH THE FAMILY

Prophet Yūsuf (as) was a very generous minister. His generosity was not only enjoyed by the people of Egypt but also those from surrounding towns. It so happened once, around 40 years after the incident of the well, that the brothers of Yūsuf (as) who lived in neighbouring Kan'ān desperately needed food. They had heard of the generosity of Prophet Yūsuf (as) although they did not know who he was. When they visited Yūsuf (as) they did not recognise him, but he recognised his brothers.

Yūsuf (as) treated them very kindly and made their stay very comfortable despite the fact that they had treated him unfairly. Eventually, Yūsuf (as) introduced himself to them. While Yūsuf (as) was now capable of taking revenge against his brothers, he instead chose to forgive them. He did not even make them feel guilty for what they had done to him in the past. So noble was his character! He said to his brothers:

"No blame on you this day, may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!"
(12:92)

Prophet Yūsuf (as) also eventually met with his beloved father Prophet Ya'qūb and the rest of his family. The moral of the story is that whoever remembers Allah (SWT) and is patient during difficult times, Allah (SWT) will grant them a huge reward.

"Verily, he who fears Allah with obedience to Him (by abstaining from sins and evil deeds, and by performing righteous good deeds), and is patient, then surely, Allah makes not the reward of the good-doers be wasted"
(12:90)

Review Questions

Q1. Which of these is a good way to protect ourselves from falling into sins with the opposite gender?

- a. Get married at an early age
- b. Read the story of Prophet Yūsuf (as)
- c. Both a & b

Q2. According to the Holy Qur'an, which of these were the ingredients to Prophet Yūsuf's (as) success?

- a. Piety and Patience
- b. Power and Wealth
- c. Physical beauty

ⁱ Scales of Wisdom, Pg 289., Hadith No. 1600

ⁱⁱ Scales of Wisdom, Pg 290., Hadith No. 1607

ⁱⁱⁱ Scales of Wisdom, Pg 289., Hadith No. 1599

^{iv} Scales of Wisdom, Pg 289., Hadith No. 1597

^v Holy Quran 12:19-20

^{vi} Holy Quran 12:23

^{vii} Holy Qur'an 12:26

^{viii} Holy Qur'an 12:33

^{ix} Bihar al-Anwar, p. 221, no. 34

^{xx} There are many stories of Allah (SWT) granting youth who had controlled their sexual desires with the special ability of being able to interpret dreams. Amongst these youth is Ibn Sireen

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:181

ANCIENT PROPHETS

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Prophet Shu'ayb (as)

“And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him.”(11:84)

The story of Prophet Shu'ayb is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an mainly in Surat al-A'raf (7) and Surat Hud (11).

Just like most early Messengers, Prophet Shu'ayb was sent to his community in order to bring them to belief in the Unity of God. His community had strayed from the right path and were worshipping idols. His main message was to teach his people about the true concept of the Oneness of God.

Yet Prophet Shu'ayb had another important message for his people.

“O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.”(11:85)

Prophet Shu'ayb was sent to two communities mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The first was called al-Aykah, while the second were the people of Madyan. Both these groups had a common problem of cheating in business.

They cheated by doing the following:

- They would rig their scales so that when they were measuring the products of other people, the scales would show them for less than what they really were. This way, they would have to pay less for what they bought
- They under-valued the products of others by criticizing them excessively, so that they could buy them for less

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the mission of Prophet Shu'ayb (as)
- Review the details of Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) economic message/principles
- Discuss the world's current economic system and the alternative systems
- Discuss the impact that capitalism and the culture of consumerism has on our lives
- Know the story of Prophet Lūṭ (as)
- Understand that homosexuality is considered an abominable sin in Islam and other religions
- Understand that homosexuality is unnatural and people are not born as homosexuals
- Understand the negative effects of homosexuality
- Understand how we should deal with homosexuals in our society

- They lied to their customers and hid the defects of the products they wanted to sell to their customers
- They over-valued their own products, so that they could sell them for more
- They lived in a fertile land, so the desert people around them had no choice but to trade with the people of al-Aykah, and these people used this as a way of taking advantage of the less fortunate people.

Prophet Shu'ayb preached to his people, urging them to be mindful of Allah's favours upon them, and to use these favours to be fair to others- not to cheat and take advantage of them. He urged them to be fair in business, to not cheat with the scales, and to only engage in ḥalāl business.

They rejected his teachings. They tried to trick him, they accused him of being insane, and then they threatened to exile him from their land.

Finally, Allah (SWT) punished them, sending upon them His Wrath, leaving them as corpses in their own homes.

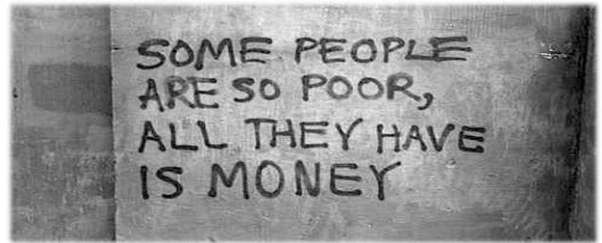
“And when Our command came, We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him, by mercy from Us. And the shriek seized those who had wronged, and they became within their homes [corpses] fallen prone.”(11:94)



This was the fatal end of the disbelieving people of Prophet Shu'ayb, as was the end of every people before and after them who rejected the Divine Message and belied Allah's Messengers and Prophets.

PROPHET SHU'AYB'S ECONOMIC MESSAGE

Prophet Shu'ayb's community, lacking faith in Allah and in the reckoning of the Hereafter, had fallen into sin, especially as might be expected, into cheating and injustice in their business dealings. So widespread was the corruption amongst Prophet Shu'ayb's people that it was considered the norm in their society. No one questioned their way of life as it brought them great material wealth and 'success' in their day-to-day business transactions.



We must be careful not to fall into the same sin, especially as we live in a world ruled by the system of capitalism. Whenever we engage in business, we must remember the following rules:

Do not put down the price when buying.

- Do not exaggerate about the good qualities of what you are selling
- Do not use oaths when selling or buying (e.g. 'I swear to God this car does not have a single problem.')
- Do not lie
- Only engage in ḥalāl business. We will learn about which types of business are allowed in Islam.

The Holy Prophet (saw) said: "Indeed, the trader who is both honest and trustworthy in both word and deed will, on the Day Of Judgment, arise with the Prophets of Allah and the righteous and the martyrs."

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Capitalism is the main driving force in today's society and the school which governs most of the world's economic transactions and behaviours.

In capitalism, the final aim is to sell products for a profit. Whether people need these products, and whether they are satisfied with them, is not taken much into consideration.

Capitalism is based on the fact that people should try to do as well as they can for themselves and not worry so much about society.

Since the main goal of capitalism is to sell products, it leads to a culture of *consumerism*. This is a culture in which people are encouraged to continually buy new things, even if they are not necessary. In such a culture, the following things are encouraged:

- Separation of families- because a separated family needs two households, which means more things need to be bought, and thus more profit
- Lack of charity- if the aim is to make profit, then charity and the needy are forgotten. The only charity that is given is just to show off and make more profit
- Capitalism means that farmers will rather burn their left-over stock than give it as charity to make sure prices stay up.

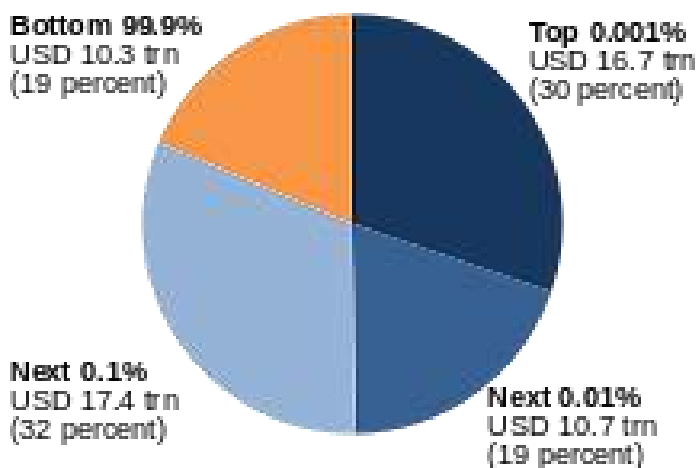


THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The below facts are a direct result of greed and excessive consumption that the current economic system, capitalism, is responsible for:

- At least 80% of the world lives on less than \$10 a day.
- 1% of the world's population has 81% of the world's wealth. The other 99% are left with only 19% of all that wealth between them.
- Almost 50% of all children worldwide live in poverty
- The world's 100 richest people could eliminate world poverty 4 times over!

Global Distribution of Wealth



THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Islam on the other hand orders us to take the middle path and balance individual needs and the needs of society. The Islamic economic system is based on the following principles:

- Justice and fairness. Thus a person is not allowed to cheat or be unfair to others just to make a profit. Exploitation is very much forbidden in Islam

- Real ownership belongs to Allah: so if a person is need and we have the resources to help them, then we must do so, because the wealth we have is a trust from Allah (SWT), and does not really belong to us. This system encourages charity based on need and sincerity
- Living moderately: while Islam does not ask us to forego comforts and luxuries, we are encouraged and expected to live moderately, so that others in the world are not deprived. Rather than always buying and buying, we are encouraged to be content and part of our excess wealth to help those who need it more



If all humans were to implement these basic principles in our daily lives then we would see all the financial problems of the world vanish and equality of wealth would spread- poverty itself would cease to exist.

Review Questions

Q1. What was Prophet Shu'ayb's main message?

- To believe in one God
- To feed the needy
- To trade with others in a fair and just manner
- Both a & c

Q2. Capitalism is:

- An economic principle based on justice and distribution of wealth
- An economic principle based on selling goods for maximum profits
- An economic principle based on Islam

Q3. Circle the main principles that a Muslim should adhere to while involved in trade:

- » Do not put down the price when buying
- » Bargain when buying to get the lowest price possible
- » Do no exaggerate about the good qualities of what you are selling
- » Do not tell the whole truth to customers so they buy your products
- » Do not use oaths when selling or buying
- » You can use oaths so people can believe you and trust you
- » Do not lie
- » Only engage in ḥalāl business

Prophet Lūṭ (as)

PROPHET LŪṬ (AS)

Prophet Lūṭ (as) is one of the prophets sent to mankind by Allah (SWT). He lived at the time of Prophet Abraham. In fact, it was Prophet Abraham who sent him to a certain village in order to guide its people. This prophet is mentioned 27 times in the Holy Qur'an, and his story is mentioned in 82 āyāt.

The emphasis in Prophet Lūṭ's (as) story is the vicious practice of his people- the practice of homosexuality. He preached to them for a long time, urging them to stop this vicious practice and go back to their nature, but they did not heed his message and threatened him. When there was no chance of them being guided, Allah (SWT) sent his punishment upon them.

“And (remember) Lūṭ when he said to his people: "You commit *Al-Fāḥishah* (an abominable sin) which none has preceded you in (committing) among people. Verily, you do sodomy with men, and rob the wayfarer, And practise *Al-Munkar* in your meetings." But his people gave no answer except, that they said: "Bring Allah's Torment upon us if you are one of the truthful. He said: "My Lord! Give me victory over the people who are corrupt”(29:28-30)

Allah (SWT) sent a group of angels to the village of Prophet Lūṭ (as). They came to Prophet Lūṭ (as) in the form of humans, and stayed with him as guests. Prophet Lūṭ (as) was scared that his people would assault them. He sneaked them into his house, but his wife told the men of the village about the visitors and the people of his town came to take the visitors.

Prophet Lūṭ (as) went so far as to offer the villages his daughters in marriage in order to bring them back to the right path. His people did not listen and tried to charge into his house. At that time, the visitors told Prophet Lūṭ (as) that they were angels, sent to destroy his people.

“And when Our Messengers came to Lūṭ he was grieved because of them, and felt straitened on their account. They said: "Have no fear, and do not grieve! Truly, we shall save you and your family, except your wife, she will be of those who remain behind. Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky, because they have been rebellious. And indeed We have left thereof an evident *āyah* for a folk who understand.” (29:33-35)

They advised Prophet Lūṭ (as) and his family to flee the village before the morning. Prophet Lūṭ (as) and his family fled, except for his wife who remained behind and suffered punishment along with the people of that village. The prophet and those who believed with him were saved, and the Promise of God to give help and victory to His prophets and supporters came true. In contrast, the stubborn people of the village, intent on their evil practices, met a horrible death.

“And (as for) Lūṭ, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which wrought abominations; surely they were an evil people, transgressors” (21:73)

In the rest of this lesson, we will discuss the very important issue of homosexuality.

ISLAM CONDEMNS HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is becoming more and more common and people are seeing it as something normal. These people now have rights and are protected by law. However, the Bible and Torah, as well as the Qur'an of course, condemn homosexuality. The Torah says: 'if a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both have done what is detestable and should be put to death'. Homosexuality used to be considered a medical and psychological problem, but because of gay people influencing experts this view was changed.

There is no doubt that Islam condemns and forbids homosexuality. If a person commits such acts and does not repent before they die, their punishment in the Hereafter is to suffer in Hell. As the Holy Qur'an confirms, the people of Prophet Lūṭ (as) were destroyed by a great torment from God because of their evil acts.

“Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky, because they have been rebellious. And indeed We have left thereof an evident *āyah* for a folk who understand.” (29:33-35)

ARE PEOPLE BORN HOMOSEXUAL?

Unfortunately, the commonness of homosexuality has led to a commonly held belief that people are born homosexual and have no choice in this matter. Some people have claimed that a person's genetic makeup can cause them to be homosexual, while others have claimed that exposure to certain hormones while in the mother's womb can cause this.

All the above claims are far from the truth. The studies used to support the above claims all had major flaws in their designs and conclusions. For every one of these studies, there were other studies that showed absolutely no hormonal, anatomical or genetic contributors to homosexuality.

No gene or group of genes has ever scientifically been shown to cause or contribute to homosexuality. Yet even if there was a genetic factor involved, the most it could be is a genetic predisposition. This means that a person may have a predisposition to doing something, without being forced or compelled to it. Just like some people are genetically predisposed to have anger problems or addiction problems, or a disease such as schizophrenia. This does not mean that we should condone all their actions and claim what they do is right. Instead, we should try to facilitate help for them so that they can return to their natural state.

According to the teachings of Islam, which are supported by science and logic, people are not born homosexual. Rather, certain events in their life, or actions they undertake, can affect them negatively and so they choose such a lifestyle.

Many homosexuals underwent severe trauma in their childhood and some were sexually abused. This led to severe psychological problems and difficulties in interacting with the opposite gender. Rather than facing and solving these issues, some of these people resort to homosexuality. Again, rather than condoning this lifestyle, we should offer help and treatment for such people. There are examples of many people who were previously homosexuals came back to a normal lifestyle. Other homosexuals simply began to live very sinful and lewd lives, and engaged in unnatural sexual acts. This caused a disease within their hearts which eventually led them to engage in homosexuality.

THE DANGERS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The first and foremost danger of this problem is that it is an absolutely unnatural act. The way humans are- physically, emotionally and mentally- obviously shows that they are suited to engage in intimate relations with the opposite gender only. When a person goes against this natural order, it will certainly have very negative results. It creates a physical and mental conflict within that person and leads to great suffering.

This is why homosexuals suffer from much higher rates of mental health problems than other people. They are more likely to be depressed, anxious and to commit suicide. Usually their relationships are short lasting and

there is a high level of domestic violence in these relationships.

They also suffer from a much higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. In western countries most people who suffer from HIV and AIDS and other major sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis and gonorrhoea are homosexual. Doctors are educated to specifically screen homosexuals for these diseases more than others and there are special health services dedicated to treating such people, all of which shows that this lifestyle is a major contributor to contracting these terrible diseases.

We also have to consider the long term impact on societies. Children are meant to be raised by a male and a female, so that their personalities remain balanced and healthy. If homosexuality continued to be condoned, children may end up being raised by two males or two females, and this can lead to many negative effects on those children. Additionally because two males or two females cannot naturally conceive children, society will be forced into more unnatural and unethical ways of conceiving children. This will also lead to major individual and societal problems.

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH HOMOSEXUALS?

If we feel a person is suffering from mental health problems and this is the reason for their considering themselves a homosexual, then we should try to do what we can to help them.

If however they are beyond the stage of helping and are stubborn or proud of their homosexuality, then we should avoid them as much as we can. We should also show our disapproval in whatever we can without getting ourselves into trouble. We should definitely not befriend them or encourage them.

It is also very important not to sympathise with them or feel pressured by society to accept them. It is our duty as Muslims to take a stand on this issue and forbid evil by showing our disapproval in whatever way we can.

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Lūṭ lived at the same time as which other Prophet?

- Prophet Jesus
- Prophet Moses
- Prophet Abraham

Q2. How many times is Prophet Lūṭ mentioned in the Qur'an?

- 10
- 15
- 27

السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللَّهِ

PROPHET MUSA^[A.S]

نبي الله موسى (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Revise the aspects of Prophet Moses' early life and struggles with Pharaoh
- Discuss the struggles of Prophet Moses with his people after crossing the sea, including
- Discuss the Holy Qur'an teachings in relation to Judaism and the Jewish people
- Discuss the story of Prophet Moses and Khidr, revising its morals
- Discuss the fact that this world has a deeper system of metaphysical laws

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Prophet Mūsā

In this lesson we will discuss the life of Prophet Mūsā (as) in greater detail than in previous years.

Prophet Mūsā (as) is the prophet who is mentioned most in the Holy Qur'an, with his name appearing 134 times across 34 chapters. This unique mention can be explained by the following:

- The Holy Prophet (saw) suffered a lot from the hands of his community. His sufferings were similar to those of Prophet Mūsā (as), although a lot more severe. Allah (SWT) wished to console and strengthen the heart of His final messenger by narrating the story of Prophet Mūsā (as) so as to inform him that previous prophets also suffered and that Allah (SWT) was always the best Helper of His Prophets.
- Secondly, since the Jews at the time of the Holy Prophet were the same community whose forefathers had received abundant blessings including being the recipients of over 400 prophets, Allah (SWT) wished to warn them against repeating the same mistakes they made with Prophet Mūsā (as).
- Thirdly, the stories of the people of Bani Israel are a warning to the Muslims at the time of the Prophet, and for the rest of time, to not make the mistakes that were made by that tribe.

Unlike the biblical records of this story, the Holy Qur'an has ignored all unnecessary details which would make the story lengthy and boring. Instead, it has focused on only those parts from which important lessons can be derived.

THE BIRTH OF PROPHET MŪSĀ (AS)

As we learnt in previous lessons, the birth of Prophet Mūsā (as) was kept secret in order to protect his life from the vicious Pharaoh of the time.

Even before Prophet Mūsā (as) was born, his father, ‘Imrān, died. It is in the wisdom of Allah (SWT) that we find many of His prophets are orphans during their childhood. Some examples include Prophet Jesus who was born without a father, Prophet Joseph who lost his mother when he was an infant, and Prophet Muḥammad (saw) who lost both his parents whilst he was still a young boy. Perhaps Allah (SWT), out of His special Mercy and love toward His prophets, desired to manage their affairs directly and also to develop within them the purest form of Monotheism where they would see no solution to their needs and problems except from Allah (SWT) directly.

Prophet Mūsā’s (as) mother managed to secretly hide her pregnancy and give birth to Prophet Mūsā (as). She feared the death of her son but Allah (SWT), having a plan for his Prophet, inspired her to hide Prophet Mūsā (as) in a casket and place it in the river. Prophet Mūsā’s (as) mum was trembling with fear at the idea but Allah (SWT) removed her fears and assured her that her son would be fine and that he would be returned to her. The Holy Qur’an says:

“And We inspired the mother of Moses, (saying): "Suckle him, but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you, and shall make him one of (Our) Messengers.”ⁱ

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

The word ‘revelation’ as has been linguistically used refers to the transmission of Divine knowledge and instructions from Allah (SWT) exclusively to His prophets. The word for this in Arabic, as per the Holy Qur’an, is al-waḥy.

However, there is another form of communication between Allah (SWT) and other slaves who are not prophets. This is when Allah (SWT) inspires something into the heart of a person, as he did with the mother of Prophet Mūsā (as). This is called inspiration, and the Arabic word used for it is ilhām.

In fact, both ordinary humans and animals can be recipients of inspiration. Allah (SWT) inspired the bees to build their houses in certain places:

“And your Lord inspired the bee, saying: "Take you habitations in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (humans) erect.”ⁱⁱ

MOSES FLOATS TO SAFETY



Putting all her trust in Allah (SWT), Prophet Mūsā’s (as) mother gently placed the wooden casket in the river and watched her beloved baby float away. Soon after, Prophet Mūsā (as) was picked up by the Pharaoh – an enemy of both Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mūsā (as). The Pharaoh and his wife, Āsiyah, fell in love with him and because they had no children of their own, they decided to adopt him.

“And the wife of Pharaoh said: "A comfort of the eye for me and for you. Kill him not, perhaps he may be of benefit to us, or we may adopt him as a son." And they perceive not (the result of that)”ⁱⁱⁱ

Prophet Mūsā (as) refused to breast-feed from any of 400 wet-nurses that were provided for him, until his mother was called to feed him, without anyone being aware she was in fact his mother. In this way, Allah (SWT) reunited this pious mother with her son.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SOLDIER

Prophet Mūsā (as) grew up into a strong man. He began to oppose the luxurious lifestyle of the Pharaoh and all his acts of oppression toward the people of Egypt. Once, as he strolled through the city of Egypt, he saw one of his followers fighting with one of Pharaoh’s soldiers. His follower shouted to him for help. Prophet Mūsā (as) rushed to his rescue by striking a blow to the soldier.



The soldier fell to the ground dead. Inadvertently, Prophet Mūsā (as) had killed the soldier. The Holy Qur'an describes the incident as:

“And he entered the city at a time of unawareness of its people, and he found there two men fighting, - one of his party (his religion - from the Children of Israel), and the other of his foes. The man of his (own) party asked him for help against his foe, so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: "This is of Satan's doing, verily, he is a plain misleading enemy."^{iv}

Muslims who belong to the Sunni school of thought believe that Prophets are divinely protected only in the matters of transmitting the message of Allah (SWT) i.e. revelation. They use the above incident with Prophet Mūsā (as) as a situation where a prophet committed a sin. They refer to the confession of Prophet Mūsā (as) himself when he says:

“And they have a charge of crime against me, and I fear that they will kill me”^v

On the other hand, the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) have taught us that prophets are sinless, from the time they are born, till their death, and in all matters and aspects of their lives. So how do we explain Prophet Mūsā's (as) actions and confession?

Consider the following:

- A sin is an act that is committed intentionally and since Prophet Mūsā (as) did not kill the man intentionally, he is not sinful.
- It is the killing of an innocent person that is considered a sin. However, killing an enemy of Allah (SWT) and his messenger is not considered a sin. The soldier worked for the Pharaoh and would have some day attempted to kill Prophet Mūsā (as). Moses regretted his action because the people of Bani Israel would be severely punished because one of them killed an Egyptian.
- When Prophet Mūsā (as) says ‘they have a charge of crime against me’, it does not mean that he admits to a crime that he committed. Instead, he is simply reiterating what the people of the Pharaoh accused him of doing. Also, when he later asks Allah (SWT) for forgiveness, he was seeking protection from the consequences of his actions i.e. being killed or imprisoned.

- When Prophet Mūsā (as) confesses to Allah (SWT) that “this is the plot of Satan, verily, he is a plain and misleading enemy’, he does not admit to being misled by Satan. What is meant here is that the fight between the two people occurred due to Satan's mischief.

PROPHET MOSES' MARRIAGE

Prophet Mūsā (as) fled from Egypt because of the threats that he received. He was all alone and had neither food nor water. When he reached a place called Madyan, he saw a group of shepherds watering their sheep next to a well and two women who stood far away from the well with empty buckets in their hands. On inquiring as to why they stood at a distance, they replied:

He (Moses) said: "What is the matter with you?" They said: "We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take (their flocks). And our father is a very old man."^{vi}

On hearing this reply, Prophet Mūsā (as) filled their buckets and watered their flock for them and then took shelter under a tree. Now Prophet Mūsā (as) was very exhausted from the long journey. He had no food or water nor a person who knew him. He prayed to Allah (SWT):

"My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me!"^{vii}

It was only a matter of time before one of two sisters who was previously helped, came back to Prophet Mūsā (as), shyly saying:

“She said: "Verily, my father calls you that he may reward you for having watered (our flocks) for us."^{viii}

Prophet Mūsā (as) was pleasantly surprised. He asked the woman to walk behind him and give him directions, rather than walking in front of him. This modesty demonstrated by Prophet Mūsā (as) was a fruit of him being God-conscious.

When they reached the house of Prophet Shu'ayb, who was the father of the two sisters, Prophet Mūsā (as) explained to him the story of why he fled from Egypt. Prophet Shu'ayb (as) guaranteed Moses safety in Madyan. He also offered him marriage with any one of his daughters. Prophet Mūsā (as) chose the younger sister as his wife and he remained serving Prophet Shu'ayb for ten years thereafter.

Morals from this part of the story:

- Prophet Mūsā (as) helped the women sincerely, expecting absolutely no rewards from them. Also, he chose to remain modest by walking ahead of the woman. In turn, Allah (SWT) rewarded him by marrying him to a daughter of a Prophet. If we remain chaste and follow the teachings of Islam, we too will be rewarded as such by Allah (SWT).
- When Prophet Mūsā (as) was offered marriage to a daughter of a Prophet, he was a young man in his early 20's. He considered the offer as a great opportunity to get closer to Allah (SWT). Instead of delaying marriage because of financial instability or attractiveness of the women, he seized the golden opportunity since the daughters of Prophet Shu'ayb were God-fearing individuals.
- Prophet Shu'ayb (as) did not object to Moses' decision of marrying the younger sister instead of the older. Also, he did not deny Moses marriage because he was from Egypt whilst his daughter was from Madyan. Here we learn that the race of an individual or his tribe is not a valid criterion in spouse-selection. We learn that it is not an Islamic etiquette that an older sibling must marry before a younger one.

THE STORY OF ĀSIYAH

The Holy Qur'an has presents Āsiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, as one of the best role models for both women and men.

"And Allah gives an example for those who believe: the wife of pharaoh." (66:11)

Āsiyah's greatness lay in the fact that although she was the wife of one of the most powerful, arrogant and tyrant rulers, she was able to see and accept the truth in the message of Prophet Moses (as). For her, wealth, beauty and status were not the main criteria of human excellence; she realized that without faith in God, a human being has nothing. Although she had everything that she wanted in this worldly life from the materialistic point of view- the best of clothes, food, palaces, jewels, servants and maids- she sacrificed all that to be closer to Allah. And that is why we see her included by the Prophet in the list of the four women who attained the level of perfection.

Another of her honours is that God chose her to provide refuge to Moses when he was an infant. When her maids brought the cradle of Moses from the river, she insisted to Pharaoh that she wanted to adopt that infant as a child.

Āsiyah, upon witnessing the miracles of Moses, and hearing his message of Unity and Truth, accepted it, and submitted herself to Allah (SWT). When Pharaoh found out about her faith, he threatened and tortured her. However, she refused to give up her faith. Instead, she beautifully asked Allah (SWT) to build for her a house in heaven, and sacrificed her life in order to maintain her faith.

"(Remember) when she said, 'My Lord! Build for me a house with Thee in the Paradise, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his deeds; and deliver me from the unjust people.'" (66:11)

Review Questions

Q1. Why did Prophet Mūsā's mother put him in a casket in the river?

- a. It was the command of Allah
- b. She feared for his life because Pharaoh was out to kill all newborn boys
- c. Both of the above

Q2. Āsiyah was the:

- a. Wife of Pharaoh
- b. Sister of Prophet Moses
- c. A woman who did not believe in the message of Prophet Moses

Lesson 2: On the Other Side

The king of Egypt, known as Pharaoh, regarded himself as divine (god) in the polytheistic, superstitious religion of ancient Egypt. At a time when the people of Egypt favoured a superstitious belief system over a divine belief system; the same era in which when the Children of Israel were enslaved, Allah sent Prophet Mūsā (as) as a messenger to the tribe of Egypt. He had two roles. The first was to call people to worshipping the One True God. The second was to stop Pharaoh from oppressing the children of Bani Israel and using them as slaves.

However, Pharaoh and his followers and kinsmen, almost universally refused to abandon their idolatrous beliefs when Prophet Mūsā (as) called them to divine religion and the Oneness of Allah. Prophet Mūsā (as) called on Pharaoh and his followers to avoid false worship, warning them of Allah's wrath. In response to this, they rose up and slandered the Prophet Mūsā (as). They accused him of being mad, of being a sorcerer and of falsehood. Pharaoh and his people refused to submit to the Prophet Mūsā (as), even though many afflictions were sent their way. They refused to accept Allah as the only God. They even held Prophet Mūsā (as) responsible for what had befallen them and sought to exile him from Egypt. Finally, after a long period of time and many warning to Pharaoh and his people, Prophet Mūsā (as) was ordered to take the Bani Israel and flee Egypt:

“We revealed to Moses: "Travel with Our servants by night. You will certainly be pursued." Pharaoh sent marshals into the cities: "These people are a small group and we find them irritating and we constitute a vigilant majority." We expelled them (the people of Pharaoh) from gardens and springs, from treasures and a splendid situation. So it was! And We bequeathed them to the tribe of Israel. So they pursued them towards the east.”
(26:52-60)

As revealed in the Qur'an, the two communities met at the edge of the sea following this pursuit. Allah divided the sea and saved the Prophet Mūsā (as) and the believers with him, destroying Pharaoh and his people.

“So We revealed to Moses, "Strike the sea with your staff." And it split in two, each part like a towering cliff. And We brought the others right up to it. We rescued Moses and all those who were with him. Then We drowned the rest. There is certainly a Sign in that yet

most of them are not believers. Truly your Lord is the Almighty, the Most Merciful.” (26:63-68)



The Children of Bani Israel were now free. They were no longer slaves and could head back to their homeland of Palestine and practice the True Religion of submission to Allah. However, even after crossing the sea and freeing his people, the struggles of Prophet Mūsā (as) did not end.

ON THE OTHER SIDE

The next part of the mission of Prophet Mūsā (as) was to protect his people from straying from the path of belief in the One True God. The following are instances of when his people strayed from the commands of Allah (SWT) and caused Prophet Mūsā (as) a lot of grief.

- When they saw a group of people worshipping idols, they asked Prophet Mūsā (as) to make for them an idol to worship. They also asked him to show Allah (SWT) to them. They did not realise that Allah (SWT) was beyond vision and hearing and shape.

“And We brought the children of Israel (with safety) across the sea, and they came upon a people devoted to some of their idols (in worship). They said: "O Moses! Make for us a god as they have gods. He said: "Verily, you are a people who know not. Verily, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in idol-worship. And all that they are doing is in vain." (7:138-139)

- Asking for a variety of foods: as the Children of Israel travelled through the desert towards Palestine, Allah (SWT) supplied them with fresh meat and pleasant sweet food (al-mann wal salwah). However, soon, they began to complain, asking Prophet Mūsā (as) to provide them with a variety of foods such as onions, garlic and so on. This was a sign of their rejection of the blessings of Allah (SWT).

And remember when you said: "O Moses! We cannot endure one kind of food. So invoke your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth grows, its herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic its lentils and its onions." He said: "Would you exchange that which is better for that which is lower? Go you down to any town and you shall find what you want!" (2:61)

- Refusing to fight to regain their land from idolaters: when the people of Moses reached the Promised Land of Palestine, they found that a group of disbelieving people had occupied it. This group of people were large in stature and were fierce warriors. However, Allah (SWT) promised them that if they fought them, they would be victorious. Despite Prophet Mūsā (as) urging them to fight, they refused and even mocked him. Only two people agreed to fight along with Prophet Mūsā (as). As punishment for this, Allah (SWT) made them to wander the desert as a homeless tribe for forty years.

"O Moses, a great people dwell therein, We will not go in unless they leave." Moses did not find among them but two men who were ready to fight. These two said to the people: "Once we enter through the door, Allah will make us victorious. They said: "O Moses! We shall never enter it as long as they are there. So go you, and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here...Allah said: "Therefore it (this holy land) is forbidden to them for forty years; in distraction they will wander through the land. So be not sorrowful over the people who are the rebellious and disobedient to Allah." (5:20-26)

- Worshipping the Calf: after some time travelling with his people, Prophet Mūsā (as) wanted to isolate himself for a period and dedicate himself to worshipping Allah (SWT). So he left his people and promised to return in thirty days. While on his isolation, Prophet Mūsā (as) was commanded to extend his stay to forty days. When he was late in returning, his tribe became agitated. A person by the name of al-Sāmiri took advantage of this. He created a cow made of gold, and made it so it would emit a sound. The people began to worship this idol.

When Prophet Mūsā (as) returned, he was furious with his people. He destroyed the idol and punished al-Sāmiri. Yet again, though, his people had failed their test.

"Then Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and sorrow. He said: "O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a fair promise? Did then the promise seem to you long in coming? Or did you desire the Wrath should descend from your Lord on you, so you broke your promise to me. Moses said: "And what is the matter with you, O al-Sāmiri? (why did you do so?) al-Sāmiri said: "I saw what you saw not, so I took a handful of dust from the hoof print of the Messenger and threw it. Thus my inner-self suggested to me. Moses said: "Then go away! And verily, your punishment in this life will be that you will say: 'Touch me not'..." (20:86-97)

- Their persistent, futile questions: there is a famous incident related in the Holy Qur'an which shows the attitude of the children of Israel. It so happened that a person among them was killed, but his murdered could not be found. So they came to Prophet Mūsā (as) for judgment. He ordered them to slaughter a cow, and that if they did so, he could resurrect the dead person who could then reveal his murdered. Instead of following this simple order, they continued to ask futile questions about the colour, age and other characteristics of the cow. Because of this stubborn attitude, Allah (SWT) made their task harder, forcing them to find a very rare and expensive cow.

"Allah the Almighty narrated: And remember when Moses said to his people: "Verily, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow. They said: "Do you make fun of us?" He said: "I take Allah's Refuge from being among the ignorant. They said: "Call upon your Lord for us that He may make plain to us what it is!"

He said: "He says, 'Verily, it is a cow neither too old nor too young, but it is between the two conditions, so do what you are commanded."

They said; "Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us its colour."

He said: "He says, 'It is a yellow cow bright in its colour, pleasing to the beholders.'" They said: "Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us what it is. Verily to us all cows are alike, and surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided."

He (Moses) said: "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to till the soil nor water the fields, sound, having no other colour except bright yellow.'" (2:67-72)

Class Activity

Discuss each of the stories above with your teacher. Try to answer the following questions:

- Why were these stories mentioned in the Holy Qur'an?
- What specific lessons can we learn from them?

JUDAISM AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Often, Muslims view Jews negatively because we generalise and see them all as evil. Some people even accuse the Qur'an of being anti-Semitic (against Jews). However, the message of the Qur'an is that people-including Jews- are only respected if they follow their Holy Book properly. Otherwise, whether they are Jews or not, they are not accepted.

However, the Qur'an:

- does not generalise: it says there are some great people among the Christians and Jews (who stand up for truth and stay up at night praying), but also some very evil people who corrupt God's religion
- does not see one nation as better
- talks so much about the Jews in order to teach us, because they were very similar to us

The only time the Jews are criticised the Qur'an is because they ignored their faith. Even the Torah (the Jewish holy book) criticises the Jews for this.

Finally, it is very important to remember that Judaism is not the same as Zionism. Not all Zionists are Jews, and not all Jews are Zionists. While Zionists are clear enemies of Islam and Muslims, we must remember that many Jews are not so.

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.” (2:62)

Review Questions:

Q1. Prophet Moses (as) was initially ordered to go to Mount Sinai for thirty days. How many days did he eventually spend there in total?

- a) 40 days
- b) 30 days
- c) 10 days

Q2. Who was the man who influenced the Israelites to worship the golden calf?

- a) Hāmān
- b) Qārūn
- c) Al-Sāmiri

Q3. People of the Jewish faith:

- a) Are all bad and we should fight them
- b) May be good or bad people, depending on their beliefs and actions
- c) Have no similar beliefs to Islam and we do not believe in their prophet

Lesson 3: The World of Insight



MOSES AND KHIḌR (AS)

Prophet Mūsā (as) was informed by Allah (SWT) that there existed a man who was more knowledgeable than Prophet Mūsā (as) himself. This made Prophet Mūsā (as) very curious and eager to learn from this man, and so he went in search of him, eventually finding him. The Holy Qur'an relates the very interesting story of their meeting.

We have discussed the details of the story in previous years. We review it here in brief. Prophet Mūsā (as) asked Khiḍr if he could accompany him and learn from him. As they set out on their journey together, some strange things happened:

- Khiḍr damaged the boat of some poor fishermen who were giving he and Prophet Mūsā (as) a ride
- Khiḍr attacked a young man at the first time of seeing him and killed him, for no apparent reason
- Khiḍr repaired a wall in a town where the people were stingy and unwelcoming, without asking for any wages

At each instance, Prophet Mūsā (as) asked Khiḍr about his strange actions, and Khiḍr did not give an explanation, asking Prophet Mūsā (as) to remain patient. However, Moses could not bear what he was seeing, and after asking for an explanation for the third time, had to part ways with Khiḍr, who then explained his actions:

- There was a king who was taking the boats of poor fishermen. By damaging the boat, Khiḍr saved the fishermen from having their boat taken, because the king would not take a damaged boat.
- The young man whom Khiḍr killed was an evil person who would grow up to be a disbeliever and cause his pious parents to be disbelievers too. Allah (SWT) wanted to replace them with a pious child.
- The wall which Khiḍr repaired had a treasure under it. The treasure belong to orphans, and if the wall fell the greedy people of that town would have stolen the treasure from the orphans.

Khiḍr had been given special insight by Allah (SWT) and had special orders to carry out these actions.

"And moreover, I did not do it of my accord. This is the significance of that with which you could not have patience." (18:60-82).

There are many morals to this story, some of which are:

- We often only see the apparent aspect of things. We should be patient and wait for the deeper reasons for things to emerge. Often we will hate something, but it will eventually be good for us.
- When something seemingly bad happens, we should maintain our trust in Allah (SWT). He is often protecting us from a much bigger calamity.
- As learned as we may be, there is still so much that we do not know. We should be aware of this fact and therefore not judge the apparent situation too quickly. This should also make us humble in learning and keen to always seek further knowledge.

THE WORLD OF INSIGHT

The above story also brings our attention to an important aspect of the world we live in today. We all know about the apparent causes and effects of things in our world.

Unfortunately, often we being to believe that these are the only things that matter. For example, a person who works to earn a living may think that it is solely his hard work that is earning him his wealth. Therefore he plunges himself into his work, ignoring his relationship with Allah (SWT) and his religious responsibilities. He forgets that it is Allah (SWT) who gave him the ability and success to work in the first place. Often Allah (SWT) will send hardship to this person as a Mercy to him, to help him wake up to himself.

The happiest of people in this world are those that look beyond the apparent causes and effects, and look at the deeper set of laws in the world. The Holy Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt (as) have taught us about these laws, and if we try to follow these teachings, we will without doubt attain success in this world.

Here, we discuss some examples of these deeper laws:

HAPPINESS LIES IN OBEYING GOD

يقول الله عزوجل : وعزّي وجلالي ، لا يؤثر عبد هواي

على هواه إلا جعلت غناه في قلبه ، وهمّه في آخرته

"Allah, the Glorified, the Exalted says: By My Glory and My Majesty, a slave will not prefer My desire over his desire unless I make his wealth in his heart, and his worries for his Hereafter..."^{ix}

In this narration, Allah (SWT) sets forth a very simple and clear law: whoever places the Commands of God over his or her desires, will live a happy life (have wealth in their heart). Although it may seem to us that following our desires will make us happy in the future, we learn here that in Reality it is going *against* our desires that will make us happy and free of worry.

GIVING BRINGS ABOUT COMFORT

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَبْعَثُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ نَاسًا مِنْ قُبُورِهِمْ مُشَدُّودَةً
أَيْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ أَعْنَاقِهِمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ أَنْ يَتَنَاوَلُوا بِهَا قَيْسَ أَعْمَلَةٍ،
مَعَهُمْ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَعْزِّوْنَهُمْ تَعْيِيرًا شَدِيدًا ، يَقُولُونَ : هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ
مَنَعُوا خَيْرًا قَلِيلًا مِنْ خَيْرٍ كَثِيرٍ ، هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَعْطَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ،
فَمَنَعُوا حَقَّ اللَّهِ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ

“Allah, the Honourable, the Exalted, will resurrect certain people from their graves with their hands tied to their necks, making them unable to move their hands even a tiny distance. With them will be angels chastising them severely, saying: ‘these are those who withheld a small amount of sustenance despite having a great amount (for themselves). These are those whom Allah gave, but they withheld the right of Allah in their wealth’^x

In this narration, it is made clear that those who keep their wealth to themselves and do not give of it, will live a difficult and miserable life, both in this world and the Hereafter. Although it seems that to us at first thought that if we keep more of our wealth to ourselves, we would be more comfortable, we see here that the Reality is that keeping less of our wealth would make us more comfortable in future.

CHASING THE WORLD MAKES US LOSE IT

“If one keeps away from it then it advances towards him. If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it then it would blind him...”^{xi}

We often think that chasing after the world and spending out time and effort in gaining worldly thing will actually make us enjoy our life in this world. However, here, Imam ‘Ali (as) teaches that in fact the way to attain the best of this world is to try to keep away from it. Instead of being blinded by the world by constantly chasing after it, we should see through it, so that it would give us insight.

KEEPING FAMILY TIES PROLONGS LIFE

Imam al-Şādiq (as): “Maintaining the ties of kinship ...prolongs life.”^{xii}



Looking at things at face value, there seems to be no connection between maintain close relationships with family members and having a longer life. However, in this and many other narrations, the Ahlul Bayt (as) have informed us that in Reality, this is in fact the case.

THE DEEPER SET OF LAWS

If we heed these words, and pay attention to these laws when we come to make decisions in our lives, then we set ourselves on the path to real success and happiness. Instead of seeking the things we want through the usual methods, and often failing, we can seek what we want by following these laws, which will bring us success in this world and in the next life.

Review Questions

Q1. Imam ‘Ali (as) says that if one keeps away from the world:

- It will blind him
- It will come towards him
- It will make him poor

Q2. Allah (SWT) says that if a person puts the Commands of God before his own desires, that person will be:

- Miserable and depressed
- Happy and wealthy
- Not a fun person

ⁱ Holy Qur’an 28:7

ⁱⁱ Holy Qur’an 16:68

ⁱⁱⁱ Holy Qur’an 28:9

^{iv} Holy Qur’an 28:15

^v Holy Qur’an 26:14

^{vi} Holy Qur’an 28:23

^{vii} Holy Qur’an 28:24

^{viii} Holy Qur’an 28:25

^{ix} (Jami’ul Akhbar, p.270)

^x (al-Kafi, 3:506)

^{xi} (Imam Ali as, Nahjul Balagha)

^{xii} Mishkatul Anwar fi Ghuraril Akhbar

السَّلَامُ عَلَى دَاوُدَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET DAWUD^{AS}

نبي الله داود (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

SENIOR LEVEL

Prophet Dawud (David) (as)

Objectives

Student should:

- Be introduced to Prophet Dāwūd (as) as a sinless prophet of Allah (SWT)
- Discuss the story of David and Goliath
- Discuss the justice of Prophet Dāwūd (as)
- Discuss the importance of judging fairly between people
- Understand that Islam encourages us to aid the process of justice
- Discuss the implications of lack of justice in today's world:

Prophet Dāwūd (as) was one of Allah's (SWT) principal prophets as he was sent down with a divine book, al-Zabūr (The Psalms). His name appears 16 times in the Holy Qu'ran. Like all other Prophets of Allah (SWT), Prophet Dāwūd (as) was divinely protected from all sins. He possessed sublime character and has been praised in the Holy Qu'ran for being totally submissive to the will of Allah (SWT) despite enjoying special and unique bounties. Allah says:

"And remember Our slave Dāwūd (as) endued with power. Verily, he was ever oft-returning in all matters and in repentance (toward Allah).

Verily, We made the mountains to glorify Our Praises with him in the evening and in the morning. And (so did) the birds assembled: all with him did turn (to Allah).

We made his kingdom strong and gave him Al-Hikmah (Prophethood, etc.) and sound judgement in speech and decision." (38:17-20)

In this lesson we will discuss two stories from the life of Prophet Dāwūd (as) and the relevant morals from these stories.

PROPHET DĀWŪD & GOLIATH

The Israelites who were believers and good doers were subject to severe torture and oppression by the enemies. Goliath, a soldier from the enemy ranks was ferocious, known for his gigantic stature coupled with his swordsmanship and courage on the battlefield. Everyone would be terrified on seeing him. Once, when the enemies confronted the Israelites, Goliath called for a challenge but everyone was scared. Prophet Dāwūd (as)

was only a young man at that time. He stepped forward to challenge Goliath. Several people advised him otherwise but Prophet Dāwūd (as) placed all his trust in Allah (SWT) and marched on. When Goliath set his eyes on the young man who looked like a boy, he laughed loudly and roared: 'Are you out to play war with one of your playmates, or are you tired of your life? I will simply cut off your head with one swipe of my sword!'

Prophet Dāwūd (as) shouted back: 'You may have armour, shield and sword, but I face you in the name of Allah, the Lord of the Israelites, whose laws you have mocked. Today you will see that it is not the sword that kills but the will and power of Allah!'

So saying, Prophet Dāwūd (as) took his sling and placed in it a pebble from his pouch. He swung and aimed it at Goliath. The pebble shot from the whirling sling with the speed of an arrow and hit Goliath's head with great force. Blood gushed out and Goliath thumped to the ground, lifeless!

When the rest of his men saw their mighty hero slain, they began to flee. The Israelites followed in pursuit of them, taking revenge for their years of suffering at the hands of their enemy. They had now regained their honour by becoming victorious. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"So they routed them by Allah's Leave and Dāwūd (as) killed Goliath and Allah gave him Power and Wisdom, and taught him of that which He willed..." (2:251)

We learn from the above story that whosoever is a good-doer and places his trust in Allah (SWT) will eventually be victorious over the enemies even though he may be weak in terms of physical strength or arms. This divine law has manifested itself throughout history, including very recently in the 2006 war between Israel and the Resistance forces in Lebanon.

PROPHET DĀWŪD AS A JUDGE

One day, Prophet Dāwūd (as) was praying in his prayer niche and ordered his guards not to allow anyone to interrupt him, but two men managed to enter and disturb him.

"Who are you?" he asked.

One of the men said:

"Do not be frightened. We have a dispute and have come for your judgment.

Prophet Dāwūd (as) said:

"What is it?"

The first man said:

"This is my brother, he has ninety-nine sheep, and I have one and he is strongly demanding that I hand over mine to him"

Without listening to the other brother, Prophet Dāwūd (as) blamed him for demanding the one sheep. As soon as he did so, he realised that Allah (SWT) had put tested him and that he had made a mistake. Instead of listening to only one party, he should have listened to both sides of the story before passing a judgment.

The Prophet (saw) also advises in regards to this situation:

"When two people bring a case against each other before you to be judged, do not judge the first before you hear out the second. If you adhere to this, the judgment will become clear for you."ⁱ

Prophet Dāwūd (as) immediately sought forgiveness from Allah (SWT) and regretted his haste. The Holy Quran says

"O Dāwūd, Verily! We have placed you as a successor on earth, so judge you between men in truth (and justice) and follow not your desire for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah." (38:26)

Prophet Dāwūd (as) brought the brothers back and atoned for his error. He was generally a very just and wise king and Prophet, who maintained justice among his people, as did his son Solomon (as) after him.

PRINCIPLES OF MAKING A JUDGEMENT

Islam places a lot of emphasis on fair judgment. This issue is discussed in many places in the Holy Qur'an. We are expected to follow the below principle if we are ever required to make a judgment:

- Do not hasten or hurry in issuing a judgment about people or between them.

- Before making a judgment ensure that you have full knowledge about the whole story or problem.
- Ensure that the source or witness providing the information is reliable and trustworthy.
- Ensure to judge based on the truth even if it may go against your own personal desires or interests
- Do not pass judgments while in a disturbed emotional state such as being angry.

Imam 'Ali (as), said to Shurayh, a judge of that time:

“Do not whisper to anyone in your court, and if you get angry leave, but do not judge whilst you are angry.”ⁱⁱ

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAM

Judging fairly between people is one example of establishing social justice. Islam is a religion built on the pillars of justice and all Muslims must live their lives on its principles. While social justice is apparent only on a societal level as the name suggests, its foundation lies in each and every individual within that society upholding justice e.g. speaking the truth, being non-discriminative and standing up to any form of oppression.

Seeking justice is a natural thing inherent in all human beings. Take an example of a child who kept his apple with you. After a while he comes back and he finds that you have eaten a small portion of it. He becomes displeased and looks at you with an accusing eye as if he is saying that you are guilty of a breach of trust. Even a child knows about injustice even though he may not tell you so with his tongue.

Unfortunately, because people fall prey to his personal whims and desires, they taint and corrupt this pure innate disposition. There is hardly any society which does not talk of truthfulness, justice and rational laws. Nor there is any regime which does not claim to uphold the people's rights and welfare.

However even a superficial look at the state of their affairs would reveal that their poor state is a result of rampant corruption, deceit and hypocrisy both in their domestic and foreign affairs. We have seen in recent years huge protests in several countries against the injustice and corruption of their leadership.

We also see huge injustice on a global scale. Some countries have attained wealth, power and prestige, and they use these to take advantage of poorer, struggling countries. They invade them, take their resources or punish them economically, simply to further their own interests.

Another example of injustice is the double-standard that exists in our world. 'Western' countries allow themselves certain rights, while they deny these rights to other countries.

To avoid such a predicament, if we are ever in a position of leadership, we must base all our actions on the Islamic teachings and follow closely the lives of the Prophets whose main mission was to establish justice on earth. Furthermore, we should always stand up for justice and oppose injustice wherever it may be happening in the world. We can do this by spreading the word about injustice to friends and family, by protesting or through other forms of activism.

“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)

Review Questions

Q1. From the story of Prophet David & Goliath, what is the most important lesson that can be derived?

- Trust in Allah (SWT) is the key to victory however difficult the circumstances may be.
- Proper planning and strategic moves are the key to defeating a powerful enemy
- The Israelites will always be victorious in any confrontation

Q2. Social justice can be achieved if:

- The individuals comprising the society live along the principles of justice
- People judge fairly, speak the truth and stand up against oppression is practiced
- Both a and b

ⁱ al-Faqih, v. 3, p. 13, no. 3238

ⁱⁱ al-Kafi, v. 7, p. 413, no. 5

السَّلَامُ عَلَى سُلَيْمَانَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ (ع)

PROPHET SULAYMĀN^[A.S]

نَبِي اللَّهِ سُلَيْمَانَ (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to Prophet Sulaymān as a sinless Prophet of Allah (SWT)
- Discuss the scope of the kingdom of Prophet Sulaymān (as)
- Discuss the issue of Islamic governance in relation to Prophet Sulaymān
- Understand that Allah (SWT) gives great power to His Trustees who submit to Him.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

Level 4

Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Sulaymān (as) is a Prophet of Allah (SWT) and was the son of Prophet Dawūd (David). Being a Prophet, he was ma'sūm, or sinless. He is one of the Prophet who is mentioned several times in the Holy Qur'an.

SOLOMON (AS) IN THE BIBLE

Prophet Sulaymān (as) is also one of the personalities mentioned in the current Bible. Unfortunately, the Bible describes him as a king, who had hundreds of wives, and did many terrible things to become king. It paints a very disrespectful picture of this great prophet.

Unfortunately, some of these stories have even penetrated Muslim hadith texts¹. We have to be especially careful of such traditions that go against the Holy Qur'an and the basic principles of Islam.

PROPHET SULAYMĀN IN THE QUR'AN

In the Holy Quran, Prophet Sulaymān (as) is introduced as one of the greatest Prophets, a wise king and a servant of Allah (SWT). He was granted wisdom as well as some special miracles. Some of his miracles include:

- Having control over natural phenomena like the wind,
- Being able to communicate with animals
- Having control over the Jinn

“And to Solomon [We subjected] the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by his command toward the land which We had blessed. And We are ever, of all things, Knowing.” (21:81)

The Holy Quran presents Prophet Sulaymān (as) as a wise and just leader, who was appointed by Allah (SWT). The story of this prophet emphasises to us that in Islam, there is no distinction between religion and state (or government). Allah (SWT) uses the example of Prophet Sulaymān and the story of the Ants and the story of the throne of Bilqīs (that has been discussed in previous years) to show that however powerful a leader is, he

- 1- Must be subservient to Allah (SWT)
- 2- Must not use his power to suppress and oppress his subjects (as in the story of the ants)
- 3- Must always be just and fair in his dealings with his subjects (as in the story of the people of Saba')
- 4- Must not be arrogant and know that it is Allah (SWT) that grants such positions.

When we look at the world around us, it is important to see whether the leaders of our world or our nation have these characteristics. If they do not, we cannot accept them as leaders.

THE POSITION OF GOVERNMENT IN ISLAM

As stated earlier, in Islam, there is no distinction or separation between religion and state. Prophet Sulaymān (as) was granted an absolute dominion over not only the physical subjects, but also super natural subjects (Jinn). Prophet Sulaymān (as) was not only the religious leader but also the political leader of his community, just as the Holy Prophet (saw) was at his time.

The natural order of the world is such that Allah (SWT) always grants the most perfect human being at any one time the complete dominion over *all* His creatures. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

To Memorise

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“I am going to place in the earth a khalifah...” (2:30)

This khalifah or representative is not only chosen by Allah (SWT) but has been granted complete dominion over the entire universe including the social, economic, moral, religious and psychological aspects of human beings. Today, this representative or proof (Hujjah) is Imam Mahdi (as).

In recent times the debate over whether religion should interfere in the affairs of the state has erupted. Usually the ignorance of the principles of Islam leads some people to suggest that state and religion should not mix and should be kept separate.

In Islam, aside from historical precedents set by the likes of Prophet Dawūd (as), Prophet Sulaymān (as), there is strong evidence from the Holy Qur'an and from the Hādith that state and religion should not be separate, and that a Muslim community should have a leader who has both a spiritual and executive role.

MAGIC AND SORCERY

Another issue that is raised in the Holy Qur'an in relation to Prophet Sulaymān (as) is the issue of magic. Consider the following ayah:

“They followed what the *Shayatin* (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime of Solomon.

Solomon did not disbelieve, but the *Shayatin* (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Harut and

Marut, but neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, "We are only for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this magic from us)." And from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between man and his wife, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's Leave. And they learn that which harms them and profits them not. And indeed they knew that the buyers of it (magic) would have no share in the Hereafter. And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their own selves, if they but knew.” (2:102)

This ayah begins by addressing an accusation that some had against Prophet Solomon, saying that he practised magic. In this āyah, Allah (SWT) equates magic to disbelief, and clears Prophet Solomon (as) of this accusation completely.

The āyah goes on to make some points related to magic, which we will discuss below:

- What we call ‘magic’ or ‘sorcery’ is of different types. Some of it is based on suggestion and illusion. An example of this is what the sorcerers did in their challenge with Prophet Moses (as). Note the Qur'an

says all they did was to bewitch the eye of people. There was no reality to the magic.

“He (Moses) said: "Throw you (first)." So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them, and they displayed a great magic. (7:116)

However, there are people who can carry out certain actions by referring to the devils from among the Jinn. This is called black magic. An example of black magic is learning things which one can later use to cause divisions within a family. The above āyah (2:102) is an example of a reference to this in the Qur'an. Other possible references include:

“And verily, those who disbelieve would almost make you slip with their eyes, when they hear the Reminder (the Qur'an), and they say: "Verily, he is a madman!" (68:51)

"And from the evil of the witchcrafts when they blow in the knots" (113:4)

- Opposing 'black magic' is 'white magic', which some people can learn from angelic sources in order to stop the effects of black magic. In one narration, a person who wants to repent from practising black magic is advised by the Imam (as) to go back and practice white magic to repel and break the effects of black magic.ⁱⁱ

However, learning this type of magic is a great trial, and one must be extremely careful not to misuse it.

- As we see in the āyah above (2:102) those who practice black magic are disbelievers. They will cause harm, not benefit to themselves, and in the Hereafter, they will have nothing and will be the ultimate losers. It is strictly forbidden to learn magic. The following narration confirms this:

Imam 'Ali (as) said: "Whoever learns magic- whether it be small or great-has disbelieved, and has broken his covenant with his Lord. His punishment is that he should be killed, unless he repents."ⁱⁱⁱ

- No type of magic can affect a person except by Allah's leave and permission. Allah (SWT) is Almighty above all causes and effects, and so one who seeks refuge in Him will be safeguarded.

This is a brief summary of the issue of magic or witchcraft in the Holy Qur'an. The main point to understand is that while there is some 'real magic', much of magic is illusory. It is forbidden to practice magic, and also to refer to witches or sorcerers or to pay them. It is also important to remember that ultimately all power belongs to Allah, and no person can harm another, even by magic, except by the permission of Allah (SWT).

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Sulaymān (as) is:

- Only mentioned in the Qur'an
- Is only considered sinless in the Qur'an
- Is not mentioned in the Bible

Q2. Prophet Sulaymān (as) was:

- A Prophet only
- A King only
- A prophet and a King

ⁱ See Story of Sulayman in Hayat Qulub (Allamah Majlisi) <http://www.al-islam.org/hayat-al-qulub-vol1-allamah-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/23.htm>

ⁱⁱ Al-Kafi, v.9, p. 648, Darul Hadith Edition

ⁱⁱⁱ Wasailul Shia, v. 17, p. 148

السَّلَامُ عَلَى عِيسَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET 'ĪSĀ [A.S]

نبي الله (ع) عيسى

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the circumstances of the birth of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the virtues of Maryam (as)
- Discuss the titles of Prophet 'Īsā (as) in the Holy Qur'an
- Understand that the Bible of today is not the Injil that was revealed to Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the myth of crucifixion
- Discuss the Christian belief in trinity and understand the reasons why Prophet 'Īsā (as) is not and cannot be God

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Prophet 'Īsā (as) and Maryam (as)

The Holy Qur'an tells the true story of Prophet 'Īsā (as) and is the only really true source about the life of this great messenger and prophet. The Bible and historians do not give a true version of the story because they were not even present at the time.

Islam is the only non-Christian religion that acknowledges Prophet 'Īsā (as). We believe in him as an infallible messenger of God. Muslims also believe in the great status of Maryam (as) and also in the fact that Prophet 'Īsā (as) will return to earth.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MARYAM (AS)

Perhaps mainly due to the miraculous nature of the birth of Prophet 'Īsā (as), there are too great accusations against Maryam (as):

- the Jews accuse her of not being a chaste woman and that she had a child through adultery
- some Christians- Catholics and Orthodox Christians- say that she was 'the mother of god'- although even in the Bible this title is not given to her
- other Christians- Protestants, Presbyterians etc... - do not give any significance to Maryam (as) and she has no role in their theology

The Holy Qur'an mentions her name 25 times. 16 times she is mentioned in the phrase "'Īsā, the son of Maryam'. This is to emphasise and leave no doubt that Prophet 'Īsā (as) is not the son of God, and also to show that Maryam is not the mother of god.

The Holy Qur'an also mentions that Prophet 'Īsā (as) and Maryam were both worshipping God, and were eating and drinking- making it impossible for them to be gods themselves.

“O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? Jesus says: ‘Glory be to You, I would not say what I do not have a right to say, I only said what You commanded me to say...” (5:116)

THE VIRTUES OF MARYAM (AS)

Maryam (as) is praised often in the Holy Qur'an and in the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt (as). Some of the following are her virtues

- She is one of the four best women in history. It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (saw):

“Verily, Allah has chosen from among women four ladies: Āsiyah, the daughter of Mezaḥīm, the wife of Pharaoh; Maryam the mother of Jesus; Khadijah the daughter of Khowaylid, and Fāṭima (as) the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) who is the most honourable of them all.”

- She is the only lady whose name is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an.
- She is the first woman to be 'chosen' by Allah (SWT)
- She is the only woman to have a child without being with a man.
- She is the first infallible woman
- She was a woman who was spoken to by angels.
- She has the right of intercession

THE LIFE OF MARYAM (AS)

Her father's name was 'Imran, and her mother's name was Hanna. She had a sister called Elizabeth, who was married to Prophet Zachariah (as). Both these sisters could not have children. Hanna and 'Imran both prayed for a child sincerely and Hanna vowed that if she had the child, she would dedicate him to the service of Allah. Her husband had had a dream that a boy would be born into his family, and so they assumed that this was the boy. However, before Maryam (as) was born, her father 'Imran passed away.

When Hanna gave birth, she had a girl, Maryam (as) and not a boy. She was shocked, but because she was a faithful woman, she decided to keep her vow. She left Maryam (as) to serve Allah (SWT) in a place of worship, and asked someone to look after Maryam (as). A lot was drawn to see who should look after Maryam, and it turned to be Prophet Zachariah who would look after her.

As Maryam (as) spent her life in the worship of Allah (SWT), He would send her sustenance miraculously; she would have the fruits of winter in summer and the fruits of summer in winter.

One day, Maryam (as) is visited by angels, and she is given the good news of a child, called 'Īsā (as)

THE VIRGIN CONCEPTION

Unlike the story of the virgin birth in the Christian scriptures, the true story is miraculous and dignified. The angels gave glad tidings to Maryam of having a son who would be a prophet. Maryam, though, was not married and so this worried her greatly. However, the angels said to her that Allah (SWT) had willed this and so it would happen. One night, she was visited by an angel, but in the form of a man. She seeks refuge with Allah (SWT), but then realises he is an angel, who gives her the message that she is going to have a son.

“How can I have a son, when no man has touched me?”
(3:47)

Maryam (as) again showed her great surprise, but the angels said that this was a sign for people and a mercy. Now, Maryam's challenge was to face the accusations of the whole community. Maryam ran away into the wilderness when she realised she was pregnant. Then she started to feel the pangs of childbirth and Allah (SWT) guided her to a date-palm. Maryam wished that she had died before this happened, and that she was forgotten by everyone.

Now, Maryam had reached her threshold of patience in this great test from Allah (SWT), and so He comes to her rescue:

“O Maryam, do not grieve. Your Lord has made under you a river, and shake the date-palm above you, so eat

and drink, and be happy. Then if you see any person, tell them that I have made a silent fast..." (19:24-26)

Once Maryam came back into town with her son, the accusations began. The whole town heard about this. Maryam responded by pointing to her baby, Prophet 'Īsā (as). The people made fun of her, but suddenly Prophet 'Īsā (as) began to speak:

"He said: I am the devotee of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and has made a prophet, and made me blessed wherever I am..." (19:30)

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN VIEWS

- Catholics believe that Maryam was a virgin her entire life. However, other Christians, especially recently, argue against this and do not believe in it.
- Catholics also believe that Prophet 'Īsā (as) and Maryam (as) were the only two people born without being touched by Satan. Some Sunni narrations also quote this. However, this is not true and as Muslims we do not believe that people are born sinful and touched by Satan.
- The Bible says that Prophet 'Īsā (as) was born in a stable, and we also do not believe in this.
- The Bible contradicts itself about when Prophet 'Īsā (as) was born. However, it is clear that his birth occurred in summer. So why is Christmas in winter in the northern hemisphere? Thus the Christmas that is celebrated today is not the real birth date of Prophet 'Īsā (as). The current date for 'Christmas' was chosen because it was the longest winter night in the northern hemisphere, and the pagans of the time who were becoming Christians wanted their celebrations to last as long as possible.

THE TITLES OF PROPHET 'ĪSĀ IN THE QUR'AN

Allah (SWT) gives Prophet 'Īsā (as) a few titles in the Qur'an in order to correct some of the mistakes of the Bible:

- **'Īsā (as), the son of Maryam;** to correct the false message that Jesus is the son or God or God
- **The Messiah (al-masīḥ):** this is a Hebrew word which means a Prophet or a Messiah. Allah (SWT)

calls Prophet 'Īsā (as) this so that the Jews and Christians both know he is their prophet.

Messiah also refers to a king or ruler and not only a religious leader. However, Allah (SWT) not only calls Prophet 'Īsā (as) 'a Messiah', but He calls him **'the Messiah'**. This was because the Jews were waiting for a specific Messiah who would save them, and so Allah (SWT) is telling them Prophet 'Īsā (as) is this specific Messiah they were waiting for

- **The Messenger of Allah (SWT) (Rasulullāh):** again, this is to bring both Jews and Christians back to the path of truth: Prophet 'Īsā (as) was not an ordinary man as the Jews believe, nor is he god as the Christians believe.
- **The Word of God (kalimatun min Allah):** in some gospels of the Bible, this title is used to show that Prophet 'Īsā (as) is god, because they claim that 'the word of god is part of god'. However, this is not what the Qur'an means. What the Qur'an means by 'the words of God' is 'the creature or sign of God'. Allah (SWT) uses 'word' in other places in the Qur'an to describe his signs and creatures
- **The Soul from God (ruhullāh):** again, the Christians use this as proof for Prophet 'Īsā (as) being god. However, Allah (SWT) uses this expression for all humans, beginning with Prophet Adam. What Allah means by 'soul' is 'life'. Also 'from God' means God is the source like when we say: 'I am from Iraq' and not that Prophet 'Īsā (as) is part of God.
- Prophet 'Īsā (as) is 'supported by the Holy Spirit': the Holy Spirit is either the Archangel Gabriel, or a special entity that was with all prophets and imams. It is the secret behind their infallibility. The Christians also claim that the Holy Spirit is a part of god. However the Qur'an says:

"We supported him with the Holy Spirit" (2:87)

The indication here is that Allah (SWT) controls both the Holy Spirit and Prophet 'Īsā (as) and they are both His creatures, and not a part of Him.

Review Questions

Q1. The Holy Qur'an teaches that:

- a. Prophet Jesus (as) was born in a miraculous way to the virgin Maryam (as)
- b. Maryam had a child out of wedlock
- c. Maryam should be worshipped or venerated because she is the 'mother of God'

Q2. The Holy Qur'an calls Jesus (as) a 'Word from God' to indicate that Jesus (as) is:

- a. God
- b. Part of God
- c. A sign of God

Lesson 2: The Book of Prophet 'Īsā (as)

In this lesson, we will discuss the issue of the book of Prophet 'Īsā (as). The Holy Qur'an definitely confirms that a book called the Injīl was revealed to Prophet 'Īsā (as). However, the question is whether this book is the same as the Bible that we have today?

The Bible of today consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the Torah of the Jews, and there is no real claim that this is the Word of God. It is accepted by Christians to a certain extent. The New Testament is the 'Bible' which the Christians follow and this is our main focus for today. We will discuss this topic by posing a number of questions.

DID PROPHET 'ĪSĀ HAVE A BOOK THAT HE TAUGHT?

- The Holy Qur'an confirms that Prophet 'Īsā (as) had a book revealed to him and this was called the Injīl.
- It seems from the present Bible that Jesus had a Scripture called 'the Gospel'. Luke in the beginning of Chapter 20 says: "One day as he (Jesus) was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the Gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came up with the elders and said to him..." This passage is the clear evidence that Jesus had a Scripture which he was preaching in the temples. Luke also narrates that Jesus was asking his disciples to go around from village to village and preach the Gospel. (Luke 9:6)

- Christians however do not recognise any written Gospel for Jesus. They claim he did not consign to writing his own teachings and directed his apostles not to write, but to preach the Gospel verbally to their fellow-men. In justification of their belief, they offer a literal interpretation for the abovementioned Biblical quotations. Thus, they assert the term 'Gospel' in those passages has a literal meaning, i.e. glad tiding.
- This claim is an attempt to conceal an historical fact about the original Gospel. Unfortunately, the Gospel of Jesus was lost or destroyed by the Jews. Though it is expressed by a number of historians that divisions between early sects of Christianity also encouraged the destruction of writings of which they did not approve. Subsequently, many people's hands were employed in the rewriting of the Gospel.

WHO WROTE THE GOSPELS?

- The Bible that we have with us today consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament contains the 'four gospels' and a remaining section called the 'Letters of Paul'.
- Sometime after the passing away of Prophet 'Īsā (as), a great number of people began to write 'gospels', such that there were 50 or 100 gospels written by many different people. Luke in the beginning of his Gospel with reference to this says: "Now that many have put their hands to the composition of a narrative regarding the events that have certainly taken place amongst us, transmitted as they were to us by those who were from the first eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, it seemed fitting for me as well..."
- Of all these gospels, 4 were chosen to be in the current Christian Bible: the gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. These form the major part of the Bible today.
- Prophet 'Īsā (as) had 12 disciples. Two of these were called Mathew and John. However, all Christian scholars agree the writers of these gospels were not the same as the disciples of Jesus. They were a different Mathew and John who lived at a later time. Mark was one of the students of St Peter, who was one of the disciples. Luke was a Greek physician and he wrote his book because 'everyone seems to be

writing one', and not because he had any special qualification to know what Jesus (as) taught.

- Thus the answer is that the Bible was written by four people who did not have direct access to Prophet 'Īsā (as). They were not his companions or successors, and they were not prophet or messengers.
- They did not hear these words from Prophet 'Īsā (as) and write them down exactly. Even they do not claim to have done this. They claimed to be inspired.
- The existence of numerous differences between the present four Gospels is a fact which has long been noticed and admitted by Christian scholars. The Gospels differ in many instances from the narration of the genealogy and the birth of Jesus to his so-called crucifixion.

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?

- Our Christian friends commonly preach that the present Gospels were compiled by those whose name they bear - all of which would place them within a short period of time of Jesus. A number of scholars believe that they were compiled between the years 50 to 100 AD which would make the first assumption impossible.
- The truth is that the physical manuscript evidence of the Gospels does not start until early mid-2nd century with the famous P52- a tiny piece of papyrus with fragments of only 7 verses. The full manuscripts of the present four Gospels were completed in the 4th century. There are also many scholarly debates about the authenticity of some chapters and the verses of the present Gospels. For instance, New International Version of the Bible warns the reader: "The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20", and "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11"

IN WHICH LANGUAGE WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?

- Around 400AD, Saint Jerome translated the Bible from Greek into Latin. This translation is called the "Vulgate" and is still in use by those still interested in Latin and is used in a revised form as the Roman Catholic Authorized Version. But in what language were the Gospels originally written, in Greek or Hebrew or even Aramaic? There is an ongoing debate as to whether the earliest Gospels were written in Aramaic or Greek. Some scholars have proposed that they were written in Aramaic. But then again, no one has ever seen an Aramaic Gospel predating the fourth century which had to be translated from Greek to Aramaic.
- We as Muslims do not have such a debate, we all know the Qur'an is in Arabic. The Christians however have no reliable way of knowing which language the original Bible was written in, and so their scholars differ on this.

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion from these discussions is that the Bible that the Christians have today is not the book of Prophet 'Īsā (as). It is not the Injil mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. While the original source of some of the material may be the original holy book, we cannot rely on these gospels because they are not the words of God or the words of Jesus. Rather, they were written by others later.

Other issues to consider are that because the gospels were simply chosen by a government of the time, different Christian groups believe in different gospels. The Orthodox Christians have a Bible that contains different gospels to the Catholic one. This is confusing and shows that the Bible of today is not the original word of God, for otherwise it could not have been changed.

Yet another issue is that of translation. The Bible, in English as we have it today, continues to have updated translations. Each new version or translation makes subtle but meaningful changes to the last. This changes the meaning of the Book and its teachings. Since we do not have the Bible in its original form, this poses a great problem. It means that the translators, who are ordinary people, are changing the meanings of a book which is meant to contain the word of God.

All this shows the miracle of the Holy Qur'an, and the blessings that Muslims have in being able to access a true Holy Book, which is the Word of God revealed directly to His Messenger, which was compiled during his life, and which remains till today, having only one version and in its original language.

Supplementary Resources

We suggest that teachers organise for their students to watch one of the lectures by Ahmad Deedat discussing this topic. These are readily available online.

Review Questions

Q1. The Original Gospels were written in:

- a. Aramaic
- b. Greek
- c. Hebrew
- d. No one knows the original language

Q2. The Gospels were written by:

- a. Jesus (as)
- b. The Disciples of Jesus (as)
- c. People who lived at least 50-100 years after Jesus (as) and never met him

Q3. The Original Injil revealed to Jesus (as):

- a. Is the same Bible we have today
- b. Was destroyed by the Jews and some Christians
- c. Never really existed

Lesson 3: Analysing Crucifixion and Trinity

The Christian religion is based on two major beliefs:

- The Crucifixion of Jesus (as)
- Trinity: the claim that God is one and three at the same time, and that Jesus is God

In this lesson, we will analyse these beliefs and prove them to be untrue and illogical.

THE MYTH OF CRUCIFIXION

Traditionally, crucifixion was a form of torture, done by hanging someone on the cross or on a tree. Christians believe that Prophet 'Īsā (as) was crucified and died on the cross. Then later, he was resurrected and then raised to heaven by Allah (SWT).

According to the Holy Qur'an, however, Prophet 'Īsā (as) was never crucified and never died; he was raised up to heaven by Allah (SWT) without being caught by his enemies. The Holy Qur'an emphasises the fact that Prophet 'Īsā (as) was not crucified. This is important because a lot of Christian beliefs are based on the crucifixion. They believe that all humans are born sinful, inheriting the original sin of Adam, and that Prophet 'Īsā (as) dying on the cross saves all humans from their sinfulness. This is why the Holy Qur'an, especially in Surat al-Nisā', Allah (SWT) emphasises so many times that crucifixion did not happen, and that Prophet 'Īsā (as) did not die.

“And because of their saying: We killed Messiah, Jesus; son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah, but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For, surely they killed him not. But Allah raised him up unto Himself. And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise.”
(4:157-158)

An authentic narration from Imam al-Bāqir (as) clarifies what really happened:

“Verily, in the night that Allah had promised to raise Jesus to Him, Jesus invited his disciples, who were twelve men, to a house. Jesus came out to them from a corner of the house whilst he was drying his head from water.

He then said: Surely, Allah revealed to me that He will raise me this time to Him and will clear me from the Jews, so which one of you is willing to have my image cast upon him to be killed and crucified and he will be with me in the hereafter? A young man from among them said: I (will accept) O Ruhullah! Jesus replied: So, you will be the one.” (Tafsir al-Qomi, vol.1 p.111)

Thus the Qur’an clearly denounces crucifixion. However, some Christians quote two āyāt from the Qur’an which they falsely believe indicate that crucifixion occurred:

“O ‘Īsā, I am collecting your soul and raising you to Myself”

The word used in Arabic in this āyah is ‘mutawaffika’ which comes from the root word ‘wafāt’ and not ‘mawt’. ‘Wafāt’ means collection of the soul and not death. Therefore, this āyah is not stating that Jesus (as) died. Rather, it is confirming the fact that Allah (SWT) raised him to heaven.

“Peace be upon Me the day I was born, the day I will die and the day I will be resurrected.”

This āyah is also used in the same style for Prophet Yaḥyā (as), but no one claims that he died and was resurrected. Also the āyah says: ‘I will die and I will be raised’ so it is speaking about the future and not something in the past. Also ‘mawt’ is natural death and not being killed by torture or crucifixion.

The authors of the gospels, who claim crucifixion happened, are not known and would not have been present at the time. Also, they could not have heard it from the disciples of Jesus (as) because according to the Bible the disciples ran away and were not present at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. Because of this, there are many contradictions in the story.

One of the contradictions relates to Prophet ‘Īsā’s (as) last words on the cross. Gospels narrate different phrases for the last words of Jesus. The last word of Jesus according to John was ‘it is finished’. (John 19:30) Luke on the other hand narrates: “With a loud voice Jesus cried: Father, into Your hands I entrust my spirit! And with these words he died.” [23:46] The last words Mark narrates from Jesus is ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?’ [Mark 15:34, Matt. 26:14-16] Keep in mind the fact that the reason why the narrations of Mark and Matthew are practically the same is due to Matthew’s narration depending largely upon that of Mark’s. Thus, it should not

be treated as a separate historical source.

In addition to all of this, the historical evidence also indicates that Prophet ‘Īsā (as) was not crucified.

This discussion shows that there is no strong logical or historical proof for crucifixion. Thus it is a false claim that Prophet ‘Īsā (as) was tortured and died on the cross. The truth is that he was raised to heaven by Allah (SWT) before his enemies could reach him.

Furthermore, it is false to claim that one person suffering and dying leads to the sins of other people being forgiven. It is also a false claim that all people are born sinful and are prone to being punished. This is because Allah (SWT) is Just. He would not punish a person or cause him to be born sinful when that person has not done anything wrong. He would also not cause a person to suffer in order to forgive the sins of another, or forgive a person because of the suffering of another. All this would be against the Justice of Allah (SWT), and logic necessitates that God is Just.

IS JESUS GOD?

Monotheism (belief in one God) is the main pillar of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All these three faiths are based completely on the belief that there is only one Lord.

However, Christianity was perverted and corrupted and Christians began to believe in ‘Trinity’ and Jesus as God. The deity of Jesus is explained through the mysterious dogma of Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity states that God is the union of three divine persons- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit- in one divine being. Thus, they say there is one God who exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. According to Christians the Father is God, the Son (Jesus) is God and the Holy Spirit is God although the Father is not the Son and neither of them is the Holy Spirit. Here is the formula of the Trinity: One person, God, the Father + one person, God the son + one person, God the Holy Spirit= one person, God the what? And by the way this is English not gibberish! Most churches baptize infants into the Trinity and thus Christians from their very childhood are told to believe in the deity of Jesus, though on faith alone.

THE DOGMA OF TRINITY

When and how did the dogma of the Trinity emerge? Did Jesus ever proclaim to be God or son of God? Did he ever call for the Trinity? No.

Historically, the original Christians of the first three centuries did not know of the Trinity.

Some early Christian sects who did exist before the Roman Catholics did not know Trinity and did not worship Jesus.

In 318 C.E. a controversy over the matter of the nature of Jesus blew up between church men from Alexandria-Arius, the deacon and Alexander his bishop. In order to safeguard the unity of his kingdom, the Emperor Constantine stepped into the fray and called for the first ecumenical council in church history in order to settle the matter once and for all.

According to Encarta Encyclopaedia, of the 1800 bishops in the Rome Empire, 318 attended the Council in 325 C.E. in Nicea (now Iznik, Turkey). The irony is that Christ's deity was ratified over the objections of most of the Christian bishops who had been gathered there from all over the world. Nevertheless, the Emperor concluded the council with a faith that he dictated in the Council. Later some bishops who attended the Council sent letters to the Emperor saying that they were forced to sign and they were not agreeing to this creed. The Nicean Creed, according to Catholic Encyclopaedia, reads as such: "We believe in one God; the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten no make, of the same substance with the Father."

The debates continued after this meeting. However, over time, those who believed in Trinity got the upper hand. Since then, brutal punishments, violent persecution and being labelled as heretics was the only destiny of the Unitarians. All their books were burnt and by 600 A.D., they had basically ceased to exist.

Today some critical Christian theologians such as John Hick in his book 'The Myth of God Incarnate' find the roots of the Trinity in ancient pagan religions. Hick finds amazing similarities between the Buddhist doctrine of Trikaya (the three body doctrine) and the Trinity.

Similarly, there are many similarities between the Trinity and the Hindu doctrine of Trimurti (Sanskrit: Three Forms) consisting a triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. It is due to these similarities that some historians assumed that Jesus must have spent some time in India during his missing years! There is however, no historical proof for this assumption. Moreover, the claim of the adaptation of a pagan doctrine by a Messenger of God i.e. Jesus (a.s) is the most irrational proposition.

ANALYSING TRINITY LOGICALLY

- God is physical and God is not physical! No doubt, the God that all monotheists believe in is not physical, or else he would be limited. Nevertheless, Trinity is explained as 'God incarnate in Jesus'. Jesus was born of Mary. He had body and flesh. He was eating and drinking. Jesus was physical. Thus, the result of the dogma of the Trinity is that God is physical and God is not physical!
- God is not begotten and God is begotten! All monotheists believe that God is not begotten. Christians also believe that God; the Father is not begotten. On the other hand, the Trinity claims that Jesus is the begotten son of God and he is God! Thus, God is begotten and is not begotten.
- God dies and God doesn't die! God that all monotheists- including Christians as they claim- believe in is Ever-Living. God does not die, not even for a micro-second. Jesus is born and hence they celebrate Christmas. All Christians believe Jesus died on the cross. Although he was resurrected again, he died. Thus, God dies and God doesn't die. Isn't this violation of a law of contradiction?

DID JESUS EVER CLAIM TO BE GOD?

The Holy Qur'an states that on the Day of Judgment on the trial of Christians, Allah will ask Jesus if he had ever asked people to either worship him or his mother? The purpose of this rhetorical question is for the Christians to hear from Jesus that he had never had such a blasphemous claim.

“And when Allah will say: O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say unto men: Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? He will say: Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to say, Had it said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours; truly, You only You, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden.” [5:116]

Nowhere even in the present gospels has Jesus ever explicitly claimed to be God. The Encyclopedia Britannica states: "Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Old Testament: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. (Deut. 6:4)".

The worship of God was always focal in Jesus' life. For instance, when his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1-2) he taught them to pray to God; the Father, not to himself. Notice that the words "Father! Grant us" indicate that Jesus included himself among the creation of God, acknowledging a high authority; 'God' over all of them. Similarly, according to John, Jesus said to Mary Magdalene: "I am going to ascend to my father and your father, to my God and your God." [John 20:17]

According to Mark, Jesus even did not allow himself to be called 'good' let alone 'God'. Mark narrates that as Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him: "Good teacher. What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." [Mark 10:17-18]

We conclude from these discussions that all the rational and textual evidence indicates that Jesus is not God. Rather, he is a Messenger and Prophet of God, sent to guide mankind towards the true belief of the Unity of God.

Review Questions

Q1. The claim that Jesus is God:

- a. Goes against the logical law of non-contradiction
- b. Is not supported by the Holy Qur'an or the Bible
- c. Both of the above

Q2. The Holy Qur'an teaches that:

- a. Jesus (as) was crucified but did not die on the cross
- b. Was neither crucified nor killed
- c. Was crucified and killed, but resurrected

السَّلامُ عَلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ايوب

PROPHET AYYOUB (JOB^{AS})

(ع) ايوب نبي الله

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the story of Prophet Ayyūb (as) in more detail
- Discuss the virtues of Prophet Ayyūb (as)
- Know the difference between the Biblical and Qur'anic versions of the story
- Understand the morals from the story of Prophet Ayyūb (as)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

SENIOR LEVEL

Prophet Ayyūb(Job) (as)

In this lesson we will discuss the story of Prophet Ayyūb (as) in more detail than in the previous years. Prophet Ayyūb (as) has been highly praised in the Holy Qur'an for his unwavering patience in the face calamities. His story has very important lessons and reminders for us about how to deal with calamities, the hidden blessings around these calamities and also the manner of supplicating to Allah (SWT). While the Bible has also mentioned this story, it is quite different from the version in the Holy Qur'an and in this lesson we will compare the two.

The name 'Ayyūb' in Hebrew means either 'the one attacked by Satan', or the 'the one who attacked Satan'. In Arabic it means 'the one who constantly returns to Allah (SWT)'. In English he is called Job. He was also one of the descendants of Prophet Abraham (as), and perhaps his wife was related to Prophet Yūsuf (as).

BIBLICAL AND QUR'ANIC VERSIONS OF THE STORY

In the Bible, Prophet Ayyūb (as) is not considered a Prophet. He was a pious man with lots of wealth – apparently the richest man on earth at the time - and a large family. He would never eat unless he left a share for the poor people. Satan tells Allah (SWT) that Prophet Ayyūb (as) is obedient and good only because he is living an easy and comfortable life and should he be tried with calamities, Prophet Ayyūb (as) will stray from the right path. The Bible then says that Allah (SWT) tried Prophet Ayyūb (as) and so this prophet began complaining about the cruelty of Allah (SWT). There are 42 chapters on his life story and complaints in the Bible.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned the story of Prophet Ayyūb (as) in six short but profound āyāt.. As mentioned, there exists a stark difference in both the content and structure of the story between the Holy Qur'an and the Bible. Unlike the

ordinary reference of PAyyūb (as) in the Bible, the Holy Qur'an refers to Prophet Ayyūb (as) as one who has received special guidance from Allah (SWT):

“And We bestowed upon him (Abraham), Isaac and Job, each of them We guided...” (6:84)

Whilst the Bible has accused Prophet Ayyūb (as) of complaining to God about his calamities, the Holy Qur'an praises Prophet Ayyūb (as) for being patient and for being an excellent devotee and slave of Allah (SWT) i.e. one who has never preferred his desires over the will and command of Allah (SWT). Also, because Prophet Ayyūb (as) always resorted to Allah (SWT) in every situation he was in, similar to a baby who always seeks out its mother, Allah (SWT) gives him the title of 'oft-returning':

“Truly, We found him (Ayyūb) patient! How excellent a slave he was! Ever did he turn (to Us).” (38:44)

THE STORY

Prophet Ayyūb (as) was a very wealthy man with large amounts of land and cattle. He lived with a big family and he enjoyed a lot of respect from his community. Despite these riches, he was a very pious man and lived a life totally devoted to Allah (SWT). According to some narrations, even the angels admitted that there existed none in the Earth as pious as Prophet Ayyūb (as). Satan was unable to gain any sort of control over Prophet Ayyūb (as) and therefore he went to Allah (SWT) with a plan. He told Allah (SWT) that the reason why Prophet Ayyūb (as) is so pious is because of the comfortable life he is living and that the moment his wealth is snatched from him, Ayyūb (as) will turn away from Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT), The All Wise, gave Satan the power to snatch away Prophet Ayyūb's (as) wealth from him. Within a short time, all of Prophet Ayyūb's (as) farms were destroyed and all his servants and cattle died. The once richest man of his time had now absolutely no means to provide even for the basic necessities. In this situation, Prophet Ayyūb (as) would repeatedly exclaim:

“Allah gives to whom He wills and takes from whom He wills.”

Prophet Ayyūb (as) saw no reason to panic and maintained a calm demeanour as if nothing had happened. His faith was untouched and his spiritual

connection with his beloved God only grew stronger. Satan's plan had failed!

Satan once again went to Allah (SWT) and argued that the real test for someone is not necessarily through loss of wealth but through loss of children. He once again sought power to take away Prophet Ayyūb's (as) children and family from him with the hope that this loss would turn him away from Allah (SWT). It was only a matter of time before Satan set the house of Prophet Ayyūb (as) crashing, killing all his family and children except his wife. Prophet Ayyūb (as) showed unfathomable patience at this great loss and once again said:

“Allah gives to whom He wills and takes from whom He wills.”

Satan was running out of options but tried one last attempt. This time he asked Allah (SWT) to give him the power to make Prophet Ayyūb (as) ill – an illness that would leave him bedridden for very many years. Allah (SWT) permits him but says: “I give you authority over his body but not over his intellect, soul and heart.”

The Biblical version reports that Prophet Ayyūb (as) fell so ill that his body gave out a bad stench such that no one could even come close to him. As Muslims we do not agree with this because we believe that since the bodies of the Prophets are so pure, holy and dignified in the eyes of Allah (SWT), they can never smell bad even when they are dead, let alone when they are alive. The narrations about his body having horrible ulcers and wounds is also not considered true.

Prophet Ayyūb's (as) illness left him isolated. Even his wife had become more a nurse. At one point when Satan realised that Prophet Ayyūb's (as) faith was almost impenetrable, he decided to try to misguide him through his wife. So he approached her in the form of a human being and promised her a cure only if Prophet Ayyūb (as) acknowledged that it was he (Satan) and not Allah (SWT) that cured him. Thus, she began to frequently nag Prophet Ayyūb (as) with the hope of instilling doubt into his heart. Prophet Ayyūb (as) realised that she had been influenced by Satan and he got upset. He said to her in a soft voice: “If I ever regain health, I swear I will punish you with strokes”. He then asked her to leave him alone.

A few days later a group of Rabbis came to visit Prophet Ayyūb (as) and said to him condescendingly: ‘God has

left you! We wonder what kind of sin you have committed to deserve this divine torment.'

Prophet Ayyūb (as) still remained patient and said to them that this was simply a trial.

THE PRAYER OF PROPHET AYYŪB (AS)

Throughout this trial, Prophet Ayyūb (as) never complained to Allah (SWT) about his situation nor supplicated to Him in a demanding tone. The Holy Qur'an quotes Prophet Ayyūb's (as) plea for relief from Allah (SWT). Pay attention to the politeness of the supplication despite the desperation:

"O My Lord, harm has touched me and You are The Most Merciful" (21:83)

Allah (SWT) answered the prayer of his beloved Prophet and reunited him with his family and friends, returned his wealth and provided him good health. Allah (SWT) has promised to answer all our prayers too when He says:

"And your Lord said: "Call on Me, (and ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation)." (40:60)

Through this story, Allah (SWT) also exposed the weakness of Satan and proved him wrong.

Since Prophet Ayyūb (as) had promised his wife that he would punish her on getting well, Allah (SWT) ordered him to gently strike her such that she does not get hurt:

"And take in your hand a bundle of thin grass and strike therewith (your wife), and break not your oath" (38:44)

LESSONS FROM THE STORY

- The first lesson that we learn from this story is that this world is a place for trial and tests and no one, including the Prophets, are spared from it. While the trials for ordinary people are a means of purification for their sins, the trials that Prophets undergo are a means of elevating them spiritually. To live in this world and not expect any difficulty and hardship is like diving into water and expecting to come out dry.
- While everyone must be tested and tried, the difficulty of each test varies from person to person depending on their spiritual make-up. Each test is 'tailor-made' to suit the individual

and to strengthen a particular weakness in him. Allah (SWT) will never place on our shoulders the responsibilities that He placed on His Prophets. We should therefore never complain that what has befallen upon us is too difficult and unfair. Allah (SWT) says:

"Allah burdens not a person beyond what he can bear" (2:286)

- Each test and trial is surrounded by blessings and each calamity will be compensated by Allah (SWT). For example when a person becomes ill, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

"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 a glorification of God and his/her cry is unification of God"

"Then there is so much reward for those who became the victim of some calamities after their death – given they had been patient – that were they given the opportunity to return to this world to experience the calamities they would have chosen to return to gain more reward"

- The best weapons that shield us against the influences of Satan are patience and prayers or supplications:

"And seek help in patience and prayer, and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for those who have awe of Allah." (2:45)

- Whatever situation we may find ourselves in, Allah (SWT) is always watching over us and is in fact with us. Even if the whole world turns against us, Allah (SWT) alone is sufficient for us, especially if we are on the right path.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1) The two weapons which best protect us against Satan in the face of calamities are:

- a. Anger and Intelligence
- b. Patience and Prayer
- c. Kindness and forgiveness
- d. Knives and Daggers

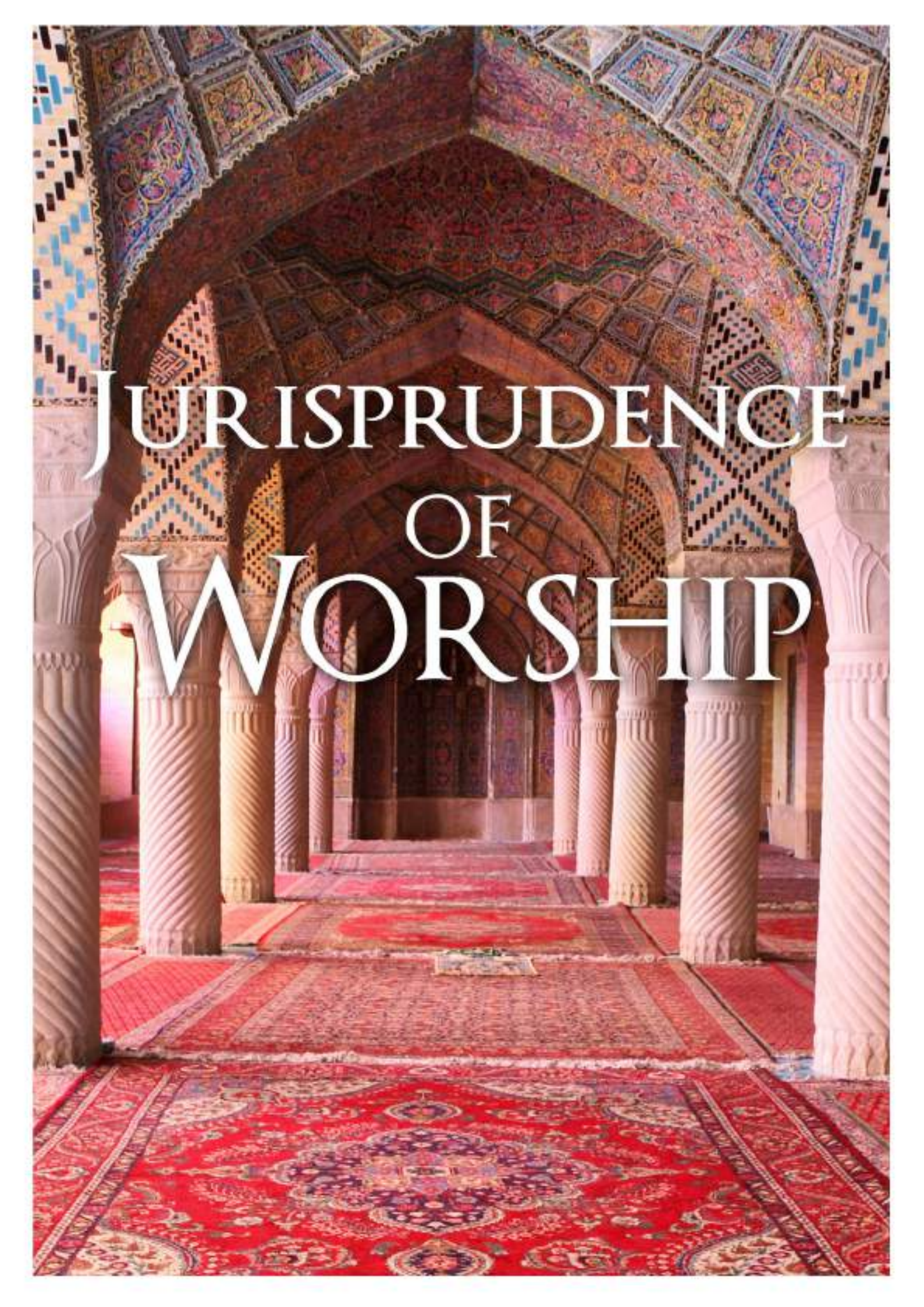
2) Prophet Ayyūb has been praised in the Holy Qur'an for:

- a. Patience

- b. Being Oft-returning
- c. An excellent devotee
- d. All of the above

3) The differences between the Biblical and Qur'anic versions of the story are:

- a. The Bible has got a lengthy account of the story and does not consider Ayyūb as a Prophet whereas the Holy Qur'an has mentioned the story in only 6 āyāt and has honoured Prophet Ayyūb (as)
- b. There are no significant differences in the two versions
- c. The Bible says that Prophet Ayyūb (as) complained of his situation while the Holy Qur'an says that Prophet Ayyūb (as) was very patient
- d. Both a and c.

The image shows the interior of a mosque, featuring a series of pointed arches supported by columns. The ceiling and arches are decorated with intricate geometric and floral patterns in various colors. The floor is covered with a large, ornate red carpet with a central medallion and border designs. The lighting is warm, creating a serene atmosphere.

JURISPRUDENCE OF WORSHIP



FURTHER PRAYER RULES

JURISPRUDENCE LEVEL 4

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the rule relating to the foundational obligations of prayer

Further Prayer Rules

In our last few lessons, we have learnt many of the rules of prayer, and by now, we should all be able to pray correctly. In this lesson, we will learn a few more of the rules of prayer that will help us to know when we need to repeat our prayer and when we do not need to repeat our prayer if we make a mistake.

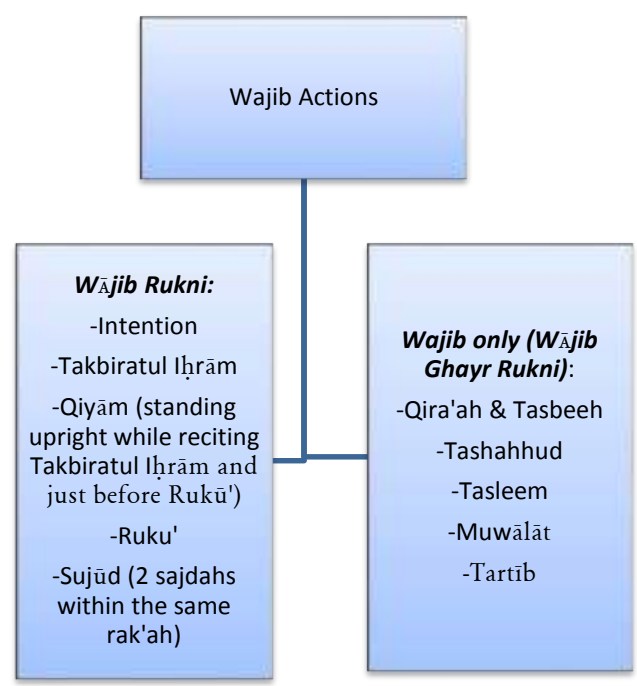
WĀJIB RUKNI

There are two types of Wājib actions in prayer. Some are Wājib Rukni (foundational obligation) and others are just Wājib.

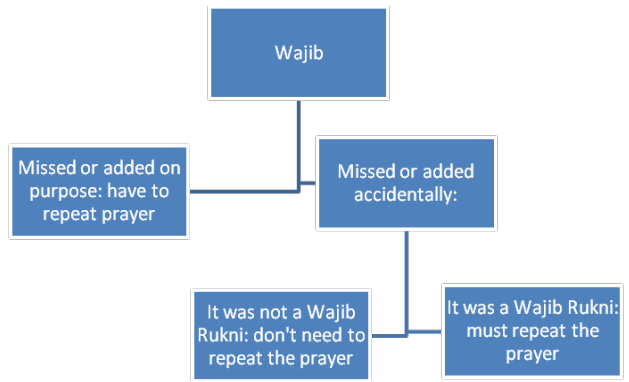
If an act is wājib Rukni certain rules apply to it. The main two rules that apply to it are this:

- If we miss or add a wājib Rukni act in our prayer, on purpose or accidentally, our prayer is invalid and we need to offer prayers again. If a wājib act is not a Rukn we only need to repeat our prayer if we miss it on purpose.
- If we miss an action during prayer (for example we forget to do our second Sajdah) we can go back to do it as long as we have not moved on

to another Wājib Rukni (such as next rak'ah and its qiyam). If we have, then we are not allowed to go back to do what we have missed.



Here is a table to help you figure out when you need to repeat your prayer and when you do not:



Let us look at the five foundational obligations in more details

- **Niyah:** This is the intention. As we have discussed in previous lessons, we need to have the intention of praying for the sake of Allah and to know which prayer we are reciting.
- **Takbiratul Iḥrām:** This is the first Takbir we do when we begin the prayer. If we do not do this correctly, or don't do it at all, our prayer is not valid.
- **Qiyam (standing upright just before ruku' and during Takbiratul Iḥrām):** remember that we learnt we must stand upright and steady before we go into Ruku'. If we do not do this, even if by accident, our prayer is not valid. Similarly, when we are reciting Takbiratul Iḥrām, we need to be standing upright and steady.
- **Ruku':** There is only one Ruku' in each rak'ah. If we miss or add a ruku' to our prayer, our prayer is not valid, even if this is by accident.
 - For example, if I realise after Maghreb prayer that I prayed four rak'at instead of three, I need to repeat my prayer.
- **Two sajdah within the same rak'ah:** If we miss two Sajdah within the same rak'ah, then our prayer is invalid. But if we miss two sajdah in different rak'at, our prayer is okay if we make up those Sajdah after prayer.

MISSED ACTIONS IN PRAYER

Let's look at some situations where we accidentally miss something in prayer. What should we do in such situations?

- I forgot to recite a surah after Surat al-Ḥamd and now I am in Ruku':
 - You cannot go back because you have passed a Rukn (which is Ruku') continue your prayer and finish it, your prayer is okay
- I forgot to perform my second Sajdah of the first rak'ah and now I am standing up for the second Rak'ah and reciting Surat al-Ḥamd:
 - You have not passed a Rukn so you can go back and perform that Sajdah you missed and continue your prayer as normal. The standing

during the recitation of Surat al-Ḥamd is not a rukn so you can go back.

- I forgot to perform my second Sajdah in the first Rak'ah but now I am in my second rak'ah and in the state of Ruku':
 - You cannot go back because you have passed a Rukn (rukū'). Finish your prayer then make up that Sajdah as Qaḍā' after you have finished the prayer. Because you only missed one sajdah (and not two within the same rak'ah) you have not missed a rukn. Making up a Sajdah as Qaḍā' is easy. After you have finished the prayer, you just perform a Sajdah with the intention of Qaḍā', that's all.
- I missed Tashahhud and now I am standing up and reciting the Tasbiḥat in the third rak'ah, and I remember that I have missed it
 - Sit down and perform Tashahhud and continue your prayer as normal, because you have not passed a Rukn.

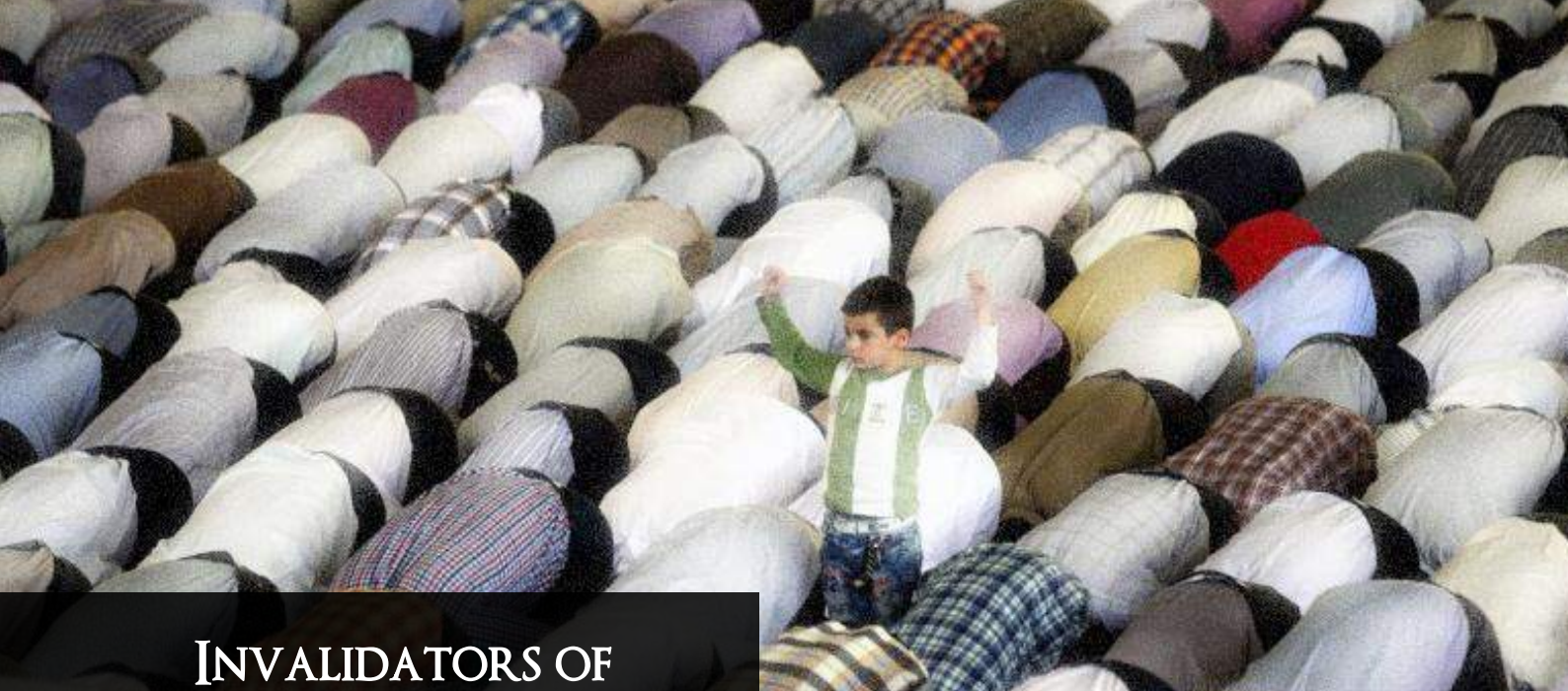
Review Questions

Q1. I forgot to recite a second surah after Surat al-Ḥamd and now I am doing my sajdah. What should I do?

- a. Stand up and recite the surah I missed
- b. I have already passed a wājib rukni so I cannot go back. But my prayer is okay
- c. My prayer is invalid because I missed the surah and I have to repeat the prayer

Q2. I finished my Maghreb prayer and realised I only prayed two rak'at instead of three. What should I do?

- a. My prayer is okay because I did not miss a wājib rukni
- b. My prayer is invalid because I missed a wājib rukni
- c. Neither of the above



INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

مبطلات الصلاة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand why prayers has restrictions in what one can or cannot do
- Learn more of the actions that invalidate prayer
- Know when prayers can be broken
- Know the Makrūh acts in prayers

Invalidators of Prayer

Activity: 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.

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

SITUATION IN PRAYER	Invalidates Prayer	Does not invalidate prayer
I reply to Salamun 'Alaykum		
Wearing a shirt that I had stolen		
Forgetting both sajdahs of the same rak'ah		
Crying due to fear of Hell		
My face turns away from the Qiblah completely		
Only eating half an apple while in Qiyam (standing)		
Sleeping for only five seconds in sajdah		
Crying because I failed my exam		
Forgetting tashahhud of the second rak'ah		
Laughing loudly and uncontrollably		

THE ETIQUETTE OF PRAYER

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) 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 rude. In this regard, Imam al Reḍa (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 some of the things that are not supposed to be done whilst praying and thus they invalidate our prayer. Even if you stand in the presence of the president of your country 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).

INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

LAUGHING OR CRYING

- If a person laughs loudly and uncontrollably, whether intentionally or unintentionally, then his prayers become invalid. If he laughs without emitting any voice then his prayers will be valid. If however in order to control himself, the condition of the person praying changes, like if the colour of his face turns red, then he should as an obligatory precaution pray again.
- If a person cries for worldly reasons e.g. loss of property or loss of a dear one then his prayers will be void. But if he cries for the fear of Hell or begging for paradise or on the pain that the Ahlul Bayt (as) suffered, then his prayers will be in order.

TALKING

- Deliberately uttering any words which are not part of prayer invalidates the prayer.
- Replying to salaam is wājib even if one is praying. The reply should however be identical to the greeting. So if one says “Salāmun ‘Alaykum”, the reply should be “Salāmun ‘Alaykum”. It is also important that the reply should be given immediately. Not replying to salām does not invalidate the prayer but it is counted as a sin. One does not have to reply to a salām that is done out of fun.

EATING OR DRINKING

- If a person eats or drinks in such a way that it changes the form of the prayer (similar to laughing, jumping and talking) then he has to repeat it.
- If he however only swallows the food from between his teeth, then his prayers will be in order.

OMISSION OR ADDITION OF CERTAIN ACTS

- If one adds or omits a foundational obligation (wājib rukni) intentionally or unintentionally then the prayers will become void.
- If one adds or omits a non-foundational obligation (wajib ghayr rukni), then his prayer is void.

FRUTHER ETIQUETTE OF PRAYER

So far, we have discussed the Wājib rules about which things break the prayer. Now let us look at some other things which are makrūh (disliked or better to avoid) things during prayer:

- To face slightly towards the right or left, remember if one turns completely away, it breaks the prayer, but turning away only a little is makrūh
- To close the eyes
- Fidget and play with one’s hands
- Anything that disturbs us while we are praying is makrūh (for example praying near the TV, or praying in front of a picture or a mirror or next to noisy friends so that we can hear what they are saying)



- Praying when one has the urge to use the toilet is makruh

- It is also makrūh to pray when one is tired and drowsy



- One common problem is trying to pray when we have noisy younger brothers or sisters. The best way to deal with this is to find a quiet room and close the door so that our siblings can't get in and disturb us. If this is not possible, give them something to play with to distract them or promise them that if they are quiet during prayer, you will play with them afterwards.

Homework

Analyse how you pray from the beginning to the end and list down the things that break prayer and the makrūh things that you have been doing. Make sure to eliminate all invalidators and aim to reduce the Makrūh acts when you stand for prayer again.

Review Questions

1. Turning slightly to the right or left:

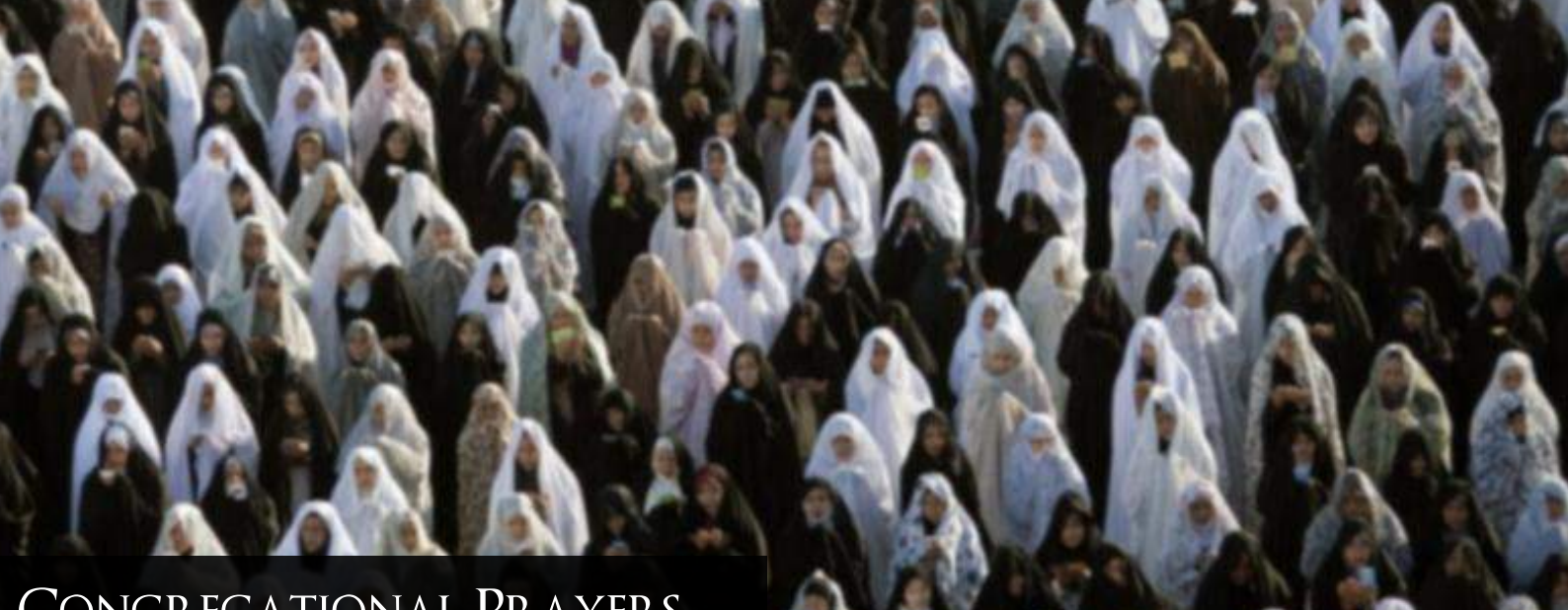
- a. Breaks the prayer
- b. Is makrūh
- c. Is okay

2. Laughing out loud during prayer:

- a. Is makrūh
- b. Breaks the prayer
- c. Is okay

3. Replying to 'Salamun 'Alaykum' during prayer is:

- a. Wājib
- b. Mustaḥab
- c. Breaks the prayer



CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS

صلاة الجماعة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded of the importance of congregational prayer
- Be reminded of the basic rules of congregational prayer
- Learn how to join the congregational prayer late through particular scenarios

Congregational Prayers

The congregational prayer is one of the most emphasised aspects of the practical life of a Muslim. It is the way in which all of the Muslims gather in one location and offer their prayers in unison. The prayer in congregation becomes the symbol of the unity of the Muslims and is a very important way of enjoining people in the community to pray regularly. In this lesson we will discuss the importance of praying in congregation and elaborate on more rules of praying in this form.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

There are very few practical acts of worship emphasised in Islam as much as the congregational prayer. The Holy Prophet [s] had said:

"One prayer of a man in congregation is worthier than his forty years of prayers at home (alone)."

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4



SOME GENERAL RULES OF CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

Once the prayer leader has been established

- If there is only one follower, the follower should stand to the right, and slightly behind the one who leads the prayer
- If there are two or more followers, all must stand behind the Imam without a barrier (e.g. wall) separating them from the Imam.
- The gap between the Imam and the rest of the congregation must not be great. Similarly, the gap separating the worshippers standing side by side should not be large.
- The actions of those in the congregation must not precede those of the Imam. The parts of the prayer should be done in unison with the Imam or slightly after the actions of the Imam. This means one cannot go into Rukū' before the Imam or go into Sujūd before the Imam. At the same time one should not be too far behind the actions of the Imam, for example, if the Imam is going in Sujūd, one cannot remain in Rukū' and should join him in Sujūd quickly.

- When we are praying in congregation while the Imam is reciting the two chapters of the Qur'an (Surat al-Ĥamd and the second Surah) we should just listen to the Imam's recitation. If we can't hear the chapters being recited, it is permissible to say some dhikr under the breath. For all of the other parts of the prayer, one should recite the words quietly.
- The lines of the congregation should be straight, not from the place of prostration but from the position of the feet. Furthermore, one should not start another row, until the gaps of the first row are filled.

JOINING THE PRAYER LATE

Let us review some scenarios in which we can join the congregational prayer. We will split up into groups and act out each of the following situations:

I enter the Mosque and see that the Imam is in his first Rak'a, reciting the second Surah. If I join the prayer will that be considered my first Rak'a?

Yes it will be. If you join at any time in the first and second Rak'a one simply joins and considers it his first. He does not need to recite anything, simply listen to the rest of what the Imam is reciting.

The Imam is now in Rukū', if I join now would this be considered my first Rak'a?

Yes, one is considered to have joined the Rak'ah as long as he joins at any time before or during the Rukū', as long as they join before the Imam begins to raise his head from Rukū'.

The Imam has now stood from the Ruku', but he is still in the first unit of the prayer. If I join now, would that be considered my first Rak'a?

No, if you join now, this will not be considered a unit of prayer for you. It is easiest to wait until the Imam gets up again for the second rak'a and join then.

I joined the prayer and the Imam was reciting the second Surah. Since I missed Surah Al-Ĥamd, I should recite both chapters quietly to myself. True or False?

False; when joining in the first or second Rak'a, you should just continue listening to the Imam recite the prayer. This is because in the congregational prayer, the Imam recites on your behalf.

The Imam is in the Rukū' of the third Rak'ah of prayers. I do Takbiratul Ihram and join the prayer. This is considered my first Rak'ah. True or False?

True. If you join in the Rukū' of any Rak'a it will be considered your first.

The Imam is reciting Tasbiḥatul Arba'a of the fourth Rak'a. When I join, should I recite Surah Al-Ĥamd and the other Surah?

Yes you should recite these chapters because the Imam only recites on your behalf in the first and second Rak'a. If you only have time to recite al-Ĥamd, that is enough. However, if you feel you have no time to recite Surah al-Ĥamd, wait till the Imam goes into Rukū' and join then. That way, this counts as your first Rukū' and you don't have to recite anything.

I joined the prayer while the Imam was standing in his 2nd rak'a. Now, the Imam is doing the Tashahhud. What should I be doing?

This is considered your first Rak'a, thus you should not be doing the Tashahhud. You should be kneeling in a sitting

position, getting ready to stand. Your knees should not be touching the floor. You should recite the Tashahhud with the Imam under breath and then stand when he stands.

I joined in the 2nd Rak'a of 'Isha prayer. The Imam is completing the fourth Rak'a with Taslim. Do I need to pray any more Rak'ah? If so, how many?

Yes, you should pray one more Rak'a. This is because the Rak'a that you join at any time before the Rukū' is your first Rak'a. Thus, although it may be the congregation's second, third or fourth, it is still your first. You should therefore, after the Imam has finished the Tashahhud in the final Rak'a, or as per recommendation after Taslīm, stand and complete the Rak'a that has not been completed.



Review Questions

Q1. When praying in congregation, I should:

- a) Listen to the Imam reciting Surat al-Ḥamd and not recite it myself
- b) I should recite Surat al-Ḥamd myself aloud
- c) I should recite Surat al-Ḥamd in a very quiet voice

Q2. When praying in congregation, I should:

- a) Go into Rukū' just before the Imam does
- b) Go into Rukū' just after the Imam does
- c) Go into Rukū' at the same time as the Imam does

Q3. When praying in congregation:

- a) We should pray with some gaps between us so others can join in late
- b) We should form straight rows and pray without any gaps between us
- c) We should pray in different parts of the mosque

TRAVELLER'S PRAYER

صلاة المسافر

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the fact that we pray 'qaṣr' if we are travelling under certain conditions
- Know the main conditions of qaṣr prayer
- Understand other miscellaneous rules regarding the prayers of a traveller

Traveller's Prayer

We have learnt in previous classes that in certain situations we have to shorten our prayers when we are travelling. This is called 'qaṣr' prayer. Qaṣr means to shorten the prayer. In this lesson, we will learn the conditions for shortening our prayers when we are travelling.

Class Activity: Revision Table

Fill in the blanks:

Prayer	Full	Short (Qaṣr)
Fajr		2
Ḍuhr	4	2
'Aṣr	4	
Maghrib	3	
'Ishā'		2

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

CONDITIONS OF QAṢR PRAYER

There are three major conditions for shortening our prayers:

- We should not be travelling to a place we consider our hometown. For example, Ali's family lives in Sydney and he grew up there and still has a home there and visits regularly. Now, Ali is studying in Melbourne and lives in Melbourne as well. Tomorrow, Ali will be travelling back to Sydney to stay with his family for a week. He does not need to shorten his prayer during this trip, because Sydney is also his home town.
- We should not be staying at the place we are travelling to for more than 10 days. For example, if I live in London but am travelling to New York to stay for two weeks, I do not need to shorten my prayers.
- We should be travelling a distance of more than 44kms on a return journey. For example, if I am leaving my town for 5 days, but going somewhere that is only 10 km's away, I do not need to shorten my prayers.

There are some other conditions that need to be met before a person must offer the shortened prayer:

- 1- One must intend to travel greater than 22km (or 44km round trip) before the journey and should not change his mind on his way.
- 2- The purpose of travelling nor the trip itself should not be ḥarām:

- a. If the parents are unhappy or displeased about a trip that is not obligatory, it is *ḥarām* and therefore one must recite full prayers
- b. If a person is travelling with the sole intent to avoid an obligatory act (like escaping from creditors) he has to recite the full prayer.
- c. If one travels with a means of transport that is usurped (for instance khums has not been paid on it) they must pray the full prayer.

- 3- The person should not be a nomad
- 4- A person should not be a regular traveller. For example, if I live in Sydney but work in Newcastle and travel there 4 days a week every week, then I do not need to shorten my prayer in either city.
- 5- A person must be leaving the borders of his hometown. For example, if I am travelling more than 44kms from one suburb of my large city (e.g. Sydney) to another without leaving its borders, then I do not need to shorten my prayers.

OTHER RULES

Here are a few other rules to remember about prayer when we are travelling:

- If a person recites the full prayer when he should be reciting the Qaṣr prayer, his prayer is void, unless he has completely forgotten about being a traveller or he does not know the rules of Qaṣr prayer. If he remembers or learns before the time of prayer runs out, he should repeat his prayer.
- Similarly, if one offers Qaṣr prayer (even if in ignorance) when he was meant to be praying full prayers, his prayers would be void.

Indicate whether the person should pray full prayer or qaṣr (shortened) prayer in the following journeys:

- 1- From his home town to another town 24km away, returning a day later
- 2- From his home town to another town 25 km away and returning 11 days later
- 3- From his home to another suburb in the same city, 40km away.
- 4- From his home town to another town to gamble for 7 days
- 5- From his home town to a town 50km away to study or work for a week

Review Questions

1. What distance do I need to travel before I should shorten my prayers?

- a. 44kms one way
- b. 44kms return journey
- c. 38 kms

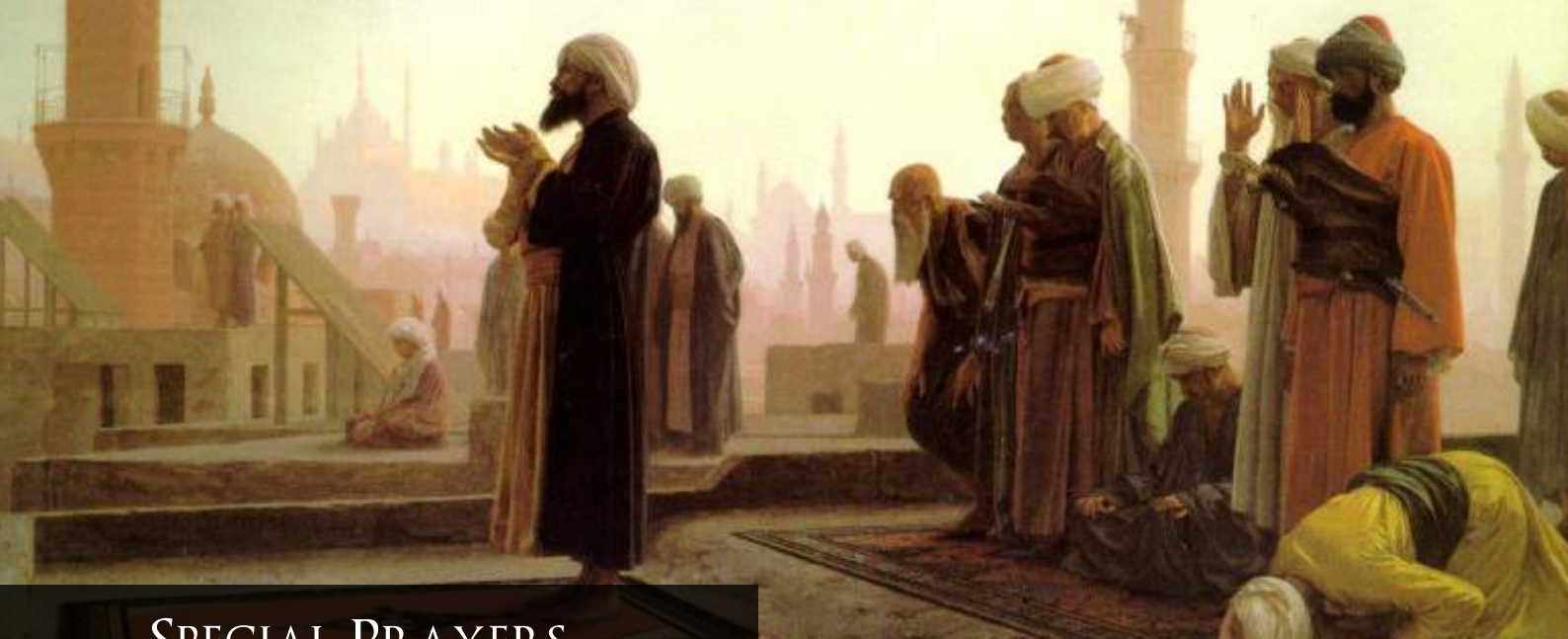
2. If I live in Sydney and work in Newcastle, and travel back and forth every week, I should:

- a. Always shorten my prayer, in both Sydney and Newcastle
- b. Always pray in full, in both Sydney and Newcastle
- c. Shorten my prayer, only in Newcastle

3. I live in Australia and I am travelling to stay in London for two full weeks with my cousins. I should:

- a. Shorten my prayers in London
- b. Pray the full prayer in London
- c. I do not need to pray in London because I am travelling

Class Activity



SPECIAL PRAYERS

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn when Salātul Āyāt becomes obligatory
- Learn the method of praying Salātul Āyāt
- Learn about Salātul Īd and when it is prayed
- Learn the rules of Salātul Īd
- Learn about the significance and rewards of Salātul Layl
- Learn the method of performing Salātul Layl

- Solar Eclipse
- Lunar Eclipse
 - The prayer becomes obligatory even if the moon or the sun are partially eclipsed, and even if they do not cause any fear.
- An earthquakeⁱ
- Any abnormal phenomenon which would usually scare people (e.g. a very violent storm)ⁱⁱ

METHOD OF OFFERING SALĀTUL ĀYĀT

There are two methods of performing this prayer. In this lesson, we will learn the shorter one.

Salātul Āyāt consists of two Rak'at, but within each Rak'ah there are five Rak'at. It is performed in the following sequence:

- 1- Niyyah (intention)
- 2- Takbīr
- 3- Recitation of Surat Ḥamd
- 4- Recitation of one āyah from a ṣurah (e.g. first āyah of Surat Ikhlāṣ. Then performing Ruku' again
- 5- Then standing up after Ruku' and reciting the second āyah of the ṣurah. Then performing a second Ruku'
- 6- **This action should be repeated five times.**
- 7- Stand after the fifth Ruku'
- 8- Two prostrations
- 9- Perform the 2nd Rak'ah in the same manner as above.
- 10- After the 10th ruku' in total, complete the prayer in the way one completes a normal prayer with two prostrations, tashahhud and salām.

Special Prayers

SALĀTUL ĀYĀT (PRAYER OF THE SIGNS)

This is a prayer prayed when particular natural signs occur. Salātul Āyāt becomes obligatory in any of the following four conditions:



SALĀTUL 'ĪD (THE EID PRAYER)

This is a prayer that we pray on the days of 'Īdul Fiṭr and 'Īdul Aḍḥā. It is obligatory if there is an infallible Imam who is not in occultation. During the period of occultation, however, we pray it with the intention of getting some reward. We can pray this prayer individually or in congregation.

METHOD OF PERFORMING SALĀTUL 'ĪD

This prayer consists of two rak'at. The unique thing about it is that it contains nine qunūt.

In the first rak'ah, we recite:

- ṣurat Ḥamd.
- Ṣurat Al-A'lā
- 5 x qunūt. In future years, we will memorise the supplication we recite during this qunūt.

In the second rak'at we recite:

- ṣurat Ḥamd.
- Ṣurat Al-Shams
- 4 x qunūt. In future years, we will memorise the supplication we recite during this qunūt.

The other parts of this prayer are the same as our daily prayer.

SALĀTUL LAYL (THE NIGHT PRAYER)



Salātul Layl is a special recommended prayer. We can pray it any time from midnight until dawn. However, the closer to dawn time that we pray it, the more rewarding and special it is. This prayer is extremely rewarding, and our Prophet (saw) and Imams (as) never missed it. It is an opportunity to have our prayers answered, to speak privately to God, and to remember our sins and ask forgiveness for them.

The Prophet (saw) has said:

“Any man or woman that rises for the night prayers immediately becomes the Imam of nine rows of angels who stand behind him or her. Then Allah (SWT) says, now do you know why I created humans? The length of each row of angels is from the Far East to the far West...”ⁱⁱⁱ

Imam Sadiq [a] said: "Never miss Salātul Layl, because, in fact, the real loser is he who misses Salātul Layl"^{iv}

Salātul Layl consists of eleven rak'at. However, even praying one or three raka't is very rewarding. In this lesson, we will learn how to perform the last three rak'at of Salātul Layl. These are the most significant and rewarding, and we should try to pray these regularly.

- **The first two rak'at** are performed like a normal Fajr prayer. The only difference is after Ṣurat Ḥamd we recite Ṣurat al-Nās in the first rak'ah and Ṣurat al-Falaq in the second rak'at. We end this prayer like a normal prayer with Tashahhud and salām.
- **The third rak'ah** is the most special. It is performed in the following way:
 - Recite **Ṣurat Ḥamd**
 - Recite **Ṣurat Ikhḷās three times**
 - Perform a **long qunūt**. This is the most special and rewarding part of the entire prayer. In this qunūt:
 - **Ask forgiveness for forty believers** that you know and pray for them
 - Seek forgiveness from Allah by saying '**astaghfirullāh wa atūbu ilayh'** 70 times
 - Then perform ruku', sujūd, tashahhud and salām as normal

This prayer is a very special opportunity for spirituality and attaining closeness to Allah (SWT). Its benefits are multiple and it should not be ignored or underestimated.

Memorisation Task:

استغفر الله و اتوب اليه

“I seek God's forgiveness and I repent to Him”

ⁱ S. Sistani: Obligatory Precaution, S. Khamenei: Obligation

ⁱⁱ S. Sistani: Recommended Precaution, S. Khamenei: Obligation

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.ihic.org.au/book.php?id=60&idt=11>

^{iv} Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 83, p. 127



FASTING

الصوم

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Review the importance of fasting as one of the major obligations in Islam and that it has special reward because it is a 'secret worship'
- Discuss the different levels of fasting:
- Discuss basic rules of intention and its timing
- Know the nine invalidators of fasting
- Know some specific rules related to the invalidators they are likely to come across on an everyday basis
- Know the rules of qada', Kaffarah, and related situations
- Know the rules for those exempt from fasting
- Learn about the lunar calendar
- Learn about the rules of knowing the beginning and end of the month of fasting

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Introduction to Fasting

Fasting is one of the most important acts of worship in Islam. It is obligatory during the month of Ramaḍān. It is one of the best ways of coming closer to Allah (SWT). As we will see, fasting is not just keeping away from food and drink; rather it is the most sincere acts of worship which has degrees and levels.

TYPES OF FASTING

As we have learnt in the previous years, there are different levels of fasting:

- 1- Natural fasting: This is like keeping a diet. There are no benefits in the Hereafter whatsoever
- 2- Jurisprudential Fasting: This is the fasting prescribed by the laws of Islam, in which one avoids nine things from dawn till dusk. These will be discussed in the upcoming lessons.
- 3- Ethical Fasting: This is not only avoiding the things that break the fast from a jurisprudential point of view, but also avoiding sins with all organs of the body. We must make it our aim at the beginning of every Ramaḍān that our fast be at least an ethical fast, and not just a jurisprudential fast. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“When you fast, you should safeguard your tongues, lower your gaze, and you should neither dispute with nor envy one another”ⁱ

- 4- Mystical fasting: This is the highest form of fasting where one abstains from everything other than the Almighty Allah (SWT).

FASTING IN THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

According to one of his numerous traditions, Prophet Muḥammad (saw) is quoted as saying:

"The month of Ramaḍān was named so because it tends to burn (yarmiḍu) the sins."

The righteous people at the dawn of Islam used to call it al-miḍmār, meaning something that destroys the excesses of evils and sins. During the lifetime of the Prophet (saw), the blessed month of Ramaḍān used to be called al-marzūq, (full of sustenance), due to the abundance of the blessings of Allah during this month.ⁱⁱ

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:

"When you fast, let your hearing and vision abstain with you from anything unlawful, against everything ugly, and leave hypocrisy aside, and do not harm those who serve you. Rather, adorn yourself with the dignity of the fast, and do not make your fasting day the same as the day when you do not fast."ⁱⁱⁱ

The above clearly shows us the significance of the month of Ramaḍān; it is a month full of blessings and Mercy, it is a catalyst for changing bad habits such that each month of Ramaḍān, one should improve more than the previous year. Every Ramaḍān we are expected to get rid of one bad habit at a time, whether it is the sin of lying, eating too much, envy, gossip etc. At the same time, we should not make fasting an excuse to get out of work, to get more attention or to feast at night.

Because of the special rewards in the holy month of Ramaḍān, there are a few additional things that are highly recommended and highly rewarding to do such as:

- Reciting the Holy Qur'ān more often
- Worshiping (such as prayers, du'ā') in the night especially
- Avoiding all forms of sins (like swearing, being rude to parents etc.)
- Spending more time at Islamic centres and around pious people
- Avoiding wasting time

Before we can practice the higher forms of fasting, we must understand and follow the rulings regarding the jurisprudential fasting. The next three lessons shall focus on just that.

THE INTENTION TO FAST

An important part of fasting is the intention to fast. Before we fast, we have to know in our mind that we are fasting an obligatory fast for the month of Ramaḍān, and that we are doing this for the sake of Allah (SWT).

The time for the intention of the obligatory fast is specific. One can make the intention either:

- 1- Before the beginning of fajr for every morning that they are fasting.
- 2- At the beginning of the month of Ramaḍān at which time we can make the intention to fast for every single day of the upcoming month.

Why is so much attention given to making the intention?

The act of fasting is almost completely based on the intention. This is because fasting could be described as the most sincere act of worshipping. When we compare fasting with other acts of worship we begin to see the sincerity within it. Look at prayer. When we pray, there could be some ulterior motives to impress the people around us (God forbid). However, when someone is fasting, no one knows if you are in fact fasting. Especially when living in a non-Muslim country, someone can pretend to be fasting, while secretly eating. However, the one who fasts and completes it has a special status in the eyes of Allah (SWT), because he is doing it completely for the sake of God.

It is for this reason that in a Hadith Qudsi it is narrated that Allah (SWT) says:

"For every good deed that you do there is an allocated reward, as for fasting, I am the reward for it."

The reward with Allah (SWT) is something that we cannot even begin to imagine.

Review Questions

Q1. Ethical fasting refers to:

- a. Avoiding sins with all organs of our body during the month of Ramaḍān
- b. Being nice to people during the month of Ramaḍān
- c. Going on a diet during the month of Ramaḍān

Q2. We must make the intention to fast:

- During the day we are fasting
- Before we begin fasting
- Any time we want

Q3. Reciting the Holy Qur'ān:

- Is highly recommended during the month of Ramaḍān
- Is the same as reciting any other time of the year
- Is not recommended during the month of Ramaḍān

Lesson 2: The Invalidators of Fasting

There are nine acts which invalidate or break the fast. Below is a list of the invalidators followed by an explanation of the one that we will come across most commonly in our everyday lives

- Eating and drinking
- Swallowing thick dust
- Immersing one's head completely in water
- Ascribing false things to Almighty Allah, or to his Prophet or to the successors of the Holy Prophet
- Sexual intercourse
- Masturbation (istimnā') which results in ejaculation
- Remaining in janābah, hayḍ or nifas deliberately until fajr
- Liquid enemas
- Vomiting intentionally

EATING AND DRINKING

If a person eats or drinks intentionally, their fast is void. Let us turn our attention to some commonly faced questions related to this rule:

a. Can I brush my teeth?

Yes you can brush when you're fasting as long as you don't swallow the toothpaste or the water. We have to remember though that if one intentionally swallows food particles that remained between the teeth, the fast is invalid.

b. Can I take injections, anaesthetics and drips (e.g. in the hospital)?

There is no objection to an injection which anaesthetises one's limb or is used for some other purpose being given to a person, who is observing fast, but it is better that the injections which are given as medicine or food are avoided.

c. Can I swallow my saliva and phlegm?

Swallowing saliva does not invalidate the fast. Also, there is no harm in swallowing one's phlegm or mucous from head and chest as long as it does not come up to one's mouth. However, if it reaches one's mouth, the obligatory precaution is that one should not swallow it.

SWALLOWING THICK DUST

This does not include normal dust in the air but if it is really thick and heavy like smoke from the exhaust of a truck and it reaches the throat, then it breaks the fast. Allowing thin dust in the air to reach the throat does not invalidate the fast.

- If thick dust is whipped up by the wind and if a person does not take care in spite of taking notice of it, allowing the dust to reach his throat, his fast becomes void on the basis of obligatory precaution.

IMMERSING THE HEAD IN WATER

With the exception of Syed Sistani who rules that it is only makrūh, most other marajī' rule that intentionally immersing the head completely in water invalidates the fast. Below are some specific rules:

- This rule does not apply to showering.
- This rule does apply to swimming, unless one can manage to make sure their entire head does not go under water at any one time. Therefore, swimming whilst fasting is not advisable



MASTURBATION

Masturbation that leads to ejaculation is ḥarām in all situations. When one is fasting, masturbation voids the fast and the person who performed it must pay kaffarah.

REMAINING IN A STATE JANĀBAH OR HAYD

If a person enters a state of Janābah during the night, they must make sure to perform Ghusl before Fajr. If they fail to do so deliberately, their fast is void, and they need to pay a kaffarah.

Similarly, if a woman is in a state of ḥayḍ, but in the evening she becomes ready to perform Ghusl and start fasting again, she must perform Ghusl before fajr time.

Review Questions

Q1. Brushing the teeth without swallowing anything:

- IS not allowed one is fasting
- Is allowed when one is fasting
- Should not be done when one is fasting

Q2. If a person is walking somewhere and the wind blows up a thick dust, the person:

- Has no obligation to cover their mouth or avoid the dust
- Should cover their mouth and avoid the dust to keep their fast in order
- Thick dust does not break the fast

Q3. A person woke up two hours before Fajr and found that they had had a wet dream while sleeping. They should:

- Go back to sleep even if they are not sure they will wake up again before Fajr
- Make sure they perform Ghusl before Fajr
- Perform Ghusl when they wake up again, even if it is after Fajr

Lesson 3: Qaḍā' and Kaffarah

Allah, the Almighty, has prescribed fasting as a means of purification and worship so that we may get closer to Him. As we have learnt in the last few lessons, there are certain things that break the fast. If a person misses a day of fasting, they have to either:

- Make up that day- we call this qaḍā'
- Make up that day and offer something else as a type of compensation. This is called Kaffarah, and we will learn its rules later.

RULES OF KAFFARAH

There are two ways of paying compensation for missing a fast deliberately. As we said, this is called Kaffarah. The two types of Kaffarah are:

- 1- Feeding 60 poor believers
- 2- Fasting for 60 days (of which at least 1 month and 1 day should be consecutive)

Under certain conditions, kaffarah is necessary if one misses a fast. Kaffarah only applies if a person does one of the four following things deliberately, voluntarily and knowing that doing these things breaks the fast:

- 1- Eating
- 2- Drinking
- 3- Sexual intercourse
- 4- Staying in the state of Janābah till the time for Fajr prayers
- 5- Attributing a lie to Allah (SWT) or the Holy Prophet or Imams (as)

So if a person does any of the above unintentionally or because they were forced, or because they had a valid excuse (e.g. they were ill and had to drink) then they do not need to offer Kaffarah.

Remember that even if a person offers Kaffarah, they still need to offer qaḍā' as well.

If we are ever in a situation where we have to pay offer Kaffarah, we should seek the advice of our local scholar. They can give us advice about how we can feed the sixty poor people, or if we choose to fast 60 days, they can give us advice on the rules for this kind of fasting.

RULES OF QAḌĀ' AND KAFFARAH

Now that we have learnt the rules for qaḌĀ' and Kaffarah, let us do a quick quiz and see whether we can figure out if the people in the following situations need to offer Kaffarah or only perform qaḌĀ'.

QUESTION	Answer
John converted to become Muslim when he was 21 years old. What should he do about the years of fasting he missed while he was a non-Muslim?	
Muhammad, whilst fasting did not know that he was not allowed to immerse his head into water but realized afterwards. What does he need to do?	
Nour deliberately drank a whole glass of juice in the month of Ramaḍān, whilst fasting so that she fits in with all her friends at a restaurant	
Husain was certain that if he slept till after Fajr in the state of Janābah, his fast would be ok. He did this in the Holy month of Ramaḍān and only later did he find out that it was not acceptable	
Zaynab had her monthly period in the middle of Ramaḍān, and she was unable to fast for 8 days of the month	

RULES OF QAḌĀ' FASTS

We have learnt in the previous years about some of the rules of qaḌĀ' fasts. What we shall discuss here is when we need to perform these QaḌĀ' fasts. As a general rule, one must offer their qaḌĀ' fasts before the commencement of the next Ramaḍān. If one fails to do so then they must fulfil the qaḌĀ' and additionally pay something called a '*fiḍyah*' which equates to $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food (this is equivalent to around \$3) per fast. This fiḍyah is not necessary when the person is a new revert to Islam.

As we learnt above, there are a number of situations where only qaḌĀ' fasts become compulsory, not the kaffarah. Let us review these:

- 1- If someone does not think it is Fajr yet (and does not investigate) and does something that breaks the fast and later finds out Fajr has come.
- 2- When a person is certain that Maghrib has set in, and breaks his fast accordingly, and later he learns that it was not Maghrib, he must give qaḌĀ'.
- 3- If one forgets to offer Ghusl Janābah during the Month of Ramaḍān and fasts for one or more days in

that state. Once the person remembers, he should offer Qadha of the fasts.

- 4- When one rinses his mouth with water because it is dry and some goes uncontrollably down the throat. In this situation too only QaḌĀ' is necessary.

THOSE EXEMPTED FROM FASTING

In our course so far, we have seen numerous examples of the merciful laws of Islam, whether it be in performing wuḍū', offering daily prayers, eating etc. Similarly, Allah, the Most Kind and Merciful, has also exempted some people from fasting. The following are the people exempted from fasting:

Those who are sick (or who suffer extreme hardship from fasting): such people usually have to offer qaḌĀ' later. Pregnant women who are in the later stages of pregnancy do not need to fast, but they must offer qaḌĀ'.

The Elderly: the elderly are not required to fast nor do they have to offer qaḌĀ' for fasts they have missed. As a recommended precaution though, if they become capable of fasting later, they should offer QaḌĀ'.

Travellers: We have discussed in details under the lesson of 'Prayers of the Traveller', who is considered a traveller and who is not. As a general rule, any traveller who prays qaṣr prayers must also break their fast. They are not allowed to fast intentionally, and must offer the qaḌĀ' later. We shall discuss more detailed rules in the following years.

Review Questions:

Q1. A person needs to pay Kaffarah if:

- a. They do anything that breaks their fast
- b. If they do certain things that break the fast deliberately and voluntarily and without an excuse
- c. They eat on purpose only

Q2. A person who is ill during the month of Ramaḍān and fasting would harm them should:

- a. Not fast, and make up their fast later when they recover
- b. Not fast, and they do not need to ever make it up
- c. Fast anyway

Q3. A Kaffarah can be offered:

- by feeding 60 poor Muslims
- Fasting 60 days
- Either of the above

*Teacher's Section (answers to quiz).

1-No Qadha, no Kaffarah

2-Qadha, no Kaffarah, because he did not know the rule

3-Qadha and Kaffarah

4-Qadha, no Kaffarah, because he did not know

5-Qadha, no Kaffarah

Lesson 4: The moon of the month of Ramaḍān

As we have learnt previously, the Islamic calendar system is based on the cycle of the moon. The solar calendar that has fixed lengths of months was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII, after whom the calendar was named, by a decree signed on 24 February 1582 with the months named after pagan (Greek) gods. The Gregorian solar calendar is an arithmetical calendar. It counts days as the basic unit of time, grouping them into years of 365 or 366 days and was initially based around the Christian holidays of Easter and lent^{iv}. The lunar Islamic calendar on the other hand is not an arbitrary arithmetic derivation of lengths of the months but is based on the cycle of the moon.

THE LUNAR CALENDAR

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, that is, it is based on the sighting of the moon. The first day of the Islamic month, as we have learnt in previous years, is when the crescent moon is sighted. The length of the cycle of the moon from one crescent to the next is approximately 27-29 days (depending on the sighting of the crescent).

It is also very important to remember that in the Islamic calendar, because the moon can only be seen at night, the night comes before the day. This means that the 24 hour day begins from the time of Maghrib and finishes at the time of Maghrib the next day, unlike how we normally consider the day to begin and finish at midnight. Therefore, you may have noted that Islamically speaking

‘Friday Evening’ (laylatul jum'ah) is on Thursday night, not Friday night.

All this may seem more confusing at first, but we have to appreciate that the Islamic Calender and timings for the acts of worship cater perfectly for people in all parts of the world, even if they have no calendar, clock or other equipment. All a person needs to do is to look in the sky and they can get an idea of the day of the month. This also means that there is no need for ‘daylight savings time’ in an Islamic system as the length of ‘day’ and ‘night’ is determined not by clocks but by the rising and setting of the sun!

The Almighty Allah states:

“They ask you about the new moons. Say: these are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage.” [2:189]

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (saw) that ‘the fixed period of time’ is for observing the fasting of Ramaḍān and breaking of the fast at the end of the month as well as for observation of the Ḥajj dates.

Therefore, when we want to know whether the month of fasting (Ramaḍān, which is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar) has begun, we should go outside and look at the sky and look for the new thin crescent moon. Similarly, when we want to know if the month of fasting has ended, we go outside and see if the new thin crescent moon for the next month is visible.

Of course, there are times when it is not so simple. It may be a cloudy night or there may be other factors hindering us from seeing the moon. In this case, we can refer to our marja' to find out their ruling in this situation. Some maraji' allow us to consider whether the moon would have been visible if there were no clouds, and this can be done by looking at astronomical data.

It is very important for Muslims to know the days of the Islamic months so that we can follow the occasions that have taken place throughout the lives of the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt (such as births and deaths). By doing this we may be able to “*be happy when our Imams are happy and sad when they are sad*” depending on the event. Hence, it is highly recommended to search for the new crescent moon.

Practical activity

It is advised that the teacher arranges a moon sighting excursion sometime in the year and demonstrate the direction to look for the moon.

- Go out each evening following the day of the new moon.
- Find a westerly facing spot with a clear view of the horizon.
- Wait for the Sun to set, then look for the crescent moon in that part of the sky.
- Don't look directly at the sun using your naked eye, use binoculars or a telescope to guide you as to where to look for the moon.
- Can you see the crescent moon? Are you sure? Is it a cloud or a vapour trail?
- Make a note of where you were, the date and time of your observation, the weather conditions and whether you saw the Moon or not

Jābir narrated from Imam Bāqir (a.s): “When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was sighting the crescent moon of Ramaḍān he would stand towards the Qiblah whilst raising his hands saying:

“O Allah! Welcome the new month for us with security and faith and safety and Islam and good health and abundant sustenance and keeping away of diseases. O Allah! Grant us the opportunity to fast (during the days) in this month and the opportunity stand for prayer (at night) and recite the Qur’ān in it. O Allah! Protect Ramaḍān for us and protect us for it and protect us in it.”^v

DIFFERENCES ABOUT MOON SIGHTING

Sometimes, Muslims begin and finish fasting on different days. This is usually because they refer to different scholars, who have slightly different opinions on the rules for moon sighting.

We should understand that just because there are differences, this does not mean anyone is ‘wrong’. Each scholar has done their research and given the ruling according to their best ability before God, and the people who refer to that scholar are also doing the right thing by referring to the appropriate marja’.

Therefore, in cases like these, we should agree to disagree on dates, and we should try to remain as united as possible. It is very important to respect each other and to not use these small differences as a reason to cause problems between Muslims.

METHODS OF ASCERTAINING THE FIRST DAY OF THE ISLAMIC MONTH

According to the rules of Islam, there are four ways to know that the new moon is visible and that therefore the new month has started:

- 1- If a person himself sights the moon
- 2- If a number of persons confirm to have sighted the moon and their words assure or satisfy a person. Similarly, every other thing which assures or satisfies him about the moon having being sighted can be taken to determine the beginning of the month.
- 3- If two just (ādil) people say they have sighted the moon that night. There are more particular rules about this we will learn later.
- 4- If 30 days have passed of the month, then the next day will be the first of the next month.

Frequently Asked Questions

Cloudy Night

If we know that according to astronomical data, the moon is potentially visible on a particular night, but we cannot see it due to cloudy weather, what should we do? See below the question and answer by Ayat. Sistani:

إن المستفاد من الأدلة الشرعية كون العبرة في بداية الشهر القمري بظهور الهلال على الأفق بنحو قابل للرؤية بالعين المجردة لولا الغيم ونحوه من الموانع الخارجية^{vi}

“What is understood from the religious evidence is that the beginning of a lunar month will be confirmed by appearance of the crescent in the local horizon in a way that it would be visible with naked eyes had it not been any cloud or external obstacles.”

Therefore, in this case, we should consider the moon to have been visible, and consider the next day the first day of the upcoming month.

Day of Doubt

If we are still unable to come to a conclusive finding, we have to remember that if a person does not know whether it is the last day of Ramaḍān or the first day of Shawwal, he should observe fast on that day, and if he comes to know during the day that it is the first of Shawwal, he should break the fast.

Review Questions

Q1. The Islamic calendar is a:

- a. Lunar calendar
- b. Solar Calendar
- c. Gregorian Calendar

Q2. The way to find out whether an Islamic month has begun is to:

- a. See or become sure that the new crescent moon of that month can be sighted
- b. See or become sure that the full moon of that month can be sighted
- c. Look it up in an online calendar

Q3. The month of fasting is the:

- a. 7th month of the Islamic calendar
- b. The 3rd month
- c. The 9th month

ⁱ Fast of the Month of Ramadhan by Yasin T. Al-Jibouri

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Biharul Anwar Vol 94 p 351

^{iv} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar

^v Al-Kolayni, al-Kafi vol.4 p.65

^{vi} <http://www.sistani.org/arabic/qa/search/3692/>



JURISPRUDENCE OF FOOD AND DRINK

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn which animals are halal to eat
- Learn which animals are haram to eat
- Learn further detailed rules about halal and haram food
- Learn the recommended and detestable acts related to eating and drinking
- Learn the rules of Islamic slaughter

Lesson 1: Ḥalal and Ḥaram Animals

It is important to be extra careful about what we eat and what we feed our family, as this can have a great impact on our bodies and souls.

Allah (SWT) has made that which is good for us and which is pure and clean permissible for us, and has made that which is harmful for us impermissible.

CATEGORISATION

For the purposes of our discussions, animals are categorised into:

- Land animals
- Marine Animals (and amphibians)
- Birds

LAND ANIMALS

The following land animals are halal to eat:

- Wild animals whose blood gushes out when slaughtered are halal to eat if they are hunted and slaughtered properly (e.g. deer, gazelle and wild goat). One of the conditions is that when hunted the animal has the ability to flee
- Therefore, baby deer (or similar baby animals) are haram to eat and their skin is impermissible to use
- Domesticated land animals are permissible to eat if they are slaughtered in a prescribed way (e.g. cow, bull)



A baby deer is haram to hunt and eat

The following land animals are makruh to eat:

- Horse
- Mule
- Donkey

The following land animals are haram to eat:

- Animals whose blood does not gush out when slaughtered. However, their skin is tahir if they are hunted or slaughtered in the right way. This includes zebras, lions and rabbits
- Kangaroos are haram to eat
- Rabbits are haram to eat



Kangaroos are haram to eat

- Dogs and pigs are haram to eat and their parts are najis
- A still-born calf is haram to eat
- A haram animal's egg is haram, and a halal animal's egg is halal. If we do not know the source of the egg, then we look at its shape. We will discuss this later

BIRDS

The following birds are impermissible to eat:

- Birds which have claws or talons
- Birds who glide more than they flap
- Birds that have no feathers

- If the above birds are hunted in the correct way their meat is not halal but its parts are tahir. The exception is a bird that cannot fly, such as a baby bird. Baby birds are haram to hunt, and all their body parts are haram to eat and are najis.



Birds with claws or talons and birds that mostly glide are haram to eat

The following birds are permissible to eat:

- Birds which flap more than they glide, as long as they can fly (e.g. not baby birds)

The following birds are makruh to hunt:

- Swallows
- Hoopoe birds

MARINE ANIMALS

All marine animals are Ṭāhir, but not all are halal

The following marine animals are halal to eat:

- Any fish that have scales
- Shrimp
- Prawn

The marine animals must die after being caught, either in the net or after coming out of the water



Shrimp and prawn are halal

The following marine animals are haram to eat but are Tahir:

- Oyster
- Lobster
- Octopus
- Calamari



Oysters and Lobsters are haram

***Note:** when buying seafood make sure the batter used is not haram or najis in any way

The following are clearly mentioned to be impermissible to eat:

- Eels
- Cat-fish
- Fish that died in the sea



FISH EGGS

- The eggs of halal fish are halal
- The eggs of haram fish are haram

AMPHIBIANS

- Ducks and geese are halal



- Crocodiles and turtles are not halal, but their skin is tahir

Review Questions

Q1. A baby deer:

- Is okay to hunt because deer are permissible to eat
- Is haram to hunt because we cannot hunt a wild animal that cannot run away
- Is makrūh to hunt because it is so cute

Q2. Which birds are halal to eat?

- Those which have claws and fangs
- Those which flap more than they glide
- Hunting birds

Q3. Oysters and lobsters are:

- Halal to eat
- Haram to eat
- Makrūh to eat

Lesson 2: Conditions of Slaughtering

For the meat of an animal to be halal, it must be slaughtered Islamically

CONDITIONS OF SLAUGHTERING

- The slaughterer must be a Muslim (male or female)
- The knife used to slaughter an animal must be made of iron. Slaughtering with a steel knife is not allowed).
- The throat and the chest of the animal to be slaughtered must be facing the Qiblah.
- The slaughterer must mention a remembrance containing the name of Allah, and so if a person says 'Bismillah' or 'Allahu Akbar' before slaughtering this is sufficient. The person doing the slaughtering must himself mention the name of Allah.
- The four structures in the throat must be cut: the oesophagus, the trachea and the two major blood vessels. Therefore, the cut must be made under the 'Adam's apple'. The whole head should not be cut off completely until the animal is completely dead.
- After the animal is slaughtered, it should still have some motion (e.g. flap/blink). This helps the blood circulate out of the body
 - Stunning the animals before slaughtering is common in many abattoirs. Goats are stunned with an electric shock, while a cow is shot in the forehead. This shock can kill an animal if the

animal is not killed within a few minutes. This can make the animal suffer less. We have to be careful about this and make sure the animal is killed immediately and blood should spurt from the animal once it is slaughtered.



FURTHER ISSUES

If we go to a non-Muslim shop and they tell us the food is halal, what should we do?

- We cannot take the word of a non-Muslim unless we have surety or confidence that this is halal

If a Muslim seller tells us that something is halal, we should take their word for it and we do not need to investigate this further.

RECOMMENDED AND DETESTABLE ACTS

RECOMMENDED (MUSTAḤAB) ACTS

- Washing hands before eating
- Saying Bismilāhi Raḥmanil Raḥīm before eating
- Saying 'alḥamdulillāh' after eating
- Eating slowly
- Eating with others, especially family members
- Cleaning between the teeth
- It is recommended to have only two meals a day, one in the morning and one in the evening
- Start and end with some salt or vinegar



DETESTABLE (MAKRŪH) ACTS

- Eating raw or uncooked meat
- Not eating a large amount
- Leaning against something while eating
- Eating food while it is hot or blowing on food
- Putting bread under the plate
- Peeling fruit that can be eaten with the peel
- Eating while walking
- Eating alone
- Separating meal place from subordinates
- Sitting with disbelievers around the same table

Review Questions

Q1. It is:

- Recommended to eat slowly
- Recommended to eat quickly so as not to waste time on food
- Neither eating fast or slow is recommended

Q2. If a Muslim shopkeeper tells us something is halal:

- We still need to ask and investigate
- We should take their word for it
- We cannot trust him as some people lie

Q3. The person slaughtering an animal as per the rules of Islamic slaughter must be:

- Muslim
- Male
- A scholar

HIJAB

الحجاب

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the categories of Maḥram and Non-Maḥram and the levels in the Maḥram category
- Know the wājib and mustaḥab dress for men
- Know the wājib and mustaḥab dress for women
- Discuss the issue of ornamentation
- Discuss some frequently asked questions in relation to Ḥijāb
- Know the limits and etiquettes of interaction between males and females
- Be able to deal with practical challenges like shaking hands with the opposite gender
- Understand the limits of inter-gender friendships
- Know the limits of online interaction between the genders

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Rules of Ḥijāb

The ḥijāb plays a significant role in maintaining one's respect and protecting one's honour and dignity. It also helps to direct one's desires away from ḥarām and deviation from the path to Allah (SWT). In this lesson, we will learn about the rules relating to the appropriate dress for men and women in order to comply with the commands of Allah (SWT) and protect ourselves.

WĀJIB ATTIRE FOR MEN

The minimum wājib dress for males is that they cover their private partsⁱ in front of maḥram and non-maḥram women and men. However, if leaving the rest of the body uncovered may lead oneself or others to fall into any sin or lust, then he must cover up the rest of his body to the extent that is usually covered by men.ⁱⁱ

FAQS ABOUT THE COVERING FOR MEN

Q: Are men who participate in mourning processions, while walking in the streets, allowed to take off their shirts and leave their chests naked while women are watching them?

A: If one knows that women are looking at him with lust and ill-intentions, he has to cover his body; otherwise, it is no problem. On the other hand, women should not look at non-maḥram men's body parts which they usually cover.ⁱⁱⁱ

A: Similarly, it is ḥarām for a woman to look at the body of non-maḥram man, except places which are customarily not covered, like, his face, hands, head, neck and feet. She can look at these parts of a man without the intention of deriving any pleasure, or if there is no fear of being entrapped in any sinful act.^{iv}

MUSTAḤAB DRESS FOR MEN

It is *mustaḥab* for men to cover from the navel to the knees in normal circumstances. However, as mentioned above, if bearing the rest could lead to any sin from the people or himself, then it becomes *wājib* to cover up more than that.

WĀJIB HIJĀB FOR LADIES

According to all contemporary *marāji'*, it is obligatory upon a woman to conceal her body (and body shape), hair and beauty from non-*maḥram* men. This includes boys who have not yet reached the age of puberty but are *mumayyiz* (able to distinguish between good and evil especially regarding sexuality and may become sexually excited if they see a lady). The parts of a woman which can be left uncovered are:

- hands up to the wrists
- face (if it is unadorned) – the front part of the chin is considered part of the face, however any part beneath the chin is not considered part of the face and must be covered.

Remember that these parts that do not need to be covered, should not be adorned (e.g. with make-up).

Keep in mind that to conceal one's body does not only mean to cover the skin. It also means to **conceal the shape** of the body including the chest^v (as the shape of the body is also part of a woman's beauty and attracts the attention of the opposite gender). Any adornment which she wears must also be covered (types of adornment will be explained shortly).

FAQS ABOUT HIJĀB FOR LADIES:

Q: What is the rule concerning women's wearing swimsuit in the swimming pools specified for females? Is there a *shar'i* limit for clothing?

A: In front of other females, a woman is not obliged to cover more than her private areas. Therefore, there is no objection to her wearing swimsuit in the swimming pool which is special for women.

Q: In wedding parties or the like, is it permissible for women to wear transparent or tight clothes that show the contours of their bodies and other types of dresses that show most parts of their bodies?

A: If women are insulated from the gaze of men who are non-*maḥram* to them, and are immune to falling victim to vile deeds, there is no harm in their wearing such clothes. Otherwise, it is not permissible.

Q: What is the ruling in the matter of the sound of tapping produced by a woman's shoes while walking?

A: There is no harm in it in itself provided that it does not draw the attention of other people and lead to vile consequences.^{vi}

Q: Can I remove my *ḥijāb* in time of danger?

A: If there is a real danger threatening you because of your Islamic dress, you can remove it only to the necessary extent.

Q: Can a woman appear in public with the top of her feet exposed?

A: No, she is not permitted to do that.

* What about while she is in prayer?

- It is permitted; the entire woman's foot, top and sole, can be exposed in prayer.^{vii} [Note: this is on the basis that no non-*maḥram* men are around to see her as is indicated in the previous question about showing her feet in 'public'.]

WHAT IS CONSIDERED ADORNMENT FOR LADIES?

According to all *marāji'*, anything which is considered to be beautifying a lady or brings unnecessary attention to a lady is considered an adornment. Let's look at the following questions and answers to define this.

FAQS REGARDING THE ADORNMENTS OF LADIES

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to wear a kind of *ḥijāb* or dress objects that could trigger the attention of other people or unleash their desire, e.g., to wear a chador in an unconventional way or choose socks with colour or material which unleash the desire?

A: It is not permissible for women to wear anything, whose colour, design, or manner of wearing may be attractive to non-*maḥram*'s attention or could eventually lead to bad effects or committing that which is *ḥarām*.

Q: If a woman shapes her eyebrows by plucking, should she cover them according to shar'?

A: If this is considered in the common view as adorning, she should cover it in front of a non-maḥram.^{viii}

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to go out of her house for some errands perfumed, with the fragrance of her perfume reaching non-maḥram men?

A: She ought not do that. It is not permissible if it tempts a non-maḥram man or normally causes him excitement.

Q: Is a lady allowed to wear foundation in front of non-maḥram men? What about if it is used to cover scars, pimples, blemishes, etc.?

A: It is not permissible.

Q: It is normal these days for a woman to put on mascara and make-up, wear rings, necklaces and bracelets for beauty and then go out in front of people in the markets and streets.

A: This is not permissible for her except for mascara and rings provided that she is safe from falling into forbidden activities and does not intend by it to excite non-maḥram men.^{ix}

ORNAMENTS FOR MEN

Q: Can a man wear white gold?

A: Regarding white gold for men: There are two things called white gold:

- Platinum, which is permissible for a man to wear;
- Regular gold alloyed with nickel, etc. which is impermissible for a man to wear and invalidates the prayers, unless the regular gold used in it is so little that it is not called gold (as per common view) anymore.

Q: Is it admissible using of gold and silver cuff-links, pins and tie pins?

A: It is forbidden for man to use gold ornaments.

Q: On men wearing earrings in one or both of the ears.

A: It is not permissible if it is made of gold; rather not at all, based on obligatory precaution.

Q: Is it permissible to wear clothes that have pictures of intoxicating drinks as a promotion for drinking them? Is it permissible to sell such items?

A: It is forbidden to wear and sell them.^x

Review Questions

Q1. A woman is:

- Allowed to wear make-up at all times
- Is allowed to wear make-up, but only if there are no strange men around
- Is never allowed to wear make-up

Q2. A man:

- Can dress however he likes as long as his private parts are covered
- Should not dress in a way that may cause lust in the opposite gender
- Should always cover his whole body except hands, feet and face

Q3. A woman can:

- Always wear strong perfume
- Use strong perfume if there are no men around
- Use strong perfume only if she is sure it would cause a strange man to get excited or pay attention to her

Lesson 2: Social Hijāb

In our previous lesson, we discussed some aspects of hijāb, focusing on the rules of clothing and dressing. In this lesson, we will focus on the rules of socialisation between men and women.

KNOWING THE LIMITS

Human beings are naturally social creatures and there is no absolute restriction on interaction between men and women – because this is not practical. It must however be understood that because men and women are different and there is a natural attraction between the two, there are rules regulating the limits and nature of social interaction. This is to avoid people falling into sins in the future.

WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE?

From our previous lessons, we know the main difference between maḥram and non-maḥram and from there we know that certain rules and regulations apply to interactions between non-maḥrams. Examples of situations where there is interaction with non-maḥrams include:

- Extended family gatherings – where cousins and relatives are present
- At school: interacting with students, teachers etc...of the opposite gender
- At work: interacting with colleagues, bosses etc...of the opposite gender
- At mosques and Islamic centres

Whenever we are in such situations, it is important to remember that it is very easy for Satan to distract us from the right path and make us behave inappropriately. Examples of inappropriate behaviour include:

- Looking at the opposite gender with lust
- ‘Flirting’
- Making jokes and being over-familiar

Some tips to remember:

- Beware of your intentions – make sure your interaction is for a good and justified, such as doing a project at school or necessary voluntary work at the mosque
- Stick to what is necessary: limit the conversation to the task at hand and don’t go beyond that
- Be professional in your behaviour
- Don’t joke or flirt – it is very easy to get comfortable speaking to a person of the opposite gender, and sometimes, joking or flirting can create improper feelings in either of the two people – even if one person’s intentions are not wrong, they can easily become wrong.
- Dress properly and speak respectfully.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

One of the practical challenges we face as Muslims living in the West, when it comes to *ḥijāb*, is the culture of hand-shaking between men and women.

In Islam, the stand on this issue is clear – the shaking of hands between non-*maḥram*s of the opposite gender is not permitted.



A man must not shake the hands with a woman who is non-*maḥram* unless his or her hand is covered and even then, pressure should not be applied^{xi}.

Therefore, whenever a non-*maḥram* offers their hand to you whether in a professional or casual context, one must politely decline the offer and simply try and explain that our religion does not permit this form of greeting.

FRIENDSHIPS WITH THE OPPOSITE GENDER

Muslims should have good relations with all people, both males and females, at school, at work, with neighbours and so on. We should be kind and courteous to everyone. However, it is not allowed to take members of the opposite gender as friends. The reason is that the attraction between males and females can never be switched off, and so any friendship between two of opposite genders can end up in sinful acts.

It is common knowledge that in Islam, fornication and adultery are grave sins and committing either bears serious consequences in this world and the Hereafter. However, what is not so well known is that while declaring fornication and adultery as *ḥarām*, Islam does not merely forbid the actual acts, but it also declares as forbidden each and every circumstance or way that leads to fornication and adultery. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an:

“Do not come near fornication, for it is indeed lewdness and an evil life-style.” (17: 32)^{xii}

The laws of Islam are from Allah, our Creator, who knows our weaknesses as well as our strengths better than we can ever do. Women, by nature, desire to be looked at, adored and cherished, while man is inclined to look at women. Allah, the Almighty therefore, warns us against our own natures, which may lead us astray if we do not exercise caution and take the necessary safeguards.

Thus, Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an:

“Say to the believing men to lower their gazes and guard their chastity... And say to the believing women to lower their gazes and guard their chastity and not to display their charms in public.” (24: 30-31)

Having close casual friendships with members of the opposite gender may lead to staring, lustful thoughts, flirtatious behaviour and seduction. Although it may not always be the case, there is no way to tell when it could happen and when it would not happen. That is why it is forbidden to mingle and mix freely with members of the opposite gender and to develop friendships with them.^{xiii}

ONLINE HIJĀB – SOCIAL NETWORKING

The principles for maintaining our modesty are very broad and the beauty of them is that they can be applied in any given situation.

In the above sections we have covered the main principles behind *hijāb* and the manner of interaction in practical situations. The same rules will apply for any other situation including social interaction online.

Keeping friends on Facebook, MSN, Twitter and any other social networking website is not completely a bad thing. These sites are a good way to keep in touch with family and friends who may live far away. It is a great way to know what events are going on in the community.

However, we have to also be aware of the dangers of such sites and the dangers of adding anyone and everyone as friends!



^{xiv} Social networking sites are designed to let people express themselves more freely online than they would in person. This is where the danger lies. Some examples of inappropriate online behaviour include:

- Posting of improper photos so everyone who is a 'friend' and has access to that person's page can see all their photos. With non-Muslims, this becomes even more dangerous because photos can be very lewd
- Posting improper comments about another person – this is an example of online gossiping and backbiting which is *ḥarām*.

- Online chatting – sometimes when people are online at the same time, they will speak or chat for no real or proper purpose – just casually. This is very dangerous in the case of non-*maḥrams* because just like speaking, chatting can become flirting, and this means we are then approaching the conditions that could lead to *ḥarām* actions.

LIMITS TO ONLINE INTERACTION

Below are some tips to regulate and limit our interaction with the opposite gender online:

- Keep to what is only good and necessary – if it is not necessary, avoid it
- Write clearly, respectfully and modestly
- Do not joke, flirt or make improper comments
- Spend minimal time in such interactions – once your work is done, don't continue chatting
- Don't keep friends of the opposite gender on your social sites for the sake of 'fun' and for casual reasons – this is unnecessary
- Don't give out too much information or ask too many questions that could be personal or irrelevant
- Don't post any improper pictures, comments or statements

Review Questions

Q1. Men and women can:

- Interact with each other for fun
- Interact with each other for any kind of work
- Interact with each other only for work that has a good or necessary purpose

Q2. Practising *hijāb* online means:

- We should only post or share pictures with friends
- We must not post or share any improper pictures and chat with anyone of the opposite gender without a good and lawful reason
- We can chat with anyone if we don't know who they are

Q3. Social *hijāb* means:

- Only wearing loose clothes and a scarf
- Only being careful of how we speak and act but not how we dress
- Dressing properly and behaving respectfully in both actions and speech when interacting with non-*maḥrams*

ⁱ These include the anus, penis and testicles. (A code of ethics for Muslim men and women)

ⁱⁱ A code of ethics for Muslim men and women

ⁱⁱⁱ Ayatullah Khamenei

^{iv} Ayatullah Sistani

^v She is exempt from this in uncontrollable circumstances only, such as if the wind blows her clothes (Sistani).

^{vi} These first 3 Q&A were addressed to Ayatullah Khamenei. Other questions and answers include:

Q: What is the criterion for what are called “conspicuous (eye-catching) clothes”?

A: They are the types of clothes that are not suitable for wearing, be it for their colour, design, being worn, or any other reason. The yardstick is that when the person wears such clothes they would definitely attract the attention of other people, so much so that their look would be conspicuous.

Q: Is it permissible for a devout woman to wear glittering black shoes?

A: There is no harm in wearing any type/colour of shoes unless the colour or the design attracts the attention of other people, or makes her conspicuous.

^{vii} These last 2 questions are addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^{viii} These first 2 questions were addressed by Ayatullah Khamenei

^{ix} These 2 were addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^x These last 3 questions were addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^{xi} Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Tabatabaie Yazdi, *Urwatul Wusqa*, Section on Marriage, Chapter One, Issue 39.

^{xii} Explaining this, the Prophet said, “The fornication of the eyes is staring, the fornication of the ears is listening, the fornication of the tongue is talking, the fornication of the hands is holding, the fornication of the feet is walking, the fornication of the heart/mind is craving and lusting, and finally, the private parts confirm or negate it.” He also said, “Staring is one of the arrows of Satan.” In another report, he said, “You are allowed to have the first accidental look (which is unintentional), but do not continue to stare.”

^{xiii} Many studies conducted about male-female interaction in the workplace concluded that one in every three women had been sexually involved with a co-worker or boss. If this is the case in a professional, business-like environment, then the potential for illicit relations in more casual circumstances has much greater potential.

^{xiv} REFERENCES

- The Islamic Modest Dress, by Murtadha Mutahhari – Shaking hands - <http://www.al-islam.org/modestdress/>
- Holy Qur'an
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MUSIC AND DANCING

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the brief reasons why music is haram
- Understand the things that make music ḥarām
- Know the rules of dancing for men and women in brief

Music and Dancing

In this lesson, we will be discussing music and songs, and learning which types of music and songs are ḥarām and which are okay to listen to.

Listening to ḥarām music is counted as one of the ‘great sins’. This is because of the several bad effects it has on the person who listens to it. In this lesson we will look briefly at some of the reasons why music is haram in Islam.

SOME REASONS WHY MUSIC IS HARAM

1. Singing becomes the cause of adultery as the below mentioned tradition states:-

The Holy Prophet (S) said, "Singing is a ladder to Adultery."

Singing can cause lust to enter a person's heart, and this leads to bad consequences. Not only he who sings but also the one who listens attentively to it becomes negligent towards Allah and is ready for immoral deeds.

2. Music can distract us from the reality of our life and cause to spend a lot of time day-dreaming or fantasising. This makes us lazy and it also deadens the heart, making it difficult for us to pay attention in our prayers and to enjoy the spirituality of supplications.
3. Listening to ḥarām music is punishable with the Hell-fire. Imam al- Bāqir (as) said:

"Music is among the things for which Allah has promised the Fire (of Hell). Then he recited the following āyah: "Indeed successful are the believers those who in their prayer are humble and those who keep themselves aloof from Vain (words and deeds)." [23:1-3].

WHAT MAKES MUSIC ḤARĀM?

The criteria of whether music is ḥarām or not is the following:

- If the music is usually played or listened to in gatherings of sin (e.g. nightclubs) then it is ḥarām
- If the music is not primarily used in gatherings of sin, then it is okay to listen to
- Remember that with issues like music, there is always room for taking precaution by not listening to music



As for the words of a song, they make the song ḥarām if:

- They talk about sinful things such as sex, drugs, alcohol
- They include vain words, this includes 'love songs' or 'romantic songs'
- It is also important to remember that it is ḥarām for a man to listen to a woman singing.

It is also important to remember that any type of transaction involving ḥarām music and songs is also ḥarām. This includes buying, selling and distributing such things.



Once a man asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) about what kind of singing was ḥarām. The Imam (as) said: 'when you are listening to something, ask yourself that on the Judgment Day, will these words be words of truth or words of falsehood?' The man understood the meaning of the Imam (as).

The Imams (as) have said: 'A house, in which there is singing, is not safe from calamity, and supplications in that house are not answered, and no angels enter such a house'.

The Imams (as) have also said: 'if a person listens to someone, he is worshipping him. If that person speaks for God, then the person is worshipping God, but if that person speaks for Satan, then that person is worshipping Satan'.

DANCING

Dancing encourages immoral deeds and arouses lust and it can also lead to a person losing their dignity. It is usually associated with gatherings of sin.



Particularly for men, dancing is forbidden in all situations.

As for women, some scholars rule that it is okay for women to dance in front of other women if there is no other ḥarām act being committed (e.g. ḥarām music or songs). However, other scholars rule that it is forbidden for women to dance even in front of other women.

Review Questions

Q1. Music is ḥarām if it is:

- Usually played in gatherings of sin
- Makes a person want to dance
- All music is ḥarām

Q2. A 'love song' is:

- Included in 'vain' songs and is ḥarām
- Is okay to listen to if the music is not ḥarām
- Is okay to listen to if a man is singing it

Q3. Selling or distributing ḥarām music or songs:

- Is okay
- Is ḥarām
- Is makrūh



CHARITY

الصدقة

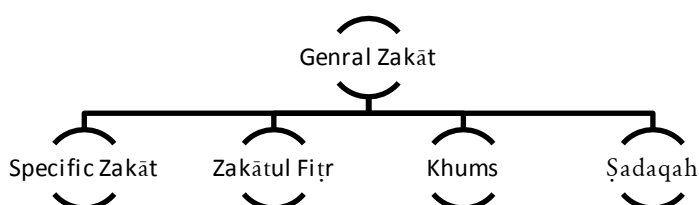
Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the terminology of the obligatory and recommended types of charity in Islam
- Know the rules related to Zakātul Fīṭrah
- Know the rules related to khums

Charity

In this lesson, we will learn about the jurisprudence of the obligatory types of charity in Islam. In previous lessons, we have discussed that Islam very much encouraged Ṣadaqah, which is a voluntary form of charity which a person can give to any worthy cause. However, there are also a few obligatory types of charity that we need to learn about.



JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

ZAKĀT

The word Zakāt has a general meaning which applies to all forms of charity. When it is used in the Holy Qur'an, it is usually used with this meaning. However, it also has a more specific meaning.

(SPECIFIC) ZAKĀT

This is one of the obligatory forms of charity which was very important in previous times, which does not apply to many people today. It is a specific type of charity which applies to only nine specific things, as outlined in the narration from Imam al-Bāqir (as) below:

“Allah made obligatory, along with prayers, the Zakāt of wealth. Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) obligated Zakāt with regards to nine things and excused other things from Zakāt. (The nine things which he obligated are): gold and silver, camels, cows and sheep and wheat, barley, dates and raisins. The Messenger of Allah (saw) excused other things from the Zakāt.”ⁱ

Therefore today, this type of charity may apply to farmers, and people who deal in genuine gold and silver coinage. They have to pay 2.5% of the value of any of the nine things listed above which they own. It does not really have much application to others in today's world.

ZAKĀTUL FİṬRAH

This is another specific form of obligatory charity, which commonly applies to us today. It becomes obligatory on the head of the family every year from the time that the crescent moon of the month of Sha'bān (the night before 'Īdul Fīṭr) is sighted- marking the end of the holy month of Ramaḍān.

On the night before ‘Īd, the money intended for Zakātul Fiṭrah must be set aside, and then ideally it should be paid before the start of the ‘Īd prayer the next day.

The head of the family needs to count the number of people in his family under his care, and for each person, he needs to donate three kilograms of an ordinary type of food (e.g. bread or rice) to a poor person.

If he cannot directly take the meal to the poor person, he can pay the value of that meal to a trusted Islamic organisation who can then deliver it to people in need. Usually, your local qualified sheikh will calculate the value of three kilograms of such food, and advise how much should be paid per person. This is another important and highly rewarding form of charity.

FAQ: if I have invited guests to my house the night before ‘Īd for dinner, do I need to pay the Zakātul Fiṭrah on their behalf the next day?

Answer: no. A person is only responsible for his guest’s Zakātul Fiṭrah if that guest is truly dependent on him (i.e. living under his care at the time). If a guest simply comes for dinner and leaves a few hours later, the host is not responsible for paying that guest’s Zakātul Fiṭrah.

KHUMS

Khums literally means one-fifth, and it is an obligatory form of charity which has been expressly mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, and which has been particularly emphasised by the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as).

“Know that whatever of a thing you acquire, a fifth of it is for Allah, for the Messenger, for the near relative, and the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer...” (8:41)

It is the most important type of charity which we need to know about and practise today. In brief, it involves giving one-fifth (20%) of our savings as charity at the end of the year.

WHAT DOES KHUMS APPLY TO?

Khums applies to:

- Any savings. Once a person has an income, they need to set a date for their khums (e.g. 1st March). Every year, when that date comes around, the person needs to go over their finances, and work out how much savings they have for that year. They then need to donate 20% of this as khums.

- For example, Ahmad started working in his first job at his uncle’s fruit shop in March 2012. Now it is March 2013, and he has saved up \$200 this year, which is sitting in his bank account. He needs to calculate 20% of this (\$40) and give this as khums.
- Any material possessions which we have not used the whole year.
 - For example: I bought a new shirt worth \$50 in March 2012. Now it is March 2013 and I have never worn that shirt, not even once. I must calculate 20% of its value (\$10) and pay this as khums.
- A number of other forms of wealth which are not relevant for most of us today.

WHO DO I PAY MY KHUMS TO?

- Khums is the right and possession of the Imam of our time (peace be upon him), to use in the way that most benefits Islam. However, during his occultation, it is our obligation to deliver our khums to the general representative of the Imam, who is our Marja’.
- If we do not have direct access to our Marja’, we need to do some research and find out who in our city has permission from our Marja’ to collect our khums and deliver it to him. Usually this will be one of the trusted and qualified sheikhs in our Islamic centres or mosques. Therefore, when it is time to pay our khums, we need to approach such a sheikh, and request them to deliver our khums to the Marja’ who we follow.

HOW IS KHUMS USED?

Khums is divided into two parts:

1. The **first part** is used to help people who are Sayyids—descendants of Prophet Muḥammad (saw). The reason why it is used to help specifically such people is because they are not allowed to receive most other types of charity. Therefore, our Maraji’, upon receiving khums wealth, will distribute among Sayyids who are:
 - » Orphans, **or**
 - » Poor, **or**
 - » Stranded in a strange land without any means of returning home

2. The **second part** of khums is used for causes that would benefit Islam. It is used by our Marja' in the way that the Holy Imams (as) would have used khums. This includes things such as:
- » Funding and maintenance of Islamic seminaries which keep the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (as) alive.
 - » Funding the study of Hawza students who will graduate to become sheikhs in future and benefit the community with their knowledge and experience.
 - » Building and maintain mosques, Islamic centres and Islamic schools all around the world.
 - » Helping other poor and needy believers around the world.

OTHER RULES RELATED TO KHUMS

- Can I use my khums to help my local mosque or Islamic centre?
 - » To do this, you need the permission of your marja'. Often, your marja' will give you permission to use a part of your khums for this. Without the permission of your Marja' however, this is not allowed.
- If I am saving to buy my first home, or to get married, do I still need to pay khums on such savings?
 - » Some scholars are of the opinion that a person can save up for such things for three years without paying khums on these savings.
- If I have a large mortgage/debt, so I still have to pay khums on the savings that are in my possession?
 - » Yes, you are still obligated to pay khums on these savings, as long as that wealth is in your possession.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KHUMS

Giving part of our wealth for the sake of Allah (SWT) in general is strongly emphasised in Islam. In fact, the word Zakāt literally means cutting back the branches of a tree so that it grows in a more beautiful and productive way. Similarly, if we remove a part of our wealth regularly and give it to those in need, our wealth grows more beautifully and productively.

There are several other benefits to giving charity, some of which are outlined in the narrations below:

The Prophet (saw) said, "Verily charity extinguishes the wrath of the Lord."

Imam 'Ali (as) said, "Charity acts as a shield against the fire."

The Prophet (saw) said, "The earth on the Day of Resurrection will be scorching, except for the shadow of a believer, for verily his charity will serve him as shade."

The Prophet (saw) said, "Give charity, and cure your sick ones through the giving of charity, for verily charity repels accidents and illnesses, and is a source of increase in your life spans and your good deeds."

When it comes to Khums in particular we have special narrations urging all believers not to ignore this vital obligation.

In fact, khums is the right of the representative of Allah (SWT) on Earth, and in reality belongs to Islam and the Muslim community. Therefore, if a person does not pay khums, they are keeping in their possession wealth that does not in reality belong to them. This makes that wealth illegitimate and means that anything that wealth is used for consequently becomes illegitimate.

Hence in order to make sure our wealth and our possessions remain blessed, and we do not get punished for keeping illegitimate wealth, we must make sure to meet the obligation of khums in a correct and timely manner.

Review Questions

Q1. Khums applies to:

- a. The savings at the end of the year
- b. All the money we earned during a year
- c. Cows, sheep and camels

Q2. Zakātul Fiṭrah is payable:

- a. On the day of 'Īdul Fiṭr
- b. On the day of 'Īdul Aḍḥā
- c. At the end of each year

ⁱ (al-Kaafi vol3 p.509)



ḤAJJ



Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Ḥajj is Wājib for every Muslim
- Understand the Ritual of Iẖrām
- Learn some of the main forbidden acts for a person in Iẖrām
- Be reminded of the fundamental difference between Ḥajj and 'Umrah and that Iẖrām is a requirement for both.
- Understand that Ḥajj is made up of two major portions, 'Umrah al-tamattu' and Ḥajj al-Tamattu'
- Understand the layout of Masjidul Ḥarām
- Understand the rituals of 'Umrah and their spiritual significance
- Review the components of Ḥajj al-Tamattu'

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Ḥajj- Spiritual Journey

Ḥajj is one of the fundamental Islamic practices. It is very potent in its spirituality, that every able Muslim must in their lives at least once. The rewards one receives in this world and the Hereafter are so great that Imam 'Ali (as) has said

"Perform the Ḥajj and 'Umrah, for they discard poverty and are an atonement (Kaffarāh) of sins and make paradise obligatory (for the person who complete them)"

In this lesson we shall learn some of the rules of Ḥajj as well as some of its spiritual benefits.

ḤAJJ IS WĀJIB

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"...and pilgrimage to the house is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, (upon) everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it; and whoever disbelieves, surely Allah is self-sufficient, above any need of the worlds". (3:97).

To the extent that it is reported from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) that:

"Whoever dies without having performed obligatory pilgrimage when he was not prevented by lack of means, illness, or force, dies a death of a Jew or a Christian".

As soon as we meet the conditions below, *Hajj* becomes obligatory. These are:

1. Bulūgh (reached age of maturity)
2. We are sane (āqil)
3. Performing *Hajj* would not stop us from missing out on another more important obligation
4. Must have the capacity (Istiṭā'ah). This includes having the money to make the journey of *Hajj*. It also includes having the physical ability to make and complete the journey.

HAJJ IS A JOURNEY

Unlike any journey we take for a holiday or to go sightseeing, this journey is very difficult, mentally and sometimes physically too. Through this journey, Allah (SWT) wishes to purify us from all the filth of sins and bad thoughts and no purification can be complete without hardship. In today's day and age, with air-conditioned tents, five star accommodation etc...the *true Hajj* is even more difficult to achieve and maintain.

We have discussed in previous years that undertaking this journey requires significant mental and spiritual preparation before leaving our homes. This lesson will focus on the rituals of *Hajj* and their benefits.

IHRĀM- THE DRESS OF PURITY

Putting on the *Ihrām*, just like all acts in *Hajj*, is a highly spiritual and symbolic act. For men, it is the wearing of two unstitched simple white cloths, one to cover the body from the navel to the knees, and the other to cover the shoulders. For women, it is simply to wear anything white. The resemblance of this dress is almost exactly like one that we will eventually be buried in. The spirituality of this act is so potent that when we take off our regular clothes, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) tell us to:

“intend to get rid of ostentation[showing off], hypocrisy, and intrusion in suspicious matters!”

By wearing these clothes, everyone becomes equal, we could be sitting next to the richest Muslim on Earth or the poorest or a scholar and we would not have a clue! Just like on the day of Judgement, the only differentiating factor will be what is in our hearts (our faith) and our actions.

Once we have entered into the state of *Ihrām*, there are 25 things that are forbidden with each one attracting some form of penalty. Here we touch on some of these, which a person is more likely to encounter:

1. Sexual union.
2. Kissing a woman (even one's wife)
3. Touching a woman (even one's wife)
4. Looking at a woman and flirting with her
5. Masturbating (this is always forbidden)
6. Wearing perfume.
7. Looking in the mirror.
8. Wearing shoes, slippers or socks
9. Quarrelling.
10. Killing insects found on humans, [such as lice].
11. Beautifying oneself
12. Removing hair from the body.
13. Covering of the face by females.
14. Sheltering in the shaded place for males.
15. Make ones 'body bleed
16. Cutting nails.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

The journey of *Hajj* is divided into two main sections:

- 'Umrah al-Tamattu'
- *Hajj* al-Tamattu'

'UMRAH TAMATTU'

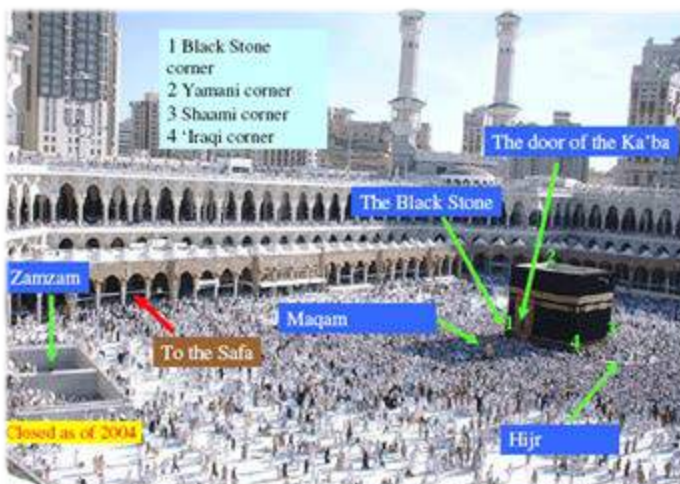
This starts when we wear *Ihrām* (after performing a mustabḥab Ghusl) at one of the stations on the way to Mecca (Miqāt). From any direction a pilgrim comes to Mecca, they have to stop at one the stations (Miqāt) shown in the image below.



TAWĀF

Upon entering Masjidul Ḥarām in Mecca, the first action that is performed is the intensely spiritual act of Ṭawāf, which is to walk around the Holy Ka'bah seven times. When in Ṭawāf one should fill one's mind with respect, love, hope and fear, and know that being engaged in Ṭawāf makes him like Malāikatul Muqarrabīn (the angels brought close to God) who continuously make Tawāf around the Great Throne.

The one doing Ṭawāf realises that the general purpose of it is the circumambulation of the heart with the remembrance of the Lord of the House. That is why we have to be in Wuḍū' when performing Ṭawāf. Upon completion, a wājib two rak'ah prayer is performed in a place called Maqām Ibrāhīm (as), the place where this great prophet stood to pray after building the Ka'bah.



SA'Y

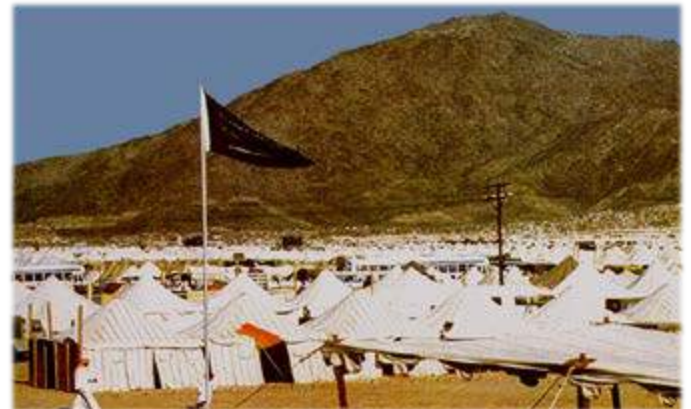
After performing Ṭawāf, one is then expected to perform sa'y which is walking or running between the hills Ṣafah and Marwah. Just like Ṭawāf, this is an intensely spiritual "walk" where pilgrims when running towards Ṣafah and Marwah consider that they are running towards the mercy of Allah (SWT), running away from their sins and past life. After Sa'y, pilgrims trim some hair or nails (taqṣīr) as a symbol of dropping their sins and never returning to the bad habits they may have had before Ḥajj. This marks the end of the 'Umrah al-Tamattu'.

ḤAJJ AL-TAMATTU'

After the 'Umrah, the pilgrims usually can dress in their normal clothes and stay in Mecca till the 8th of Dhul Ḥijjah. On this day, people prepare for the beginning of Ḥajj by re-wearing their Iḥrām and then heading to the desert of 'Arafah. On the 9th day of Dhul Ḥijjah, at noon, the Ḥajj begins.

STAYING AT 'ARAFAH

The first part of the Ḥajj process is to leave Mecca and stay in a desert outside Mecca called 'Arafah. A person must spend the afternoon of the 9th day of Dhul Ḥijjah in this place. This is the best time to ask Allah (SWT) for forgiveness and for our needs.



STAYING AT MUZDALIFAH

The next step is to stay in a place called al-Muzdalifah between Fajr and sunrise of the 10th day of Dhul Ḥijjah. This is where we collect rocks for the stoning of the pillars.

STONING OF THE PILLARS

On the morning of the tenth day, we head towards Mina, another place on the outskirts of Mecca. Here, on the morning of the 10th, 11th and 12th days, we throw pebbles at a set of three pillars or walls which represent Satan.



THE SACRIFICE

Part of performing *Hajj* is to sacrifice an animal and feed its meat to the poor and needy. These days, most people pay to buy an animal and have someone slaughter it on their behalf.

SHAVING OF THE HEAD

After the sacrifice has occurred, men shave their heads, while women cut a small portion of their hair. This is another symbol of a person being freed from their sins. After this, a person can remove their *Iḥrām*, and most things are permissible for them to do again.

ṬAWĀF

After shaving the head, we can head back to the Ka'bah in Mecca. Here we must perform *Ṭawāf*. This means to walk around the Holy Ka'bah seven times, and then perform a two rak'ah prayer at a place called Maqām Ibrāhīm (as). This is the place where this great prophet used to offer prayer to Allah (SWT).



SA'Y

After completing the *Ṭawāf*, we move to the two hills, Ṣafa and Marwah. Here, we do what Hager, the wife of Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) did thousands of years ago. We walk between the two hills seven times.



ṬAWĀFUL NISĀ'

After completing the walking between the hills, we go back the Ka'bah and perform another seven laps to complete what is called *Ṭawāful Nisā'*.

STAYING AT MINA

We are required to stay in Mina on the 10th, 11th and 12th days of Dhul Ḥijjah. Once we have done this, and completed all the above actions, our *Hajj* is complete.

Review Questions

Q1. *Iḥrām* is:

- a. A state in which we can do ḥarām things
- b. A state in which we enter where we completely submit to the will of Allah (SWT) signified by wearing of 2 cloths (for men) and white for women
- c. The two cloths men wear when performing *Hajj*

Q2. *Hajj* is wājib on us when

- a. We are able to go to Mecca
- b. When we are really old and about to die
- c. We feel like going

Q3. In *Hajj*:

- a. We relax and enjoy good food and a Muslim culture and environment.
- b. We meet new people and make new friends
- c. We leave all our sins behind and make a new promise to Allah (SWT) to be true Muslims.



ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the meaning of enjoining good and forbidding evil
- Understand the importance of this obligation
- Understand the different ways of meeting the obligation
- Discuss some of the conditions of this obligation
- Review the importance of listening to advice

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1- Introduction

Enjoining good and forbidding evil are two of the most important obligations in Islam. In Arabic these two obligations are termed:

Al-amr bil m'arūf Enjoining Good

Al-nahy 'anil Munkar Forbidding Evil

In this lesson, we will discuss the importance of these obligations. In the next lesson, we will discuss the conditions of these obligations and how best to meet them.

Enjoining good means that we should encourage and urge others to do good deeds. It also means we should create a social environment where people are encouraged to adhere to the laws of Islam and do good deeds. Some examples include:

- A parent teaching and showing their child how to pray
- A school curriculum including religious education, teaching children the rules of Islam
- Television advertising encouraging people to give charity

Forbidding evil means that we should discourage and prohibit others from doing evil deeds. This includes creating a social environment where people are discouraged from transgressing against the laws of Islam or doing evil deeds. Some examples include:

- A friend discouraging a fellow friend from using foul language

- A government making all websites with explicit material prohibited and shutting them down

Enjoining good and forbidding evil are alternative obligations (Wājib Kifā'i). This means that the obligation stands as long as it is not met. However, once someone meets the obligation, then it no longer applies to anyone. For example, if someone is swearing in public, then it is an obligation on all to stop him. However, once one person stops him, then the obligation drops from the others.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE OBLIGATIONS

It is unanimously accepted among Muslims that these are two very important obligations. The Holy Qur'an makes this clear in many instances, including the following:

"You are the best community amongst people, you enjoin to good and forbid evil and believe in Allah."
(3:110)

"O my son! Establish prayer, enjoin good and forbid evil, and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily! These are some of the important commandments ordered by Allah with no exemption." (31:17)

As can be seen from the āyāt of the Holy Qur'an:

- One of the characteristics of the best communities is that they enjoin good and forbid evil
- The command to enjoin good comes directly after the command for daily prayer, emphasising its importance

The authentic narrations of the Ahlul Bayt (as) also emphasise the importance of this obligation. Below are two of many narrations from Prophet Muḥammad, indicating the importance of this obligation:

"People will be in a good state as long as they enjoin good and forbid evil, and help each other to good. If they do not do this, blessings will be taken away from them and they will be empowered over each other. Then there will be no helper for them neither in the earth nor in the skies".ⁱ

"I saw a man from among my community surrounded by the flames of fire, then his enjoining good and his

forbidding evil rescued him from the flames and placed him with the angels"ⁱⁱ

Furthermore, Imam al-Redha (as) says:

"You should enjoin good and forbid evil. Otherwise, the evil people among you will come to power. At such a time, the good people among you will supplicate, buy their prayers will not be answered."ⁱⁱⁱ

The narrations emphasise that if a community wants to continue to receive blessings from Allah (SWT), and to have their prayers answered, then they cannot ignore these two vital obligations. If a community ignores these obligations, or becomes lazy in fulfilling them, then they risk:

- Losing many of their blessings
- Being excluded from Allah's Mercy
- Being ruled by ruthless oppressors
- Never having their prayers answered

Thus it is clear from the Holy Qur'an and the authentic narrations that these two obligations are extremely important on an individual and a community level.

ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL: ON A GLOBAL SCALE

These obligations can come about in many different contexts. On an individual level, a friend may advise their friend to avoid listening to ḥarām music. On a community level, a person may encourage their neighbour to attend the mosque. However, it is also important to realise that these obligations have a wider scale as well.

Advertising is a major issue related to enjoining good and forbidding evil. The general public responds to mass advertising, and through this medium people can be easily influenced. Unfortunately, in most countries around the world, advertising is used to encourage sins and evil deeds, rather than to enjoin good. We see advertisements for alcohol everywhere, and it was only recently that some countries stopped cigarette advertising.

Just as damaging are the indirect messages sent through advertising. One of the main principles of advertising in the West is 'sex sells'. Therefore, we see that whatever is

being advertised (cars, alcohol, and clothing) there is often a sexual tone to the advertising. This creates a society which is obsessed with body image and sex. Rather than enjoining good, advertising in the West constantly and persistently enjoins evil.

Our duty is to be aware of this and to try to protect ourselves from such advertising. It is also our duty to do what we can to produce positive advertising, whether it is through social media or other small media projects.

Another major issue related to enjoining good and forbidding evil is what happens globally in what is called 'politics'. In our generation, it has become common for Western countries to invade other countries using different excuses. These invasions lead to death and destruction, and cripple these countries for a long time. In addition, we see Western powers try to cause divisions between Muslims and foster conflict between them.

Our duty as young Muslims living in today's world is to keep a sharp eye on what is happening around the world. We cannot ignore these things and say that they are not our business. Muslims around the world are like one body, and if one part is hurting, the whole body hurts. We must also try to gain insight in order to know what is actually the truth of what is happening around the world.

Once we know the truth, we must do whatever we can to enjoin good and forbid evil. We must speak out against injustice and do what we can to stop it. We must make others aware of the truth and encourage them to stand up to oppression as well. We must remember that enjoining good and forbidding evil are not just obligations on an individual or family level, but they are obligations on a global scale as well.

Review Questions

1. Enjoining good and forbidding evil are:
 - a. Recommended acts
 - b. Individual Obligations
 - c. Alternative Obligations
2. Enjoining good and forbidding evil are:
 - a. Only obligatory on an individual level

- b. Are obligatory on all levels
- c. Are only obligatory on a community level

Lesson 2

In this lesson, we will discuss the conditions of these two obligations.

The first important point to understand is that these obligations can be met in several ways:

- By thoughts
- By words
- By actions

How do we know which method to use? Whichever method is sufficient to make an impact and get results is sufficient. For example, if advising someone through words is enough, then that is all when we need to do. If words are not enough, and action must be taken, then action becomes obligatory.

On the other hand, if action is needed, but one is not able to do this because of fear of harm or death, then they should use words. If one is not able to even use words, then they can at least enjoin good by hating evil actions in their minds, and loving good things in their minds.

THE CONDITIONS

Mas'adah ibn Sadaqah narrates: "Imam al-Şādiq (as) was asked about enjoining good and forbidding evil, is it the obligation of the entire community? He (as) said: 'No'. It was said: 'why'. He (as) said: 'it is the obligation of the one who has the ability and who is obeyed, one who knows what is good and what is evil.'"^{iv}

The following are the main conditions for enjoining good and forbidding evil:

- Sufficient knowledge: the person must know what is good and what is evil, and have sufficient knowledge regarding these. For example, before a person corrects what they think is a mistake in someone else's prayer, they must be sure that they are speaking with knowledge and know the correct rules of prayer

- The probability of affecting the person: if we feel that our advice will have an effect on the person, then we are obligated to say or do something. If we feel that it will not, or might make them worse, then we do not need to say anything. Unfortunately, some people reach such a stage of stubbornness that when we give them advice about an issue (e.g. ḥijāb) they close up and become hostile, and it may even make them more stubborn. So before we give advice, we should assess how it will be received.
- The probability that a person will make the mistake again: if a person is unlikely to make the same mistake again, we do not need to advise them. For example, if a person misses their Fajr prayer just once, when they are usually very timely about it, we do not have to advise them because they are unlikely to do this again frequently.
- The person performing the obligation should not come to harm. If a person feels their life, health or wealth would significantly be harmed then the obligations no longer apply to that person. However, if it is a particularly important issue, then one must take a stand even if there is a fear of harm (e.g. Imam Ḥusayn at Karbala)

THE ETIQUETTE OF GIVING ADVICE

If the above conditions are met, then it becomes obligatory on us to enjoin good or forbid evil. This will often be done through giving advice to someone. When giving advice, there are some etiquettes we should follow:

- Maintain a pure intention. We must make sure that we are not just picking on people's mistakes or trying to put them down. Our intention must be purely to enjoin good for the sake of Allah (SWT) and to meet our Islamic obligation
- Give advice politely. We should not berate someone, scream at them, or advise them in a rude way. Instead, we should use pleasant words, remain calm and not embarrass the other person.
- Give advice privately. We should do our best to not make the issue public. Instead, we must give

the advice in the most private of settings, when we are alone with the other person.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as): "When the following āyah was revealed: 'O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from the Hell-fire...' a man from among the Muslims sat and began crying. He said: 'I have been unable to protect myself, and now I have been made responsible over my family as well'. The Messenger of Allah told him: 'it is sufficient for you to command them to that which you command yourself and forbid them from that which you forbid yourself.'"^v

There are some special situations where enjoining good and forbidding evil are even more important:

- Within a family. Parents especially have a special obligation to advise their children and guide them. The obligation also applies to siblings advising each other.
- Positions of leadership: people in positions of leadership (e.g. community leaders, government heads) have a particular obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil. This is especially important in maintaining the community's moral health.

Review Questions

1. The conditions of these two obligations include:
 - a. Sufficient knowledge of the rules in the situation
 - b. The probability that the person being advised will take some heed
 - c. The person giving advice must be a scholar or a leader
2. When giving advice to one who has is doing something wrong, we should:
 - a. Do it publicly
 - b. Do it privately
 - c. Be harsh so the person understands

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- ⁱ Mishkatul Anwar, chapter on Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil
- ⁱⁱ Mishkatul Anwar, chapter on Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil
- ⁱⁱⁱ Wasailul Shia, Chapter 1 on Enjoining Good, Narration 4
- ^{iv} Mishkatul Anwar, chapter on Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil
- ^v Mishkatul Anwar, chapter on Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil



LAWS OF TRANSACTION

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the Islamic recommendations for work
- Understand the main types of business which is not allowed in Islam
- Understand some examples of business practices forbidden by Islam
- Understand that Islam strictly forbids usury
- Discuss the issue of 'interest' in today's finance world and how this relates to Islamic laws

Lesson 1: Working in Permissible Businesses

As we have seen throughout this syllabus over the last several years, Islam is a religion that covers all aspects of life. A significant part of all our lives are business transactions: we all work, buy, sell and hire things. Islam has set out rules for all these transactions. These rules are in place firstly to protect us from the harmful effects of some things, and secondly to maintain justice between people and stop exploitation.

ISLAMIC URGES US TO WORK!

The first issue to discuss is that Islam encourages all people to work, unless they are somehow unable. Anyone who can, is expected to work, and we are encouraged to establish ourselves in a financial sense as well, and keep a balance between the spiritual and material life. The Ahlul Bayt (as) say:

“Those who sell their Hereafter for this world are not from us, and those who sell their world for their Hereafter are also not from us.”

This point is also indicated by the Holy Qur'an, wherein the following people are praised:

“Men whom neither trade nor sale diverts them from the Remembrance of Allah” (24:37)

Here, the Holy Qur'an implicitly praises those who actually have a business and who still take time out to pray. In fact, Imam al-Şādiq (as) says that such people have more reward for praying on time than those who

have no business and are unemployed and thus do not find it difficult to attend prayer.

The Holy Qur'an also states:

“Once the prayer end, then spread out on earth and seek Allah’s Bounty” (62:10)

Further to this, Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

“Attend business, because will make you needless of what is in people’s hands.”

In fact, the Imams (as) have said that

“Allah loves a person with a professional skill, who is trustworthy”

In another narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) asked a person:

“Why have you not gone to Hajj?”

The person answered: “I cannot afford it!”

The Imam (as) said: “then work harder so you can afford it!”

In fact, Imam Musā al-Kāḍim (as) says:

“A person who works to keep his family from becoming needy to other people is like the one who engages in Jihād for the sake of Allah”

The Prophet (saw) also says:

“Worshipping God has seventy portions, and the most virtuous of those is to seek (sustenance through) Ḥalāl”

In Islam, any job is respected and encouraged, as long as it is ḥalāl, even if it is seen to be trivial or lowly by people. Similarly, any job which involves ḥarām, no matter how prestigious, is despised and forbidden.

It is clear then, that being lazy and deliberately avoiding work when one is able goes against the recommendations of Islam. As Muslims living in the West, we should not be the kind of people who sit at home and claim welfare payments from the government, especially if this means having to be dishonest. Instead, we should amongst the hardest working people.

Finally, Islam recommends that we make a decent living. This means we should not become greedy in seeking wealth, and to not become workaholics. In addition, we should never engage in any ḥarām acts when doing

business- it is better to lose money than to something ḥarām to gain it.

IMPERMISSIBLE BUSINESSES

While Islam strongly encourages us to work, there are some types of business which are strictly forbidden. These are business which cause harm to society and its members, either physically or mentally. Here, we will discuss the main types of these business.

ALCOHOL

Any transaction related to alcohol is haram. The seller, maker and transporter of wine are all cursed by God, and we have to make sure we have nothing to do with any alcoholic products.

AL-MĪTAH

- *al-mītah* is any animal that is not slaughtered in an Islamic manner. Wealth gained through selling the meat, skin or other products from such an animal is ḥarām in general.
- We cannot sell any types of *mītah* to Muslims under any circumstances. Again, this includes the meat, fat and skin (and the leather made from it) of that animal.
 - Wool is not included in this rule.
- If the *mītah* is Najis (for example a cow not slaughtered in an Islamic way) then we cannot sell it, even if it is to a non-Muslim.
 - If we are working for example at a shop which sells these things, we cannot be directly involved in selling these products (i.e. working at the check-out counter)
- If the *mītah* is not najis (for example non-ḥalāl seafood such as calamari) then we can sell it to those who deem it ḥalāl only.

PIG PRODUCTS

- It is ḥarām to eat products derived from pigs. This is mentioned at least three times in the

Holy Qur'an and Muslims are unanimous about this. Pig products are not only ḥarām to eat, but are also najis.

- It is impermissible to sell pig products, even to non-Muslims, because they are najis. We should not engage in any business involving pig products. Our Imams have said:

“When Allah makes something forbidden, he also makes profit from it forbidden”

DOGS

- Dogs are najis in themselves. Therefore, we cannot engage in business related to dogs.
- The definite exception to this is a hunting-dog. We are allowed to keep such a dog and the prey the dog catches does not become najis even though it is touched by the dog.
- Shepherd dogs and guard dogs are also allowed according to some scholars. If we need such dogs, we should keep them outside the house.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was asked about the profit gained from selling a non-hunting dog. He (as) said: “this is forbidden, but profit from selling a hunting-dog is okay.”

GAMBLING

Gambling is one of the mortal sins in Islam, and so being involved in any business that includes gambling is impermissible. This prohibition is clearly expressed in the Qur'an, and the term used to describe gambling is '*al-maysir*' (literally: easy loss).

- The first point to emphasise is that gambling of any type is impermissible. This includes betting on sporting matches, online poker, poker machines, TAB, and so on.
- While it is common in Australia for people to make a 'friendly bet' on the Melbourne Cup in the workplace or at school, even this is not allowed in Islam.
- The second important point is that engaging in any business that involves gambling is not allowed. For example, working in a casino, helping to create a gambling website or being a bookie are all disallowed.

- Selling or buys instruments or equipment which would solely be used for the purposes of gambling (e.g. poker cards) is impermissible.
- The third issue is that we have multiple narrations from our Imams (as) forbidding chess. At the time of our Imams, chess and backgammon were common forms of gambling activities. In one narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“Backgammon, chess, and all gambling are examples of *al-maysir*”

He also says:

“Backgammon, chess and anything that is gambled with are examples of *al-maysir*”

However, more recently, chess is no longer used for gambling and is played in a completely different context. Therefore some of our scholars rule that playing chess is impermissible, while others still rule that it is impermissible.

SCULPTURES AND DRAWINGS

Drawings which are created for ḥarām purposes are impermissible to create.

When it comes to sculptures, some scholars deem it impermissible to create a sculpture of any living being. Others limit this to sculptures which would be used for worship or other impermissible acts. In general though, a Muslim cannot create a cross that will be venerated by Christians or an idol that would be worshipped by Buddhists.

MUSIC AND SINGING

We have discussed this issue in other lessons. The main point to review is that selling any music or song which is not permissible in Islam is ḥarām. Just as we are not allowed to listen to these types of songs and music, we are also not allowed to sell the instruments, CDs, DVDs or other products related to them.

HELPING OPPRESSORS

Assisting oppressors in their oppression is a major sin in Islam, and should be avoided in all circumstances. Thus any business

which supports an oppressor somehow is forbidden in Islam. The Holy Qur'an commands:

“Help each to piety and virtue, and do not help each other to enmity and sin”

Our Imams have said: “The person who oppresses others, the person who supports this and the person who is happy with this, will all be companions in the Hell-Fire.”

Abu Baṣīr, a companion of the Imam, asked Imam al-Bāqir (as) if he was allowed to work in the government of the 'Abbasids. The Imam replied: “no, you cannot even sharpen their pencils. A person does not gain anything of their world, except that they take the same portion of his religion”.

Therefore, we should be very careful to take any position with oppressive governments or companies that support them. The only exception is if that position will genuinely allow us to help the believers and stop them from being harmed.

Review Questions

1- A Muslim is:

- a. Is allowed to sell al-mītah to non-Muslims
- b. Is allowed to sell only al-mītah which is ṭāhir and only to non-Muslims
- c. Is allowed to sell any meat to anyone

2- A Muslim

- a. Is not allowed to gamble but can engage in gambling-related businesses
- b. Is not allowed to gamble or engage in gambling-related businesses
- c. Is allowed to gamble if it is online

Lesson 2: Islamic Business Practices

In continuation of our previous lesson on the rules of Islam in relation to business, here we will discuss some business practices which are forbidden in Islam. The reason for these practices being forbidden is to maintain justice and avoid exploitation.

CHEATING

Cheating, fraud or deception in a transaction or in trade makes the earning through that transaction ḥarām.

Unfortunately, cheating and fraud are very common in the business world, and there is a mentality that: ‘if you can get away with it, go for it’. However, as Muslims, we should make sure that we do not engage in these practices. In Islam, the trader is considered ‘the one loved by Allah (ḥabibullah)’ and so must respect this position by remaining honest.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says in an authentic narration:

“the one who cheats us is not one of us”.

In another authentic narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) walked past a shop where a fabric-seller had placed his products in dim light such that people could not see the real quality of the fabric. The Imam (as) told him that doing business like this is not allowed and he must display his goods properly.

The definition of cheating in Islam is when a person takes money but in return gives something other than what the customer thinks he is buying. Some examples are selling milk mixed with water when the buyer thinks he is buying pure milk, or selling old car parts as new or saying a car has no faults when the seller knows that it does.

A person came to Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) and said: ‘I sell caps, but I put old cotton inside the caps and do not tell people about this’. The Imam (as) said:

“I prefer that you would tell them what material you have used.”

The wording of the Imam (as) indicates that although it is not ḥarām to selling poorer quality things, one should not sell it at the price of a higher quality thing.

In another narration, the Prophet (saw) went to the market where grains were sold. He said to a particular shop-keeper:

“Your food looks good, how much is it?” Just then, Allah revealed to him to place his hand in the pile of grains and grab some grains from the bottom of the pile. When he did this, he saw bad grains hidden at the bottom of the pile. Here, the Prophet said: “you have betrayed and cheated the Muslims.”

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHEATING

It is common sense to not cheat others, because we do not like to be cheated ourselves. In addition to this, cheating can cause a business to fail. The following narrations indicate this:

- In one example, there was a woman called Zaynab, who sold perfume. She used to come and sell perfume to the wives of the Prophet. The Prophet (saw) said to Zaynab:

“When you sell, remain righteous and do not deceive. This is more pure and protects your good for longer.”

- In another narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said:

“Avoid deception, because the one who deceives others, others will deceive him. If he has no wealth, he will be cheated with regards to his family.”

- The Prophet (saw) says:

“Whoever deceives his Muslim brother, Allah will take away the blessings from his sustenance, will spoil his livelihood and will leave him to himself”

CAN WE CHEAT NON-MUSLIMS?

Cheating is forbidden, no matter who we are dealing with. Cheating in business with non-Muslims is ḥarām, especially if the image of Islam would be tarnished by this.

BRIBERY

Bribery is when we pay someone an illegal fee in order to show us favour. Examples include when a person pays a bribe so that his application for a driving lesson is accepted even though he has not passed the test, or when a person bribes a judge to rule in his favour.

Bribery is forbidden in all legal systems, and this is the case in Islam also. This is a matter of common sense, because bribery leads to injustice, discrimination and other problems.

In Islam, the person giving the bribe, taking the bribe and anyone else involved in negotiations to do with bribery is sinning, and the wealth gained in this way is ḥarām. Even if a bribe is given in the form of a gift or commission, it remains haram.

Taking bribes when a person is in the position of judgment is particularly bad. Imam al-Bāqir (as) said:

“taking bribes when judging is disbelief in the Almighty Allah.”

The only exception to the above rule is if a person has no choice but to pay a bribe in order to do things important for his livelihood and get his rights. Unfortunately, this is the case in many so-called Muslim countries. However, the person receiving the bribe is still committing a mortal sin and will be punished, and it is as if he has lost his faith.

If a person takes a bribe, the money gained through the bribe is not the possession of that person, and if he uses that money, it is like he is using stolen money.

Situations where a company pays another company commissions or similar things to keep a deal between themselves are also impermissible in Islam, and earnings gained through this way are impermissible.

We should take great precaution when it comes to how we earn our money, because these issues can be dangerous for our faith and life.

USURY

Usury is when a lender gives a loan to a person but charges them for that loan. So a lender would lend \$1000 to a person but charge them a fee of 10% for every month that the debtor does not pay him back. This means that if the debtor does not pay the lender back for a year, he would then owe him \$2200.

When it comes to transaction, the āyāt and narrations are few in comparison to those about laws of worship, perhaps because transactions are often common sense things.

However, usury is an exception, and there are six āyāt in relation to usury in the Qur’an, showing just how important it is to avoid this. Usury was very common in the Age of Ignorance, and the Holy Qur’an made it impermissible in a gradual manner, until it finally made it absolutely impermissible.

“Those who eat Riba (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Satan leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like Riba (usury)," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba (usury). So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating Riba (usury) shall not be punished for the

past; his case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns [to Riba (usury)], such are the dwellers of the Fire - they will abide therein.”

As we can see, in these āyāt:

- The Qur’an describes the one who takes usury is like one who is struck by Satan
- They suffer in this way because they claim there is no difference between sale and usury
- Allah advises the believers to leave usury if they are truly believers
- Allah warns people that if they do not leave usury, then they are opening themselves to warfare from Allah, the Exalted

In today’s world, a clear example of usury is what loan sharks do. Loan sharks loan people who are desperate some money but charge huge interest rates, which exploit people.

When it comes to banks, there has been some discussion amongst our scholars recently about whether the loans banks give are usury or not. The discussion about this is for a higher level. However, at this stage, the interest that banks charge is still jurisprudentially considered to be usury.

When it comes to practical situations, most scholars allow a person to take a loan from a bank in a Western country even if the bank charges interest. This is because the person himself is not the one setting the condition of interest. Similarly, it is permissible to receive interest from a bank in a non-Muslim country.

Review Questions

1- Usury is:

- a. Permissible in Islam
- b. Impermissible in Islam
- c. Permissible in some situations

2- Cheating a non-Muslim:

- a. Is allowed
- b. Is not allowed

- c. Is allowed, only if you can get away with it



JIHĀD

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the definition of Jihad
- Know the conditions of Jihad
- Discuss some of the misconceptions related to Jihad

Jihād

The Arabic word Jihād comes from the root ‘Jahd’ which means ‘struggle’. Jurisprudentially, it means fighting those who have attacked Muslims and their territories. In Islamic terminology, this is termed Jihād al-Asghar (the minor struggle). In this lesson, we will be focusing on this form of Jihad, and when we use the term Jihad in this lesson, this is what we are referring to.

Jihād al – Kabīr (the great struggle) refers to struggle for knowledge and education, while Jihād al Akbar (the greatest struggle) is used to refer to the struggle against one’s evil desire, and we have discussed this in many other places in this curriculum.

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

The importance of Jihad in Islam cannot be overstated. 250 āyāt are revealed to the Prophet related to this issue. The narrations also tell us that Jihad is one of the doors of paradise which God opens to his special servants, it is the fourth of the practical pillars of Islam, and the best thing after the obligatory prayers. The narrations also tell us that above any goodness is a higher level of goodness, except for being killed for the sake of Allah: there is no goodness higher than this. In a nutshell, the best way to understand the concept of Jihad in Islam one must imagine ‘Islam’ as a country and ‘Jihad’ its defence ministry. Can you imagine a country without any ministry of defence?!

THE DEFINITION OF JIHAD

The jurisprudential definition of Jihad is physical and financial struggle for the sake of Islam. This may be:

- against non-Muslim enemies of Islam
- or against Muslim groups who are violating (bāghīn) the laws of Islam and fighting other Muslim groups or fighting against a just ruler

The defensive form of military struggle against the enemies of Islam is a substitutive (واجب كفاً) obligation, regardless of the presence of the ma’ṣūm Imam or not. This is because it is necessary for the preservation of Islam. So if a Muslim land is being attacked or invaded, there is an automatic obligation on all able Muslims to defend the Muslim land.

As for the pre-emptive form of Jihad, then this is not permissible except in the presence of the ma’ṣūm Imam

or a specific representative of his, according to the great majority of our scholars.

THE CONDITIONS OF JIHAD

Jihad a substitutive obligation (*wājib kifāi*), meaning that while it is initially obligatory on all, once the need is met by a sufficient number of people, the obligation falls from the rest of the people.

It is obligatory subject to the following criteria:

- Having reached the age of religious responsibility (*taklif*)
- Masculinity
- Ability

Therefore, it is not obligatory upon children, women or those who are unable due to physical disabilities.

However, if a Muslim land is being attacked (defensive struggle), then the obligation falls on absolutely everyone who is able to resist the enemy in any way possible.

If two Muslim groups fight, then the first step is to try to bring about agreement between them. If this does not work, then the party who is being unjust and violating (*bāghia*) the laws of Islam must be fought until it submits to the Command of Allah.

JIHAD IN THE QUR'AN

There are many misconceptions about Jihad that circulate in the media, especially in relation to the Qur'anic teachings on Jihad. This problem has been exacerbated by the false application and misuse of the idea of Jihad by a number of terrorist groups who claim to be Muslim but have very little to do with Islam, and who are driven by political or economic motivations.

We will briefly discuss some of the Qur'anic *āyāt* related to war and peace. The first point to note is that the Qur'an sometimes encourages Muslims to make peace, while at other times prohibits this. This may seem like a paradox. However, there is no contradiction here, because these are different commands for different situations. For example, there are times when Muslims would be making a genuine peace treaty which would be beneficial for Islam. An example of this is in the following passage:

“And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy...And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also and trust in Allah; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing, and if they intend to deceive you– then surely Allah is sufficient for you...” (8:60-62)

However, in other situations, where an offer of a peace treaty is likely to be a deception or trick, then making peace is prohibited. An example is the following *āyah*:

“So be not weak and ask not for peace while you are having the upper hand.” [47:35]

In general, the default option in Islam is peace. However, if Muslims lands are being invaded or attacked, or significant harm is being posed to Islam or Muslims, then pacifism is forbidden and defence of Islam is obligatory.

If warfare is necessary, this is to take place with its rules and regulations. The Qur'anic *āyāt* quoted above (also see 4:89-91) indicate that peace treaties can be made in certain situations and should be upheld. Enemies who surrender are not to be killed. There should be periods of truce, and this is perhaps why it is forbidden to fight during the four holy months. ‘Civilians’ (e.g. women, children, and those who are not engaging in warfare) should not be harmed.

We also know from the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (as) that even the land should be protected from unnecessary harm. Imam ‘Ali (as) would make the following supplication before battle:

“O’ God! Save our blood and their blood, produce reconciliation between us and them, and lead them out of their misguidance so that he who is ignorant of the truth may know it, and he who inclines towards rebellion and revolt may turn away from it.”ⁱ

From other narrations, we understand the following about the ethics of Jihad from the viewpoint of Imam ‘Ali (as):

- Do not initiate: “Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting”
- Do not take revenge: “Kill your anger, and forgive when you have power”
- Do not kill: “If, by the will of God, the enemy is defeated then do not finish the wounded and the

captives of war, do not inflict pain on women, children and old men...”

- Practice chivalry: “There is no religion for one who has no chivalry.”
- No terrorism: “I heard from the prophet to have said: ‘Faith handcuffs terrorism’.” (this quote is from Muslim ibn ‘Aqīl)

individuals who are ignorantly inspired or influenced by these groups are going down a misguided and dangerous path.

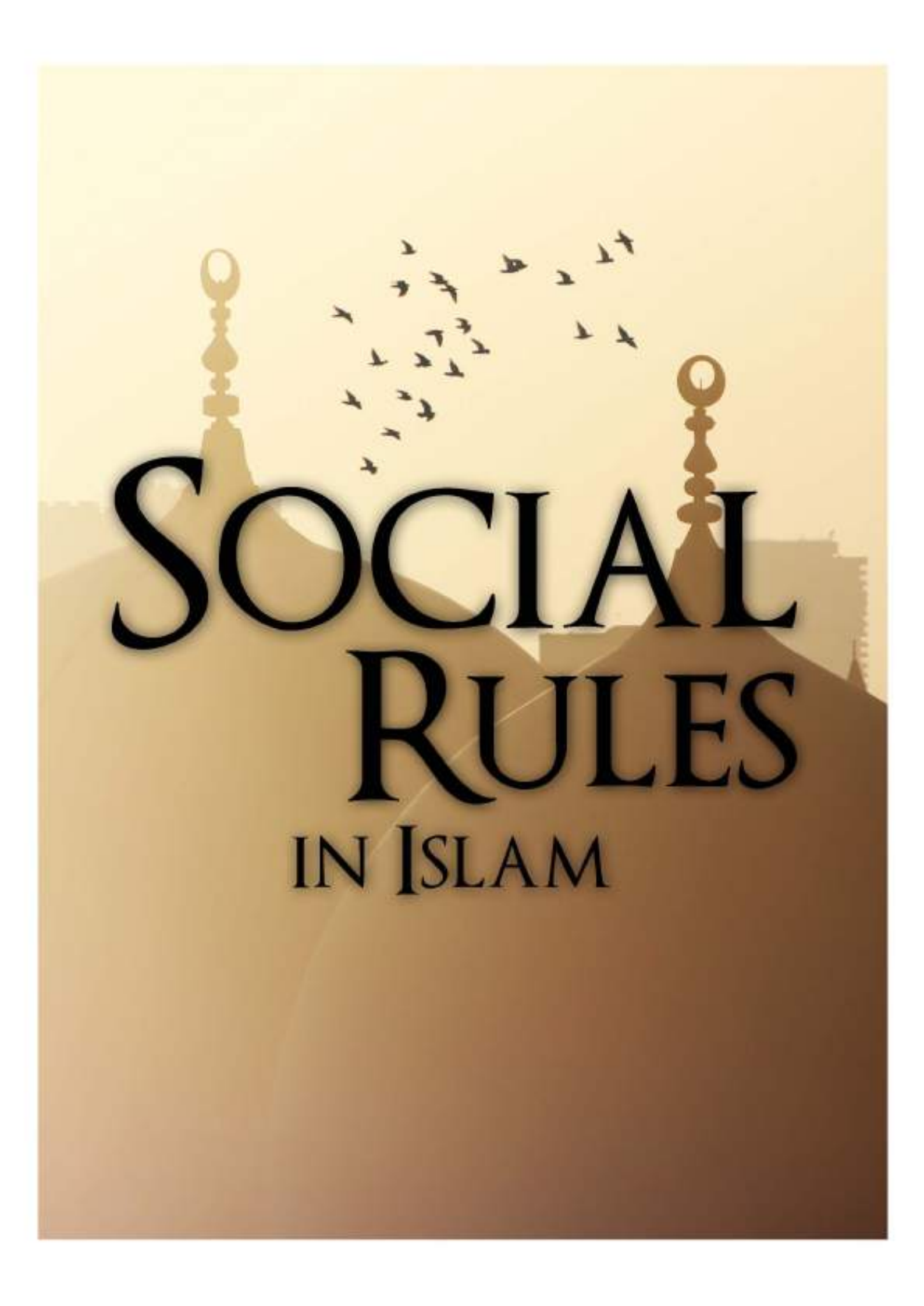
FALSE APPLICATIONS OF JIHAD

Many groups or individuals claim to be practising Jihad when in fact they are committing murder and grossly violating the laws of Allah (SWT). These include:

- groups who accuse other Muslim groups of being disbelievers, and carry out bombings, shootings and other attacks on these Muslims and their mosques
- those who carry out suicide bombings and other attacks on random individuals in Western and other countries

The groups described above generally do not have Islamic motivations. Instead they tend to have political or economic motivations, and often have the backing of governments who are enemies of true Islam. The

ⁱ Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 206



SOCIAL RULES

IN ISLAM

BACKBITING

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

الغيبة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand what it means to backbite
- Understand the difference between backbiting and slander
- Understand the motivations for backbiting and slander
- Be reminded that backbiting is forbidden in Islam and tips to avoid it
- Understand the circumstances when backbiting is permitted
- Know how to seek forgiveness for backbiting

Backbiting

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ
الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم
بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرَهُتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“...nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is al-Tawwab (One who accepts repentance much), Merciful.” (49:12)

In the previous lessons we learnt about minding the tongue and understanding the evils we can cause by misusing our tongue in the sense of speech i.e. saying wrong or bad things.

This lesson will explore two particular evils that are caused only by the use of the tongue and unfortunately, are a very common problem. These are the evils of:

- Backbiting (Ghībah)
- Slander (Tohmah)

UNDERSTANDING BACKBITING AND SLANDER

To reveal the bad quality of a believer behind his back (i.e. without him knowing), which is actually found in him (is true) is called Ghībah (backbiting). However, to accuse someone of something which is untrue is called Tohmah (slander).

Abu Dhar, a very close companion of the Prophet, once asked the Prophet (SAW):

“O Messenger of Allah, what is *ghibah* (backbiting)?”

The Prophet (saw) replied:

“It is to mention about your brother that which he detests”

Abu Dhar asked:

“O Messenger of Allah, what if that which is mentioned about a person is true?”

To which the Prophet (saw) replied:

“Know that when you mention that which is in him, you have committed *ghibah* (backbiting), and when you mention that which is not in him, then you have slandered him”ⁱ

There are different ways of committing this grave sin and they include, for instance, speaking negatively about someone in one of the following ways:

1. In person i.e. face to face, to another person or in a gathering
2. Over the phone when speaking to a friend or even a family member
3. Through all the different online methods of communication – the most relevant example of this today is using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to insult or to publicize other people’s sins and mistakes whether they are true or not.
4. Listening to someone else backbite without doing something to stop it or discourage it is also not permissible.

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said:

“The one who listens to *Ghibah* is one of those who do *Ghibah*”ⁱⁱ

THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND BACKBITING

Backbiting and slander are a result of jealousy and pride. If a person is respected, has done some good, has helped others, there will always be people who are angry and bitter that such a person is respected by all.

People backbite for the following reasons:

- To damage other people’s reputations and make themselves look better. This often occurs among colleagues.
- To gain revenge against a person who they have a grudge or grievance against.

BACKBITING & SLANDER ARE FORBIDDEN

This is a major sin and something which is very much detested in Islam. We should avoid backbiting at all times.



The Holy Qur’an describes the reality of backbiting as eating the flesh of a dead corpse, as in the ayah above. The Prophet (saw) saw this reality when he ascended to heaven during his *Mi’raj*.

These two actions are impermissible because they spoil people’s names and characters. When you speak badly of someone, you make others think badly of them. Another reason why it is bad is because the people are not there to defend themselves. If you hear negative things about others, you should give the others a chance to defend themselves by explaining, before you believe what you hear.

Here are some ayāt and narrations about the graveness of these sins:

Allah (SWT) says:

“*Wayl* (Hell) is for every Slanderer, defamer,” (104: 1)

THE EFFECTS OF BACKBITING

Backbiting leads to scandal among the community of Muslims and also damages people’s reputation very badly. It also leads to animosity, hatred and great conflict between people and can lead to breaking of friendships, partnerships and even families.

HOW TO AVOID BACKBITING

In order to avoid backbiting, we should try our best to *pre-plan our gatherings* and have something useful and positive to talk about. Otherwise, the conversation may unfortunately turn towards criticising people who are absent.

Not only are we not allowed to backbite ourselves, we are also not allowed to listen to backbiting. If someone is backbiting, we should take the following steps to stop them:

1. Tell them that we do not want to listen to this
2. Leave that gathering or conversation, unless we really cannot
3. Defend the person who is being criticised

Backbiting is only permitted when a person sins openly and his sins are known to all, such as if a person roams the streets with a bottle of wine on his lips. "One who sins openly is not worthy of respect and his Ghībah is not Ḥarām"ⁱⁱⁱ

REPENTING FROM BACKBITING

In order to repent from this sin, we have to take three steps:

1. Regret the act
2. Seek forgiveness from Allah (SWT)
3. If the person has heard of what we have said about them, we must seek their forgiveness and try to repair their reputation. However, if he has not, there is no need to ask forgiveness from him directly, but we must make sure we seek Allah's forgiveness and try to stop the things we said from spreading.^{iv} We also need to restore the person's honour or reputation that we affected by backbiting.

Review Questions

Q1. Slander (tohmah) is:

- a. To accuse someone of something which is not true
- b. To talk about someone behind their back
- c. To steal from someone

Q2. We can avoid backbiting by:

- a. Speaking less
- b. Pre-planning our gatherings
- c. Attending lots of gatherings where we chat and socialise with others

ⁱ <http://www.islamic-laws.com/backbiting.htm>

ⁱⁱ (Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il)

ⁱⁱⁱ . (Makasib Muhrima page 27, Vol. 4)

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Islamic Ethics and Morality: Why are Gheebat and Tohmat Haraam? -

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ISLAMIC CONVERSATION

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the Islamic etiquette for greetings, including the specific rules of greetings
- Discuss specific rules regarding hand-shaking, hugging and kissing
- Discuss that we should not favour people over others in greetings for the wrong reasons
- Understand that Islam encourages humour in conversation
- Know the limits we have to keep when making jokes
- Discuss the issue of 'pranks'
- Discuss some examples of healthy positive humour

Social Rules

LEVEL 4

Islamic conversation

Allah (SWT) in his infinite wisdom and mercy wishes for us humans to achieve the best we possibly can in this world and in the next. He (SWT) has created us as social gregarious creatures but with that He has also given us guidelines on how to behave with each other. In this lesson we shall discuss some of the guidelines of conversations between ourselves.

ETIQUETTE OF GREETING

Allah (SWT) has placed a great emphasis on greeting people and especially initiating a greeting.

Imam Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (as) said:

"Seventy rewards is the share of the one who initiates a 'greeting' and only one reward belongs to the one who returns the 'greeting'."ⁱ

When two people see each other, the initiator of the exchange of greetings receives a greater reward. The greeting referred to here is the Islamic Greeting "Assalāmu 'Alaykum" and its reply "Wa 'Alaykum al Salām". Similarly, greeting Non-Muslims with "good morning" or something similar is also recommended.

We must also remember to:

- 1- Be cheerful and smiling when greeting others (not grumpy)
- 2- Greet even our close friends and family (like parents and siblings) as this increases love and respect.
- 3- Make eye contact with the one we are greeting.

- 4- Hugging and shaking hands between members of the same sex or with Maḥram members of the family is also recommended. The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

"When you meet each other then initiate greeting (salām) and embrace; and when you separate from each other, then depart with seeking forgiveness."ⁱⁱⁱ

Some rules regarding greetings

- 1- We are permitted to greet members of the other gender only if there is no risk of sin
- 2- We should not discriminate when greeting (i.e. greeting our friends only not others, or greeting the rich not the poor)
- 3- Those standing must greet those sitting whilst those arriving at a gathering must greet those present
- 4- It is also recommended to ask about the health of others upon greeting them.
- 5- Kissing is permitted between members of the same gender. The following rules should be noted though:
 - a. Never on the lips – Except for between spouses or between parents and their young children
 - b. Not loud or inappropriate
 - c. Not on the hand except for the Ahlul Bayt (as) or the great scholars
 - d. It is recommended to kiss scholars on the forehead
 - e. No one should kiss another person's feet
- 6- Shaking hands is never permitted between members of the opposite gender who are not maḥram to each other (Refer to activity). Circumstances when it is permitted is:
 - a. When it may cause extreme difficulty
 - b. When there is a barrier between the hands (like a glove) – but no squeezing is involved.ⁱⁱⁱ

We have to remember that a greeting is a form of kindness shown to others; it is not permissible to initiate a greeting with an evil intention (such as striking a conversation with a member of the opposite gender, or seeking a ḥarām favour (e.g. obtaining ḥarām objects).

ETIQUETTE OF CONVERSATIONS

Just as with greetings, Allah (SWT) has placed some boundaries as to what is appropriate conversation. It should be remembered though that being a good Muslim does not mean that a person is boring and humourless. Indeed Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Humour people and you will enjoy their brotherhood. Meet them with smiles and joy and you will kill their spites."^{iv}

Some rules to observe and remember when conversing with others:

- 1- We should never be offensive, make offensive jokes or use sarcasm to destroy the confidence of another. It is ḥarām to tease and laugh at anyone due to their physical nature or circumstance. This type of bullying behaviour is highly frowned upon by Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

"O you who believe! Let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nick names." (Surah al-Ḥujurāt 49: 11)
- 2- We should never lie or gossip – Even if it is in joke or a prank. Lying in jest is another kind of falsehood. For instance, telling a person that "such a person has invited you for dinner tonight," when actually there is no truth in it can be harmful if that person believes the lie. This type of falsehood is also ḥarām as proved conclusively from the traditions.^v
- 3- Thinking carefully when we make a statement or state a fact to ensure it is not exaggerated, is true and is not offensive.
- 4- Maintaining the principles of ḥijab when conversing with members of the opposite gender.

- 5- We should avoid constantly telling jokes and clowning around as we will never be taken seriously. Imam al-Sajjād referring to a clown once said:

“Tell him that there is a day for God in which those who indulge in vain and futile acts will not gain anything but loss.”

- 6- We should never violate the sanctity of sad occasions and places like funerals and graveyards with laughing and giggling.
- 7- Have a sense of humour and do not take everything personally!

The Holy Prophet summarised the conversations of a true believer as thus:

”(The true believer is one who possesses) noble interactions (with others); his (spiritual) bosom is the most expansive from all other people; his soul is the most humbled (of others); his laughing is done (only) with smiling (not out loud); and his gathering (with others) is (only) in order to learn something...”^{vi}

Being humorous is also very encouraged in Islam if the rules above are followed. The Holy Prophet used to be very humorous and used to encourage his companions to have a sense of humour too!

One of the Holy Prophets companions was Zahir, who used to trade in metal objects. Once the Prophet was passing by the bazaar, he saw Zahir and playfully grabbed him from behind and said, “*Will anyone buy this slave?*” Zahir laughed and said, “*O Messenger of Allah, whoever buys this slave will be in loss.*” The Prophet smiled and said, “*In Allah’s eyes, your value is high.*”

ONLINE CONVERSATIONS

These rules also cover the online space when chatting or commenting on other people’s status. Online conversations can easily be misinterpreted as

- 1- There is no eye contact or body language
- 2- There is often very little context
- 3- It is impersonal
- 4- It is limited to written word mostly

It is therefore very important that sensitive conversations be carried out in person and that whatever is being said online is thought about carefully.

Instant messaging can be a very useful tool for a Muslim to ensure communication with family, friends and teachers. In spite of this, we have to learn to use these tools correctly. Some simple rules for online conversations include:

- Avoid sarcasm.
- Avoid using too many IM Acronyms. Too many ‘LOLs’ might spell insanity, not laughing out loud.
- Do not write your entire daily agenda in your personal message space. The people who really care where you are probably have your mobile phone number anyway.
- If you have to leave an IM conversation, it is nice to say why you are leaving.
- Always say “Goodbye” or “TTYL,” don’t just suddenly sign off your IM client.
- Emotions are okay to use, but don’t overuse them. For example, they cannot replace words, they go together with words. A sad face should be accompanied with why you’re sad.
- If you have really important news to tell somebody, or a long story, use e-mail to write it all out or use the telephone.
- You can have serious talks on IM, but anything really serious should be done face-to-face. IM conversations are more likely to lead to misunderstandings.
- Do not start conversations when you have nothing to say. They end up being dull
- Don’t be “Half there” when having an online conversation- This is rude and inappropriate. Informing the other party that you are doing other things or alternatively postponing the conversation may be more appropriate.

Class Activity

Discuss with your teacher the most appropriate way of avoiding unwanted handshakes from non-maḥram members of the opposite gender.

Review Questions

1) Joking in Islam is

- a. Never permitted
- b. Encouraged as long as it is done appropriately and within Islamic principles
- c. Is only permitted with non-Muslims

2) We are permitted to play pranks on people:

- a. Only if we do not lie or offend the person
- b. Never, it is debasing and offensive
- c. If it will make others laugh

3) In online conversations

- a. We are allowed to talk about others
- b. We are allowed to pretend to be who we are not
- c. We have to be very concise and avoid wasting time

ⁱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 120

ⁱⁱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 76, p. 4

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.al-islam.org/modestdress/6.htm> (section on Shaking hands)

^{iv} Mizan al-Hikma, vol.3 p.240.

^v http://www.al-islam.org/greater_sins_complete/22.htm

^{vi} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 64, Section of the Signs of a True Believer, pg. 310, tradition 45



BEING SOCIABLE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the Islamic etiquette for greetings, including the specific rules of greetings
- Discuss specific rules regarding hand-shaking, hugging and kissing
- Discuss that we should not favour people over others in greetings for the wrong reasons
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- Discuss some examples of healthy positive humour

Being Sociable

We have learnt in previous lessons that Allah (SWT) has created us as gregarious beings i.e. we naturally tend to socialise with other people. Islam encourages us to follow this innate nature by being actively involved in our communities and by being around good company. Living an isolated life away from society is strongly discouraged since it eventually could lead to very serious mental, physical and spiritual problems. Whilst being a lonely person is abominable (very bad), having friends in our lives is considered a basic necessity just like food and water. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“One who does not have a friend lacks a base necessity”ⁱ

Islam also encourages us also to work collectively as a community since this has a lot of individual and social benefits. Social benefits include uniting the community whilst individual benefits include breaking the selfish nature by developing concern for other people's problems.

In practice, we also notice that Islam places a lot of emphasis on reciting daily prayers in congregation in mosques rather than alone at home. Also, the ritual of Ḥajj requires Muslims around the world to gather at one place all at once and to perform the acts of worship together. These acts of worship are in synchrony with our innate nature of being gregarious or social animals.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

“And hold (onto) the rope of Allah all together, and do not be divided”ⁱⁱ

One of the aspects of positive social interaction is to have positive conversations. This begins with proper greetings and extends to other parts of the conversation, and includes humour as well.

Today, we will learn about some of the rules of Islamic conversation.

ETIQUETTE OF GREETING

Allah (SWT) has placed a great emphasis on greeting people and especially initiating a greeting.

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- If you have to leave a conversation, it is nice to say why you are leaving.
- Always say “Goodbye” or “TTYL,” don’t just suddenly sign off
- Emoticons are okay to use, but don’t overuse them. For example, they cannot replace words, they go together with words. A sad face should be accompanied with why you’re sad.

- If you have really important news to tell somebody, or a long story, use e-mail to write it all out or use the telephone.
- You can have serious talks on instant messaging programs, but anything really serious should be done face-to-face.
- Do not start conversations when you have nothing to say. They end up being dull
- Don't be "Half there" when having an online conversation- This is rude and inappropriate. Informing the other party that you are doing other things or alternatively postponing the conversation may be more appropriate.

HUMOUR AND PRANKS

Islam is a religion which encourages humour. However, there are rules for jokes in Islam.

This is the model that we have to follow. When making jokes or words of humour, we must make sure that we do so within the boundaries of Islam, by:

- Never ever lying.
- Never hurting someone's feelings, making fun of others, or being racist.
- Not becoming a clown by joking way too often as others will see us as foolish and never take us seriously.
- Not disrespecting holy or solemn occasions or places.
- Not becoming over-friendly with the opposite gender. This does not include the elderly and those who are *maḥram* to us.

GOOD JOKES

Can you think of some good jokes that do not go against our Islamic values?

Here are some examples:

- Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hall. One hat said to the other, "You stay here, I'll go on a head."
- What do you call a skeleton that rests all day? *Lazy bones*.



- How do you sink a submarine full of fools?
Knock on the door.

PRANKS

We sometimes have some fun performing practical jokes or 'pranks' on others. This can sometimes be okay but we have to make sure that we are very careful so that we do not unintentionally harm ourselves or others.

Imagine scaring an old lady, who may have heart conditions. Or imagine ordering pizza to a fake address and therefore wasting the time and food of others. Would we like to be treated like this?



We must definitely stay away from such evil pranks and make sure that we do not harm others in order to make ourselves feel happy.

Class Activity

Discuss with your teacher the most appropriate way of avoiding unwanted handshakes from non-*maḥram* members of the opposite gender.

Review Questions

Q1. Joking in Islam is

- Never permitted
- Encouraged as long as it is done appropriately and within Islamic principles
- Is only permitted with non-Muslims

Q2. We are permitted to play pranks on people:

- Only if we do not lie or offend the person
- Never, it is debasing and offensive
- If it will make others laugh

Q3. In online conversations

- We are allowed to talk about others
- We are allowed to pretend to be who we are not
- We have to be very concise and avoid wasting time

ⁱ Ibid No. 8760

ⁱⁱ Holy Qur'an (3:103)

ⁱⁱⁱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 120

^{iv} Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 76, p. 4

^v <http://www.al-islam.org/modestdress/6.htm> (section on Shaking hands)

^{vi} Mizan al-Hikma, vol.3 p.240.

^{vii} http://www.al-islam.org/greater_sins_complete/22.htm

^{viii} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 64, Section of the Signs of a True Believer, pg. 310, tradition 45



NEIGHBOURS AND GUESTS

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Students should understand:

- The importance of goodness to neighbours
- The ways of being good to neighbours, most importantly not harming them
- That Islam encourages us to have guests and to be good hosts

Neighbours and Hosting

In the Holy Qur'an Allah (SWT) orders us to be good to our neighbours whether they are Muslim or not, and whether they are close to us or not. Islam also encourages us to strengthen relations with our family and friends by hosting them in our homes, and being generous and gracious towards them. We will discuss this further in future years.

In this lesson, we will focus on discussions related to neighbours.

GOODNESS TO NEIGHBOURS

In an āyah which lists ten obligations upon Muslims, neighbours are included among those to whom we must show goodness. Just as the āyah commands us to worship Allah and to be good to our parents, it similarly, with the same seriousness, commands us to show goodness to our neighbours.

“Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphan, Al-Masakin (the poor), the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful” (4:36)

In emphasising the importance of respecting the rights of the neighbours, Imam 'Ali (as) said whilst on his death bed: “Fear Allah and keep Him in view in the matter of your neighbours, because they were the subject of your Prophet's advice. He continuously advised in their favour such that we thought he would allow them a share in inheritance”ⁱ

WHO IS CONSIDERED TO BE OUR NEIGHBOUR?

The definition of a neighbour in Islam is anyone who lives within forty houses from our house in each direction i.e. north, east, south and west. This was the definition given by the Prophet (saw) when asked to define a neighbourⁱⁱ

OUR DUTIES TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOURS

We have certain obligations in relation our neighbours whether they are Muslims or not. If we are not careful of our duties toward them, we will be sinful.

REFRAINING FROM HARMING THEM

The least we are expected to be careful of is to avoid anything that may cause harm to our neighbours. Things like making noise, or throwing rubbish near their house, or parking our cars in a way that blocks their driveways are all considered major sins.

Infact, the Prophet (saw) asked Imam 'Ali (as) to go to the mosque and to repeat the following three times: "A person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his harm has no faith"ⁱⁱⁱ

DOING GOOD TOWARD THEM

In addition to avoiding harming our neighbours, we should always perform acts of kindness toward them. In a lengthy ḥadith, the Prophet (saw) gives us many examples of how we can practically help our neighbours in addition to always praying for them: "To help him if he asks your help, to lend him if he asks to borrow from you, to satisfy his needs if becomes poor, to console him if he is visited by an affliction, to congratulate him if he is met with good fortune, to visit him if he becomes ill, to attend his funeral if he dies, not to make your house higher than his without his consent lest you deny him the breeze, to offer him fruit when you buy some or to take it to your home secretly if you do not do that, nor send out your children with it so as to not upset his children, nor bother him by the (tempting) smell of your food unless you send him some to him."^{iv}

We should realise that by doing good to our neighbours, particularly those who are not Muslim, we will be giving them a very good impression about Islam. In today's world where Islam is too often portrayed negatively, it is important that we do our part in reforming this negative image and present Islam in its true and pure light.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEIGHBOURS

Whether our neighbours are Muslims or not, they all have rights over us. However, some neighbours have more rights over us than others and we should deal with them accordingly. Imam al al-Ṣādiq (as) says: "There are three types of neighbours. The first type is the neighbour who has one right, the second is a neighbour who has two rights, and the third is a neighbour who has three rights. The neighbour who has three rights is a Muslim neighbour who is also a relative. Such a neighbour has the right of Islam, the right of kinship and the right of neighbourhood. The neighbour who has two rights is a Muslim neighbour, who has the right of Islam and the neighbourhood. The neighbour who has one right is a polytheist neighbour, who has the right of neighbourhood"^v

NEIGHBOURS OF THE MOSQUE

The neighbours of mosques must also be treated in the same way as our home neighbours. In fact, if they are not treated well and are annoyed with the Muslims who use that mosque, they may begin to hate Islam and Muslims, and this is a terrible thing. For example, we

should never park our cars in ways that inconvenience our neighbours. Worst still is to park our cars in their driveways. Would you like someone to park his car in your driveway? What if there was an emergency and you needed to transport a family member to hospital but someone has blocked your driveway? This careless attitude could surely cost someone's life!

Another example of looking after the neighbours of mosques is not to throw any rubbish on to their front yards. Unfortunately this is something very common in our communities so we should make sure that we stop doing this ourselves and then advise others against it. Remember, we are representing Islam by our actions! Imam Khomeini had ordered the Adhan for fajr prayers to stop being sounded on the microphone lest this noise would disturb an aged or ill neighbour of the mosque.

Homework Activity

Between now and next week, ask yourself about your actions with your neighbours. Is there anything you do to hurt them? If yes, what steps would you take to change your actions? List down three things that you would do to change, or improve your attitude towards your neighbours.

Review Questions

Q1. Which neighbour has the greatest right over us?

- a. A Non-Muslim
- b. A Muslim who is also a relative
- c. A Shi'ah

Q2. My neighbour harmed me. Islamically, what is the best way to treat him?

- a. Harm him
- b. Be patient and forgive him
- c. Report it to the police.

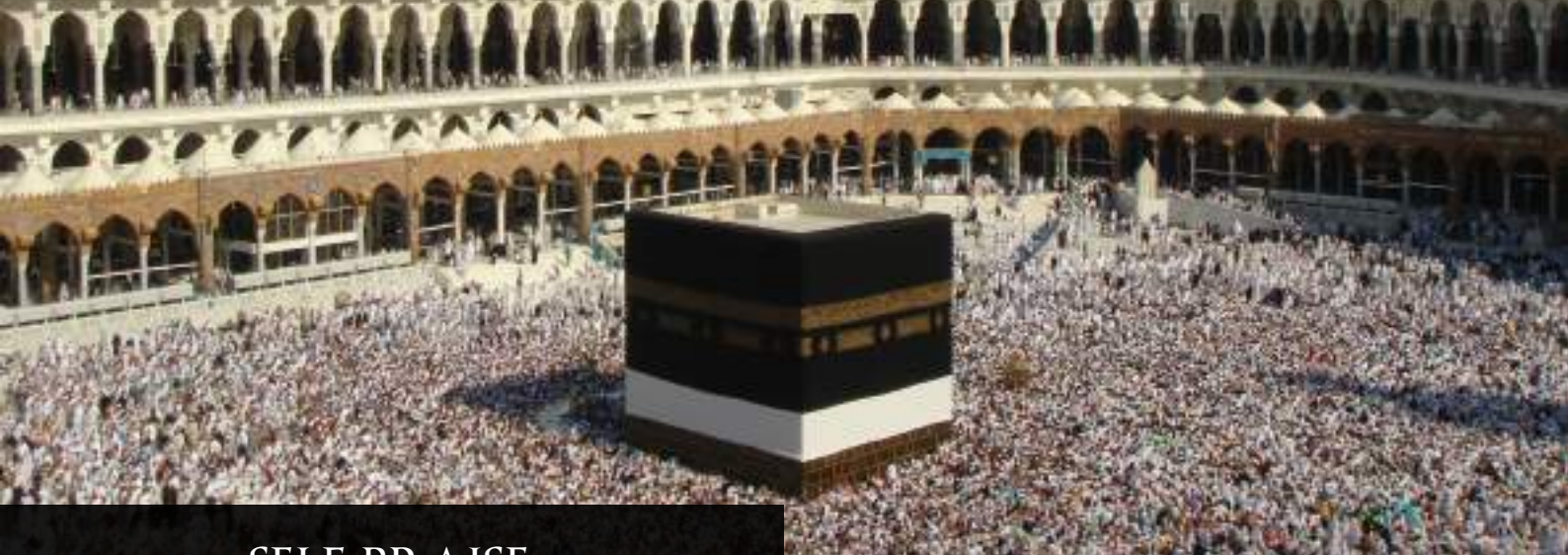
ⁱ Scale of Wisdom (Pg, 233, No. 1301)

ⁱⁱ Wasaelu-Shi'a (12:125)

ⁱⁱⁱ Wasaelu-Shia (12:125)

^{iv} Scale of Wisdom (Pg, 235, No. 1308)

^v Al-Mahajatul-Baydha 3:422



SELF PRAISE

العجب

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the meaning of pride ('ujb)
- Understand that self-praise, one of the consequences of pride, makes people turn away from us
- Understand that all forms of pride ('ujb) are abominable in Islam and that we should always be humble
- Discuss some ways of avoiding pride

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Pride

Pride or 'ujb is a feeling of exaggeration of one's virtues and good deeds, their overestimation and satisfaction with them, accompanied with a sense of superiority on their account. A person with pride considers him or herself free from all shortcomings and faults. In contrast, a feeling of pleasure and delight on performing virtuous deeds accompanied with a sense of humility and modesty before Allah (SWT) and gratitude for His favours is not pride.

The following narration from Imam al-Kāḍim (as) explains the different levels of pride:

“There are several levels of 'Ujb. One of them is when one's bad actions appear to him as good; he reckons them as good and loves himself, imagining that he is performing virtuous deeds. Another level of 'Ujb is represented by a person who believes that by having faith in God he has done God a favour; whereas (in reality) it is God Almighty who has conferred a favour on him (by endowing him with faith).”ⁱ

SOURCES OF PRIDE

We are feeble beings in need of many things in life. One of our basic needs as humans is the need of the sense of security. Security can be either physical or psychological. Both types of security help us function better in our daily lives.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

If one was asked to learn a chapter from the Qur'an in a cage with a tiger, he would be unable to learn because of the fear of falling prey to the wild animal. However, if there was no tiger, learning a short chapter from the

Qur'an wouldn't be that hard. This is an example of (a lack of) physical security.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY

If one was asked to learn a chapter from the Qur'an in a cage, outside of which a tiger roamed freely, and was told that the tiger will only leave if the person learnt a chapter, it wouldn't be that hard. This is because there will be a sense of security that the 'situation' will come to an end.

`Ujb or pride is linked to psychological security. When a person thinks that he or she is superior to others, he is feeding on this fear that stems from psychological insecurity.

As social beings, we humans want acceptance and appreciation from our friends, family and peers. We want to fit in. So we try to excel at things. Sometimes we reach that level of excellence. At other times, we don't. Taking pride by repeatedly and thanklessly acknowledging our achievements is `Ujb. According to the traditions reported from the Ahlul Bayt (as), `Ujb is worse than sin, so much so that Allah (SWT) makes a believer commit sin so that he may be saved from `Ujb. `Ujb or pride leads to a number of major sins and evil traits. When its roots permeate the human heart, it leads the person to disbelief. In addition, a person afflicted with `Ujb never cares to rectify himself. Rather, he considers himself as a pious and virtuous person. He belittles his sins and never thinks of purging himself from them, and ultimately leads himself to eternal damnation.

People can be involved in performing the greatest of deeds like serving the poor, helping the needy, building hospitals, mosques etc...but if they take pride in that, and consider themselves superior to others because of their actions, Allah (SWT) will not reward them for those deeds. However, if they are humble, and are thankful to Allah (SWT) by acknowledging that *all* praise belongs to Allah (SWT) and realising that no achievement would be possible without His beneficence, a person's delight in his achievement will be considered a praiseworthy trait.

PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

Pride ('ujb) is the feeling within a person's heart that he is somehow better or superior than others, or deserves merit for his actions. Arrogance (kibr) is when a person

acts out these thoughts, by looking down at or belittling others.

PRIDE IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

Allah (SWT) severely condemns `Ujb in several places in the Qur'an.

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ

يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا

"Say, 'Shall we inform you about the biggest losers in regard to works? Those whose endeavour goes awry in the life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good.'" (18:103-104)

At the beginning of the creation of mankind, when Allah (SWT) ordered all his angels and Satan to bow down in obedience to Prophet Adam (as), all bowed down except for the accursed Iblis. The reason for his refusal was his pride in himself, he felt superior because he was made of fire while Prophet Adam (as) was made of clay. He assumed that his worship of 6000 years would have granted him a superior status.

Allah (SWT) tells us in the Qur'an that:

"Certainly We created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam.' So they [all] prostrated, but not Iblis: he was not among those who prostrated. Said He, 'What prevented you from prostrating, when I commanded you?' 'I am better than him,' he said. 'You created me from fire and You created him from clay.'" (7:11-12)

In the second verse quoted above, Iblis is clearly indulging in self-praise. He is belittling a creation of Allah (SWT) that he believes is inferior to him, but what he does not know is that superiority is ranked via righteousness and God-wariness in the eyes of Allah (SWT). As a result of this undue self-praise, Allah (SWT) punishes him by banishing him from His presence and proximity:

:Get down from it!' He said. 'It is not for you to be arrogant therein. Begone! You are indeed among the degraded ones.'" (7:13)

In one of his famous sermons, Imam ‘Ali (as) enjoins us to take a lesson from what happened to Satan:

“You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all”

EFFECTS OF PRIDE

One of the effects of pride or ‘ujb is that a person will praise themselves regularly, sometimes obviously and directly, and at other times in an indirect way. No one likes people that are proud and praise themselves. It is only natural for us to turn away from such personalities. Those who praise themselves, whether intentionally or not, are belittling others around them. In almost all cases, this leads to such proud persons losing important people in their lives such as their family and friends.

Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“No loneliness can be compared in dreadfulness to the one that is the result of ‘Ujb.”

He has also said:

“You should avoid self-admiration, having reliance upon what appears good in yourself, and love of exaggerated praise because this is one of the most reliable opportunities for Satan”ⁱⁱ

AVOIDING PRIDE

Pride is a trap which is very easy to fall into. Sometimes one may do it without realising. Therefore, the most important thing to do to avoid this sin is to actively assess ourselves. Reflecting on our actions and words at the end of each day can be a good start. We must think about how we went about our day – realising which sins we committed, how we can seek forgiveness for them, and how we can ensure we do not repeat them. We must assess all the blessings granted by Allah (SWT) during the day and thank Him for everything. We must think about what we said in praise of ourselves, and what we said in praise of our Lord.

Imam al-Bāqir (as) has taught us:

“Block the way of ‘Ujb with the knowledge of the self.”ⁱⁱⁱ

There are other ways of training ourselves to avoid self-pride and self-praise:

- We should frequently praise others for their positive traits. Once praising others becomes second nature, the mind will subconsciously become more humble
- When we are proud of an action of ours, we should remember that it is God who provided all the causes for our good action
- We should remember our sins and shortcomings so that we do not become too proud of our good actions and perfections
- Even if we do feel a sense of pride, we should never act on it by praising ourselves or acting arrogantly.

We must remember that any good trait we have is a blessing given to us by Allah (SWT). Whether it may be knowledge, strength, wealth or health - all are blessings that Allah (SWT) has endowed upon us and if we are not thankful for them, they may be taken away from us at any time.

Review Questions

Q1. Pride or ‘ujb is:

- a. Arrogance in action
- b. An overestimation of a person’s own good qualities in their mind
- c. Frequently praising oneself

Q2. We can avoid pride or ‘ujb by:

- a. Putting ourselves down in front of others
- b. Praising ourselves in front of others
- c. Praising others for their good actions and traits

Q3. The reason for the fall and cursing of Iblīs was:

- a. His dishonesty
- b. His refusal to worship God
- c. His pride and arrogance

ⁱ Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 313, hadith # 3

ⁱⁱ Ghurar al-Hikmah, p. 298

ⁱⁱⁱ Mizaan al-Hikmah, hadith # 11859



COMMUNITY SERVICE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the meaning of community service and the main categories of this
- Know the importance of meeting the needs of the believers
- Understand the importance of social obligations in comparison to ritual obligations
- Know the concept of Zakāt of one's position, talent, ability and time
- Know the main conditions of helping believers
- Outline the benefits of community service to our personal lives

Lesson 1: Benefits of Community Service

Community service is defined as any activity done for the benefit of the community as a whole or an individual. It can be as simple as picking up some rubbish or helping an old person with their shopping bags to serving the community as a public servant.

Allah (SWT) has given us many blessings and talents and He expects that we will use our blessings to help those who are not that fortunate. If we were to just imagine that every Muslim who had any talent in anything, donated some of his or her talent to Islam, today Muslims would have been the most advanced and powerful people in the world!

Islam has emphasised this aspect of the social lives of Muslims with the Almighty (SWT) placing tremendous reward and benefit for participating, supporting and promoting serving our fellow human beings.

Indeed our Imams (as) have informed us that:

“The most beloved of the slaves of Allah is the one who serves the slaves of God the most.”

In this and the next lesson we shall discuss the meaning of community service in Islam and how we can fulfil this obligation.

WHY MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR FELLOW MUSLIMS?

Although as Muslims we are required to serve humanity and all creatures of Allah (SWT), the obligation to help our fellow Muslims is even greater. Here we will discuss some of the benefits of helping others, especially Muslims, to our own lives.

IT IS A SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

To help another person out or to serve the community has immense rewards in the hereafter as we shall discuss but its most apparent reward in this world is that of making us happier and more fulfilled. Many studies over the years in psychology have shown thatⁱ:

- Giving and even just thinking about giving in a spirit of generosity are linked to health and well-being.
- People who think too much about themselves and their own desires – or their own troubles – are not very happy.
- Helping is also a form of self-help when the giver has experienced the same problems as those receiving.
- Volunteerism has positive impacts on happiness, mood, self-esteem, physical and mental health.
- Giving can be a lifelong benefit for those who start young.
- Altruism is associated with a substantial reduction in mortality rates and is linked to longevity.

IT IS A SOURCE OF BLESSING

The spiritual benefit of helping others is also immense as it not only increases our rizq in this world it has tremendous benefits in the hereafter. One of the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was accompanying the Imam during Ḥajj, and the Imam was explaining to this man the rewards of each of the acts of Ḥajj. The companion was amazed by this and wondered at the great rewards of each action.

The Imam then asked:

“Do you want me to teach you something that brings greater rewards?” The companion said: “is there such an act?” The Imam (as) said: “yes, fulfilling the need of a believer is better than a Ḥajj, and a Ḥajj and a Ḥajj...” until he counted ten Ḥajj pilgrimages.

IT IS A FORM OF WORSHIP

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) once said:

“By Allah, Allah has not been worshipped by anything better than fulfilling the rights of a believer. Surely, the believer has a greater right than the Ka’bah”ⁱⁱ

This narration clearly shows that one of the best ways of worshipping Allah (SWT) is by serving His creatures and fulfilling the rights we have over our brothers. The important point to remember here is that, because it is worshipping, helping others should only be done purely for the sake of Almighty (SWT) not to gain fame, to be liked or to become popular.

As we have learnt before, this form of worshipping has far more reward than even the Ḥajj or any other form of ritual prayers!

“Whoever helps his Muslim brother in a need that he has, it is as if he worshipped Allah for nine thousand years, in which he stood on his feet during the night and fasted during the day”.

IT HAS GREAT REWARDS!

One ḥadith by Imam al-Sajjād (as) captures the rewards of helping others, Imam (as) says:

“The one who meets the need of a believer has begun by meeting the need of God and because of it God will meet one hundred of his needs. One of these needs is paradise. The one who relieves the sorrow of someone else, God will relieve the sorrow of the Hereafter from him. If one visits an ill person, the angels will surround him and pray for him until he leaves. The angels say: ‘may Paradise be for you purely’. By Allah, meeting the need of a believer is more dear to Allah than fasting two consecutive months while performing I’tikāf in Masjidul ḥarām”

SOCIAL AND RITUAL OBLIGATIONS

We often judge religiousness by ritualistic things like prayer, Ḥajj and fasting. However, often these things are not so difficult and the only barrier between us and prayer, for example, is laziness. However, when it comes to social obligations, these can often be extremely difficult to practice and it can hurt so much to put these Islamic obligations into practice in our family life. Similarly, when a person comes to us in need, another

sign of true faith is to help that person in the way that we can. This is a major obligation in Islam.

A man came to Imam al-Bāqir (as) and said:

“Thanks to God, I come from a village where most people are Shii.” The Imam (as) asked: “(In your village), do the rich show mercy upon the poor? Do the good people forgive those who have wronged them? Do they share their wealth with one another?” The man replied: “we are not like this”. The Imam (as) said: “these are not our Shi’ah”

This narration emphasises how we should be so diligent in meeting our brothers’ needs. In fact, the Imams tell us:

“You are not really brothers until you can put your hands into the pocket of your brother and take money when you need it, and then put the money back when you no longer need it.”

Class Activity

Explore the different community service projects in your immediate and wider community. Which one inspires you? Use this discussion to involve yourself in one of these projectsⁱⁱⁱ

Review Questions

Q1. Is helping my parents with housework community service?

- Yes- as you are assisting your parents
- No- community service is only for helping people outside the family
- No- my family is not a community

Q2. The least form of helping others is:

- Praying for them
- Smiling at them
- Giving them money

Q3. One of the worldly benefits of helping others is:

- We are often poor and sad
- We live longer and are happy
- We have few friends

Lesson 2: ZAKĀT OF BLESSINGS

As Muslims, one of the obligations we have is that of Zakāt (or Ṣadaqah). This Zakāt does not only mean giving money! It means giving out of whatever blessing we have received from Allah (SWT). If we have blessing of time, talent or money, we have to spend a part of them for the sake for Allah (SWT). As we have seen in the previous lessons, the way we can use our talents, money and time is to help our fellow Muslims!

The Imam quotes from the Prophet (saw):

“Charity is obligatory upon every Muslim every day” When the Prophet (saw) said this, he was asked: ‘who can afford to pay charity every day?’ He (saw) said: “Removing harm from the path of believers is charity.”

This narration indicates that Zakāt applies to each and every blessing given to a person. Zakāt applies to blessings such as health, strength, knowledge, time and talent.

ZAKĀT OF OUR POSITION

One form of zakāt is that of our position. When we become leaders in our school, at work or in any situation in our life, we are obliged to help everyone we can due to our influence.

Let us consider an example of this from the lives of our Imams (as). ‘Ali ibn Yaqṭīn was a sincere Shi’ī who was close to Imam al-Kāḍim (as). ‘Ali’s father was a minister to the Abbasid Caliphs, and when his father died, ‘Ali himself was offered the position of minister. This was a very powerful and influential position. However, ‘Ali had heard that something as minor as sharpening a pencil for a tyrant is a sin, and so he went to Imam al-Kāḍim (as) to ask for advice about taking this position.

The Imam (as) said that because this position would allow ‘Ali to help the believers and make things easier for them, he should take it. However, the condition was that he must make sure to meet the needs of people:

“Don’t resign, for we are more comfortable with you, and your brothers will gain some dignity through you. I hope that Allah will heal some wounds through you, or will stop the fire of the enemies through you. O ‘Ali, whoever makes a believer happy, has begun with God, and then pleased the Prophet, and then pleased us.”

‘Ali took the position. However, one day, a Shi‘ī Kufan man travelled all the way to Baghdad to speak to ‘Ali ibn Yaqtīn and ask for a need. However, ‘Ali had guards at his door that turned away this poor man. This man came back to Kufah broken-hearted.

Later on, ‘Ali went to Ḥajj and while there he went to visit Imam al-Kaḍim (as). The Imam asked his servant to refuse entry to ‘Ali and to turn him away. ‘Ali was extremely upset by this. He found the Imam later and asked the reason for this treatment. The Imam (as) told him it was because he had turned people away from his door and not used his position to benefit them, and so the Imam (as) had treated him the same. The Imam (as) told him that even his Ḥajj would not be accepted if that Kufan man would not forgive him.

‘Ali was extremely sorry and asked the Imam (as) how he could make up for what he did. The Imam (as), in a miraculous manner, gave ‘Ali the opportunity to travel to Kufah the same night. ‘Ali went to the house of Ibrahīm (the man whom he had turned away) and sought forgiveness. The man was still upset and was not willing to forgive him so easily. Initially, Ibrahīm said: ‘may God forgive you’. However, ‘Ali insisted that he wanted the forgiveness of the man himself also, because the Imam had made this a condition. However, ‘Ali persisted and humbled himself in front of this man, even asking him to place his feet on his cheeks, until the man forgave him, and they hugged one another and cried.

OUR OBLIGATIONS TO OTHER BELIVERS

When it comes to the community of Islam, the obligation of meeting the needs of others becomes even greater. Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

“a believer has thirty rights over another believer, and that these rights are only met if one fulfils them or is excused from them.”

In a narration that meets the strict criteria of authenticity, and by which the scholars can issue an edict, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) is asked by al-Mu‘alla ibn Khunays about the right of believers over one another. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says: (phrases in brackets are not parts of the narration)

“There are seven obligatory rights, and if one does not meet them he will lose exit from the obedience and service of the Lord’. The companion asks: ‘May I be made your sacrifice, what are they?’ The Imam (as) says: ‘I fear for you in case you do not meet them, and that you may learn them but not practice them’. The companion replied: ‘there is no strength except by Allah’.

The Imam then replied:

- » The easiest of these rights is that you love for your brother what you love for yourself and hate for him what you hate for yourself (if we apply this, would we ever cheat anyone? We don’t like to be cheated, and thus we would never cheat anyone)
- » Don’t make him angry, keep him pleased, and try to follow his wishes
- » Help your brother with your self, your wealth, your tongue, your arms and your legs (social service is so important and is a major part of religious teaching and we should try our best to perform community service.)
- » Be his eyes, his guide and his mirror (if he makes a mistake, gently correct him)
- » Don’t satisfy your self with drink and food while your brother is hungry and thirsty, and don’t be fully clothed when he is bare (we should not be stuffing ourselves and gaining weight whilst others are poor and starving. We live in the age of information where we don’t have the excuse of not knowing about the poor. We know about them and thus we have an obligation to meet their needs as much as we can)”
- » Be to his servant, and if he does not have a servant, send your servant to him to help him.
- » To confirm his oath, accept his invitation, be present at his funeral, visit him when he is ill, and tire your body in meeting his needs, and do not make him ask you his need but you take initiative in meeting his needs^{iv}

ETTIQUETES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

In order to reap the benefits of helping others, we have to follow some very simple rules:

- 1- **We must help purely and only for the Sake of Allah (SWT):** not for the sake of fame, or praise or appreciation. If we feel bad or disappointed for having done something and then not being appreciated, it means we did not do that action purely for Allah (SWT).
- 2- **Do it quickly:** we should not delay helping out for it is more pleasurable for the receiver.
- 3- **Make it seem small:** We should try to make the thing we do to seem small as only then will it be big. Do not lord our favour over the person. Rather, act as if it was nothing.
- 4- **Do it secretly:** When we help others, we have to ensure that they and others do not see it. It has to be done very smartly and quietly so as not to show off or embarrass the recipient.

Review Questions

Q1. Which of the following is a type of zakāt:

- a. Using my computer skills to hack into and spy into my teachers computer to help my fellow students get the answers to the exam
- b. Using my computer skills to help design a site that people can use to learn about Islam
- c. Helping with fundraising in the mosque so I can sit at the front stall and everyone can see how generous I am

Q2. If we want the reward of helping others:

- a. We must try to do it so that they never find out that we helped them
- b. We should put it on facebook that we helped them
- c. We should be careful to make sure that we help them the way we think is right

Q3. Which of the following is an obligation we have on our brother?

- a. Correct him when he makes a mistake in front of others so that others learn not to make the same mistake
- b. Get him a bike when you know he needed one but never asked you for one
- c. Eat your lunch in his presence when you know he is thirsty and hungry

ⁱ Post, S. (2011), It's good to be good: 2011 fifth annual scientific report on health, happiness and helping others. International Journal of Person centred Medicine, Vol.1, No.4- 808-813 (Great read for teachers available <http://www.ijpcm.org/index.php/IJPCM/article/view/154>)

ⁱⁱ Biharul Anwar, 74/222

ⁱⁱⁱ Teachers should have a list of activities students can do to fulfil this obligation. This could be things like helping clean up the Islamic centre, visiting the elderly and sick, collecting money for charity etc.

^{iv} Al-Kafi, v.2, p.169 & 174



SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Islam Encourages Independence

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Islam encourages us to be independent in our personal and social needs, where possible
- Understand that a person who is independent and does not ask from others is liked by people
- We should ask Allah for all of our needs
- Understand that where it is necessary to seek help, we should do so but from appropriate people
- Discuss the qualities of people who are likely to be truly helpful

Indeed, one of the greatest honours Allah Bestows upon his servants is blessings to be self-reliant. Imam al-Şādiq (as) has said:

“The honour of a Mu'min lies in nocturnal worship and his esteem lies in his being independent of the people”

One of the companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) once found himself in severe poverty. His wife advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (saw) and request his help.

The man approached the Holy Prophet (saw), but as soon as the Prophet's (saw) eyes fell upon the man, he said:

“If a person seeks something from me, I shall certainly grant it to him, but if he were to exhibit himself as being self-sufficient and free from want, Allah shall make him wealthy.”

Hearing this, the man said to himself, “The Holy Prophet (saww) has intended me by this speech of his”.

Without uttering a word, he returned home and narrated the incident to his wife.

His wife said, “The Holy Prophet (saww) is also human; explain your dilemma to him and see what he has to say.”

The man returned to the Holy Prophet (saw) for the second time but heard the same sentence from him and again came back home without saying a word. When this was repeated for the third time, the man borrowed a pickaxe from one of his friends and set off towards the mountains. Throughout the day he worked hard to

gather firewood, which he sold for some flour and that night, he and his wife had bread for dinner.

The next day, he worked harder and collected more firewood and this continued for several days till he was able to purchase a pickaxe for himself.

After some period, as a result of his hard work, he managed to purchase his own animals and property, and slowly became rich.

One day, arriving before the Holy Prophet (saw), he narrated to him the events of his life and the effect of his words, whereupon the Prophet (saw) responded:

"I had said (before): One who seeks to be independent (of others), Allah shall make him independent."

WHAT IS SELF RELIANCE?

Self-reliance is the use of our abilities to do actions that we are capable of. This was demonstrated by the companions of the Prophet who would not seek assistance even in something as simple as picking up a stick when it had fallen from a camel-rider- the companions would rather do it themselves. When asked why they did not ask for help in such simple matters they said that the Prophet (saw) had taught them:

"Be wary of asking others for your needs"

Often, we ask for assistance needlessly, either out of laziness or sometimes we think we deserve it (arrogance). For example:

- Do we tell our siblings/parents/friends to do menial tasks like bring a glass of water or pick up something?
- Do we think we deserve welfare payments from the government and therefore neglect to work hard to earn our living?

Imam 'Ali (as) warns us that:

"One who fails to make effort due to negligence or laziness will find his state to be one of deterioration and decline."

Allah (SWT) in His infinite wisdom and mercy has given us a tremendous amount of blessings to help us reach whatever goals we set for ourselves. He has given us the tools to reach as far as we wish to. Indeed Imam al-Reḍā (as) says:

"One who cannot raise himself and ascend to the ultimate height of which he is capable, will not be lifted by anything else".

ADVANTAGES OF BEING SELF-RELIANT

- **Freedom and independence** – One who is self-reliant will not be so easily influenced by others. When we need people, they can influence us more easily.
- **Self-Reliance provides confidence** — in one's own abilities and accomplishments.
- **Self-Reliance bring a sense of responsibility** — and maturity that comes from providing for oneself.
- **Self-Reliance provides intuition** — by learning to trust God's principles rather than go along with what is popular.
- **Self-Reliance provides success** — positive results for efforts and achievements.
- **Self-reliance makes a community independent and strong-** The benefits flow out to the whole community and are not limited to an individual.

DOES THIS MEAN WE SHOULD NEVER SEEK HELP?

Certainly not! Self-reliance also has extremes; if we are constantly seeking help from others this is disliked as it means we become dependent. At the same time if we are over-confident and never seek help we become arrogant! We have to ensure to keep to the middle ground.

CONSTANTLY SEEK HELP FROM ALLAH (SWT)



We are creatures completely dependent on Allah (SWT) for all our needs and therefore Allah encourages us constantly to seek our needs from *Him* and no one else. He even likes us to *constantly* ask *Him* for even the smallest of things (like salt for food!) No matter how trivial the issue is, or how great it is, we should request it from God. This practice is a great virtue, and is considered a type of remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

The Imams (as) tell us:

“Gaining closeness to God comes through asking him,
and gaining closeness to people comes through
refraining from asking them”

SEEK HELP FROM THE RIGHT SOURCE

Sometimes we need to seek help especially when we are being abused, harassed or are having genuine difficulties we cannot get over on our own. In such cases we have to be selective as to whom we approach. The basic characteristics of the people we should seek help from are:

- 1- **Those who actually have the knowledge and expertise to help** -asking a random unqualified person about feeling depressed or anxious does not make sense. It makes more sense to speak to a doctor or counsellor.
- 2- **Those who are trustworthy-** we have to make sure we do not share our personal difficulties with people who may make them public and embarrass us.
- 3- **Those who won't reject us-** Those who would genuinely like to help.
- 4- **Those who will not hold it over us-** We have to be careful about seeking help from those who can in the future hold their help over us and make us feel like we owe them.

There are certain groups of people we should seek help from when we need to: this includes our parents, trusted teachers, the right friends and sometimes even the right relatives.

Class Activity

Discuss briefly what kinds of problems one should seek help with and what kinds of problems one should not seek help with. Be sure to discuss issues of harassment, abuse, cheating, housework etc.

Review Questions

Q1. Self-reliance can be good when?

- a. One seeks help only when required
- b. One constantly seeks help and assistance with everyone and anyone they come across
- c. One never seeks help from anyone

Q2. Those who cannot do something

- a. Should be rejected and shunned as they are lazy or pretending so they can get pity from others
- b. May be genuine and we cannot judge them and should help them where and when we can
- c. Should not try anything they can't do independently



سوء الظن

SUSPICION

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the principle of assumption in Islam and the different types of assumptions
- Understand that there is a healthy balance between suspicion/assumption and naivety
- Understand that suspicion in family life is especially
- Discuss strategies for avoiding suspicion
- Understand that being transparent and accountable in all our dealing fends off suspicion

Suspicion

In previous levels, you may have come across the subject of suspiciousness and its prohibition in Islam. However, in this lesson, we will consider this subject in more detail to give you a better understanding of its nature and help you better understand why it should in most cases be avoided.

THE DEFINITION OF SUSPICIOUSNESS

Suspiciousness or suspicion is a mental/psychological process which simply an inclination to distrust and doubt things especially the actions or intentions of people. The negative suspicion is based on having an evil inclination or perception which results in making negative or evil assumptions about people or situations – i.e. taking the pessimistic view of things.

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

This kind of suspicion is irrational and not usually based on evidence; therefore, it is harmful and is also considered sinful in Islam.

Reasonable suspicion is a phenomenon where a person is inclined to doubt based on evidence of some sort which results in questioning certain issues. We will discuss this later in the lesson.

SUSPICIOUSNESS IN ISLAM

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ

“O you who believe, avoid most assumption, because some assumption is evil...” (49:12)

Islam encourages us to always assume the best about one another in life. When we hear a word from someone, or see them doing something, we are encouraged to interpret it in the best way possible and to avoid giving it a negative interpretation.

Unfortunately, many of us automatically think negatively and interpret things in a bad way, leading to suspicion. Suspicion can lead to a breakdown in many relationships, especially marriages. It can also become extreme, leading people to be paranoid and to always think someone is trying to hurt them or plot against them.

The Holy Qur'an commands us to avoid any suspicion so that we can overcome this problem. Whenever we are tempted to interpret things negatively, we should stop ourselves and try our best to interpret things positively.

Notice that the Qur'an again uses the word 'avoid', which is a very strong prohibition! The Qur'an does not only say

this is impermissible, it says to 'avoid' it and not go near it. The reason it says avoid 'most suspicion' is because most of our thoughts automatically lean towards negative interpretation, so we should always stop our mind from moving towards those negative interpretations. Whenever these thoughts come to our mind, we should ask for forgiveness from Allah and try to kick them out of our head.

Another way of helping to remove suspicious thoughts is to avoid associating with evil people because:

Imam Ali (as): "Association with evil people leads to suspicion about good people"ⁱ

People who are usually suspicious tend to always be on the guard and have quite constricted emotional lives. Their reduced capacity for meaningful emotional involvement and the general pattern of isolated withdrawal often lead to anxiety. People with this particular disorder have a tendency to bear grudges and to interpret others' actions as hostile.

EXAMPLES OF SUSPICIOUSNESS

It is important to note that the culture in which we live contributes immensely on our perception of things. As such, it is important NOT to think like the society thinks, because this is one of the major causes of evil.

One of the most common examples of suspicion is in the instance where perhaps a believing brother or sister is seen with a person of the opposite gender in public. Immediately, the first thought to come in mind would be that there is something suspicious going on here! However, the two could be brother and sister or have some other legitimate relationship which we are unaware of. To immediately suspect that the two are doing something wrong is in itself a sin.

Here are some other examples you may face:

- Your friend declines your invitation to play sport for a valid reason. You may think he or she does not want to spend time with you and this causes a deterioration in the relationship.
- You are working with someone on an Islamic project. You offer an idea but they do not take it up because of a valid reason. You might think they have something against you personally. This can cause the project to fail.

Suspicion is especially harmful within families. We see so much family conflict because of suspicion. A wife or husband may be too suspicious of each other about issues such as money or extended family relationships, and this can cause a lot of marital conflict.

In the wider family context, we see that relationships between a person and their in-laws are often very tense because of suspiciousness. If we learn to think positively and be less sensitive, many of these problems would solve themselves or never occur in the first place.

REMOVING SUSPICION FROM OURSELVES

While we are encouraged not to be suspicious of other people, at the same time we should also try to be an open book and remove suspicion from ourselves to make it easier for people to trust us. If we are in a situation that we think people might interpret in a bad way, we should explain ourselves to others and show them that we are not involved in anything negative.

One day, the Prophet (saw) was speaking to his aunt in the market when a man walked by. The Prophet (saw) told him: 'This is my aunt'. The man said 'of course, O Messenger of Allah', but the prophet (saw) wanted to make sure that the man did not think the Prophet (saw) was talking in a friendly way to a strange woman so he explained himself, even though he is the Prophet.

ARE ALL SUSPICIONS BAD?

As mentioned, a person needs to be intelligent to decide when suspecting about others is bad and when it is necessary. The important thing to remember is that we should avoid suspecting our family, friends and other believers.

However, when it comes to the enemies of Islam, we should not be naïve, and we should have reasonable suspicions about them so that they cannot harm us. Therefore, trusting everyone without discriminating between those who love us and those who want to harm us is also wrong. We should not allow ourselves to trust people who show enmity or hostility towards us, especially because of our religion. We must be able to distinguish between enemies and friends, and exercise caution accordingly.

MAKING EXCUSES FOR OTHERS

When we see someone in a situation that looks suspicious, we must try to make as many excuses for them as possible and try to find as many justifications as possible. The Ahlul Bayt (as) tell us:

“Interpret the action of your brother in the best way possible until it becomes very clear that he is going the wrong thing, and do not interpret a word that comes from your brother negatively”.ⁱⁱ

If we really cannot find a justification, we should ask them to clarify what they were doing or what they meant.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO AVOID SUSPICION

- 1) Every time a negative thought crosses the mind, replace it with a positive one. Also actively remember that it is Satan who is contributing to this thought, and that we need to overcome him by dispelling this thought.
- 2) Consider everyone around us to be better than us. This will make it easier to justify their actions which may seem suspicious.
- 3) Make as many excuses as possible to justify the actions of others. This will help keep the relationship strong, and will give us peace of mind also.
- 4) Remind yourself of both the physical and spiritual harms of suspicion, which include:
 - Paranoia
 - Losing friends
 - Conflict with family members
 - Agitation and anxiety

ⁱⁱⁱAlso remind yourself of the benefits of always thinking positively about loved ones and other believers:

- Peace of mind
- Strong relations
- Close family ties

THE BENEFITS OF AVOIDING SUSPICION

Imam 'Ali (as) says that avoiding suspicion benefits us more than anyone else because it leads to calmness and tranquillity of the heart.

“Interpreting things positively (ḥusn al-ḍann) leads to peace of mind”^{iv}

Homework

1. Give an example of situations where suspiciousness can be most harmful and MUST be avoided at all costs, and explain how it must be avoided.
2. Give 3 ways in which suspiciousness can be avoided
3. In what situations or towards whom should we exercise ‘reasonable’ suspicion?

ⁱ Beharul-Anwaar vol.74 p.191

ⁱⁱ Mizanul-Hikmah vol.4 p.1784]

ⁱⁱⁱ References

eHawza Lecture on Suspiciousness – Sheikh Mansour Leghaei
Holy Qur'an

Paranoid Personality Disorder -

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paranoid_personality_disorder

Mizan ul Hikmah – book of Hadith

^{iv} Beharul-Anwaar vol.74 p.191

COMMUNITY CARE

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn some of the etiquettes of looking out for the ill, including
- Understand some of the etiquettes of looking after the elderly

Social Rules

SENIOR LEVEL

Community Care

Falling ill is an inevitable part of life. Everybody falls ill in their lifetime and no one can claim to be immune from it. While illnesses are difficult to bear, all of them are a hidden mercy from Allah (SWT) as our sins are forgiven. For this reason we should not complain when ill, but instead practice patience and pray to Allah (SWT) to make us better.

In addition to shedding light on the positive side and hidden mercies behind every illness, Islam has also laid great emphasis on visiting the sick and promised great rewards reserved for ones who do so.

In this lesson we will discuss the benefits of illness, the importance of visiting the ill, the etiquettes of dealing with them and those of dealing with the elderly.

BENEFITS OF ILLNESS

a) Appreciating good health

It is only when we have lost something that we miss it. Similarly, it is only during illness that we truly appreciate and remember the days when we were healthy. Periods of illness cause us to become more careful about ourselves when we regain health; we naturally tend to avoid those foods or activities or ways of life that caused our illness in the first place. This change of life is a practical way of appreciating the blessing of Allah (SWT). Falling ill also makes us humble as we begin to realise how weak and powerless we are since creatures as tiny as mosquitos can leave us bed-ridden for several days.

b) Purification of sins.

The Holy Prophet (saw) says:

“The wrongdoings of a sick person shed away from him like the shedding of leaves from a tree.”ⁱ

It is for this reason that Imam al-Sajjād (as) says in one of his supplications:

“O Allah, I do not know in which situation I should be more grateful; in health or during illness. When I am healthy, I should be grateful for my health and the opportunity to perform good deeds. However, when I am ill, I am lying in bed and resting, but your angels are asking forgiveness for me and I gain rewards despite not doing anything.”ⁱⁱ

One day the Prophet was walking when he looked up and began smiling. He was asked why he was smiling to which he explained that two angels had come down to write the rewards for a person who usually attended congregational prayers but they did not find him there. They went back and reported this to the Exalted Lord. He said to them:

“Write the same rewards for him as if he were there, because if he was not ill, he would have been present.”

HOW TO DEAL WITH ILLNESS

The discomfort experienced from illness makes one very easily agitated and frustrated. We tend to lose our temper quickly and often complain about our situation to others. Moreover, because we are unable to resume normal duties, we become depressed and consequently also affect the moods of those around us. Take for example the sullen mood of an active young boy who has sprained his ankle and is barred from any sporting activity for 4 weeks, or imagine the frustration of a middle-aged man who is bed-ridden for a month because of a chronic illness.

In these testing times, Islam has given us invaluable advice on how to best deal with our illness:

a) Concealing illness

The first important tip is to conceal our illness as much as possible and not to inform anyone other than our doctors about it. Unfortunately we usually have a tendency of exaggerating and dramatizing our illnesses to people so that we can gain their sympathetic attention. In addition to our personal problems and our

acts of charity, our sicknesses should also remain concealed. The Prophet (saw) said,

“From among the treasures of righteousness are: concealing one’s tragedies, sicknesses and charity.”ⁱⁱⁱ

b) Do not complain to others

When we are ill, we should not complain about our situation to anyone but Allah (SWT). Complaining to others means that we are indirectly complaining about Allah’s decision upon us. Instead, we should try and think of those people who are in a much worse situation and then thank Allah (SWT).

“Allah Almighty has said, ‘Whoever becomes sick three times and does not complain to any of his visitors, I change his flesh to flesh better than what he has and blood better than his blood. If I cure him, then I will cure him and he will have no sin, and if I take him [in death], I will take him to My Mercy.’”^{iv}

When Prophet Ayyūb (as) was very ill for a long time, he did not complain to anyone but very politely asked Allah (SWT) to have mercy on him:

“O my Lord, harm has touched me, and You are the Most merciful”

c) Take quick steps to become well.

We should not wait for our illness to become severe before taking necessary steps; it may after all be too late. When we are ill, we should take quick steps to recovery by visiting a doctor and following his prescriptions carefully, eating well and resting adequately. Having a carefree attitude toward illness is in reality betraying the trust (our body) that Allah (SWT) has gifted us with.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE ILL

As previously mentioned, Islam has placed great emphasis on visiting the ill. It has instructed us to inquire about our brothers and sisters who have not been seen in the mosque or in social gatherings for an unusually long time. If we learn that they are ill, we must visit them. In this section we will discuss the etiquette of visiting the ill, be it at home or in a hospital.

a) Before visiting, we should call the family to ask for the most convenient time so that we do not trouble the family and the patient. Often, the family of the patient is

already struggling to care for the patient and the last thing they want is to attend to guests at random times.

b) We should not disclose the details of the illness to other people and we must respect the family's wish for confidentiality if this is what they want.

c) We should not visit the ill empty-handed. We should always take something even if it is simple, like a get-well card or flowers. We should keep in mind to take something suitable like a book or healthy foods like fruits rather than sweets that the patient should not be eating anyway. A companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq (AS) narrated.

“One of his companions became sick so we went to visit him as a group. We met Imam Ja’far (as) on the way, and he asked, ‘Where are you going?’ We replied, ‘We are going to so and so to visit him.’ He said, ‘Stop’, so we stopped, and he asked, ‘Does any of you have an apple or a quince, or a citron, or some perfume or a piece of sandalwood?!’ We said, ‘No, we do not have any of these?’ He said, ‘Do you not know that the sick man is comforted by anything that is brought for him.’^v

d) Our visits should be short so that we do not make the patient uncomfortable. Often patients find it difficult to stay awake or to sit up for long. Sometimes they also need to use the toilet often and our long stays would inconvenience them. We should only prolong our stay if they need our company. Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“The visitor with the greatest reward with Allah is he who when he visits he sits briefly, unless the sick person likes the company and wants and asks for [him to sit longer].

e) We should not visit the ill in a sad or depressed mood, nor argue, nor interrogate them about his illness as this would make him very upset. Instead, we should visit them with a cheerful and happy face and give him good words about a speedy recovery so that he feels better.^{vi}

REWARDS OF VISITING THE ILL

a) Visiting the ill is likened to visiting Allah (SWT) Himself

The Prophet (saw) said:

“Allah Almighty will say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘O son of Adam, I became sick and you did not visit Me!’ and he will ask, ‘O Lord, how can I visit You when You

are the Lord of the worlds?’ He Almighty will say, ‘Did you not know that My servant so and so became sick and you did not visit him?! Did you not know that if you had visited him you would have found Me there with him?!’^{vii}

b) Forgiveness of sins.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said:

“Whoever visits a sick person, seventy thousand angels will escort him repenting for him until he returns to his house.”^{viii}

c) Reminder of the Hereafter:

When we visit the ill, we attain a realisation of our weakness and the transient nature of this world where everything will someday age, deteriorate and eventually die. This realisation is healthy as it reminds of our final abode – the hereafter- and therefore helps to keep our actions on track.

The Prophet (saw) said:

“Visit the sick and follow funeral processions, they will remind you of the Hereafter.”^{ix}

DEALING WITH THE ELDERLY

Like illness, ageing is a natural and inevitable part of life. In affluent countries like Australia, there is a large population of elderly people and this means a greater responsibility on younger people to look after them. Islam has laid as much emphasis on our social responsibilities such as looking after the elderly as it has on our spiritual and individual aspects of life.

According to the Holy Qur’an, the life for the aged has been described as the most miserable stage of life (arthalil ‘umr). This is because that part of life is very difficult and leads to people becoming dependent on others. The Holy Qur’an also says that those who are given long lives suffer a ‘reversal’ in creation, physically and mentally, slowly reverting to a life similar to that of a baby, which is helpless and dependent.

“And he whom We grant long life, We reverse him in creation (weakness after strength). Will they not then understand?”^x

It is also difficult for us to imagine the difficulties of life for the elderly, because we have not experienced it. We think that we will always have our current health and

strength and so we become impatient with the elderly because of their slowness or weakness. Once a champion marathon runner was taken to a running track he used to frequent. Now, in his old age, he could hardly run and was moving like a toddler would. This reminds us that no matter how fit we are, we will one day be old and weak too and so we should be patient with our elders now that we are young.

Elderly people are often depressed because they feel that they are now useless and dependent on others. In addition, they may be suffering from medical conditions which cause them pain and suffering. In addition to all this, they often have many expenses related to health care which makes their life even more difficult. In many cases, elderly people are left alone in a nursing home or in a corner of their house without anyone paying attention to them or visiting them. They can become so depressed that they pray to be taken from this world.

Islam has given us instructions for every aspect of our lives including our responsibilities toward our elders and how to deal with them in the right manner

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD ELDERS

- We need to be good and respectful to elderly people, especially our parents. In fact, the Holy Qur'an says:

“...and to your parents, be good to them (directly). If one of them or both them reach old age do not say (even) ‘uff’ to them and do not chastise them and say to them honourable speech”^{xi}

We should take time out from our life and wait on our parents like servants, and always speak to our parents respectfully.

- According to the Qur'an, we should be humble towards our elderly parents and be like a soft carpet they can walk on.

“and lower to them the wing of humbleness and mercy”^{xii}

- If we need to correct our elders or give them advice, we should be subtle in doing this and shouldn't be blunt. Even if the elderly person thinks they are always right because of their experience, we should still not be blunt in

advising them and should take their age into consideration.

- We should spend time around them, converse with them and make them laugh. Give them company and remove some of their boredom and depression.
- We should look after their financial needs without them having to ask us. A man has as much responsibility to look after his parents as he does towards his wife and children. Wives, in turn, should not complain about their husbands sending money to look after his parents. Remember, when we were young, our parents looked after us, and now they may be too proud to ask for anything when they need it. In one narration, a man came to Imam al-Ṣādiq saying that he had a financial dispute with his father and he wanted the Imam to judge between them. The Imam (as) said:

“you and your wealth belong to your father.”

When we are helping our parents financially, we should do in a subtle and respectful way, and should not make them feel bad about it. Part of this is that we should be vigilant of their needs and give them assistance before they ask. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“do not trouble them to ask you for their needs.”

- We should pray for them as we have been instructed by the Holy Qur'an:

“Say: O Allah have mercy on them just as they raised me when I was young. Reward them goodness for their goodness, and forgiveness for their mistakes”

Review Questions

1) Which of these is NOT a benefit of illness?

- a. Forgiveness of sins
- b. Practical appreciation of good health
- c. Loss of appetite and hence loss of weight

2) In dealing with the ill, we should:

- a. Ask them in detail about their illness
- b. Meet them with a happy and cheerful mood

- c. Make the details of their illness public

3) In regards to the reality of visiting the ill, it is as though one is visiting...

- a. The Holy Prophet (saw)
- b. Imam Mahdi (atfs)
- c. Allah (SWT)

4) In regards to dealing with the elderly:

- a. Islam has not laid much emphasis on it
- b. Islam has laid as much emphasis on this as it has on individual acts of worship
- c. By providing financial assistance only we have fulfilled our duties.

ⁱ 'al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, v. 4, p. 293, no. 56

ⁱⁱ Sahifa Sajjadiyah, His Supplication when Ill

ⁱⁱⁱ Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v. 2, p. 68, no. 1435

^{iv} al-Kafi, v. 3, p. 115, no. 1

^v al-Kafi, v. 3, p. 118, no. 3'

^{vi} al-Kafi, v. 3, p. 118, no. 6

^{vii} al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, v. 4, p. 317, no. 3

^{viii} [al-Kafi, v. 3, p. 120, no. 2]

^{ix} Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 25143

^x Holy Qur'an (36:68)

^{xi} Holy Quran (17:23)

^{xii} Holy Quran (17:24)



ISLAM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

محيط

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand some of the general Islamic principles that indicate the importance of the environment to Islam
- Discuss some of the Islamic teachings that naturally protect the environment
- Briefly discuss some Islamic ways in which we can help the environment
- Discuss that we must keep a balance between caring for immediate human needs and for the environment

The Importance of Environment in Islam

It is unfortunate today that Muslims in general do not have a healthy respect for the natural environment around us. Allah (SWT) tells us in the Holy Qur'an that all His creations are exquisitely beautiful and excellent:

"[God] made excellent all that which He created (32:7)"

The magnificence of the natural creation of Allah (SWT) is manifested in the beautiful trees, mountains, flowers and animals! Allah (SWT) created all of these, each with its own beauty and has put in them a means of peace and cure for human beings. Certainly there is a

SOCIAL ISLAM

SENIOR LEVEL

possibility that there may be a cure for cancer in the depths of the oceans or the rainforests!

At the same time Allah (SWT) has made it compulsory upon humankind to take care of this creation and not exceed the limits. Allah (SWT) puts the responsibility of taking care of and developing the earth squarely in our hands!

"[God] brought you forth from the earth and delegated you its development" (11:61)

We have learnt in previous lessons some of the ways we can protect our environment but in this lesson we shall focus more on seeing how Islam is encouraging us to live in Harmony with the environment and *not* to exploit it for worldly desires. We are certainly responsible, and will be questioned about things like global warming: a phenomenon which destroys the environment and changes the climate which results in destruction and death. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

"They strive in the earth to make mischief and destroy the crops and the cattle, and God does not love mischief"

"Corruption has become apparent in the lands and the sea, because of what people have earned."

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Sustainable Development-** When we decide to use the natural resources for development (e.g. building our house) we have to ensure that we do not destroy the resource (e.g. take some wood but to not destroy the whole forest!)

- b. We do not take more than we need. Isrāf (wastefulness) is not allowed in Islam and is forbidden in the Qur'an. The Holy Prophet said:

“Do not waste water even if you are at a river.”

- c. We must nurture the resource so it can be useful for others in the future.
- d. In obtaining the resource we do not violate the rights of others: so we are not allowed to eat fruits that have been grown on usurped (stolen) land.

2- Follow the teaching of Islam in our actions- the laws of Islam are universal and hence they encompass all aspects of human life including the physical. Examples of what we can do include:

- a. **Understanding that exploitation** of this earth and its resources is a result of greed and the love for the physical aspects of this world. Being conscious that we are created for eternity in the Hereafter and understanding that greed is disliked by Allah (SWT) is the first step in protecting the environment.
- b. **Not being wasteful** in all aspects of life
- c. **Respecting the creation and creatures of Allah** (SWT) by not abusing them and only using them for what they are not meant to be used for.
- d. **Being conscious of others at all times.** Even a simple act as clearing a path for others to walk freely is a rewarding act in Islam. Prophet 'Īsā (as) says:

“I passed by a grave of a man who was being punished severely. I passed by his grave a year later but his punishment had stopped. I asked why this had happened. Allah, the Exalted, revealed to me that the man had a son who in the meantime had paved a path for people, and dedicated the reward to his father. Because of this, Allah, the Exalted, forgave the father.”

3- Living in Harmony with the environment.

- a. **Our physical body is healthiest in a healthy environment.** Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“Life is not pleasant without three things, clean air, abundant fresh water and fertile land”ⁱ.

Indeed even noise pollution is forbidden in Islam. In the Holy Qur'an, Luqmān (as) advises his son:

“Lower your voice, for the harshest of sounds is the braying of the asses”.

In today's world, the application of this is to reduce the noise from our cars and other possessions. Therefore even if you are playing Islamic *anashīd* loudly from your car it may be considered noise pollution.

- b. **Strive to study and understand the environment-** Knowledge about nature, the trees, bees, honey, olives, mountains etc...has been stressed in the Qur'an very much. It is through knowledge of nature that we can learn more about Allah (SWT) and become better believers.

- c. **Take advantage of the environment to attain spirituality-** Praying out in the open sky, taking a stroll through a rich rainforest or walking along the beach all serve to elevate our spirituality when we connect to the earth and nature.

- 4- **Improving the Environment:** in whatever we can. Something as simple as planting a tree has great rewards in Islam. The Prophet (saw) says:

“If the Judgment Day is upon you, and you have a small palm tree in your hand, if you are able to plant it before you get up, then do so!”

The Prophet also said:

“If any Muslim cultivates the land or plants it, and then a person, an animal or a bird eats from it, this would be counted as a charity for him on the Judgment Day.”

Class Activity:

Discuss with your teacher what other practical ways you can protect and conserve your environment.

Questions:

- 1- We are responsible for our environment because

- a. We are the smartest creatures of God.
- b. God (SWT) has given us this responsibility

- c. As we are living in it we have to be sure that it is the best for us

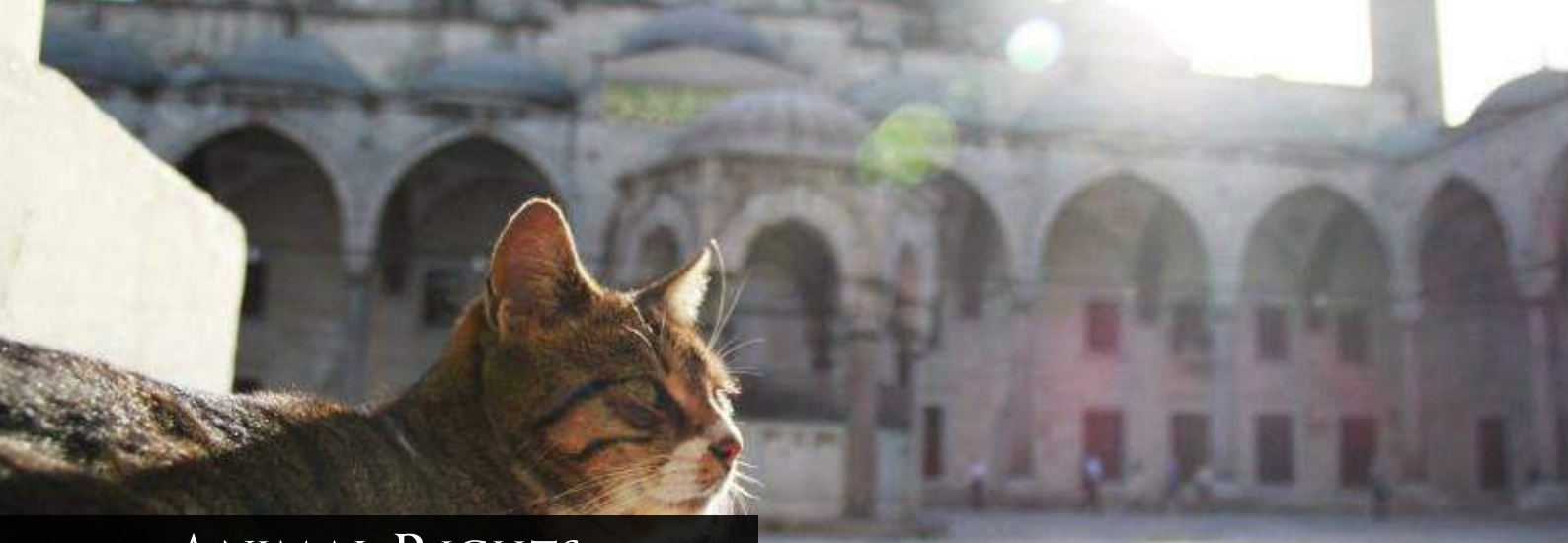
2-Sustainable Development means

- a. Utilising whatever resources I want to live comfortably
- b. Being conscious of the future generations and those around me when I utilise resources
- c. Not wasting water

3-Living in harmony with the environment means

- a. Living like a hermit in a cave in a jungle in Africa
- b. Speaking to and hugging trees and plants and animals
- c. Utilising the environment to gain proximity to Allah (SWT)

ⁱ Biharul anwaar Vol 75 p 232



ANIMAL RIGHTS

حقوق الحيوان

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Islam has rules and rights related to animals as well
- Discuss that human rights always take priority over animal rights
- Discuss some specific rules related to animal rights
- Understand that while we can use animals for their proper use (e.g. slaughtering a chicken) we are not allowed to torture or hurt animals
- Understand that Islam encourages us to take care of animals

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Introduction

Over the last few lessons we have discussed issues related to our social life, particularly the rights that people in our families, neighbourhood and in communities at large have over us. In this lesson we will discuss the Islamic outlook on issues related to animal rights.

Not only has Islam detailed laws for worshipping, social rights and environmental care, but being a very comprehensive and practical religion, has also instructed us to care for animals and to ensure that they are not treated badly. While animals and plants have all been made subservient to human beings, no human is allowed to misuse or mistreat plants or animals, and will be liable for punishment for doing so.

The issue of animal rights has been one of ongoing discussion also in the scientific world. To what extent should animals be used for human benefit is still quite ambiguous. Islam has provided us with a simple yet powerful principle upon which we can base our decision— a principle which lies within the hierarchy of creation.

THE HIERARCHY OF CREATION

All creatures are equal when looked at from the aspect of being the slaves of God. However, in relation to each other, there is a hierarchy among the creatures. Human beings were the last creatures to be created and the according to the Holy Qur'an, the best of creations. Also, everything else has been created to serve the needs of humans:

“Don’t you see (O men) that Allah has made subservient for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth...?” (31:20)

In other words, if and when there is a clash in the perfection of different creatures, for example animals and humans, the creatures lower in the hierarchy of creation should be sacrificed for those in the higher level.

ANIMALS IN THE HOLY QUR’AN

It is worth to useful to remember that the Holy Qur’an has named several chapters after the name of animals. Allah (SWT) has also mentioned the uses of some animals in the Holy Qur’an, for example obtaining milk and meat from the cow, donkeys and camels as a means of transport, and honey from bees which has a cure for human beings.

This way, the Holy Qur’an takes a moderate approach by showing the importance of animals while simultaneously pointing out that they have been created to serve human beings.

The Holy Qur’an also confirms that animals have their own organised systems and societies:

“There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered” (6:38)

On this basis, some of our great scholars have concluded that animals possess a limited level of intellect. In addition, the Holy Qur’an also confirms that animals will be resurrected on the day of Judgement:

“And when the wild beasts shall be brought forth” (81:5)

The following narration also confirms this:

One day, the Prophet (saw) saw two goats fighting and told his companions: “God knows why they are fighting, and the one that has been unfair will be treated accordingly on the Judgment Day.”

HOW SHOULD WE CARE FOR ANIMALS?

The least care that we should show toward animals is to avoid harming them physically for the sake of amusement. Unfortunately in communities in the Middle East, throwing stones at dogs is a big pass time for the youth and they are often encouraged by their elders.

The other ways to care for animals is to provide them basic necessities such as food, water, suitable accommodation and medication when they fall ill.



So comprehensive is Islam in its teachings that it is considered Makrūh (disliked by Allah (SWT)) to scrape out the remains cooked meat or chicken off a bone such that nothing remains of it¹. This is because the remains on the bone are usually a source of food for the birds.

Here is an example of how the Prophet (saw) looked after animals. The Prophet of Islam was once performing ablution for prayers from a pot of water. A cat passed there and turned its eyes at the pot of water with a thirsty look. The Prophet realised at once that the cat was very thirsty, so he stopped the ablution and placed the pot before the cat. Only after the cat had fully quenched its thirst, did the Prophet resume the ablution.

PROHIBITIONS WHEN DEALING WITH ANIMALS

- Keeping a bird in a cage for fun is not permissible. This is because a bird is naturally created to fly and thus restricting it from doing so causes harm and stress to it.

- Similarly, keeping a dog as a pet is also not permissible unless it is a guard dog or shepherd dog. In these cases, they should not be allowed to enter the house itself.
- Furthermore, cursing an animal is not permissible since they are also the creatures of Allah (SWT) and they play a significant role in our ecosystem, albeit usually unnoticed.
- We cannot slap an animal in the face because the Prophet (saw) confirms that they are also constantly glorifying Allah (SWT)
- While hunting, we cannot hunt or hurt a baby bird. The Prophet (saw) says that while a baby bird is in its mother's nest, it is in the refuge of Allah (SWT)
- It is not permissible to instigate animals to fight one another. Therefore bull-fighting and other such activities organised for fun are impermissible.
- Killing an animal for fun is not permissible. We can only do so if it is for human benefit such as if the animal must be used in medical research.

The late honourable Imam Khomeini would not even kill flies but only shoo them away. When asked about this he used to say that shooing them away serves the same purpose as killing them. Similarly, we should not kill spiders in our homes if we can remove them in a different way.

When the Prophet (saw) ascended during his Me'raj he saw a woman who was being tortured. On inquiring about this he was told that the woman had caged her pet cat for days without providing it with any food or water such that it died as a result of this starvation.

- We can only collect milk from a cow if she (the cow) has enough milk to feed her calf.
- When collecting honey, we must not collect all of it but leave some behind for the bees especially in winter.

Review Questions

Q1. Islam has:

- a. Focussed on aspects of worship but has neglected the issue of animal rights
- b. Comprehensively discussed the issues of animal rights
- c. Both *a* and *b*

Q2. According to the principle of 'Allah's hierarchy of creation':

- a. Human beings can be sacrificed for the perfection of animals
- b. Animals can be sacrificed for the perfection of humans
- c. Nothing should be sacrificed as Allah (SWT) has already made everything perfect

Q3. Which of these is not prohibited?

- a. Using animals for medical research
- b. Caging birds for fun
- c. Instigating animals to fight so as to attract large crowds to raise money for charity

ⁱ Risala of Syed Sistani (Point ix of Fatwa No. 2646)

OTHER SUBLIME TEACHINGS WHEN DEALING WITH ANIMALS

- Islam has also set rules for when there is a clash between the welfare of two animals. For example, if there is sufficient water only for a dog or a sheep, the water should be given to the dog. As for the sheep, it can be slaughtered and eaten.
- Also, if we are travelling with an animal and there is sufficient water only for Wudū' or for the animal, we should do tayammum and give the water to the animal.